

Proposal and business plan for:

**Social Integration Drop-in
Centre for Disabled Persons
Living in Low-income**

Written and submitted by:

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To:

Date:

Executive Summary

I am proposing for this drop-in centre will run as a non profit organization, and to provide much needed programs and services for low-income persons with all types of disabilities. This drop-in centre will also serve as an unstructured social program; structured programs are not in the best interest of all persons with disabilities. The current unstructured drop-in centres/social clubs we do have in Halifax Regional Municipality are social clubs provide services which only mental health consumers can access. From my own experiences of being a person with a disability myself, and knowing other persons with other types of disabilities, I find that persons with all types of disabilities also find themselves socially isolated, especially those living in poverty. How this drop-in centre will work, is that it will be a place open from Monday to Friday during regular business hours. The drop-in centre will be there to serve low-income persons with disabilities with the following purposes:

#1 - For the clients of this drop-in centre to have social opportunity in their lives. This opportunity is important to keep low-income persons with disabilities from being socially isolated.

#2 - For the clients to have the opportunity to have structure in their day to day lives by being able to access the services offered by this drop-in centre. This opportunity will help the clients be able to set goals in two different areas, work related and self improvement related opportunities.

I plan to apply for provincial Government funding to operate the drop-in centre. I am proposing for this drop-in to provide activities for the clients to have structure in their day, and workshops on education/life skills related topics. Also available at the centre for the clients, I am proposing for a free tea/coffee provided, and lunch program to be offered. I have one main consultant which I use for all my business ideas who is Archie Gillis at the Entrepreneurs Disabilities Network. There is going to be a wide range of services and programs offered to clients as part of this drop-in centre in the areas of employment/work related activities, self improvement related and social activities. The reason for offering all the different services and programs is because each client's goals of them wanting to access the services and programs of this drop-in centre could be different. Some may want to achieve something by coming to the drop-in centre, while other clients may want to use it for just a place to socialise. The drop-in centre will have to be located in a central location with access to major Metro Transit bus routes. As you read through this proposal, you will also come across ideas of things that need to be done here in Nova Scotia to help persons with disabilities that are living in poverty.

Where the idea came from

Over the range of the past 10 to 15 years of my life I had been involved with many organizations which provide programs and services for persons with disabilities of all types. Through my involvement with these organizations, I have gained knowledge of the exciting social clubs for mental health consumers. Also during that same period I have gained knowledge of other programs; and services which provides services for persons with disabilities. However some of the exciting programs and services have either only one main focus of what they do for helping their clients or specific criteria for membership to become a client. For example: there are social clubs including Caring and Sharing, the Among Friends, Connections Club House and New Begging's provide social opportunity for mental health consumers only. The problem is, in order to be a client of Connections Club House and New Begging's, the person has to have a referral from either their psychiatrist, or other mental health professional. The referring mental health professional has to say that in their professional opinion the person which they are referring has to have an access#1 mental health diagnoses. This is what is required in order for the referral to be approved by the program coordinators. (See part 3.5 of business plan)

I personally know people with work-limiting disabilities who tried getting into accessing the services of these social clubs, and their referrals got turned down by the directors of these social clubs because of their referring mental health professionals were not able to make access#1 diagnoses. I have had the opportunity to tour these places, and I was pretty impressed with what I had seen and at the same wishing that persons with other types of disabilities could access these social clubs. The problem is that these social clubs only provides services and social opportunity to people who can prove to be mental health consumers. From my experiences of knowing these current programs and services for persons with disabilities, plus from my experiences of being a part of the disability community, I find that there is a real need for persons with all types of disabilities to have those same social opportunities as the mental health consumers have access to.

There is a strong need for this business/organization because:

I believe that when an individual approaches government for assistance, we should be sitting down with them and building a relationship with that person. Key questions need to be asked such as:

Note: The fallowing will provide a rundown on questions of concerns about different income assistance clients. The fallowing are general concepts of what we need to consider for help in day to day living needs, and for placing the clients into social programs where they need to be.

- A] What education level has the income assistance client completed?
- b] Dose the income assistance client know how to budget?
- c] What really brought the client here?
- d] Is their skills you have that may help the client become employed?
- e] Dose the client know how to shop for healthy food?
- f] Dose the client know how to cook?

Then the next thing we need to look at is how we help achieve a next step for the income in assistance client. Well I think a centre like the one which I am proposing in this business plan will help.

