



Phoenix Rising

In the Spirit of Phoenix

~ by George Klukowski (GK)

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Let me start by wishing all of our clients, participants, staff, volunteers, and community partners, the very best for a safe, restful, and meaningful holiday season. It's a tough time for many, with the increased pace of daily living combined with family expectations for the season and the commercial juggernaut that accosts our senses as well as our purses and wallets at every opportunity. Still, despite the melee, many look forward to unplugging and spending time with family and friends. In addition, we tend to be at our most benevolent at this time of year in terms of helping those that live without what we take for granted as our bare essentials. It is this collective action of giving and benevolence that always inspires me and leaves me hopeful for the future. Over the next few weeks, what humans will do for one another reflects the near atomic potential that we have to impact the course of things ... and that is something to hang our hopes on, something to build on in tough times.

This potential can often transcend language, race, sexual orientation, and other barriers that people in our communities face on a daily basis even as the holiday season is heavily biased in favour of a Western European ideological and mythical context. For some in our diverse

community, this holiday season is a poor fit in terms of alignment with respective belief systems and values. Still, I would argue that the depth of charity at this time of year can be a vehicle for those conversations that we need to have about inclusion, about freedom to practice one's beliefs and values, and about a new world order comprised of a newly forged ideological position that combines the best of all diverse cultures, including the Western European viewpoint.

At Phoenix, we care deeply about people. We believe that caring is at the heart of doing great things with and for people. Look around you, see and feel the caring that is out there now. Imagine what we can do if we harnessed and sustained this caring. Just imagine.



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Though the barriers of life seem formidable,
we find when we challenge them that they
have no will.
~ Robert Brault

Seasonal Celebration!
Friday, December 21, 2012
The Maple Room
The Stratheona Hotel
5:30 p.m. — 9:00 p.m.
Appetizers provided
Cash bar

In Memory of a Good Man

~ by GK



In 2004, Bruce fell on hard times and was not able to effectively run the agency. It was then that Bruce's wife (now ex-wife) Valerie stepped in to assist the senior management of Nisika to succeed the organization. It was with her unequivocal support and ultimately Bruce's as well, that we were able to give birth to Phoenix Human Services Association.

According to his family and friends, Bruce had of late turned a corner for the better and was beginning to engage with family and friends in meaningful ways. His unfortunate passing came all too soon, just when the light was beginning to shine on his life once more and close friends and loved ones were once again able to enjoy his company.

Bruce was an exceptional man who gave significantly of himself for the betterment of people in need. He was not a perfect man. He had his faults. He had vulnerabilities. But on November 9, 2012, this community lost one of its champions. That much he earned.

Many of us at Phoenix and a large contingent of community members were shocked recently by the untimely and unexpected passing of Bruce Walker Mitchell, owner and president of the former Nisika Community Services Ltd. For those of you who don't know the story, Nisika was formed in the early 1980's and initially ran out of Bruce's basement on Cambridge Street in Fairfield. For many years, the agency was amongst the largest social services agencies in Victoria, employing close to 200 staff members in its glory years and bringing services and supports to thousands of individuals over the course of its 25 year history. Bruce was very active and engaged in the social services sector, particularly in community living where, other than with his children, his greatest passion lay.

Bruce was well-liked throughout the community and was a friend to many. Bruce was a deeply thoughtful and generous person with a wonderful sense of humour and a knack for impersonation. He came to work every day in finely pressed blue jeans and silk shirts and preferred sandals over loafers. He treated his employees like family members and went to great pains to make sure they were appreciated.



A good character is the best tombstone.
Those who loved you and were helped by
you will remember you when forget-me-
nots have withered. Carve your name on
hearts, not on marble.

~Charles H. Spurgeon

Managing Human Rights At Work

- by Stephen Hammond

Tip #25: Differences and Discomfort - Persons with Disabilities.

It can be uncomfortable for some people to interact with people who have physical or mental disabilities. We don't know how to act. Don't believe that? Talk to a person who uses a wheelchair; any can tell you of bizarre behaviours they've observed from others. One of the most common is when they are chatting with a person, and a third person joins the conversation. If the third person is not using a wheelchair, often the dialogue will only be carried between the two people not using a wheelchair, sometimes even referring to the person in the wheelchair as if he or she isn't there.

