

# Happenings

WE BELIEVE IN PEOPLE

Volume 2, Edition 1  
2021



## PROJECT SEARCH: BEN BLAZES A NEW TRAIL

5

**RAISE YOUR VOICE COUNCIL**  
It is amazing to see the council members are continuing to advocate for others...

6

**XPLORE EMPLOYMENT**  
We have officially rebranded CLO's Employment Services...

4

## STAY CONNECTED

Support worker, Hugo Troccoli had the opportunity to speak with CBC's Natasha Fatah about Community Living Oakville and Giving Tuesday.

13

# A MESSAGE FROM JANET



Welcome to our winter edition of Happenings

We wish you the very best in 2021, and hope that we will begin to see positive signs that Covid19 will be behind us as this year unfolds. We sincerely thank families, and friends for their support and patience over the past many months. It has been almost a year of ever-changing guidance, protocols and difficult decisions.

For me, the inspiring and shining light has been the resilience of the people we support and employees. They have not allowed the challenges of the past year to take the joy out of life, but engaged in new ways to stay connected, involved with friends, and participate in interesting things.

We are working with Public Health and developing an ethical vaccine roll out plan. People we support and employees are receiving information about the vaccine to assist in making an informed decision. People, or their Substitute Decision Maker, if applicable, will need to sign a vaccine screening and consent form. Public Health has asked that we not have forms signed at this time, as the required form has had some revisions over time, and may have more. We will provide updated information when it is available.

As many of the people we support are vulnerable due to age or existing health issues, they would be considered at high risk of experiencing the worst effects of the virus, if contracted. We have been actively advocating with our Halton partner agencies for priority for people supported and the Direct Support Professionals who are working in homes. We urge families to be prepared, by reading the helpful information on the Ministry of Health or Public Health websites. Recent information obtained about the Covid19 vaccine indicates that the Developmental Services sector will be part of the second phase, however the time frame is unsure due to delayed delivery dates in Canada.

We hope you enjoy reading this edition of Happenings, and are pleased to be able to share some positive stories.

Janet Lorimer  
Executive Director

## IN THIS EDITION

- 3 Sarah's Decision Making Journey
- 4 Xplore Employment Rebrand
- 5 Project SEARCH
- 6 Raise Your Voice Council
- 7 A Warm Welcome
- 7 Making a Difference
- 8 Making Spirits Bright
- 9 Become a Monthly Donor
- 10 You Made a Big Impact
- 11 Campus Connections
- 11 Bringing the Christmas Spirit
- 12 Stay Connected
- 14 Spreading Inspiration
- 14 Passion, Perseverance & Patience
- 16 Holiday Festivities
- 17 Artistic Flair
- 17 A Holiday Drive Thru
- 18 Senior Connections
- 19 'Take 20' Mindfulness Sessions



During these restrictive times while we all work to stay safe and healthy, we search to find things that bring us joy. See Page 17

# SARAH'S DECISION MAKING JOURNEY



Have you ever had to make a decision that caused knots in your stomach - the decisions that sometimes you avoid making so you don't feel anxious? This is the story of Sarah and her journey of decisions to realize her dream.

Sarah is a woman who is supported at Community Living Oakville in Ontario, Canada. She moved into a home - a group setting with 3 other people - operated by the agency when she was 24 years old. Although she was glad she was able to take that natural step of adulthood and independence by moving out of her family home, she started thinking that maybe she did not actually need all of the support that she had been receiving through the organization. Maybe living with three other people was not what she wanted long-term.

Moving out on her own into an apartment is where she wanted to head next. Although there were many exciting thoughts about moving on her own, such as increasing her privacy and doing what she wants when she wants, making this decision was also met with worries.

"I was worried I wasn't ready. I was nervous about actually being on my own," shared Sarah. She was thinking through questions like would she have enough money to pay her bills and would she be able to find an apartment where she knew people?

## **Important Choices & The Three E's**

Sarah's support team was confident that she would succeed on her own, but making the decision had to come from Sarah. Community Living Oakville worked with Sarah to ensure that she had all the tools and the best information to make her decision. Over the course of a couple of years, Sarah and her team focused on ensuring that Sarah had the Three E's - Education, Experience, and Exposure - to make the choices that worked best for her, when it worked best for her.

And so began the journey. Sarah searched online and in newspapers for available apartments. In addition, she talked with friends who lived on their own and came to realize that she wanted to live near those friends, while also being close to public transit and near amenities. Sarah visited different buildings and met with friends so she could have experiences to make her decision. She developed a budget and felt financially secure as she had a job. On paper it all looked good. She was ticking all the boxes to make her choices and live out her dreams.

## **Decision-Making Through Mindfulness**

However, there was always anxiousness rearing its head and causing her to worry about the unknown. This is where Sarah

and her support team delved into mindfulness to help Sarah in areas where she was worried. Sarah learned how to meditate to keep a clear mind and utilize music therapy to help herself when she feels emotional. "Sarah has embraced mindfulness. She has come to know her comfort zones and how to be grounded in the moment," says Laura, Sarah's direct support professional (DSP). "She has learned how to react based on experiences."

In December, the call came and an apartment in the building she chose was available! It was 'go time' and she needed to make that decision. With her armor of Education, Experience, and Exposure, she had the confidence to feel she was making the best decision for her.

Today, Sarah is loving being on her own. She still gets support from Community Living Oakville and still practices her mindfulness and music therapy. "I love having my own place. I love my neighbourhood and there are so many cute shops that I can walk to and I love that I have friends in my building to reach out to when needed. When I get anxious, I can meditate or go for a walk. Some people doubted my ability and I love that I was able to prove them wrong."



