

# HAPPENINGS

WE BELIEVE IN PEOPLE



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## A MESSAGE FROM ALEXANDRA

WELCOME TO THE LATEST EDITION OF HAPPENINGS!

I hope you have had a wonderful summer and are enjoying this fall season. Each time we sit down to compile our latest newsletter, we are amazed at how fast time goes by. This edition in particular is an exciting one, as it showcases all the memories made this summer. I don't know about you, however I often feel the need to squeeze in all the 'summer' activities as the season often feels very short here in Canada. I think everyone at CLO also felt the same as there were many beach days, cottage vacations, out of town day trips, BBQs and more!

September was also an exciting month as we held our 36th annual golf tournament. We could not have asked for better weather and were very grateful to see everyone enjoying themselves at Piper's Heath Golf Club. We even had a special guest - Mayor Burton, who welcomed our golfers participating in the ladies morning tournament. Our golf tournament is our largest fundraiser each year and the funds raised go directly to enhance the lives of people we support. This year we broke our highest record ever, raising funds for people that live in Supported Independent Living. A heartfelt thank you goes out to all golfers, sponsors, donors and volunteers who made this day possible. I would also like to thank Brenda Kerr, Golf Chair, Andrea Interior, Development Manager and our golf committee for making this event such a success!

At the end of September, we were able to reflect formally on our operations last fiscal year. This was reviewed and celebrated at our Annual General Meeting. Members were briefed on our accomplishments, progress in our strategic plan and goals realized to date. I am very proud of what our agency has achieved.

At Community Living Oakville, we regularly promote advocacy within our region and also participate in larger scale provincial efforts. Most recently, Community Living Ontario has encouraged its membership to advocate for Bill C-22. This act 'to reduce poverty and to support the financial security of persons with disabilities by establishing the Canada disability benefit,' is an essential legislation that would have the potential to bring many people up above the poverty line. We encourage all of you to voice the importance of this act and for parliamentarians to continue to prioritize this Bill. In Canada, more than 70 percent of adults with an intellectual disability live in poverty and with inflation at its highest in decades, many disability support amounts have not risen with inflation.

As we transition from summer to fall, we also recognize the upcoming cold and flu season. We remind everyone to continue to be vigilant in following health and safety procedures. Though external COVID measures have lifted, Community Living Oakville continues to follow protocols to ensure the safety of people we support who may be more vulnerable. We are thankful to Central West Specialized Developmental Services for supporting health initiatives and recently facilitating another Public Health led vaccine clinic.



We thank all family and community members who continue to support our efforts in various forms. Everyone's contribution makes a difference and allows our agency to fulfil its mission. If you are interested in volunteering your time, please reach out to our newest member, Shannon Douglas, Volunteer Coordinator at [shannon.douglas@oakcl.org](mailto:shannon.douglas@oakcl.org).

In closing, we also want to introduce our new 'Family Corner' in our newsletter. Please be sure to take a peek and reach out to us with any ideas or submissions for future editions.

With warm regards,

Alexandra Hoeck-Murray  
Executive Director

## GIRLS JUST WANNA HAVE FUN



Each summer Annie, Michelle, Robin, Stella and Ulli head north for their annual ladies cottage weekend. They stayed in a chalet at Blue Mountain and spent their days exploring the resort. They rode the gondola up the mountain, enjoyed the restaurants, shopped, and relaxed to the sweet summer sounds.

There is nothing better than a weekend away from the hustle of the city. Thank you, Desiree and Pauline, for helping to keep the tradition alive!

## LET'S PLAY BALL



“As a player, it was a thrilling game. Although I didn’t have a homerun, it was loads of fun to finally see other people - and the pizza was fabulous - which was a plus!”

- DJ Thornington

This summer, in partnership with Jays Care Foundation, Community Living Oakville teamed up with Community Living Burlington, Community Living North Halton, and Bob Rumball Canadian Centre of Excellence for the Deaf in a merciless, nail-biting season of Challenger Baseball!

We are grateful to Jays Care Foundation, who provided us with all the equipment we needed for the season. Games were played throughout Halton, with the CLO Chargers’ home field being at beautiful Trafalgar Park. Teams matched up every Wednesday throughout the summer, ending the season in September with a full day round robin tournament, celebration and awards ceremony. Blue Jays Representative, Zack Shaban, joined the celebration, and was presented with a few gifts on behalf of all the teams to thank him and the Blue Jays for all their support.



