



Vision, Mission and Values

Annual General Report

2010 / 2011



Alpha Court is a non-profit community mental health organization. The agency is governed by a voluntary Board of Directors, representatives of the community that we serve.

Respect · Dignity · Hope · Wellness

Message from the President

I am pleased to report that 2010/ 2011 has been a year of growth, change and opportunities. As a Board, we have adopted a Policy Governance model and are working diligently at developing policies. We have an extremely talented and ambitious board of directors who work well together as a team and understand the necessity of aligning our strategies with those of our funders and our community partners.

In November, we engaged in a board development session that provided policy governance education, followed by a board retreat at Old Fort William in February. Throughout the past year we have been provided with data and progress reports on the strategic plan and are pleased to report that the goals and objectives identified for the year have been implemented.

Significant achievements for the year included the smooth transition to our new Executive Director, Cindee Richardson. After an extensive search for a new location, we approved the recommendation for a move to 221 Wilson Street. In addition to providing extra space to accommodate the addiction housing staff, we now have a multi-purpose room that serves as our board room, staff training room and employee lunch room. We have remained on a main line bus route, accessible to clients, and we are wheelchair accessible.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our funders, the Northwest Local Health Integration Network, and the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care. We also appreciate being the recipients of a Northern Heritage Foundation Grant for an intern position for a Resource Development Coordinator. For the second year in a row we received funding from the Thunder Bay Community Foundation which is committed to meals and program needs for our Day Treatment Program currently in the design stage. The Bank of Montreal also donated some money which we have used with our clients for “Art Days.” They have derived a great deal of pleasure from these activities.

Along with the changes of a new Executive Director, a new board model, an addiction housing program, an announcement of a relocation of the main office, Alpha Court participated in the Ontario Common Assessment Needs and Integrated Assessment Record pilot projects. This required an intensive time commitment on behalf of the program staff, but they have done well and we hope these efforts will make the intake process much easier for clients.

As I reflect on the past year, I am pleased with the changes and with the adaptability of the agency staff. On behalf of the entire Board of Directors, we proudly serve Alpha Court and we look forward to another gratifying year.



Sean Adams

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Board of Directors

2010-2011

President

Sean Adams

Past-President

Christina Buzzi

Treasurer

Greg Larsen

Secretary

Inie Slaney

Directors

Leonard Pullan

Suanne Howes

Suzanne Persall

Katherine Turner

Patricia Hajdu

Kate Brindley

Tammy Campbell

MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

Our Vision

Alpha Court envisions a society where all people regardless of their mental health challenges can reach their full potential and live productive lives.

Our Mission

Alpha Court promotes living beyond mental illness through the provision of individualized, recovery-oriented, community-based services that are developed in partnership with consumers. Alpha Court exists so that people with mental illness

- Have safe, decent, affordable housing
- Have the resources required to meet their basic needs
- Have the self confidence, knowledge and skills to live their lives successfully
- Have positive and supportive relationships within the community
- Are supported in their efforts to navigate the complex system of community, health and social services
- Live in a supportive and understanding society free of stigma, barriers and oppression.

Our Values

As part of the commitment and passion we bring to our work, Alpha Court is guided by the following key principles:

- **Respect:** We respect people – the choices they make, the independence they seek, and the justice they are entitled to.
- **Dignity:** We believe in the strengths, uniqueness, value and worth of all people.
- **Hope:** We believe that hope is the cornerstone to change and recovery.
- **Wellness:** We believe that wellness and health is a human right, which includes a person's social, emotional, physical, spiritual, cultural and intellectual well-being.

Message from the Executive Director

Each year this report provides a way of accounting to the public the activities and expenditures of Alpha Court. It is also a time to express appreciation to those who make this organization function well. This includes our clients who are represented on our board, and tenant's association as well as our funders, volunteer board of directors and partner agencies. I want to say a heartfelt thank you for the staff of Alpha Court for their generous spirits, adaptability and dedication to their work.

We experienced a great deal of change this past year, and while this is often difficult for people, it also can be a time of renewal. Holly Gauvin, Director of Community Mental Health and Addictions explain the reorganization, programs and our contribution to e-Health. Darlene Belliveau, Director of Finance and Administration review the financial and administrative changes and Sharon Atwood, Director of Property Management discusses property and housing issues.

I was hired as the Executive Director July 5, 2010. I worked in community economic development with Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition in Northwestern Ontario for seven years followed by a decade working in health/ social service research and project management in Australia. My return to Northwestern Ontario has been a joy, and working for Alpha Court a pleasure.

