

Company struggling to find social workers, psychologists

BY ALISON BROWNLEE

Arden McGregor says social workers and psychologists are hard to come by in Muskoka.

McGreggor, a psychologist and executive director for brain and spinal cord rehabilitation clinic Brainworks, said her Huntsville-based office has been trying to fill positions with area residents for some time, but is struggling to do so.

"We're at the point now where we're actually going to have to start turning away people who have been seriously injured in accidents, in particular, if we aren't able to attract a psychologist or social worker," she said.

She said the company has 10 employees in Huntsville and the fastest-growing segment on the company is in Muskoka and the near-north. And the aim, she said, is to hire people from the area rather than hiring from elsewhere in the province or country.

"My goal, right from the beginning, was to defeat the

myth that the expert is always from out of town," said McGregor, who also founded the company. "Or that, in the north, there is standard treatment or care. That is an absolute myth. We're trying to defeat that, one therapist at a time."

Both McGregor and the company have received national recognition for rehabilitation services.

She said the trouble with finding registered professionals from the area to fill the positions is due in part to a lack of related post-secondary institutions in the region.

"Some want to be in university cities, for example," she said. "We've had people apply for the position, but really what they're looking for is to join us in another location."

The company also has offices in urban centres in southern Ontario.

She said she often hears comments about people who love the region, but cannot find work that will allow them to live here.

"Well, maybe there is," she said.

She said social workers and psychologists are integral in making a difference in an injured person's recovery.

"Accidents and injuries affect every part of your life. Everything you think, feel or do are all affected significantly when you've been in an accident or had a serious illness," she said.

"Your mood and thinking style affects how well you do physically after an injury."

She said the company is searching for registered social workers or psychologists from the area, who believe strongly in the company's vision and in making a difference in the lives of people in Muskoka.

She said the job advertisements for the full-time salaried positions could be viewed on the company's website at brainworksrehab.com/careers. Compensation, she said, would be competitive with the company's other offices.