

Envision discussed achievements and challenges during its AGM

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Envision Counselling and Support Centre held its annual general meeting virtually on June 18.

Envision Counselling and Support Centre's virtual annual general meeting on June 18 was attended by over 40 people, including staff, board members and guests.

The main highlights of the year were discussed during the meeting.

"The past year has been a very busy one for all of the staff at Envision Counselling and Support Centre," said the organization's executive director Christa Daku.

Some of the bigger events included the silver anniversary celebration, the start-up of a walk-in clinic and Rural Outreach Awareness Measures (ROAM) announcements in 2019. Envision also held a 50/50 for a Cause fundraiser in early 2020, raising over \$40,000 for the organization.

Daku made a brief overview of the 2019-20 statistics.

"As reflected in the AGM statistics, all areas of our programming, ranging from the prevention education to our front-line counselling and family support services, we continue to serve more individuals and families as the years pass. This is a

direct reflection of the needs in our communities. The support we continue to receive from our funding bodies, sponsorships and ongoing community donors continue to make our services viable and sustainable."

She pointed out the expansion of walk-in counselling was well received in Estevan, Weyburn and Oxbow.

"This is a one of a kind program, which allows accessibility to all individuals who may be experiencing difficulty in their lives. With no program mandate restrictions and no waiting list for services, the program is accessible on an immediate basis," Daku said.

Employee assistance program/fee for service counselling services were also implemented in Estevan and Weyburn this past year. The program continues to grow and expand as individuals and couples seek support from Envision, who typically would have to wait for services in their funded programs or don't meet the criteria needed to enter one of their core community programs.

"As an agency, Envision continues to strive to fill gaps in service and meet the needs of our communities by exploring gaps in southeast Saskatchewan. It is our vision that all individuals have the ability and the skills to thrive in a healthy environment. From prevention to intensive counselling and support, each program mandate strives to meet the outcome of improving interpersonal relationships," Daku said.

For the past three years, community awareness about the support available for individuals and families who may need it has been a strategic goal for Envision. They also continued to focus on resource development to ensure the capability for growth and sustainable support for existing programs.

“Ongoing funding proposals, sponsorships and donor engagement are the strategies that allow and enhance growth within a non-profit organization,” said Daku.

During the AGM, Daku also talked about Envision’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“COVID-19 presented challenges as well as opportunities for our organization as we closed out the fiscal year,” she said.

Even though Envision wasn’t mandated to close, they decided to take that step to protect their employees and the community. They continued to operate through other means available, implementing the health authority’s guidelines since the beginning of the pandemic throughout the reopening.

“What could be perceived as a defeat or serious roadblock in the human service industry, has also encouraged new ways of service delivery in all areas of our programming. Ranging from the way we do business to provide public awareness, to office support, to front line counselling and family support, all areas of our programming have maintained effectiveness with the utilization of technology. Envision has a mission of providing innovative programming and the additional avenue of technology has unlimited possibilities as we continue to forge ahead,” said Daku.

Chairperson Brian Pilloud pointed out that throughout the last few months, Daku and assistant executive director Lynda Rideout provided great communication to the board, allowing them to act on facts derived from known sources including the Saskatchewan Health Authority.

While their programs keep going, Envision offices remain closed to the public and for now, they continue to serve individuals by appointments only.

As part of the meeting, MNP partner Ashley Rushton guided the participants through Envision’s financial statements for the 2019-20 year. While there were some changes in particular revenues, the total revenue was almost on par with the last year, with a slight decrease, while expenses, which also stayed pretty comparable, saw an increase,

which according to Rushton mainly was due to when different events played out.

It was also pointed out during the financial report that “at this time, it is unknown the extent of the impact the COVID-19 outbreak may have on the organization as this will depend on future developments that are highly uncertain and that cannot be predicted with confidence.”

Several representatives of funding agencies also participated in the meeting including the United Way Estevan.

“We are very grateful to have Envision in the Estevan area and the work that they are performing during these unprecedented times,” said United Way Estevan president Melanie Graham.

Daku thanked the funding agencies including the United Ways of Estevan and Regina, Ministry of Integrated Justice, Ministry of Social Services, Justice Canada and the Ministry of Health. She also extended her gratitude to the Envision board and staff.

As part of the meeting three board members, including Tana Cugnet, Ann Favreau and Bill Holliday, were re-elected for a two-year term. Sheila Szakacs from the Kipling area was voted a new board member. Cugnet was voted the incoming chairperson, while Favreau was voted a vice-chair and treasurer and Lana Perrault was voted as secretary.

The AGM marked the end of the six-year term for Garth Mryglod of Carlyle/Kenosee Lake. Angela Burgess has left the board due to other obligations.