For four years, I was on the board of directors of the Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. I wanted to do community service work, and I thought this was a perfect fit because my dad has been hard of hearing since birth. But even after four years of talking and debating with deaf people, I still feel a level of uncertainty when I'm alone with a deaf person and have no translator. Strangely, I always feel the deaf person is responsible for putting me at ease. If he or she doesn't, I don't seem to know what to do. I learned so much during those four years and yet one great lesson came from understanding why deaf people want to continue to communicate in their own language instead of trying to fit into the hearing world. When deaf people communicate with one another, they experience much more comfort.

If I learned anything in those four years, it's that levels of comfort run both ways. Many deaf people prefer spending time with one another versus trying to fit into the hearing world.

I discovered a training exercise from an organization in the United States called Windmill. They specialize in programs for persons with disabilities and getting better understanding from persons without disabilities. In the exercise people are asked, "If you were to have a disability or disorder, which of the following would you choose?"

Deafness

Blindness

Being a paraplegic (paralysis of legs)

Having a learning disability

Most people choose deafness because they perceive that it will hinder their life the least. Then I ask them what type of person they'd hire, if they were to integrate more persons with disabilities into their workforce. Very few choose to work with a deaf person. Most opt for the person who is paraplegic. Why? Because we prefer to interact with a hearing person to avoid communication problems.

Why are we so hung up on having only comfortable communication? I don't know, but when Helen Keller was asked which was more difficult, being deaf or being blind, she replied: "Blindness cuts a person off from things, but deafness cuts a person off from people." Employers need to ensure that merely feeling uncomfortable isn't an excuse for inadvertently cutting people off from otherwise stellar workers. At the least, it may encourage a valuable employee to leave your employ and seek another.

Suggestions:

1) Learn a few bits of etiquette about communications involving persons with disabilities - there are a number of things people do, yet realize it. A bit of knowledge (easily found on the web) can help. For example, talk to a deaf person, not the interpreter. Similarly, talk to a person using a wheelchair, not any companion with the person. Don't finish the sentence of a person with a speech impediment. Simple things can make a big difference.

2) Ask before assisting - there are many times we want to assist a person with a disability. There are many times a person with a disability wants and needs assistance. Unless we're talking about something that is urgent or safety-threatening, it's very easy to ask if the person wants some help.

3) Be only as inquisitive as the person wants - and don't expect any more. Sometimes a curious person wants to know more about a disability or how it occurred. One person may be open to this and another person may not. Accept whatever the person wants as it's no one's business, unless of course it's related to the business for operational purposes (although origins of a disability can't possibly be needed for operational purposes).

This tip is written by Stephen Hammond, B.A., LL.B., CSP, and is made available to organizations who subscribe to Stephen's "Continuing Education" packages. To find out more about these educational packages, go to www.StephenHammond.ca and click on "Continuing Education".

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Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see.
~ Mark Twain

Financial Update: Year End & Year Ahead

~ by Joan Chalmers

It's that time of year when I start receiving questions about income tax, T4's, pension tax forms, RRSP's, agendas, etc. I thought it would be helpful to share some information that will hopefully answer some of your questions.

The December 21st payday is the last paycheque for 2012. After that date, year end reports will be prepared for our payroll provider and the BC Pension Corporation. This information will be used to generate both the T4's and the tax receipts from the Pension Plan (MPP) contributions. We will be asking staff in January 2013, to update addresses and phone numbers to assist us with the distribution of these forms. With our payroll provider, you will be able to view and print a copy of your T4 online. The MPP tax receipts will come directly to you from the corporation; we do not produce these at Phoenix. Likewise, for those of you who are contributing to our Group RRSP, Standard Life will issue tax receipts directly to you.

You should receive your 2012 Revenue Canada income tax return sometime in February 2013. For those of you who choose to claim employment-related expenses for your 2012 return, Revenue Canada will require a T2200 form signed by your employer. I will gladly fill out the employer-related sections of this form for you, but Phoenix does not have these forms available on site. You can download the T2200 from the Revenue Canada website (www.cra-arc.gc.ca) and drop it off to me. I will get these back to you within one week.

