

Happenings

WE BELIEVE IN PEOPLE

Volume 3, Edition 1
2022



THE RAISE YOUR VOICE COUNCIL

Meet your 2022/2023 Council Members.

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COMMUNITY PARTNERS

We are thankful to be supported through the Oakville Community Foundation's GIVEOakville program.

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HOLIDAY MATCH CAMPAIGN



Thank you to our compassionate community for your unwavering support during the holiday season. Through the Holiday Match Campaign we raised \$61,500!

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A MESSAGE FROM ALEXANDRA



Welcome to the latest edition of Happenings!

We are happy to connect with all of you once again and share the many moments leading up to the holiday season and into 2022.

Unfortunately, the weeks prior to the holidays and into the New Year were not what we had expected. Many people we support and our staff contracted Covid-19 and multiple homes agency wide have been in and out of outbreak status. We are thankful to the people we support for remaining positive and patient during these times. They, along with the tremendous staff who have been working diligently to maintain everyone's safety, continue to have a smile on their faces. We are also grateful to Halton Public Health and our Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services for guiding and continuing to support us.

Despite these challenges around us, it is always admirable to see how our network of friends, families and neighbours, support people and services at Community Living Oakville. A sense of 'community' is always evident, in good times and in bad. Most recently, this was demonstrated during our Holiday Match Campaign. It warmed all of us to see the generous contributions that were made. We look forward to you reading further to learn about these meaningful donations in our development report within this issue.

It is also notable to acknowledge the great work that has been done to date in order to achieve our Strategic Planning initiatives and our goals through-

out our Accreditation Plan. One would have thought that the many bumps in the road would have halted these action items or significantly slowed them down, however not so for our determined leadership team. Collectively, we have made great progress in various areas such as through rights education and promotion, initiating our first data project, facilitating workshops and activities for seniors, exploring new day service models via 'Community Connect,' expanding employment and pre-employment programs and increasing our social media presence to name a few. All of these elements combined are an added effort towards enhancing the quality of life for the people we support and embracing a person-centered culture.

The year ahead opens the doors for new possibilities and experiences. We encourage you to stay in touch and reach out, as we would love to hear from you! Here are just a few of our key initiatives projected for 2022: increase recruitment of both staff and volunteers (know of anyone? please refer them to us!), develop a comprehensive diversity initiative (embracing diversity agency wide in everything we do), and increasing family engagement (initiating a parent group, focus groups and more).

If you or anyone you know is eager to get involved, please do reach out to us through <https://oakcl.org/contact>

"Alone, we can do so little; together, we can do so much."

~Helen Keller~

With warm regards,

Alexandra Hoeck-Murray
Executive Director

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Take a look back at some images and experiences we enjoyed in 2021 - See Page 10

VIRTUAL VOICE



The Virtual Voice program, funded by the Government of Canada, New Horizons for Seniors Program, started in July of 2021 amid COVID restrictions and people having to learn to do things in a new way. The aim of the Virtual Voice program is to educate seniors on technology from a myriad of different platforms including cell phones, tablets and laptops.

A number of people tune into the biweekly Zoom events, held by Tech Coaches, in order to increase their knowledge of the internet and what it can do for them. Topics explored to date, include Google, other internet browsers, Facebook, email, music streaming sites, and movie streaming sites.

Another aspect of the Virtual Voice program is a biweekly health initiative targeting healthy eating, and other modules discussing issues that seniors may face as they get older.

Virtual Voice has introduced technology to those unfamiliar with it, expanded people's comfort and knowledge of using technology, while also providing a way for people to virtually connect with one another. To those who attend Virtual Voice - Keep clacking on those keyboards.



SENIOR CONNECTIONS

The Senior Connections Program started its online offerings of events in April of 2021. The program is funded by the Government of Canada, New Horizons for Seniors Program. The aim of the program is to connect seniors who are supported by Community Living Oakville with seniors living in long term care facilities.

Since the program's inception, many events have been offered, from online concerts, bingo sessions, pottery classes, painting classes, and yoga and mindfulness and discussions about mental health and various issues seniors are facing today.

We have partnered with a number of long-term facilities within the Region including Allendale Long Term Care, Chartwell, Wyndham Manor, Extencicare Halton Hills, Mountainview, Kilean Lodge and Creek Way Village.

Senior Connections Program has reduced some of the isolation that seniors face, especially during a pandemic, and had created some long-lasting relationships that will hopefully continue to flourish even after the program ends.

This project is funded by
the Government of Canada.



INTRODUCTION: NAZEEM LAHASHMI — DIRECTOR OF SERVICES



Hello everyone, my name is Nazeem Lahashmi and I recently joined Community Living Oakville as the Director of Services. I feel honoured to be supporting both people who experience disabilities along with stakeholders of the organization as we head into 2022 and further unknowns with the pandemic. I am eager to be a part of progressing towards our strategic goals and accredi-

tation plans as a team and can't wait to meet all of you in support of our community and agency.

A bit about me - I was born and raised in Ontario and lived in a few cities throughout the Greater Toronto Area before settling down in Georgetown with my lovely wife and daughter for the last eight years. My education is very diverse; most recently I graduated from Ryerson University with a degree in Child and Youth Care along with a minor degree in Sociology. Prior to that, I studied and received a diploma in both Child and Youth Care and Police Foundations.

