

Happenings

WE BELIEVE IN PEOPLE

Volume 3, Edition 2
2022



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A MESSAGE FROM ALEXANDRA



Welcome to the latest edition of Happenings!

I hope you are enjoying the sunshine and the warm weather. All of us here at CLO have been enjoying the outdoors. As you will see from this newsletter edition, people have been active and have embraced the ability to get back into routines, participate in group activities and be a part of their community.

Though many COVID restrictions have been lifted, we continue to monitor health and safety measures closely and with an abundance of caution. Decisions made are done so with the welfare of everyone at the forefront. The ability to enjoy our local parks, boardwalks and neighbourhoods in the spring and summer months allow everyone to select activities that are of comfort to them.

We are grateful that many in-person options are now available and Stay Connected, our online platform, is still in session. This provides people with the ability to participate in a hybrid model if they wish, and allows for more opportunities based on one's individual interests.

Last month, we celebrated Community Living Month. During this month, various events were hosted to celebrate inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities and their families. We would like to thank all those who came out to support our events, as well as a special thank you to Mayor Rob Burton. Mayor Burton further proclaimed that the month of May was 'Community Living Oakville Month' (see page 10 to hear more.)

In May, we also hosted our first Family Roundtable session. These sessions focus on presentations made by our senior lead-

ership team in an effort to keep families up to date on the latest happenings at CLO and within our sector. Sessions are open to all family members and invitations will continue to be sent quarterly via email. Please stay tuned as we would love for you to be in attendance. In addition, we also announced our future Family Group. This group will reflect family members from various departments and services across our agency. Family members will be invited to apply and members will be selected via application/interview process. Please check your email for further details.

Do you know of anyone interested in working or volunteering with CLO? If so, please be sure to inform them of the many opportunities that exist and please reach out. Currently, we are facing a staffing shortage in the developmental services sector. This reality has posed various challenges agency wide. We would like to acknowledge the advocacy work done by OASIS, the Provincial Network and our Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. They continue to work diligently to voice our concerns and recruitment challenges; all working together to provide resources and strive for solutions. Through their activism, our staff and the staff in this sector were successful in receiving a much-deserved permanent wage enhancement, in acknowledgement of their hard work and in an effort to retain employees in developmental services.

Lastly, I would like to recognize all of our current staff who continue to work diligently to support people to achieve their goals. Their commitment to quality support was highlighted through our most recent ministry compliance audit. CLO received wonderful feedback and met all ministry related compliance obligations. Thank you to you all!

Wishing everyone an enjoyable summer.

Warm regards,

Alexandra Hoeck-Murray
Executive Director

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At Community Living Oakville we are committed to ensure that each person is able to understand their rights, understand the responsibilities that go hand-in-hand with making decisions and exercising the rights that are important to them.

CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2022!



It has been a remarkable year once again for Project SEARCH Halton as we emerged from some of the constraints of the past 2 years. Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital (OTMH), once again welcomed students on-site to participate in the Project SEARCH Halton program. As discussions started, the bare walls of the classroom quickly became covered with lists of goals, ideas, and insights about the world of employment. And, as always, the passage of time was amplified by the busyness and enthusiasm of the young interns as they grew in confidence, maturity, and experience.

As in past years, we saw interns quickly become comfortable in their new environment where barriers fade as they anticipate the start of internships where they gained hands-on experience alongside mentors, managers, skills trainers, and our Halton District School Board teacher. Understanding the broader role in the mission of any workplace is important and the interns quickly saw the impact they can have on patient experience. It takes tight collaboration among all partners and managers/mentors to move forward successfully.



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brought about restrictions. It took a lot of planning but was a perfect day and an enormous success.

- A visit from the Director of Education, Curtis Ennis - along with Superintendents of Education, Terri Blackwell and Colette Ruddock, and Board Trustee, Tracey Ehl Harrison. It was an honour to have them visit the interns and receive a tour.
- An enlightening visit from the Board's Indigenous Knowledge Guide, Steve Paquette, was another class favorite as we all learned the history and culture of local First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities.

Several interns realized significant personal goals such as:

- Austin earning a bronze medal at Swim Canada in Montreal.
- Juan enrolling in college to study toward his Medical Device Reprocessing certification.
- Karan earning his G2 driver's licence and driving himself to program.
- Several interns obtaining their Food Handling Certification.
- All interns receiving Basic First Aid training.