A huge thank you to the talented coaches - Cody Prevett & Pam Garden - who led the CLO Chargers team through the season; all of this could not have happened without your positive energy & leadership. To assistant coaches - Julie Bisbicos and Helen Sinai - thank you for cheering from the sidelines. Also, a special thank you to Ramsha Abbasi for coordinating schedules, equipment, and answering all the questions about a sport she may or may not have ever played! See you next season.

# SUMMER PREP TAKES OAKVILLE BY STORM

The success of this year's Summer Prep Program was abundant. Support provided by Xplore Employment's summer job coaches fostered rapid growth among the students enrolled. From job placements at the Burloak Canoe Club, My Furniture Bank, and Joshua Creek Heritage Arts Centre, the students experienced a range of opportunities to hone their practical skills and abilities in customer service, hands-on activities, and real-world experience that has helped prepare them for future employment. These work experiences were supplemented with Zoom classes twice a week where students learned valuable auxiliary skills such as interview preparation, resume building, problem solving, and job search tools. Through the combination of in-person placements and online classes, the Summer Prep students took Oakville by storm with their incredible work and learning.

The Burloak Canoe Club (BCC) has been in operation since 1989, instructing enthusiasts of all ages in kayaking and canoeing. The BCC is among the best canoe clubs in Canada, boasting accolades aplenty and being home to three Olympic medalists. The club currently has almost 250 members, meaning there is plenty of work to be done to keep the place running smoothly.

Summer Prep students at the BCC enjoyed many beautiful summer days working in the sunshine watering plants and trimming bushes. They also had

fun mopping, sweeping, vacuuming, and keeping the changing rooms spotless. Although the students did not get the chance to take a canoe out on the water, they certainly helped the club's members stay afloat. Students checked life jackets to make sure they were safe to use, sorted out the numerous canoe paddles so they were easily accessible, and even organized an entire cupboard of canoe covers over the course of a week.

The students thoroughly enjoyed working at the BCC and Sonika Mehta had this to say about her time with the program: "I developed good listening skills and learned how to follow instructions in order to do my work properly. I loved going to work, be it rain or hot. I also learned how to take transit with the support of my mom." The time at the BCC was well spent, and students took away a wealth of new skills and experience they will carry with them through their future work.

My Furniture Bank is a charity organization located in the Trafalgar area that aims to create a sense of safety and security by offering services to end furniture poverty in Peel and Halton. The charity also prides itself on sustainability for both people and the planet, creating a broader impact in the world. By repurposing discarded furniture, families can turn their house into a home and waste is heavily decreased.





At My Furniture Bank, the projects Summer Prep students worked on left the building almost as fast as they came in. Over the course of six weeks, students worked on sanding and re-staining pieces to bring them back to life, completed paint jobs that rendered old desks and dressers almost unrecognizable, and repaired essential fixtures that left furniture looking brand new. The students enjoyed the chance to help families in Peel and Halton furnish their houses not only by being involved with furniture repairs and warehouse organization, but also by directly serving clients to help them pick the best design for their homes.

Focusing on the relationship between nature and artistic creativity, Joshua Creek Heritage Art Centre (JCHA) is a beautiful spot to let your imagination wander. With the help of amazing staff and artists, you will find yourself indulging in your creative abilities through wellness workshops, art programs the surrounding environment.

JCHA provided Summer Prep students a variety of opportunities, including the restructuring of their entire filing students, which the students completed in just 9 days! Afternoons consisted of gallery sitting, which is Joshua Creek's own name for

working in the art gallery. Open from 1-4 on weekdays, students would help the other volunteers greet customers, organize the shop, and keep the gallery clean.

These wonderful opportunities in the community allowed the students to develop the skills they need to be successful in the workplace. Students saw improvements in their communication, punctuality, customer service, and interpersonal skills. The growth the students made throughout the summer was a truly impressive feat and shows their ability to keep growing throughout their careers.

“The program is amazing, it teaches a range of life skills with a good mix of online learning and in person work. Being able to have my daughter feel like she is actively working and participating in the community is a massive confidence booster.” A quote from Summer Prep student Maia's parents outlines the community involvement aspect of the Summer Prep program.

The team at Xplore Employment is overwhelmed with pride for all of the hardworking Summer Prep students who they supported this summer. Even more impressed are the parents. Rachna Uberoi, a parent of one of the students in the program said “the preparation is appropriate and learning in a stress-free environment like this helps the youth immensely. Gives confidence. Thank you.”

Congratulations to the students of Summer Prep 2022, wishing you the best of luck in the future!

