



Connections

Where choices change the lives of people with an intellectual disability

FEATURED STORY

Meet our newest members of the Self Advocates Council (SAC)!



This picture shows a group of new SAC members with support staff on either side

From L, Katina, Patrick, Felicia, Novlette, Gus, and Venus

By: Sue Hutton

In September the Self Advocates Council welcomed the newly elected members for an orientation session. The group talked about what is important to them, and what some of the best ways to communicate are.

The issues that are important to the SAC for 2017-2019 seem to be echoing the priorities of earlier years. Being in relationships, getting out into the community, learning to get around the city better with TTC and having rights respected are key themes. It's a wonderful time to build momentum and keep the issues from past years on the table.

In this Issue

- Pg 1 | Featured Story
- Pg 2 | Central Region
- Pg 3 | Etobicoke Region
- Pg 4 | North York Region
- Pg 6 | Scarborough Region
- Pg 8 | Volunteer Voice
- Pg 9 | News

The next SAC meeting will host a researcher from York University who wants to work with people labelled with intellectual disabilities to explore what relationships mean. We look forward to telling you more about what we discuss in the November issue of Connections!

In the meantime, if you know anyone who would like to get involved with the Self Advocates Council, please get in touch with:

Sue Hutton
647-729-1205
shutton@cltoronto.ca

Self-Advocates Council Meeting
Wednesday October 25, 2017
11:00 am – 1:00 pm
20 Spadina Rd

People labeled with an intellectual disability and their supporters are invited.

A Sunny Sunday Stroll



Starting the Easy Walk at The ROM!

By: Michelle Grimley

Community Living Toronto's first 'Easy Walk' explored the Annex neighbourhood, an area familiar to many of us in Central Region. On the morning of Sunday, August 20th a group of members, individuals, and volunteers met at the Royal Ontario Museum. Many of us were meeting for the first time and were excited to be going for our Easy Walk on such a sunny morning!

In front of the Royal Ontario Museum we learned about the famous Michael Lee-Chin Crystal design. We talked about our opinions of the unique building and then headed North along Avenue Road. Our volunteer tour guide, Megan Steciv, shared her great knowledge of the history of the Annex throughout the walk. Megan is a student at The University of Toronto and she brought history to life on our Sunday stroll!

The group stopped in front of a gorgeous old church and Megan pointed out symbols hidden in the stained glass window. Participants took pictures of the beautiful brick 'Annex style' houses, admiring their doorways and pillars.

We pictured the Annex as it looked many years ago, imagining driveways with parked horses and buggies. The group thought of famous residents like Timothy Eaton (of the Eatons Department Store) and George

Gooderham Sr. (of Gooderham & Worts Distillery) walking the very same streets as us.

Bringing us back to the 21st Century, The Open Streets Toronto program had taken over Bloor Street and the group enjoyed the live music and dancing. The sunny weather and unexpected festivities made the morning feel extra special.

Easy Walks are free and open to all! On the next Easy Walk, we will be touring United Way Agencies in Central Region on Sunday, October 29th.

Upcoming Central Events

Central Region Dinner Club

Every Wednesday
4:00 pm – 8:00 pm
30 Birch Ave

Central Region Council Meeting

Tuesday October 10, 2017
6:00 pm – 8:00 pm
20 Spadina Rd, Room 2B
All are welcome!

Parent Share Central Region

Monday October 16, 2017
10:00 am – 12:00 pm
Parents for Better Beginnings
38 Regent St, Second Level
RSVP: Yulia Prudova at 647-729-1209 or
yprudova@cltoronto.ca
or Bonnie Heath at 416-645-6000 ext. 1311
bheath@woodgreen.org

Easy Walk

Sunday October 29, 2017
10:00 am – 11:30 am
Meeting Location TBA
RSVP: Yulia Prudova at 647-729-1209 or
yprudova@cltoronto.ca

For information on any of the above events, contact:

Michelle Grimley
647-729-1210
michelle.grimley@cltoronto.ca

Project Paws



Here's Conrod, an artist at Creative Village Studio, Learning about animals and pets.

