



THE ART

of Community-Based Rehabilitation

by Dawn Trottier
The Drive

“Our clients’ life, loved ones and goals serve as our canvas. The paint is the abundant resources, the treatment options and the strategies used. And Brainworks is the brush that, through the team’s skill and dedication, paints individual client’s full picture of a healthy recovery and regained independence. “

Brainworks is an organization for individuals of all cultures living with the effects of brain injury, chronic pain, behavioural issues, sleep concerns, and a myriad of other injuries and conditions. The company provides direct services throughout southwestern and south-central Ontario and the Muskoka area; and educates and consults throughout Ontario.

Executive Director Arden McGregor, a London resident, founded the company in 2003, after having routinely commuted to Windsor for over ten years to provide much needed services to Windsor and area residents. She was determined to smash the belief



that “an expert is someone from out of town.” After years of development in the area, Brainworks now employs six rehabilitation professionals who live and work in Windsor, and the rest of Brainworks’ approximate 40 staff are available as support and consultative resources.

Windsor, known for outsourcing patients to London, Michigan and other locations, is changing in a brilliant manner where patients facing a long and complicated road to recovery can find solace right in this city.

“It’s like I’ve been walking down this dirt road for years waiting for a car to come by - and you did.”

Spoken by a local Brainworks’ client, this individual received the above and beyond help and care Brainworks is known for, following a traumatic injury.

There are over 2000 trauma admissions to Windsor hospitals every year. The majority of these cases require rehabilitation. However, most people do not know their options until they are put into a crisis situation. Brainworks is available to clients on a 24/7 basis to handle all aspects of the rehab process to reduce stress on the clients and their families.

In June 2009, with a decade of experience, Tami Nestor became the first Case Manager at Brainworks in Windsor. The case manager acts as a liaison between the client, the medical and rehabilitation professionals, lawyers, insurance companies, and employers to identify what services and resources are necessary to promote the client’s highest level of well being. Tami acts as a ‘rehab coach’ and sets collaborative goals that address physical and cognitive impairments while empowering the client’s active involvement in their own treatment and recovery.

Case management services help clients and their families navigate and understand the rehab process, providing resources and support that helps them return to a productive lifestyle. Having a case manager and the Brainworks team available to a client on an on-call basis helps to quell the client’s fears and manage their stress during a truly traumatic time like dealing with a severe brain injury.

“When a client is stressed and afraid, their recovery will be prolonged. We help clients cope with the challenges to Brainworks are an important part of the rehabilitation process. A life-changing injury changes not only the lives of the patients, but also the lives of the family and friends. Educating the client and those close to them can reduce fear and anxiety they feel. Nina Sutton, a Brainworks social worker, counsels the affected families to reduce the shock from the shift in the family. “When someone is in a serious accident, everyone in the family has a role adjustment.”

Within the last few months, Brainworks has made exciting local contributions. When a colleague asked a question about accessible housing options, Brainworks jumped in with the answers. Brainworks partnered with Bungalow General Contractors and ARC Physiotherapy and hosted an Accessible Home Tour to educate Windsor professionals about accessible home options.

In honour of National Pain Awareness Week and to benefit the Canadian Pain Coalition, Brainworks hosted a breakfast seminar to discuss the legal, medical and psychological perspectives of suffering from Chronic Pain. They have also partnered with local police services to make helmet donations and participate in many charitable organizations and advisory board.

The Brainworks team works with children, adolescents and adults at home, work, and school. They apply their knowledge and experience and apply the skills required to help clients function better in all aspects of life. The most important facet of the company is that it is not based in an office or clinic; it is in the client’s own settings to encourage them to carry out their independence. Says a client, “Brainworks helped me get my life back.” TDM by Dawn Trottier, The Drive