

FEATURED STORY

February is National Inclusive Education Month

By: Mia McGowan, Education Outreach and Spinclusion Coordinator



Every February, Spinclusion facilitators from Community Living Toronto descend upon Toronto schools to highlight the importance of inclusion by playing a fun interactive game that encourages children and youth to celebrate differences and include everyone. Although Spinclusion runs throughout the school year, February is an opportunity to “blitz” schools and focus on the concepts of inclusion. Children and youth have the opportunity to explore various scenarios related to inclusion as well as think about why everyone needs friends. It encourages them to think about how to ensure that everyone feels welcome and included. For more information about Spinclusion check out our website at <http://www.spinclusion.ca>

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To find out the Benefits of Inclusion in the classroom, look here:

<http://connectability.ca/Garage/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/education-brochure.pdf>

“Diversity is being invited to the party. Inclusion is being asked to dance.” – Vera Myers



Spinclusion being enjoyed in the classroom.

CENTRAL REGION

A Buzz Cut to Beat Cancer

By: *Matt Poirier*

Emanuel, who lives at Simpson group home, is no stranger to the world of fundraising and volunteering for worthwhile causes. In the past, Emanuel has completed the Walk for Autism, he's biked for a heart health fundraiser, and he's hosted a spooky, horror themed haunted house fundraiser for Community Living Toronto's United Way campaign in 2014. With his eye always on his next fundraiser, Emanuel decided that he wanted to grow his hair out for children with cancer, and have people pledge him to cut it off when it was long enough to donate.

Originally, Emanuel wanted to grow his hair to commemorate the release of a video game he'd been waiting for, but as the release date drew closer and his hair got longer, he realized that he wanted it to be about something more. "I've always wanted to do something for sick kids" says Emanuel, "I thought I would donate my hair, instead of it going to waste."

Emanuel grew his hair for two years, until it reached well past his shoulders. With some help from CL Toronto staff, Emanuel planned the hair cutting event to take place at Creative Village Studio on December 8th, 2015 and he set up an online fundraising page so that donors could quickly and easily make a donation to the charity he chose. Monies collected were being given to A Children's Voice Foundation, specifically the Angel Hair for Kids program which provides wigs and hair loss solutions to financially disadvantaged

children in Canada who have lost their hair due to a medical condition or treatment.

On December 8th, Emanuel gathered with some of his support staff and peers at Creative Village Studio for the big moment, opting to go for a full buzz cut! Feeling a little lighter and much balder, Emanuel was excited and proud of the success of yet another fundraising event. In total, he raised \$350 for Angel Hair for Kids, and created awareness within his circle of the importance of not only this particular cause, but of giving back to your community on a much wider scale. Emanuel would like to sincerely thank anyone who contributed to this important fundraiser and he is looking forward to his next venture, whatever that may be.

If you would like to make a donation to Emanuel's cause, it's not too late! Visit: <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/pages/emanuel-cuts-his-hair-for-angel-hair-for-kids/> or contact Matt Poirier at 647.729.1210 or matthew.poirier@cltoronto.ca.



Emanuel before and after the full buzz cut, with staff Kathy Simoes

Upcoming Central Events

Central Region Council Meeting

Tuesday, February 9, 2016,
6:00 PM, 20 Spadina Rd, Room 2B
All are welcome. Contact Matt Poirier at
647-729-1210 or matthew.poirier@cltoronto.ca

Central Region Council's Spring Fling Dinner & Dance

Saturday, May 14th, 2016
Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre
Tickets are \$50 each.
Buy tickets online at:
<https://www.gifttool.com/registrar/ShowEventDetails?ID=134&EID=19487>
or contact Matt Poirier.

ETOBICOKE REGION

An Unforgettable 80th Birthday Celebration!

By: Kathy Baccichet

"I could hardly believe it when I arrived. All of my friends and people who are important to me were there. I will never forget that day!" Bill said when talking about his 80th birthday celebration. And what a celebration it was! Bill celebrated with his close friends, family and Community Living Toronto staff at Creative Village Studio in Etobicoke.

Not one to turn down the spotlight, Bill thanked his friends for coming by entertaining them with a musical performance. In turn, his friends paid tribute to Bill with their own performances, including his friend Conrod's heartfelt rendition of *What a Wonderful World*.



Bill in blue shirt and hat surrounded by guests at his 80th Birthday Party

The evening also featured entertainment by Community Living Toronto staff Taylor and Orlando, which got everyone clapping, dancing and singing along.