## A SUMMER PARTNERSHIP



In June 2022, Community Living Oakville and the Town of Oakville entered into an exciting partnership where Community Living staff supported twelve young people each week, aged 13-21, in the Town's Teen Adventure Program. Teens with a developmental disability, with the support of four staff, would spend the week playing games, swimming, and enjoying their time at Queen Elizabeth Park Community and Cultural Centre.

The summer led to new relationships being developed and amazing stories that people are still talking about. One youth, who had just graduated from school, decided to join Community Living Oakville's Xcel program, as well as begin his search for employment through CLO's Xplore Employment.

The future is shining bright and we look forward to continuing our partnership with the Town of Oakville next summer.

# FLY... THERE ARE PLACES I'VE NEVER BEEN AND ALWAYS WANTED TO GO

## - THE TRAGICALLY HIP



The legendary Tragically Hip wrote and sang about 'places they had never been but always wanted to go' in their song 'Fly'. There's Moonbeam Ontario... Mistaken Point Newfoundland... For Thorne this was Disney World Florida and Universal studios.

Thorne is crammed full of life, inspirational energy and happiness - truly a remarkable gentleman. He loves celebrations and his home can never be decorated too early for any Holiday or his excitement literally exceeds his ability to contain himself. Everyone knew visiting Disney World would be such a circumstance, if not a spiritual pilgrimage of sorts due to his admiration for

costumes and characters. He also loves slapstick humour, but that's an entirely different story...

Unlike Moonbeam and Mistaken Point, Disney is in a different province, a different country - about 2050km and an international border separated Thorne from his dream. Achieving that voyage and dream would not have been possible without the initiative, drive and passion of two staff, Vanetta and Tharmiga, who despite any challenges, were willing to set off on the adventure with him. They scripted the bold idea, to which Thorne accepted and happily agreed. After the tedious research and planning with all the complexities of travel during this time, came the travel documents and ensuring they were in order.

Every aspect of the trip was incredible. The flight experience and the villa complete with a private outdoor pool gave Thorne the perfect start to his days in paradise before heading off to the beach. In Florida, he took in the colourful sight of Miami's unique culture, Universal Studios and of course, Disney World. This was truly a remarkable adventure from the time of departing Pearson International airport to landing in the United States. The trio's bold approach to 'go big or go home' scratched multiple items off Thorne's "bucket list" in one trip. To say this voyage was a *journey* for Thorne is only part of the story, it was an adventure for Vanetta,

Tharmiga *and* Thorne. A bonding experience achieved through mastering any adversities that can come with travel; dealing with challenges, being in a different environment and reaching far out of one's comfort zone - despite the luxury. Missing family and friends, changes in routines, and through it all, they made this happen *together*.

The pictures are amazing: Thorne lying on the sandy beach in Miami, experiencing the texture of the ocean sand for the first time, and then meeting the characters in both Disney and Universal Studios. The pandemic may have placed many ever-changing rules and restrictions on everyone but it could not obscure this wonderful opportunity.

Wherever life brings him, Thorne will never be a line in a song, looking back on adventures or places he 'had always wanted to go but never did' - Thorne went, he saw, they conquered.



## BRUCE-LYN AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN VOLUNTEERISM

The Bruce-Lyn Award for Excellence in Volunteerism was established in 2004 to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Community Living Oakville and to honour the history and spirit of volunteerism that helped establish the Bruce-Lyn School. The award is presented to a volunteer who has provided an outstanding contribution to help enrich the lives of people we support.

This year's Bruce-Lyn Award for Excellence in Volunteerism is presented to the [Joshua Creek Heritage Art Centre](#). Every Monday seven artists from Community Living Oakville arrive at Joshua Creek for art class and each week the lessons provided are focused on different ways of seeing and experiencing the world. The result are pieces of art that are personal to each artist and reflect the unique way in which each artist sees the world.

In two hours these gifted artists produce personal masterpieces with much laughter and joy. Joshua Creek provides an environment to create and nourish their gifts and imagination. Thank you for your contribution to Community Living Oakville and for having a direct impact on the people we support.



## SUTTON SCHOLARSHIP

The Sutton Scholarship was established by Gerry and Margaret Sutton, who wish to contribute to the education of children of long-term employees of Community Living Oakville. The Scholarship is open to children of staff who have dedicated 8 years or longer to the company and is awarded to individuals who display dedication to their community. All applicants are reviewed by a selection committee and the Sutton Scholarship is awarded to one new student each year. This Scholarship is renewable for the student each year of their college or university course (if a specific grade is achieved).