My point here is that if we build that relationship, put people on a path and tell them that you are going to help them make the calls, you are going to follow up with them and then in 3 months you are here, 6 months, 9 months here and then you won't need me, we put a plan together for that individual and we provide them with the tools they need to move forward in and a progressive way that sees them no longer relying on the system in short time. It is believed that 20% of people living all-over Nova Scotia are persons with disabilities of all types. At least 50% of this overall disability population in Nova Scotia live in poverty, and need opportunity to improve their quality of life. Some persons with disabilities feel socially isolated because of their current quality of life. A good portion of Nova Scotia's person's with disability population live within Halifax Regional Municipality. We do have current drop-in centres and social clubs within Halifax Regional Municipality for low-income persons with all kinds of disabilities; currently, the focus is to provide services and social opportunity for mental health consumers. What about social opportunity for low-income persons with other types of disabilities? There are programs for persons with other disabilities, which serve as structured programs. Their main focus, however, is on training and employment, and their main focus does not include social inclusion for persons with disabilities; certain programs that serve mental health consumers being the exception. (See parts 3.2, SWOT are Analysis Summary and 3.5. Competition) There are persons with other types of disabilities who need those same programs and services, but they are currently not provided. The proposed drop in centre will be set up as a positive place which will make persons with all types of disabilities feel happy, comfortable, and provide a way to make them feel like they are active in the community. This will be made possible by the clients being able to access a range of different programs and services at this one stop drop-in centre.

Programs and services offered by the drop-in centre I am proposing will include:

#1 – Workshops on community, education, and employment related topics.

A lot of persons with disabilities of all types are confused about how to handle important life skills. Some do not have any training employment related dreams and/or goals, while others are confused about what they want to do with their lives. Some of the clients may not get outside their residents; much and these clients may be interested in wanting to get to know their community better.

#2 – A life skills training program.

From my experiences of knowing all kinds of persons with different types of disabilities, I find there is a great need for this program. This is needed especially for the persons whose disability is a developmental problem, and for persons having learning disabilities. Some persons with disabilities, more than others have difficulty understanding life skills.

#3 – an art studio for the client to do art work.

I know that Veith Street Gallery Studio Association already offers this for members of the Creative Sprit East. However their open studio space for artists to do their work is very limited. I find that membership at Creative Sprit East is increasing, so maybe forming a partnership with the Veith Street Gallery Studio Association could be possible to take on the overflow in membership at Creative Sprit East. Perhaps the space at this drop-in centre could be used to accommodate for the over-flow of their membership. Also as a part of this program maybe photo, music, and computer which these types of art are not curenially offered by Veith Street Gallery Studio Association.

#4 – A rewards program for the clients.

This program is needed because persons with disabilities who are at great risk of living in poverty for the rest of their lives. Some persons with disabilities are interested in entering or re-entering the work force while others are not able to. Some persons with disabilities might need something that Income Asstiance will not pay for. Also in some cases, their income assistance case workers will not include the telephone allowance in their budgets without a note for their doctor saying they need it for medical reasons. This makes it very hard for those IA clients to get a job, for those IA clients who have a goal to enter or renter the workforce, and many persons with disabilities are IA clients. Therefore the opportunity for them to get rewarded for doing volunteer work around the centre, and to gain work experience will be provided as a program/service of this centre. Having work related responsibility in their life will be good for them, and for those who are not interested in entering the workforce, this may make them think about getting a job the second time around. This program will give the clients an opportunity to do things to help out with the upkeep of the Drop-in centre. This is also something that Connections Club House and New Begging's offers to their clients. However at Connections and New Begging's the client's neither gets paid for their time, and there is no official rewards system offered for the work done. At this drop-in centre there will be an official rewards system offered for those clients who choose to volunteer. The work could include anything from cleaning up and doing maintenance work around the drop-in centre, through to helping to get lunch ready for the clients who will be using the lunch program. However I would not want the clients to treat this rewards program as full time employment, however it will provide opportunity for training. Clients participating in the rewards program will not be a requirement for them to access the drop-in centre. However if they choose to participate, this program will give them a chance to gain work experience, and earn a reward. **(See Appendix B for more information and a full description on how this program will work)**

#5 - A computer lab and resource room

This program is needed as part of the resource room, because some of the clients could be looking for employment and for those clients we could have a bulletin board available to post things such as job listings. Others could be looking to get out to events taking place in the community, for those clients,

why not post events taking place in the community. Some clients may be interested in using the internet to look for employment, while others may need to use the internet from time to time for various reasons. Teamwork cooperative already offers this service, however they offer this on a serious level where you have to be either job searching, writing your resume, or other employment related activities. These computers at the drop-in centre can be used for anything. Also provided by the resource will be a phone answering for clients who sourisly are looking for work who's income asstiance case workers will not cover them for phones.