2021 – a new year, a time for change, and the perfect opportunity to launch the rebranding of Community Living Oakville’s Employment Services – Xplore Employment.

On February 25th, 2021 Community Living Oakville, in partnership with Ontario Disability Employment Network (ODEN) hosted the official launch of Xplore Employment.

The business engagement event, with Pam Damoff, MP, as the Master of Ceremonies, hosted a business panel with representation from Halton Healthcare – Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital, Fortinos and Lexus; all of which have been strong supporters of Community Living Oakville. Sean Callahan, Retired Area General Manager of SODEXO Canada was our keynote

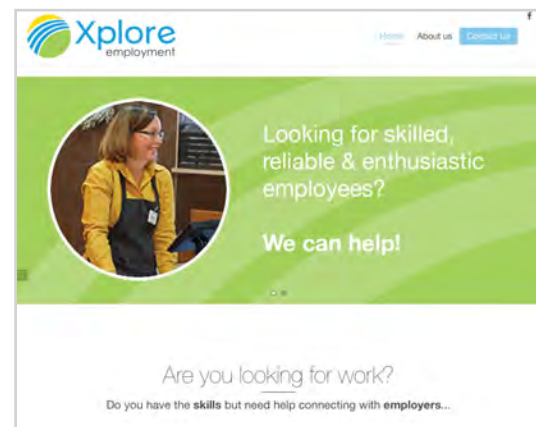
speaker promoting the benefits of building inclusive and diversified workplaces. The event focused on how businesses can enhance their hiring practices to maximize business potential and build brand loyalty, while showcasing Xplore Employment’s services and supports to both employers and job seekers.

Xplore Employment offers a variety of services, including employment planning, resume writing, interview preparation, job searching and on-the-job support.

The Xplore Employment team consists of five experienced Employment Specialists who are dedicated to assisting people to achieve their employment goals. Employment Specialists work with the job seeker to explore their interests, build their employment portfolio and support the job seeker with obtaining and maintaining competitive employment.

Our new office is located at 240 Wyecroft Road, just down the street from Community Living Oakville’s main office. The new site houses a large training room, which will offer pre-employment classes, networking workshops and other training opportunities as well as a computer lab where people can work on resumes, job search and enhance their computer skills.

If you are interested in exploring your employment goals or for more information please visit our website at [www.xploreemployment.com](http://www.xploreemployment.com) or call us (905)-842-0146 ext. 255.



# PROJECT SEARCH: BEN BLAZES A NEW TRAIL

Successes abound as our Project Search interns reach the mid-point of their second internships - each one has taken on new challenges and are proving once again how capable and competent they are. As always, our classroom is a beehive of activity as we expand on previous learning. Recently we've been exploring self-advocacy in the workplace, learning how to express ourselves using "I" statements, and we've been having plenty of fun getting to know ourselves, and how to work more effectively with our coworkers and peers, through an illuminating personality assessment. Our teacher, Lisa, took the learning further by creating a very engaging Kahoot! game using the material that was also taught in workshop format earlier in the month. Using a variety of delivery methods has proven very effective in solidifying the learning across a variety of learning styles.

Our second term was marked by the emergence of a brand-new internship brought about by Linda Ivory, who heads up Diversity and Inclusion for Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital: "It is always my goal to ensure that every intern has the opportunity to learn new skills and be part of the Halton Healthcare family." Leading up to this new opportunity, Project Search had another intern collecting mail from Human Resources each day so Linda explored the possibility of expanding the service and presented the opportunity to a number of departments she felt might be interested. As a result, and "In collaboration with the Manager of [Logistics], the job coaches of Project Search, and selected departments, a mailroom internship was created. This is a new role for the organization; one of the interns has been placed and is excelling beyond our expectations. I am receiving such positive feedback and I couldn't be more proud!"

One of our interns, Ben, was top-of-mind as we considered who might provide the personalized service of delivering, receiving, sorting, and processing mail. On the surface the job may look somewhat simple but in reality the decision making, accuracy, attention to detail, and customer service is significant and Ben is rising to the challenge.



From the perspective of a skills trainer, it's been an enlightening experience to help develop this new internship and build new relationships with several departments we've never worked with before. Our intern happily delivers mail and greets staff with a smile and wishes them well each day. As a result of Ben's efforts, we're getting positive comments including some encouraging feedback such as this from Donna, an executive assistant in the corporate office: "It is always a challenge in the mailroom with all of the sorting and distributing the incoming and outgoing mail. Ben, one of the interns, started helping out recently and the effects on the workflow have been amazing. The mailroom is clean and the mail is being delivered to several departments which is a service that we did not have until [the team] from Project Search came up with the idea. It is a huge help to many of our staff to have their mail delivered directly to our departments rather than having to go down to the basement to fetch it ourselves. I feel that the interns benefit from seeing the staff around the hospital and it is certainly nice to be greeted with a friendly 'Good Morning' from the interns who recognize the staff's familiar faces. Thank you for enriching our work lives at the hospital!"

Ben is also in the unique position of forging this new opportunity and bringing awareness to many staff in the hospital who were not previously aware of Project Search. Given the success we've seen so far it is possible the mailroom services may expand to more departments and transform this aspect of logistics for the hospital in the future.

As we partner with the hospital, we are keenly aware of our role and emphasize to our interns that we can all help carry out the mission of providing Exemplary Patient Experiences, Always. This extends to staff experience as well since we're all collectively in the business of carrying out that mission. Ben is truly blazing a new trail.