This year the Sutton Scholarship was awarded to Emily Zhu, the daughter of Yun Xu. Ever since Emily started high school, she has been volunteering at Community Living Oakville. She has been part of CLO's art classes and camps, Christmas and Halloween dances, COVE conference, summer BBQ's and picnics. She would look forward to helping at the Christmas Dance every time December (even though she couldn't be behind the bar!).

Emily's coworkers, teachers and mentors describe her as a hardworking and positive person who goes above and beyond to support her fellow peers. She accomplishes new things that will help her be successful in whatever she does. Currently, she is enrolled in the Medical Science program at Western University pursuing a career in Dentistry. Emily is very grateful for the opportunity to not only be part of the CLO family over the years but also to have been granted this year's scholarship.

All of us at Community Living Oakville would like to wish Emily good luck and good times. The most exciting phase of your life is just beginning!

## COMMUNITY LIVING OAKVILLE'S 36TH ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT



On Thursday, September 8, Community Living Oakville held our 36th Annual Golf Tournament at Piper's Heath Golf Club. Our Morning Ladies "9 & Dine" and Afternoon 18-hole tournaments brought over 275 golfers and guests in attendance throughout the day. Together we raised a groundbreaking net total of \$136,500 for our Supported Independent Living (SIL) Program! This is double what we raised at last year's tournament, and we could not be more grateful and appreciative of the tremendous support from our community and friends.



Supported Independent Living (SIL) services individuals with developmental disabilities to live more independently within our community. The people we support through this program live in their own homes (usually apartment or subsidized housing) and receive various levels of individualized support based on their unique needs, desires and goals. Common areas of assistance include help with personal care, budgeting, banking, shopping, medical appointments and access to employment resources and recreational activities.

Although some are employed part time, most solely rely on government assistance programs such as the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). This funding unfortunately only provides enough to cover basic monthly needs such as rent and food. In order to "make ends meet", most therefore need to depend on resources such as food banks, Goodwill,

Salvation Army, and Safety Net on a monthly basis. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has further affected people's access to a number of services due to lack of availability, transportation, and their decreased mobility and compromised health.

The generosity and support from this year's event will provide each person supported by SIL opportunities to access healthier meal options, cooking and nutrition classes, regular exercise with fitness memberships, participation in recreation and leisure activities, and passes to attend workshops of interest. For some, it will allow them to indulge in simple pleasures such as an occasional coffee or meal out with friends. Making these options possible, provides each person with greater independence and autonomy over their own health and wellness and brings them closer to fulfilling their individual goals.

Edith Hoyle, 1 of the 42 people supported in SIL, has been supported by Community Living Oakville since 1994 and bravely shared her story with the attendees of the evening dinner reception at this year's event. Edith has two daughters aged 14 and 11 years old and is an avid animal lover, who loves her cats. She describes herself as a kind and caring individual who feels strongly that everyone should be treated fairly. She loves being able to live independently and continuously looks for work opportunities in the community. One day, Edith dreams to live in a place of her own and hopes to visit her children more frequently.



To learn more about our Supported Independent Living program and the tremendous difference it makes in the lives of all involved, watch our [SIL Golf Recap Video](#). If you are interested in more information or would like to volunteer, please contact [helen.sinai@oakcl.org](mailto:helen.sinai@oakcl.org).

While we receive much of our funding from the government, many of the pro-grams and services we offer rely heavily on fundraising initiatives, the largest of which is this annual golf tournament. We cannot thank our generous sponsors and donors, enthusiastic golfers, dedicated volunteers and hardworking employees enough for making this year's event an incredible success!

## SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS FOR MAKING THIS EVENT POSSIBLE



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On behalf of Community Living Oakville, the many people we support and their families, THANK YOU. We hope to see more of our community at next year's event!

# ONE THING I LOVE ABOUT MY JOB

"I would say the thing I love most about my job is being able to support people to visit places they otherwise wouldn't be able to experience due to financial constraints or other reasons. I always feel immense joy when I see the smiles and excitement from people supported when we do these things. For example, the virtual Van Gogh experience, going to Ripley's Aquarium, Zoos, African Lion Safari etc. I'm always a little taken aback when people I'm supporting thank me for "taking them" to these places but it really makes me realize how much they enjoy and appreciate these experiences, and the impact I have. Of course, a lot of this is only made possible by generous donations; which is the other thing I love most. I love that we have a team of people who not only support each other but will rally to find every dollar or free opportunity/experience we can to make the days rich and exciting."

- Lauren Flammini

"One thing I love about my job is that I am always learning. Learning from the people we support, through our coworkers and educational opportunities."

