2018-2019 ANNUAL REPORT
Vision
We believe everyone deserves the opportunity to live a self-fulfilling life.

Mission
Empowering people to lead a meaningful and inclusive life.
A Message from Empower Simcoe President, Jim McNamara

The branding process is complete, and our new name Empower Simcoe has been launched. The rebrand sends a definitive message to the community that we are in the business of empowering all people to live the life that they choose for themselves. Our primary goal is to support everyone to BE, BELONG and THRIVE in their communities. I am proud of this direction. It sets our approach moving forward; delivering services that meet the needs of those that we serve. We will continue to develop and implement individualized service plans that reflect the vision of each person who looks to us for support. Staff have embraced the change and are working diligently to carry this message forward to all of our partners.

Our CEO – Claudine Cousins – is approaching two years with Empower Simcoe. Her leadership and vision have led the way in this change. The tireless pursuit of a culture that values people, respects their individual choices, and recognizes the commitment of our staff is at the heart of our organization. Claudine values the importance of community relations and embraces Empower Simcoe’s role as a leader in the sector. Always leading by example, she models the values: driven; accountable; respect; community – necessary for our success.

We continue to face challenges with the provincial government as they become knowledgeable about our sector; however, the new minister for the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services seems open to working with us to develop a collaborative working relationship for the future. The government’s backtracking on many of the funding cuts announced over the past year is an indication they are open to listening, although there is still no clear message about future funding for the Developmental Services Sector. This uncertainty leaves us in the position of hoping for the best, but planning for the worst.

Claudine, the board and our management team are exercising due diligence in this regard. Contingency planning, with varying scenarios for possible eventualities, is the outcome of this uncertain climate. We continue to work hard to influence government decisions in this regard and educate the community on these challenges. We will work with our community partners within and across sectors to send clear messages to government regarding the impact their decisions have for the people that we serve – some of the most vulnerable in our society.

Thank you to all of our staff and volunteers for the work that they do every day. In these turbulent times, they continue to be passionate and committed to the people that we serve and our belief that everyone deserves the opportunity to live a self-fulfilling life.
As I reflect on the achievements of the past year – rebranding our agency with a new name, vision, mission, and values of note; it is apparent to me that the employees, people supported, families, advocates, volunteers, and numerous partners have a great deal of pride and commitment to the work of Empower Simcoe.

This pride and commitment translated into action that drove the implementation of the revolutionary change from Simcoe Community Services to Empower Simcoe. The vision was clear that success moving forward necessitated more of a focus on the “outcomes” of our work and not on the “inputs or outputs.” We must be able to look at each person supported; each program or service being offered and be able to answer the question, “what difference is this making in the lives of the people we are serving?” And more specifically, how is this program, service or support “empowering this individual to live a meaningful and inclusive life?”

We have just begun this transformational journey. One of our priorities is to embed our brand, leading to brand recognition in our community. You may ask, why? I see it this way, as a multi-service community organization, we must continue to evolve to anticipate and respond to the changes in our community. And we are positioned to do just that. Our five-year strategic plan, now in its second year, is a dynamic plan that reflects the changes in the environment. With our three priorities: Service Excellence; Community Reach and Connections; and Capacity Building, Empower Simcoe is well on its way to empowering our community to Be. Belong. Thrive.
Empower Simcoe
Core Values:

DRIVEN
We strive to constantly move forward, while celebrating successes.

ACCOUNTABLE
We work mindfully to empower every individual’s goals.

RESPECT
We treat everyone with dignity, deserving of our full attention and commitment.

COMMUNITY
We are accepting of all people and give each a voice.
Tied into our Person Centred Excellence Work Plan, Empower Simcoe is excited to begin implementation of workplace competencies that will enhance and sustain our quality workforce; one that will continue to deliver a very high standard of service to the people and families we support.

Core Competencies are the values, traits, and behaviours that a person demonstrates in supporting people to live more inclusive and dignified lives in the community. It’s not about working harder; it’s about working better. People with highly developed core competencies exemplify the best quality of support in the sector. Ultimately, the implementation of competencies will enable Empower Simcoe to make a difference every day by enhancing the lives of the people and families we support.

Learning about Core Competencies is an exciting opportunity for all Empower Simcoe employees to develop, grow, and celebrate outstanding performance in their positions. Core Competencies will also help employees as a guide for performance management, and to help each employee thrive in their roles at Empower Simcoe.