## SPONSORED BY:



Royal Bank



# RAISE YOUR VOICE COUNCIL

Visit the Raise Your Voice Council Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/raiseyourvoicecouncil](http://www.facebook.com/raiseyourvoicecouncil)) for the latest information and photos from past events.

Would you like to join the Raise Your Voice Council or have any questions?

Talk to any of our members or email Julie Bisbicos at [julie.bisbicos@oakcl.org](mailto:julie.bisbicos@oakcl.org)

RYVC has been meeting monthly to plan social events, and meet council members from other agencies to see how they have stayed connected through the pandemic.

The council continues to host virtual parties, which have record turnouts! The virtual parties continued in to December with the Jingle Ball- Ugly Sweater edition, hosted by our very own Self Advocates- Raise Your Voice Council.

Our guests got very creative with their sweaters and they were quite a colorful group! The highlight of the party were the surprise guests: Dr. Temple Grandin and MP Pam Damoff. There were a few live musical performances by Ryan Switzer and a duet of "Last Christmas" by Asha and her partner! We received so much positive feedback and hope in the near future to party and celebrate in person. Until then, lets continue to party in a safe manner – virtually!

February had been a busy month- kicking off with the council hosting the Valentine's Day Party "Spread the LOVE" on Saturday February 13th, 2021. We had a huge turnout, with games, dancing and our first ever Virtual Photo Booth! It was a wonderful way to Spread the LOVE and everyone had a blast.

RYVC will be meeting with The Staying Connected Network based out of London, which is a group of Self-Advocates from various organizations across Ontario. These meetings are held monthly to discuss hot topics- advocacy, human rights, affordable accessible housing, accessibility and literacy/plain language, disability awareness, mental health and so much more. It is a great opportunity for the council to learn more about these topics so they can provide information to others.

The council will also be meeting with self-advocates from Community Living Burlington to network and share what they have been working on over the past few months.



### Upcoming Events by RYVC:

St Patrick's day Party  
Saturday, March 20, 2021



# A WARM WELCOME



**Change:** Merriam Webster's Dictionary describes change as "to give a different position, course or direction too."

We all experience change in our lives, we change our clothes, we change our ways, we change a policy. For some people, change is a good thing, and some people fear change, which most likely is due to the unknown possible outcome of that change.

Meet Paul, a 29-year-old who has recently decided to move out of his family home. With support provided by Community Living Oakville, Paul was able to embrace change – a change to his routines, his newfound comfort, and a new house. Living with three other people, this change has worked well for Paul. As Paul's support staff and new roommates have gotten to know him, they have discovered that he loves to play cards (especially Uno) and his Nintendo Switch.

Paul is extremely active, and can often be found working out and joining Zumba classes—perhaps to offset his love of ice capp's and boston cream donuts. He finds that working out is a good way to relieve the stress of the day, and feels it promotes good mental health and overall wellness.

If you see Paul around, give him a warm 'Hello' and ask if he knows any good Zumba classes to join! Perhaps, you will be inspired to know that he embraced new opportunities and even made a few new friends along the way.

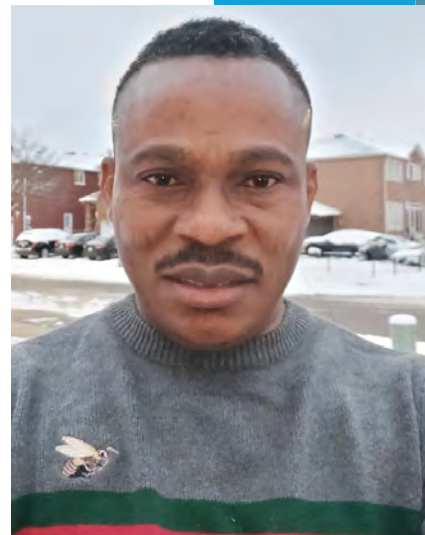
# MAKING A DIFFERENCE

A year ago, the role of almost every Direct Support Professional and Support Worker was challenged as the pandemic came at us full force. Staff were challenged to support people in ways that they hadn't in the past. They needed to become even more creative and resourceful to ensure that people were still on the path to leading their best life. Michael Ayuno rose to this challenge and has been a driving force at Community Living Oakville (CLO).

Three years ago, Michael Ayuno joined the team in a part time overnight position. Not long after he attained a full-time overnight position, the pandemic hit and Michael's flexibility and reliability proved to be a great benefit to CLO. As many staff were lost due to the one employer rule, Michael was able to flex his schedule and pick up many extra shifts during the day. He wanted to ensure that the people we support continued to receive excellent service.

Michael states that "people we support are the center of everything we do" and this is very evident in his work. When people could not celebrate the festive season in traditional ways, Michael ensured that some great memories and traditions could still be created. Michael made certain that the people he supports who were missing their families, could still remain connected virtually. With lots of coaching, teaching and hands on support, Michael was able to work with people to maintain family connections as well as connections with friends and teachers during school closures.

"Michael knew that Arhem had a love of music and singing, so he sought out a karaoke machine for him and his roommates. Before you knew it, the home was filled with festive sounds and lights! It was truly heartwarming," says Rose Agbor, Manager. Rose continued to say that "Michael is one of the most dedicated and reliable staff. He is a great roll model to all that surround him. He has worked exceptionally hard in the last year to ensure people that he



supports continue to have connections during this truly challenging time."

Benita Ebonka describes her colleague Michael as "very organized, detailed oriented and a supportive team player who always puts the needs of the people he supports first. He is also very creative in problem solving."