-Nicole Mlehmman

"I like a thousand things about my job, but most of all I love the support we get from our managers. This makes our job enjoyable and provides a 110% service to the people we support. At Xplore Employment, when someone I support gets hired for paid job and feels purposeful in their community - that's a feeling I can only describe as exuberant!"

- Ali Ibrahim

"Trying to choose only ONE thing that I love about being a DSP is impossible!!! We have the most inspiring, fulfilling, rewarding careers- picking one thing that makes our jobs so special is akin to asking what your favourite thing is about Christmas. I love it all!!!! Building relationships with the wonderful people we support, assisting them in expanding their lives, helping people to build independence and autonomy, and having the opportunity to make someone's day a little bit brighter. DSP's have the amazing opportunity to improve the quality of life for the people we support by helping them reach their goals and dream a bit bigger. I am so grateful to be fortunate enough to do something I

love for work!"

- Gina Peters

"I love my job. The services that CLO provides for the people are exceptional. They work in collaboration with the community, families and most importantly the individuals to strengthen each person's ability to function positively and create a healthy and stable environment that minimizes negative stressors. They also support each person to develop and grow to reach their full potential, empowering them to make positive choices to be included in their society. Most importantly they recognize each person's unique development and work with them to function in a positive manner."

- Nadine Wanhue

"What I love about my job... I get to personally witness people's lives change. Wow...Just Wow!"

- Carolyn McCleister



# MAKING A DIFFERENCE

## PIERRE VELEZ



It takes many types of people in various departments to keep Community Living Oakville running smoothly and efficiently. Some are more visible and prominent and some work quietly in the background. Pierre Velez, a one-person department of Building and Property Maintenance, is the latter and he the glue that quite literally holds Community Living Oakville together. He is a treasure and an amazing asset to the organization. He is long overdue for this recognition as everyday he truly is Making a Difference.

Whether Pierre is coordinating a kitchen project, dealing with an emergency of flooded basement or broken furnace, taking calls on the weekend and after hours for help, Pierre is really the “jack of all trades”. He does his work without complaint, with a smile on his face and an eagerness to help in his step.

Pierre has been with CLO for 8 years and said “those 8 years have just flown by”.

When asked what he enjoys best about working at CLO he said that “Everyone is so appreciative of everything I do. I always get a thank you, even though I am just doing my job. It makes me feel great to be wanted.” Pierre stated that his favourite projects are definitely kitchen renos. “They seem to make people the happiest”.

Pierre takes great pride in his work: “When I am working in people’s homes, I want them to feel like I am not disrupting anything, like I am not even there. My main goal is to make sure that people feel comfortable in their homes.”

Prior to working at CLO, Pierre worked for renovation companies, new home builders and he has also done work as an estimator, but when asked which job he likes best, he replied “Of all the jobs I have had, CLO is by far my favourite. It feels like I have a great work-life balance.”

Pierre is the father to 2 beautiful girls, has a loving wife of 19 years, and we can’t forget his loyal Jack Russel Terrier. “My family has benefited from me loving my job. They have a happy father at home.”

When not at work Pierre is an avid traveler and he recently enjoyed a family trip to Italy. He loves to get on the links a couple of times a year for a round of golf and loves to work on his car in his free time.

**“Pierre is a dedicated staff who expresses his passion for work in all of his projects. Overseeing all maintenance initiatives at CLO, Pierre is meticulous in ensuring the upkeep and quality of homes as well as buildings. He always provides service with a smile and is willing to lend a helping hand to anyone in need. Pierre, we thank you for your service and we are grateful you are part of the CLO team.”**

**- Alexandra Hoeck-Murray**

Pierre, on behalf of Community Living Oakville, we would like to thank you for the hard work that you do; for always being just a phone call away and just around the corner when we need you. We are grateful that you are part of the CLO family and thank you for always MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

## BOND OF BROTHERS

With the recent Thanksgiving festivities just past us, and Christmas holidays approaching, it's often regarded as a time to gather with family. That's no different for brothers, Marty and Ronnie Copland. With less than a year between them in age, they are very close, and have been throughout their lives. A number of years ago, Marty moved from Georgetown to Oakville where he receives housing and day support from Community Living Oakville. For family birthdays and other important celebrations, he goes back to his family's home and loves catching up with his dearly loved brother, Ronnie, talking about their favourite pastimes- NASCAR, baseball and to 'chew the cud' about life.