Another question that comes up around this time of year is whether Phoenix will be covering some of the cost of personal planners for staff. Just to give the newer employees some history, a few years back, Phoenix was in a good financial position to offer a partial subsidy towards the purchase of annual personal planners. With the cuts the agency experienced a few years ago, we unfortunately had to make some tough decisions around our discretionary spending. While Phoenix is in a much more stable financial place today, the cost of doing the work that we do continues to rise and the money to cover these increases has to be found within our current funding, much of which isn't growing in line with cost increases. To help explain the difference



between a required expense and a discretionary expense, some of our required expenses include things like the benefit plans, MSP coverage, Worksafe BC premiums, First Aid recertification, Criminal Record Reviews, and others that are required by virtue of a variety of agreements and legislation including the BCGEU collective agreement, Employment Standards, BC Occupational Health and Safety Guidelines, and CARF accreditation standards, to name a few. Required expenses are generally funded through our contracts, but we rarely receive any additional funding if our required costs increase. We have

experienced increases of up to 42% in our Health Benefits over the last 2 years. The MSP premiums have increased 12% over the last 2 years and are going up again in January, 2013. The First Aid recertification cost has increased 44% this year.

Discretionary expenses are those expenses that Phoenix chooses to incur for staff, which include things like cell phones, personalized business cards, and personalized voice mail and e-mail systems. Our ability to address discretionary costs vary year to year, with some clearly prioritized over others (e.g. personalized business cards over personal planners). There are other cost pressures that influence how much room there is to address discretionary expenses. For example, we have consistently increased our training budget for staff over the past few years and in the first 6 months of this fiscal year, our training costs have increased by 70%. The new website is currently in development and we have paid 50% (\$3,450) of the cost thus far, but anticipate cost overruns, so we expect the final tally to be somewhere closer to \$7,000-\$8,000.

So the long and short of the story is, with increasing costs and no additional funding, Phoenix unfortunately will not be subsidizing personal planners this year. Please remember that we do have printed calendars available at the Store Street office as a low cost alternative.

If you have any questions, please e-mail me directly at jchalmers@phoenixhumanservices.org. I will be providing regular financial updates in the newsletters, so if there's something you want to ask me....please do.

Looking to Give a Little or a Lot?

~ by Donna Washington (DW)



The Mustard Seed is a non-profit organization that among a long list of other services and supports, provides the largest food bank on Vancouver Island. The food bank provides nutritious food to those in need on an ongoing basis throughout the year. The Mustard Seed work goes a long way in the fight against hunger and poverty. If you would like to be a part of the fight, please take a few moments to look at their website (www.mustardseed.ca), as they have made it very easy to donate in a number of different ways. There will be boxes at Joan Crescent and Store Street for the collection of non-perishable food. I will personally make a point of ensuring the donated food gets into the hands of the Mustard Seed. I have printed off the Mustard Seed Food Bank Shopping List and will post them to the boxes for reference, if you would like to know which items they are requesting.

Beginning With Diversity

~ by Sylvia Raju

After our strategic planning sessions last month, what resonated with a few of us was the staff's reported admiration for Phoenix as an agency because of its openness to diversity. As we glanced around the room during these sessions, it occurred to us that although we have some level of diversity with regard to staff and client base, it was not enough. Diversity is not solely about the individuals within an agency, be it staff or client; it is also about having a deeper understanding of how the world functions, and our role as an agency and staff in the maintenance of a particular status quo. When speaking about diversity, what most often comes up is the value of difference, so I question: Why is there difference? What makes something different? What purpose does difference serve? Why is diversity being used synonymously with difference?

In another office, Karen Basi sat mulling over all the information gathered at the strategic planning seminars. Words to action...she had a simple response: "Let's start a diversity committee". And she did. At present, there are six Phoenix staff members from various programs and agency levels who are gathering regularly to move forward the agenda of diversity in our agency. This group is in its infancy stage, and, as it develops, there will be exciting opportunities for all agency staff to become involved. The hope at present is that a small group of action-oriented individuals will establish a solid foundation upon which Phoenix can then build an invaluable and inclusive diversity model. The following definitions are intended to clarify our perspective on diversity. Again, we are at the infancy stage! So much so, that in order to develop a long-term plan which will allow us to grow as an agency and expand our presence in the community, we must first establish some core foundational beliefs. We have done this by defining what Agency diversity means in the context of the work we do at Phoenix:

Agency Diversity: With an understanding that inequality is built into the core foundations of daily practices, Phoenix will work towards respecting, valuing, and supporting multiple ways of being by promoting equality through increased accessibility and growing our presence in the community.

