

**FEATURED STORY**

## A Makeover for our Bill of Rights



Community Living Toronto's Bill of Rights is one of the most important documents we have ever produced. It was, after all, created by our Self Advocates Council who worked in

consultation with people supported by Community Living Toronto to determine what was most important to them.

After a decision was made to redesign the Bill of Rights, we turned to Emanuel Chasi to see if he could help us out. Luckily, he jumped at the chance! Emanuel, who is a very talented artist, is also very involved with fundraising efforts for Community Living Toronto; each year, he eagerly helps raise money for our United Way Campaign by hosting a Halloween Haunted House.

## In this Issue

- Pg1 | Featured Story
- Pg2 | Central Region
- Pg3 | Etobicoke Region
- Pg4 | North York Region
- Pg5 | Scarborough Region
- Pg6 | Self Advocates Council
- Pg7 | Volunteer-Students Voice
- Pg8 | Bridging Diversity
- Pg9 | Events

For the Bill of Rights, Emanuel decided to create drawings he thought would be the most relatable. With the help of his support worker Eppi, Emanuel came up with two concepts for each Bill of Rights. Those images were then shared with our Self Advocates council as well as the public, who voted for their favourite drawings on Community Living Toronto's facebook page. The winning images were then compiled together to form our new Bill of Rights poster!

The reaction to the newly designed poster has been nothing but positive! Everyone loves the detailed drawings that truly depict the rights and responsibilities we should all be entitled to.

## Mindfulness: An Important Practice for Everyone

By: *Matt Poirier*

If you were visiting our head office at 20 Spadina Road any Wednesday evening over the last two months, you may have felt an aura of calm energy enveloping the lobby. This wasn't your imagination as Family Link, in partnership with Central Region Council, presented parents and caregivers with a six week Mindfulness Program which ran from January 20<sup>th</sup> to February 24<sup>th</sup>.

The program, facilitated by Sue Hutton, MSW, is specifically designed for parents, siblings and caregivers of individuals with an intellectual disability. Its aim is to provide them with tools to help increase family well-being, lower stress, improve focus and support them in connecting with other families who are experiencing similar challenges. With childcare provided by Community Living Toronto volunteers, the two hour sessions provided an opportunity for parents to learn, release and reflect; things all of us rarely have the chance to do in today's hectic world.

With the peace of mind of knowing their children were safe and occupied with volunteers, participants were able to focus solely on being present in the moment, and really feel the power of the meditation practices taught by Sue. When the sessions were over, participants took advantage of the opportunity to connect with each other, share experiences and talk about what helps them overcome

challenging situations when supporting a loved one with a disability.

The program was partly funded by Central Region Council which made it more financially accessible for families who otherwise might not invest in a program that some would consider a 'luxury', but is becoming more and more of a necessity. When the program ended in February, participants were thrilled with the results which spoke volumes to the power of Mindfulness as something that's beneficial not only for them, but for other families, youth and children of all ages.

One participant said, "This was the first thing I've done for myself in years. I've learned to pause and be in the moment which has allowed me to not only be a better mom, but also feel better about myself as a person. I feel calmer and happier, and motivated to keep up the practice with my kids."

Overall, a total of ten people walked away with a new toolkit of Mindfulness practices they can draw upon when they're feeling stressed and overwhelmed. Plans are in place to hold a follow up session for participants later this spring to discuss their experiences and commitment to practicing mindfulness and meditation. Stay tuned for details on possible future Mindfulness programs!

## Upcoming Central Events

### Central Region Council Meeting

Tuesday, April 12, 2016 at 6:00 pm  
20 Spadina Rd, Room 2B All are welcome.  
Contact Matt Poirier at 647-729-1210 or [matthew.poirier@cltoronto.ca](mailto:matthew.poirier@cltoronto.ca)

## Central Region Council's Spring Fling Dinner & Dance

Saturday, May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre

Tickets are \$50 each.

Buy tickets online at:

<https://www.gifttool.com/registrar/ShowEventDetails?ID=134&EID=19487> or contact Matt

Poirier.

## ETOBICOKE REGION

### A Dream Realized!

*By: Kathy Baccichet*

This January, Etobicoke's Supported Independent Living Group had the opportunity to take ten individuals on a trip of a lifetime.

One of these individuals was Cathy Hitchcock. Ever since I met her five years ago, all Cathy would ever want to talk about is going on a plane or somewhere far away. I have always replied that in order to do so, she needs to save. And that she did. She managed to save enough to be considered for our big trip this year - a cruise adventure!

When I first discussed this trip with Cathy, she was unsure if that's what she wanted but as soon as she heard that she would have the chance to fly and see places she had never seen, she was sold.

