

Excel Society Impact Statement

Our communities evolved as a way to balance the strengths and weaknesses of groups of people. As an active not-for-profit organization the Excel Society provides residential, life skills, recreation/leisure, employment training and placement services to approximately 500 individuals with various disabilities who live in our community.

Excel's clients may have a diagnosis of developmental and physical disabilities, schizophrenia, fetal alcohol syndrome, dementia, diabetes, bi-polar disorder, HIV, brain injury, or be deaf/hard of hearing. Many clients have a dual diagnosis of two or more disorders including physical health issues. An increasing number of clients have complex needs exhibiting severe behaviour issues.

Beyond their disabilities however, clients want to contribute, they want to have productive lives, and they deserve respect and support to accomplish their dreams.

To provide that support, Excel requires a staff of 350 – 400 people. Constant recruitment is necessary to meet staffing requirements and to fill vacancies. Presently, Excel has 51 permanent part time and full time contracts to fill as well as ongoing relief positions. These positions are becoming impossible to recruit to as the economy explodes around us.

Staff often come to Excel with little or no training. To ensure quality care, training is provided through the Excel Academy, a private vocational school licensed through Alberta Advanced Education. Excel spends approximately \$200,000 per year for training and must fund raise to compensate for the cost. Staff cover a portion of the course costs but find it difficult based on wages received and the high cost of living in Alberta. Another challenge is to find relief staff to cover for regular staff participating in training.

Edmonton Persons with Developmental Disabilities Community Board reduced funding to Excel Society by 3.4% (\$196,000.00) in 2006. The result was the need to cut three management positions and reduce spending in the homes and program sites. This has increased Excel's challenge to meet its vision of Enriching Lives by Enabling Potential.

You can help Excel Society get the message to the decision makers in government about the need for improved wages for staff supporting people with disabilities. Our staff are committed and dedicated individuals serving a vulnerable population with little recognition and we believe with your help we can shine a stronger light on the need to improve this area of our community.