From a very young age, I have been honoured to support people with disabilities. I had a grandfather whom I supported daily for five years as he was aging and experienced dementia and Alzheimer's before passing away in 2007. I also had the privilege to work with March of Dimes Canada, Community Living Mississauga and my longest tenure of 12 years as a Residential Manager for Christian Horizons. I am also a part

time professor in the Faculty of Social Services Program at Centennial College and have been teaching our future leaders for the last 6 years.

Some of my passions are social justice, traveling, horses, music and of course good food. I love to spend my time learning about people and cultures, working on small home renovation projects and learning about future technologies. One of the coolest places I have traveled to was Japan where I learned a lot about Japanese culture, food and technology. But just as I have passions and hobbies that I strive to achieve, I know the people we support have passions, dreams and hopes for their lives. This is why I am excited to meet everyone throughout this coming year and ecstatic to be a part of the team to support people in meeting their goals, creating happiness and success in their lives. I can't wait to begin making changes, build relationships of trust and celebrate all of our successes along the way.



JIM'S YOGA EXPERIENCE

Yoga is an activity that is said to have physical benefits, while also improving one's mental wellbeing. Such is the case for Jim Morkin, who began his Yoga experience with Community Connect in the fall of 2021. Jim attended weekly Yoga sessions with PowerYoga Canada-Trafalgar Oakville Location and was committed to focusing on his physical, emotional and social wellbeing, by pushing himself a bit further each week. As time went on, Jim's focus on the elements of yoga (poses, strength and breathing), as well as his independence with these elements improved.

Unfortunately, due to the challenges and restrictions imposed by the pandemic, specifically the Omicron variant, Community Connect had to pause services for a few weeks over Christmas and into the new year. Although, not an ideal situation, the safety of people supported and staff was the priority.

Now that restrictions are being lifted, Community Living Oakville's Community Connect is getting back into full swing! People have returned to their sports, recreational and social activities that they have been missing; including Jim, who has resumed his weekly yoga sessions! We look forward to continuing to follow Jim's Yoga Journey to becoming the healthiest version of himself.

PROJECT SEARCH: MARCHING FORWARD



Project Search's third year at Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital got off to a fantastic start despite the shifting sands of a pandemic and we are grateful to the hospital for inviting us back for in-person learning during increasingly challenging times. Our bright new Project Search interns embraced major changes in their young lives as they left the regular school environment and began to navigate a complex new environment while also contending with the impact of Covid-19. As you read this, the interns would have embarked on the second leg of their Project Search journey. It's clearly evident how their newly acquired skills are transferring to new environments and job duties. As we've experienced in past years, one of the departments at the hospital has even expressed interest in hiring one of our interns upon completion of the program.

We are so grateful to be on site in person but it hasn't been business as usual. Covid-19 has brought about many operational changes including staff redeployment. We have had to remain very flexible and creative as we navigate a fluid environment. For example, one of our internships had to be placed on hold for safety reasons but this challenge also presented an opportunity to explore, and ultimately develop, a blended internship to provide a rich learning experience for that intern. This will involve working in several different departments each day providing a fulsome experience across them all. While other departments have experienced a significant increase in workload that they were unable to accommodate an intern and yet others have experienced a temporary but conversely reduced workload which is not conducive to a rich learning opportunity for an intern.

As new opportunities grow from new challenges there are other highlights to note as well. Of particular significance is the addition of transportation services now available for our interns coming from North Halton (Acton and Georgetown). This service, offered through Activan, has been in the works for some time and with the help of a Halton District School Board Superintendent a great partnership was formed.

We also welcomed visitors from the Wellington Catholic District School Board and the Waterloo Catholic District School Board as the Ontario Ministry of Education begins to roll out Project Search across the province. The province has ambitious plans for Project Search and we look forward to seeing how that unfolds.

As we enter the second and third internships we introduce resumes, cover letters, and interview skills in greater detail. All our interns prepare, practice, and participate in actual interviews for their second internships. Resumes are also written and revised in preparation for those interviews and together form a foundation for later in the year when we begin to work closer with Community Living Oakville's Xplore Employment team and explore real-world employment opportunities.

Community Living Oakville and Project Search are proud of the interns for the strength and resilience they have demonstrated as we march forward into 2022. Their growth and development will no doubt continue throughout the second internship, and we are already looking ahead to the third prior to the exciting transition from graduation to paid employment through ongoing support from Community Living Oakville.



SPONSORED BY:



Royal Bank



HOLIDAY MATCH CAMPAIGN

Thank you to our compassionate community for your unwavering support during the holiday season. Through the Holiday Match Campaign we raised \$61,500! With your generous donations, you made certain that we continue to deliver the programs and services the people we support rely on to enjoy enriched, fulfilled and connected lives. Our long-standing friends and supporters of CLO, Peter and Petrina Nesbitt, donated a very generous \$15,000 match through The Petrus Fund, and in the season of giving, you all ensured that every dollar was matched.