Since I began I have attended the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health summer institute on concurrent disorders and followed this up with the Canadian Psycho-Social Rehabilitation conference in Ottawa. I attended a conference on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder for provincial agency managers in an effort to address some of these prevalent issues we face in abundance in the north. I was also acclaimed as the Northwest representative board member for the Ontario Non Profit Housing Association and I am the Privacy Officer for Alpha Court.

2010-2011 has been a good year and I am looking forward to the upcoming year as one committed to excellent service delivery, and expanding programs that offer opportunities for improved quality of life for our clients. Addressing the lack of suitable and affordable housing is of paramount importance. Illness or addiction does not need to define individuals and it is my hope that in partnership with agencies and individuals we can address the broader determinants of health and focus on the impacts of poverty and homelessness. Those of us who have a voice need to be a voice for social justice and equality.



Cindee Richardson

Message from Treasurer

The fiscal year end of March 31, 2011 has been another active year for Alpha Court. The LHIN funded program budget increased to \$2,159,076. This was due to the Addictions program starting part way through the fiscal year. We had an additional budget for the GAPPS program in the amount of \$50,617. The actual monies received by this partnership were adjusted to \$42,782 reflecting the staff changes that occurred in February of this year. In addition to the LHIN and GAPPS funding we were recipients of funding from the Northern Heritage Fund which translated in an intern position that allowed us to hire a Resource Development Coordinator from December 2010 until November 30, 2011. With LHIN approval, we were approved to utilize unspent funds to help with the renovations costs related to our move to 221 Wilson Street.

The Housing Program which operates our two apartment buildings had an operating budget of \$824,744.00. The transfer of monies to the capital reserve was in the amount of \$115,612.00. We were able to secure a federal grant of \$42,177.00 replacing the makeup air system at Dease Street. We also received a federal grant in the amount of \$17,299.00 for architectural fees for design work related to the stucco and window replacement at our building on Jasper Drive.

The rent supplement program had an operating budget of \$200,282. The startup for the addiction housing portfolio was in the amount of \$1,054. Total rent supplement funding amounted to \$200,282.

Minor capital expenditures this year amounted to \$81,832.00.

This is the first year of the wage freeze that has been legislated by the government. The only exception is that pay equity obligations to staff must be honored during the wage restraint.

At this time I would like to thank Darlene and her staff for their diligence and hard work over the past year. I am optimistic that next year will offer Alpha Court more opportunities and wish the organization the best of luck in their future endeavors.

Greg Larsen

Director of Finances and Administrative Services Report

The fiscal year ending March 31, 2010 has been another busy year for the Administrative Team. First and foremost I would like to express my gratitude to the Administrative Staff for doing a great job during the transitions that have taken place during the fiscal year. Your hard work and dedication is much appreciated.

With the addition of the Addictions Funding from the LHIN as well as the MOH Funding for the additional 24 units for Addictions Clients, it was necessary to reorganize the Administration Department. Workloads necessitated a change in order to handle the increased workload. In reorganizing we have eliminated the Receptionist position. Chantal Henderson has taken on the Administrative Assistant's position and Margie Cholin has become the fulltime Finance Clerk. Cindy Lyght has moved to the fulltime Property Management Clerk's position. Prior to this move, the Finance Clerk and Property Management Clerk position was a half-time position in both departments.

Alpha Court has received monies this year from Thunder Bay Community Foundation in the amount of \$5,000 to assist us with our Day Programming associated with the new Addictions Program. We have also received funding from the Northern Heritage Fund for an Intern position - a Resource Development Coordinator Intern whose duties include Fundraising and Event Planning. Meghan King has been hired for this position and has been very active since starting her role with Alpha Court in December. The Bank of Montreal has also made a donation in the amount of \$1,100 to help pay costs related to operating an art class for our clients. Meghan King organized two days of art workshops which were well received by the clients and staff that participated in this event.

The Operating Budgets for the Health and Addictions Programs along with the Northern Heritage Funding and the GAPPS funding amounted to \$2,218,860 this fiscal year. The MOH funding for the operation of the buildings at Dease and Jasper was budgeted at \$782,245. The Rent Supplement Budget including \$1,054 this fiscal year for Addictions Housing was in the amount of \$201,336.

We also received funding from Social Housing Renovation and Retrofit Program (SHRRP) for \$12,177 for Dease Street for replacement of the rooftop heating unit. SHRRP monies to be received amount to \$41,576 for the Architects work related to the Jasper repairs as noted in the Property Management Report. A further \$143,438 SHRRP Funding will be received for construction when the work commences at the Jasper Drive location.

