

# BOARD CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT



*2020-2021  
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 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 supported 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

Our mandate is to provide employment and skills training to people facing barriers to employment, including individuals living with disabilities or chronic health issues. Our clients include; 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. Further, our mandate is to research the development of programs in employment and entrepreneurship, leadership, and distance learning. To fulfill this mandate, we serve approximately 250 clients per year. We are serving clients in eight to 10 provinces or territories simultaneously at any given time.



## *Funders and Partners*

Our partners make our Vision a reality because we are different from many not-for-profit entities. *After all, we are a virtual organization.*

We appreciate our partner, the Government of Canada Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities, National Programs.

We are indebted to Shaw Communications for their support in running our public service announcements on national TV.

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

We want to acknowledge a new corporate donor, Roper Greyell LLP, for making a generous donation from its Christmas fund to MAKE A CHANGE CANADA during the year.

We want to acknowledge the Wheeldon Peschke Group of CIBC Wood Gundy for their generous donation during the year, which will give individuals in the local community the opportunity to expand their tech skills. So, thank you for your continued, ongoing support.

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

Ensuring we meet the needs of our clients has been a challenge during Covid. Our CEO, Anne-Marie Edgar, has worked diligently to ensure that the needs of our clients were met in alignment with the expectations of our funders.

Her efforts were successful because of the staff's loyalty and commitment to the mandate of MAKE A CHANGE CANADA. We want to thank them for all the excellent work they provide to our clients. To our clients, I want to send a sincere appreciation for availing of our services and demonstrating that our supports make a difference in their lives and futures.



## *Achievements*

Two significant achievements include completing our Board's governance policies and becoming reaccredited under the Imagine Canada Standards Program.

Our third success was being part of the national response to COVID-19, successfully rolling out COVID-19 support to people with disabilities across Canada through the additional program, GoRemoteNow!

## *Challenges*

We have had challenges this year, and we continue to be faced with COVID-19, but I am happy to say that the organization is doing well. Not only did the organization thrive, but staff stepped up to help bring support to people with disabilities where they needed it while taking precautions or protections to safeguard their own health and safety.

## *Looking Forward*

Our attention to board governance is essential. This oversight means strategically planning, budgeting effectively, monitoring diligently, problem solving promptly, and ensuring that we continue to support our team as it meets the national needs of persons with disabilities.

The Board is committed to its role. We are always open to ensuring that our actions support the actions of our team to provide employment and skills training to people facing barriers to employment, including individuals living with disabilities or chronic health issues.

# CEO REPORT



*2020-2021  
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 2020-2021. 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 three online programs during the year. First, The Tech Diversity Online Program is an employment and self-employment program, providing enhanced employment services to people with disabilities across Canada.

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

Third, we ran the GoRemoteNow! Program, which was part of the national response to COVID-19. This short-term project ran for half of the year under a special initiative to bring relief and career assistance to people with disabilities. There was a focus on remote work placements, expanding training opportunities, and participant and employer retrofits.

We also produced a Desktop Calendar for 2021 during the year, featuring our clients and graduates.



## *Good News Stories*

It was a year of achievements, despite COVID. One outstanding achievement during the entire year was celebrating our 15<sup>th</sup> year of providing online career assistance and skills training across Canada. Completing 15 years of successful operations is a real milestone for the organization.

In terms of new programs — not a new program per se, but — with the Rogers Fire Nuggets Social Enterprise, we added a second production group in the community of Cranbrook, British Columbia.

We continued with the brand recognition for our programs under [anycareer.ca](https://anycareer.ca) and [studyanywhere.ca](https://studyanywhere.ca) with some great audio visual and multimedia productions to bring interest and clients to these programs.

## *Stability and Funding*

We had stability through the year due to our current funding agreements with the Opportunities Fund. We received an upward amendment under our current funding agreement for \$405,088 and an extension to March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022. This amendment was provided specifically to allow us to continue our regular activities, as well as add activities in order to continue the special initiative launched in 2020-2021 (i.e., the GoRemoteNow! Program). Under this contract amendment, we received approval to serve an additional 110 clients in the Tech Diversity Online Program.



## *Community Connections*

In June 2020 we held an industry roundtable on the topic of Hiring for Diversity. We used a successful work placement as the case study, and we discussed the mentorship of people with disabilities. In January 2021 we gave a presentation at the National Career Development Conference on the unique nature of our programs, in supporting clients in our programs who are straddling both employment and self-employment career goals. We also completed upgrades to two of our advanced courses in the Certificate in Web Development and Design Program.

We successfully rolled out the new GoRemoteNow! Program as part of the national response to COVID-19. Under GoRemoteNow!, for the first time, we provided equipment and physical retrofits to employers and organizations who provide supportive employment to people with disabilities. One of the organizations we provided with a retrofit has been able to train their participants in computers, and another has been able to provide training in robotics to people with disabilities.



## *Staff Engagement*

I have begun a process of staff engagement which enabled me to determine how to interact with a remote staff with maximum effectiveness. This process will continue in the new year as it enables me to hear their concerns, be proactive, and ensure that our team is strong and supportive of each other and the mission of Make A Change Canada.



## *Challenges and Resiliency*

The year was not without its challenges. GoRemoteNow! was a large-scale project that stretched us to increase capacity, but we were able to get new systems, services, and staff up and running quickly and efficiently. Our staff worked extremely hard for the success of the programs and the participant outcomes.

COVID-19 continued to challenge us during the year; some of our staff, especially those in Ontario, were under lengthy lockdowns, and thankfully managed through the difficult times. To brighten days and ease the strain of COVID-19 we created a Connection and Community Webinar Series. We also collated mental health and COVID-19 resources to have on hand, should any of our clients require outside assistance.

## Client Testimonials

I have four testimonials from anonymous contributors who are clients in the program.

***“Thank you for this wonderful opportunity to expand my business and kick-start the motivation going forward during a pandemic.”***

***“I appreciated the assistance with setting up my office comfortably, so that I could work and feel professional. It made me feel so much better about myself. It improved my confidence in my abilities.”***

***“The program has moved me ahead; it made me feel supported and valuable. It is great to have programs to do that. This team is top-notch and does so much already.”***

***“I love the support from my employment specialist. The personal touch she provided was so different compared to other employment counsellors that I have worked with. I sincerely thank her for choosing me as a client and for nominating me for the GoRemoteNow! success story.”***

We received a wonderful testimonial from an employer who took advantage of the Wage Subsidy Program during the year:

***“I wanted to thank everyone at Make A Change Canada for the amazing opportunity to participate as an employer in the GoRemoteNow! Program. Our experience, hiring an employee under a wage subsidy, has been nothing short of remarkable.***

***Rose joined our organization through the program, and has since been hired full-time with us. While exceeding performance expectations, she has also brought an energy and perspective that we did not have previously. She truly has embraced her role and made our team more well-rounded, diverse — and ultimately, stronger.***

***Make A Change Canada's programs have a ripple-effect that touches all, and I'm very proud to be a part of it.”*** — Vincent Bucciachio, SociallyInfused Media from Hamilton, Ontario (with his permission).

## Conclusion

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.

