



Basic Income for Ontario



The Ontario government recently completed province-wide consultations on the design of a Basic Income Pilot, led jointly by the Honourable Dr. Helena Jaczek, Minister of Community and Social Services and the Honourable Chris Ballard, Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy.

Basic Income is a different approach to income security. It guarantees a minimum income level of support to help all low-income individuals and families.

The province is looking to test the Basic Income idea in an Ontario context to be able to truly evaluate what works and what doesn't for our province and our people.

In part, the Pilot aims to test how a basic income could provide more consistent and predictable support while improving health, housing and employment outcomes for individuals. The results will help inform future policy decisions regarding income security reform.

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Public consultations ran from November 3, 2016 to January 31, 2017 to seek input from individuals across the province, including people with lived experience, municipalities, experts, and academics. The consultations were guided by a discussion paper by the Honourable Hugh Segal, **Finding a Better Way: A Basic Income Pilot Project for Ontario.**

Two separate online surveys for the general public and experts were also provided as a means to participate. The online consultation was the most successful ever held on ontario.ca with over 34,000 responses by individuals and experts.

Work with First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and urban Indigenous partners to tailor a culturally

appropriate approach that reflects their advice and perspectives is ongoing.

The feedback will be used to finalize the pilot design and help plan how to get the project running. The ministry will report back on what was heard during the consultation process later this winter and release the final plan for the pilot in April 2017.

Thank you to all those who took time from their busy professional and personal lives to contribute to this important topic.

For more information, visit **ontario.ca/basicincome**. ■

Minister Jaczek Visits Community Living North Halton to Announce Strategic Investments in Residential Care Settings in Ontario

Minister Dr. Helena Jaczek visited Community Living North Halton on February 6, to announce they will be one of the agencies receiving funding through the Multi-Year Residential Planning strategy.

The investment is part of a larger spend of \$2 million earmarked for repairs and upgrades at residential properties across the province. The initiative also creates additional residential capacity for 51 people with developmental disabilities in agencies across Ontario.



The Honourable Minister Dr. Helena Jaczek delivers an announcement in support of repairs and upgrades at residential properties across the province.

Community Living North Halton received \$215,000 to house three new people, in addition to making important infrastructure upgrades to maximize the quality of life for residents. Upgrades include repairing and painting the building's exterior, upgrading its heating and

cooling system, renovating bathrooms and replacing windows.

As Greg Edmiston, Executive Director, Community Living North Halton, describes it, the funding will make a difference to agencies like his that work to provide important services and supports to some of the most vulnerable in the province.

“Investments like these are critical in helping agencies like Community Living North Halton build capacity which in turn will help us in addressing waitlists.”, said Edmiston. “We foresee a lot of people requiring residential care and supports in the years to come. Investments like these will be important to agencies across the province in supporting those who are most in need.”

To read more about this announcement, visit the province's [news release](#). ■

Ontario to Fund the Rebuild of Christian Horizons Group Home Destroyed by Fire

In 2015, the Christian Horizons residence in Branchton, near Cambridge was providing supports to four individuals with developmental disabilities, when it was tragically destroyed by a fire.

Fast forward just over three years later and Ontario Minister of Community and Social Services, Dr. Helena Jaczek was in the community on February 8 to announce provincial funding to help rebuild the residential setting.

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“We are proud to continue supporting safe, accessible and welcoming spaces for those who need community services,” said Minister Jaczek. “Agencies like Christian Horizons play an invaluable role in providing critical services to people with developmental disabilities. With today’s investment, we are restoring and increasing their capacity to serve the area, she concluded.”

With an investment of \$1.5 million, Christian Horizons will replace the original four-bed, 2,500 square foot group home, with a six bed, 4,800 square foot residence that will, once construction of the building is complete in 2017/18, create additional capacity and accommodate individuals with complex support needs.

The new group home will be modern, accessible, and fully compliant and will be best able to meet



Kathryn McGarry, MPP Cambridge; the Honourable Minister Dr. Helena Jaczek; and Janet Noel-Annable, CEO of Christian Horizons at the Christian Horizons funding announcement.

the needs of the adults with developmental disabilities it serves.

To learn more about Christian Horizons visit their [website](#), or to read more about this announcement check out our [news release](#). ■

New Guidelines Help Adults with Challenging Behaviours

New Consensus Guidelines for the Care, Support and Treatment of People with a Developmental Disability and Challenging Behaviours were released last August to help families, caregivers and agencies support adults who have both a developmental disability and challenging behaviour.

The 31 guidelines range from developing a support plan to working with first responders. The guidelines were developed over two years and involved some 250 individuals including experts, clinicians, DS agencies and the four Community Networks of Specialized Care (CNSCs).

