



A-Way Express
THE WHOLE PACKAGE

Annual Report

2015-16

Report from A-Way's Board of Directors

The past year has been a challenging one for A-Way.

This time last year our organization was facing serious financial problems. All staff at A-Way are to be commended for their loyal contributions to help A-Way to weather the storm. Our scaled down Annual Meeting, with home-made sandwiches and a bare bones agenda, was just the tip of an iceberg that saw reduced staff salaries and even the elimination of some positions.

Fortunately, our major funder, the Toronto Central LHIN came through at the end of the fiscal year with a one- time grant, which allowed us to balance the books and to upgrade some of our operating systems and our order taking technology.

These financial and operational challenges prompted the A-Way Board of Directors in early January to decide to explore integration opportunities with a partner agency to bring greater administrative strength to A-Way so that we can focus on our business and provide productive and supportive employment. Those discussions are now well underway.

The entire A-Way community also shared, each of us in our own way, Meredith's heartbreaking loss in June. I know we all join together to wish her the best at this time.

We are grateful that in recent months we have had the leadership and guidance of Paul Dowling, who is serving as Interim Executive Director and is also leading the integration process. Paul brings experience with both functions, having served as Interim Executive Director at A-Way in the past and also having facilitated integration for other mental health agencies.

I thank all of the staff and board for your commitment to the mission of A-Way Express. We look forward to our next year with hope and enthusiasm for new beginnings and increased opportunities for A-Way Express and its wonderful staff community.

Jackie Rankine, Community Chair September 2016

As I come to the end of my second year on the board of directors I would like to say that I am always pleased with the strength and resilience shown by everyone who works at A-Way. Whether it is a courier on a rush delivery finding a way to make the delivery on time, despite a closure on the subway, or managers having to make do with less, everyone here always manages to find a way to get the job done.

As usual at every AGM, people come and go from the board. Leaving this year will be the chair of our Human Resources committee, Edith Sinclair. I would like to thank her for the six years she has been on our board and the work she has done. I'd like to thank our previous treasurer Richard Wu, who retired in the spring and Andres Yamsuan, who retired from the board as well. Michele MacAulay will also be retiring from the board this year. Thank you to all of you for your tireless efforts.

I'd like to join Jackie in saying how much we all shared in the loss suffered by Meredith in June. One of her beliefs in life is *"the words "not possible" are an opportunity to rise to the challenge"*. I feel that everyone at A-Way continues to rise to all the challenges we face everyday.

Peter MacDonald, In-house Chair, September 2016

Volunteer Board of Directors of A-Way Express 2015-16

Jackie Rankine - Community co-chair
Peter MacDonald - In-house co-chair
Edith Sinclair - Chair, Human Resources Committee
Bill Kennedy - Treasurer (Appointed during the year)
Jim Ward - Chair, Governance Committee
Michele MacAulay - In house member
Ludwig Reindl - In house member
Dwayne Shaw - In house member
Joanna Pawelkiewicz - Community member
Jaipreet Kohli - Community member (Appointed during the year)
Richard Wu - Treasurer (Retired during the year)
Andres Yamsuan - Community member (Retired during the year)



From left to right:

Richard Wu (Treasurer), Jackie Rankine (Co-Chair), Andres Yamsuan, Jim Ward, Meredith Cochrane (Ex-Officio), Michele MacAulay, Dwayne Shaw, Peter MacDonald (Co-Chair)

Report from Interim Executive Director Paul Dowling

It is a real pleasure for me to be back at A-Way to fill in while Meredith Cochrane is on leave. For many staff and board members I am a familiar face, having filled this role on previous occasions. I am very proud to have been here in 2012 when A-Way developed its 5 year Strategic Plan and to have supported the Board to hire Meredith, as a strong leader, to see that Strategic Plan through to completion.

It is gratifying for me to see the tremendous progress that has been made at A-Way since I was last here:

- A successful rebranding exercise to give A-Way and our couriers a fresh new look
- Creation of the Operations Manager position and hiring of Jim Priestman into that role to put a clearer focus on management of the business
- Creation of the Employment Support Specialist role to put a distinct emphasis on supporting A-Way staff to explore wider employment opportunities
- Introduction of new technology to allow for on-line ordering.