Note – With the service which I had talked about in program#1 and service#5 combined, maybe guest speakers from teamwork cooperative could come in from time to time to talk to the clients about the services that teamwork has to offer.

#6 – A section of the drop-in centre offered for members of the Entrepreneurs Disabilities Network to hold meetings, networking events, to use for office space, ECT.

This would be an ideal part of what the drop-in centre could offer. Members of this organization are actually persons with disabilities who own their own business. However a lot of these members cannot get out to networking events, cannot afford office space for their business, and they are living on a low income. For some members of this organization, the member has their own business, are on Income Assistance and the money they make from their business could supplant their income they get from income asstiance. Maybe having this space offered by the drop-in centre will help other clients think about entrepreneurship as an option for their work related goal.

#7 – Onsite counselling program for clients who are looking for counselling about problems and issues they could be facing or if they just need someone to talk to.

This is needed because from my experience of knowing persons with disabilities and being a person with a disability myself, sometimes the clients may have problems which they do not want to talk to the other clients, friends, or even family members, etc. about. These same clients who would access this program may not have an outside counsellor to talk to. Clients will have the option of either setting up one on one session, or group sessions with the on-site counsellors.

#8 – A free lunch and coffee shop program for the clients.

This is needed as part of the drop-in because a lot of clients who will use this program are on low incomes. Due to the fact that they are living on low incomes and a lot of them cannot work at either full time or part time paid employment due to their disability means they cannot afford to do a lot of social activity. Having this program will provide the clients to be able to sit down with and have lunch or a coffee or tea with their friends. Being a registered client of the centre will be a requirement.

Appendix A

1. Business Objectives and Goals:

I plan to provide a drop-in centre for the benefit of all persons with disabilities. The sole purpose of this drop-in centre will provide social opportunity and services for persons with all types of disabilities, with the ones living in poverty being the main target. Clients helping out around the centre will be optional; however I propose to have a rewards program for those who do help out around the centre. Activities offered by the centre provided by the centre could include different types of workshops about topics such as different areas of life skills, education, art classes, and prestations to help the clients get to know their community better.

1.1 Mission Statement:

The mission of the Social Service Drop-in Centre is a place to provide social opportunity, programs and services for persons with disabilities of all types. This drop-in will keep these people from becoming socially isolated which is a good for them way to maintain both their general and mental health. This drop-in centre also will provide persons with disabilities who are living in poverty social opportunity at little or no cost.

1.2 Long Term Goals

My primary long term goal is to provide social opportunity and services for persons with all types of disabilities. The drop-in centre will not only be a drop-in program, like most drop-in centres are. The clients will also have the opportunity to help out with the day to day operation of the centre. Some clients may clean while others may help out in the kitchen or help out in the office. However there will be no fixed schules for when clients will be required to be on site to help out with things around the centre.

2. Business Ownership Structures:

This will be a non profit organization which means that no one owns the business.

2.1 Type of ownership structure

I will be the excusive director of this organization. I will use Archie Gills (Business Counselling Coordinator) with EDN for free business consulting services as my main consultant. I also have a few other people who have expressed interest in wanting to be consultants for this idea. (See part 5.2 of this business plan) I will meet with these people to see if their expertise would be of any help. When I have secured funding, I will hire someone full time to help with the running of the drop-in centre. There will also be a board of directors to help with the running of this organization.

2.2 Experience and role of owner

My background is appropriate for running this organization because I have experience in working with persons with disabilities and working in disability programs. Past programs which I have experience in working with include the Next Step Project which is no longer funded. **(See appendix B)** I am currently a member of EDN, plus I am on the board of directors for this organization. I am also a member of the Creative Spirit East/Veith Street Gallery Studio Association.

Marketing Plan

3.1. Marketing Research Results - Demands/trends For My Business

Due to the fact that this business is going to be a non profit organization means that we will not be required to sell products to make money to operate this business. However we are going to have to advertise, so the general public will know that we exist.

