

DONOR DOLLARS

IN ACTION

Community Living Toronto
Donor Stewardship Update



Spring 2017

Community First

Community First is creating the groundwork to shift from site-based day programs to more community-based activities for people who have an intellectual disability. Thanks to a an Employment and Modernization grant from the Ministry of Community and Social Services our team is well poised for success.

Historically, site-based day programs or sheltered workshops were created to give people with an intellectual disability an opportunity to learn and work at these sites during the day.

Over the years, Community Living Toronto has begun moving away from this model in order to provide more community based and person centered options. Examples of these would be taking an art class or going on a job placement in the community rather than staying at a site-based program.

Our Community First team has also created a “Community Engagement through Person Directed Approach” training module for staff to equip them with the necessary skills on community engagement and development. So far, 77 site based day program staff have been trained and now have the skills to develop community connections. As part of our commitment to knowledge sharing, our Community First team is also delivering this training to other Community Living agency staff across the province.

Through Community First our team has developed community readiness programs for the people we support. Topics include: public transit and pedestrian safety, computer skills, money skills, and health and food safety.

To date, more than 30 people have benefited from these programs.

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Community
Living
Toronto



BUILDING COMMUNITY

On Campus Experiences

In partnership with Centennial College, our Community First team has created IOPEN, an On-Campus Post-Secondary Experience Network.

IOPEN provides young adults with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to have an inclusive college experience so that they can pursue areas of academic and career interest while being provided the supports and accommodations they need to achieve success.

Students from the Developmental Services Worker programs act as mentors for these young adults, helping them manage the work load, socialize and fit in. The Centre for Students with Disabilities also assists with supplies for classroom accommodation and any other accessibility requirements. As of January of this year, 6 students are currently attending Centennial College with support from IOPEN.

Chris Reynolds, is currently in his second semester at the college. (His photo is on the front cover of this newsletter.) Here's what he has to say about the IOPEN so far...

"I view IOPEN as a success due to the extensive supports that are in place and the appeal of the individual classes. I passed my Developmental Psychology course and am now taking Principles of Psychology with aspirations to become a therapist in the long term. It would be a wonderful thing to continue with the program, as I believe it can influence other things if given the chance."

Community First is paving the way for people to have more options in their community by shifting away from the sheltered work model to a modern approach in service delivery. It is giving people who have an intellectual disability the opportunity to be out in the community, contributing to society, and feel valued, fulfilled and inspired.

We're really proud of this initiative, and the work that's being done by our team.

The Community First approach is helping people of all ages access community resources where they live, learn, work and play and we look forward to building on it for years to come.

For further information about Community First or IOPEN contact Flora Nichols at 416-421-3953 or by email fnichols@cltoronto.ca.



Q&A with Steven, an IOPEN student at Centennial College. (photo above)

Q: How are you enjoying being a student at Centennial College?

A: Amazing. It's something that I have wished for a long time and I got my wish. What they promise you, is what you get.

Q: Are all of your accommodations being met?

A: Definitely, 100%

Q: Are your professors in class accommodating?

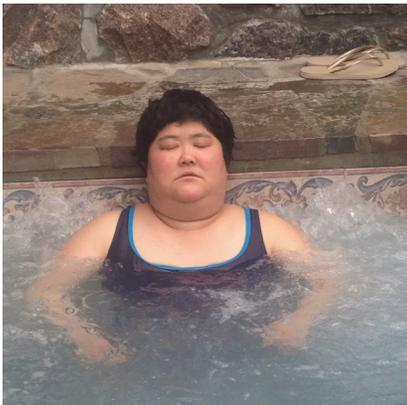
A: Amazing, my teacher is extraordinary, nothing I have seen in a long time.

Q: Would you recommend IOPEN to anyone?

A: 100% with out a doubt!

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

A Little R&R for April



April enjoying one of the many perks at Ste. Anne's Spa

April has many dreams, one being to take a trip to Ste. Anne's Spa in Grafton, Ontario with friends.

Last year, April and her support team began to plan, looking at what it would cost and how she could make this happen.

Determined, April knew that if she cut back on things like a weekly lunch date outing she could save towards her goal.