Our group of 13 arrived in Florida on January 31 to board the ship. Our first port of call was Amber Cove, Dominican Republic. When we got off the ship, Cathy could hardly contain her excitement. Looking out at the ocean, she asked if it was Lake Ontario. We explained to Cathy by showing her a map that we were now a long way from home. The whole group was in

awe of being so far away and in such a hot climate.

The next destination on our list was St. Thomas, where we walked around and enjoyed the local sites. By the second port of call, everyone knew what to expect and had gained their sea legs. St. Juan was our third port of call, where we went on a guided bus tour and walked through the local streets. We all commented on the cobblestone streets and how different they looked from Toronto.

Our last port of call was Grand Turk where Cathy swam in the ocean for the first time. At night, we attended a Michael Jackson tribute show where everyone had so much fun, they danced in the aisles. As we boarded the trip after a long day, Cathy turned to me and asked "Kathy, when I can do this again?"

It was incredible to be a part of a trip that Cathy had waited 43 years to experience. This is one of the reasons why I came into this field; to see the joy first hand when someone gets to experience something new, reaches a milestone or simply gets to do things that so many of us take for granted. I will always remember this wonderful trip.



*Cathy's Ship at Grand Turk Beach where Cathy swam in the sea for the first time ever!*

## Upcoming Etobicoke/York Events

### Etobicoke/York Council Meeting

Tuesday, April 12, 2016  
295 The West Mall, Suite 204  
6:30 pm to 8:30 pm  
Please call to RSVP to:  
Wendy Dyke 647-729-3627

### Monday Night Club

4pm-7:30pm  
Etobicoke ADP  
102 Advance Road  
Call 416-232-1213 for details

### Friendship Club

Last Wednesday of the month, 6pm-8pm  
295 The West Mall in Boardroom  
Registration: LauraLee Edmiston,  
647-729-0440 or [ledmiston@cltoronto.ca](mailto:ledmiston@cltoronto.ca)



## Eighth Easy Roller

### Bowlathon

Saturday April 23, 2016  
5:00 to 8:00 pm

Bowlerama West– 5429 Dundas Street West  
Silent Auction, Raffles, Prizes and More!

Enjoy a fun evening of bowling for \$25 or  
collect \$25 in sponsored pledges.

Registration deadline: Friday April 15<sup>th</sup>  
To register, get info and to obtain your pledge sheet  
contact: Wendy Dyke at 647-729-3627

All proceeds go towards Etobicoke/York Region  
council and membership.

## NORTH YORK REGION

## We Colour Our World with Music



*Choir group enjoys day at Nathan Phillips Square*

*By: Carlotta Carmichael and Janis Edwards*

Each Thursday at 1pm, under the direction of our dedicated staff Carlotta, a number of talented ladies and gentlemen from the North York Region Supported Work and Community Activities program gather to sing songs of all genres and from all decades. Sometimes without words even in blended tones, we share the joy of singing and enrich the lives of others in our community.

**Willi Wonka and the Chocolate Factory** was our first musical, and we are currently working on **The Lion King**.

On the last Thursday of each month, the residents of Hawthorne Place Care Centre are entertained by our choir and this trip is the main focus of rehearsals throughout the month. During the summer, we tour places of interest, listen to classical music or just hang out at places like Nathan Phillips Square. At the end of November, when winter rolls around, we pack up our road tours and volunteer assignments until February. We invite you to

come to our program on Thursdays and be entertained. We are also always looking for opportunities to showcase our talent!

We hope to see you out at one of our shows soon!

*Our Choir members are: Alan, Annmarie, Arnold, Aziz, Daninah, David, Dawn, Elaine, Frances, Isabella, Jonathan, Judy, Linda, Maria, Marie, Marilee, Rachel and Shane.*

## Upcoming North York Events

### North York Council Meeting

Monday, April 4, 2016  
18 - 1122 Finch Avenue West  
1:00 pm to 3:00 pm  
Everyone Welcome!  
Please call to RSVP to:  
Wendy Dyke 647-729-3627

### Upcoming Sibshops

Where: Victoria Park Hub  
1527 Victoria Park Avenue  
10:30 am to 2:30 pm  
Saturday, May 14, 2016  
Please call to register:  
Wendy Dyke 647-729-3627 or  
Cate Whiteley 647-729-3635

### Pizza/Bingo at the Victoria Park Hub

1527 Victoria Park Avenue  
Wednesday May 18, 2016  
6:00 pm to 8:00 pm  
Cost: \$3.00 per person  
Call to register your attendance:  
Wendy Dyke 647-729-3627

## SCARBOROUGH REGION

## Achilles Walk/ Run

*By: Felicita Zanatta*



*Community Living Toronto Team is ready to go!*

On a beautifully mild Sunday morning, staff, family and friends from Community Living Toronto joined over 1500 others and participated in the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Achilles St. Patrick's Day 5K Run/Walk.