Harvir's family described Michael as "a supportive staff who does his job always with a smile on his face! We are thankful for the quality of support he provides, not just to Harvir but for the other people supported who live with him."

A little bit about Michael outside of Community Living Oakville is that prior to moving to Canada, his chosen profession was that of a pharmacist. When he made the move to Canada, he wanted to continue his journey of caring for people and stated that this profession at Community Living Oakville brings him joy. During his down time, he considers himself a bit of a news buff. During the warmer days, you can find Michael lacing up his joggers as he is an avid runner.

Thank you Michael for all you do in your roll at Community Living Oakville.

We are grateful that you are truly **MAKING A DIFFERENCE!**

# MAKING SPIRITS BRIGHT

Thank you to our generous community who, over the holidays, helped to make spirits bright for the people we support at Community Living Oakville!



Generously donated bottles of shampoo, conditioner, and body wash for men and women. People were thrilled to have such a wide selection of products. THANK YOU, BRANDS INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION for your donation of personal care products!



FOX AND LEAF CO.

When staff at CLO could not get together to celebrate the amazing staff receiving years of service awards this year, we decided to get them something extra special. Thank you to all of our staff who celebrated milestones this year. Your work is appreciated, and your dedication to the people you support is valued. A huge thanks to Lindsay @foxandleafco for the generous personal engraving of our Yeti Tumblers.



United Way donated beautiful Essential Oil Sets to people supported at Community Living Oakville during the holidays via their Community Donation Program. Most recently, through a partnership with Bell, the United Way donated a cell phone to each person supported at Community Living Oakville! THANK YOU UNITED WAY! Your donations and ongoing support has been warmly received and appreciated by everyone.



Her Studios in Burlington launched the season of giving by matching all client donations in the month of December. They raised an incredible \$2,562.40 and donated the money directly to people supported in order to make their Christmas wish lists come true! The generosity of Cobie Durie, owner of Her Studios and her husband Andre, an employee of CLO is extremely heartfelt. People were over the moon on Christmas Day to receive these gifts. It truly made the day special for all. A WHOLE-HEARTED THANK YOU to Cobie and Andre Durie and everyone at Her Studios Inc.



The Halton Junior Civitan's hosted a cookie dough drive and raised an impressive \$1,000. They donated these funds, specifically to support Stay Connected; our virtual program at CLO. The Halton Junior Civitan's even took their support one step further by creating a Christmas 'Party in a Box' and a Valentine themed event - a virtual party for the people we support with many fun filled surprises! THANK YOU HALTON JUNIOR CIVITANS, for your involvement and donations!

## 35TH ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT ACT II

Due to Covid-19, Community Living Oakville's 35th Annual Golf Fundraiser did not take place last year. We are hopeful 2021 will give our community the chance to hit the links and raise vital funds for Community Living Oakville. So, we are pleased to announce that the 35th Annual Golf Tournament will take place on Wednesday, September 15th, 2021 at a new venue - Piper's Heath Golf Club. We ask you to please save the date in your calendars and keep an eye out for more information in the coming months. While being safe and following any provincial guidelines, we want to get out onto the greens and golf!

For more information, please email [golf@oakcl.org](mailto:golf@oakcl.org) or call Natasha at 289-795-8340 or Brenda at 416-268-3080.

**Save the DATE!**  
**WEDNESDAY**  
**SEPTEMBER**  
**15**  
**2021**

**35th Annual GOLF TOURNAMENT**

**NEW Venue:**  
Piper's Heath Golf Club  
5501 Trafalgar Road, Milton

**Shot-Gun Format:**  
**8:30** for the Ladies "Nine & Dine"  
**1:00** for the "Mixed" 18-hole tournament

Fun guaranteed and all details will comply with any provincial guidelines that may be in effect.

For more information, please contact: [golf@oakcl.org](mailto:golf@oakcl.org)  
Brenda Kerr - 416-268-3080 or Natasha Fieldman - 289-795-8340

# BECOME A MONTHLY DONOR TODAY!

At Community Living Oakville we assist people with developmental disabilities by providing a range of services including: residential supports, supported independent living and day service opportunities. Day service options may include a variety of activities such as educational, recreation and leisure or healthy living programming. In addition, we offer many special interest groups such as social media workshops, theatre and mentorship programs to name a few. For youth, we offer an after school program for those ages 5 – 21 years old. We also offer employment service supports including: career development, job skills training, job placement and ongoing job coaching.

Monthly giving helps reduce administrative costs, enables us to invest in specific areas of our work, expand our programs and provide innovative services - because we know we have the ongoing support of YOU our community!

By giving monthly, you are able to invest what makes sense for you and make an incredible impact throughout your donation. You may give by cheque, credit card or through our website, and you may stop any time. And, as a monthly donor, you'll receive one tax receipt per year for your total annual contribution.

Become a monthly donor today!

For more information please email or call us at [natasha.fieldman@oakcl.org](mailto:natasha.fieldman@oakcl.org) or 289-795-8340.



JOIN THE  
COMMUNITY LIVING NETWORK  
& BECOME A  
MONTHLY DONOR TODAY

visit us at [oakcl.org](http://oakcl.org) to learn more

## AN EXCITING NEW PARTNERSHIP



Community Living Oakville is pleased to announce a new partnership with Second Harvest Food Rescue. Through the program, we will be able to offset program costs, access nutritious food, and reduce our environmental impact by rescuing food. In the first couple of weeks, we have already benefitted from sweet treats from Starbucks at Erin Mills & QEW and Shoppers Drug Mart at Bristol & Mavis.