By: Jessica Field and Katie Drohan

During the month of August, the Supported Independent Living Program in Etobicoke/York Region ran a pilot program called *Project Paws*. Created and facilitated by Katie Drohan and Jessica Field this program took place at our Creative Village Studio. This is a great opportunity to have hands-on interactions with various types of domestic and exotic animals, learn how to properly care of pets, and overall have a calming and therapeutic experience.

The four-week program offered many different choices and activities. Each week offered an opportunity to meet animals that were brought from different organizations including: **Pawsitively Pets, Hands on Exotics** and **Therapeutic Paws of Canada**. Participants visited the **Toronto Humane Society** for a free shelter tour that explained the importance of caring for pets properly and got to meet some of the pets from the shelter. **The Toronto Wildlife Center** taught us about wildlife in the GTA. The participants even got to make pet toys and paint their own pet rock.

Project Paws offered many resources for pet owners who receive ODSP income support to access free or lower cost veterinarian care from **The Toronto Animal Services** and other local organizations. The facilitators

created plain language pamphlets and information sheets on how to take care of pets. Participants had an opportunity to explore different educational stations around the studio that provided them with visual and tactile self-directed learning opportunities.

Upon gathering feedback from the participants, the facilitators found that the pilot project was a success. The program not only provided therapeutic benefits by improving participants' moods and reducing anxiety and stress levels, it also empowered the individuals to gain confidence in their ability to properly care for their pets. This program generated an interest in volunteering within the community at local humane societies. Participants learned about pets and animals in a safe and fun environment, while promoting their artistic expression.

Thank you!

Project Paws would like to thank **Therapeutic Paws of Canada, Pawsitively Pets, Hands on Exotics, the Toronto Wildlife Center** and the **Toronto Humane Society** for partnering with us and making this possible. We would also like to thank **Helmutt's Pet Supplies** for their generous donation of treats and small pet toys. Lastly, we would like to thank **Rebecca Lawrence** for her support with creating the pamphlets and other visuals, as well as the management and **Creative Village Studio** for believing in this program and helping to make it possible.

Project Paws hopes to continue to run the program at other locations so that more people can benefit from this great initiative!

For more information please contact

Katie Drohan
416-727-9027
katie.drohan@cltoronto.ca

or

Jessica Field
(416)-317-0438
jessica.field@cltoronto.ca

Upcoming Etobicoke/York Events

Etobicoke/York Region Council Meeting

Tuesday October 10, 2017

6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

4895 Dundas Street West (Creative Village Studio)

All are welcome!

RSVP: Georgina Stergiotis

at 647-729-0445 or

georgina.stergiotis@cltoronto.ca

Friendship Club

Wednesday October 25, 2017

6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

ERO - 295 The West Mall, Suite 204

Registration: LauraLee Edmiston

at 647-729-0440 or

ledmiston@cltoronto.ca

Parent Share Etobicoke/York Region

Thursday October 19, 2017

10:00 am – 12:00 pm

ERO - 295 The West Mall, Suite 204

For information contact: Sarah Winter

at 647-729-1633 or

swinter@cltoronto.ca

or Bonnie Heath at 416-645-6000 ext. 1311

bheath@woodgreen.org

Note: Friendship Club and Parent Share park in the underground on **P2**

Parking at ERO is limited due to construction.

Please park on P2.

Arrange for Wheel trans pick up or drop off at front entrance on The West Mall.

If you are interested in joining our Etobicoke/York

Council contact: Georgina Stergiotis

at 647-729-0445 or

georgina.stergiotis@cltoronto.ca

North York

Stratford Festival Trip – Summer 2017



Participants enjoying a picnic lunch on their trip

By: Colleen Mazor, Dianne Doan, Greg Field, Katina Xilias, Support Worker III

On July 7th and August 8th two groups of participants and staff from the North York Supported Work and Community Activities (SWACA) program travelled to Stratford, Ontario. The groups went to enjoy the Stratford Festival Relaxed Performances: **Treasure Island** and **HMS Pinafore**.

Before each performance, the actors demonstrated what some of the loud sounds would be, like a gun or canon firing, and reassured everyone that no one would be hurt. Another actor climbed the high wire and again assured everyone that he would be okay. Prior to the Treasure Island performance, audience members were invited to the stage to see the Billy Bones spy glass that showed the stormy cliffs of England.

