

Facilitating services for public good 'fulfilling' 📄

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About four years ago, the Public Good Society was formed by a group of concerned citizens interested in promoting awareness among marginalized people regarding services they were entitled to, and needed. More recently, this effort has expanded to include church leaders and mental health managers.

The PGS applied for government funding to create a facilitator-connector position to bridge the gaps in service delivery between clients and service providers.

This person primarily works with persons using downtown Dartmouth food banks or meal programs (such as Feeding Others of Dartmouth) and with service-providers in the immediate locale. The creation of this position has proven very effective in helping displaced people find work, find mental health services, and find what they were looking for.

As the third facilitator-connector in the organization's history, having started last month. I have begun to be present at the local food banks and FOOD. I have also been visiting the local service-providers, introducing myself and attending various orientation sessions. It's been a huge learning curve.

My professional background is 18 years of church ministry, which included volunteer assignments at street shelters for homeless men in Ottawa, Toronto and Halifax. I am finding this experience unique and enormously fulfilling. Four days a week I am given the privilege to sit and talk with people who rarely find anyone who is willing to listen. The stories I hear are sometimes emotional, sometimes inspiring, and always interesting. I write down what I remember and with the permission of the client I call potential service-providers who can assist with stated needs.

Many of our clients list jobs as their priority. I have recently been accompanying women and men to the Career Development Office on Wyse Road, where they receive a thorough orientation and assistance in preparing resumes and looking at work possibilities.

The Public Good Society's most recent funding comes from the Department of Community Services and the program I am with is called Connections that Work. The funding will last for another six months. The Public Good Society has long term objectives to strengthen or improve the continuum of services for people living in difficult circumstances, living in poverty, etc.

Should you become aware of someone who could use the services of a "facilitator-connector," please do not hesitate to call me at 476-0785.