In February of this year the paymaster partnership with St Joseph's Care Group and Canadian Mental Health Association was adjusted to reflect that the Alpha Court full-time equivalent has accepted the position of Addictions Worker. The cash-flow was adjusted to reflect this amendment. It should be noted that this project is underfunded over the term of the contract and requires each agency to contribute in-kind contributions in order to make the project succeed.



The Administration Department has been very busy with the preparation of the upcoming office move. A great deal of time was spent looking for the new location and hiring a contractor that would complete the necessary renovations at the new location. Renovations were paid for with unspent funds from the LHINS. We are eagerly awaiting our move to 221 Wilson Street early in the new fiscal year and the staff is looking forward to working in a healthy work environment.

Reporting requirements and tight deadlines continue to be a challenge for all staff. In particular the tight turn around for Audit Reports and Government Reports to the LHINS by May 31st is an ongoing challenge for all concerned.

I would like to thank my staff again for all the great work that has been accomplished this year. I thank you for your patience when I have been tied up with reports and not been as available as I would have liked to have been. I look forward to working with you all over the next year.

Darlene Belliveau

Director of Housing and Property Management Report

Non-Profit Housing

The housing portfolio has experienced a surplus with the Operating Budget this fiscal year. The Capital Expenses were under our allocation for 2010-2011.

We received special RETROFIT funding of \$58,365.53 to complete cost effective repair work at 1500 Dease Street (25 units) and 1241 Jasper Drive (34 units). It included the replacement of the bathroom fans in all apartments, ballast and bulb replacement, toilet replacement in all units and automatic door closures to the back door areas of both buildings. We received SHRRP funds with the cost at \$13,237.95 for the replacement of the make-up air unit at 1500 Dease Street. We applied separately for SHRRP funding for Consultant and Construction Fees to repair the deficiency at the stucco bay window areas at 1241 Jasper Drive. The Ministry has approved these costs and the funds will be received and the work completed next fiscal.

Capital work at Jasper this year included replacement of the flooring in 4 units as well as minor roof repairs and replacement of smoke and heat sensors in certain areas of the building. Capital expenses at Dease Street include minor soffit and fascia repairs. A countertop was replaced in one of the apartment units and we replaced the carpet with tile in 3 units.

We experienced moderate turnover of tenants at Dease Street and high at Jasper Drive this past year: 3 two bedroom units at Dease Street, 3 one bedroom units and 3 two bedroom units at Jasper Drive. Turnover costs continue to increase when it is necessary to do extensive repairs on move out.

The tenants and staff are very pleased with Diane's hard work and the condition of the building at 1500 Dease Street and her assistance with the cleaning at 1241 Jasper Drive. Maintenance Superintendent, Mike Sternastik was very busy with general maintenance, refurbishing the units on turnover at both buildings and the cleaning at 1241 Jasper Drive. I commend them both for their efforts in the buildings. I want to extend a thank you also to Cindy Lyght who assists me as Property Management clerk.

The Homelessness Initiative Project

This HIPII Partnership Program with BISNO and CMHA continues to be very successful with the increase in referrals over the last year. Currently there is a wait list for these units.

In this program there were 34 move-ins including 8 transfers of tenants to another unit. We obtained 15 new units this fiscal year and cancelled the agreement on 14 units. One landlord cancelled our Agreement on 6 units due to his ill health. It made for a very busy summer for me as we had to relocate these tenants in other units. At year-end we had 67 units in this program. This number goes up and down throughout the year due to landlords withdrawing units or HIPII giving notice that we no longer require a particular unit. The transitional housing units Alpha Court operates within our allocation of 37 units were well utilized this year with 14 clients housed in the 3 units.

We take great pride in our program's accomplishments and our successful partnership with Brain Injury Services Norwestern Ontario (BISNO) and CMHA. Our Homelessness Initiative Project (HIP) celebrates its 10th Anniversary this fall and we are planning a Celebration on Friday October 7th at the Italian Cultural Centre.



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Alpha Court is operating two other rent subsidy programs (750 and 500) with the allocation of 12 (8 and 4 respectively) units. These programs are not shared with any partners. The 750 Program experienced two move-outs and 3 vacant months during the year. December 1st we added one unit increasing the allocation to 8. The 500 Program has 4 units at year-end with no turnover in the fiscal year.

We were successful in reducing evictions with only two in the period. This is in large part due to consultation with staff and Property Management about which tenant will be a good match with which landlord and the hard work done by the Case Managers to help clients be successful tenants. Support Workers are working more closely with clients on move-out. This fact is helping to maintain good rapport with landlords in the program.

We continue to pay out rent and repair money for reasons which include: the tenant being evicted or incarcerated, the tenant leaving with little or no notice and rent is paid while the unit was undergoing repairs or refurbishing for a new tenant. Above normal wear and tear by some tenants is still a concern and we are working closely with these Landlords and Support Workers with unit inspections. The Support Workers are also working with their clients in an effort to address these concerns.

