



2020/21 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

ANNUAL REPORT

Report from the Executive Director Chris Baginski-Hansen

The 2020/21 fiscal year ended much the same way it started, in a provincial lockdown. When the COVID -19 pandemic was first declared in March 2020, I did not think that a year later we would be living in yet another lockdown and experiencing a third wave of the virus. The doors of all Second Chance offices have remained locked for over a year, as when we could have clients in, we could only do so by appointment with very limited numbers after a Covid screening was completed. We supported our clients by offering all of our services virtually, and very quickly made sure we used technology as a tool for connecting with people, listening, providing referrals and resources, giving job leads, writing resumes and coaching people on how to succeed in job interviews whether they are virtual or in person while wearing a mask and maintaining a safe physical distance.

Staff were able to take advantage of many training opportunities at this time, many for free, that included; accessing government supports, mental health and well-being, labour law, technology supports, workplace safety, youth engagement. Staff also actively continued with community based committees such as; Youth Service Providers, Poverty Task Force, Employment Co-ordination Committee and even held the annual Employer Recognition Event virtually. The one advantage of virtual meetings is the elimination of travel time which for many committees increased participation initially. As time went on and with more and more virtual meetings, "ZOOM" fatigue did set in.



The unemployment rate for Guelph was at a high of 15.5% in June 2020, dipped to 5.3 % in December and rose again to 9.1% in March. With each lockdown came the closure of certain business sectors as well as schools closing to in-person learning. This led to families having to adjust to reduced incomes, home schooling and no outside social connections.

Some Programme Updates

The ways2work programme signed a three year contract in October 2020, to support 125 youth with group based employment supports and a job placement. This is the first 3 year contract for this programme and will make a significant difference in the lives of many of our youth.

The Youth Job Connection and Youth Job Connection Summer programmes again partnered with the Upper Grand District School Board for the Summer Co-op in the Trades programme. Initially the programme was not going to include the work placement component, but the Ministry of Education approved co-ops and very quickly placements were found for 18 of the 22 youth in the programme. Even more optimistic was that 14 of the 18 youth were either employed or in school three months after completing the programme.

The Board of Directors approved funding for a monthly case consultation process for each employment team for 2020/21. Each team meets monthly with a local therapist to discuss complex cases, develop support plans and referrals and is an opportunity for each staff person to learn and develop new skills that are so needed when supporting people without the benefit of a face-to-face connection. With so many of our clients experiencing isolation, job loss and an increase in mental health issues, this has been an amazing opportunity for collaboration, support and learning.

The Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development announced a number of significant changes to its Second Career programme in January, with more changes to come in 2021/22. Most noted is the change to only funding programmes that are a maximum of 52 weeks and the development of different application processes for different streams such as; fast tracking applicants most affected by the pandemic and applicants laid off from the manufacturing sector.

Supporting our Business Community

The Federal government announced the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) programme for businesses in 2020, to help businesses keep and return workers to payroll, by providing a wage subsidy of 75%, for businesses that saw a drop in revenue during the pandemic. For businesses that qualified and received CEWS funding, they did not qualify to receive the wage subsidies and incentives that our programmes offered. The result was a significant reduction in the amount of employer grants we were able to provide. This was an issue across the province and all funders were well aware that we were not going to be able to fully utilize these funds. The CEWS programme is expected to end September 2021.

The following shows the change in employer grants from the 2019/20 fiscal year:

Employment Ontario Employment Service (ES) Employer Incentive Budget: \$113 810
Incentives Paid 2019/20: \$81 824 Incentives Paid 2020/21: \$65 697

Employment Ontario ES Fergus Employer Incentive Budget: \$41 420
Incentives Paid 2019/20: \$39 488 Incentives Paid 2020/21: \$20 386

Ways2work Subsidized Placements:
Subsidies Paid 2019/20: \$94 443 Subsidies Paid 2020/21: \$36 318

Youth Job Connection Subsidized Placements:
Incentives Paid 2019/20: \$72 224 Incentives Paid 2020/21: \$63 714

Youth Job Connection Summer Subsidized Placements:
Incentives Paid 2019/20: \$34 426 Incentives Paid 2020/21: \$12 228

In total, for Guelph and Wellington County, 2nd Chance was able to provide \$198 343 to support 131 placements in 2020/21 compared to 201 placements and \$322 405 in financial supports in 2019/20.

Canada Ontario Jobs Grant - \$207 059 in training contributions provided compared to \$291 964 in 2019/20.