In the new Consensus Guidelines, we are introduced to Joan, an adult with developmental disabilities.

“We were trying to help Joan find ways to cope with her distress and her fears. She had been self-injuring for the past few months.

We knew of a therapist that used group therapy and role-playing. We convinced her to take Joan on as a patient.

Though the therapist needed to adapt her approach to work with Joan, it was easier than originally anticipated. The therapist gradually included Joan in her groups. The groups helped Joan by permitting her to express things she never talked about. It helped her a lot.

As well, Joan is now a member of our village theatre group. She has landed a few small parts but she mostly enjoys being a stagehand. It has become a passion. She still sees her therapist a few times a year and enjoys group therapy.”

In Joan’s case, Guideline 22 on psychological therapies was one of the key factors that helped.

Key to the project’s success is the work of Jeffrey Hawkins, Executive Director of Hands the Family Network and Guidelines Project Lead for CNSC Ontario, and Jacques Pelletier, the



Community Network of Specialized Care Ontario conference participants.

Guidelines Project Director and Editor. As noted in the foreword to the Consensus Guidelines, “By implementing these guidelines and developing pro-active training strategies...we can better support some of our most vulnerable people while contributing to the province’s goal of achieving inclusion for all Ontarians.”

CNSC Ontario organized training sessions throughout the province for more than 400 people since the Guidelines were launched. Through the CNSCs, the Consensus Guidelines will continue to move forward to build the sector’s capacity to support people with more complex needs. This will include developing implementation tools to support application of the Consensus Guidelines.

The Consensus Guidelines can be read on the CNSN's website [here](#). ■

Host Family Delivers Opportunity and Independence in a Relationship Spanning Nearly Four Decades

When Mary Allen Aylesworth first arrived to meet her future Host Family nearly 40 years ago, she instantly felt welcomed and soon after became a member of the Colley family.

Trini Colley and her husband Jack, who is now deceased, had recently purchased a home in Kingston, which had more bedrooms than they could fill. This, and a desire to make a difference, led the Colleys to consider opening their home to an adult with developmental disabilities who was receiving services through Ongwanada, a service agency in Kingston.

Ongwanada works tirelessly to support people with developmental disabilities, with a special focus on those with complex needs, so they can lead full lives that are well supported in their communities. Their Host Family Program, which the Colleys enrolled in, does exactly that by enabling adults with developmental disabilities to live in a home with people who provide care and support in a family setting.

Today, the program is funded by the Ministry of Community and Social Services and continues to



Mary Allen Aylesworth and her host parent Trini Colley attend a holiday gathering at Ongwanada. Photo credit: Michael Lea, Kingston Whig-Standard.

be offered by service agencies such as Ongwanada. It was during the enrollment process into the Host Family Program that the Colleys first met Mary Allen, aged 16 at the time. After a thorough screening process, an Ongwanada staff person felt Mary Allen would work out perfectly with Trini and Jack. That was the beginning of a relationship that's still going strong almost 40 years later.

Once the decision was made to have Mary Allen move in, it didn't take long for her to adjust and feel like a member of the family. She was given

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her own bedroom, enjoyed playing with the family dog, and has since been on vacations with the Colleys to the Philippines, Australia, and the United States.

“Becoming a Host Family provider just made sense to me because it is in me, it is part of who I am as a person,” explains Colley. “I’m someone who cares for others and wants to give back. In return, I get an overwhelming sense of fulfillment that helps provide me with the patience and perseverance that someone in a Host Family provider role requires, because it’s a commitment, it’s not just a visit—you’re not just bringing someone into your home for the weekend, you are bringing them into your family and life for the long-term.”

Most importantly, Mary Allen was given an opportunity to be part of the neighbourhood and the larger community, to enjoy daily activities, and to learn a variety of new skills.

At age 54, Mary Allen still has an active schedule. In addition to helping out an elderly neighbour with household chores such as garbage, groceries and laundry, she also spends three days a week working at the Kwik-Shred, a local document destruction service company.

For more information on our Host Family Program—or the LifeShare program—please visit our [website](#). ■

Ontario Launches New Pilot Marketing Campaign to Promote "LifeShare" Housing

This past January, the province initiated a new pilot marketing campaign to help people with developmental disabilities find supportive housing with families in their communities.

LifeShare—formerly known as the Host Family program—is an innovative residential program that provides a family setting for people with a developmental disability, where they are

supported and can enjoy inclusion, independence and community belonging. Many adults and their families are needing or prefer this form of housing option. However, at the end of fiscal year 2015/16 there were only 1,715 people participating in LifeShare situations of the close to 20,000 who are receiving some sort of supportive housing.



If you or someone you know would like to be involved in the LifeShare program, the best way to start is by contacting a developmental services agency in your area.