We recognize that taking Phoenix in this new and exciting direction will also require a level of training for individuals at all levels of the agency. This will not be a simple process, but one well worth the journey. By addressing organizational barriers and increasing staff's skills in providing equitable services, we as an agency can, with great pride and integrity, take Phoenix well into the future.



Transformative knowledge is disturbing by nature. It disturbs commonly acceptable ways of doing and disturbs the person implementing it. It ruffles the smoothness of our habits, rattles our certainties, disorganizes and reorganizes our understandings, shakes our complacency, [and] unhinges us from secure moorings.

~ "Innovations in Narrative Therapy: correcting, practice, training, & research" Jim Duvall & Laura Bères

Did you know...

Phoenix has received \$974.26 from the Thrifty Foods Smile Card Program for the period of June to November, 2012. We have had nine requests submitted to the TOEM fund for the period of April to November, 2012 that have been approved for a total of \$951.34. What this means is, that if we keep up this pace, both in terms of fundraising and expenditures, we will have fully subsidized the TOEM fund thereby making it sustainable over the long term. That's a fantastic achievement in such a short space of time. The TOEM fund balance now rests at \$5150.92. Many thanks to all of you who made this possible.

thank
you!



Did you know...

Iona G., AYCW with the Children's Team, successfully lobbied on behalf of a youth that she is supporting to be the first recipient of the Shiny Side Up fund. The \$703.98 award will pay for an Apple iPad 2 and a custom app in order to help this youth expand her communication abilities, including assisting her to understand expectations by providing visual steps and gaining social and life skills through visual modelling. Hopefully, Iona will write a feature story in the spring newsletter. We are grateful to the Vancouver Island Charity Riders for their generous donation that has enabled this youth to benefit in this way. **FYI, next cut-off for Shiny Side Up applications is March 31, 2013.**

**While we try to teach our children all about life,
Our children teach us what life is about.**

~ Angela Schwindt

Working out is good for the brain as well as the heart

By ANDRE PICARD (The Globe & Mail, October 29, 2012)

Small Montreal study prompts more research into the positive impact of exercise on cognitive declines associated with aging

Can a little bit of exercise make you smarter? Or, stated more precisely, can regular activity help slow the cognitive declines associated with aging? A small but intriguing study suggests that the answer to those two questions is Yes. "The message from this research is that exercise is not just good for your heart, it's good for your brain," Dr. Martin Juneau, director of prevention at the Montreal Heart Institute, said in an interview. "If you're looking for a little bit more motivation to exercise, hopefully this is it."

The study, being presented Monday at the Canadian Cardiovascular Congress in Toronto, showed that a group of middle-aged, sedentary, overweight adults could, over a period of just a few months, significantly improve standard measures of cognition including the ability to think clearly, recall and make quick decisions. Oh, and they also lost weight, shrunk their waist size, became more flexible and dramatically improved their endurance.

Dr. Juneau, who oversees a huge facility in Montreal where patients recovering from heart surgery and the ill-effects of cardiovascular disease come for rehabilitative exercise, said he was approached by a group of individuals who wanted to participate in a popular Quebec event, Le Grand Défi Pierre Lavoie, in which small teams cycle 1,000 kilometres around Quebec to promote youth physical activity. The researcher agreed to train them on the condition that they would become research subjects. "This is a hot topic, exercise and the brain, so we saw it as an opportunity to do some tests on regular people," he said.

None of the six team members – four men and two women – did any exercise. They were all overweight, with an average body mass index of 29 and an average waistline of 103 centimetres (well above the recommended 94 cm for men and 80 cm for women). Their average age was 49. They also underwent a battery of tests to measure cognitive skills and use of oxygen by the brain. Their exercise program consisted of two sessions of high-intensity interval training on stationary bicycles, one 'long' bike ride outside of about 40 minutes, and two brief weight-training sessions. The key exercise was the interval training, which consisted of pedalling to maximum ability for 45 seconds, followed by 45 seconds rest, this for a total of 20 minutes. (The Montreal Heart Institute uses this method to help rehabilitate heart patients.)