Over the past few years A-Way has carried out a lot of study and research, exploring new ways to make the business grow, to provide more and higher quality employment opportunities and to sustain the good work of A-Way into the future. We continue to explore those ideas and to look at ways in which A-Way can collaborate with like minded people and organizations to achieve our shared goals.

A-Way works with other consumer survivor organizations through the Consumer Survivor Initiative Network to demonstrate ways in which our shared work empowers people who have experienced mental health challenges to take responsibility for our shared success. We have participated with other Social Purpose Enterprises to highlight the success of commercial business to serve a social purpose.

We are currently exploring new ways to work more closely with like minded organizations, sharing resources to increase our efficiency and to benefit from the expertise and experience of others.

As we look ahead to our 30th year in business, we marvel at the incredible success we have shared, providing meaningful employment and delivering excellent customer service for so much longer than any of our founders could have imagined. We look to the future with the hope that we can continue to do this work for many years to come and that, through innovation and collaboration, we will expand the scope of our work into areas we have not yet imagined.

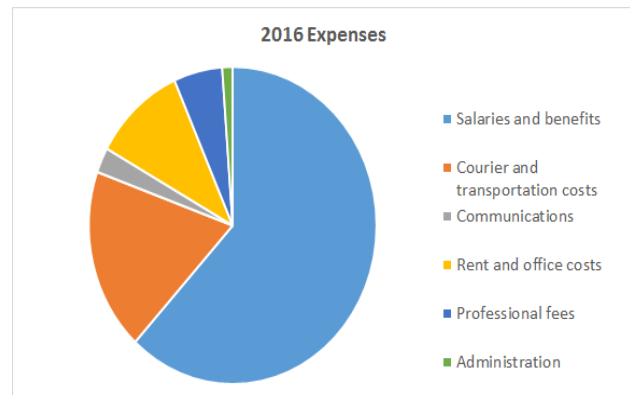
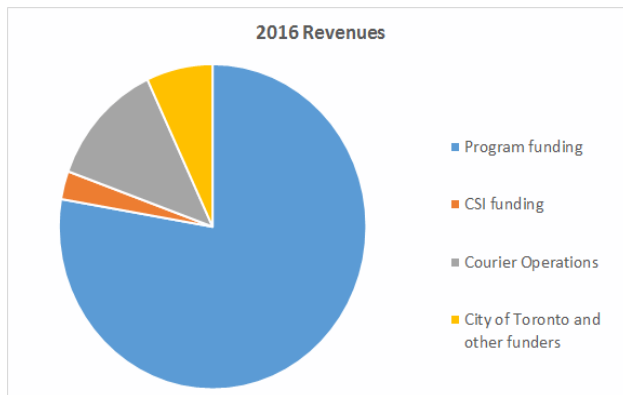
Paul Dowling
Interim Executive Director

Financial Report 2015-16

Applause Community Development Corporation Carrying on Business as A-Way Express Courier

2016 was a busy year. A renewed focus on cost control allowed A-Way to align expenses with revenues and return to a healthy cash position. As the newly appointed Treasurer, I will continue this initiative as the team works to find new ways to help the people we serve.

Bill Kennedy, Treasurer



Applause Community Development Corporation Summary Statement of Operations For the year ended March 31, 2016

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
Revenues		
Program funding	828,590	745,732
CSI funding	30,000	30,000
Courier Operations	133,135	134,419
City of Toronto and other funders	74,365	150,257
	<u>1,066,090</u>	<u>1,060,408</u>
Expenses		
Salaries and benefits	656,379	682,152
Courier and transportation costs	197,525	211,762
Communications	27,172	14,523
Rent and office costs	109,622	124,916
Professional fees	57,853	21,143
Administration	12,456	28,571
	<u>1,061,007</u>	<u>1,083,067</u>
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses	<u>5,083</u>	<u>(22,659)</u>

Audited financial statements are available upon request.