Visit **Developmental Services Ontario** for information on agencies that offer LifeShare or check out the LifeShare program and campaign on the MCSS **website**. ■

Ontario is partnering with nine community agencies to launch **LifeShare: a place in your heart, a place in your home**. The campaign aims to find new potential home providers, as well as raise awareness of the Host Family program. Agencies in Brantford, Burlington, Campbellford, Kitchener, Pembroke, Sault Ste. Marie, Timmins, Toronto and Vineland are all participating in the pilot marketing campaign.

At the conclusion of the marketing pilot, efforts will be evaluated to measure their impact in order to make decisions on the future of the initiative.

“We know there is no one-size-fits-all housing solution for adults with developmental disabilities, said The Honourable Minister Dr. Helena Jaczek. The Host Family program provides an opportunity to go beyond traditional residential supports and gives these individuals the opportunity to live in supportive family environments and feel more included in their communities. The LifeShare campaign will make sure that more Ontarians are aware of the great benefit of this program, she concluded.”



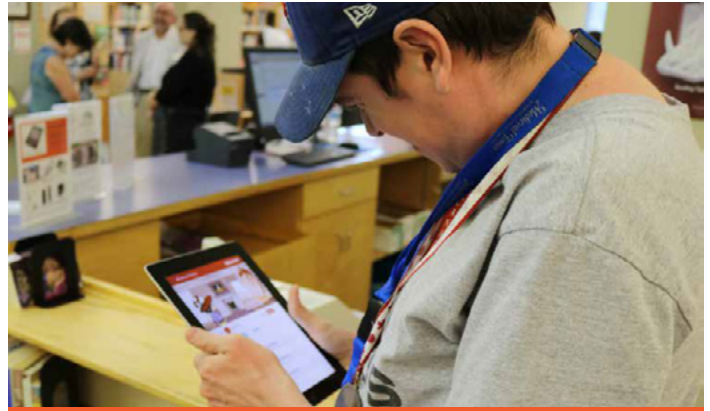
Digital App Helps People Build Independence

MagnusCards is a new digital app that helps people build independence in their communities by teaching them life skills such as taking the bus or finding items in a grocery store. It is a fun digital guide with game design elements, which provides step-by-step instructions for people to prepare for new situations or practice and support activities in an everyday routine.

Magnusmode, the Waterloo-based company behind MagnusCards, was founded by Nadia Hamilton. She was inspired by her brother Troy, who has autism. When he graduated from high school, there were few opportunities for Troy to continue his personal and social development. It inspired Nadia to create a company that uses technology to empower and support people with cognitive special needs.

“This helps build structure for people with disabilities, in otherwise structureless environments”, said Nadia. “What we are providing is a practical situation that people can use and hold.”

“MagnusCards means more freedom to the one learning and their caregiver; it enables or empowers the learner to do a task that he or she couldn't. This makes the lives of both easier,” said



An individual uses their new MagnusCards digital application.

Lucia Salcedo, whose son has cognitive special needs. “As a result of freeing them from not being able to do something to achieving it, they also give the learner a feeling of self-worth and empowerment like I understand it now or I can do it now.”

MagnusCards continues to grow, as they explore partnerships that enable the right content to get into the hands of the people who need it the most.

The app was developed in partnership with CIBC, ROM, MLSE, Tim Hortons and over 20 other partners, uniting Canadian brands in an inclusion strategy that was inspired by sibling love. It is free on the Apple and Android application stores.

For more information, visit Magnusmode's [website](#). ■

Eva Speaks Out About Accessibility

Eva Penner-Banman spoke out about what accessibility means to her at the National Youth Forum on Accessibility in Ottawa, on November 1, 2016.



Eva attends the National Youth Forum on Accessibility in Ottawa.

Eva attended the forum on the recommendation of The Honourable Dr. Helena Jaczek, Minister of Community and Social Services. The event brought together youth of all abilities from across Canada to share their ideas and experiences on what accessibility means to them. It included an appearance from Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, and is part of the federal government's consultation process to inform the development of planned accessibility legislation.

The most important thing Eva took away from the forum was that there are many types of disabilities and they are all different—including people with invisible disabilities. “I stand up for the people who can’t stick up for themselves—we are their voices, for little things or for big issues,” said Eva. “It’s important to stand up for the people who may not be able to speak for themselves”.

Eva is an active member of New Day, Leaders of Today, a self-advocacy group, and a representative committee member on Community Living Essex’s Board of Directors. Through these experiences, she has developed the confidence to speak out for other people. She has a great passion for helping out others and being an active voice and leader for people with disabilities.

Eva notes, “It’s important for people to get out and get involved. Don’t be afraid and don’t be shy”. She summed up her experience at the forum with four words: “amazing, encouraging, informative and networking”. ■

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