During conversations and support reviews, Marty's support team identified that seeing his brother more would greatly contribute to enhancing his quality of life. He often shared that he wished they lived closer, had more frequent visits and less scheduling was required to do so. His support team thought - wouldn't it be great if Ronnie could pop around anytime for a visit? Mr. and Mrs. Copland also expressed that, as years go by, they were keen to ensure Ronnie was equally supported, as often choices are limited when crisis comes knocking.

And so, sometimes the planets align in our collective favour – and when the rare opportunity of a vacancy presented in one of CLO's Enhanced Supported Independent Living (ESIL) services and Ronnie's needs matched with the DSO system, teams were mobilized to offer the resource, and Ronnie moved to Oakville and closer to his brother.

Earlier this year, Ronnie moved to live less than 2km away from each other. After working at the golf club in Georgetown for over 20 years, Ronnie is keen to explore job offerings in his new neighbourhood. He is going to take up music lessons and looks forward to discovering all that Oakville has to offer.

Whenever the brothers want to see each other, Ronnie cycles over to Marty's place to relax, connect, share views and news... and now when there are family gatherings, the brothers travel together from Oakville!

## FAMILY CORNER

It's hard to believe the Holiday Season is just around the corner! Keep a lookout in the coming weeks for more information on our annual fundraising campaigns, including:

- Wreaths and Decor
- Fruit Cake
- Giving Tuesday

If you have any questions, reach out to Andrea Interior, Development Manager: [andrea.interior@oakcl.org](mailto:andrea.interior@oakcl.org).

 A promotional poster for a Family Roundtable session. The top half features a photograph of several people sitting around a table in a meeting room, with laptops open. The Community Living Oakville logo is overlaid on the photo. Below the photo, the text reads: "Community Living Oakville invites you to our next FAMILY ROUNDTABLE". The word "ROUNDTABLE" is written vertically on the right side of the poster. The main text continues: "PLEASE JOIN OUR SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM FOR A VIRTUAL ROUNDTABLE SESSION, FEATURING AGENCY WIDE AND SECTOR UPDATES, NEW INITIATIVES AND Q&A." The date and time are listed as "November 29, 2022 5.00PM - 6.00PM via Zoom". At the bottom, it says "RSVP by Nov 21 to [andrea.interior@oakcl.org](mailto:andrea.interior@oakcl.org) to obtain the meeting link."

# FINDING YOUR VOICE

## A NOTE FROM MASSIVE TANK'S RYAN SWITZER

I have always found the idea of someone “coming out of their shell” to be an interesting one. It all really starts (in my humble opinion) with confidence, but as I’m quite sure we can all agree, finding confidence and being confident are two separate things. From an outsider’s perspective, it is almost always easy to see what someone is particularly good at assuming that you have had enough exposure to that person over a long enough time frame. You can relay this information to the person, however you will often find yourself in that proverbial “you can lead a horse to water” situation. To state the obvious, for anyone to step outside of their comfort zone is by definition...uncomfortable!

It has been my experience that vocal classes exemplify this phenomenon like no other instrument. For example, if you think about a guitar - we literally hide behind it when we play. Should a bad sound occur, we can always blame the guitar. If you want to test this, just ask a guitarist to play you a song. Watch how they will tune it, play two or three chords - look awkward - and then tune it again. Was it the guitar? Did they make a mistake? You will never really have the answer to that question. With the voice there is no such external luxury. If you make a bad sound - it comes out of you! This is one of the reasons I feel that singing, while clearly the most anxiety inducing instrument, can also have the highest probability of getting someone “out of their shell.”

When I first met Paul we hit it off pretty quickly. Paul loves all things music and loves trying new things. Even to this day, in each session I have with him, he will walk around the room to find and try something he hasn’t played before (thankfully I am blessed with a very well stocked room!). Paul has good rhythm, so sitting him down to play guitar was an easy sell. We set to task and put on Ring of Fire by Johnny Cash (a CLO favorite). I had been told that Paul loves to sing, however in many sessions I had not seen this inclination at all. We started strumming the chorus and that was when I heard a very low mumble of the lyrics. It was clear that Paul was a bit shy, but with some coaxing the mumbles got louder and louder. Last week I had the privilege of asking Paul to lower his voice because he was SO loud as he sang his favorite Backstreet Boys songs that we couldn’t hear the guitar at all!. It is fairly easy to say that Paul’s shell is nowhere to be found anymore, but it should be noted that this didn’t happen in one, two or even 10 sessions. Putting yourself out there like that requires a disproportionate amount of courage and I believe that courage is the catalyst to prove your confidence to yourself. The part that I have always found so intriguing is that confidence seems to be omni-directional. It tends to spread to areas in a person's life that have nothing to do with where the confidence originated!