Thanks to your generosity, these funds will provide Community Living Oakville the opportunity to facilitate valuable mentorships for the people we support. Due to the pandemic, many people we support have felt an increase in isolation and are not readily connected to their community. Through volunteerism and mentorship, however, people we support will have the opportunity to partner with engaged members in our community who will support people to secure social roles and expand their networks. Mentors will meet regularly with people we support to assist them in determining their goals, facilitate discussion based on topics of interest, support people to learn new skills, attend volunteer engagements together and connect them to services and people in our community. Ideally, mentors will meet with people in person, however they will have the option to meet virtually during times when social distancing is a requirement. Due to your support, the volunteer mentorship program will become a reality and provide new and valued connections for the people we serve.

THANK YOU TO OUR HOLIDAY MATCH CAMPAIGN DONORS

- Abdurrahman & Nihal Gecekusu
- Ainslie Baillie
- Alan and Elva Telfer
- Alison St.Hill
- Andrew Cervin-Lawry
- Ayako Inoue
- Brian Delorey
- Cassandra Callahan
- Christine Hardy
- Daniela Hampton-Davies
- Darren Lawless
- David Spence
- David Justice
- David and Mary White
- Dean Pielt
- Debbie Marks
- Debbie McKibbon
- Debbie Birnie
- Donna Novakovic
- Eve and Peter Willis
- Evelyn Kuschnik
- Farm Mutual Reinsurance Plan
- Frank and Azniv Lochan Family Foundation (a fund held within the Oakville Community Foundation)
- George Baillie
- Grant and Barb Wallace
- IODE Angela Bruce Chapter
- Isabella Evans
- Janet Quinn
- Jennifer Diamond
- Jennifer Buckley
- Jennifer Cross
- Jessie and John Reiffenstein
- Joanne Peters
- Joanne Mellon
- Joy Scott
- Judith French
- Judy McLellan
- Kari McAllindon
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- Lorraine Yates
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- Marta Coito
- Martha Burnham
- Mary Ann Favro
- Melissa Graham
- Michael Ross
- Paul and Judy Malloch
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- Procor Limited
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- Robert and Jennifer Doyle
- Robitaille Charitable Foundation
- Rosanne Van Hees
- Roseanne Elliott
- Samantha Cheung
- Samantha Horn
- Sandy Cimatori
- Sasha Woodbridge
- Steve Campbell
- Sue Baillie
- Tara Pencak
- Teresa Howarth
- The WB Family Foundation
- Tom Mahoney
- Tom and Michelle Whelan
- Viviana Smith
- Warren and Alexandra Somers
- Wendy Fasken
- Yasmine Khan
- Yvonne Robinson



We would also like to recognize Sue Bartholomew and Vanessa Barr for hosting their Oakville Club Ladies tennis luncheon in support of CLO this year. We are grateful to both of you for your continued commitment to our mission and for the generosity of your members and attendees towards our holiday match campaign.

LYNDA GOODBRAND MEMORIAL

If it ain't Scotch...

You always hear about people who are kind & compassionate, but no one can come close to being more grateful for all of life's blessings than Lynda Jean Goodbrand. Lynda passed on October 29, 2021 at the age of 64. She leaves behind a legacy incomparable to many. Most notably was her kindness, compassion, her witty sense of humor and her loving family.

Lynda would always ask about people whom she encountered over the years. "How is your mother doing?", "Is your cat doing better?" Her room was once painted by a staff member's son, and Lynda always made sure to check in, and ask about him. Lynda felt other people's emotions deeply, she would know if something was bothering you, and would simply ask "How are you doing?"

Lynda lived with four other women, who say the nights are a little too quiet; Lynda was very patriotic and loved this beautiful country she lived in and she would pay tribute by singing the National Anthem, and/or God Save the Queen every night before she fell asleep. A memory her housemates at the time didn't think they would miss. Also, during the days, Lynda's love for music would echo through the house while she sang Jesus Loves Me and/or Amazing Grace. And who can forget Christmas caroling? If you were one of those people who would only like to hear carols during the Christmas season (or maybe not at all)- then you made the wrong friend, as Lynda sang Christmas Carols ALL YEAR ROUND, and sang them proudly while decorating the tree in November.

While hearing all the memories people shared about Lynda, there were smiles, laughter, tears, and tears from laughing so hard.

I heard about how Lynda was a GPS before google maps was even invented - Mary White recalls Lynda telling her how to get around town to where she needed to be (probably because Lynda knew how Mary could get lost in her own back yard).