Other highlights during the past 10 months include:

- Matt securing a job in Waste & Linen at OTMH starting the first week of June - even before graduating from the program. His hours are such that he can continue to be part of the program and graduate with his classmates.
- Austin being offered a job at the Milton hospital in Food Services.
- A year-end trip to Canada's Wonderland (a clear favourite) where everyone enjoyed a day-long social event together for the first time since Covid

Several adjustments were made to internships this year to maximize skill development and growth and in some cases, the opportunity for interns to move to a different internship when it's evident that they have reached their goals and could benefit from being challenged by something new.

Community Living Oakville introduced Life after Project SEARCH sessions for interns and families last year and this was a success once again. The transition to working with CLO's Xplore Employment team was instrumental in several interns finding employment opportunities even before the completion of the program.

Congratulations to all our graduates! It is our greatest hope that the class of 2022 have acquired the skills and increased independence necessary to find meaningful employment in the future. We are confident that this is just the first of many successes for the Project SEARCH interns as they throw their graduation caps high into the air of possibility.

Visit www.projectsearchcanada.org for more information about Project SEARCH Canada.

AN INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNITY LIVING OAKVILLE'S EXTERNAL RIGHTS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Community Living Oakville is committed to protecting and enhancing people's rights and personal freedom, and ensuring that the fundamental design and delivery of services promote individual expression. The External Rights Review Committee provides an objective view and ensures that the safety, dignity and respect for the person are evident.

When there is a need for a rights limitation to be imposed, there must be adequate due process and the External Rights Review Committee aids in giving a fair and impartial review of these limitations on personal freedoms.

Community Living Oakville is fortunate to have an External Rights Review Committee that brings an array of knowledge and experience. Please take a moment to learn more about each of our members.



Elizabeth Hayde – Chair

Elizabeth Hayde is a Realtor with Re/Max Real Estate Centre and specializes in both Residential and Commercial Real Estate. Along with a busy real estate career, Elizabeth also owns three other businesses and was nominated for the Women

of Influence award in 2020.

Over the years, Elizabeth has worked for nonprofit organizations like Brampton Caledon Community Living, Community Living Mississauga, Family Services of Peel, Community Living Oakville as well as worked in the private sector for Fortune 500 companies like ACCO Brands Canada and Rothmans, Benson and Hedges.

Elizabeth has always taken an active interest in supporting people with developmental disabilities and their families. She supports individuals to develop responsible decision-making skills, exercise informed choices and assume responsibilities and reasonable risks. Elizabeth also serves as a role model to others to demonstrate a respectful and positive attitude towards people with disabilities, while ensuring individuals are provided with opportunities to develop relationships, skills and roles, which facilitate their effective participation in the typical and valued life of the community.

Elizabeth supports many causes in the community including Salvation Army, Easter Seals, Kindred Spirits Orchestra, Shelters for Abused Women and Prisoner Reform Employment.



Jim Feyerer

Jim Feyerer is a senior strategic HR leader with 25+ years' experience in the healthcare and long-term care sector. He is an accomplished and dynamic leader with a proven track record of aligning leaders and developing and retaining key talent in pursuit of the vision to deliver exemplary patient experiences. Jim is currently Director Human Resources at Halton Healthcare. Jim holds a BA in Psychology from York University and an MBA from Western University.



Liz Behrens

Liz moved to Oakville in 1971 and as her children entered school, she became involved in the community. Liz initiated the Block Parent Program and the Residents Association. In 1980, Liz was elected to Oakville Town Council and in 1985 to Halton Regional Council. In 2000, Liz became the Executive Director of the Bronte Business Area and in 2007, she became the Provincial Returning Officer for the Riding of Oakville. Liz is currently the President of the Rotary Club of Oakville Trafalgar.



Andy Willemsen

Andy Willemsen has worked 34 years in the Developmental Services Field. During that time he worked in the areas of Community Living Supports, Family Resource, Community Participation Supports, Rights Awareness, and Educational Supports. Andy is a strong advocate for people receiving services and in addition to his experience, Andy brings with him a wealth of information. Currently he is enjoying being retired.



