

FEATURED STORY

Sending Your Child to Camp

Excerpt from ConnectABILITY.ca

As a parent, you may be anxious or worried about finding a camp that meets your child's needs. From highly specialized camps to regular camps that accommodate children with special needs, there are options for every child. With careful consideration of what will benefit your child most, along with some research, you should be able to find the right camp for your child.

Sending your child to camp will benefit them in many ways. They will be provided with structure and routine, have a chance to build confidence and independence, and get plenty of activity and exercise. They will also have many opportunities to interact with other children, develop friendships and learn skills from others. Camp will help them learn to problem solve and communicate their needs to others outside their family circle. Even though it may be hard to let go, camp will also give you some time to yourself.

To start your search, it is a good idea to make a list of the kind of camp you want. It can be challenging to find a camp to meet your child's needs and sometimes, you don't even know where to start looking. The following questions

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can be used as a guide to help you decide what you are looking for in a camp:

1. Do you want day camp or overnight camp?
2. Do you want a specialized camp for children with special needs?
3. Do you want an inclusive camp?
4. Do you want a half-day or full-day program? Have you considered if your child is comfortable being away from home and their age?
5. Do you want a camp placement for one week, or the entire summer?
6. How far from home will you be comfortable for a residential or even day camp for your child?
7. What cost can you afford? Is subsidy available?
8. Do you have benefits for your child (e.g. Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities or Special Services at Home), that might assist with the

cost for the camp or a support worker for your child?

9. If you want an inclusive camp, does your child need a support person to be with them and is this available at the camp? If so, is there an additional cost?
10. If your child is physically fragile, do you need a nurse on staff?
11. Do you want counselors with CPR and First Aid Training?
12. Does your child need medication? Can staff administer medication?
13. If your child has special dietary needs, can this be accommodated at the camp?
14. Do you need transportation for your child to the camp? Is it available?
15. Are there specific activities your child likes and you would like the camp to include?

To read the rest of this article and learn more about choosing the right summer camp for your child, visit:

<http://connectability.ca/2010/09/23/sending-your-child-to-camp/>



Holiday Party Brings Joy to Many

CENTRAL REGION

By Lea Neveroff



For 25 years, a Christmas Party has been organized for the hundreds of individuals supported by Adult Protective Services Workers (APSW) in Central Region. Each year, more than 200 people attend the annual party with great excitement and anticipation. APSW begin to receive calls as early as the summer time from many people inquiring about when the next party will be held and the anticipation of the event only builds from there. It is such an important event for so many of the individuals we serve. Many of them do not have family or friends to share the holiday spirit with, and would not otherwise have a holiday party to attend. The party this year happened to fall on a wonderful sunny day and a record number of people turned out for the festivities.

With funding from Central Region Council, APSW provides snacks, Christmas music and a DJ with dancing, candy, fruit bowls and a delicious hot meal accompanied by dessert. The party wraps up with everyone leaving with a holiday gift. Before the evening ended, many people expressed that they would bring their gift home and leave it to open on Christmas morning. There is always laughter, singing, a chance to socialize and tears of joy. It's not uncommon to hear people say "I matter. I too,

have a Christmas." Everyone leaves filled the holiday spirit, feeling valued and happy to have been a part of such a wonderful event.

Central Region Spring Fling!

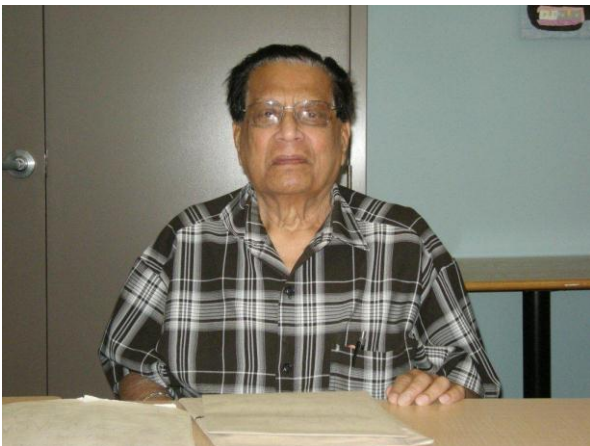
Spring Fling Dinner & Dance
Saturday, April 18th, 2015
Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre
\$50/ticket

For more information or to make a donation to our silent auction, contact Matt Poirier at 647-729-1210 or matthew.poirier@cltoronto.ca.