Implementation of Core Competencies at Empower Simcoe will strengthen our foundation, validate our roles, and lead our agency to deliver the highest quality of services and supports.
Since 2007, Empower Simcoe has partnered with The Council on Quality and Leadership to measure and improve personal quality of life for the people who access our services. It is this foundation that raises the quality of service we provide above the standards outlined by Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services Quality Assurance Measurement.

For The Simcoe County Infant Development Program at Empower Simcoe, by reviewing data over several years, it became evident that supports being offered to families to connect to the community were not effective in families achieving their outcomes. Something needed to change. Through the use of data, new strategies were implemented; along with new procedures and training for staff to better serve the families they support. As illustrated in the chart to the right, by being accountable, a new best practice has had a positive impact on supports, resulting in improved outcomes for families.

Accountability allows Empower Simcoe to focus on our unique strengths and talents to facilitate opportunities for improvement. Together, we discover what is possible, dream about what could be better, and design a plan to enhance organizational performance.
Charlee has struggled with homelessness on and off since the age of 13. Now at 19, with a three year old daughter, she is actively engaging with the Empower Simcoe Regional Housing Support Services Program. Currently, she lives with and cares for her daughter and has been in stable housing for over a year. She’s also maintained a full-time job for a period of time, and most recently has returned to school through the Simcoe County Board of Education Adult Learning Centre. Her goal is to earn her high school diploma.

“Empower Simcoe has helped me go from someone who was literally sleeping on the streets, behind stores, and struggling to budget what little I had to keep myself fed; to having a two bedroom apartment, having my daughter back, plenty of food on the table, scheduling counselling sessions for my mental state and getting myself back to school so I can continue to better myself, not only for me, but for my family.”

By respecting one’s self-determination and choice, Empower Simcoe is committed to supporting individuals with dignity who are experiencing chronic homelessness. From education and advocacy to funding applications and referrals for other resources, we assist the community in meeting various housing needs.

4,670 individuals received services over the last year. 135 participants found housing in 2018-2019.
When asked what empower means to him, a big smile immediately breaks out on Logan Schram’s face. “It means I can help my community. I get to go out and it’s wonderful,” beams Logan. Whether it’s weekly Special Olympics bowling, his job at Sobeys in Angus, his annual gig as an Elvis Tribute Artist at the Collingwood Elvis Festival, or performing for veterans every Christmas, it’s easy to see that a love of community is something Logan is very proud of. With support from the Empower Simcoe Family Relief Program, Logan has connected with a new Community Helper for Active Participation that has allowed for new-found independence and more access to his community. Passport funding and entry into the Adult Protective Worker Program was successfully advocated for on Logan’s behalf this year, empowering him to do participate in his community even more.

“I try and make a difference. I really love helping my community. The whole town looks out for me too. It’s such a huge honour, and it gives me more strength to face the world on my own.”

Ladies and gentlemen, with a meaningful presence in his community, Logan has left the building.
Year one of our five-year strategic plan is completed. It’s a plan that includes three priority areas: People Receive Excellent Services, People Experience Services as an Extension of Our Community Reach and Connections, and People Experience Services as a Result of Building Our Capacities to Serve. The strategic plan has guided our operational decisions and tactics and helps to position us for a successful future.

This past year I have seen the dedicated employees of Empower Simcoe work hard to implement the goals of our strategic plans. Specifically, they have achieved success in the rebranding of our agency, as reflected in the numerous positive comments received from internal and external stakeholders. Please refer to the visual update here on those achievements to date. We continue to work with community partners to achieve our vision while ensuring the people we support receive excellent services.

I am proud of the work we have achieved to date, and recognize there is much more to accomplish. Over the next four years, we will continue to infuse innovative and evidence-based approaches in the way we operate, leading to increased efficiency and effectiveness.

The path is clear, and I look forward to the journey ahead.

Claudine Cousins, Empower Simcoe CEO
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Financial Highlights 2018-2019

How we put our funding to work

We are so grateful to our committed donors and volunteers, whose generosity helps us to Be. Belong. Thrive.

Sources of Revenue:
- Grant - MCCSS $34,717
- Grant - County of Simcoe $3,820
- Rent $2,848
- Other $3,013
Total: $44,398

Expenditures:
- Salaries, Benefits, Travel and Training - $33,709
- Occupancy $3,387
- Service Costs - $5,876
- Amortization - $1,529
Total: $44,501

Assets, Liabilities & Net Assets
- Assets $22,805
- Liabilities $9,962
- Fund Balances $12,843
Empower Simcoe supports 193 people in Group Living and 144 people through Supported Independent Living.

