

**NEWS RELEASE AND BACKGROUNDER  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**New Leaders Join Community Living Toronto’s Patron’s Council to  
Advance Inclusion Across the GTA**

*Distinguished business, media, public policy and community leaders bring insight,  
influence and commitment to building inclusive communities*

**[Toronto, ON, June 04, 2026]** – Community Living Toronto is pleased to welcome five new patrons to its Patron’s Council, a distinguished group of civic, business and community leaders committed to advancing inclusion and opportunity for people who have an intellectual disability and their families across Toronto.

The new Patrons are:

1. **Todd Smith**, Vice-President, Marketing and Business Development, Candu Energy Inc.
2. **Jim Ritchie**, President and CEO, Tridel
3. **Heather Watt**, Management Consultant, Board of Director, Holland Bloorview Kids Hospital
4. **Andrew Saunders**, President and Chief Executive Officer, The Globe and Mail
5. **Arron Barberian OOnt**, Owner, Barberian’s Steak House

Established in 1998 to mark Community Living Toronto’s 50th anniversary, the Patron’s Council helps increase awareness, advance public policy and mobilize resources in support of more than **4,000** people with an intellectual disability and their families in Toronto.

As champions of inclusion and social change, members of the Patron’s Council help open doors to employment, housing, community participation, and greater understanding, while supporting Community Living Toronto’s mission of building a society where everyone belongs.

“Community Living Toronto has a long history of standing up for the rights and choices of people who have an intellectual disability,” said **John Tory, Chair of Community Living Toronto’s Patron’s Council**. “We’re proud to welcome these new patrons and grateful for the perspectives, networks and influence they bring. Together, we will help build a future where people with an intellectual disability are fully included in every part of community life.”

As new Patrons, they join a distinguished group of community leaders committed to influencing public policy, raising awareness, and helping remove barriers facing people who have an intellectual disability and their families.

“We are incredibly pleased to welcome these accomplished and respected leaders to our Council,” said **Brad Saunders**, Chief Executive Officer, Community Living Toronto. “Our patrons are champions for inclusion opening doors, strengthening partnerships and helping remove barriers that still exist. Their support will help us advance our mission of building inclusive communities where people who have an intellectual disability have the opportunity to thrive, contribute, and belong.”

“We are fortunate to welcome such exceptional leaders to our Patron’s Council,” said **Stephanie Gawur, Chair of the Board of Directors**. “Each Patron brings valuable experience, insight, and influence that will help strengthen our vision and ongoing efforts to create a future where people with an intellectual disability are fully included and valued.”

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### **About the Patron’s Council**

The Patron’s Council plays a crucial role in supporting Community Living Toronto’s mission of fostering inclusive communities by supporting the rights and choices of people with an intellectual disability. Established in 1998, to celebrate Community Living Toronto’s 50th anniversary, the Council collaborates with community partners, business leaders, and philanthropists to make a significant impact on the lives of people who have an intellectual disability and their families. The Council members have shown exemplary leadership, dedication, and vision in making an impact both within and beyond the Community Living Toronto community.

### **About Community Living Toronto**

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** people 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 more information, please contact:**

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### **Social Media Handles**

[Facebook @CLToronto](#)  
[X @CLToronto](#)  
[Instagram @CLToronto](#)  
[LinkedIn @Community Living Toronto](#)  
[Website: CommunityLivingToronto.ca](http://CommunityLivingToronto.ca)

## BACKGROUND

### Community Living Toronto Welcomes New Members to the Patron's Council

#### Todd Smith

**Quote:** "I'm honoured to join Community Living Toronto's Patron's Council. Throughout my career in public service and now in the private sector, I've seen what's possible when we design policies, services and communities so everyone can participate. I look forward to lending my voice and experience to help expand opportunity and inclusion for people who have an intellectual disability and their families across Toronto."

**Todd Smith is Vice-President, Marketing and Business Development at Candu Energy Inc.,** an AtkinsRéalis company, where he is responsible for international business growth and sales of the Canadian-developed CANDU® nuclear reactor. Prior to joining the company in 2024, Todd served for 13 years as a Member of Provincial Parliament in Ontario and held several senior Cabinet portfolios, including Minister of Energy, Minister of Economic Development and Trade, and Government House Leader. During his tenure as Minister of Energy, he led significant initiatives to support Ontario's growing electricity needs, including advancing new nuclear builds and refurbishments. Before entering politics, Todd worked as a television and radio broadcaster and served as News Director for a local broadcasting company in Eastern Ontario. He attended the University of New Brunswick and graduated from Loyalist College's Broadcast Journalism program.