3.2 SWOT Analysis Summary

Strengths:

Outgoing, motivated, friendly
Have good sales and marketing skills.
Have great outreach skills
People person, efficient
Goal oriented
Persistent
Have an understanding of issues affecting person with disabilities.
Have knowledge about persons with disabilities, living in poverty.

Weaknesses:

Making business contacts and gaining clients could sometimes be hard.
Networking

Opportunities:

This drop-in centre provides persons with disabilities of all types to have a place to go and help them get out of social isolation.

Opportunities include a number of reasons as to what makes this drop-in centre different from the competition, and why people would use this drop-in centre, as opposed to using the same programs and services elsewhere. These reasons are as follows.

- Connections Club House in Halifax, and New Begging's Club house in Dartmouth, requires a referral from a doctor or other mental health professional. Your doctor has to specially say that you have an access#1 mental health diagnosis such as bipolar or sizisophranpic in order for your referral to be accepted by the program coordinators of these places. As for this drop-in, no professional referral as such is required. My drop-in centre, will offer the same type of services, programs, and opportunities as offered at Connections and New Begging's, however open to persons with all types of disabilities.
- (Among friends) and the (Caring and Sharing Social Clubs), have A-bit less criteria, however still a referral is required, and still you have to have mental health issues. The reference referring the client has to honestly say that the client they are referring has mental health issues. These social clubs do provide neither services, nor social opportunity for persons with other types of disabilities. Also as for these social clubs, socializing is their only focus. At this drop-in centre, socializing will be a one of the main focuses, however this drop-in will have three other focuses including employment, training/ gaining work experience/education, and counselling of different types.
- This drop-in centre will be a drop-in centre will serve not only as a place for job searching, however clients using the library and computer lab resources of this drop-in centre for job searching, will also have the opportunity to use those drop-in's resources for other purposes such as a regular cap site as well. Also there will be computer training such as Microsoft program training, Photoshop, ECT.
- This drop-in will also serve as a place where they can come and gain work experience, and clients will have the opportunity to use the counsellors as an employment reference, and to gain social skills they need to get use to for holding down a job. Current job search centres does not offer these extra services.
- This drop-in centre will also offer opportunity for the clients to gain work experience/training, and to explore the world of work to help them make decisions of their employment related goals.
- As for clients who are interested in wanting to start their own business, this centre will have a strong connection with the Entrepreneurs Disabilities Network, the drop-in will offer support to those clients, as well as supporting those clients who are looking for work.
- Some clients coming through this drop-in may need services such as addictions counselling, ECT. As part of the services of this drop-in centre, the centre staff will offer referrals to those services for the clients who need them, as well as helping them look for work, education.
- Persons with disabilities who are living in poverty, using the drop-in centre will have the opportunity to socialize with others who also have disabilities, and the drop-in centre will be a service that will encourage them to find ways to get out of poverty.
- I know of two employment readiness programs located within Metro where persons where persons with disabilities do not feeling comfortable attending. (See part 3.5. Competition of my business plan) Persons with disabilities will have the opportunity to feel comfortable attending this drop-in centre.

Threats:

There are other organizations which have similar mandates. Social clubs and drop-in programs for mental health consumers already exist.

3.3 Market Size

20% of Nova Scotians are persons with disabilities. 50% of this number lives in Halifax Regional Municipality. These are the persons this drop-in will be serving.

3.4 Lifecycle and Seasonality

This organization will operate all year around. However there may be some activities taking place at the drop-in centre that might be seasonal activities. This possibility will be looked at after the centre is up and running and as the time of operation of this centre goes on.

3.5. Competition

The competition which this organization will be faced with is the fact that we already have similar type places with similar type mandates. However the existing drop-in centres only provide services to mental health consumers. Other competition only has one main primary focus as in what they do to help their clients. This drop-in centre has a lot of major focuses to help its clients. Also this drop-in centre will be open to persons with disabilities of all types living in poverty.

3.6 Competitive advantages:

Other organizations and agencies can refer clients to the drop-in centre.

3.7 Customer/Client Profile(s):

The clients who use this drop-in centre will be persons with both physical and mental disabilities of

all types who are looking for social opportunity. For some of the clients, the drop-in centre will be a place for them to have social support. As for other clients it will be a place for the clients to go and feel like they are working toward bettering themselves and doing what they have to do to fit in with society.