Job Postings

- Guelph – 105
- Fergus – 85

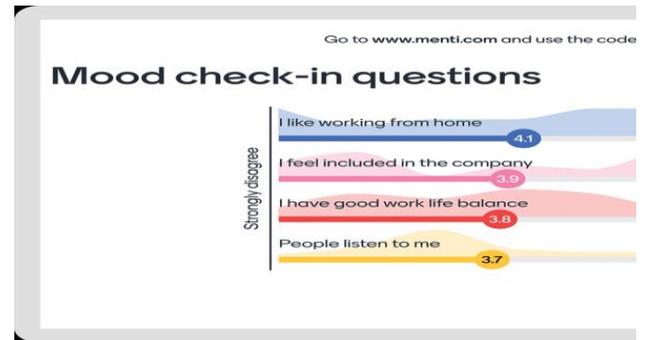
Fergus and Wellington County

Michelle Dally, Programme Manager

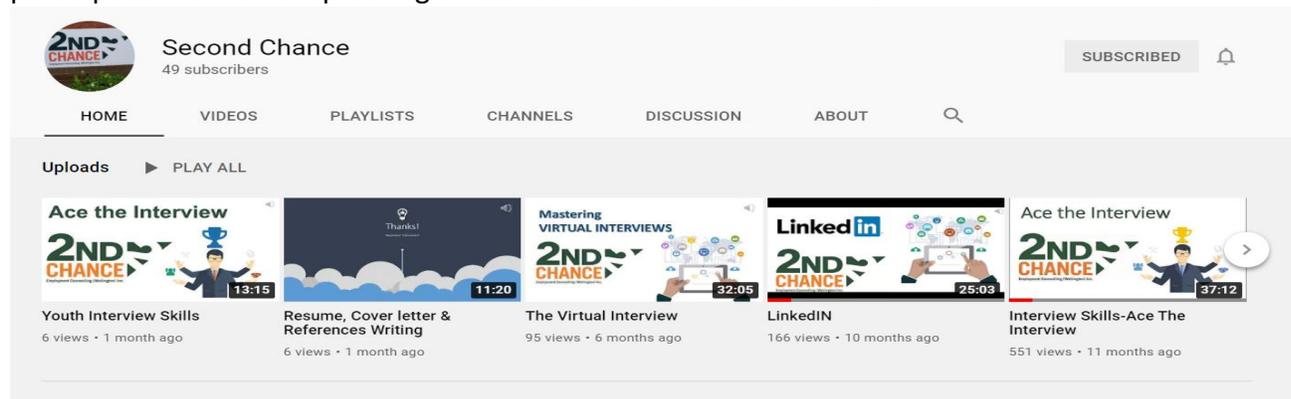
It's hard to believe that we are still not able to provide services in person; and, as lockdown continues we've had to accept that in person services won't likely be happening anytime soon. With this realization we quickly began to transform services from in person to online and virtual. Although the transition hasn't always been easy we have learned how to successfully use new technology to meet the needs of our community. Thanks to the hard work, creativity and dedication of staff the below are just a few of the new things we have designed and accomplished:



Interactive workshops using a program called Mentimeter which allows the facilitator to ask a question and display the participant's answers on the screen. Based on the answers, the facilitator can tailor the discussion resulting in a more relevant and meaningful conversation with the participants. Students and youth, in particular, really enjoy this new format!



2nd Chance You Tube Channel featuring employment related workshops designed and pre-recorded by staff. Online workshops allow participants to watch the content when they want and where they want. This has been especially helpful for parents who found it difficult to participate in a workshop during office hours with children at home.



ZOOM workshops and one to one meetings for job seekers, students and youth group participants. Staff have learned how to use extra Zoom features such as polls, break out rooms, screen share and surveys to encourage participation and feedback. We now deliver LinkedIn, Job Seekers Network, Job Search, Interview and 2nd Career workshops on a monthly basis. Being able to hear and see others via Zoom is the next best thing to in person interaction!

The ability to **control a client's computer** (with their permission) via the software called AnyDesk. Imagine being on your computer at home and a staff member being able to control your mouse/cursor from the office. This is extremely helpful for clients who lack computer skills and has allowed clients to get the support they need without coming to the office.



Guelph

Jenni Brooks, Programme Manager

This year I have been asked to share with you a picture of how the work we do impacts our clients and the Guelph Wellington community. I decided that the best way to do that was to share some client success stories and feedback. This past year has been a difficult one for the people we work with and for a lot of our client's success looked very different. For counsellors the same could be said in that all of our services had to change in the way that we delivered them to the community. Lots of lessons have been learned and much like the world in general everything happens much slower. Sometimes slower is better, people have time to consider their options and make sound decisions for their future, have opportunities for retraining etc., For some the problems are more urgent and require immediate interventions and we have done our very best to support clients with the resources and community services we have and to the best of our ability. There have also been some good practices developed and new programming and technology discovered, tools and services we will continue using long after this pandemic resolves itself. Staff at 2nd Chance, with the support of the board, were able to find creative solutions for delivering client service and making sure people were getting their basic needs met, through community referrals, directing them to financial support, addressing food insecurities, mental health support and so much more. The needs of clients were more complex and the anxiety and fear about working and being exposed to the virus were real stressors for so many. We have strived to connect with the community, to listen and to help.

I want to take an opportunity here to share some of the great work that happened in our programs this year and some of the feedback we have received from clients...