#### Jim Ritchie

**Quote:** "I am pleased to join Community Living Toronto's Patron's Council and support its vision of creating inclusive communities where everyone belongs. Housing and community development play an important role in shaping how people experience connection, opportunity, and quality of life. I look forward to contributing my experience in city building and community development to help advance innovative and inclusive communities that are welcoming and accessible for all."

**Jim Ritchie is President and CEO of Tridel** and is widely recognized for his leadership in building sustainable and inclusive communities across the Greater Toronto Area. He oversees all aspects of Tridel's operations, including land acquisition, planning, development, and construction. During his tenure, Jim has led the delivery of more than 150 condominium communities and overseen the sale of over 45,000 homes. His leadership reflects a strong commitment to city building, environmental sustainability, and long-term community impact. Jim is an active industry leader who serves on several advisory bodies and committees focused on housing, sustainability, and social equity. He is known for a values-driven approach that emphasizes community well-being, innovation, and creating neighbourhoods where people can thrive.

### Heather Watt

**Quote:** “I am honoured to join Community Living Toronto’s Patron’s Council. Inclusive communities are stronger communities, and I believe everyone deserves the opportunity to fully participate and thrive. Throughout my career in government and the private sector, I have worked to bring people together to solve complex challenges. I look forward to contributing my experience in public policy, healthcare, and cross-sector collaboration to help advance a more inclusive Toronto.”

**Heather Watt** is a management consultant with over 20 years of experience across the public and private sectors. She has advised organizations across government, healthcare, life sciences, insurance, consumer products, industrials, and private equity, including over a decade at Monitor Group and McKinsey & Company. She previously served as Chief of Staff to Ontario’s Deputy Premier and Minister of Health from 2018 to 2022, where she had oversight of Ontario’s approximately \$70B healthcare budget and played a central role in the COVID-19 response. Her work included policy development, stakeholder relations, and health system transformation across hospitals, home and community care, public health, and mental health.

### Andrew Saunders

**Quote:** “I’m proud to join Community Living Toronto’s Patron’s Council. As a leader in Canadian media, I’ve seen how visibility and informed public conversation can help change attitudes and open doors. I look forward to supporting Community Living Toronto in raising awareness, strengthening partnerships and advancing a more inclusive society where people with an intellectual disability are valued, empowered, and fully included.”

**Andrew Saunders is President and CEO of The Globe and Mail**, where he oversees all aspects of Canada’s national newspaper, including its digital platforms, advertising network, events, and conference business. With more than 20 years at The Globe and Mail, Andrew has extensive expertise in business transformation, digital strategy, consumer insights, branding, and revenue growth. Prior to becoming President and CEO, he served as Chief Revenue Officer and led the organization’s transition from print to digital across subscriptions, advertising, events, analytics, and consumer marketing. Andrew is highly respected within Canada’s media and advertising sectors and serves on several industry boards and advisory bodies, including the Canadian Cannes Advisory Board, the IAB Canada Board, and The Canadian Press Board. He is also actively involved in community initiatives, including the United Health Network Foundation and United Way Greater Toronto.

### Arron Barberian, OOnt.

**Quote:** “It is an honour to join the Patron’s Council. Hospitality is about making people feel welcome and that belief aligns closely with Community Living Toronto’s mission. I look forward to supporting the organization in creating greater opportunities for inclusion, belonging, and meaningful community participation for people with intellectual disabilities.

**Arron Barberian is the owner and steward of Barberian’s Steak House**, one of Canada’s most iconic dining establishments. Since taking over operations in 1994, he has continued his family’s

legacy of excellence in hospitality while building one of the country’s most recognized culinary destinations. Arron is also known for his passion for wine and oversees one of Canada’s largest

cellar wine collections, with more than 30,000 bottles. Beyond business, he is widely respected for his philanthropic leadership and charitable work supporting organizations such as Holland Bloorview Foundation, Sinai Health Foundation, and Jays Care Foundation. Through his commitment to hospitality, community, and giving back, Arron has become a highly admired and influential figure in Toronto's business and charitable sectors.