In May of last year, armed with savings and a \$600 grant from the Choices that can Change Lives Fund, April's dream came true. April was booked for a wonderful two days at St. Anne's spa with her friends. A dream she'll always remember and a goal she definitely wants to repeat again in the future.

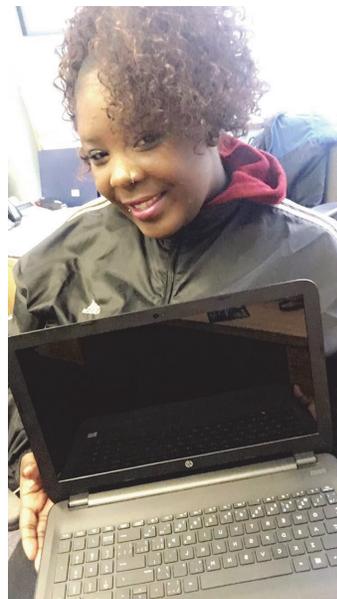
Moesha Now Has a Head Start

Like April, Moesha also has many dreams and goals.

One of her goals includes going back to school to study for her GED to receive her high school diploma. As Moesha and her support team were looking at what would be needed, they knew that a laptop would be a necessity. Moesha had some money put aside for a new laptop but knew that wouldn't be enough if she planned on going to school in the Fall. With the help of her support worker, Moesha applied to the Choices that can Change Lives Fund.

Moesha was awarded a \$650 grant to help her cover the cost of a laptop. This past year, Moesha has been attending classes and doing very well. She's been able to submit her assignments online and communicate with her teachers and peers. Not only that, she's also been able to apply for part-time jobs online. Giving her a head start come graduation day.

Moesha expects to graduate this June and we expect great things to come!



CHOICES that can Change Lives Fund

Through the Choices that can Change Lives Fund small grants create big opportunities for people.

62 grants have been awarded since 2012.

April has had her dream of going to the spa come true, and having a laptop is helping Moesha be successful at school.

Others have gone to camp, taken swimming lessons, receive tutoring and tuition assistance. They've been able to develop skills and independence through technology as well as gain confidence and make friends through sport—all because of the support of donors like you —
THANK YOU!

WANT MORE INFO?

Visit:
choiceschangelives.ca

Or contact:
Sylvie Labrosse
647-729-1180

HELPING HANDS

Helping People in Need

Adult Protective Service Workers (APSW) advocate for, coordinate and monitor the necessary community supports for adults who live independently, but are without social or family support and most of which live well below the poverty line

Each year the APSW team hosts an holiday celebration. This celebration simply wouldn't be a success without Dr. Adrienne Schmitt and her friends Debbie Speers and Dr. Alexandra Mackay who put in many hours to ensure that none of the individuals and families supported by the APSW program go without over the holidays.



*From the Archives
Dr. Schmitt
Board President
1993—1995*

Adrienne was first introduced to the Community Living family through her friend and colleague, Dr. Hugh MacKay. She went to take on different roles including that of Board President from 1993 to 1995 and for the past 20 plus years she and her friends Debbie and Alexandra, have donated their time and money to creating holiday gift bins for the many individuals supported by our APSW team.

In the beginning, they created about 60 bins. Since then, this has tripled to 200 bins!

Divided by men's and women's, each bin contains personal care items, a scarf, hat or mittens, a \$10 gift card for Loblaw's and a \$5 gift card for Tim Horton's, as well as other gift items. Last but not least are the homemade holiday cookies — a dozen cookies are put into containers and those sweet treats make their way into each bin.

The holiday bins originally started as a bin full of food, but as people aged and needs changed, they started including different items but always kept the cookies in the bins to provide an added personal touch. Alexandra and her family are in charge of making the cookies, and have recruited work colleagues and friends to assist with the baking. A dozen cookies for every bin takes a lot of helping hands!

Shopping for 200 is very time consuming and you can't make each box the exact same as buying 200 items at one store is mostly impossible. The shopping does happen year round and even though they start earlier, they always seem to be scrambling closer to their deadline — as how most holiday shopping goes.

Debbie and Adrienne do most of the shopping and the coordination. Once everything is purchased, they all get together on a Sunday afternoon to assemble the bins with all the gifts and cookies.



