



**FEATURED STORY**

## Welcome our new CEO, Brad Saunders!



Brad Saunders

*It was a busy month at Community Living Toronto as we officially said goodbye to our CEO Garry Pruden who, after more than 35 years of working at Community Living Toronto, decided to retire (more on page 3). However, we are very excited to announce that Brad Saunders has been appointed as Community Living Toronto's new Chief Executive Officer!*

*Brad has been Community Living Toronto's Regional Executive Director of our Etobicoke and North York regions for the past 4 years. He brings a history of service excellence, a commitment to fostering a strong and positive work culture, and believing in our Association's mission of supporting people with intellectual disabilities to live meaningful lives.*

## In this Issue

- Pg 1 | Featured Story
- Pg 3 | Happy Retirement, Garry!
- Pg 4 | Central Region
- Pg 5 | Etobicoke Region
- Pg 6 | North York Region
- Pg 7 | Scarborough Region
- Pg 8 | Self Advocates Council
- Pg 9 | Bridging Diversity
- Pg 10 | News

*We sat down with Brad to ask him a few questions:*

**Q.** Congratulations, Brad and welcome aboard as the new Chief Executive Officer of Community Living Toronto! Can you tell us a little bit about your past experience and what brought you to Community Living Toronto?

**A.** Thanks! I'm very excited about this opportunity and I'm honoured for the chance to work with and provide leadership for such a strong organization and dedicated group of staff and volunteers.

When I was in high school I got a job at a summer camp for kids who were Deaf. Two weeks a summer we had individuals with special needs come to the camp and that was my first involvement with developmental

services. There was a bus each year from Huronia Regional Centre and the camp was the only time many of them were away from the facility all year. These were a great group of people and I have a lot of good memories from those summers. I stayed involved with the Deaf community when I was done school working in a group home doing overnight shifts part-time while I worked on my university degree. I worked at the Bob Rumball Associations for the Deaf for the next 17 years. In 2006, I had an opportunity to work for the MCSS as a Program Supervisor in Toronto and later in Central West Region. I learned a lot working in government and had a very good experience. When the opportunity to work with CL Toronto came along 4 years ago, I jumped at the chance. I have such a high regard for the organization, its leaders and work that the chance to be involved was great! Since starting here 4 years ago I've loved the opportunity and progress the organization has made.

**Q.** There have been a lot of changes in the developmental services sector in the last few years (fee for service, single point access are just two of many). Can you let us know about some of those changes?

**A.** A significant change that has happened over the past month is the ministry announcement that they will be phasing out sheltered workshops and emphasizing employment and meaningful community activities. CL Toronto has been making this transition for many years and we have two sites that provide sheltered work as a choice. By building on our Community First project we will plan to support individuals differently in the future. We do not have a time line yet but will be working on this. This, and many of the other changes you mentioned all have one thing in common – they shift the focus to the person – acknowledging their rights as citizens and their right to meaningful involvement and inclusion the community.

**Q.** What kind of effect have these changes had on Community Living Toronto as an Association?

**A.** There have been and will continue to be changes in the way Developmental Services are provided. As old ways have faded, new approaches have emerged. I expect this will continue for years to come and CL Toronto will constantly need to make sure we are relevant to the individuals we support and the communities we operate in. As staff members, we will continue to need to challenge ourselves to do better and provide a professional, valued service.

**Q.** What is Community Living Toronto doing to ensure the best quality of service for people we support?

**A.** There are many things the organization is doing but most important right now is our commitment to ensuring all staff have their mandatory training up to date. This is a requirement of the ministry and part of our commitment to provide a professional and qualified staff. It is absolutely critical that we meet our timeline. I know we will get there and this is a big first step in terms of ensuring the best quality service.

**Q.** Are there any exciting new initiatives Community Living Toronto is working on for the new year?

**A.** We will be going through a strategic planning process over the next year and this is going to be an exciting time to consider our future. The process will be led by the Board of Directors and will involve consultation with individuals, families, staff and the community. At the end of it we will confirm our mission, vision and values and outline our goals for the next 5 years. This will be a big piece of work

but a well done strategic plan is critically important for healthy organizations.

**Q.** What do you see as some of the challenges you might have to face as the new CEO?

The challenges aren't new; doing more, providing support to more people with limited funds and working with everyone to see how those funds best meet the needs of people. As well, we live in a very noisy world, over 70,000 charities compete for funding – all great causes - alongside us. Social media means communication is constant and almost real-time – how do we continue to make our voice heard, meaningfully in our 24/7 world. As well, how we continue to make our services relevant to people who live in a city like Toronto, one of the most diverse cities in the world.

**Q.** What are you most excited about in your new role as CEO?

Everything! The developmental services sector, actually the entire social services sector is in the midst of great change – we will embrace it, and as an organization, work together to continue to provide excellent support to people with an intellectual disability.