Heather Neal

Heather Neal is the Manager of Crisis Services for Canadian Mental Health Association – Halton Region Branch (CMHA HRB). Heather has been part of the crisis team at CMHA HRB for the past 10 years. Prior to her work with CMHA HRB she has 10+ years' experience working in a variety of community mental health settings including work with children, youth, and adults. Heather has an educational background in Psychology, which has helped to guide her work over the years. Heather holds a strong commitment to working with individuals and families in times of need and helping to guide to a place of recovery in the community and is honored to be blessed with the opportunity to help others!

AN INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNITY LIVING OAKVILLE'S EXTERNAL RIGHTS REVIEW COMMITTEE (CONT'D)



Nicole Roseneck

Nicole Roseneck has lived in Burlington for the past 44 years and enjoys living here with her husband and 2 teenage daughters. She has been employed as a Halton District School Board Secondary teacher since 2004. She has taught in many different pathways in high school but her passion is teaching in the Community Pathways Program. CPP supports students identified as exceptional who have limited cognitive and adaptive skills. It is designed to meet the needs of students who require an Alternate Curriculum to meet their varied learning needs including communication, functional academics, skills of daily living, social skills, self-regulation, and motor skills. Prior to teaching, Nicole was a Live-In Manager for 6 ½ years with Community Living Burlington. She uses both of these experiences to provide valuable learning opportunities for her students at MM Robinson. She enjoys various sporting activities, travel and spending time with family and friends. She looks forward to her professional development and new learning opportunities as a member of the External Rights Review Committee member.

We would like to thank the External Rights Review Committee for their time and dedication to ensuring that Community Living Oakville continues to provide quality services and supports.

JUST KEEP MOVING

Like the biceps of those participating, the Seniors Healthy Movement class is growing strong.

The first class started moving in February with three loyal people setting goals for their best possible health. Since then, we have welcomed ten enthusiastic and eager participants, all seeking better health. Tom Sawyer, the personal trainer, has developed a program for each person, taking into consideration each person's mobility and physical needs along with their individual goals.

As such, the program has resulted in increased strength, mobility, and stability. This class has impacted people's daily lives on many levels. For some it has improved their physical strength, for others their confidence. For one participant of the Healthy Movement class, getting in and out of the vehicle had been a challenge; with her dedication to attending the class twice a week, and with her focus on improved health, this is no longer as big of a barrier as it was back in February.

Congratulations to all those in the Seniors Healthy Movement class for taking a step toward reaching their fitness goals!

Are you 50 and over? Are you looking for ways to increase strength, mobility and socialize?

For more information on the Seniors Healthy Movement, please contact Neil Rogers neil.rogers@oakcl.org



In February, MPP Stephen Crawford visited Community Living Oakville to learn more about the Seniors Health Initiative funded by the Government of Ontario through the New Horizons Seniors Community grant.

CONQUERING OUR FEARS - ONE STEP AT A TIME



Fear can be a funny thing – sometimes that fear motivates, challenges and makes us push forward; other times that fear can be paralyzing and prevent us from experiencing life. When given the choice of whether to conquer her fear of heights, or miss out on going to the CN Tower, Robin was determined to not let her fear hold her back on experiencing one of Ontario’s largest tourist attractions.

On March 10th, with encouragement and support, Robin went to the top of the CN Tower! Although Robin will admit that there were times when she considered turning back around, she persevered and kept on going.

When she reached the top Robin was amazed by the view. She took pictures to capture this monumental moment and, on the way back down, she exclaimed that she was happy she continued to the top and wasn’t scared anymore. Way to go Robin on overcoming your fears!



“It’s not the absence of fear. It’s overcoming it.”

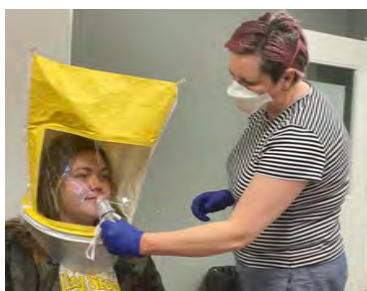
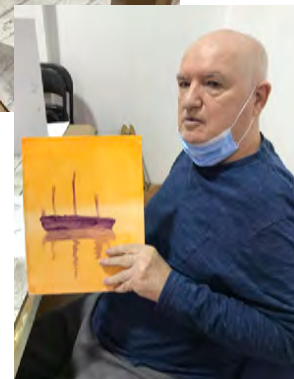
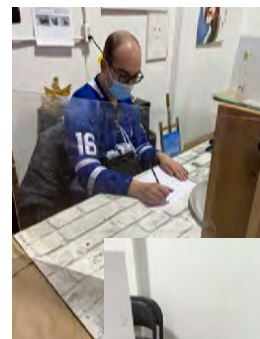
– Emma Watson