This year we raised over \$922. The money raised from our team goes to support activities sponsored by Scarborough Regional Council. This includes drop-in, dances, literacy and cooking classes.

Everyone enjoyed the camaraderie and had a wonderful time. We hope you join us next year!

## The Connection Dance Needs Your Help

*By: Ellen Armstrong*

After 17 years of volunteering at the Connection Dance, Alison Thomas and Ellen Armstrong are retiring.

In order for the dance to continue, we need two parent volunteers who can commit to showing up for 3 1/2 hours for 8 Friday evenings a year. The work involved is easy and really rewarding. Alison and I will still be involved as facilitators to Scarborough Council and will support the dance in many ways but will no longer be running it. Please help us to continue this much needed and well attended social activity. You can contact us or come to the dance and talk to us. Our next dance is April 29, 2016.

Please contact:  
Ellen Armstrong at 416-938-4337 or  
Alison Thomas at 416 678 6922.

## Upcoming Scarborough Events

**Scarborough Council Meeting**  
Monday May 2, 2016 at 6:15pm  
1712 Ellesmere Road in Boardroom  
All Welcome!



**Bingo Bowling Extravaganza**  
Fundraiser on Friday May 6, 2016  
ParkwayBowl, 67 Ellesmere Road  
Lanes open at 6:30; games run from  
7 to 9:30 pm  
Cost is \$25 per person; register your team of 6.

**Bingo at Lawson**  
Friday April 15, 2016  
1712 Ellesmere Road, 7-8:30 pm  
\$5 for a snack and prizes

**Winter Literacy**  
Saturday Morning 9 am-noon  
1710 Ellesmere Road  
Program Starts October 17, 2015  
Registration is \$20 plus \$5 each week

**Tuesday Morning Drop In**  
10:00 am to noon, \$4 each week  
1712 Ellesmere Rd  
RSVP to Sarah at 647-729-1633 or  
[swinter@cltoronto.ca](mailto:swinter@cltoronto.ca)

### Self-Advocates Council

## Brad Visits with the Self-Advocates Council

*By: Sue Hutton*



*Members of the Self-Advocates, friends and Brad Saunders*

The Self-Advocates Council (SAC) loves to learn about what staff are doing at Community Living Toronto. When Brad Saunders became Community Living Toronto's CEO, the SAC

invited him to a meeting to talk about self-advocacy.

The SAC talked to Brad about things that are important to them. The group talked about the Inclusion workshops the SAC are doing in schools. They talked about the importance of making their own decisions. They talked about listening to each other, and learning about what's going on in Community Living Toronto programs.

The group then talked to Brad about how important plain language is to people labeled with intellectual disabilities. Nelson added that most self-advocates don't read at all. When people with intellectual disabilities need to learn about something, they need to have people explain it to them in a way they understand. The group was reminded about the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) which is a government rule for making things accessible for people with disabilities. For people with intellectual disabilities, that means being able to understand things. For people who use wheelchairs to get around, it means being able to get to the places they want to get to – by having ramps available.

Brad talked about a job he used to have where he had to write a lot of speeches. He said that he had to write the speeches in a way that everyone could understand. He had to use plain language so that it was as accessible as possible.

Brad told the group that Community Living Toronto is going to be thinking about what it wants to do in the future. He said it's like a "person-directed plan for the agency". Brad asked the SAC to think about what they would like to see happen for the agency. Brad would like the SAC to get involved in this person-directed planning for the agency. Sounds like an exciting thing to think about for the SAC.

## Volunteer-Students Voice

### Join Us for our Annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner!

On Thursday April 14<sup>th</sup> we will be celebrating our Volunteers. This year's event is at a new venue: **Sala Caboto, 40 Playfair Ave, Toronto, ON M6B 2P9**

If you have not already received your invite, please contact your Regional Volunteer Coordinator

Special Guest Speaker: Honourable Mike Lake, PC, MP Edmonton-Wetaskiwin

### We are looking for Volunteers:

For our Annual Picnic which is just around the Corner.

We need volunteers to help on Saturday June 11<sup>th</sup> 2016 – 1712 Ellesmere Rd, Scarborough. We are looking for volunteers to help with set up, bingo and running the stations. If you are interested, contact your Regional Volunteer Coordinator.



Are you a caregiver for a person with an intellectual disability? Join our network of caregivers and family members. For further information, contact Sarah Winter @ 647-729-1633 or [swinter@cltoronto.ca](mailto:swinter@cltoronto.ca)

## Spotlight on Volunteers

As part of our ongoing focus on health and wellness, our incredible volunteers Nicole and Paul are teaching a much anticipated Yoga Class at Warden Woods SWACA.