## Happy Retirement, Garry Pruden!

After 35 years of working at Community Living Toronto, CEO Garry Pruden retired on November 1.

Over the years, Garry has made an incredible impact on individuals with intellectual disabilities, as well as the entire Developmental Services Sector. His ability to lead new and innovative programs and projects while listening to the needs and goals of individuals and families has resulted in ground-breaking

transformation of Community Living Toronto and the sector. His life-long career in developmental services has led him to lead a lengthy list of impressive initiatives, including championing person-directed planning and approaches in Community Living Toronto's services, overseeing the creation of Connect**ABILITY.ca**, leading responsibility for new, innovative programs - such as the future of day services, senior services, children's services, person directed planning and technology applications - and so much more!

For Garry, being involved with Community Living Toronto was so much more than just a job. With a mother who helped run some of the first programs offered by the Association, Garry grew up in the sector. Over the years, he opened his own home to many people with an intellectual disability, believing every person has value and the ability to make a contribution in the society.

Garry's work has made a lasting impact on our Association and while he will be missed tremendously, we know he will always be around ensuring individuals with intellectual disabilities receive the upmost support and care to be thriving members of their communities.

Best wishes for your retirement, Garry!



## CENTRAL REGION

# West Don Lands Celebrates Their First Thanksgiving

By: Warren Lee Herdsman, staff

West Don Lands is one of Community Living Toronto's newest housing partnerships with Toronto Community Housing with a senior focus. Each of the thirteen individuals living at West Don Lands have their own one bedroom apartment and they wasted no time in decorating to their own taste and making them their own. Those living at West Don Lands have enjoyed exploring their new neighborhood, which is located in the historic Distillery District, an exciting and bustling part of the city.

The individuals at West Don Lands are actively involved in the recreation activities that are held in the multi-purpose room on a regular basis. The most popular event for all the tenants is the frequent pot luck dinners. It's an opportunity for neighbors to come together to share a meal and enjoy great company. On occasion, it's not unusual for a sing-a-long to break out.

It's a wonderful feeling to live in a place where your neighbors know your name and, from time to time, are engaged in lengthy conversations about what's up and coming in the neighborhood. People supported by Community Living Toronto take part in meetings and have a voice in making changes.

We celebrated our first Thanksgiving in October. Some people visited their families for an early dinner in order to get back to their home for the celebration. The individuals collectively planned the menu and contributed to the exceptional holiday team spirit.

Having lived at West Don Lands for less than a year, the individuals are looking forward to many more holiday pot lucks and great times with their new neighbours.



Everyone is ready to enjoy the Thanksgiving dinner

## Upcoming Central Events

### Central Region Council Meeting

Tuesday, January 12th, 2016  
20 Spadina Rd, Room 2B  
6:00 – 8:00 pm  
All are welcome.

### Save the Date for Spring Fling!

Annual Spring Fling Dinner & Dance  
Saturday, May 14th, 2016  
Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre  
More details to come!

### Mindfulness Program

6 week program for parents and caregivers  
Wednesdays, January 20 – February 24  
20 Spadina, Room 1  
\$25 for members, \$35 for non-members  
Contact Yulia for more information at  
647-729-1209 or [yprudova@cltoronto.ca](mailto:yprudova@cltoronto.ca)



## The Royal Winter Fair Day Trip

By: Erin Clarke, staff



From Left: Erin, Trevor, Owen, Mark, Yang, Wai Chee, Chris, Alan, Michael, Amy, Jackie, Josephine

On Monday, November 9, Etobicoke, individuals from the Adult Development Program (ADP) and staff visited the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair. The group started the day by exploring the petting zoo area and visiting the animals on site, which included llamas, goats, peacocks, and cows. Afterwards, we went into the horse ring to see a horse show, followed by a medieval times performance. The horse instructor showed the audience the many tricks and skills the horses had been trained to perform.

A delicious lunch was followed by a walk through the fair, where we were able to check out many different exhibits and vendors.

We finished off the fun day by exploring the fair through an observation deck that was accessible for our individuals who use wheel chairs. Overall, the entire day was a great success! Each of the individuals who attended had a great time and enjoyed themselves immensely!



Chris in the petting zoo area

## Upcoming Etobicoke/York Events

### Etobicoke/York Region Council Meeting

Tuesday, January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016  
295 The West Mall in Boardroom  
6:30-8:30PM  
Everyone is welcome

### Friendship Club

January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2016, 6:00 – 8:00PM  
295 The West Mall in Boardroom  
Registration: LauraLee Edmiston,  
647-729-0440 or [ledmiston@cltoronto.ca](mailto:ledmiston@cltoronto.ca)

## North York Participants Create an Amazing Halloween Treat

By: Georgia Kurlinas, Support Worker II  
North York SWACA



Completed train ready for pick up

Days before Halloween, a number of participants in our Supported Work and Community Activities (SWACA) program came to my rescue to make my 4 year-old son's costume!