STREETDOG ART STUDIO



As we develop partnerships for the Community Connect program, we are extremely thankful to Patricia Carrasquilla for her efforts to be an inclusive member of our community. Patricia is the owner of StreetDog Art Studio and is someone who is kind, compassionate and devoted to providing exceptional services to the people we support. We connected with Patricia in 2021 to see how we can work together to support people who are passionate about Art. Patricia has been extremely generous to donate her time and studio to help people achieve their goals and explore artistic avenues to express themselves.

People are enjoying their time learning about different forms of art and always leave looking forward to returning for their next art lesson. Patricia brings the best out of people with her extraordinary teaching style. Thank you, Patricia, for everything you do!



N-95 FIT TESTING

As part of Community Living Oakville’s ongoing effort to keep people receiving services and staff safe, we have been hosting N-95 fit testing clinics. The clinics are held by Jennifer Dance, Alison Fay and Brianne Bresolin, all of whom have received training and are certified. Several clinics have already taken place and more will be scheduled in the near future.

IN MEMORY OF ROY LESSELS



Roy Lessels charismatically knew the secret to making anyone feel like he had known them forever. He made a point of learning people's names and using them when he spoke with the person. Roy was always at Community Living Oakville events, surrounded by excitement and where he always found a way to unlock people's spirit to have fun. His energy was always buoyant. A lull in a game at the CLO picnic and he hurdled in to get the vitality boosted.

Jack Roy Lessels, was born February 13, 1930 at Holyrood estates in Oakville. He passed away peacefully at 92 years of age on March 10, 2022 at Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital. An Oakville native and member of the Oakville Historical Society – and loved the history of the town.

He made the games, beanbag toss, ring toss and more, which gave people pleasure when gathering at Bronte Park. Anyone remember the 'three-legged sack race'? I personally witnessed the competitive enjoyment people drew from that. He also stored and painted the games.

It was captivating seeing Roy speak to people we support like close friends; even at a time when the world was grasping to figure out precisely how to speak to someone with a disability "just like anyone else". The responsiveness of the people we serve endorsed one of Roy's greatest contributions to our conceptual growth as an agency, and the Community Living movement as a whole.

Roy was a naturally humble man who shared no clues as to why he did not desire being the center of attention. He was an amazing father and his son, Michael, knew it and was proud when Roy would work his magic to engage people at Community Living Oakville events. Living true to his values, 'Roy believed in people' with his amazingly simple, powerful philosophy to Keep Smiling.

Despite Roy's humility and avoidance of limelight, one always knew when he was in the building. His enthusiasm when he greeted people with genuine inquiry as to 'how they have been,' radiated. His greeting was something like what one would expect from Kris Kringle: he knew everyone's name and had genuine insight as to who they really were. It was amazing to witness the pure sincerity in a simple: 'Hello, Hi! Hi! How you doing?'

On March 10, 2022, Roy was reunited with his wife, Joyce and eldest son, Curtis. His belief in a positive world that understood inclusiveness will continue to be at the forefront of Community Living Oakville and all that we do. We thank Roy for all of his advocacy and dedication to Community Living Oakville. Roy - We miss you.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

We are thankful for a generous donation from the **Augy & Anna Carnovale Foundation** (a fund held within the Oakville Community Foundation) which will provide weekly meals for the next year from **Ritorno restaurant** to people receiving housing support through Community Living Oakville, as well as to the dedicated front-line staff providing support. This is the first time Ritorno has committed to an annual program in partnership with a local non-profit. THANK YOU Augy & Anna Carnovale for your tremendous support and to Julia, Brianne and the Ritorno team for making this possible!

<https://ritorno.ca>



The **Oakville Pump and Patio** continues to provide dinners for people receiving housing support through Community Living Oakville. These meals are such a welcome and much appreciated treat as we continue to navigate through the effects of the pandemic, including the strain of staffing shortages. THANK YOU Ethan and your staff for your ongoing generosity and kindness!