Bill would like to say thank you to his staff Sam Santelli for planning and arranging his party, as well as Harold Tomlinson for his work in setting everything up at the Studio. Lastly, Bill would like to extend a special thank you to everyone who came out to share in his milestone celebration.

The evening ended with everyone signing a frame that has now become a beautiful keepsake which Bill plans to proudly hang on his wall for years to come. Even as I interviewed Bill, he became emotional and said that he hopes for another party when he turns 90 to which I replied, "I'll be there!"



Bill gets out his trumpet to play for his guests

Upcoming Etobicoke/York Events

Etobicoke/York Council Meeting

Tuesday February 10, 2016
295 The West Mall, Suite 204
6:30 pm to 8:30 pm
Please call to RSVP to:
Wendy Dyke: 647-729-3627

Monday Night Club

4pm-7:30pm
Etobicoke ADP
102 Advance Road
Call 416-232-1213 for details

Friendship Club

Last Wednesday of the month, 6pm-8pm
295 The West Mall in Boardroom
Registration: LauraLee Edmiston,
647-729-0440 or ledmiston@cltoronto.ca

NORTH YORK REGION

A Big Thank You to All Holiday Hamper Supporters

By: Wendy Dyke

The holiday season kicked off in a big way with the assistance of our Holiday Hamper supporters who lent a hand to 46 households in our region. Families from our Community Support program, Early Childhood Services and Adult Protective Services were able to have an enjoyable holiday due to the generosity of so many people. Included in this were three donors who adopted families in need. One donor shopped for a family with five children and requested a family with young



Gifts from a donor that adopted a family with 5 children

kids as they wanted their own children to be involved in helping to pick out gifts. The donor and their children shopped for gifts that were specific to each child recipient, and then gift wrapped them before bringing them to our office for delivery to the family. They generously included something for the mom, as well.

Another adopt-a-family donor helped out a family with a son who has difficulty interacting with other children. One of the suggested gift items was a gift card for a fast food restaurant where the child likes to go to play and have a soft drink. As this activity is a difficult expense for the family having the gift card means the family will be able to do this outing more frequently.

The third adopt-a-family donor helped out a young man in service who is moving into a group home and was in need of new things for his bedroom. The donor provided the means for him to shop for what he needs to make his new home comfortable.

North York Council also continued their support for holiday hampers in two ways this year; they increased their financial contribution for the purchase of gift cards for hamper recipients, and provided funding for the adoption of two families in need. The funds they have used in previous years for a holiday meet and greet for staff, volunteers and students was instead donated to the adopt-a-family initiative. When the recipients came to pick up their gifts purchased through membership funds, they had tears of appreciation and thanks in their eyes for the gifts they took home to their children.

The season of giving was in full force in December as even last minute donations came in to help us extend our help to those in need. Gifts of colouring books, hats, mitts, and gloves were added to the gift bags to compliment the toys and personal hygiene products that were donated. A last minute grocery gift card was given to a family whose personal and financial situation had recently changed. This gift card meant that the family of four including a baby would be able to purchase much needed food in the weeks leading to the holiday and beyond. The timing of the donation was almost magical.

I also need to mention the support given year round to the Holiday Hamper snack cart. In the North York Regional office we have a snack cart that we stock with lunch items, snacks and drinks to sell to staff and visitors. This initiative raises between \$1,000 and \$1,200 dollars annually. We use the funds to purchase gift cards from grocery stores, department stores, drug stores, coffee shops and restaurants. So a big thank you to those who make purchases from our snack cart. We could not help as many families in need as we do without your support.

Upcoming North York Events

Upcoming Sibshops

Where: Victoria Park Hub
1527 Victoria Park Avenue
10:30 am to 2:30 pm
Saturday March 12, 2016
Saturday May 14, 2016
Please call to register:
Wendy Dyke 647-729-3627 or
Cate Whiteley 647-729-3635

North York Council Meeting

Monday March 7, 2016
18 - 1122 Finch Avenue West
1:00 pm to 3:00 pm
All Welcome!
Please call to RSVP to:
Wendy Dyke 647-729-3627

SCARBOROUGH REGION

Learning to Cook Healthy Meals

By: Felicita Zanatta

On September 21, 2015 the Scarborough cooking class began for a ten week session with Betty-Anne Wilson as the facilitator with three terrific volunteers. Ten participants learned ten new and easy recipes, all focused on healthy eating. Everyone got to take home a binder which contained copies of the recipes, a list of items to buy and cooking hints. The meals varied in terms of ingredients to accommodate different tastes and to cover an array of lessons, including how to prepare meat, legumes and vegetables.