For the longest time, my son's Halloween costume was going to be the Incredible Hulk, but while talking to his aunt, my son stated he wanted to be a TTC train and amount of pleading would convince him otherwise. I took a look online and found some ideas on how to make a train costume, but they would all take days to make and I was running out of time!

Then the week of Halloween, as I start my work day, I noticed that there was some down time, and asked the group if they would help me with the costume. From there, an unplanned idea took shape to make the train using boxes from the recycling pile. As I started to cut and form the train, more and more individuals came to help with the crafting of the train.

Slowly, the conversation at the program went from "What are you making?" to "We're making a train for Georgia's son", as everyone came together for a true group collaboration. With input from supportive and creative co-workers and participants, the costume transformed from a silver blob to a shiny train!

The look of joy and surprise on my son as he came by to pick up his costume was truly priceless. We added wheels and lights at home to make his costume road and Halloween ready. Without the amazing individuals who came to my rescue, my son's Halloween would not have been as special as it was! Weeks after, as others put their costumes away, my son continued to zoom around the house in his TTC train.



Many thanks to those who helped me with making the train, particularly: Arnold, Vince, Judy, and Donald (painting), Mark, Amy, Carol, and everyone else who provided their hands, encouragement and support!

## Upcoming North York Events

### Move Well 4 Life Fitness Program

This specialized movement and wellness program is designed specifically for adults with disabilities. It is run by physical education teachers with over 10 years of experience. The program includes introduction to weights and fitness, adapted physical education setting and

activities. The next session will start in January 2016.

For details please contact Flora Nichols at 416-419-3692 or [fnichols@cltoronto.ca](mailto:fnichols@cltoronto.ca).

### Upcoming Sibshops

Victoria Park Hub  
1527 Victoria Park Avenue  
10:30 am to 2:30 pm

Saturday, January 16, 2016

Saturday, March 12, 2016

Saturday, May 14, 2016

Please call to register:

Wendy Dyke at 647-729-3627 or

Cate Whiteley at 647-729-3635

## SCARBOROUGH REGION

### A New Canadian!

*By: Felicita Zanatta*

Michael Jones is one of our newest Canadians! Mike came to Canada in 1991 as a landed immigrant. His mother already resided here so he was raised by his grandfather in Jamaica and left for Canada one week before the catastrophic Hurricane Gilbert.

Mike lived with his mother at first, but with the help of Adult Protective Service Workers (APSW), he found a job and moved out on his own. Mike is very active in his community. He helps people in his building who have difficulty getting around by getting their groceries or running errands for them. He enjoys being active by gardening around his building, providing a pleasant environment and giving back to his fellow Canadians.

Mike always dreamed of getting his Citizenship, so he embarked on a long process of

applications to be granted permission to complete his citizenship test verbally. Mike answered questions about the history, government, areas and symbols of Canada. The long road included many challenges such as learning to write his name and practicing for the oral test. The person giving Mike the oral test for Citizenship was surprised at the amount of knowledge that Mike had of Canada. Finally, Mike and his APSW Glen Snyder, who supported him in the process, attended the Citizenship Ceremony on October 1, 2015 where the officiating Judge declared Mike a Canadian Citizen.

Mike is happy and proud of his achievement. Of his achievement, he says "It's the best thing that could happen to me" and "Glen helped me all the way." On October 19, 2015, for the federal election, Mike voted for the first time. He is now working on his next goal with Glen and hopes to obtain a Canadian Passport in the near future.

Congratulations Mike!



*Mike Jones and Glen Snyder*

## Upcoming Scarborough Events

### Scarborough Region Council Meeting

Monday January 4, 2016 at 6:15pm  
1712 Ellesmere Road  
All Welcome!

### Bingo at Lawson

Friday, December 18, 2015  
Friday, January 15, 2016  
1712 Ellesmere Road, 7:00 - 8:30pm  
\$5 for a snack and prizes

### Winter Literacy

Saturday morning 9:00 am – 12:00 pm  
1710 Ellesmere Road Program  
Registration is \$20 plus \$5 each week



### Join the Scarborough Achilles Team!

Sunday, March 13, 2016 at 10:30 am  
Steam Whistle Brewing  
255 Bremner Boulevard  
Minimum \$50 in pledges  
Sponsored by the Scarborough Region Council

For more information on all of these events and to register contact Felicita Zanatta at 647-729-1635 or [fzanatta@cltoronto.ca](mailto:fzanatta@cltoronto.ca)



