

## Microboards: Small non-profits for supported decision-making

Canada/British Columbia – Vela Microboard Association

### SUMMARY OF PROJECT

A Microboard is a small group of family and friends who join a person with disabilities to create a non-profit organization so as to support the person to create the life he or she envisions. The network enhances supports that may previously have been solely the responsibility of parents or other relatives.

“Microboards are ensuring that persons with disabilities can lead a good and fulfilling life.”

—Linda PERRY, Executive Director, Vela Canada

### FACTS & FIGURES

- As of September 2014 more than 900 active Microboards were set up in British Columbia.
- There are currently over 4,500 voluntary Microboard members.
- Over the past 15 years Vela has supported Microboard development in 3 other provinces of Canada and 4 other countries
- Velboards have also been implemented in Australia, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, and the United States

### PROBLEMS TARGETED

In the late 1980s British Columbia was a leader for deinstitutionalization in Canada. However, a sizable number of people with complex disabilities remained in institutions, as it was widely believed they could not live successfully within a community setting. This did not deter their families and friends from advocating for their return to community living.

### SOLUTION & METHODOLOGY

Vela created a process for their agency to engage with and assist disabled individuals, their families, and Microboards. Some assisted people cannot use speech to communicate, and Microboard members

commit to helping them to communicate their needs and wishes to the community. Microboards meet together to learn with and from each other, discuss their respective processes, and support one another. If Microboard members provide services for a fee, they work with funders to do so.

## **OUTLOOK & TRANSFERABILITY**

The concept of the Microboard has proven to be very successful, and is currently working well in several countries – in communities large, small, and even remote. It is easily transferable due to a clear philosophy and set of guidelines that are freely accessible. Vela is prepared to provide assistance and consultancy on how to set up such a support organization.

Photo

Microboards make an important difference by supporting people with disabilities through family and friends to lead self-directed lives.

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LIFE STORY IS ADDED HERE