ETOBICOKE REGION

The Value of Community Living Toronto Membership

By Eric Laimer



Harry Batasar, long-time Community Living Toronto member.

The Batasar Family has had a long affiliation with Community Living Toronto. Marc Batasar has been attending Etobicoke Employment Training Services (ETS) for over 15 years. ETS

has been a valuable support for Marc to learn new skills and make friends. Harry, Marc's father, is grateful for the outstanding service and help that he receives from the caring staff at ETS. However, there are some questions and needs that go beyond the scope of ETS. That is where Harry has relied on the support of his long time Membership with Community Living Toronto. When Harry has a question about social recreation activities, ODSP or other services within the Developmental Services sector, he knows he can call his regional Membership Coordinator for answers and help.

Managing all of the paperwork and invoices for Passport and ODSP can get overwhelming at times. When he has run into problems, Harry has called his regional Membership Coordinator for assistance. Sometimes all that was needed was for the paperwork to be re-submitted. Another time, a letter was written on his behalf by the Membership Coordinator to help resolve an issue.

Harry has often attended the many information sessions that have been held for Members about the RDSP, Wills and Estates planning and other topics of interest. Aside from the valuable information that he has learned at these sessions, he has also had the opportunity to meet and connect with other families.

Membership has helped Harry stay informed and to navigate his way through the sometimes confusing sea of programs and services within the Developmental Sector. Harry has been a Community Living Toronto Member for over 20 years, which is proof of how valuable Membership has been to him, Marc and his family.

Upcoming Etobicoke Events

Tri-Hards Bowling

February 14th & 28th

March 14th & 28th

Etobicoke Region Council's Seventh Annual Easy Roller Bowlathon

Saturday April 18th. 2015

5:00 to 8:00 pm.

Bowlerama West
5429 Dundas Street West
(Just west of Kipling)

Space limited. Register by Friday April 10 to:

Eric Laimer, 647-729-0445

Or elaimer@cltoronto.ca

NORTH YORK REGION

Report on North York Council

By Wendy Dyke

As we welcome 2015 and we head into our annual membership drive, I thought it might be a good time to update our members on recent North York Council activities and their plans for the coming year.

In 2014, North York Council sponsored a number of initiatives in the region. Through membership donations and fundraising through the sale of Nevada lottery tickets, they were able to sponsor several events organized by the North York Social Recreation committee. These included a Community Walk with Victoria Park Hub partners, Working Women and the Toronto East Chinese Baptist Church; three Pizza/Bingo nights and the North York

Halloween Dance. North York Council also expanded the number of programs they offered in 2014. There were four sessions of cooking classes. Council also ran their ever popular TTC Readiness program last spring. North York's Jumpstart Literacy Classes also continue to run on Saturday mornings with sponsorship from Council. Lastly, Council was instrumental in enabling the region to reach out to forty-two households from our Early Childhood Services, Home Management, Family Support and Adult Protective Services Programs during the holiday season through our Holiday Hampers initiative. Without the support of our members it would not be possible for Council to sponsor these events and programs.

Looking forward to 2015, Council has been busy planning a family information night focusing on the Ministry of Community and Social Services Passport program and how to access ministry funded services. Council has once again committed funding for cooking classes this year with the next session to start in April for eight weeks. Please watch for details on these in our upcoming newsletter. Council also continues its support for the Jumpstart Literacy Program. If you want information about this program, please contact Jackie Fisher at 647-729-1162.

North York Council has also been discussing development of new programs. However, they need input from individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families about what specific programs they would like Council to develop. A survey has been developed that lists specific activities and programs within four general categories: Social Recreation Activities, Hobbies and Art Programs, Health and Fitness Activities, Education and Life Skills. The survey will be posted on ConnectABILITY.ca. Please watch for the link to the survey coming to your inbox soon and take a few minutes to complete it. The results

will enable each Regional Council to make decisions on how best to meet the needs of our members by developing programs and sponsoring events that are important in enriching the lives of individuals with intellectual disabilities.

If you wish to support the North York Council's fundraising efforts, please visit the Parkway Plaza's Smoke and Gifts shop at 85 Ellesmere Road and purchase a break open lottery ticket. Ticket proceeds are used by North York Council for the programs they sponsor.