3.8. Forward Contracts-letter of interest

3.9 Advertising and Promotion

I plan to Advertise through networking and through buying ads in Street Feat news paper. Another way of advertising is through networking with other disability organizations.

3.10. Production mix:

3.11 Geographic market and distribution channels:

The clients who use this centre will live within the HRM area of Nova Scotia. However the drop-in centre will be open for persons with disabilities who live in other parts of Nova Scotia to access the services of. If the first drop-in turns out to be a success then down the road I may look at opening up drop-in centres in other parts of Nova Scotia.

3.12. Location and reason for choice

Space to operate the drop-in centre is extremely expensive. I will have to look to see where I can get space. The drop-in centre will have to be located in a central location with access to major Metro Transit bus routes.

3.13 Pricing

Because this organization does not involve activity to raise funds, means that pricing of products will not be nessacery. There will be no daily fees for clients to use the drop-in centre.

3.14 Future Opportunities:

I will be providing a much needed service for persons with disabilities of all types.

4. Financial Plan

4.1 Fixed Assets

Details of the fixed assets such as equipment that will be needed are camera, computer and related equipment. Business supplies such as card stock, printer, internet, and cell phone.

These assets will be acquired from:
Staples Business Depot

4.2 The working capital requirements will be used for:

Paying the rent for the space I will be using for the drop-in centre, general office supplies, and equipment needed for maintaining the centre. Also capital will be used for purchasing the food, tea and coffee for the clients.

4.3 Source of capital:

There are government agencies which will fund non profit organizations. Possibilities of capital could include the Department of Community Services, Accoa, and the Capital Health District Authority.

4.7 Comparison to the industry average:

4.8 The financial operation of the business will be monitored and evaluated through:

4.9 Provisions for taxation have been made by:

5. Management plan

5.1. Employees

For this drop-in centre I cannot do all the work myself. The employees I will have to have working at this centre will have to include people who can offer services to persons with disabilities, and who have knowledge of disability issues. I know at Connections and New Begging's club houses the employees include people who have training in Occupational Therapy and Social Work. These types of employees would be great assets to the drop-in centre. Also the clients of this drop-in will have the opportunity to help out with day to day maintenance activities of the drop-in.

5.2. Consultants

Main Consultants for this organization will include:

Archie Gillis, business counselling coordinator with EDN.
 Gerard McNeil, Education Curator for Veith Street Gallery Studio Association

5.3. Equipment Required

Laptop Computer-In September 2008, Teamwork Cooperative gave me a laptop for business purposes. This was covered through the Opportunities Fund. I also have to date a printer for my computer and a digital camera.

Equipment Needed	Quantity	For what purpose	Estimated cost
Computers	24	20 for the computer lab 4 to carry out the administration/business work of the organization.	
printers	8	5 for computer lab, 3 for offices.	
Fax machines	3	2 for sending and receiving faxes for the organization. One for the resource room/computer lab.	
photocopiers	3		
telephones	6		
General office supplies	Amount varies		

5.4 Daily operations

The Drop-in will operate on a day to day routine basis.

6. Legal requirements

6.1 Local Government/Government Requirements

This organization has to be registered as a non-profit organization with the Nova Scotia registry of joint stocks. This has to be 5 people involved with the running of the organization.

6.2. Qualifications required

Knowledge of issues relating to persons with disabilities of all types will be an asset.

6.3 Licences/registration required

6.4 Insurance

Training that may be necessary:

I have many of the skills required to do the task needed for this business. I do realize however that the things I am good at can always be improved upon and that there are a few things that I will require training for. Working with EDN's Archie Gillis, by utilizing some of their free training workshops, and by seeking out other free or inexpensive training opportunities, I will try to strengthen areas I feel I may be weaker. I had also taken training through Teamwork Cooperative. Next, I will outline training which I have taken to date.

Training completed:

It was recommended by Teamwork Cooperative that I attend training especially in computer courses such as Microsoft word, Excel, PowerPoint and Publisher. This training has started on September 8th, 2008 and it ended in January 2009. Upon completion I will receive certificates which will certify me in Microsoft programs.

Also, during this time period I have completed training in Photoshop. I will also receive a certificate of completion for Photoshop.

List of membership of associations:

EDN, Street Feat, Creative Sprit East/Veith Street Gallery Studio Association