These performances were highly unique. Unlike traditional shows, audience members were able to leave their seats and return to the theatre as they wished. There were also television monitors set up in the lobby so that no part of the show would be missed.

Both performances were spectacular! One show was a high seas thriller with audience interaction and the other a buoyant musical that kept everyone tapping

their toes.

Very special thanks to the **Stratford Festival** for offering these unique venues which allows everyone to be part of the theatre experience.

Stratford trips were coordinated and supported by:

**Colleen Mazor, Dianne Doan, Greg Field,
Katina Xilias**
– North York Region, Support Worker III's

<https://www.stratfordfestival.ca/Visit/Accessibility/Relaxed>

'Relaxed performances are specifically designed to welcome patrons who will benefit from a less restricted audience environment. Patrons of all abilities are welcome, including but not limited to those with intellectual or learning disabilities, sensory processing conditions or autism. There is a relaxed attitude to noise and movement within the auditorium, and some minor production changes may be made to reduce the intensity of light, sound and other potentially startling effects.'

Youth Summer Employment Transitions a Success!



Celebratory picnic at Christie Pits

*By: Mike Adair, Community Support Coordinator,
Community First*

This past summer, the Community First team ran our first ever Youth Summer Employment Transitions program. Staff support for the project was made possible by funding through Canada Summer Jobs 2017, via Employment and Social Development Canada. After reaching out to five high schools across Community Living Toronto's four regions, seven students were brought into this pilot project.

The goal of the project was to build upon the students' employment-related skills. To begin their journey, the students completed two weeks of Job Readiness Training at the Community Junction. After their training, they were offered paid and volunteer summer placements with brand new community partners.

In total, the summer group worked in six paid placements (in for-profit businesses) and three volunteer positions (in traditional volunteer settings). These placements were successful because of the amazing attitudes and hard work ethic of our participants.

To celebrate the accomplishments of this first group, the team met for one last get together on August 31st at Christie Pits, where they enjoyed a picnic. With such a positive first run, we hope to be working with the student job seekers of Toronto for many summers to come!

Upcoming North York Events

North York Region Council Meeting

Tuesday October 10, 2017
1:00 pm – 3:00 pm
North York Office Boardroom
1122 Finch Avenue West, Unit 18
All are welcome!

Cooking Classes

Tuesday Evenings, October 17 to December 5, 2017
4:00 pm – 7:00 pm
1122 Finch Avenue West, Unit 16

Sibshop

Saturday November 18, 2017
10:30 am – 2:30 pm
Victoria Park Hub
1527 Victoria Park Avenue

For More Information and to register
Contact: Wendy Dyke
at 647-729-3627 or
wdyke@cltoronto.ca

Jumpstart Literacy

Every Saturday
9:30 am to 11:30 am
1122 Finch Avenue West, Unit 16
Registration fee:
\$20.00 per person
Weekly fee:
\$5.00 per person
To learn more and to register, please contact:
Karla Galvez- Del Rio
at 647-729-1162 or
kgalvez@cltoronto.ca

Parent Share North York Region

Thursday October 5, 2017
10:00 am – 12:00 pm
1122 Finch Avenue West
For information contact: Sarah Winter
at 647-729-1633 or
swinter@cltoronto.ca
or Bonnie Heath at 416-645-6000 ext. 1311
bheath@woodgreen.org

SCARBOROUGH REGION

Summer Literacy 2017!

By: Shannon McCormack



Hosting the bake sale!

Summer Literacy is a program sponsored by the Scarborough Council. Students are engaged in a positive, inclusive and educational environment where they go on daily adventures both in the classroom and in the community.

We have visited various places in the community including:

Parks, the library, the movie theatre, the bowling alley, the local recreation centre pool, various restaurants and a play at The Fringe Festival.

These experiences have allowed the students to learn more about their community. The outings also allow for key life skills to be developed such as riding the *TTC*, *using money in everyday situations, reading street signs and navigating our way through the city*. One of our goals is that all the individuals in this program feel comfortable and a part of their community, while maintaining their independence and contributing to society.

Nicole, a student at Summer Literacy shared that: **“Summer Literacy helped me prepare for college and improved my overall confidence”**.