IMPACTFUL RESULTS: STORIES OF SUCCESS
“What makes me happy is I’ve found my partner for life in Jesse,” says Amanda. “We’re happy living life on our own. This is home.”
The Empower Simcoe EarlyON Child and Family Centres support parents and caregivers of children prenatally through 6 years of age, providing information and programs on child development, learning, parenting, community supports and referrals to specialty services. Michelle and sons Gendrix and Ishmeal are regular visitors to the EarlyON Child and Family Centre in Barrie. When Michelle had concerns about Gendrix’s speech development, Program Facilitators worked through a developmental screening with her and assisted with making referrals to get Gendrix the help he needed. Michelle says the EarlyON Child and Family Centre has been instrumental in providing parenting, developmental and community resources to her family.

“Through early intervention, the Program Facilitators have done so much for Gendrix. The supports here are unbelievable. I’m very grateful for all you do for my family and the community.”

In 2018/2019 the EarlyON Child and Family Centres and satellites were visited 58,630 times by parents, caregivers and children.
Elouise Beatty loves her new tricycle. While this determined and happy little girl isn’t walking just yet, her adaptive tricycle allows her to build gross motor skill development, endurance, and strength. According to her Mom Shelby, “Elouise is very active. We have a tough time keeping up with her, and she’s willing to try anything.” Shelby and husband Ryan know that Elouise has come a long way in just three years. Born premature at thirty-six weeks at four pounds, five ounces, Eloise stayed in the neonatal intensive care unit at Soldiers Memorial Hospital in Orillia for the first two weeks of her life. Very soon after her birth, Elouise was referred to the Simcoe County Infant and Child Development Program at Empower Simcoe. Now, Shelby cannot imagine the last three years without the Infant and Child Development Program and its essential role in Elouise’s care and growth.

“I had no idea of all the supports involved. You’ve been my eyes and ears at all of Elouise’s appointments. You’ve even helped us advocate for funding. We’re now getting assistance for an ankle-foot orthosis to help Elouise walk. The Simcoe County Infant and Child Development Program gives me peace of mind. I’m very grateful for what you’ve done for my family.”
Lloyd Janes dreams of one day driving his own Corvette Stingray, preferably in blue or black please. In 2019, through hard work and perseverance, Lloyd got one step closer to his dream ride by earning his G1 driver’s license. “Learning the written rules of the road was the hardest part,” recalled Lloyd. “I was emotional. I was in tears when I got it.” Knowing he can accomplish anything, and with the support of the Empower Simcoe Employment Supports Services Program, earning his G2 driver’s license is Lloyd’s next big goal. With two jobs on the go; one at the Barrie Kempettes Gymnastics Club, the other at a local Shopper’s Drug Mart, being able to travel independently throughout his community means everything to Lloyd. “Instead of being in the passenger seat all the time, I can now be in the driver’s seat. Life is going to be exciting.”

Buckle up, everyone. Look for Lloyd to pass you on Highway 400 in his Corvette soon.

Any minute now, Perry’s morning ride will arrive to take him to Empower Simcoe’s Community Support Services Barrie. Today, there’s an end of summer barbecue planned and Perry doesn’t want to be late to see all his friends and join in the fun. As the Barrie Accessible Community Transportation Service bus pulls up to the front of his house, Perry is quickly out the door with a smile on his face and a friendly hello for his BACTS bus driver. Perry is eager to start his day. Being able to ride the bus on his own has been a personal goal of Perry’s for many years. With his new-found independence, there’s a profound joy in Perry’s heart knowing he can travel on his own on a daily basis throughout his community to volunteer, work, take care of some shopping or run an errand. Congratulations Perry! Don’t wait for us though. We know you’ve got places to go.
Making dreams come true

For Annie and Eric St. Louis, it was love at first sight. It was at Eastview Secondary School in Barrie that Annie noticed Eric right away. “He was kind of cute. I wondered if he had a girlfriend,” recalled Annie. After dating for more than two years, Eric and his family moved away before relocating back to Barrie in 2008. Upon his return, Eric immediately reconnected with the young woman he couldn’t get out of his heart. On May 18th, 2019, sharing their love and commitment for each other in front of 80 close family members and friends at Heritage Baptist Church, Eric and Annie became husband and wife. “My dream was to walk down the aisle and marry my best friend. I’ve dreamed about that since I was a young girl,” says Annie. As a member of the Empower Simcoe Board of Directors and Self-Advocates Council, this valued and dedicated volunteer also has another dream. “I’d love to have children and be a mother,” says Annie. For Annie and Eric, finding love is proof that dreams do come true.