As of a few weeks ago Paul and I are preparing an opening set for a gig in November at the Nickelbrook Brewery in Burlington! He has gone from quietly singing Ring of Fire to BELTING out “I Want it That Way.” That man has so much passion and love for music, and now he has the confidence to show and inspire everyone who gets the opportunity to hear him. When I mentioned the idea of perform-ing to Paul, I expected hesitation - but boy was I wrong. He was so excited and now comes to his classes with renewed purpose to make sure he is at his best - so that he can show his skills and passion to all of those whom I am sure will become his adoring fans.



# YEARS OF SERVICE

Another year has gone by and the commitment of our staff is nothing short of amazing. Staff at all levels and departments work together to provide people with the best possible support.

We want to thank you, our dedicated staff, our visionaries, our leaders and our advocates for your tireless work. As you reach this career milestone, we honour you for the part you play through your dedication and commitment to Community Living Oakville and the people that you support.

We would like to acknowledge the following employees who celebrated their Years of Service milestone during the 2021-2022 fiscal year.

## 5 years

**Dahlia Habash**  
Residential

**Osabor Osahon**  
Residential

**Chris Lowrey**  
Residential

**Monicah Irungu**  
Residential

**Abimbola Ogunleye**  
Residential

**Michael Obiku**  
Residential

**Melissa Belo**  
Residential

**Alicia Bacchus**  
SIL

**Ali Ibrahim**  
Employment

**Asif Sajjad**  
Residential

## 10 years

**Patrick Wilson**  
Residential

**Cherie Kelly**  
Employment

**Stephanie Michie**  
Employment

## 15 years

**Laurie Koopmans**  
Residential

**Bill Urwin**  
SIL

**Shanelle Cottle**  
Manager

## 20 years

**Maria Isac**  
Residential

**Helen Sinai**  
Manager

## 25 years

**Jane Tynan Bryd**  
SIL

## 30 years

**Tony Garcia**  
SIL

**Andrew Schoenhardt**  
SIL

**Tracey Morrow**  
Employment

"ONE PERSON CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE  
AND EVERYONE SHOULD TRY."

- JOHN F. KENNEDY

# LONG AWAITED DREAM COME TRUE

## CONGRATULATIONS KIM AND BRIAN!

Kim had always known she was going to marry the man of her dreams, but she wasn't so sure when she met him! They met at a Special Olympics Bowling practice on October 5, 2007 and Brian gave his number to Kim for her to call. She tossed the paper aside but later Kim thought, "Oh, what the hell", and decided to give him a call. Kim remarked that it wasn't "love at first sight because he was so short" It should be noted that Kim stands tall at 5'11. But when they had their first date at Symposium Cafe, they talked for hours and a slow romance started to take root.

Kim and Brian then began an arduous long-distance relationship where it would take Brian 2 hours to travel to and from Mississauga to visit Kim on the weekends and at bowling on Thursdays. They delighted in common shared interests such as going to the movies, eating out for dinners and seeing concerts together.

One Christmas, to Kim's surprise and delight, Brian got down on one knee and popped the question! Kim then became an avid watcher of the "Say Yes to the Dress" show and quickly started to seek out her own. Wedding planning can be quite extensive and Kim and Brian both set their goals in motion with making the dream they so long envisioned come true. Financial planning was put in place and both Kim and Brian worked diligently towards saving for their big day. In 2019, Kim and Brian starting planning what their wedding would look like and chose a date in August 2020 to be wed. Venue searching, gown hunting, wedding coordinating were all in full swing.



In February 2020, Brian took the final bus ride to be with Kim and moved permanently to Oakville. As you can imagine, this couldn't have happened at a better time. A few weeks later, the world tilted under all our feet with the pandemic and as we all hunkered down for a long period and isolation crept in and drew us from one another, a loving seed was finally starting to blossom. The wedding was postponed, the wedding dress purchased would wait on the hanger, but the dream would not die.

The dream resurfaced and a new wedding date was scheduled for September 2022 and both Kim and Brian, with the aid of James Montague as their wedding planner, started putting the plans in place. Over the course of many, many months, Kim, Brian, James, SIL staff along with both families hammered out all the fine details in making their wedding day come true. When asked if any of the wedding planning was stressful, Kim replied "No, it was all just fun".

The dream wedding was nothing short of just that. In the banquet room at the Holiday Inn (Bronte), Kim came down the aisle glowing with her brothers Brent and David at her side, as Singer Collin Brennan serenaded the room with song.

