

President's Message

by Bob Moroz, RTT
President, MAHCP

With the end of summer approaching, I was hoping to have an inspirational message for you. With that in mind, I would like to tell you about a group of members that we have been working with over the summer.

In late June of this year, I was made aware of the intention of the Society for Manitobans with Disabilities to lay off a number of their professional staff. Included on that list were Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists and Speech-Language Pathologists. After speaking with Gary Nelson, the Labour Relations Officer for SMD we arranged a meeting with all of the members from that facility. My expectation was that I would be hearing how awful and unjust it was for them to be losing their jobs, certainly a natural reaction.

What I heard from them couldn't have been further from my assumption. Every single one of them, including those who were on the list to be laid off, had as their first thought: "What is going to happen to my kids?" Those of you who work with children, especially pre-school age, will know that early intervention is absolutely critical during the most important years in human development. These members are terrified. The crisis that is facing those who are about to have their employment ended or interrupted is obvious. In the face of that, the concerns that I heard from them was that more children than ever will enter school without ever having had the benefit of their interventions. How can we let that happen?

What about those who remain employed? Do you think they complained about the increased caseload that was coming their way? You guessed it. They are quite literally devastated that they will not be able to get to all of the children and families that so desperately need their unique skills.

We were able to arrange an urgent meeting with officials from the Ministry of Family Services and in attendance were 3 members from SMD, one from each of the professions affected. I literally sat in awe of these professionals as they spoke. They painted a passionate, sincere and highly intelligent case about how all of this will affect the children who need them.

It is said that true character shows most clearly in a time of crisis. This is a crisis situation and I want to thank those members at SMD for showing me what their true character is all about. I wanted to share this story with you so we can all see what true caring and professionalism looks like.

I hope that by the time you are reading this article, that a solution has been found. We continue to publicly pressure the employer and government to correct this outrageous error in judgment.



Bob Moroz, President