We have been able to assist our youth with supports to help them secure and maintain employment, in one case the client was sharing a laptop with their partner, as they were both without work, due to COVID, and struggling financially. In order to do the youth group and job search, attend interviews etc., you need reliable technology and access. Using the program supports the client was set up with a new Chrome Book laptop, a cellphone and phone plan. The participant had not owned a phone in over 5 years and was so grateful for the supports. The participant was able to use their new technology to complete the program and successfully found employment.

The ways2work program was able to support a young person who had recently started their addiction recovery. The youth was attending daily appointments for Methadone and was hopeful to join the program to work towards employment and a brighter future, with the support of the program and all their hard work they successfully completed the programme while continuing to attend their daily appointments for methadone. The client completed the 6 weeks of Employment Skills Training and found a manufacturing position in line with their job goals.

We have a client who has a past criminal record and came to the agency as he wanted to do Second Career for AZ truck driving. He said now that he's 50, he feels he needs to change his career as welding is physical and has taken a toll on his body. As part of the application process, both the staff and a rep from a local AZ driver training institution said that he would need an offer of acceptance from an employer who was aware of his criminal record and would hire him to do driving within Canada. The client was able to do this and called the counsellor and was literally choked up stating he had been approved for 2nd Career retraining and that he thanked the counsellor for being such a beautiful human who didn't judge him about his criminal record. He told the counsellor he hopes they know how life changing this will be for him and said he has the tears to prove it.

We received this feedback from a client who had just completed a 2 year program partially in the pandemic, he is married with 2 children and wanted to make a positive change for him and his family by working in environmental studies and making a positive change in the world for his children to grow up in. Below is his update to us upon finishing his 2nd Career training.

"I want to inform you that I have completed my course requirements for the Ecosystem Management Technician program and I was successful in maintaining my 4.0 GPA, and I am especially proud of making my goal to secure employment right out of school. I started a full-time contract position with Conservation in the role of Coordinator Outreach, delivering the Community Tree Project, which is part of a climate change adaptation initiative funded by the Federal government. I feel that the position is a good bridge between my previous career in

environmental advocacy and my new career path to help build green infrastructure for climate resilient communities. I am working with an excellent team that I can work well with and learn from, and with an organization that was at the top of my favourites list. I am hopeful that I can convert my contract position into a permanent one.

I am grateful to you and your team for helping me identify a pathway and in preparing the Second Career funding, including the additional living away from home allowance which enabled me to attend the limited on-campus activities and to perform a PT role at Fleming as a course technician (teaching assistant). While the past 61 weeks of the pandemic have been challenging I have been lucky to have had the SC support which removed a financial burden that would have otherwise kept me from completing my return to school. Thank you.”

In addition, here is some candid feedback on what clients like about the service at 2nd Chance....

“What I like most was the individual service and for that I was very grateful! I had not had to look for work for about 25 years and was a little anxious and in need of guidance and support. I felt that the individual, their specific circumstances, including their interests and abilities were taken into consideration when given counselling. I felt the counsellor was knowledgeable and resourceful and I was confident when getting their help.”

“The kindness, the help, you were so polite. Really appreciate the new resume and it worked! Everything you gave me I appreciate and hope to give back to someone.”

“Personal connections with any of the folks I worked with. I feel like they were looking out for MY best interest. Very helpful workshops as well....and one on one conversations and support.”

“Keep on encouraging people not to give up, keep being awesome and continue doing an amazing job.”

“I have gone to other employment agencies in other cities but what I appreciated the most from 2nd Chance was the non-judgemental feeling I got. It felt like you wanted to be there, to help others become better.”

“The way they greet the people is the first thing that gave me a relief in this new country for me. The services they provide and the way they interact is very reassuring, and they tried to provide me every kind of information they can.”

“How friendly and inclusive all the staff were.”

We as an agency deliver these services under the leadership of our Board of Directors and their wealth of knowledge, skills and support. The staff are so grateful of the time and commitment you contribute to us and the Guelph Wellington community.



Finally.....

The year challenged all organizations, not just because of the pandemic, but organizations were also challenged to look at their systems and values and address systemic racist processes. The entire organization, board and staff, started working with a local trainer, Kevin Sutton, on A Supportive Approach to Anti-Oppression and Community Resilience. The training, all done over ZOOM, over 10 hours has already sparked a great deal of discussion around how we want our services to be safe and inclusive for everyone and how do we as individuals and as an organization listen, change and grow.

To say the year has been very difficult doesn't begin to describe the past year. For people who have lost jobs, businesses, suffered physically and mentally, the challenges have been overwhelming and the recovery from an economic and health perspective will be a long process for all.

2020/21 Programmes

- Employment Ontario Employment Service Guelph and Wellington County
- Employment Ontario Employment Service Fergus
- Youth Job Connection
- Youth Job Connection Summer
- Canada Ontario Jobs Grant
- ACE
- Ways2work

Thanks to our Funders

Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development
Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
Government of Canada



A Very Big Thanks to Our 2020/21 Board of Directors

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