

## **Ontario Government Invests \$1.8 Billion in Developmental Services “A critical investment at a critical time.”**

(TORONTO – April 4, 2018) – On Wednesday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, the Wynne government announced their plan for “*Care and Opportunity*” in the 2018 budget, including an investment of \$1.8 billion over three years to expand services for Ontarians who have an intellectual disability. The budget aims to address a number of long standing issues for individuals with a developmental disability, their families and community service agencies. It also provides much needed enhancements to Ontario Works and the ODSP program that will create opportunities for employment and community participation and improve quality of life.

The announcement of an expansion of direct funding for the Passport program which will guarantee at least \$5,000 in annualized funding for more than 40,000 people with an intellectual disability, starting when individuals turn 18 years old is helpful news for families.

“For years parents have feared the metaphorical ‘cliff’ their child experiences when they turn 18 and they lose Special Services At Home funding only to be put on a wait list that is often years long.” says Brad Saunders, CEO of Community Living Toronto. “This investment is an encouraging first step towards providing the guaranteed supports that every individual should be entitled to when transitioning to adulthood. By removing the ‘cliff’, this investment will set people on the right track to living full and meaningful lives in their communities.”

In addition, the budget outlined positive changes to the ODSP program, including the elimination of asset limits and adding a 3 percent annual increase to rates for three years starting in the fall of 2018. \$200 million over the next three years will go directly to operating budgets of community agencies, providing stability and ensuring the continuation of high quality services for those individuals who are currently supported by the Developmental Services sector.

“This investment comes at a critical time as community based services teeter on the brink after nearly a decade without funding increases. Ever growing wait lists and a serious shortage of funded services have created a sense of hopelessness for families and community agencies.” says Saunders “Community Living Toronto believes that when fully implemented, this long-awaited investment will be a bold move towards a more inclusive Ontario for all.”

### **About Community Living Toronto**

Since 1948 Community Living Toronto has been a leader in developing community-based services and supports for people with an intellectual disability and their families. One of the largest organizations of its kind in Canada, Community Living Toronto provides services and support to over 4,000 people and their families across Toronto. Our mission is to change the lives of people with an intellectual disability by giving them a voice, and supporting their choices where they live, learn, work and play.



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