<https://www.theoakvillepump.com>

The **Northern Reflections** store in Burlington Mall made an incredible donation of women's clothing for the people we support. THANK YOU Kelly, Cathy and your staff for your thoughtfulness providing fashionable options for the women in our service!

<https://www.northernreflections.com>



Our fundraiser in partnership with the **BigYellowBag**, continues throughout the spring and summer season. BigYellowBag is a local company that delivers high quality garden products in a neat, clean bag straight to your door. As part of their #giveandgrow program, \$10 from every bag of soil or mulch that is purchased using our unique code **CLOAK22** will be donated to Community Living Oakville. As an added bonus, YOU save \$5 on your purchase!

Orders can be placed on their website: www.bigyellowbag.com. Please make sure to use our unique code **CLOAK22** for donations to come to Community Living Oakville.



UNITED WAY HALTON AND HAMILTON'S LOCAL LOVE AWARD

The team at Community Living Oakville has persevered to ensure we continue to show support to our local community through United Way Halton and Hamilton. We were honoured to be awarded the Inspiring #LocalLove Award at their Evening of Celebration event earlier this year!



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

ROAD TO WRESTLEMANIA



In the Loop Media hit the road one Sunday evening and that road led us straight to the Coca Cola Coliseum in Toronto for WWE- smack talk, wrestling, and drama!

I have never experienced a WWE event, not since I was a little kid, (and because of my brother), Shawn Michaels, Bret Hart, Owen Hart and the Undertaker were the big names then, and wow have things changed!

Adam Spicer of In the Loop Media, also hosts his own segment on Stay Connected called Smack Talk, which is a review of the week's WWE drama. He made sure to teach me all about this "Road to WrestleMania" that we were on. Thanks to Adam, I (kind of) knew what to expect: who was in the main event, what their story is, specific terminology - heel (not to be confused with heal), face, blind tag, death match, curb stomp, R.K.O, and The Man.

Throughout the show, I made sure to sit and take in all that was happening around me. I have to admit, in the weeks leading up to this event, I kept asking myself - What is so great about a bunch of people jumping off ropes, clotheslining each other and talking smack? And why the popularity? Millions of people watch the WWE, and because I was not part of the WWE family, I did not know nor appreciate what was really happening.

That Sunday night my thoughts changed. I not only witnessed incredible athleticism, nonstop crowd interaction, lights, music, and every single person having the time of their life. I watched the true meaning of Inclusion unfold before me, a social cohesion that I have not seen anywhere else. Everyone, a thousand people regardless of race, gender, disability, economic status or medical need, were all cohesive in this giant arena, cheering, jumping up and down, swearing, booing, and yelling, hugging, high fiving; together. Alongside each other, complete strangers laughing with one another in harmony.

Working at Community Living Oakville I strive to ensure an inclusive community for every person who uses our services. I always hope for a day when people do not need to rely on agencies such as ours. I hope for a day where people can rely on the Natural Support Networks (friends, community members, neighbours) in our community. A vision that seemed impossible, until I witnessed it happen.

The Road to WrestleMania was more than just a road we took that night. This was a journey. If the WWE can create an inclusive cohesive society, surely we can too.

Thank You Adam, Michel, Greg, Michael and Hugo for taking me with you on this Journey to Inclusion.



“When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, ‘Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.’”

— Fred Rogers

MAY IS COMMUNITY LIVING MONTH



Did you know that May is recognized as Community Living Month in the Province of Ontario?

Each year Community Living Associations celebrate inclusion across the province and encourage local services and businesses to create inclusive and barrier free environments.

During the month of May, Community Living's across Ontario recognize and celebrate the successes of creating inclusive communities for people with Developmental Disabilities.

Each year Community Living Associations celebrate inclusion across the province and encourage local services and businesses to create inclusive and barrier free environments.

This year, Community Living Oakville collaborated with the Town of Oakville to increase awareness in recognition of the Community Living movement.

On April 25th, our Executive Director, Alexandra Hoeck Murray, and In the Loop Media joined Mayor Rob Burton of Oakville to officially mark May 2022 as Community Living Oakville Month. Read the [formal proclamation here](#).

On May 1st, Oakville Town Hall kicked off Community Living Month by lighting up green and blue from sunset to sunrise as part of Community Living Ontario's Shine a Light on Community Living initiative.