### Bridging Diversity

## “Being My Whole Self”: Advocates Mark Black History Month

*By Emily Mooney, Master of Social Work  
Placement Student*



*Eddie sharing a spoken word poem he wrote for Black History Month*

During Black History Month, I was fortunate to attend the “Being My Whole Self” panel at the **Anti-Black Racism Conference** on February 19, 2016 at Ryerson University. The panel members - three Black members of the LGBTQ community who have been labeled with intellectual disability - discussed issues of identity and community, and safety, inclusion, and belonging. The panel was moderated by King, a community organizer and group facilitator from Supporting Our Youth. The three panelists - all members of sprOUT Toronto - were Eddie Lindsay, Jr., Sonia Lowton, and

Romeo Dontae Tresean Biggz Pierre. Eddie is studying community and social services at George Brown College, and he volunteers with sprOUT. Having a learning disability, ADHD, and a physical disability has made him want to promote a conversation about how people past the age cut-off for “youth” programs still need access to support services. Sonia is a committed self-advocate with an invisible disability, working to increase awareness of the impact of racism, ableism, and homophobia on people who receive services. You may be familiar with Romeo and his work: he is a multidisciplinary artist, musician, and performer who uses his art to explore his experiences of growing up with an intellectual disability and being a trans man.

A common theme in King’s introduction and among all the panelists was the experience of being marginalized in multiple ways at once. Eddie opened the discussion with a powerful performance of his adaptation of the hymn “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” often called the “Black American national anthem.” Between lines of the hymn, Eddie rapped about the painful rejection he has felt from family, friends, and church. He feels that there are “four strikes” against him: “Black, I’m gay, I am a person with a disability, I am fat. I am!”

Sonia talked about what it’s like to move through the world in a Black body with an invisible disability. She also spoke of feeling unsafe when she uses women’s washrooms, and described how upset she was once when some women chased her out of the “wrong” one. She was very grateful to Eddie for standing up to them.

Romeo showed his [short film](#), “**Was Lost but Now I Am Found.**” This film’s themes are the isolation that Romeo has felt from being Black and trans, as well as the joy that comes to him from doing youth engagement work and



teaching people about being LGBTQ. The film concludes, "You are not alone."

The panelists also talked about communities where they feel safe and welcomed, mentioning sprOUT, the Griffin Centre, and the 519 Community Centre. They suggested that community spaces are more welcoming when the people there are educated about LGBTQ issues, and when there are flyers and signs to show that the area is a positive space. Eddie mentioned that it is important not to assume what a person's pronouns are, in case they are transgender. Romeo, Sonia, and Eddie all demonstrate powerful resilience and dignity in response to the multiple ways that they are marginalized. They and King all prepared an excellent workshop that brought light to what their lives are like. I am grateful for the opportunity to have heard them.

## EVENTS

### DSTO Info Fair

This free event is on Wednesday May 18, 2016, 10:00am – 6:00pm  
At the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre  
6 Garamond Court, Toronto ON M3C 1Z5

**The Day Includes:** Information from Toronto based agencies on services and supports for transitional youth (16 years of age and older) and adults (18 years of age and older) with a developmental disability

Agency and Community Partner presentations on topics such as eligibility, what you can do while you wait for services and supports and how to get involved in self-advocacy groups

Opportunity for families to speak to DSTO agency staff, self-advocacy groups and family groups

For more information contact Matthew Armstrong at 647-729-1158  
[matthew.armstrong@cltoronto.ca](mailto:matthew.armstrong@cltoronto.ca)  
or visit the Developmental Services Ontario Toronto Region (DSO TR) website at [www.dsotoronto.ca](http://www.dsotoronto.ca)



The graphic features a central circular photo of a family (a man in a blue 'CARLTON' jersey, a woman, and a child) surrounded by icons for 'dancing', 'carnival', 'BBQ', 'music', and 'games'. A shopping basket icon is also present. Text reads: 'Games, activities & fun for the whole family!' Below this, it says 'Community Living Toronto annual picnic' in large green and orange letters. The date and time are 'SATURDAY JUNE 11, 2016 11 AM - 3 PM'.

1712 Ellesmere Road, a short walk from the McGowan TTC Station. Wheelchair accessible parking only. For Wheeltrans booking, please use 1710 Ellesmere Road.

Don't forget to bring your lawn chairs or blanket and sunscreen. Admission: \$2.00 per person. Additional donations welcomed. Please let us know you are coming by calling:

Etobicoke & North York Regions:  
Wendy Dyke 647-729-3627

Scarborough Region:  
Felicita Zanatta 647-729-1635

Central Region: Matt Poirier 647-729-1210

[www.communitylivingtoronto.ca](http://www.communitylivingtoronto.ca)



@CLToronto



Community Living Toronto



United Way  
Toronto

A United Way member agency