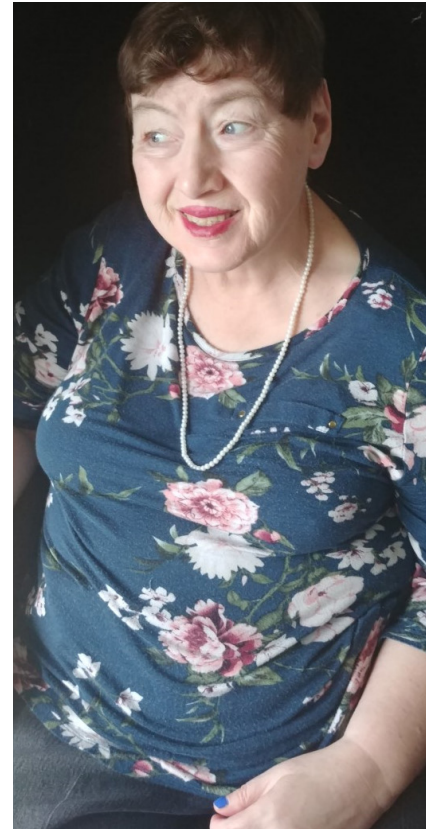
There were stories about Lynda's love for flowers, Wolfie, crocheting, Annabelle, jujubes, her winks, girl's days, hot chocolate but "just a small with little milk". Stories were shared about how Lynda was undefeated in card games no matter how hard you tried and about her many travelling adventures to Port Elgin and Niagara Falls - everyone's ears were ringing from the music, which was never too loud for Lynda.

Amongst the memories, laughter, and smiles, there's also somberness. Conversations would return to how Lynda had an incredibly devoted and loving family by her side. Lynda was a valued, loved, and respected member of her family. She was a sister, an aunt, and most important for Lynda she was a daughter. She shared a special bond with her mother Betty; a mother-daughter bond you read about, or see in the movies and aspire to have. It was incredible to hear the passion and love when Lynda spoke of her mother. Lynda loved spending time with Betty, and the feeling was mutual. Any chance Betty had she would be with her daughter. Lynda loved to chat about their shopping trips, trips up North and stopping for picnics. Lynda also talked about how beautiful her mom is, and how they shared a love for 'looking their finest'. "Don't forget the lipstick" Lynda would often say before leaving the house. "Can't forget her necklace and watch" recalls one of her staff Linda, "it is almost like she wasn't 'put together' without them."

Lynda and Linda shared an inside joke "I loved that she always called me 'Lin', because we had the same name, even though hers was with a Y" (and not an i). People would sometimes correct her, but they both laughed as they knew it was a nickname.

Lynda, you made the world a better place because you were in it; you taught us the importance of kindness, patience, compassion and how important family is.

Rest Well Lynda, and remember,
"If it ain't Scotch.....Its Crap!"



Lynda Goodbrand
August 17, 1957 - October 29, 2021

COMMUNITY PARTNERS



We are thankful to be supported through the Oakville Community Foundation's GIVEOakville program. Community Living Oakville gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Oakville community, Balogh Family Foundation, Shorey Family, Jackson Family Fund and the Brian and Julia Hanna Family Fund held at The Foundation. Because of your generosity, we can expand our Community Connect program and provide the people we support greater opportunities for full participation in our community.

The Community Connect program offers adults with developmental disabilities the opportunity to enhance their skills to become more independent and develop community connections; strengthening their social network. People we support will build skills towards independence (employability skills, social skills, communication skills and healthy living). Community Connect will further educate employers and community partners in regards to becoming knowledgeable in disability awareness, working with someone with a disability and creating a diverse and inclusive environment.



In January, many people supported by Community Living Oakville's residential services faced challenging periods of isolation due to Covid-19. Ritorno restaurant, recognized these challenging times and donated over 25 3-course meals to those who were most affected by the restrictions in place. THANK YOU Julia, Brianne and your team for your big hearts and joyful support through your Ritorno Gives initiative! <https://ritorno.ca>



The Oakville Pump and Patio has graciously started a partnership with Community Living Oakville, providing meals to people receiving our services, once a week on a rotational basis. As we continue to battle the impact that Covid-19 has, including the strain of restrictions, the enjoyment of not having to cook and instead receiving a special delivery is a welcome treat. THANK YOU Ethan and your staff for bringing smiles to their faces and your ongoing generosity during this time! <https://www.theoakvillepump.com>



In the season of giving, an incredible amount of Christmas presents was collected through the United Way Halton and Hamilton Gift Drive for the people we support. The thoughtfulness of those in our community who sponsored gifts and provided a variety of both essential and entertaining items for our residents was wonderful and they were thrilled to receive them. THANK YOU UWHH for your steadfast support of Community Living Oakville in big and small ways.



We would like to send a note of thanks to Dr. Emeka Anosike, MD, CCFP and the staff at the Rehoboth Family Health Clinic for going above and beyond in providing the best support and careful accommodations to the complex needs of some of the people we support. We truly appreciate your loyalty as a community member and advocate for people with developmental disabilities and THANK YOU for your care. <http://www.rehobothfhc.com>



If you have any questions about sponsorship, registration, volunteering or to be added to the email list for future CLO events, please contact Andrea Interior via andrea.interior@oakcl.org



COURAGE TO LIVE AN AUTHENTIC LIFE SCOTT BERGMAN MEMORIAL

May 5, 1971 - January 14, 2022

Some of the greatest teachers have no academic credentials. Like Scott – and people we support – their lessons in life were authorized through courage to walk a road ‘less travelled’ – which makes all the difference – for us and those they meet. But from that path – encouraging flowers of hope - will grow.

Scott agreed with this story. When offered the opportunity to speak on an educational video about Abuse, Neglect, Mistreatment and Exploitation - his enthusiasm jetted with passion of an erupting volcano, a fiery eagerness. He wanted to educate people about the need to understand trauma. He was willing to share his experiences – a PhD dissertation on the struggle of receiving service and the resultant pain it brought.