On May 7th, we joined local community partners for the Town of Oakville's Spring Donation Drive-Thru event to accept donated items for those in need. The event was held at two Town of Oakville locations, Queen Elizabeth Park Community and Cul-

tural Centre and at Sixteen Mile Sports Complex. Community Living Oakville was truly grateful for the opportunity to connect with our generous community.

To close out the month of celebrations, Community Living Oakville hosted a free public skate at Sixteen Mile Sports Complex for the Oakville community and people supported. Thank you to everyone in attendance for helping promote community inclusion and partnership!



Lastly, throughout the month of May, employees, families and friends got involved in our Donate-A-Day Fundraiser by sponsoring days throughout the month of May. Together we raised \$2,500!

Thank you to our amazing community for your willingness, generosity and involvement. Our collaborations ensure that we have the resources needed to continue providing quality supports and services to people who have a Developmental Disability. We couldn't do this without you!

FROM ANAND TO FULL CITIZENSHIP



I had fallen through the cracks for over four decades, not even aware that I had been missing out on full citizenship. To the Government of Canada, I was citizen 000-000-000. My journey to full Citizenship started with the Honourable Anita Anand, Member of Parliament.

Anita Anand walked into Community Living Oakville's main office last year to deliver a generous donation of sanitizers at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. We opened the door to greet her and gladly accepted her generous donation. She was very kind, she asked about the work we do and posed for a photo before leaving.

A few months later, in my quest to full citizenship, my support team remembered Ms. Anand's visit to CLO. We reached out to her office in aid of receiving my Social Insurance Number. Service Canada, with its regular red tape, had given us a run around. Ms. Anand's office responded to our request for help right away and asked for my consent for staff to proceed on my behalf. Ms. Anand's office discovered that Service Canada had never received an application for a Social Insurance number, but Ms. Anand stepped in and promptly sent in a request to Service Canada and continued to check in with us throughout the lengthy process. With the support of Ms. Anand and her team, I finally received a Social Insurance Number; I was no longer citizen 000-000-000.

Thank you to Ms. Anita Anand and my network of support for assisting and supporting my quest to achieve full citizenship. Clearly this is another example of respecting everyone's rights, the right to speak out and express ideas, and experience continuity and security leading to full citizenship.

“Thank you to Ms. Anita Anand and my network of support for assisting and supporting my quest to achieve full citizenship.”

A promotional graphic for a golf tournament. It features a white golf ball on a tee against a background of a golf course with a bright sun. The text is white and blue on a dark blue background.

Community Living Oakville's
36th Annual Golf Tournament
CLICK HERE TO REGISTER TODAY!
Thursday, September 8, 2022

2 Tournaments:
Morning "Ladies 9 & Dine" and
Afternoon 18-hole event
Piper's Heath Golf Club, Milton

Community Living Oakville

A blue and yellow hiring advertisement. It features a stylized sunburst logo for Community Living Oakville.

WE ARE NOW
HIRING
JOIN OUR TEAM

Community Living Oakville

We invite you to apply online via
www.oakcl.org/apply

www.oakcl.org

MEET HARVIR



At Community Living Oakville, we believe in our Mission, Vision, and Core values. Harvir is a perfect example of how his team has supported him to live an active, rewarding life in his community by valuing and respecting his dreams and desires; particularly, his dream of having a voice and a means to be heard.

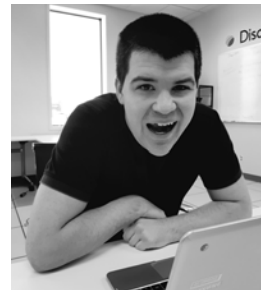
As the late Dave Hingsburger says,

“Be my microphone, not my voice”.

Harvir has been given a voice, with his support team as his microphone, to ensure he is heard!

To hear Harvir’s Story visit:

<https://youtu.be/iZgLRKdo7Lg>



Community Living Oakville’s Xplore Employment team supports people to achieve their employment goals, and works with each person to identify their distinct skills and employment interests. Xplore Employment’s Employment Specialists encourage self-empowerment while offering assistance with resume writing, interview preparations and on the job training. They advocate for inclusive workplaces and work towards removing barriers to success. The support does not end once the job seeker finds employment, as the Employment Specialists also provide monthly check-ins at job sites and provide support as needed. Xplore Employment works with various employers, helping them find the right candidate for their business.

