

FEATURED STORY

Spinclusion Takes Its Message North!

By Mia McGowan



A new facilitator is ready to take Spinclusion to her remote northern community.

As part of National Inclusive Education month and to wrap up the cross Canada tour, Spinclusion travelled to Iqaluit, Nunavut.

Invited to join the Pilimmaksarniq teacher’s conference, where 300 teachers from across Qikiqtaaluk (formerly known as Baffin Island) were coming together to develop skills through practice, effort and action, Spinclusion was welcomed as a fun and interactive resource that would encourage students to think about

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inclusion and accepting differences. Spinclusion games were in high demand and the facilitator training was well attended. Games are now available to teachers all across the Qikiqtaaluk region including very remote communities like Arctic Bay, Cape Dorset and Hall Beach. I was also very pleased to share Spinclusion with the Nunavummi Disabilities Makinnasuaqtit Society, an advocacy and awareness organization for people with disabilities that is affiliated with the Canadian Association for Community Living. Despite frigid temperatures, the adventure was a great success and now children in one of the most isolated parts of the country will have access to Spinclusion.

A special thank you to Community Living Toronto for sponsoring this trip as well as First Air for providing reduced air fare and free shipping!

CENTRAL REGION

Tax Season Made Easier

By Matt Poirier

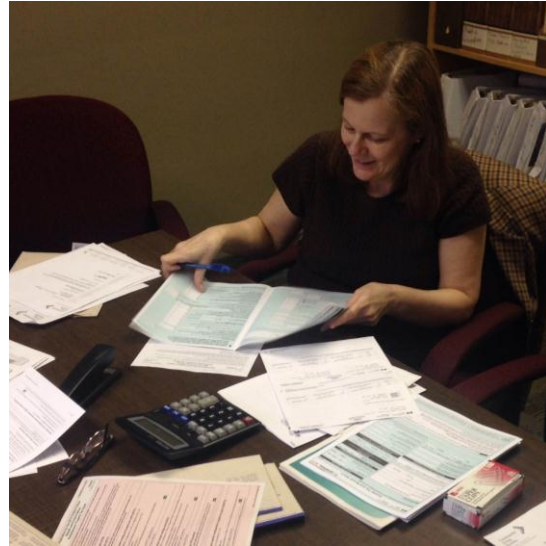
Tax season can be a stressful time for most people, and it can be expensive to have someone complete your return. For individuals we support, this can often be an inconvenience and oftentimes inaccessible. To make this easier, Central Region in partnership with Chartered Professional Accountants Ontario (CPA) hosted two Tax Preparation Assistance Clinics at 20 Spadina in March.

Each year, volunteer Chartered Professional Accountants prepare personal tax returns for individuals in their communities who truly need assistance. The Tax Preparation Assistance Program operates in conjunction with a variety of agencies across the province including food banks, charities, hospitals, seniors' centres, community centres, social service agencies and libraries. The agencies co-sponsor the sessions on a volunteer basis.

Personal tax preparation service is available at no charge to individuals:

- Without dependants with a gross household income of less than \$25,000.
- With dependants, including a spouse or equivalent, with a gross household income of less than \$35,000.

For the last few years, long-time Community Living Toronto volunteer Susan McCloy dedicated two evenings to helping individuals prepare their tax returns. It is work that she enjoys doing, and it makes her happy that she has the opportunity to do something she likes, while helping individuals that need it at the same time. Susan was able to complete nearly 30 tax returns for individuals in service, and hopes to help out again next year.



Volunteer Susan McCloy hard at work with the Tax Preparation Assistance Clinic.

For more information on CPA Ontario and free tax clinics in Toronto for individuals who need assistance, visit:

www.cpaontario.ca

Upcoming Central Events

Central Council Spring Fling Dinner & Dance

Saturday, April 18th, 2015
Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre
\$50/ticket

Purchase tickets online at
www.communitylivingtoronto.ca

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

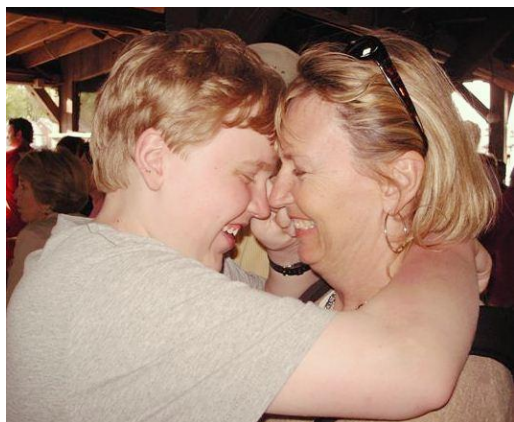
Central Council Meeting

Tuesday, May 12th, 6PM
20 Spadina Rd, Room 2B
All are welcome.