(On the left) After a day's shopping— Adrienne's car filled to the brim with shopping bags filled with all sorts of gifts.

(On the right) Items are stored and ready for the assembly line to be added to the bins and delivered.



OPEN HEARTS

Once finished, they pack up their cards and deliver the bins to the Foster's Clubhouse a few days before the annual Holiday Celebration.

Adrienne likes to donate her time and resources to the APS program because *"It's a program that's not like the others. For the little ones (Children) they are always cute and cuddly and it's easier to get services for them. But for the adults, sometimes they are not cute and cuddly, sometimes they've had a bad deal in life, but they are the ones that I think need it."* says Adrienne.

Our many thanks to Adrienne, Debbie, Alexandra, and all of their helpers for making sure that everyone who attends the annual APS holiday celebration receives something special each year.

A fun fact from Adrienne

A couple of years ago, thanks to a connection with a Funeral Director. Adrienne, Debbie and Alexandra were able to pack all of the bins into one hearse and have everything delivered in one shot! There was plenty of room for all the bins!

Help-a-Family Campaign

Over the holiday season many go without and while the APSW team works hard to reach out to every possible resource throughout the city – sometimes people get missed.

With only 2 weeks left before the holidays, James, an APS Assessment and Referral Coordinator, reached out to our Fundraising and Public Relations team to find out if there was any way we could help. He spoke to us about Victoria, Jessica, Jane, and others. He told us about the challenges and hardships that these families were faced. We knew we had to help and with little time to spare, the Help-a-Family campaign was launched.

Wish lists were created that included everything from new clothing, gift cards, mitten, hats and gloves and toys for kids, video games for the teens. We even added some self-care items for the moms who weren't asking for anything for themselves. Seven families needed extra help this past year and we were determined to make sure that they got it. Through social media posts, internal and external email networks, kind and generous donors and power of community, every family on that list received their wish list items just in time for the holidays.

"Everyone deserves something special over the holiday season and we are blessed to have the support of so many from our Community—thank you." James, APS Assessment and Referral Coordinator

Many thanks to everyone who jumped in to help in December. Your many donations of cash, toys, clothing and gift cards made an huge difference to the lives of these families.

HOW TO HELP

Even though December is months away, donations to for the Help-a-Family or Holiday Hamper Campaigns are accepted year round.

Make a donation online or contact Alex Pryse to arrange the delivery of new clothing, toys or gift cards.

Alex can be reached at:
alex.pryse@cltoronto.ca
or 416-271-6456

COMMUNITY ROCKS

Let the good times roll!

On December 3rd, 1,400 of our closest friends celebrated community and the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities with a huge party—Mardi Gras style! This year's Community Rocks was our best yet exceeding our fundraising goal of \$600,000! Hosted by our friend and CTV Host, Ben Mulroney, party goers danced the night away to performances by the Sam Roberts Band, The Happy Pals and DJ Raptor at the after party.

Our many thanks to our sponsors, donors and everyone who joined us for this party with a purpose. Since 2008, you have helped raise over 2 million dollars to help people of all ages who have an intellectual disability live to their fullest potential.

Visit our website communityrocks.ca and our Facebook page for all the event info and photos.



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Louis Thomas

A HOME OF ONE'S OWN

Krystal's Journey—A Mom's Perspective



Maddie, Karen, and Krystal

The other day I dropped off my adult daughter Krystal at her home. She lives on a busy, east end street, just blocks from the subway.

It was cold out and I sat in the warmth of my car as she struggled with the door key, fumbling with the latch, looking over to me anxiously then placing her big, pink purse on the ground so that both hands were free to unlock the cranky door. It opened, she shot me a glance of relief, waved goodbye and walked into the home she shares with three young women. "She can do it!" I thought as I watched her soldier on.

As the mother of an adult daughter with Down syndrome, these are powerful words that I find myself chanting again and again, especially over the past two years since Krystal moved into supported independence.