In addition to exploring the community, students are learning and practicing major skills in the classroom. The Summer Literacy curriculum is planned in accordance to the students' wants and needs. This way, the content is relatable to the students and their everyday lives. Having fun is a big part of Summer Literacy and this year as our final project, students performed *The Lion King Musical!*

There is a strong focus on math in our program. We have been working on various day-to-day situations in which we use our math skills and concepts. The emphasis this year has been on Canadian currency. We focused on identifying coins and bills, knowing their value, counting money and making correct change. Students had the opportunity to use their skills in the community in three local restaurants. During our annual Bake Sale fundraiser, students rotated on cash duties to practice their skills. It was a great success!

Summer Literacy recently had two very special visitors. **Officer Gibson** and **Officer Alexander** from **43 Division**. They came to deliver an interactive presentation on bullying—specifically addressing cyber-bullying. The program was also fortunate enough to receive a furry visitor and her handler. Honey is a sweet therapy dog from **St. John Ambulance** who volunteered to play with us to release stress and put smiles on our faces.

The Summer Literacy Program is sponsored by the Scarborough Regional Council. We want to thank the leads, Ellen Armstrong and Alison Thomas, for all their support. We hope to see you there next year! For information please call Felicita Zanatta at 647-729-1635 or fzanatta@cltoronto.ca



Honey, the therapeutic dog from St. John Ambulance making new friends with some of the participants.

Upcoming Scarborough

Scarborough Region Council Meeting
Monday October 2, 2017
6:15 pm
1712 Ellesmere Rd
All are welcome!

Bingo at Lawson
Friday October 20, 2017;
7:00 pm – 8:30 pm
1712 Ellesmere Rd
\$5 for a snack and prizes

Winter Literacy
Saturday mornings
9:00 am – 11:45 am
1710 Ellesmere Rd.
\$20 registration and \$5 per class
Eligibility determined by interview

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

Connections Dance
Friday October 27, 2017;
7:30 pm – 9:30 pm
1712 Ellesmere Rd
\$8 admission

Call: Lester
at 416-566-7252

Tuesday Morning Drop In
10:00 am – 12:00 pm
\$4 each week
1712 Ellesmere Rd

RSVP: Sarah Winter
647-729-1633
swinter@cltoronto.ca

Parent Share Scarborough Region

October 12 and 26, 2017
9:30 am – 11:30 am
Cedarbrook Community Centre
91 Eastpark Blvd
Contact: Sarah Winter at 647-729-1633 or swinter@cltoronto.ca
or Bonnie Heath at 416-645-6000 ext. 1311 or bheath@woodgreen.org

ConnectABILITY.ca



Volunteering with Jumpstart Literacy

By: Sam McKhail



Sam at Jumpstart Literacy

My experience with the Jumpstart Literacy Group is as a Volunteer Teacher's Assistant. I attend the group on a weekly basis and have been volunteering with the literacy class for almost a year and a half that started in April 2016.

I love my volunteer work very much and really enjoy helping out with the program. The group has also helped me learn lots of brand new things that I find interesting and important. I've learned leadership skills and how to create an atmosphere that suits all the participants and volunteers. We learn based on what's best for each student, advising and improving on skills that participants find really challenging.

I like meeting new people and helping out and working with the Teachers, Volunteer Assistants. Also, the working with the students help me become a better person too. I enjoy attending Community Living Toronto's Annual Volunteer Appreciation Evening as well! It is my favorite event and always a lot of fun!

Volunteer Orientations and Trainings

If you are interested in getting involved as a volunteer, please sign up for one of our upcoming volunteer orientations! Existing volunteers are also required to attend one session per year to update their annual trainings. Register for an upcoming session at

www.cltoronto.ca/volunteers

Orientation Dates	Regions
Monday October 2, 2017 at 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM	Central
Monday October 16, 2017 at 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Scarborough



MyCommunityHub is an online registration space for activities, classes, programs, workshops, respite and camps offered by Developmental Service Agencies across Ontario.

Register today at:

mycommunityhub.ca

Volunteer Opportunities

Friendship Group Volunteer

Are you free on Wednesday evenings and looking to do something fun and different!? Community Living Toronto runs a Friendship Group for individuals with an intellectual disability, who meet up once a month.