Applause Community Development Corporation Summary Statement of Financial Position As at March 31, 2016

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
Assets		
Cash	129,222	76,917
Accounts receivable	38,108	59,767
Prepaid expenses	2,719	3,717
	<u>170,049</u>	<u>140,401</u>
Liabilities & Fund Balances		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	70,174	47,578
Payroll government remittances payable	15,507	13,538
Fund Balances		
Ministry of Health	0	4,142
Commercial Fund	42,720	39,270
Other Funders Fund	41,648	35,873
	<u>170,049</u>	<u>140,401</u>

Audited financial statements are available upon request.

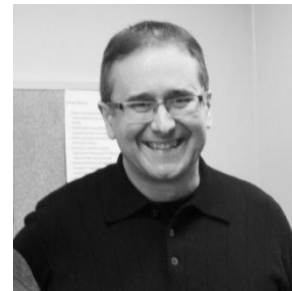
Employment Support

Some A-Way employees stay with A-Way for a long time, while others choose to use the experience they gain at A-Way as a first step to transition into other employment – either in careers they have had in the past, or forging new paths.

Supported by the City of Toronto’s Homelessness Partnering Strategy, A-Way now has a dedicated Employment Support Specialist who develops training, partnerships, mentorships and placement programs to help staff develop new skills, experiences and connections. In addition, our Employment Specialist meets one on one with staff to help them create resumés, to practice interview skills and to investigate personal career options.

A-Way encourages all staff to gain new skills and experience through internal opportunities such as new positions within the office, sitting on the A-Way Board of Directors or joining one of the organization’s standing committees.

A-Way really does fit well into my life right now. I especially value having the Metro Pass and going to the job fairs. I also am glad I am free to look for other work if I want to with the full support of the staff who work here. (Maira)



A-Way’s Employment Support Specialist,
Scott McCauley

Maira’s Story

I worked at A-Way part-time for 5 years from 2001 to 2006 - some of the time as a courier and some of it on reception. The work on reception helped me get a similar part-time job at Houselink. I stayed at Houselink for 8 years.

Through the years, I kept contact with some of the people here and came to some A-Way events. After reaching retirement age, I was looking for something to do that would suit me. I put my name on the waiting list and was fortunate enough to finally start working here again this last April as a courier.

My motivation this second time working here is a little different. I still have the original reasons but I also really value getting the exercise when I am working. I think this is because I am a little older now as it makes more of a difference.

Some of the things that impressed me when I first came to work here:

- there was a waiting list; they didn’t just say “No”
- there was the choice of hours! You could start at 8:30 am, 10:30 am or 12:30 pm
- as well, you could choose the number of days you wanted to work - from 2 days to more
- there was understanding around mental health issues; they understood that people sometimes need time off for such things as relapses, adjusting to new medication, or to stay in a hospital

for a while. This is quite remarkable in the general work force and means a lot. You don't have to go around pretending or fearing that you will lose your job.

- Scott told me about workshops and job training events. Anyone who was interested was welcome to come. The workshops could help you whether you were just thinking about working here or if you were a long-time A-Way employee or if you wanted to work elsewhere. Whatever your choice, you could get support. This is one of the main things I like about A-Way - the range of choices they give you!

Peter's Story



I've been working at A-way Express for 7 years. I started as a courier and eventually applied for a relief order taker job. Two years ago I put my name up for election to the Board of Directors. After I joined the board I was asked if I was interested in becoming the in-house co-chair of the Board of Directors.

As co-chair of the board one of my jobs is chairing the board meetings on a rotating basis with the other co-chair. I am also on some of the sub-committees of the board, the Executive committee, the Human Resources committee and the Governance committee. As a board member I get to work with the rest of the board and our Executive Director in deciding where A-Way will go in the

future and to make sure we have the resources necessary to get there.

As a member of the Executive Committee I learned of a new opportunity. Our executive director, Meredith, needed an executive assistant which was something I had done before and had done well at. I offered to come in one day a week on a volunteer basis and it has increased to two days a week.

Before I darkened the doorstep of A-Way Express I spent 2 years at the University of Waterloo studying chemistry before I switched to the University of Toronto Scarborough and got my degree in Computer Science for Data Management. On my way to becoming co-chair of the board of directors and executive assistant, I worked for a large company looking after the operating system software and database management system software on Univac 1182 mainframe computer systems. I was also programme assistant at a community based mental health program which was very similar to what I do here.

