

# BOARD CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT



*2021-2022  
Mr. Michael Fong*

*Abstract  
It is my honour to present the Board  
Chair's Report and share our  
accomplishments and challenges with  
our funders, partners, staff, and clients.*

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# *Board Chair's Annual Report*

## **Introduction**

It is my privilege to introduce to you our current board members

Mrs. Wendi Thomson,

Mr. Frank Falvey,

Dr. Tanya Lentz, and

Mr. Satish Mistry.



The Board is charged with the oversight of MAKE A CHANGE CANADA, a federally incorporated registered Canadian charity. We are the pioneer in providing online and supportive career-related programming for people facing barriers to employment. Our services are available online across Canada.

My sincere thanks to the Board for all your hard work and support throughout the year. I realize board work is time consuming, and I am grateful to the board members for their dedication and commitment to MAKE A CHANGE CANADA.

## Our Mandate

MAKE A CHANGE CANADA is a federally incorporated nonprofit organization with charitable status. We are pioneers in providing online and supportive career-related programming for people facing barriers to employment. We are a virtual organization and our services are available online across Canada.

MAKE A CHANGE CANADA has two major mandates:

- First and foremost, we provide employment and skills training to people facing barriers to employment, including: individuals living with a disability or chronic health issue, youth, stay-at-home and single parents, older workers, Indigenous Peoples, new Canadians, members of the LGBTQ+ communities, and individuals living in rural or remote areas. To fulfill this mandate we serve an estimated 250 clients across eight to 10 provinces at any given time.
- Our second mandate is to conduct research for the development of programs in the areas of employment and entrepreneurship, leadership, and distance learning.

## *Funders and Partners*

Our funders and partners help us to deliver widespread services to Canadians in need. This support is essential, as we are a virtual organization providing diversity in services to individuals from all segments and locations of the country.



Thanks to our partners, Government of Canada, Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities, National Programs for funding provided for fiscal 2021-2022.

We also recognize Shaw Communications for its major support in running our public service announcements on national television.

We received widespread support during the year, largely due to our memberships and industry partnerships, including the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, BC Technology Association, and The Presidents Group.

## *Staff and Clients as the Key to Our Success*



Of course, we would be unable to fulfill our mandate without acknowledging our excellent staff, and especially the leadership of our CEO, Anne-Marie Edgar, who has consistently set the tone for ensuring program quality, managed a plethora of operational responsibilities, and is always available to support the Board to help shape MAKE A CHANGE CANADA.

A big round of applause to the staff for their good work, and sincere thanks to our clients for availing of our services.

## *Achievements*

I would like to say a few words about our major achievements, which include the following:

1. First, becoming recertified as an educational institution under Employment and Social Development Canada;
2. Second, planting the foundation for stronger Board Governance to secure a strong future for the organization, and in particular the further implementation of our improved governance model and board processes; and lastly
3. Successfully continuing to deliver support to people with disabilities across Canada through the expanded mandate under our federal funding agreement as part of the national response and recovery due to COVID-19.

## *Challenges*

In regards to challenges, we continued to be faced with the challenge of COVID-19 for a second year.

I am happy to say the organization is doing well. Not only did the organization maintain its focus on quality of service, but our staff rallied together to amplify outreach efforts and brought support to those people with disabilities who needed it while paying particular attention to support of the team and protecting their own sense of well-being.

## *Looking Forward*

As we find ourselves with the COVID-19 pandemic soundly in our rearview mirror, the Board of Directors remains committed to its role.

The pandemic disruption has provided our organization with an opportunity to lead and to find solutions. We will continue to work to find innovative ways to help Canadians from coast to coast overcome barriers to employment and find meaningful work, whether through traditional employment or self-employment opportunities. We will be ready to help individuals gain the IT skills training they need to secure remote work that allows them to manage their personal barriers effectively and meet family caregiving obligations. We will be prepared to help people build employment skills, paving the way to career happiness and self-sufficiency.

And if there is any organization who can lead the way, it is MAKE A CHANGE CANADA. Thank you for helping to make this organization one that we are grateful for and proud to be a part of.

# CEO REPORT



*2021-2022  
Anne-Marie Edgar*

*Abstract  
This CEO report is submitted and highlights the Good News and the Challenges that make Make A Change Canada the wonderful organization that it is today.*

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# *CEO Report*

## **Introduction**

It is my pleasure to present the Manager's Report for the year 2021-2022. First off, I would like to thank the Board Chairperson and all of the other Board members for your support of our organization, programs, and clients over the prior year. Your commitment to Make A Change Canada has meant a job well done, and also wonderful growth in our governance practices. Congratulations on helping to move the organization forward.

## **Scope of Work**

Make A Change Canada operated two online programs during the year.

First, the Tech Diversity Online program is an employment and self-employment program, providing enhanced employment services and skills training to people with disabilities across Canada, as well as wage subsidies to participating employers.

Second, the Certificate in Applied Web Development and Design program, a technology skills training program open to anyone facing barriers to employment.

We also continued to maintain our social enterprise, Rogers Fire Nuggets, with new opportunities identified for future expansion and implementation. This social enterprise provides an additional level of opportunity for those seeking meaningful employment.