Planning and preparing for her move would never have happened without LIGHTS. I remember those first meetings with Laura Starret, the Facilitator who guided us from day one on our journey, so well. Krystal and I would stare at each other and Laura, gape-mouthed as she dropped bombs like "*Exactly what kind of support do you need, Krystal?*" or "*What are you willing to let go of, Madeleine?*"

It was a scary process, but LIGHTS had faith in us, holding our hands as we walked – no, climbed – through a very hard, uphill process. An apartment was found. Support was defined. Connections were sparked and honed between like-minded families. We interviewed, interviewed and interviewed potential mentors.

A million pieces were pulled together like a puzzle and the result is anything but cookie-cutter-easy yet LIGHTS has been with us every step of the way, assisting with the funding and innovative vision that has made our dream come true.

Meanwhile, Krystal and her housemates don't see themselves as anything other than the norm. They are four, very unique young women who laugh through meals together, squabble over household chores and struggle with the finicky front door.



Krystal opening her "finicky" front door.

LIGHTS 

A LIGHT in your community

8 | COMMUNITY LIVING TORONTO

A gift to LIGHTS will help provide funding for those in need and seeking a home of their own.

For more information visit LIGHTS.to

A LEGACY OF GIVING



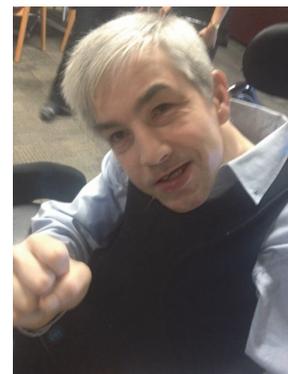
Donna and Jim Britten

Donna and Jim Britten have been so grateful for the well trained and caring staff from Community Living Toronto, who have supported their son David for many years. David was born in 1968, at a time when there was little support for a child with an uncontrolled seizure disorder that resulted in an intellectual disability. Donna gave up her teaching career, and with the help of their family, they were able to give David the 24 hour loving support that he needed to be safe and part of their Scarborough community. The Britten's became involved with Community Living Toronto 44 years ago and always hoped that David would have the same

opportunity as would his sisters to live separately from his parents ,in his own home in the community, as an adult. They worked very hard to make this happen for him. Donna has been on the Board of Directors for 20 years, and was honored to be the Board's president in Community Living Toronto's 50th anniversary year. She was a founding member of Developmental Services Toronto (DSTO) a Board Member of Community Living Ontario, and presently, a board member of OASIS (Ontario Agencies Supporting Individuals with Special Needs). Jim has been the chair of Community Living Toronto's Quality Assurance committee for many years starting in the late 1990's, bringing his understanding as a parent and expertise as a Senior Manager of Quality Assurance at IBM to the position.

At 18, David moved to his new home on Marydon Crescent in Scarborough, just 10 minutes by car from his family home. He has been very happy living there with so many long time staff to care for him and also enjoying the company of his housemates and their families. They see the great guy that he is, despite his disability. His family is still an important part of his life and they see him often. David is now frail and the seizures have taken their toll. He has become nonverbal and has lost most of his mobility. Despite the setbacks he remains happy and tells us all by his actions, quite clearly, what he needs.

This past year has been a tough one for the Britten family. Jim, a long-time member, volunteer, and David's dad, had passed away. Donna and Jim were so moved to have David's long-time advocate, Leila Bazur, come to visit him in the hospital in his final days. She assured Jim that he needn't worry about David and that he will always be taken care of, giving Jim and Donna much comfort.



David Britten

At Jim's funeral, this past spring, there was standing room only. Their family and many friends were surrounded by a great circle of support from their Community Living Toronto family, "They are very special people that we have met because of our son, David" says Donna.

Jim and Donna are so grateful for the loving care and support David has received that they chose to have donations in memory of Jim made to the Association. This was in addition to the large gift they made a number of years ago, in memory of Donna's parents.

Community Living Toronto will miss Jim Britten's sage advice on many committees, his patience, kindness, and the energy and love he showed his son David, and each of David's staff and housemates who live at Marydon. In the many gifts we have received from Jim and his family over the years, Jim's legacy will live on. Donna will continue to be a part of Community Living Toronto and will always do what she can to help.

CORPORATE & COMMUNITY SPIRIT

The Colour of Spirit is Orange

Tom, who is supported by Community Living Toronto's Employment Supports program, started working at Dream Office REIT at the end of March 2016 and it wasn't long before he felt like a part of the team.