Xplore Employment also offers a variety of programs designed to prepare people for every stage in their employment journey:

The **Networking Webinar** is a convenient virtual weekly drop-in session, where individuals connect with others, build communication skills, share their work/volunteer experiences and discuss different topics each week.

JOB LAUNCH

Job Launch’s High-School Prep is a 6-week in-class pre-employment program designed to help prepare students for their eventual transition from school to work.

Summer PREP is a 7-week student volunteer program, designed to give students an opportunity to gain work experience and build essential skills during summer break.

Our mission at Xplore Employment is Inclusion! Follow us on our social media platforms @xplore-employment (Instagram, Facebook and Twitter) and visit us at www.xploreemployment.com.



MAKING A DIFFERENCE - GINA PETERS

“I love that I have the opportunity to work in self-directed support – to follow people’s lead. I am proud to support people to make their own goals.”



You must possess some great qualities as a Direct Support Professional if after only coming on board with Community Living Oakville a year and a half ago, your name is put forward as a staff that is Making a Difference.

Gina Peters was hired with Community Living Oakville in January of 2021. Starting when the pandemic was in full swing and our world was filled with restrictions and unease, this did not stop Gina from embodying the values that Community Living Oakville holds dear.

Prior to Gina being hired as a staff at CLO, she was a student within our Housing Supports and completed her internship here with Humber College, DSW program. Gina first enrolled at Humber College setting her sights on working with children, but after having such a positive placement experience at Community Living Oakville, her career trajectory changed and CLO reaped the benefit.

Gina stated that one of her reasons for deciding to make CLO her employer of choice is that she “likes what the agency stands for. They focus on the importance of Social Roles.” Gina stated that “I feel so fortunate to be able support people to be able to build relationships and enrich

experiences. I sometimes can’t believe that I get paid to do this. I love that I have the opportunity to work in self-directed support – to follow people’s lead. I am proud to support people to make their own goals.”

In her short time with Community Living Oakville, she has had an incredible impact on people. Spend any time with Gina and you will quickly realize that her calm, respectful and positive demeanor is contagious. Listen to the way that she talks and you will want to do better just by listening to her. You want to hold yourself to her standard.

One of the people that Gina supports is Cody. When asked, Cody could not say enough amazing things about her. Among all his accolades, he did have one worry in sharing his thoughts on Gina. His worry was that if “word got out” on how amazing Gina is, people would try and entice her to come work with them and he made it clear he does not want that to happen. “Gina is kind, compassionate, she is respectful of my feelings, and she respects my privacy.” Cody said, “She is motivated to help me. She always comes in, in a good mood. She gives great advice but supports me to make my own decisions. My life is better because Gina is in it to support me.” Cody was part of the interview process to hire his staff and he felt that she had all the qualities that he was looking for in a staff. “When I am with Gina, I don’t think about my disability, I am just me.”

Gina’s manager, Helen Sinai, jumped at the chance to talk about Gina. “She fully embodies the Vision, Mission and Core Values of Community Living Oakville. It is at the forefront of everything she

does.” Helen also stated that “she supports people to have Social Capital and Roles. She knows the value of this and is constantly working to ensure that people have meaningful relationships outside of paid support.” Helen said, “in short...she is a SUPERSTAR!”

When Gina is not working, she enjoys staying active. She likes to spend time keeping fit at the gym, kayaking, biking and hiking. Gina volunteers as a consultant to families of newly diagnosed children with autism. She helps families navigate funding streams and support. Gina is the mother of 2 children, aged 6 and 7 years old. One of Gina’s children has a dual diagnosis. Gina has received amazing support for her son and feels a sense of responsibility to pay it forward, which has led her on her career path and her volunteer experience.

Gina, on behalf of Community Living Oakville, we thank you for all you do and for MAKING A DIFFERENCE.



KATHY ASHWELL'S ARTISTIC JOURNEY



Joshua Creek Heritage Art Centre sits on 12 acres of picturesque gardens and rolling hills, and is host to unique exhibitions for well-known and emerging artists. Every year, artists of Joshua Creek Studio are invited to display their beautiful works of art in an exhibition open to the public. The exhibition not only highlights the talent that exists within the community, but allows people to immerse themselves in the creative vision of each artist.