The Recovery Program with Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), where they issue a cheque for the difference in the rent from Ontario Works (OW) maximum of \$368 to the ODSP maximum of \$469 continues. This is issued once a client is approved for ODSP. There is a change in the Maximum Allowable Shelter portion for ODSP and OW this year which will affect the rental portion the tenant pays for their unit effective April 1st, 2011. ODSP changed from \$464.00 to \$469.00 and OW from \$364.00 to \$368.00 (1% increase) reducing the amount that we pay for a subsidy. It is always a challenge to ensure that the tenant portion is increased accordingly to ensure that the Landlords receive the correct amount.

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care join together with our local LHIN to fund a new program in Addictions with 3 Support Staff and 24 Rent Supplement Units over the next two years. This project started in March 2011 and we have secured 2 units for April 1st.

I extend congratulations to the Staff and Managers for their continued mutual hard work, support and dedication to the clients in making these programs very successful.

Sharon Atwood

Director of Community Mental Health and Addiction Services Report

This year has marked many changes within the Mental Health system and Alpha Court. I wish to highlight some of the changes in this report and to tell you all how much I admire the commitment and determination demonstrated by the staff during this time of transition. Because of their efforts client services have been delivered in the same timely, high quality and sensitive manner that Alpha Court Community Mental Health and Addiction Services has become known for. The changes:



New Structure

In October Alpha Court restructured and introduced team leaders into the agency structure. Barb Armstrong, Barb Lovie, Nicole Latour and Gene Wazinski have all stepped up to the challenges of leadership and have provided both staff and management with outstanding support despite the ever increasing demands upon their time.

New Training

Seven front line staff have successfully completed the training in Admission & Discharge Assessment Tools (ADAT). The completion of these tools is mandatory for all persons planning to attend any Ministry of Health funded treatment facility. Historically only a few agencies provided the assessment services which often lead to long wait times for services. With our staff being able to deliver the tools client seeking treatment will have timely access to assessment services which will ensure that they are referred to the most appropriate level of care.

Ten staff members are currently training in Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT). This training will allow our staff to provide more appropriate support to individuals experiencing emotional deregulation due to addiction, depression, anxiety and personality disorder. This training will allow staff to deliver sensitive services to individuals with emotional deregulation.

Three staff successfully completed Level 1 Trauma Counselor training and a fourth member completed trauma training specific to First Nations people.

One staff member successfully completed her Psychosocial Rehabilitation (PSR) Practitioner Certification. We have two members of staff with this designation. As you know PSR is the foundation that guides our practice at Alpha Court.

This training reflects the needs of the consumers we serve as well as the commitment to professional excellence demonstrated by our staff.

New Projects

The program staff at Alpha Court took part in piloting a new assessment tool called the Ontario Common Assessment of Needs. The objectives of this new tool are to provide a holistic consumer based approach, gather relevant information available for service planning (identify needs earlier), create a standard approach to information gathering and sharing, identification of resource stresses and gaps and improved sharing of information. As a next step to this project Alpha Court staff also participated in the Doorways portal project.

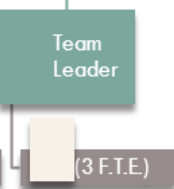
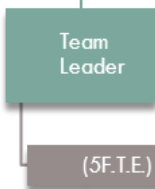
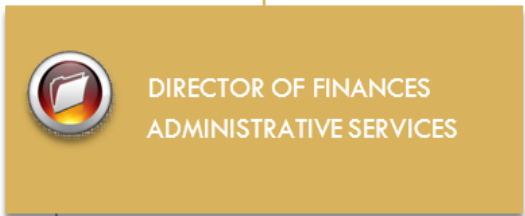
The portal establishes a secure, single point of entry for providers to access a range of clinical and assessment information from any location electronically. This technology improves patient care by eliminating the need for patients to repeat information to each provider. Alpha Court was very successful in implementing both projects. Special thanks to Gene and Jennifer for agreeing to be back up trainers and to Nicole who coordinated the implementation, training and evaluation of each program.

New Staff

This year we have welcomed new staff members to the team. John Henry, Sharon Wingfield and Gary Mack have joined Alpha Court. They bring with them a wide variety of knowledge and expertise and have made wonderful additions to our team.

This truly has been a year of changes at Alpha Court, but staff continues to respond to the ever increasing needs of client care with professionalism and dedication. Many thanks to all staff for their continued work on behalf of our city's most vulnerable citizens.

Holly Gauvin



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