The classes also covered learning how to measure ingredients, types of vegetables and



Class participants preparing a delicious meal

kitchen safety. Each person prepared their own meal and later enjoyed eating their creation.

This session included a new incentive for our home cooks; everyone who took the initiative to make one of their delicious recipes at home received a small kitchen gadget as a gift! To further participant learning, a special guest from South Riverdale Community Health Centre visited the class to demonstrate what a healthy meal includes.

The Learn to Cook Healthy Meals class is sponsored by the Scarborough Region Council and they plan to hold another session in the spring. These sessions are very popular and a waiting list is expected. For further information, please contact Felicita Zanatta at 647-729-1635 or fzanatta@cltoronto.ca.

A Holiday Thank You!

On behalf of the Scarborough Community Support Team and the recipients of our holiday hamper program, I would like to send a warm thank you to everyone who kindly provided donations.

Your generosity helped 14 families, 15 individuals and 22 children have a holiday season filled with many surprises. We received donations of gift cards, food items, clothing, toiletries and toys as well as financial

donations. Gift cards were especially appreciated.

I want to thank Scarborough Council who generously provides financial support on a yearly basis. This donation allows the purchase of gift cards and other hamper items. I would also like to thank the two Warden Woods SWACA programs, as well as Scarborough ADP for their thoughtful donations to our hamper program.

Thank you again and all the best for 2016!
Shelly Greenberg

Upcoming Scarborough Events

Scarborough Council Meeting

Monday February 1, 2016 at 6:15pm
1712 Ellesmere Road in Boardroom
All Welcome!

Bingo at Lawson

Friday February 19, 2016
1712 Ellesmere Road, 7-8:30pm
\$5 for a snack and prizes

Winter Literacy

Saturday Morning 9am-noon
1710 Ellesmere Road Program
Starts October 17, 2015
Registration is \$20 plus \$5 each week

Achilles St. Patrick's Day 5K Run/Walk

Join the Scarborough team for
Sunday March 13, 2016 to start at 10:30am
255 Bremner Blvd.; \$50 in pledges

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

Tuesday Morning Drop In

10:00 am to noon, \$4 each week

1712 Ellesmere Rd

RSVP to Sarah at 647-729-1633 or

swinter@cltoronto.ca

SELF ADVOCATES COUNCIL

Self-Advocates Contribute to Accessibility Discussions

By: Sue Hutton



Dave, Casseen, Lorraine, Shelley, Martin, Paul, Peter and Jessica

The Self-Advocates Council and friends had their voice heard in the recent Accessibility Roundtable Discussions held by Deloitte. The provincial government put Deloitte in charge of hosting discussions with people with disabilities on a new Accessibility Certification model. This certification model will not replace the law called the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), but it will be another way of making accessibility happen for people with disabilities. At the discussion, Nelson said he wants to see accessibility “mandated” for everyone. Self-Advocates don’t think the AODA is being upheld often enough. For people with intellectual disabilities, telling the government what accessibility means to them is important. It’s more than just wheelchair ramps.

Deloitte listened to the Self Advocates thoughts and included them in a report to the provincial government. This certification model is supposed to provide people with disabilities a chance to directly let a business or community organization know if they think it is accessible. For self-advocates, the term accessible isn’t very specific. For many people, the term brings to mind wheelchairs, interpreters for the deaf community, or braille communications. For people who have an intellectual disability, accessibility means a lot of other things. Here are some of the things the Self Advocates Council talked about at this meeting: “Making sure that people understand that we need more time to communicate is important” said one person. Another person talked about the importance for businesses to talk directly to a person with an intellectual disability, and not just to their staff person. Making sure that businesses are polite, respectful and friendly was very important to self-advocates and they made sure that was going into the report to the government.

From the Self-Advocates Council:

For people with an intellectual disability, here are just few things that are important about accessibility:

Please take the time to communicate clearly so we understand.

Please use pictures or movies to communicate. Don’t just give us words to read.

Please show us respect, patience, and kindness.

Treat us like we belong, because we do.

Please don’t be impatient with us. We communicate and process things differently.

Please know we are all different and have different ways we communicate. Some of us use assistive devices to communicate.

Please communicate with us directly, we deserve your attention.

To get involved in Self Advocates projects like this consultation, contact Sue Hutton at 647-725-1205 or shutton@cltoronto.ca

For more information on the Accessibility Certification: <https://www.certifiedforaccess.ca/>
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act: <http://www.aoda.ca/>
AODA Alliance: <http://www.aodaalliance.org/>

Volunteer-Students Voice

Welcome to the Volunteer and Student Section!

We are excited to be here and part of your monthly newsletter! Look for us in the months to come for updates and exciting information on our students and volunteers.