When I started working as Executive Assistant I thought the most important skill I had was my computer skills. After a while I realized my most useful skill was my curious and imaginative mind. I will admit it, one of my favourite pastimes is dreaming of a better future and another World Series win for the Blue Jays and hopefully in my lifetime another Stanley Cup win for the Leafs.

It helps knowing that it is ok to fail as long as you learn from your failures. Once you accept that it is ok to fail you start to lose your fear of failure and you start to try and make your dreams come true.

I know that I will probably fail at achieving some of my dreams; but I promised myself years ago that if I fail at something today, I will get up tomorrow and try again knowing that if I fail better I have learned something and one of my dreams may actually come true.

Arthur's Story

I work in the Marketing Department here at A-Way; my main job is to go out into the community and get new business and customers for A-Way.

I started at A-Way as a courier. After about a year of doing courier work, I was promoted to Sales Associate. Working as a sales representative for A-Way can be both challenging and rewarding. It's very important to present a professional image. When I do outreach, I make sure that I dress appropriately and communicate a warm and positive image. It's also very important to be able to listen and communicate effectively. I think being able to handle rejection is another important skill to have when working as a sales professional.



I meet all kinds of people in my job. I talk to receptionists, managers, CEO's. I believe that being able to connect with people and having empathy goes a long way in helping me get my message across. This in turn helps me to have a great opportunity to sell A-Way and to get new customers!

I'm very happy and fortunate to have been given this opportunity to help A-Way in this capacity. I'm thankful for the support that A-Way has given me over the years to do my job well. It is such a good feeling to have when your company believes in your ability and potential to succeed. Working as a Sales Associate has increased my self-esteem and enabled me to develop skills I never thought I had.

Working here at A-Way has been instrumental in my recovery as a consumer survivor. Proper nutrition, exercise, having a helpful health practitioner, doing things that I love and having a support system are some of the things that help me in my recovery.

In terms of decreasing stigma here at A-Way, I believe that we can all do our part in making sure that the community sees us in a positive light. The simple act of paying attention to hygiene and dressing appropriately when coming to work goes a long way in helping the community to view us - people with mental health challenges in a positive light. I think working here at A-Way gives us all that opportunity. The fact that an organization like A-Way exists, proves to us and the community that mental health survivors can be productive members of society.

Opportunities to Socialize at A-Way

A-Way encourages its staff to form social support networks to connect with one another, to improve nutrition, access cultural and sports activities, relax, and have fun.

The Social Club arranges fun and interesting outings like bowling and trips to art galleries. This year they have organized picnics, barbecues and a trip to Shakespeare in the Park.

The Alumni Club welcomes former employees for a meal and a chance to maintain connections with acquaintances and former colleagues.

The Art Club meets monthly to explore creative projects. They have made greeting cards that are for sale in the office.

The Breakfast Club produces healthy meals two days a week for our couriers to start their day. Under the leadership of program coordinator, Jim Toudy, the Breakfast Club has recently expanded beyond breakfast and hosts a 'Spaghetti Dinner' every Friday after work.

The program gives staff a chance to eat a nutritious breakfast (and a Friday afternoon meal) at no cost. The Second Harvest food program can be a source of free good food for the breakfast club. They take advantage of that to save costs.

A-Way's kitchen is always a good place for staff to socialize with each other. This can be an opportunity for people to share activities going on at A-Way with fellow staff that may not have heard or read about them. As well, the music that our breakfast club supervisor puts on during meal times hits the spot.

Nutritious sandwiches make up a good portion of the breakfast club menu. Couriers have the option to take something from the breakfast club out on the road. It takes away the need to buy take out, which can be expensive. A new thing this year for breakfast is boiled eggs, which are very popular. Cereal is always available for staff to have. The Friday afternoon meals have something besides the pasta now: there are chicken burgers and hamburgers.

The program got some extra help from a new employee in the past few weeks. He will be working until another staff returns in October. He is doing an excellent job.

The breakfast club is a vital and exciting part of A-Way. We hope it is always here for the staff who benefit so much from it.



A-Way Staff

Thank you to all A-Way staff for your hard work and commitment!







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