THANK YOU SECOND HARVEST, STARBUCKS, and SHOPPERS DRUG MART for supporting Community Living Oakville through this exciting initiative!



If you have any questions about sponsorship, registration, volunteering or to be added to the email list for future CLO events, please contact Natasha Fieldman via [natasha.fieldman@oakcl.org](mailto:natasha.fieldman@oakcl.org).

# YOU MADE A BIG IMPACT

Thank you to our compassionate community who recognized the economic hardship Covid-19 had on our fundraising campaigns in 2020 and stepped up in a big way!

A long-standing community leader anonymously donated a very generous \$10,000 match and YOU ensured that in the season of giving, every dollar was matched! You ensured that we continue to deliver the programs and services people rely on in order to enjoy enriched, fulfilled and connected lives.

**YOU RAISED OVER \$65,000!  
THANK YOU FOR DEMONSTRATING  
YOUR GENEROSITY AND CONTINUED  
SUPPORT DURING THE HOLIDAY  
SEASON.**

*Holiday Appeal Donors – list based on generous gifts received between November 26th and December 31st, 2020 for the Holiday Appeal.*

## **Foundation Support**

Frank and Azniv Lochan Family Foundation (a fund held within the Oakville Community Foundation)

The Robitaille Charitable Foundation

The Shorey Family (a fund held within the Oakville Community Foundation)

The WB Family Foundation

## **Corporate Partners**

Access Abilities 1036332 Ontario Inc.

Cheney Window & Door Specialists

Farm Mutual Reinsurance Plan Inc.

Procor Limited

Stardust Flat Roofing/1211853 Ontario Limited

Tarrison Products Ltd.

Velux Canada

## **Community Support**

Douglas Aldrich

Robert Amyotte

George Baillie

Ainslie Baillie

Barley Family

Mark & Vanessa Barr

Robert Batt

Sharon Bremer

Peter Carfrae

Roy & Clemence Chard

Barry Coles

Shannon Coles

Howard Day

Anne Dean

Brian Delorey

Onkar & Rashpal Dhillon

Carole Dickinson

Robert & Jennifer Doyle

Roseanne Elliott

Robert & Helke Ferrie

Kevin Flynn

William & Anell Francis

Pamela Fraser-Damoff

Pamela Gray

Mary-Jo Hildebrandt

Peter Hnatiw

Samantha Horn

Tamara Horton

IODE Angela Bruce Chapter

Dona Justice

David Justice

Evelyn Kushnik

Julian & Ella Layne

Maryellen Love

Paul & Judy Malloch

Frank & Mary Manley

Bob Mark

Winston Mark

Francesca Modestino

Krystle Moreira

Mary Morra

Nick Norvack

Donald & Beverly Odbert

Lynn Ohanian

Sandra Omorodion

Jessie Reiffenstein

Clayton Reynolds

Ivica Sokic

Cynthia Steneveld

Lori J. Szwarc

Larry R. Thomas

Mary Thomas

Barry & Liz Thomson

Marlyne Van Exan

Anne Vandewall

Linda Vervoorn

Grant Wallace

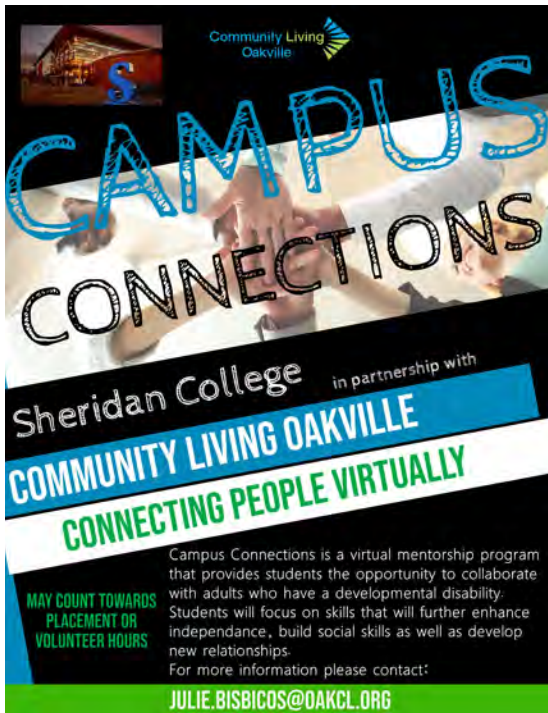
Jon Wallace

Marilyn Weber

Thomas Whelan

David White

Lara Whitewell



## CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

In partnership with Sheridan College, we have created a new virtual platform for students to connect with people at Community Living Oakville, called Campus Connections. Some of you may have many good memories from this program in the past, when it was held on campus at Sheridan!

Through this partnership, students act as mentors in a volunteer capacity. Many of whom are looking to gain further experience in the developmental service field and are completing their practicum placement. Each day, students meet with people from Community Living Oakville virtually and learn new things together! Whether that's travelling through Rome, checking out local museums or simply chatting over coffee- all from the comfort of their own home's.

This new virtual world is providing endless opportunities for people to connect quickly and easily. Campus Connections ensures people are still living their best life and are able to meet new friends- even during a pandemic!

## BRINGING THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

Christmas looked quite different this year for everyone, many stayed at home doing their part to keep loved ones safe.

The pandemic has had an impact on everyone supported, especially during the Christmas holidays, where people typically spend time with family and friends.

This year, the Supported Independent Living (SIL) department was trying to brainstorm ways to ensure people who lived on their own would be able to celebrate Christmas safely, following Covid-19 protocols.