After four months of training, the team successfully completed the 1,000 kilometre trek, with little difficulty. Dr. Juneau said the physical changes – four kilos of weight loss and waists that were nine centimetres smaller on average – were not surprising. Neither was the sharply increased capacity to exercise, measured by VO2 max (or peak oxygen uptake).

But the researchers were surprised at the dramatic changes in blood flow to the brain and in cognition. Interestingly, the improvements in cognition mirrored weight loss: In other words, the more weight the participants lost, the sharper their brains became. "These were average people, and we saw big changes," Dr. Juneau said.

He cautioned that the study is very small – only six people. The research is now being reproduced on a much larger scale, and Dr. Juneau is confident that he will get similar results. "In the end, cognitive decline is largely a blood vessel problem. The brain is loaded with blood vessels and if you make those healthier with exercise, you reduce the risk of decline," he said. "It's very similar to the heart." Canada's physical activity guidelines recommend that adults be moderately active – the equivalent of a brisk walk – 30 minutes a day, every day. For children, the standard is 60 minutes. According to Statistics Canada, only 15 per cent of adults and seven per cent of children meet that minimum standard daily. In fact, the average Canadian adult spends 50 to 70 per cent of their daily lives sitting, and roughly another 30 per cent sleeping.

Research published earlier this month in the medical journal *Diabetologia* compared disease rates between the most active and least active adults, and it found those who were largely sedentary had a 147-per-cent increased risk of heart attack or stroke, a 112-per-cent increase in the risk of developing diabetes, a 90-per-cent greater risk of dying from a cardiac event and a 49-per-cent greater risk of premature mortality.

A total of 69,703 Canadians died of cardiovascular disease in 2009, the most recent year for which detailed data are available, according to Statistics Canada. That is 29 per cent of all deaths



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The opinions expressed by those interviewed or those contributing are not necessarily those of Phoenix Human Services Association or its management.

The Hard Hat Trio

~ by Nicole Coutts

Do you ever stop to wonder how broken kitchen cabinets become functional again? Burned out lights are replaced so the room is once again illuminated? Old carpet is replaced with gleaming new linoleum? All of these tasks, and many more, are completed by the Maintenance Committee. I know, you're thinking, "I've heard of the Health and Safety Committee and the Staff Satisfaction Committee, but what is this Maintenance Committee all about?" Well, let me introduce you to a small but diligent group consisting of Joan Chalmers (Director of Finance and Operations), Donna Washington (Day Program Coordinator) and me, Nicole (Community Living Services for Children Program Coordinator). The committee was developed to address the many day to day items, as well as the larger items, which require attention in order to keep Store Street and Joan Crescent operational for all the programs that access these spaces.

To assist us in ensuring that our buildings are well maintained and concerns are addressed in a timely manner, we developed a process which allows us to track requests and ensure that follow-up information is communicated to staff. Please take a moment to read through the following information.

For what type of concern should I complete a request form?

A *Maintenance Request Form* should be completed for general repairs such as non-functioning drawers, leaking taps, broken door knobs, etc. If the item in question has a potential health and safety implication, a *Health and Safety Concern Form* should be completed, **not** a *Maintenance Request Form*.

Where do I get the forms?

Store Street: the forms are located in the mail slots in the client file room. Maintenance Request forms for Store Street are to be placed in Joan Chalmers' mailbox, which is in the client file room at the Store Street office.

Joan Crescent: the forms are located in the mail slots in the admin office. Maintenance Request forms for Joan Crescent are to be placed in Donna Washington's mailbox, which is in the admin office at Joan Crescent.

How do I complete the form?

The committee will be able to address your request with greater efficiency if all of the form is thoroughly completed. The amount of detail that is provided in the "nature of the request" section of the form will assist the committee representative in assessing the most appropriate course of action. As repair tasks may be delegated to more than one committee representative, it is imperative that only one request is completed per form. If you have two requests, please complete two forms.

Why do I have to fill out a maintenance request form?