“It was everything I had ever imagined. My wedding day was phenomenal because I got to marry my best friend.”
A Message From Michael Hesson, President, Empower Simcoe Foundation

The Empower Simcoe Foundation has been under construction this past year as we move to develop policies and programs in line with our new mission “To raise funds to improve the quality of life for people of all abilities” and to foster an inclusive society. The work of the Foundation is directed by its mission and with the increasing need to help bridge the gap between program funding and service needs; there is no shortage of opportunities.

To leverage these opportunities, the Foundation added a Donor Relations role to its strategic arsenal to grow our planned giving and other fund development initiatives. We continue to appreciate and value the generous donations to our two signature events – our annual golf tournament and Community Champions Fashion Show – that allow us to make a difference in people’s life.

A priority for the Foundation is to partner with Empower Simcoe and our ministry partner based on our mission, to develop and fund a designated treatment program that will support our community in ensuring those with multiple complex and forensic needs receive treatment outside of a hospital.

Thank you to all our donors, volunteers, community partners, and Empower Simcoe staff for caring and helping to respond to community needs through collaborative fundraising.

Foundation Financial Highlights 2018-2019

Assets, Liabilities & Net Assets
Assets - $1,437,448
Liabilities - $536,098
Fund Balances - $901,350

Sources of Revenue:
Fundraising Events - $68,281
Donations - $26,883
Other Fundraised Funds - $227,486
Rental - $153,788
Other Misc. Revenue - $178,724
Total: $655,162

Expenditures:
Contribution to Empower Simcoe - $93,717
Fundraising Expenses - $28,345
Administrative - $52,731
Other - $59,309
Total: $234,102
Assets - $1,437,448
Liabilities - $536,098
Fund Balances - $901,350

10% Fundraising Events
27% Other Misc. Revenue
23% Rental
4% Donations
35% Other Fundraised Funds
25% Other
23% Administrative
12% Fundraising Expenses

40% Contribution to Empower Simcoe
27% Revenue
10% Fundraising Events
4% Donations
35% Other Fundraised Funds
23% Rental
25% Other
23% Administrative

Our Donors and Sponsors

Legacy Gifts
The Empower Simcoe Foundation would like to honour long-time board member and supporter Yvonne Young for her generous legacy gift received in 2018.

Consider Your Legacy
By leaving a bequest in your will, making a gift of life insurance or designating Empower Simcoe Foundation as a beneficiary of your RRSP, RRIF or TFSA, you can help empower Simcoe County residents to lead a meaningful and inclusive life for generations to come.

For more information, contact Donor Relations Coordinator, Doug Cleverley, at (705) 726-9082 ext. 2285, or dcleverley@empowersimcoe.ca.
Barb Burns - Community Support Services – 35 years
Fernando Bertucci – Community Support Services – 35 years
Dave Montgomery – Community Support Services – 30 years
Kristi Pitkin – Community Support Services – 30 years
Paul Windross – Community Support Services – 30 years
Kathy Lemon – Accommodations – 30 years
MaryAnn Coish – Accommodations – 30 years
Kim Martin – Supports and Services Manager – 25 years
Diane Uram – Community Support Services – 25 years
Donna Deger – Community Support Services – 25 years
Stephanie Mole – Accommodations – 25 years
Carrie Nadeau – Accommodations – 25 years
Patti Radford – Preschool – 25 years
Melanie Enwright – Preschool – 25 years
Carrie Nixon – Family Services – 20 years
Claire Lavigne – Community Support Services – 20 years
Kelly Balkwill – Community Support Services – 20 years
Jamie Ellis – Family Services – 20 years
Christine Palmer – Accommodations – 20 years
Beverly York – Accommodations – 20 years
Lisa Wright – Community Support Services – 20 years
Rhonda Vanata – Accommodations – 20 years
Sharon Moir – Accommodations – 20 years
James Cousineau – Accommodations – 15 years
Pamela MacDonald – Accommodations – 15 years
Michele Kapteyn – Supports and Services Manager – 15 years
Kerrie-Sue Christie – Accommodations – 15 years
Kari Nesbitt – Accommodations – 15 years
Kim Tiffin – Accommodations – 15 years
Miranda Mitchell – Accommodations – 15 years
Lynda Goya – Accommodations – 15 years
Debbie Murphy-Preston – Accommodations – 15 years

For giving selflessly to improve the quality of life for people supported by Empower Simcoe, the 2018 Gift of the Heart recipients: (left to right) Deb Morrow, David H. Warren of Eastview Legal Services, Graeme Thomas, Jenny LeCollier, Kevin DesRoches, and Arner and Nancy Armstrong.