ETOBICOKE REGION

FamilyLink Etobicoke Hosts First Info Session

By Jackie Fisher



Monica Richardson and her son.

Monica Richardson, the parent of a child who has autism, is very experienced with navigating community resources to find activities, programs and funding for her son. Monica recognized that there was a need for families in the Etobicoke region to network and support each other as they are pursuing resources to ensure that their child with a disability has the best quality of life possible. Monica is the lead for our FamilyLink – West Region and, in collaboration with Community Living Toronto staff, has developed a list of various topics for parents to gather and discuss on a monthly basis at various locations throughout Etobicoke.

On Thursday, February 26th 2015, FamilyLink Etobicoke held its first information session at Etobicoke Regional Office on the topic, “Planning for Short/Long Term Breaks” for their children with an intellectual disability. Despite the dreary and cold February evening, a group of parents met to listen to City of Toronto – Adapted and Integrated Recreation Program staff, Respite Services representatives and Monica about activities and programs that are

available in the Etobicoke region that may be suitable to the needs of their children throughout their life.

Monica was able to provide valuable insight to other parents on various issues such as feeling “guilty” or “anxious” about leaving your child for an overnight respite stay, how to prepare your child for overnight camp or respite and what to expect as a parent when leaving your child in the care of others for longer than a day.

The representatives from City of Toronto provided a wealth of information on programs and resources in Etobicoke and subsidies available for families who require financial assistance. Meanwhile, the representative from Respite Services provided information on types of respite available in Etobicoke, the places to receive respite services for after school, overnight or for longer breaks if required, the application process for obtaining a respite worker for services at home and other pertinent information that a parent requires to obtain respite services.

The group was very interactive and enjoyed the topics discussed. Keep checking upcoming newsletters, email blasts and flyers for information on future meetings.

For more information visit:

Respite Services: www.respiteservices.com

Adapted and Integrated Recreation:

www.toronto.ca/parks

And make sure to visit Connected Families at www.connectABILITY.ca!

**Family
Link**

Families of People with
Intellectual Disabilities,
Connecting Through
Friendship and Support

Upcoming Etobicoke Events

Tri-Hards Bowling

April 11th & 25th (Last Bowling Day)

May 9th, Banquet

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 is limited. Register by Friday, April 10th. Donations are needed for prizes and silent auction!

RSVP to Eric Laimer at 647-729-0445 or elaimer@cltoronto.ca

NORTH YORK REGION

Whitehorn Celebrates Milestone Birthdays

By Wilma Nad



Whitehorn residents, Glenn and Marianne celebrate their birthdays.

With one individual at Whitehorn Residence turning 85 and another resident having just

turned 71, the team knew that they wanted to make this an especially memorable celebration for Glenn Howard and Marianne Eggett. It was arranged that the celebration would be held at the Jerusalem Restaurant on March 5th, 2015 and would include all of Glenn and Marianne's peers, friends, key support staff and our placement student.

When the evening arrived, it was easy to see that Glenn and Marianne couldn't be more pleased. With all the great food and entertainment, the mood couldn't have been more festive. At every opportunity, Glenn enthusiastically clapped his hands with approval while Marianne smiled and laughed throughout the evening. When Marianne and Glenn had each opened the last of their many presents, they knew that everyone truly wished them all the best on this very special occasion and in the year to come.

Student AnnaLouh Anonat had this to say about her Whitehorn placement and the celebration of Glenn and Marianne's birthdays:

It has been a great privilege of mine to have worked with Glenn and Marianne as a volunteer and most especially the residents of Whitehorn group home. However, it has been a greater privilege to have attended the birthday party of both Glenn and Marianne at the Jerusalem Restaurant, both of whom have reached another great milestone in their life! I feel honoured to be part of such a loving and caring family. In two short months, I have already built a book of memorial moments. My wish for Glenn and Marianne is many more birthdays filled with great health and happiness.

Upcoming North York Events

RDSP Information Session

Thursday April 16, 2015

7 – 9 p.m.

1122 Finch Avenue West, Unit 16

RSVP to: Wendy Dyke

647-729-3627 or wdyke@cltoronto.ca

Information Session

Learn about applying for Services through DSO Passport Program, Respite Services and Person Directed Plans

Wednesday April 29, 2015

1122 Finch Avenue West, Unit 16

RSVP to: Wendy Dyke

647-729-3627 or wdyke@cltoronto.ca

SCARBOROUGH REGION

Achilles Walk/Run a Great Success

By Stacey Bateman



Stacey, Tony and Morgan brave the wind to take part in the Achilles Walk.