### The Fabulous Invictones

Wednesday January 20,  
2016 at 7:00 pm  
1712 Ellesmere Road

Cost is \$5 in support of  
Community Support Team activities.  
Light refreshments and door prizes  
For tickets contact: Janet Dunne,  
Coordinator of Family Supports  
at 647-729-1631

### Tuesday Morning Drop In

10:00 am – 12:00 pm, \$4 each week  
1712 Ellesmere Rd  
RSVP to Sarah at 647-729-1633 or  
[swinter@cltoronto.ca](mailto:swinter@cltoronto.ca)

## SAC UPDATE

## Self-Advocates Acting in Legal Rights Films with ARCH Disability Law Clinic

By: Sue Hutton



SAC member Casseen Johnson, here with 2 of her 3 children, is acting in legal rights films with ARCH Disability Law.



Members of the Self Advocates Council are no strangers to role playing about their rights. Role playing is a common tool we use at Council to learn about rights and important issues. Casseen Johnson has helped lead role plays with members of the Self Advocates Council, and at various Community Living Toronto programs. When invited to act in films about rights, Casseen was ready for action. Being a single mom living with an intellectual disability has given Casseen many opportunities to learn about her rights and how to advocate. She enjoys opportunities to help others learn about their rights too.

ARCH Disability Law invited the Self Advocates Council to work on some Rights Education films together. Casseen, along with Mike Edser and SAC friends Nancy Dickson and Susan Rossler from North York Supported Work and Community Activities are in lead roles in the films. They are also helping develop the scripts.

The films talk about Legal Guardianship – and what that really means. They are aimed at people with intellectual disabilities to have an opportunity to learn about their legal rights.

The film scripts are about issues that people with intellectual disabilities face every day in making their own decisions.

Mike, Casseen, Nancy and Susan have had a chance to work with lawyers from ARCH in developing the scripts over the last month. In talking about what's important to SAC members over the years, the issue of making one's own decisions is something SAC members are very comfortable with and happy to talk about. Working on a film project like this with ARCH lawyers is a fantastic next step in sharing this important advocacy information with everyone. Stay tuned for film screenings in the New Year!

## BRIDGING DIVERSITY



Layla Ibrahim at the Community Living Toronto display table

## Supporting Immigrant and Refugee Families and Children with Disabilities

*By: Ilaneet Goren, Diversity Specialist*

Immigrants and refugees with disabilities are an integral part of our diverse communities. Yet their needs, challenges and lived realities are not well understood or incorporated in service design and delivery, according to reports. Community Living Toronto and OCASI (Ontario Coalition of Agencies Service Immigrants) have been working together to address this gap through awareness-raising and knowledge sharing initiatives.

Thanks to this ongoing collaboration, settlement workers have been learning about intellectual disability, developmental services in Toronto and Ontario, ConnectABILITY.ca, and how to connect newcomer families to the right supports. Likewise, service providers in the developmental sector have gained a greater understanding of the unique challenges relating to migration and settlement and how these

experiences affect newcomers' ability to access services.

In early November, my Bridging Diversity colleagues Bob Ferguson and Layla Ibrahim and I participated in a two-day conference geared toward settlement sector professionals in Ontario. We partnered with Chavon Niles, OCASI's Accessibility Coordinator to deliver a workshop on supporting immigrant and refugee families and children with disabilities. We also had a display table with information on how to access Adult Developmental Services and Early Childhood and Family Resources in Chinese, Farsi and Tamil.

Most conference participants who visited our table were interested to learn about the services available so that they can make better referrals for their clients, many of whom find the system difficult to navigate. Some service providers have asked us to deliver information sessions at their agency, an invitation we're happy to accept because these conversations help dispel misconceptions around intellectual disability in some communities which prevent many families from reaching out for support.

Earlier this year, OCASI and Community Living Toronto co-hosted a series of cross-sector roundtable discussions in Toronto, Ottawa and London. The conversations explored the barriers immigrants with physical and intellectual disabilities face when trying to access community support services. One of the key recommendations was to work better across our professional 'silos' in order to create more opportunities for cross-sector cooperation and allow agencies to share experiences and resources while strategizing for systemic change.

Developing effective partnerships has been the cornerstone of our diversity and inclusion work at Community Living Toronto. As more

refugees -- many with children -- will be arriving in Canada, we will continue to draw on the strengths of our partnerships to help meet their needs.

## NEWS

### Together We Are Better Contest

Community Living Ontario would like to invite elementary school aged children (ages 4-14) from across Ontario to participate in a contest that promotes and raises awareness about inclusive education. The intent is to have children and classrooms to begin thinking about inclusion and start a conversation about inclusive education. For more details, please see flyer or visit:

<http://communitylivingontario.ca/together-were-better-contest>



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



@CLToronto



Community Living Toronto



United Way  
Toronto

A United Way member agency