



# RANCH EHRLO SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Issue 108 March 2020

## Top employer for the 9th straight year

It's so important to provide the best possible outcomes for the participants we serve – and one of the ways we do that is by making sure our employees are engaged, appreciated, and have a place they enjoy coming to work. Because we aren't just employees – we're parents, grandparents, siblings, coaches, teammates, friends, thinkers, dreamers, and doers!

Our staff matter as much as our clients. That's not just something we say, and we think we've proved that by being one of Saskatchewan's Top Employers for nine years running! This designation recognizes the Saskatchewan employers that lead their industries in offering exceptional places to work.

## Culture an important aspect

At Ranch Ehrlo, we know the importance of culture – not just talking about it but experiencing it. With the majority of our participants of Aboriginal descent, we strive to provide cultural experiences that we

know matter. Regardless of what program participants are part of, we try to give them as many opportunities to experience their culture as possible.

"Our goal is to not just talk. We need to teach, guide, model, and mentor the importance of their culture," said Treatment Foster Care (TFC) program manager Lisa Neill.

To that end, TFC parents Heather Whitequill and Quincy Dustyhorn hosted a presentation called "Powwow 101" for the foster parents in the program.

"We actually got into dancing because



We are guided by the CARE, Children And Residential Experiences: Creating Conditions for Change, multi-level model.  
We work to improve services for our clients through six practice principles:

developmentally focused

family involved

relationship based

trauma informed

competence centred

ecologically oriented



Quincy and Heather

of the Treatment Foster Care program. We've always sort of attended powwows sporadically, and then when we were completing our training to become foster parents, we learned that kids who didn't have exposure to their culture look for it, sometimes, in unhealthy ways," Whitequill explained.

"One of the greatest things about powwow is that it teaches our kids, especially our kids in care, that they can and should be proud of who they are and where they come from," she added.

In our schools, students have had several opportunities to connect with their culture recently. Schaller Education Centre had the opportunity to work with Joely BigEagle-Kequahtooway and Lorne Kequahtooway from Buffalo People Arts Institute. They worked on leather moccasins and other crafts with the youth.

Angel Whitestar works with families in our Family Treatment Program and students in some of our education programs to do beading and other crafts. All of these crafts have deep significance.

"I grew up in a powwow family, so all these sewing and crafts I learned at a young age through helping my parents make regalia or fancy dance bustles," Whitestar explained. "My family always told me if you have a gift share it. Keep the culture and knowledge alive and strong."

## New strategic plan

We are pleased to announce the completion of a new five-year strategic plan. The full plan, which remains in effect until 2025, is available online at [ehrlo.com](http://ehrlo.com)

"We undertook a robust strategic plan consultation process, looking at the history of the agency as well as the direction we see for the future, which resulted in a new strategic plan for the agency," explained Andrea Brittin, Ranch Ehrlo CEO.

A key component of the process was engaging as many staff voices as possible. Each of Ranch Ehrlo's 800+ employees had the opportunity to participate in the process by providing vital information through a staff engagement survey and feedback from our all agency meetings. The resulting plan includes a re-articulation of our vision, mission and value statements.

"The plan also outlines our focus on four strategic themes: program excellence, quality workforce, effective/efficient governance and working environments, and strong stakeholder/partner relations," Brittin stated. "Even though this is a five-year plan, we will be reviewing it every year to make sure our framework is advancing the very important work we do to improve the lives of children, youth, and families."



## Strategic plan 2020-2025

OUR VISION	OUR MISSION	STRATEGIC THEMES
<p>We envision communities where all individuals and families achieve their full potential.</p>	<p>To provide quality preventative and restorative services to, and advocacy for, vulnerable individuals and families through highly engaged and professional employees.</p>	<b>THEME: PROGRAM EXCELLENCE</b>  <p><i>Goal statement:</i> Develop and operate specialized, comprehensive, and sustainable programs/services to accommodate current and emerging needs of communities and clients we serve.</p>
<p><b>We value</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service excellence</li> <li>• Integrity, mutual respect, and trust</li> <li>• Employees and teamwork</li> <li>• Empowerment and accountability</li> <li>• Open and consistent communications</li> </ul>	<b>THEME: QUALITY WORKFORCE</b>  <p><i>Goal statement:</i> Employ a skilled, trained, collaborative, and engaged workforce to deliver programs/services.</p>	<b>THEME: EFFECTIVE/EFFICIENT GOVERNANCE &amp; WORKING ENVIRONMENTS</b>  <p><i>Goal statement:</i> Ensure highly effective and efficient governance and operations for the delivery of programs and services.</p>
	<b>THEME: STRONG STAKEHOLDER/PARTNER RELATIONS</b>  <p><i>Goal statement:</i> Build, maintain, and enhance strong external stakeholder relationships to advance our mission.</p>	<b>Objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver evidence-based assessment approaches and treatment intervention</li> <li>• Ensure CARE principles embedded throughout the agency</li> <li>• Collaborate with community to develop TRC action plan</li> <li>• Focus on client-based advocacy.</li> </ul>
		<b>Objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance leadership development and succession planning</li> <li>• Create a culture of workplace health and safety</li> <li>• Implement a clear agency-wide training strategy</li> <li>• Operationalize employee engagement action plans</li> <li>• Enhance recruitment and retention tools and processes.</li> </ul>
		<b>Objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance key reporting metrics to ensure data-informed decision-making</li> <li>• Enhance risk management tools and practices</li> <li>• Maintain financial sustainability.</li> </ul>
		<b>Objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foster advocacy in communities through partnering</li> <li>• Be a respected, influential voice in improving programs/services to vulnerable groups locally and nationally.</li> </ul>

## What success looks like

To find examples of how relationships and environment foster success, we simply have to look at our Programs for Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD). The program supports persons with multiple, complex developmental needs by providing person-centered and strength-based

care and support in its residential, educational, and vocational programs.