Staff are being directed to complete a *Maintenance Request Form* for the following reasons: 1) information will be reported in the same manner by all staff, 2) the requests can be clearly and effectively communicated to all committee members, 3) increased accountability from the committee to staff regarding the outcome of the request, and 4) all requests are forwarded to a central individual, who then distributes tasks to committee members.



during service hours that it is not disruptive to established programming.

Will I get any feedback regarding my request?

The committee representative who books the service will document the action taken and communicate the action/outcome to the staff who initiated the request.

I have completed the form. Now what?

Once the form is either faxed or placed in the appropriate mail slot, the request will be forwarded to the Maintenance Committee. A committee representative will communicate with staff to ensure that if a repair is to be scheduled

First Aid

~ by DW, co-chair Health and Safety Committee

Over the last few months, the agency has been engaging in a review of our first aid training requirements. This review was partially prompted after trying to assess whether the various first aid training certifications that were being offered in the community all contained the required components as outlined by Phoenix. After many phone calls and research, we learned that some changes were required. A document explaining the reasons for the change, what the changes are, and how staff can expect to arrange for the first aid training will be e-mailed to all staff and programs. Program Coordinators will be reviewing the changes in your upcoming team meetings as well. Copies of the document will be available at reception for the next month and then available throughout the year on the Health & Safety boards at each site.

I have a simple philosophy: Fill what's empty. Empty what's full. Scratch where it itches.
~ Alice Roosevelt Longworth

Clutter ~ by DW

In attempts to de-clutter our wonderful Store Street work space, I have collected miscellaneous items which were found around the office. These items will be kept **temporarily** in boxes on the table in the kitchen by the front entrance. These boxes will be deemed lost and found until the end of the December, when the items will then be made available to staff or clients who can put any of the items to good use. Come January 18th, the remaining items will be donated.



Changing of the Guard

~ by GK

Earlier this week, the Phoenix Board of Directors met for a regular board meeting and as is the custom for the first board meeting following the AGM, the board dealt with the assignment of officers. As a result of that process, Signi Thorleifson is the new President, Susie Girling moves to Vice President, and Gil Owen will remain as Treasurer. The post of Secretary vacated by Signi will be filled at some point in the future.

I want to congratulate Signi on her appointment, and also Susie for both her longstanding service as President and for her willingness to stay in a position of leadership with the role of Vice-President. I also want to express my gratitude to Mary, who was an excellent Vice-President and often stepped in to chair various processes as part of her role. Kudos to Gil as well, for his willingness to serve once again in the highly accountable role of Treasurer.

As President, Susie saw us through some very difficult times and with her ever increasing and challenging demands at VIHA, she felt she just couldn't give the organization her fullest attention. Signi has a great deal of management and leadership ability and experience, as well as being a very passionate and highly resourceful individual. She will be taking a planned three month leave to Central America in January and is expected to return in April, fully rested and raring to go. Susie will be the 'go to' person in her absence.

A Giant Leap ~ by GK

With the recent conclusion of our staff and public strategic planning consultations regarding our future as a community social service agency, there has been, understandably, a great deal of interest and motivation to propel this agenda forward. I'm with you there. Unfortunately, time of late has not been on my side and as a result, my contribution to the momentum has been slow and steady.

A big chunk of my time has gone into developing the new web site, especially making sure that it has all of the components that we need to make us stand out as much as we want to moving forward. For the first time, we can tell our stories to a broader audience, share our events widely, promote others in the community, fundraise actively, blog poetically, and engage in the social media stratosphere. The website has gone through the architecture and design phases and is currently being developed on to our web server where we will host the site. Shortly, we will receive training in the content management software so we can begin to enter the content we want the public to see before the official launch, which is likely to be in February, 2013.

The next two big pieces for me will be the distillation of the new mission, vision, and values from the strategic planning consultations and the creation of the Strategic Plan itself. With respect to the former, I will be meeting soon with Jennifer Charlesworth (who facilitated our staff and public meetings) to pull out the rich and key messages coming out of the planning process and to wordsmith the mission and vision in a way that accurately captures what was said and intended.