Historically, staff would deliver meals from a local restaurant for people who would not be spending time with family. This year, the SIL team were stumped on how they could provide meals to so many people who would be home... Then came a Christmas miracle- from Wellington Square United Church and the Burlington Rotary Club!

Wellington Square United Church and the Burlington Rotary Club, made enough individual meals to provide each person a feast on Christmas day. Staff elves Elena and Jane spent Christmas day delivering delicious, homemade dinners with all the trimmings to each person.

They didn't stop there! Wellington Square United Church also went beyond our expectations, by providing the people we support with a delicious assortment of baked goods. As well, the Burlington Rotary Club made sure that Christmas was complete by ensuring that everyone received a gift bag with an abundance of surprises.

The day was spent filled with laughter and Christmas cheer. Everyone appreciated the kindness shown to them.

Thank You, Wellington Square United Church and Burlington Rotary Club for your generosity, your time, gifts and the fabulous dinner! You helped bring the spirit of Christmas to those who needed it most and brought much needed joy to each person that we support during these challenging times.



# STAY CONNECTED

What a whirlwind the past few months have been! From our Halloween Spook-Tacular, Remembrance Day Celebrations, Jingle Jam, up to our Spread the Love Valentine's Day and everything in between. It is no secret, people joining Stay Connected enjoy a great party!

It is never a dull moment on Stay Connected. We have hosted some outstanding guest speakers lately as well! Some of them include: Canadian Astronaut, Doctor, Spacewalker and loving father Dr. David Williams. Dr. Williams, joined Stay Connected to talk about space and all of the things astronauts do and struggle to do while in space. An inspiration to us all from someone who literally has reached for the stars!

A special shout out to our In The Loop reporters who asked some great questions!

#space #astronaut @astrodavemd #defyinglimits

Community Living Oakville is known to host some of the greatest dances - and a pandemic wouldn't keep us from that! The Halloween virtual Spook-Tacular was jam packed with some of the most elaborate and fun costumes we have ever seen! We also managed to squeeze in some halloween trivia and of course a few tunes to get the Virtual dance party rocking!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AK4Tsm3nLns&t=192s>



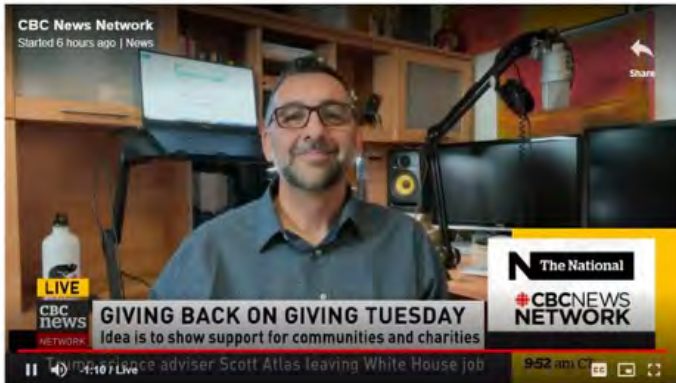
Stay Connected hosted another special guest, MP Anita Anand who has been very busy during this pandemic. She has been working hard to secure PPE and vaccines, as well as encouraging Canadians to stay safe.

We were so grateful to chat with her and look at the positive work going towards health and safety in our community.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iVQxa1HIYc8>



# STAY CONNECTED (CONT'D)



Support worker, Hugo Troccoli had the opportunity to speak with CBC's Natasha Fatah about Community Living Oakville and Giving Tuesday. On December 1st, 2021 our Stay Connected coordinator and In The Loop lead, Hugo Troccoli was called up to help send a message on National TV (CBC). He was asked to share what it is like working within a non-profit organization during the pandemic and what viewers and our community can do to help.

**Click ink to watch: [https://youtu.be/ysrwbS\\_MtSI](https://youtu.be/ysrwbS_MtSI)**

Our additional virtual sessions are still going strong! Chef Adam continues to share his recipes with his cooking class and Angelica continues to provide engaging and fun dance classes accessible to all. Spencer's acting workshop continues to bring so much fun and excitement every Wednesday, Greg and Avi are still entertaining listeners by playing their favourite tunes, Danielle and Jeff are going strong - keeping our bingo players excited about calling out BINGO!

Our partnership with Halton Junior Civitans also continues to provide people we support with fun crafts and games of Kahoot, as well as some great 'Ice Breaker' questions to get to know each other.

We have Little Rays Reptiles joining us, and are always planning to have great guests, parties and special events hosted by Stay Connected.

If there's anything we know - it's that our Stay Connected friends like to laugh and have a good time. A few of us have been sharing our favourite "dad jokes" and everyone was laughing out loud so much, so we made a new session called 'LOL!'



*"How do you get a squirrel to like you? Act like a nut."*

*"Why can't a nose be 12 inches long? Because then it would be a foot."*

*"How does a penguin build its house? Igloos it together."*

After creating our own laughs, we took it a step further and invited Kathryn Kimmins to Stay Connected. She is a leading authority on the benefits of 'Laughter Yoga' and is known for her energetic, entertaining and content-rich programs. She has taken her passion for this unique craft to businesses and organizations, individuals and groups throughout Ontario.

As a Certified Laughter Yoga teacher, and Laughter Ambassador of Canada, Kathryn understands how laughter can be used to heal the body, mind and spirit connection.

She helps people to tap into their innate & infinite child-like spirit to increase their happiness potential through her laughter yoga programs. We have been laughing our way through the muddy Mondays with Kathryn. Thank you for joining us and brightening our day!

