

Community Living Toronto Announces New Addition to Patron's Council

Former Foreign Affairs Minister Hon. John Baird is the newest member of the Patron's Council, advocating for people with intellectual disabilities in Toronto.

[Toronto, ON, August 23, 2023] – Community Living Toronto (CLTO) is pleased to announce that the Honourable John Baird has become the newest member of its Patron's Council. Mr. Baird's strong, personal commitment to the developmental services sector, along with his expertise will support CLTO's advocacy efforts and will help raise awareness of issues that directly impact the lives of people with an intellectual disability.

Mr. Baird spent three terms as a Member of Parliament with the Government of Canada. He served as Minister of Foreign Affairs, President of the Treasury Board, Minister of the Environment, Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

In 2010, he was selected by Members of Parliament from all parties as Parliamentarian of the Year. Before joining federal politics, Mr. Baird spent ten years in the Ontario Legislature where he served as Minister of Community and Social Services, and repealed the *Homes for Retarded Persons Act* (HRPA), ensuring people with intellectual disabilities get the dignity and respect they deserve as full members of society. Mr. Baird also served as Ontario's Minister of Energy, and Government House Leader.

"We welcome Mr. Baird to the Council," said Mr. Duncan Jackman, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of E-L Financial Corporation Limited, and current chair of CLTO Patron's Council. "As members of the Patron's Council, we have an opportunity to use our skills, talents, and connections in ways that create meaningful change for people with an intellectual disability. I have no doubt that Mr. Baird's experience and background will help us to do so."

"As a former Minister of Community and Social Services, I have a deep understanding of the barriers facing those with an intellectual disability and their support networks, as well as the many talents, skills and contributions each person can make to their community and society at-large," said Mr. Baird. "I am looking forward to collaborating with the team at Community Living Toronto and other Patron's Council members, and continuing to building inclusive communities and supporting the rights and choices of people with developmental disabilities."

The Patron's Council was started in 1998 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the organization and to support Community Living Toronto's mission and vision to serve people with an intellectual disability. Since then, the Patrons have opened doors for funding, increased public awareness and inclusion of the people supported in business, communities, and events across Toronto.

"We are very thankful for our Patrons who continue to lend their expertise and talents to help us move critical issues forward to better serve the needs of the people we support and their families. As we celebrate our 75th anniversary, these important voices will continue to help strengthen our advocacy efforts in the developmental services sector and their experience will help us identify real solutions to the challenges the sector still faces," noted Valérie Picher, CLTO Board Chair.

Brad Saunders, CEO of Community Living Toronto acknowledged the significant role of the Patron's Council and their support to the organization. "As an organization, we strive to be an innovative leader in creating programs for people with an intellectual disability and their families. Through a variety of supports and services, we enable them to live where they want and with who they want, find meaningful employment, and participate in their community."

Mr. Saunders added that, "One of the areas Mr. Baird will support CLTO is addressing the housing crisis for people living with intellectual disabilities. A good example of an existing initiative ready for further advancement is our [Lawson Redevelopment project](#) - a partnership with Tridel to meet the housing demand and a significant step forward in building communities of belonging."

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About Community Living Toronto

Celebrating 75 years of belonging, Community Living Toronto has long been a source of support for people with an intellectual disability and their families. Community Living Toronto offers a wide range of services including respite, person-directed planning, employment supports, supported living, and community-based activities.

Community Living Toronto is proud to support over 4,000 individuals and their families in more than 80 locations across Toronto. The "community living movement" began with families who wanted their children to live in the community, rather than institutions. Today, Community Living Toronto continues to advocate for inclusive communities and support the rights and choices of people with an intellectual disability.

For the full list of the [Patron's Council](#), please visit: <https://cltoronto.ca/leadership/>

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