Please contact your Regional Volunteer Coordinator for information on all of the following events.

Central Region: Yulia Prudova at 647-729-1209 or yprudova@cltoronto.ca

Scarborough, North York and Etobicoke Regions: Sarah Winter at 647-729-1633 or swinter@cltoronto.ca

Volunteer of the Year Nominations

Do you know of a volunteer who has gone above and beyond? Nominate them for the Volunteer of the Year Award! Please contact your Regional Volunteer Coordinator for more information.

We want to hear from you!

If you want to be part of an exciting group of volunteers let us know! We offer opportunities in all areas of our organization. From friendly visiting, administrative tasks to teaching drama and music. We always welcome new volunteers! Call you Regional Volunteer Coordinator today for more information!

Training and Information Sessions

As part of our ongoing commitment to ensuring up to date training and information for our volunteers and students, we are now offering updates and mandatory orientation sessions. Please contact your Regional Volunteer Coordinator to register. North York and Etobicoke dates to follow.

Central Region – 20 Spadina Rd.

Tue, March 1, 1:00 to 2:30 PM Room 1
Tue, April 19, 4:30 to 6:00 PM Room 1
Tue, May 31, 9:00 to 10:30 Room 1

Scarborough Region – 1712 Ellesmere Rd. Boardroom

Feb 3rd 2016 10-11
March 9th 10-11 am
April 6th 1-2 pm
May 4th 2016, time TBD



Are you a caregiver for a person with an

intellectual disability? Join the Family Link network to connect with other caregivers and family members. For further information, contact Sarah Winter at 647-729-1633 or swinter@cltoronto.ca

Find us on  FamilyLink Toronto

Inclusive Education Awards

We are excited to be launching the 18th Annual Inclusive Education awards this February 2016.

You can nominate: a Teacher, a Principal, an Education Assistant or a school if they are supporting, encouraging and facilitating the inclusion of children with an intellectual disability within a full time appropriate grade classroom in their neighbourhood school.

Nominate now using our online nomination form:

<http://connectability.ca/2016/01/19/nominate-an-outstanding-inclusive-educator-eighteenth-award-for-inclusive-education/>

Nominations are due by Friday April 15, 2016. For more information, contact Mia McGowan at mmcgowan@cltoronto.ca or 647-725-1258.

Jim Turner Memorial Award for Outstanding Voluntarism

Each year, Community Living Toronto presents awards to volunteer leaders who support the work of the Association. 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. Volunteer recognition awards

are presented annually at the Association's Volunteer Recognition Dinner in April.

Criteria for the Award nominations:

- 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 Liliana Ruiz at 647-729-1169 or Liliana.ruiz@cltoronto.ca



MyCommunityHub

MY TIME. MY ACTIVITIES. MY CHOICE.

Launching February 17

We are excited to be a partner in MyCommunityHub - an innovative online registration tool for activities offered by various DSTO agencies across the Greater Toronto Area. Together, this will be the place where families, individuals and agencies can find everything they need to know about fee for service programs and other activities.

For more information visit:

<http://connectability.ca/mycommunityhub/>

CHOICES that can Change Lives Fund

Where small grants provide big opportunities for individuals and families seeking help to make dreams and goals a reality when all other resources have been exhausted.

**Next application deadline
March 31, 2016**

For info and forms visit:
choiceschangelives.ca

or contact:
your Regional Membership
Coordinator

membership@cltoronto.ca

ARE YOU OR SOMEONE YOU LOVE LIVING WITH A DISABILITY?

If so, you may be eligible for up to
\$3,500 a year in Matching Grants and
up to **\$1,000** a year in Bonds!

The Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) is a unique program provided by the government of Canada to enhance the financial security of people living with disabilities. *

FREE RDSP INFORMATION SESSIONS

HOSTED BY COMMUNITY LIVING TORONTO

Presented by: Brendon Pooran, a Toronto based lawyer who provides advice on wills and estate planning, Government benefits and disability law.

Wednesday, February 24, 2016

Central Region: 7:00—9:00 pm

20 Spadina Rd., Toronto

RSVP to: Matt Poirier at 647-729-1210 or matthew.poirier@cltoronto.ca

Tuesday, March 1, 2016

Etobicoke/York Region: 7:00—9:00 pm

295 The West Mall, Suite 204, Etobicoke

RSVP to: Wendy Dyke at 647.729.3627 or wdyke@cltoronto.ca

* Funding for these information sessions is provided by the Government of Canada.

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Community Living Toronto



United Way
Toronto

A United Way member agency