Scott joined Pat and Lorne Bergman fifty years ago in May 1971. It was to be the start of a challenging journey – played out in a world then and now unready to meet the needs of some of its citizens. Scott would be driven by challenges often making him homeless – alone – and often misjudged. Scott witnessed undistorted positive and negative qualities of our world. Hope and despair. He taught us being homeless was the last true rebel call in life. Bravely he endured the harshness of our northern winter. In a world where renegades have a home – Scott often did not. ‘Hardcore’ is the only cliché that comes to mind.

Like Pat and Lorne – we were hopeful when Scott joined Community Living Oakville at the end of April 2021, that Scott had found ‘home’. He was animated and lively – like when he purchased a pair of bright (very bright) tight fitting orange pants. One day on the

porch he embraced a neighborhood dog in an incredible show of affection – unlocking friendliness the golden retriever inhaled with overpowering energy. He gave away possessions – fishing rods and tackle - to neighborhood children. He wanted people to be happy. Scott was funny – he loved to laugh and see people laugh.

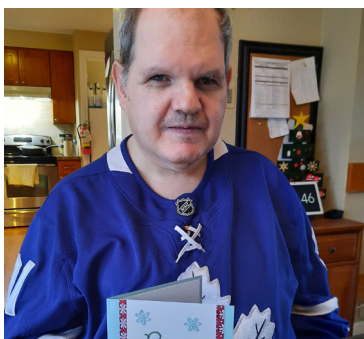
Craig joined Scott at the home and though Scott’s parting comments were filled with fury of a fiery sermon – Craig sheepishly loved his return. Scott loved to cook and though Craig could complain with zest and appeal – and was counselled to ‘not eat the meal then’...there was nothing like sitting down to enjoy what Scott developed in the kitchen. Like the symphony of life which he composed and conducted to the end, his meals had magnetic appeal in a way only Scott could coordinate.

Through Scott, however, we glimpsed the toll of homelessness. Scott was one of the most fearless people we knew. Nothing can be more frightening than being homeless without shelter. But to Scott the winter lion’s cold angry roar – and Maslow’s renowned Hierarchy of Needs - were just a tame housecat. Scott was unique amongst unique people. Scott had a spiritual streak and we spoke about his father, who Scott dearly missed. Scott seemed comforted by the thought of his father’s spiritual presence.

On January 14, 2022, Scott passed away. Scott was supported by Community Living Oakville for the longest period of any agency in his life, according to his sister Tracey – 256 days. He leaves his unique profound mark – kindness and caring on all staff, and his friend Craig. We miss him.

A YEAR IN REVIEW

Take a look back at some highlights from 2021!





MEET ME - ANDREA CERVIN LAWRY



Witty, funny, devoted, and fun are the main ingredients that make up me, Andrea (at least that's what my friends tell me). There are a lot of things you might not know about me and you can catch the Coles notes version here: [A bit about Andrea CL](#)

Otherwise, I hope you enjoy reading a little bit about me and what I

have been up to these last couple of years.

I grew up in Oakville, where I live with my family and I have a younger brother. Though it's likely you won't find me there, I am always out around town, hopping on the local transit heading to my next adventure.

First stop – Special Olympics:

I am part of many Special Olympics teams including basketball, softball, track and field, and my favourite, 10-pin bowling. I love to keep active and taking part in these sports gives me the chance to hang out with my friends. It has been tough with Covid-19 and all the shutdowns, as the Special Olympics hasn't been running, but I have found other ways to keep In the Loop and Stay Connected with friends...

Second Stop – Community Living Oakville:

March 2020, when the pandemic began, was a stressful time for me as there were a lot of unknowns. Before Covid-19, I took the bus to CLO every day where I would meet up with my friends and, with the support of staff, we would get to do all the things we loved. We would travel all over including trips to Niagara Falls, Toronto, etc. No masks, no restrictions, just fun! I miss those days. I miss the staff and seeing people every day, but there have been lots of positive things that have come out of this pandemic for me as well. I joined CLO's virtual program Stay Connected, which started just days after the closures began. In Stay Connected, I get to meet new people, interview famous people, see my friends, and because it is virtually, I can join in anytime I want. Stay Connected has given me the opportunity to explore the world outside of my comfort zone. I wasn't usually overly excited to be on camera, but now two years later, being on camera is second nature to me. In fact, I am so comfortable, I joined CLO's media group, In the Loop Media. I LOVE it! I have learned how to navigate social media, I created my own podcast, I research and share positive quotes and have my own YouTube gaming channel - all of this was possible with the help of the media team. I love to game, and you can watch me play Animal Crossing on my YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpV-BRpZN3ZJs3i7dQoJP3lg>

Third Stop - Songwriting & Producing with Massive Tank Studios:

Another positive that has come out of this pandemic for me personally was that I was able to explore and dig deeper into my songwriting. I worked with Ryan at Massive Tank Studios and it was EPIC! We worked heavily on rhythm, songwriting and how to use a digital audio workstation. Ryan posted my work on social media and it was very cool to see and share:

<https://www.facebook.com/ryanman.man/videos/615426859499656>

“Andrea wrote and programmed every instrument on this track, she learned how to use GarageBand on her iPad in quite an impressive amount of depth, and she wrote both the lyrics and melody. I was just there to point her in the right direction if she needed it (she rarely did) Andrea had her work done every week and often early. If she needed help mid-week, she would ask and if she didn't understand something - she would ask. She was and is a joy to work with. This is her first completed song, which she produced 100% herself! Andrea, I'm so proud of you!! Great job and I can't wait for your next one!” - Ryan, Massive Tank Studios

Fourth Stop - Raise Your Voice Council:

I am proud to say I am entering my 4th year of being the Chair of the Raise Your Voice Council at Community Living Oakville. This council is a group of people who have disabilities who have come together as a Self-Advocate group. We plan and host the best parties, dances and events. We also host the widely known and anticipated C.O.V.E (Community of Voices Everywhere) Conference in partnership with the Self-Advocate committees from CLB, CWSDS & CLNH. Due to the pandemic, 2021's C.O.V.E Conference was held online and hosted about 100 people from across Ontario World Café. Guest speakers talked about Inclusion, Awareness and Acceptance. Check out the special events that happen virtually through Stay Connected - You won't be disappointed!

Last Stop - Work:

Although my life is full of fun adventures, I do also work in between the exciting activities and love working at HER Studios (<https://www.herstudio-sinc.com>) (#xploreemployment) It is such a great place where everyone is kind and of course the paycheck is nice too!



So, that's me, Andrea Cervin Lawry! I hope to see you around some day, and if you see me in the community, make sure to say hello!

Editor's Note: check out a fun clip that one of Andrea's friends made for her: <https://vm.tiktok.com/ZMLFqtxAY/>

CHRISTMAS DINNER

Wellington Square United Church, along with other community outreach programs, has been serving holiday meals with the help of their volunteers for a couple of years now. This is the second year that people supported at Community Living Oakville have received these generous meal donations.

The Christmas dinners, along with gift bags, were delivered to 19 people supported through Community Living Oakville's Supported Independent Living program. Each Christmas dinner (which had enough food to serve a family of four) consisted of turkey, baked potato, tossed salad, stuffing, squash, soup, gravy and bread – as well as items to satisfy one's sweet tooth – such as candies, muffins, fruit, cheesecake and apple pie.

Thank you Wellington Square United Church for your generous donation to Community Living Oakville, and for helping families put gifts under the tree, dinner on the table and smiles all around.

While all were very appreciative of the meals, some expressed their appreciation in words -

“The meal was so good, I relished it over a couple of days and I am also happy that I received gifts to open on Christmas Day!”

– Stephanie Rowsell

“Grateful! I felt happy and enjoyed the meals.”

– Luciana Bachetti



AENEAS MACISAAC



On February 11, 2022, Community Living Oakville lost one of its very generous volunteers. Aeneas MacIsaac, a member of the Knights of Columbus, volunteered his time every Sunday evening delivering donations from Cobs Bread's End of Day Giving Program to Community Living Oakville.

Aeneas was a kind man, who came every week with a story of a new adventure and he spoke often of the love he had for his wife, children and grandchildren. Aeneas was a generous man who was dedicated to Community Living Oakville; he took the time to get to know our agency and was committed to the delivery of bread – rain or shine, snow or hail – and with a smile on his face every time.

Aeneas – we thank you for the contributions you made to Community Living Oakville. You will be missed.





The Loop@HOME virtual program continues to create engaging content focusing on “good news for a change”. Nothing can stop this group of content creators and the creativity from these reporters and creators never ceases to amaze!

They have been developing their own shows such as Smack Talk (a WWE wrestling podcast), and “Wake up Oakville” which is a weekly radio show discussing entertainment, video games, weather, sports and current events.

In The Loop@HOME is a very collaborative, creative, and positive group, who share lots of “good news” while honing their skills and becoming more independent about their social media posts and engagement.

See what we have been up to:
<https://youtu.be/AALOKLUSRiA>

Stop Animation rocks:
<https://fb.watch/aZgR9vMm50/>

Christmas special:
<https://vm.tiktok.com/ZMLFgDBhd/>

Click below and follow our social media to Stay in the Loop!

<https://linktr.ee/InTheLoopMedia>

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STAY CONNECTED



“The friendliest place on the Internet”

We’ve had some exciting things happening in our virtual sessions with exciting guests, engaging discussions, laughter, entertainment and mindfulness tools to help us be fully present, aware of where we are and what we’re doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what’s going on around us.

We’ve enjoyed hearing the positive feedback from participants and parents and are happy to that there is a place for people to be together to talk, share experiences and have fun!

Monday Movie Nights are a big hit with people joining in every Monday night at 7p.m. to watch a featured film. Our feature “Temple Grandin” starring Claire Danes; A biopic of a woman with autism who has become one of the top scientists in the humane livestock handling industry and an important advocate for the Autism Community, was a huge success. Organized by Greg Kozak the evening included an amazing Q&A with Dr. Temple Grandin herself, who discussed the making of the movie and talked about her life.

