

Welcome and thank you for coming tonight, whether you are a parent, caregiver, staff member or volunteer. I am happy to report on the highlights of the 2024-25 year, and even more excited to think about our next Annual General Meeting, which will celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> year of the organization, when Joan Keeler, a nurse who was newly graduated from an additional Rehabilitation diploma program at Mount Royal College, had the inspiration to start the agency.

You will notice that George Roberts, who sadly recently passed away, is no longer at our Board table having served since 2003/4. We will be honouring him, and his relationship with Springboard that goes back to 1992, at the end of the meeting, when we dedicate the Board room to him. We all miss him.

I have been fortunate to attend a number of events at Springboard this year, from the annual awards ceremony to a lovely BBQ just a month ago. They are all shining examples of the remarkable culture that exists here. The number of long service employees, our positive annual Employment survey and our generally low staff and client turnover rate all speak loudly for the quality of the people and the work. As a long-time educator, another signpost I use is watching the clients get off the bus. I used to have 25 school buses at my door, watching here is much easier, but it looks just the same, clients happy to see their friends, the staff, and to start the day's activities. This fall was also the time to review the work of our CEO, and it will be no surprise that staff and parents are very happy with his work, and believe good things are happening, which in turn makes the Board very happy.

We once again had great community support for our casino, and more than \$80 000 will go towards a much-needed replacement vehicle and allow us to maintain and grow our community outings for clients. Romeo and the leadership team made a strong case with PDD for funding a site expansion, but such was not granted. Given their new method for enrolling new clients, this turned out to be an unanticipated good thing, and we continue to have no problem filling our currently available spaces.

The Board and Management met in October to review our 5-year Strategic Plan which is current through 2028. We will continue to ensure SBC is sustainable and the programming continuously evolving based on best practice. In particular, I am proud of the music and art programs, which are also available to those who do not attend the day program. As part of a research project I am working on, I have come to understand how valuable both these areas are to everyone, and especially those with any issues with memory or cognition. And, it is very fun to watch the band play, and the clients sing and dance, all with big smiles on their faces and joy spreading to the audience.

The Board is happy to support ongoing staff development and is in the continuous process of reviewing our policies, to ensure they meet the current and future needs of the organization. We will be very sorry to lose Dr. Ken Taub from the Board, who will be moving further into the long process of retirement. He has been a valued member since 2006, and has brought wisdom, and important probing questions to all of our meetings. Please, let's give him a round of applause for his many years of service.

We are currently looking for additional Board members, particularly another parent, so if anyone in the audience today is interested or knows someone who might be, please let us know. It's a lovely group, and a great organization to be part of and I thank them for their ongoing support.