This year, Kathy Ashwell was one of 22 people invited to participate in the Artists of Joshua Creek Exhibition 2022. Each one of Kathy's photographs that were selected for the exhibition is a representation of her as an artist.

Kathy has been attending Art from the Heart, a weekly art class offered on Monday mornings, where she gets together with other emerging artists to provide them with the opportunity to express themselves and find peace through their art expression. Although Kathy really enjoys working with different media, her passion is photography. Kathy said, "photography is everything to me. It's the way I express myself. Even if I'm having a bad day, I'll take my camera out to take photos and it's a way to make me feel better."

Kathy first became interested in photography when she was no longer able to continue her employment at McDonald's due to health concerns. Her mother had given her a small point-and-shoot camera and Kathy would head outside to take photos of the world around her. She realized she had a keen eye for composition and photography. She saved up enough money to purchase a quality camera and found she had a passion for capturing the beauty found in nature – a butterfly landing on a hydrangea, small rock formations along the shore, or the way the sky lights up at sunset. She continued to photograph every chance she had and her skills began to improve over time. Her passion for photography hasn't faltered since that moment.

Sybil Rampen, founder of Joshua Creek Heritage Art Centre, spoke of Kathy's talent and dedication: "Each week, when Kathy arrives, it is always a thrill to see what she has accomplished during the week. She is a true artist in her own right. She loves colour. She is innovative, courageous, and curious. Her work has a powerful impact. Not only is she an artist, she is a photographer, a singer, and a performer. She is very gifted. She has a future as an artist and we will do our best to help her achieve her dream".

If you are looking for an immersive experience, take the scenic route up to Joshua Creek Heritage Art Centre and come check out the world through Kathy's eyes!



THANK YOU FROM XCEL

On behalf of people supported, families and staff, the Xcel team would like to thank the 2021 Community Living Oakville Golf Committee, all the sponsors, participants and donors for their support of the Xcel day program as the recipient of the funds raised from 2021's Golf Tournament.

Because of your generosity, financial barriers have been alleviated for families as the funds have helped cover the cost of events, van rentals, passes, memberships and supplies, allowing more participants access to an array of daytime opportunities

Words cannot express how grateful we are to each one of you for giving the people we support the opportunity to be active and inclusive in their communities no matter the cost!

“I HAVE THE RIGHT”



Have you ever heard the phrase “people with disabilities have the same rights as everyone else”? This statement sounds wonderful, it sounds like a great philosophy to live by, but above all else it sounds obvious.

For a person with a disability, this statement is far too often not a reality. As family members, friends and support providers, we worry. It is deep inside most of us that we need to protect and to keep from harm anyone that we perceive as more vulnerable. Our heads swirl with phrases such as, “What if?” “What will happen?”, and, “What if they fail?”.

When we think of the person that we are today, most of us would say that the struggles we faced, the decisions (good and bad) we made, and our experiences in life helped to make us who we are. It was our right to fall down and get back up again. In essence, it was the ability to exercise our Human Rights.

Through the use of Personal Outcomes Measures analysis, The Council on Quality and Leadership determined that when people exercise their rights, their overall quality of life improves; and isn't that the end game for all of us, to have a better quality of life? According to the Council of Quality and Leadership, when people have the right to personal decision-making, emergency department visits decrease by 47%, behaviour events decrease by 69% and most importantly, people have a better quality of life.

As an organization, promoting people's rights and supporting people to exercise their rights has become the forefront of what we do. Although we still have a long way to go, we are working diligently with people supported, staff and families to educate and understand how to best support people in learning, understanding and exercising rights.

In March of 2022, Community Living Oakville partnered with Green Pink & Yellow Productions and debuted a video titled “I HAVE THE RIGHT” where we showcased over 30 people that we support to express which Human Rights are most important to them. We encourage you all to watch the video below, to support and to be a champion.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uXa5p-7jrqs>

At Community Living Oakville we are committed to continue to offer EDUCATION, EXPERIENCE and EXPOSURE to ensure that each person is able to understand their rights, understand the responsibilities that go hand-in-hand with making decisions and exercising the rights that are important to them.



GreenPink&Yellow
productions

“To deny people their human rights is to challenge their very humanity”

Nelson Mandela



301 Wycroft Road
Oakville, ON L6K 2H2
905.844.0146
www.oakcl.org

Charitable Registration #:
107790552 RR0001