<https://youtu.be/SDrnnz3tG-I>

On Tuesdays we have a session with Kristeen who shares tools for us to use when we feel anxious or overwhelmed. These tools have helped us all immensely so we can handle difficult situations much better and find peace when we need it. We are also grateful for Lori who brings us “Livin it up with Lori” which happens right after the mindfulness sessions. Weekly topics such as Self Esteem, Building Friendships, and Assertiveness are fun and helpful to all who attend.

Our collaborations with Oakville Public Library’s “Discover Your World”, where we can discover, explore and learn about the world around us, are also well attended. People participate for one hour of fun activities including information sharing, trivia, crafts and games. The session about the winter Olympics was especially interesting.

Thursday Bingo continues to be a weekly favorite, as well as all of our music sessions, such as All Request Hour, Name That Tune, 80’s Music Hour, Oldies Hour, Karaoke, and ‘Sweatin to the Oldies’!

The variety that the Stay Connected sessions offers, helps us to get through each week by connecting with others so that no one feels alone.

In The Loopers continue to keep positivity flowing for all with “good news for a change!”

DONOR FEATURE: JUNE AND IAN COCKWELL

We are thankful for community donors who partner with Community Living Oakville and help us achieve our mission of providing quality services, supports and opportunities that are determined by the dreams and goals of each person supported.

Thanks to an incredibly generous donation of \$50,000 from June and Ian Cockwell, made in honour of Mags Shorey, CLO has been able to extend and expand our Stay Connected virtual platform.

Stay Connected was established as an alternative to in-person programming. Prior to the pandemic, people we support would join together in-person to attend educational workshops, as well as recreational and social activities; however, due to the restrictions implemented as a result of the pandemic, over the past two years this has not always been possible. Stay Connected's virtual programming ensures that people can still gather virtually and keep in touch with one another, minimizing the isolating effect that the pandemic can have.

This generous donation will not only ensure the continued success of Stay Connected, but will allow it to grow and offer a variety of options to meet the interests and goals of the people attending the program. Through Stay Connected, people we support have the opportunity to share ideas, meet prominent guest speakers, enhance their communication and interviewing skills, develop and maintain friendships while continuing to learn and build skills that enhance their independence. Stay Connected also offers people the opportunity to focus on their health and wellness by offering culinary and nutrition classes, workshops focusing on mindfulness and mental health, as well as exercise classes. Without the additional funding, this program would not be possible.

The people we support were thrilled to receive the news that they are able to continue accessing this valuable program as we continue to face challenges due to restrictions and closures.

THANK YOU June and Ian Cockwell for making this possible!

XPLORE EMPLOYMENT'S LONGEST-STANDING PARTNERSHIP AND AN INCREDIBLY DEDICATED EMPLOYEE



Founded in 1980 by Wayne Hay, Haygar Enterprises supplies fundraising products to schools, sports teams, non-profit organizations and community groups across Canada. Over the 35-year partnership with Community Living Oakville's Xplore Employment, Haygar has employed and provided work-experience to approximately 70 people supported. When moving on from Haygar to other opportunities, employees leave with warehouse-related employment skills (labeling, packaging and preparing various products for shipments), as well as the confidence to pursue new employment challenges.

For many employed at Haygar, the family business begins to feel like a second home. Seasoned employee, Bill Hickson agrees, stating that, "Wayne and Todd are such nice people to work with". Bill is essential in completing the holiday fundraising orders and takes pride in "always giving 100%". It is known that no one works faster than Bill and a more loyal and hard-working individual would be difficult to find.

Bill and the Hay family successfully persevered through Covid-19 restrictions, shut-downs, supply shortages and shipping delays over the past few years. Despite all the challenges, Bill "look[s] forward to working there every year". We wish Haygar Enterprises many more years of prosperity and continued community partnership.

For Bill and Xplore Employment - there is no place like Haygar!

THE MORE THINGS CHANGE, THE MORE THEY STAY THE SAME -

A NOTE FROM MASSIVE TANKS STUDIOS' RYAN SWITZER



MASSIVE TANK
STUDIOS

This past December was a different kind of Holiday to say the least. It was the second year that we have been told to stay away from our families and the second year I have found it a real challenge to get into the holiday spirit. For context, I start getting excited about December in July typically, and while my ornaments may not go up as early as some - this is more to do with an acute fear of ladders than a lack of holiday cheer. Couple this with the fact that my parents are two of my best friends and I'm sure it's clear how Omicron may have been a very wet blanket.

It's times like these where normally I've been able to draw from other sources and find the spirit elsewhere, but to be truthful

- the lockdowns, the restrictions and the solitude have taken their toll over the last two years. I admittedly found difficulty staying in the Holiday spirit, while simultaneously following the recommendations of our health officials. This is where Jingle Bells comes into play and also where the teacher became the student.

As a matter of course I generally change gears in December and work on holiday music with my students. It is pretty much understood that Jingle Bells is the least cool offering and literally any other suggestion gets less of a groaning response - except for this year. It started on a Thursday with Michael Lessels in the second week of December. Michael is learning some piano and Jingle Bells fit the bill with regard to its technical challenges, speed and familiarity. Michael in general is a very quiet and gentle man, so it was a bit surprising when we started playing this song that he began singing along in nearly a full voice!