North York Council meets the first Monday every month. Their next meeting will be Monday, February 2nd, 2015
North York Region Office, Board Room
1122 Finch Ave W, Unit 18

Upcoming North York Events

Pizza/Bingo Night at the Victoria Park Hub
Wednesday, March 18, 2015
6 – 8 p.m.
1527 Victoria Park Avenue, 2nd Floor

For more information, contact Wendy Dyke at 647-729-3627 or wdyke@cltoronto.ca.

SCARBOROUGH REGION

Holiday Baking & Memory Making

By *Teresa Harris*

On Saturday, November 29, a small group met at Community Living Toronto's Central Adult Development Program (ADP) site for an

afternoon of holiday baking and cookie decorating.

As a new volunteer, I was so excited to begin working with Community Living Toronto this fall. After helping to sell 50/50 tickets at *Community Rocks* and seeing first hand the care and enthusiasm that surrounds everything Community Living Toronto does, I knew I was hooked! It means a lot to have the opportunity to share my interests and skills with an organization that hits close to home for me, and meet some new friends along the way.



The cookie bakers enjoying their holiday treats.

On this particular day, with the help of Petra Asfaw, CL Toronto's Family Support Coordinator for Planning, I was fortunate enough to lead five fun young women supported by the Association through a workshop that began with instruction on how to roll, cut, and then bake sugar cookies and gingerbread cookie dough. Then, supplied with enough icing, candy, and sprinkles to open a Bulk Barn, we adorned our gingerbread men and sugar cookie stars with festive decorative trimmings. I was so impressed with the enthusiasm, skill, and creativity all of the participants showed. I see bright baking futures on the horizon!

Afterward the group relaxed with some hot chocolate, munched on our creations, and danced to One Direction. As the afternoon

came to a close, everyone went home with bellies (and bags!) full of cookies and new friends made. We're looking forward to similar events this spring, and hope to have even more friends join us!

Holiday Hampers a Success!

By Shelly Greenberg

On behalf of all the recipients of the Scarborough Region Hamper program and the Community Support Team, I would like to extend a warm thank you to everyone who contributed and donated items to our program.

Your generosity has helped 17 families, 14 individuals, and 20 children have a brighter and happier Holiday Season. Along with the contributions of food, toiletries and clothing, we also received financial donations and therefore, we were able to purchase gift cards for clothing, entertainment and food.

Thank you to Warden Woods and Employment Training Services as well as Scarborough's Adult Development Program for collecting donation items. Your generosity was greatly appreciated.

Upcoming Scarborough Events

5th Annual Bingo Bowling Extravaganza
Friday, April 17th, 2015, 7 – 10pm
Parkway Bowl, 67 Ellesmere Road

Achilles St. Patricks Day 5K Run/Walk
Sunday, March 15th, 2015
Join the CL Toronto Team!

For more information on both of these events & to register contact Felicity Zanatta at 647-729-1635 or fzanatta@cltoronto.ca.

Tuesday Drop In every Tuesday morning
10am – 12pm. 1712 Ellesmere Rd.
\$4/person, contact Sarah Winter at 647-729-1633 or swinter@cltoronto.ca.

NEWS

A Year of Lessons in Diversity

By Ilaneet Goren –Diversity Specialist

Last month I celebrated one year on the job. It was a chance to express my gratitude and reflect on the things I have learned. What lessons can I share and take with me into 2015 to help build a culture of equity, diversity and inclusion?

1. Diversity is.

Diversity simply describes the reality we live in. *Inclusion* is how we choose to respond to that reality. We know today that, much like with organizational values or our standards around client safety and confidentiality, diversity applies to every level and position within the organization without exception. This is good because it means we are all in this together. "*All together now*" is not just a timeless Beatles song. It was also the title of our presentation when Bob Ferguson and I spoke at the 2014 Community Living Ontario conference in October, emphasizing our shared responsibility as a sector and inviting other organizations to join the diversity conversation. The full description of the workshop can be found on the conference [website](#).

2. Allies are... everywhere.

It's impossible to do this work alone. I've come to expand my definition of an 'Ally' to include anyone who is genuinely supportive of efforts to promote diversity and inclusion. The Bridging Diversity Committee is viewed by many as the main point of contact for diversity-related questions, issues and project ideas. But the Committee isn't the only place where these conversations are happening. We need more people to have more conversations across the organization to create that ripple effect. Check out this resource page by Mount Sinai Hospital for interactive tools on how to be an ally to diverse communities:

www.mountsinai.on.ca/about_us/human-rights/ally/

3. It's ok to say you don't know.

I must admit that when I first started I worried that the title "Diversity Specialist" might imply I was an expert on diversity. I have a long history of involvement in the field, but can anyone truly be an expert in something so complex and ever-evolving? What I've learned is that it's often better (and more helpful) to realize when you don't have the answer, and to spend time thinking about the question itself. Teen mathematician and entrepreneur, Jacob Barnett, thinks that knowing the answers can actually prevent us from thinking creatively and authentically. Watch his captivating TEDx Teens talk, "Forget everything you know":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uq-FOOQ1TpE>