On March 15, 2015, I walked with my friend Tony and my mother in the 16th Annual Achilles St. Patrick's Day 5km Walk/Run. Community Living Toronto had a team of ten

people and we all met downtown at the Steam Whistle Brewery to walk or run the 5km. It was a bit windy out but everyone still showed up with a smile on their face ready to walk or run.

Every year, the Achilles Walk/Run is a sold out event with over 1,500 people from different organizations across Ontario and a variety of abilities participating. All the money that is raised by Community Living Toronto's team goes to support Scarborough Region community activities like drop-in, dances, literacy and cooking classes. Alternatively, participants can choose a specific Community Living Toronto program to support.

This year was my 11th year walking with my friend Tony. Tony's biggest passion is walking and I look forward every March to completing this walk with him. I can't wait until next year to take Tony back downtown to walk with him for a great cause!



Bill and Sue staying warm during the walk.

Upcoming Scarborough Events

5th Annual Bingo Bowling Extravaganza

Friday, April 17th, 2015, 7 – 10pm
Parkway Bowl, 67 Ellesmere Road
\$20 includes shoe rental and sweet table.
RSVP to: Felicita Zanatta
647-729-1635 or fzanatta@cltoronto.ca

RDSP Information Session

Monday, April 20, 2015
Scarborough Region 7:00—9:00 pm
1712 Ellesmere Rd., Scarborough
RSVP to: Felicita Zanatta
647-729-1635 or fzanatta@cltoronto.ca

Scarborough Region Council Meeting

Monday April 13, 2015 at 6:15pm
Boardroom at 1712 Ellesmere Rd
All are welcome!

NEWS

Inclusive Education Month Wraps Up

By Mia McGowan

For the 8th consecutive year, Community Living Toronto has been “blitzing” schools with Spinclusion during National Inclusive Education month. Spinclusion is a fun interactive game that encourages children and youth to celebrate differences and include everyone. And celebrate they did!

Thirty schools played Spinclusion in February – that’s just fewer than 1,500 students that were challenged to think about respecting and including everyone. They were asked to think of specific ways they could include a student who has a disability and the overwhelming response was “Be a friend,” and “Ask the person to join you.” Thank you to all of the

Spinclusion facilitators who took time out of their very busy schedules to ensure that this year’s National Inclusive Education month was a success.

Check out www.spinclusion.ca or contact Mia McGowan at 647-823-3607 mmcgowan@cltoronto.ca



Grade 2/3 class at St. Agatha give inclusion the thumbs up.

Bringing a Lens of Diversity to Person Directed Planning

By Melissa Turner

I have been a student with Community Living Toronto, working with the Diversity Coordinator, Ilaneet Goren, for the past eight months. As my placement is coming to an end, I wanted to reflect on the connections I have seen between diversity and person directed planning. I have had the opportunity to sit in on a Person Directed Plan and participate in facilitation training. As a social work student with a focus on equity and diversity, I think planning is a great example of how equity fits into everything we do at Community Living Toronto.

A person directed plan allows an individual to develop their own life goals while recognizing their strengths and rights. Plans are led by individuals and they decide what is most important, while family and friends are invited to learn about an individual's hopes and dreams. To bring an equity and diversity lens to planning means to recognize the multiple identities an individual has, and how those are significant in their hopes and dreams.

At the beginning of a plan, the individual has the opportunity to tell their story. In my experience, this has been a great way for the individual to highlight the parts of their past which they are particularly proud of, or which they want to be acknowledged by the participants. This allows people to discuss aspects of their lives that are important to them. The story part of the plan should include experiences that allow the person to feel that their unique individuality is represented in the plan.

After telling their story, individuals take time to talk about their positive qualities and valued roles in their communities. This allows people to consider, for example, how funny or artistic they are, acknowledge their role as a good sister, or mention how they volunteer every week at an animal shelter. It is in this section that I think staff should ask a few more questions: Are there any communities or groups you belong to or like to spend time with that you want recognized? What cultural holidays or events do you participate in? These questions would allow individuals to talk about being part of the LGBTQ+ community, their attendance at spiritual events, their membership in the Jamaican Canadian Association, or their women's group.

The different parts of themselves that an individual chooses to share emphasize their importance in the planning process, making such aspects as culture, faith, gender, sexual

orientation and racial identity visible. When we take the time to write or draw what has been shared, we are helping create an inclusive environment by confirming to everyone participating in the plan that those aspects are important to the individual. To do this would mean to see beyond the narrow label of "disability", and instead seeing the person as a whole.

Logo Design Contest: What Does Diversity Mean to You?

We asked artists supported by Community Living Toronto to create a painting representing what Diversity means to them and received numerous inspiring images!

Starting Monday, April 13, you will have a chance to vote for your favourite image over on Community Living Toronto's facebook page (www.facebook.com/cltoronto).



The winning design will be unveiled in May and become Bridging Diversity's official logo!