In addition to having as many laughs as possible, we realized we need to be mindful during these times. With Kristeen Sopeju, we learn how to tap into our inner peace, stay present and acknowledge thoughts before reacting. Mindfulness is truly a gift to one self and Kirsteen helps us bring this to the forefront!



STAY CONNECTED continues to provide the people we support the ability to virtually connect, talk, share stories, thoughts, ask questions, have some laughs and most importantly... STAY POSITIVE!

For more information about our virtual platform-Stay Connected, please contact [julie.bisbicos@oakcl.org](mailto:julie.bisbicos@oakcl.org) to join in!

*Stay Connected is supported by the Government of Canada's Emergency Community Support Fund and the Oakville Community Foundation*

## SPREADING INSPIRATION



When you first see Chris Waugh, it's obvious that he's a unique person with great taste! There is a lot more to Chris than his signature bow tie and a cowboy hat. Despite being a man of few words, Chris has a strong personality and an ability to bring joy to any room he walks into.

The last year has certainly been a difficult one, but Chris has managed to make the best of a tough situation. Chris may not get to see all of his friends right now, but his positive attitude has enabled him to find joy and fulfillment in other ways. Chris has found a good balance of opportunities throughout the last year: neighborhood walks, in house games and spending time with his housemates are just a few ways Chris has embraced these times. In the afternoon, Chris enjoys heading out for a 'Sunday drive' in the country while sipping his coffee.

Despite Christmas being a little different last year, Chris was able to see his wonderful brother Jeff and his sister-in-law Kim. Their time together was brief, but as usual Chris made the best of it; exchanging presents and having some laughs! It was just what Chris and his family needed. One of the many wonderful gifts that Chris received, was an electronic drum set which became an instant favorite! Chris often has music on in the background and smashes the drums like he's in a concert performing for thousands of people.

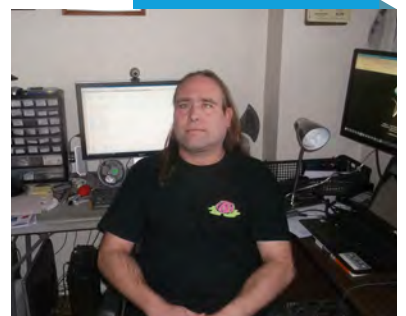
Chris's spirit and positivity is a great example of perseverance and motivation. Regardless of what obstacles stand in his way, Chris remains positive and looks for opportunities. He loves to try new things and have wonderful experiences along the way- inspiring everyone around him!

# PASSION, PERSISTENCE & PATIENCE

In May of 2019, Derek McDonald was working as a dishwasher for a prominent Oakville restaurant. On the weekends, he ensured to keep his software programming skills current.

Derek is the man behind Diskery ([www.diskery.com](http://www.diskery.com)) a music archives database and museum site for punk, metal and hard rock music. Operating since 1997, it is one of the oldest such sites on the Internet. Access to the website is free to the general public. The majority of articles and all of the programming was done by Derek McDonald. Through a recommendation of a friend that is also supported by Xplore Employment, he connected with an Employment Specialist. Derek was very specific with his job search needs, the type of job he wanted and where in the GTA he needed to work. With these parameters, his Employment Specialist went to work. For ten months there were multiple job applications submitted, a couple of interviews and lots of 'thanks, but no thanks' emails. Then life came to a screeching halt, the pandemic. Derek and his Employment Specialist decided that instead of the pandemic being a setback, it was an opportunity to focus solely on his job search.

In April of 2020, a job posting from Ready Willing and Able (RWA) came in via email. It was for EY (formerly Ernst and Young) in their Neurodiversity Centre of Excellence (NCoE) department where they would like to hire neurodiverse individuals for the role of 'Account Support Associates'. Derek was up for the chal-



lenge as it ticked off all of the boxes he needed to further his career. His application was submitted and the first interview was a success. Derek was accepted into EY's Super Week. Derek spent 6 hours a day for 5 days, showing off his software developing, leadership, and team member skills. On the last day of Super Week, Derek was offered the job and started his dream job on October 19th, 2020. His salary was double what he had been making, he works from home, and he is now a software developer.

Derek stayed focused on his job search, kept his software developing skills current, and stayed true to his vision of where he wanted to be. On February 3rd, 2021, Derek passed the exam to be a certified Automation Engineer. EY and their Neurodiversity Centre of Excellence, offered Derek the opportunity to showcase his skills, learn new skills and the opportunity for a career. If we can learn anything from Derek it is this - stay passionate, persevere, and be patient. Life will give you lemons, but you can make lemonade, or lemon chiffon pie, or lemon cake and have Xplore Employment there to assist you!

**WE ARE NOW**

**HIRING**

**JOIN OUR TEAM**

Community Living  
Oakville



*Please submit your resume at  
[resumes@oakcl.org](mailto:resumes@oakcl.org)*

[www.oakcl.org](http://www.oakcl.org)

# HOLIDAY FESTIVITIES



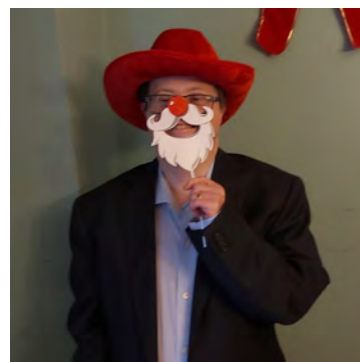
With all of the regular holiday festivities cancelled this year Michael L., Jim, Albert, Bryan and Michael B., decided that they needed to blow off a little steam and push the reality of the world to the back of their minds even just for one evening. This year has been tough on all of us and what better way to say goodbye to 2020 with a Big Bash!