Kim's mother Beverly, reflected on how beautiful Kim was and teared up at seeing her daughter come down the aisle. Kim's Maid of Honor and friend, Jessica, and Brian's Best Man and brother, waited for them along with their friend and officiant at the end of the aisle. The overly handsome groom looked prideful and stoic. Hearts were squeezed, words of love and dedication were repeated and laughter exchanged as the officiant gave the wrong rings to be placed on hands. Exchanges of happiness, hopefulness, joy and love were felt throughout the room full of guests.

A reception followed the ceremony, with delicious food, cake cutting, speeches to the Bride and Groom and the small bells left on the tables were rung often with the expectation that the bride and groom would answer the ringing with a kiss. As the end of the day unfolded, Kim and Brian settled into a new life as a couple and reflected on a long-awaited dream realized.

Newlyweds Brian and Kim plan on going on a cruise for their honeymoon next year, but until then they marvel at being newly married.



## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

At Community Living Oakville, we work to break down barriers and defeat old stereotypes and fears about people with developmental disabilities. We support the ideal that everyone deserves equality, acceptance and fair treatment.

Our staff and volunteers are committed to a single vision and goal: A world where each person with a developmental disability lives their dreams and choices as a respected and valued contributor to community life.

However, we need your help! With the onset of Covid-19, our volunteer program was put on hold, and now our engagement is at its lowest level.

Volunteers assist in many areas:

- Teach someone a new skill
- Provide rec & leisure activities
- Prepare and facilitate upcoming events
- Assist with fundraising initiatives
- Lend a hand with yard and home projects
- Foster partnerships with local businesses
- Be an ambassador for CLO

Our volunteers are central to our vision, which is why we want to welcome Shannon Douglas to Community Living Oakville as our Volunteer and Student Coordinator! Shannon will be facilitating volunteer engagement and coordination and will oversee student placements. Shannon joins us with over 20 years of experience in the nonprofit sector including volunteer management, therapeutic rec & leisure, and program delivery and development.

We envision a community that is strong and diverse; where there are diverse members, there is a rich fabric of ideas, interactions and experiences.

Help us create a diverse and rich community!

For more information on Volunteering or Student Placements, please contact Shannon Douglas at [shannon.douglas@oakcl.org](mailto:shannon.douglas@oakcl.org).



## CLO'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING INTRODUCES A NEW BOARD MEMBER

Community Living Oakville hosted its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on September 26, 2022. In addition to the business aspect of the night, the AGM featured messages from the Executive Director, the President of the Board of Directors and the Board of Directors' Treasurer, all of whom commended the work that the staff of Community Living Oakville have done over the past year to ensure the health, safety and overall wellbeing of the people receiving services.

The AGM also passed a motion and introduced a new Board member to CLO's Board of Directors, Anne Dean.

Anne is a client-focused integrated marketing agency leader with extensive background in strategic branding & design, shopper marketing and CPG & Private Brand packaging development and deployment for Fortune 500 Retail and Consumer Packaged Goods clients. Anne lives in Oakville with her daughter Addison (11 years old), and their new puppy Buddy.

Anne has over 25 years-experience in marketing services, having held positions leading North American locations of global agencies for SGK ([www.sgkinc.com](http://www.sgkinc.com)) and Public Label ([www.publiclabelagency.com](http://www.publiclabelagency.com)). Anne has also been responsible for leading local and global client relationships with major consumer packaged goods and retail clients. Anne is known as a strong communicator who can identify opportunities, and solve problems that foster healthy ongoing relationships, resulting in business growth. A collaborative leader and brand builder that elevates organizational performance, unlocks potential, and facilitates team and individual success.

Anne's sister, Katherine, has been part of Community Living Oakville for over 20 years. Anne is looking forward to growing her involvement in supporting the success of Community Living Oakville as its newest board member. Welcome Anne!

## MP ANITA ANAND AWARDS ALEXANDRA

This past summer, our Executive Director was recognized for her exceptional service to the Oakville community by MP Anita Anand in honour of The Queen's Platinum Jubilee. We are incredibly proud of Alexandra's commitment and achievements as our very own local community hero!

The Canadian Platinum Jubilee emblem was created to mark the 70th anniversary of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.



# WE ARE HIRING

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JOIN OUR TEAM

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Apply online:  
[www.oakcl.org/careers](http://www.oakcl.org/careers)

# Community Living Oakville

A graphic element consisting of several overlapping, fan-shaped triangles in shades of blue and green, pointing to the right.

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