When client Reid\* arrived last year, he had no strategies to manage his emotions and complex needs.

“He’s had so much trauma in his life, especially as a child,” said clinical consultant Terrea Woodward-Friesen, who works closely with Reid as part of his team of caregivers.

“When he arrived – when he got upset about something, or had anxiety about something, or was worried about something, he would just blow up. He would get so angry he would kick and punch the walls,” Woodward-Friesen recalled.

Woodward-Friesen and the team began working with him, teaching him coping mechanisms for his big emotions. Reid has many strategies now – counting to ten, deep breathing, and talking to staff are a few that he regularly employs.

“In one year, he’s gone from having absolutely no control over his behaviour … to now, he’s able to really help himself. A lot of the time, he’s even initiating that himself, which is huge.”

Because of his increased ability to manage his emotions, Reid has been able to join a vocational program and is working regularly for the first time in his life. He’s also joined Special Olympic sports teams in the city, joins his caregivers for grocery shopping and other community outings, and even sat through a whole movie for the first time in his life.

Currently, Woodward-Friesen is working with Reid to differentiate between small, medium, and big problems. Before they began working on it, something as small as losing a pen could cause him to go into crisis.

“We’re trying to teach him that we’re all working together to keep him safe and that he has choices. We’re not here to tell you what to do, we’re here to support you. Building that relationship allows him to feel safe and secure.”

*\*Name changed for privacy*

## **Wearing multiple hats**

When he’s not helping mold the minds of Schaller’s student body, educational assistant (EA) Zane Anderson is a running back with the Regina Thunder. Signed in 2019, Anderson made the move to Regina and shortly thereafter applied to work as an EA at the agency.

“Maybe a month or two into the season, one of the coaches on our team – he deals with goal setting and the mental side of the game – suggested that I work here,” he explained.



Photo courtesy Wanda Harron Photography

“I was unsure how it would be when I first started. When I came in it was a little bit of a shock, but I’ve been able to adjust, and I really like working here. It’s been a great experience.”

Though he has some experience with children, Anderson has no formal training in education and, until he landed at Schaller, didn’t consider it a path he may follow.

“Education actually wasn’t something I considered before coming here. But these past few months I’ve really liked it and I’ve decided that’s the area I’d like to pursue.”

And while he may not be running football drills with the youth, the traits he applies to his football career are ones he tries to impress upon the youth.

“The coaches I’ve had, they preach attitude and character – and that’s the stuff that I work on with the kids. Those are some values that I hold high that I love to pass on to the kids that I work with.”

“Working at a place like this, especially at Schaller – we have a great community. The other EAs and teachers are great and make the day a whole lot easier. And my coaches and teammates have also helped me out a lot with that. Both teams – they do their part and help me out with that.”

# Office and staff changes

We have had several staff and location changes in the agency over the past several months.

## New directors

Joey Panko and Mike Deis joined the team of residential directors and Natasha Anderson has been hired to fill the term clinical director position.

Panko has been with Ranch Ehrlo for the past 12 years in various roles, including but not limited to that of a clinical caseworker and, most recently, a clinical director.

Deis brings 26 years of experience to his new role as acting residential director, including 18 years as a unit manager for both intake and in-town programs.

Anderson was a clinical manager in the Programs for Persons with Developmental Disabilities. She has also worked contract with Ehrlo Counselling Services and has served as a clinical caseworker in various group homes throughout the agency.

## Office space

We are continuing to grow as an agency, and with that comes an increased need for administrative support and office space. We recently leased new office space off Winnipeg Street in Regina.

In January the IT moved to the new space along with our Quality Improvement team. As well, the Property Management department moved from Regina to the Pilot Butte campus to make room for new vice-president, Pam Dmytriw and a term training position .

## Retirements

Contract music therapist Bernadette Kutarna in the Program for Persons with Developmental Disabilities and CARE training coordinator Donna Kovatch both retired in January.

## Hockey day



Ehrlo Sport Venture staff Leslie and Gloria at Grassick rink in Regina to celebrate Hockey day in Canada with players and families from the Outdoor Hockey League (OHL).

## Regina Pats



Special thanks to the Regina Pats for coming out to OHL practices in January!

## Child advocate



Members of the Saskatchewan Advocate for Children and Youth's office came to the Ranch for an introductory information sharing session to ensure all the youth in our care achieve the best possible outcomes. L to R: Advocate Lisa Broda, executive director Wanda George and Ranch CEO Andrea Brittin

## Selfcare for staff



The Regina/Pilot Butte staff association offered several free Wheelhouse rides in 2020 to beat the winter blues, try something new, and encourage team building.

## Valentines Day



Youth at Matheson House in Prince Albert created this Valentines Day inspired lawn art!