That particular morning, I went to another Michael on my way back to the head office. When I walked through the door, the excitement on his face, his voice saying "alriiiiiight!!" and his joy to start playing

music would humble and melt the most stoic individual. Couple this with a nearly identical reaction to playing Jingle Bells and it was game over. I don't feel any shame in admitting that after this class I went to my car and took a couple minutes to gather myself. The spirit and joy these two men showed was so beautiful and pure. They had experienced the same lockdowns as me, they had arguably experienced more separation from their families and yet their holiday spirit came alive with a simple song.

I love what I do, I'm so fortunate to do it and as I've shown here - I am not always the teacher. The number of times that I have learned similar lessons from the people we serve at CLO is countless. In a world of complications, so often I'm reminded of how I undervalue the simple things and how I need to pay much more attention. In short, this article is really a thank you letter to both Michaels for showing me what was right in front of me and reminding me what the holidays are really about. So to Michael Lessels and Michael McCron, from the bottom of my heart...

Thank you.

“In a world of complications, so often I'm reminded of how I undervalue the simple things and how I need to pay much more attention.”

MAKING A DIFFERENCE: MARY WHITE

If you have ever met Mary, it is pretty certain that it is an encounter that you will not forget. Mary's personality, her zest for life, her comedic timing are all strong characteristics that will leave a lasting impression. However, if you have ever spent any length of time with Mary, you will know that her desire and her driving force is to ensure that each person that she provides support to has the best life possible.

Mary started her journey with Community Living Oakville in 1999. She worked front line in residential services. Shortly after, she took on a Live-in Manager position and she moved in with Linda, Rose, Ann, Sharon, Sandy and eventually, Pauline and Andrea. She did an amazing job at creating a family atmosphere in their home. To this day, you can ask her former housemates and they will talk about, with fondness, the amazing impact she had on their lives. After six years as a Live-in Manager, Mary went on to become manager of Day Services and ensured people had meaningful daytime opportunities, that were second to none. During the pandemic Mary offered her support, as usual, to assist the Residential team to provide managerial oversight to two homes.

We can talk endlessly about the impact she's made, through her endless advocating for her teams and people she supports. How she goes above her job requirements by sitting on the Joint Health and Safety Committee or being a Safe Management instructor- both roles she takes very seriously.

Above all else, the importance of family, and the love she has for her own family is what brings her the most pride.

Those who are lucky enough to know Mary feel like they know her family and are part of it. She boasts endlessly and gleams with pride as she talks about them and their accomplishments. She is a sister, an aunt, a great aunt and just recently a great-great aunt. She also has 2 fur-babies, Matty and Conor, who regularly make appearances at Zoom meetings. To us, she is Mary, but to her family she is lovingly known as Mimi. Her love of family goes beyond her own family. When she meets you, she will always ask about your family and will always make sure to check in when your paths cross. "How is your dad?", "How is your little baby?" as if she has known them her entire life and her interest is pure genuine.

If you can describe Mary in one word it would be GENEROUS. Her generosity to others knows no bounds. If she ever has cash in her wallet, she will give it to anyone that she feels needs a little help. If she has received a gift, her first thought is who would benefit from this more than her (unless it is chocolate).

Dear Mary, for always lending a helping hand when needed, for entertaining us with your stories of working on the ships on the Great Lakes, your after-hours use of the office intercom, your love of TONY ROBBINS but most importantly for being a fierce advocate to not only the people that you provide support to but the staff that you oversee and your colleagues, we thank you for always MAKING A DIFFERENCE.



"Mary is my hero, she helps be get things done. She makes me feel happy when things aren't great"

-Vanessa R

"I love Mary, she is always there for me. She has a beautiful smile. She always asks how I feel and if there is anything else I want"

-Serena L

"Mary is such an incredible, honest person. She has an answer for everything, a story for everything, and a reaction for everything. Everything she has taught me always goes back to helping others- this is the end result for anything she does. She does it to ensure people are taken care of. No matter the cost, no matter who you are, you will always have clean clothes on your back, a bed to sleep in, food to eat and a few extra bucks in your pocket 'just in case'. She has and continues to Make a Difference in my life and everyone she knows"

- Julie B

RAISE YOUR VOICE COUNCIL

The Raise Your Voice Council is a group of self-advocates who aim to promote greater awareness of the rights of people with a developmental disability.

Meet your 2022/2023 Raise Your Voice Council members:



Andrea Cervin Lawry
Chair



Katherine Thomson
Vice-Chair



Avi Duggal
Treasurer



Joel Layne
Event Planner



Michael Marchetti
Event Planner



Sarah Green
Fundraiser



Samantha Rose
Fundraiser



Greg Kozak
Security



Warren Wright
Security



Melissa Reid
Member at Large



Kaitlin Nesbitt
Member at Large



Marty Copland
Member at Large



Gary Merrill
Member at Large



Kiley Jablonski
Coordinator

Visit the Raise Your Voice Council Facebook page (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 Kiley Jablonski at kiley.jablonski@oakcl.org

WE ARE NOW

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Community Living
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