4. Tools are only good if we use them.

It's easy to get trapped in thinking that if we have more tools or *more* resources to help us work across diversity, we will automatically be more inclusive. I've realized that it's really important to address the fundamental question of how we learn and how we integrate new knowledge in everyday practice. Let's face it, we live in an age of unprecedented access to a vast ocean of information available at our

fingertips. Literally (I sometimes joke at my workshops that most of the diversity materials can be searched on Google much like the lyrics to your favourite pop song). Jokes aside, the Bridging Diversity team has worked over the years to compile many helpful resources and links to multilingual and ethno-culturally specific services that can be found on our intranet (SharePoint) and on www.ConnectABILITY.ca. The Bridging Diversity Newsletter, with updates and new resources, comes out every season and is shared through e-mail, website, SharePoint, Twitter, Facebook and hard copies in every regional office. Perhaps our greatest challenge is turning theory into practice.

5. Trust the process.

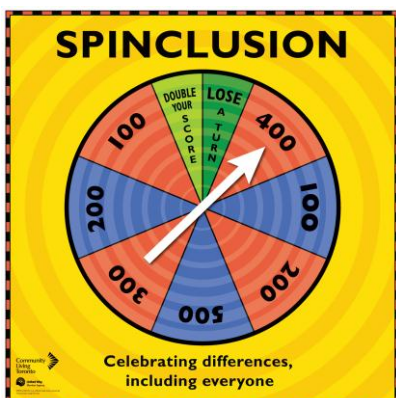
You may remember this scene from the movie *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*: Indy is standing in front of what appears to be an impassable canyon. He needs to get to the other side to save his father, but there is no bridge in sight. An ancient clue instructs him to "take a leap of faith." As he takes the first step into the abyss, a passageway that was previously camouflaged is revealed to him and he can safely cross to the other side. I've noticed that we may sometimes get uneasy if we don't have all the parts of our plan figured out. We might be nervous if we can't imagine exactly what a proposed idea would look like, even if we think it's a great one. Having a sense of control can give us comfort, and comfort isn't bad. The thing is, innovation and trying new ways of thinking and doing requires stepping outside of our comfort zone. (Worked out OK for Apple...). The process we create for diversity is crucial because it helps sustain it overtime. Trusting the process means believing that we have enough to take the next step forward, so that a path will be revealed.

The Bridging Diversity initiative has been generously supported by the Ontario Trillium Foundation.



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Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario.

February is National Inclusive Education Month



This year, students from 30 schools in Toronto will be playing Spinclusion during National Inclusive Education Month. That is a lot of children and youth who will have the opportunity to play our fun interactive game that celebrates differences and includes everyone.

During this month, Spinclusion is also going on a trip to Iqaluit, Nunavut! We are excited for this amazing opportunity to share this fantastic game in the far north. Stay tuned for tantalizing tidbits...

For more information contact Mia McGowan at 647-725-1258 or mmcgowan@cltoronto.ca.

Jim Turner Memorial Award for Outstanding Voluntarism

Each year, Community Living Toronto presents awards to volunteer leaders who support the work of the Association and the people it

supports. We are currently seeking nominations for the “Jim Turner Memorial Award.” This individual must be a member of Community Living Toronto in good standing who has made an outstanding contribution(s) that has affected the lives of the individuals we support and/or their families. This may be through direct service, contribution on Association Committees or other activities/events. All volunteer recognition awards are presented annually at the Association’s Volunteer Recognition Dinner on April 15th, 2015.

Criteria

Award nominations will consider:

- Length of time involved with Community Living Toronto
- Nature of the support/partnership
- Impact of the support/partnership on Community Living Toronto’s:
- Presence in the community
- Impact on the people supported by the Association
- Impact, if any, on the greater Community Living movement
- Relationships with corporate and community partners

To make a nomination, you can request a form from your Membership Coordinator, find it on our corporate website, or contact the Executive Office at 647.729.1169.

Deadline for Nominations is: February 27, 2015.