December 19th was Jim's Birthday, so his roommates decided to combine Jim's special day with a Birthday/ Christmas Party! The turkey went into the oven early, all the trimmings were being prepared during the day. Everyone woke up to the house fully decorated and it was a Christmas/ Birthday Wonderland. The smell of the turkey overtook the house and everyone was in the mood to party....and eat!



All those Covid comfy clothes were put away and suits were pressed and ready to go! This surely set the mood for a great night. A photo booth and props were also set up for funny photos. Everyone was so amused by their funny faces and expressions once they saw the pictures. While decked out in suits, looking very spiffy – everyone was ready for a night of reflection and celebration. Dinner was served and the wine was flowing! If going to a Christmas Dance wasn't possible, the Christmas dance was coming to them. The music started to play, everyone was cutting a rug!

Even though it would have been nice to have family and friends come over, they were in our thoughts. The night was filled with laughter, stories, and good times! Truly a party to remember. The look of pure happiness and joy was present on everyone's face.



# ARTISTIC FLAIR

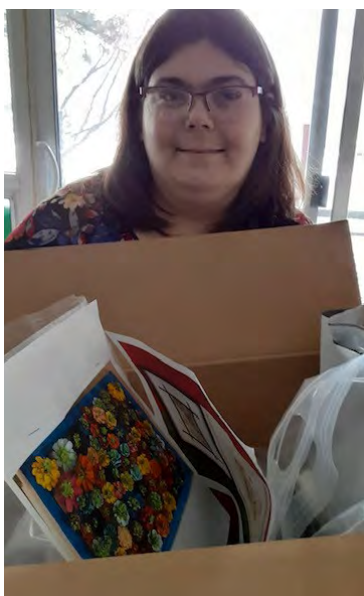


During these restrictive times while we all work to stay safe and healthy, we search to find things that bring us joy.

For many people, joy comes in the form of art. So, we happily started a Zoom Art program being offered once a week for small groups.

Kelly, Melissa, Sarah, and Andrea have kicked off the program with great enthusiasm! Not only have they been able to create some great projects, which we plan to put on display - they have also been able to be social and enjoy some catch-up time with each other.

The sessions are 4-5 weeks long for 2 hours per week. All supplies are dropped off at the participant's home ready to get started! We look forward to offering more sessions so that people may stay social and be creative!



## A HOLIDAY DRIVE THRU

The holidays certainly were different this year, everyone avoiding the traditional celebrations with large groups of family and friends. Holiday Festivities were closed, or altered to ensure all Covid-19 protocols were followed, but house-mates Michelle, Stella, Robin, Ulli and Annie found ways to celebrate and embrace the holiday spirit!



The ladies grabbed two vehicles, and a coffee for the drive and headed down to GLOW at Safari Niagara. Surrounded by the twinkle of more than a million lights, the ladies sang along to Christmas music and danced through the entire 3 km dazzling landscape – a spectacular evening!

*“Art enables us to find ourselves and lose ourselves at the same time.”*

- Thomas Merton

# SENIOR CONNECTIONS

Seniors Connections is a much needed program that aims to achieve a sense of community and purpose through the inclusive participation of seniors. This program focuses on introducing seniors within Community Living Oakville to seniors within various senior homes throughout our region. It encourages lasting and sustainable relationships that will reach beyond the duration of this program. It is our hope that through connections made, seniors will have a greater social network in which they can rely on; develop skills and share experiences with one another.

After running two very successful seniors programs, Community Living Oakville sought out a grant through the New Horizons for Seniors Program (NHSP), which we were successful at receiving. We are thankful for this funding, as it has allowed us to continue this program once again. This time however, Covid-19 decided to grace us with its presence. With the unknown ahead of us, and recognizing that seniors are some of the most vulnerable during this pandemic, we decided to delay the start of Senior Connections.

Fast forward one year later and recognizing that seniors are facing social isolation, feel disengaged from friends, family and their community – we asked ourselves: how do we connect seniors to others? What we do know is that we have technology on our side, and therefore Virtual Seniors Connections was created!



A Senior Connections Facilitator is currently developing the new virtual program, which will be rolling out in the next few weeks! Planning meetings are underway as well as building vital connections with seniors in our community. We are hopeful that Covid-19 restrictions will be lifted and we can all meet in person, but for now we will connect virtually, creating opportunities with seniors, for seniors!

If you are interested, or know someone who is a senior residing in Halton Region and would like more information - please contact Neil Rogers at [neil.rogers@oakcl.org](mailto:neil.rogers@oakcl.org)



# 'TAKE 20' MINDFULNESS SESSIONS

Tap into the Joy,  
Compassion,  
Delight  
and Laughter  
within.



Relief for Anxiety, Chronic Stress and Depression



## Take 20

A Weekly 20 Minute Pause For Self Care and Mental Wellness

Thursdays: January 21, 2021 - February 25, 2021.  
1:00 PM on Zoom



At Community Living Oakville we appreciate and respect our Support Workers and acknowledge that they have been at the forefront, providing support to people since the beginning of this pandemic.

We wanted to give back and provide an opportunity to support their mental wellness and overall health.

Take 20 is a weekly 20-minute pause for our front line workers to practice self-care and promote mental wellness. Sessions will continue through March.

Please watch for the weekly reminder and link to join!





301 Wycroft Road  
Oakville, ON L6K 2H2  
905.844.0146  
[www.oakcl.org](http://www.oakcl.org)

Charitable Business  
#0175265C  
BN107790552R001