This group is facilitated by Community Living Toronto Staff. Each month, they get together has a different theme, ie. *Halloween, Movie Night, Wii Night, Holiday Party!*

It's an fabulous opportunity for friends to come together to share food, fun and friendship!

We are looking for dedicated and committed volunteers to help out with running the group, set up and clean up and just some good friends for the individuals to get to know!

**Minimum hours per week: 2; flexible
Wednesday Evenings**

Location: 295 The West Mall, Suite 204

Fall Cooking Class Assistant

This Fall, Community Living Toronto will be offering cooking classes for people with intellectual disabilities.

Learning how to prepare simple meals can make a significant positive impact in the daily lives of those living with intellectual disabilities, and can often be the first step to gaining a sense of independence.

As a volunteer for our cooking classes, you don't need to be a chef or a culinary expert! You simply have to have the passion to help those in who are willing to learn.

This program takes place from

**October 17th - December 5th from
4:00 PM - 7:00 PM at the North York's Supported
Work & Community Activities Kitchen (SWACA).**

**Minimum hours per week: 3 hours/week;
Tuesdays from 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM**

Location: 1122 Finch Ave. W., Unit 16

Jumpstart Literacy Volunteer

Jumpstart Literacy is a great annual literacy program offered for adults with an intellectual disability who are interested in building their literacy skills. This program focuses on English literacy and selected sessions are devoted to building mathematics literacy skills as well.

We are currently looking for volunteers to join our team! If you are patient, helpful, enjoy sharing your knowledge and are eager to give back to the community, this is an amazing opportunity for you!

Experience working with people with an intellectual disability is desirable, but not necessary. This opportunity is ideal for future educators or Resource Teachers who can get some hands on experience in planning special education curriculum, materials, visual aid, etc.

**This program runs every Saturday
Starting September 9, 2017 - June 23, 2018
From 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM
North York Regional Office located at
1122 Finch Avenue West, Unit 16**

Life Skills Volunteer

Are you free on Tuesday evenings and looking to do something fun and different!? Community Living Toronto runs a Life Skills Program for individuals with an intellectual disability, who meet weekly from 4:00 PM - 7:30 PM. This group is facilitated by Community Living Toronto Staff. Every week the participants break into three groups, cooking, crafts and literacy sheets and there is always a theme: Thanksgiving, Christmas, Earth day, Football night, etc. The meal, crafts and work sheets are based on that particular theme.

Minimum hours per week: 3.5 hours

**Location: 102 Advance Rd. at Adult Developmental
Program in Etobicoke Region
Tuesday Evenings**

If you are interested in volunteering, please visit our website at www.cltoronto.ca to learn more about Community Living Toronto, and then submit your resume to:

Karla Galvez-Del Rio
karla.galvezdelrio@cltoronto.ca



Information Fair
A Free Event
Wednesday October 18, 2017
1:00pm - 8:00pm
The Warehouse Event Venue
Downsview Park
35 Carl Hall Road. Unit 2

THE DAY INCLUDES:
Information from Toronto based agencies on services and supports for transitional youth (16 years of age and older) and adults (18 years of age and older) with a developmental disability.

*The opportunity to explore purchasing services with your Passport dollars.

*Information on fee for service programs.

*Agency and Community Partner presentations on topics such as:
Developmental Services Ontario, ODSP and Passport

*What you can do while you wait for services and supports;

* Self-Advocates presenting *Yellow Brick Road*

*dsto Council.

*Opportunity for families to speak to dsto agency staff, self-advocacy groups and family groups.

More information will be available on the Developmental Services Ontario (DSO) website as we get closer to the event.

Please check in for updates at www.dsotoronto.ca

Presentations from the Fair will be available for viewing after the event at www.connectability.ca

Renew Your Membership

cltoronto.ca/membership/

COMMUNITY ROCKS

SAVE THE DATE!

When: Saturday November 10th, 2018

Where: Queen Elizabeth Theatre!

Find out more at:

communityrocks.ca/

Follow Us!



@CLToronto

www.CommunityLivingToronto.ca



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



United Way
Toronto & York Region