We produced a desktop calendar for 2022 during the year featuring our clients and graduates.



## Achievements

The major achievement of the year took us into innovative new areas of programming. Under funding from Opportunities Fund, one unique service offering saw us successfully matching workers with disabilities with employers with disabilities in a unique form of work placement. The dual benefit is the achievement of simultaneous career and skills advancement for people with disabilities at multiple levels.

We continued to experience growth during the year. During the year we added three new staff positions. We successfully onboarded a Chief Operating Officer, a Workforce Opportunities Specialist, and an Administrative Specialist. We also increased our instructional team from two to three instructors.

Our organization's Management Policies were in place by the year end.

## *Good News Stories*

During the year we continued to successfully bring support to where it is needed most as part of the national response to COVID-19. We continued to provide equipment and physical retrofits to employers and organizations who provide supportive employment to people with disabilities.

### **L'Écllosion (The Outbreak), 2022**

#### **New Brunswick**



In the process, one positive development was the identification of innovative new service features and tools to support work placement participants and employers even better, and to create a signature Make A Change Canada approach to work placements that will serve the organization well for years to come.

## *Stability and Funding*



We have had stability through the year due to our current funding agreement with Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities, National Programs.

We received an upward amendment under our current funding agreement for \$1,435,000 and an extension to September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022. This amendment was provided specifically to expand online skills training opportunities to help individuals obtain and maintain employment, and to create real opportunities for advancement in their careers into high-demand jobs in high-demand sectors. It also provided wage subsidies to more realistically meet the requirements of both employers and participants, in order to fully support the career advancement of people with disabilities. Under this contract amendment we received approval to serve an additional 50 clients in the Tech Diversity Online program.

## *Community Connections*

A definite highlight for the year was our fireside chat with Marco Pasqua on December 3 to mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Marco Pasqua is a highly sought-after motivational speaker and he delighted the guests with his conversation that day on “How a Remote Future Can Unlock the Potential of People With Disabilities.”



## *Staff Engagement*

During the year, I continued with the expansion of the workplace improvement process for the organization. Between the team engagement session, the completion of an employee skills matrix, and new alternative ways to foster an open and respectful workplace, including the monthly CEO coffee meetings and the quarterly all team meetings, feedback from employees has been very positive. The workplace improvement process helps me to ensure that our team is strong and supportive of each other and the mission of Make A Change Canada.

## *Challenges and Resiliency*

When I think of challenges for the year, my thoughts turn to our clients. We saw our clients experiencing greater degrees and frequency of health issues, hospitalizations, and financial difficulty.

We saw clients ready to move ahead into new businesses or employment, but the COVID-19 challenges and the new economic reality threw up roadblocks to moving ahead. This left our team doing greater follow up. With ingenuity, our team was able to find viable alternatives for clients and quickly pivot the nature of their career guidance.

Fortunately, our team coordination remained strong, and I am pleased to say that our team has been there for our clients and each other every step of the way.

COVID-19 continued to challenge us during the year, particularly with connecting physically as a team. Thankfully, by creating opportunities for team collaboration on projects and new means of team building, we managed through the difficult times and minimized feelings of isolation.

## *Employer Testimonials*

Now, having the permission of the individuals involved, I would like to share some testimonials from participating employers with you. These thoughts demonstrate the unique importance of our work placements for the employers and workers alike.

### ***Construction Industry Employer in British Columbia***

#### ***Hiring a person with a disability and receiving a wage subsidy***

*"[Program Participant] and I have been working good together. She has been working with getting my accounting all in order and getting some procedures in place. A couple of months back, there was a glitch with the software the way it was and it was not able to do exactly what we wanted to for job costing. This was just recently sorted out so now she can carry on with job costing for our projects. That will be super helpful. This glitch put us back a few months. I was also hoping to have her create a simple website for LLJ and we could post our recent project pictures and advertise our services. She has shown me another website that she has created and I am confident she can do a good job to make one for me too. This extra time would help me as a company owner to keep her on to complete these couple of important items."*

## **Disability Services/Accessibility Employer in Ontario**

### ***Hiring a person with a disability and receiving a wage subsidy***

*“[Program Participant] loves shopping and requesting services online (websites).*

*He cannot use his hands. Instead, he uses voice commands and a tiny dot as a head mouse on his eyeglasses to navigate online.*

*[Program Participant] is a bright employee at LinoraTech.*

*He has put together a 3-minute short video showing how an inclusive shopping experience on a website can attract more customers for organizations, businesses, and entrepreneurs.*

*This experience applies to any business type.*

*Website Accessibility can help you access more visitors and clients (with disabilities or without disabilities).”*

## *Conclusion*



I am proud to say we continue to be a beacon of hope for people with barriers to employment from all across Canada. We are a trusted source of quality programs and give our clients faith that we have the program that will work for them and give them the chance for a new future.

I am very grateful to the Board, our fantastic staff, our funders, and all the employers who make our programs such a success. We are also very grateful to the clients who believe in our mission and become advocates for Make A Change Canada.