From there, I will be setting up a couple of consultations with staff in early January to tease out a bit more detail about the human resources development piece that was a key theme in those meetings. After that, a draft of the Strategic Plan will be written and shared with staff and Board for feedback. The final Strategic Plan will then be submitted to the Board for ratification.

In the meantime, Emma, whom many of you know from the Supervised Access program, is helping us to build a database of local, regional, and national granting bodies that we could strategically target throughout the year to develop new, and build on existing, programming.

Finally, Signi (Board President) and I will be meeting with fundraising guru Judy Lightwater, to explore the whole set of parameters that the Board must work within with respect to taking a role in fundraising for the organization. Signi recently attended the 'Board Voice' AGM and conference in Richmond and had the pleasure of seeing Judy in action. Needless to say, she is pumped about fundraising.

This is undoubtedly going to be an interesting year. We have worked hard during some of the most trying of times to build the foundation from which to create the changes that many of you have patiently waited to see. More than ever, that famous quote from Mahatma Gandhi now applies to Phoenix: "**You must be the change you wish to see in the world.**" The new Phoenix will depend on our collective ability to be that which we wish to see in the organization. Ready or not ... here we come!

People know you for what
you've done; not for what
you plan to do.
~ unknown



Look at a day when
you are supremely
satisfied at the end.
It's not a day when
you lounge around
doing nothing; it's
when you've had
everything to do, and
you've done it.
~Margaret Thatcher



Life is mostly froth and
bubble,
Two things stand like
stone,
Kindness in another's
trouble,
Courage in your own.
~ Adam Lindsey Gordon

A Final Thought — Anti-fragility?

~ by GK

I'd like to wrap up this edition of 'Phoenix Rising' with another soapbox rant. Many of you have heard me say time and time again that our present reality is one that demands a different set of adaptation skills. In effect, things are moving so quickly and change is one of those things. The pace of change is such that periods of relative stability are becoming a rare commodity. This means that we have to operate in a state of readiness, preparedness, and willingness to leave things behind, even things we like, and embrace new things, even things we don't like.

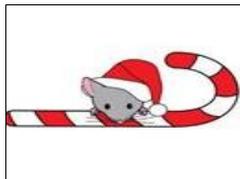
I've also ranted about resilience, and especially how resilient the Phoenix staff has been in the face of a barrage of difficult changes over the years. This has served us well and will continue to do so into the future.

So, one day, I'm thinking about how to pool our collective strength and talent to face this new reality when the e-mail blips on the screen and what should I see but a Globe and Mail article entitled, "Why Trauma May Be Just What You Need". Needless to say, I was intrigued by the title because in our field, trauma is something we see often and people are always affected in an adverse way.

The article is about the ideas of economist Nassim Nicholas Taleb and in particular, those contained in his latest book, "Antifragility: Things That Gain from Disorder". Taleb argues that the opposite of being vulnerable to random events is not simply to be sturdy or adaptable, but actually to thrive on some degree of calamity and improve by it. He goes on to challenge the 'fragilistas' whom he believes make things more dangerous by seeking an unrealizable stability and suggests instead a 'hormetic' approach, where the system is strengthened by virtue of its exposure to small doses of toxins.

He goes on to say that the best innovations are born out of necessity and require a quality of conviction that is seldom borne out of methodical intent. This contradicts contemporary ideas of innovation, "as we tend to think that innovation comes from bureaucratic funding, through planning, or by putting people through a Harvard Business School class by one Highly Decorated Professor of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (who never innovated anything) or hiring a consultant (who never innovated anything)." (from Nassim Taleb)

To wrap up this final thought, perhaps common clichés like "no pain, no gain" or "when life gives you lemons ..." arise from a similar premise and in our case, I suspect that we will more readily find opportunities for growth if we learn to embrace, and not resist, difficult times.



Be not afraid of going slowly; be afraid only of standing still.
~ Chinese proverb

Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference.
~ Winston Churchill

I worked to cultivate a freedom from anticipation — that urgent thief who steals the minute-to-minute awareness of life. I was content to stay on another day in the good company of raw nature and a book by Thoreau...I reconfirmed the lesson I'm condemned to learn over and over again: our days are stolen by our constant grasping at the phantoms of future happiness as we think about living — rather than living itself — trapping us in our yesterdays and tomorrows.
~ James Baldwin