On Friday's he started wearing the company's colour brand orange — just for fun. *"It seemed like the best day to wear the company colour,"* he explains. *"For me it was about company pride, but I didn't think anyone would notice."*

His colleagues did way more than notice and for the rest of the summer, people in the office wore orange shirts on Fridays, with more people joining the movement every week.

It all came together in a big group picture with the company CEO, Jane Gavan. *"It's so heart-warming to see how enthusiastic everyone was about supporting Tom in his idea. It's such an easy way to build a sense of community in our office and to make Fridays more fun,"* said Ms. Gavan. *"We're all proud to have Tom on our team."* Everyone wanted to be part of the group photo, so even people who didn't own orange shirts found creative ways to participate – making orange bow ties, hats, and ties.

Dream is an amazing employment champion for people who have an intellectual disability and are one of Community Living Toronto's corporate partners that encompasses the spirit of community and philanthropic giving.

Jane Gavan is the Vice Chair of Community Living Toronto's Patron's Council and Dream has been a Community Rocks sponsor since 2010.

The Colour of Spirit at Dream Office REIT is ORANGE!



Dream Office REIT staff all wearing the company's colour orange

GETTING TO KNOW US

Meet Sam



Sam Forbes is 18 and works as a Public Relations and Fundraising Ambassador. As a young adult, Sam has a busy schedule. He attends high school, works at Starbucks twice a week and is at 20 Spadina once a week helping to answer the phones and welcome visitors at reception, distribute mail throughout the building and mail out important tax receipts and thank you letters to our generous donors. As an advocate for people with disabilities, Sam is also part of Community Living Toronto's speakers bureau and when has spare time he likes to go out with friends for frozen yogurt and sushi.

You may already know about Sam from his YouTube video "The Dancing Barista" that went viral in early 2016. Following the viral video he was interviewed on many talk shows, including Breakfast Television, CTV, and The Ellen DeGeneres Show! On meeting Ellen Sam says, "It was a pretty amazing experience to meet Ellen...she seems like a really good genuine person and I like that she takes the time to talk about special needs stories".

Meet Jenna



Jenna Martinuzzi also works as a Public Relations and Fundraising Ambassador for Community Living Toronto. When Jenna isn't helping out at reception and in the mail room she can be found on the 5th floor of 20 Spadina supporting our team with filing, opening direct mail, helping to prepare for events or writing articles for newsletters or websites.

Jenna is also part of our Speakers Bureau and can often be found presenting with the Spinclusion team at schools around Toronto, speaking about creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for children and youth of all abilities and cultures. In her spare time Jenna likes to post on social media, go out with friends, and travel. Just recently, she got a second job here at the Coffee Den. Congratulations Jenna!

Meet Margarida



Margarida celebrating at Community Rocks.

Margarida Da Silva is the Administrative Assistant for the Public Relations and Fundraising Department but she's way more than what her title speaks to.

Margarida has been with the Association for more than 16 years and we'd really be lost without her. She uses her office management, financial and coordinator skills to keep us all on track, up to date ensuring that everything runs smoothly.

In her spare time, family, grandchildren, travel adventures and theatre are her passion. She's inspired daily by the many people we support, and this keeps her coming back to work every day.

SAVE THE DATE!

FAMILY FUN FAIR



Let us know you're coming...

Etobicoke

Georgina Stergiotis

647-729-0445

georgina.stergiotis@cltoronto.ca

Central

Michelle Grimley

647-729-1210

michelle.grimley@cltoronto.ca

Scarborough

Felicita Zanatta

647-729-1635

fzanatta@cltoronto.ca

North York

Wendy Dyke

647-729-3627

wdyke@cltoronto.ca

A short walk from
McCowan
Subway Station

Saturday June 10th, 2017

11AM-3PM

Admission: \$4

1712 Ellesmere Road

Carnival

Games

BBQ

BINGO

plus More!

Additional Donations Welcome!

Bring a lawn chair or blanket and sunscreen!



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CONTACT US

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20 Spadina Road, Toronto, Ontario, M5R 2S7

fundraising@cltoronto.ca

647-729-1180

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