

September
2011

Opening Doors

A Community Living Peterborough Publication



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From the Desk of
the C.E.O.

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Our Call to Action

Be Informed.
Be Involved.
Be Inclusive.
Become a
Member Today!

Our Mission

To inspire respect and equality for people with an intellectual disability by promoting: community knowledge, organizational excellence and individual quality of life.

Our Vision

That all people live in a state of dignity, share in all elements of living in their community and have the opportunity to participate effectively.

School's In!

One family's journey to finding the right classroom fit for their child.

- Pat Whittaker, Outcomes Facilitator



A little background on Mitchell...

Mitchell Henson is a very social four-year old boy who lives with his five-year old sister Molly and their parents, Bonnie and Jason, in the city of Peterborough. Mitchell enjoys meeting new people and being in the company of other children. He enjoys sounds, movement, textures, colour, and switch-activated and musical toys, and has excellent range of motion when provided with lots of open floor space to explore and play...this freedom of movement is a frequent, daily 'must-have' for Mitchell.

Mitchell is unique in his abilities and continues to challenge the medical community. His health care diagnoses impact on his daily support needs and require that skilled adult support be available to him at all times and in all settings.

Questions...Choices...Informed Decisions

Mitchell's participation in nursery school for the past three years provided him with opportunities for daily interaction with other children in a fully inclusive environment. Mitchell's playmates reflected a diversity of support needs, and both staff and his mother Bonnie observed his responsiveness to children with differing abilities.

This became a key consideration in planning for Mitchell's introduction to elementary school this month. The process began with parent queries and consultation, a tour of Mitchell's 'home school' and discussions with the school principal and school board liaison. Staff expressed their willingness to undertake the necessary environmental accommodations, however some issues remained and Bonnie and Jason were keen to explore all options available. Their request for a tour and consultation with staff at a school offering a Learning and Life Skills (LLS) program led to consideration and selection of the option of 'reverse integration.' This model would effectively promote Mitchell's involvement with classmates in Junior Kindergarten, Senior Kindergarten, and LLS classes, allowing Mitchell to benefit from periods of time in each setting.

In reference to their decision, Bonnie states: "We have seen that Mitchell receives different benefits from different groups of kids.

See 'Back to school' on page 4

Up in the Saddle

- Lisa Clarke, Community & Fund Development Officer

On a sunny Wednesday afternoon in early September, Nancy Condon rides Snuggles confidently through the door of Kildare Stables' indoor arena and into the adjoining outdoor ring. With the mentorship of Lisa Corp, an Outcomes Facilitator with Community Living Peterborough and avid horse enthusiast, Nancy has grown confidently and skillfully as a rider over several months.

Community Living Peterborough has had a partnership with Kevin Sweeney's Kildare Stables (formally Trapalanda) for several years. Outcomes Facilitator Julie Schuster explains, "For people who may be perceived as 'vulnerable,' horseback riding allows them to enjoy a unique experience filled with freedom." She has seen firsthand how riding increases core strength, balance, and an increase in mobility.

"Some of the people we support experience sensitivity to their environment," says Lisa Corp, "and horseback riding promotes a sense of calmness, serenity, and a special partnership with an animal."

For many people, adults and children, supported by Community Living Peterborough, horseback riding is an opportunity to realize dreams and showcase their physical abilities. "We have seen so many people grow through this experience," continues Lisa, "They begin to gain control of their bodies, sit up straighter, and shine."

As Nancy returns inside with Snuggles, fellow peers on horseback continue to be lead around the indoor arena. One woman glows from excitement, her wheelchair sitting across the sand by the mounting stairs. A gentleman enjoys the comfortable lulling movements of the horse as his facilitator, Dan Masterson, leads him several times around the circle. With a two hour opportunity to ride every second Wednesday throughout the year, the riders have consistent opportunity to build skills, confidence, friendship with peers, and relationships with the horses. ♦



The Community Access adult horseback riding program takes place at Kildare Stables every second Wednesday, throughout the year. The Family Support program facilitates children's horseback riding sessions seasonally.



Join Us in Making a Difference BECOME A MEMBER TODAY!

Community Living Peterborough is "spreading the word" about our free Associate Membership throughout the City and County of Peterborough. Together, through strong membership, we can open even more doors to equal opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities.

Please consider becoming an ambassador for Community Living Peterborough by inviting your family, friends, and workplace to build inclusive communities together through our free Associate Membership program. We also offer a General 'Voting' Membership for people interested in becoming keenly involved in our organization; this membership level is available through donation and an interest in the voting process.

Be informed. Be involved. Be inclusive.

Contact Lisa Clarke, Community and Fund Development Officer, at 705-743-2412 ext. 539 or lclarke@communitylivingpeterborough.ca for more information on membership, donations, events and sponsorships.

Membership Benefits

Criteria	Associate Member	General Member
Cost	\$0	Donation with interest in the voting process
Invitation to our Annual General Meeting	✓	✓
Invitation to CLP Events throughout the Year	✓	✓
Quarterly <i>Opening Doors</i> Newsletter (by email)*	✓	✓
Monthly eBulletin (by email)*	✓	✓
Inclusive Communities Vinyl Window Static	✓	✓
Voting Card at our Annual General Meeting		✓
Customized Name Tag at all RSVP'd Events		✓
Invitation to Local and Provincial Workshops and Seminars		✓
Subscription to <i>Community Living Ontario's Living Leaders</i> Newsletter		✓
Recognition in our Annual Report		✓

Provincial Election: Our Call to Action

- Craig Adams, Board President, Community Living Peterborough

Dear Members, Friends and Supporters of Community Living Peterborough:

The upcoming provincial election (October 6) is a golden opportunity for all of us at Community Living Peterborough to have our issues heard!

Several issues are critical for the developmental services sector to have addressed to ensure that agencies like ours are stable, families and individuals are provided the highest level of service and support, and those without service have plans in place to address their needs.

Three Key Issues:

⇒ **Funding and Sector Stability:** need for adequate funding for supports and services in Ontario to ensure that people receive the support they require and to resolve labour instability for support workers;

⇒ **Adults Living in Poverty:** need for an increase in the Ontario Disability Support Program income support to individuals to ensure that they have a decent living allowance;

⇒ **Waiting Lists:** need to relieve the strain that waiting lists create on an already stressed system and ensure that ALL people have access to our services.

Provincial funding offered in the recent Ontario budget covers only the very basic needs of the individuals Community Living Peterborough supports. When the provincial government chose to sacrifice the last year of our four-year funding agreement, they had not fully considered the impact of their decision. As an agency, we had hoped to maximize efficiencies, account for the two per cent reduction in funding, and continue with no erosion to our services.

Unfortunately, this has not been possible and the impacts are being felt across our agency. Community Living Peterborough does not want to see people sitting for hours on end with little opportunity to participate in the community because we can no longer offer what the province considers "extras," such as inclusive recreation. However, a lack of funding means we have already needed to cut important services - services we feel are not "extras," but crucial to a person's sense of self worth as a participating citizen of their community. People living with an intellectual disability should not have to live in a situation where only their most basic needs of life are met.

The province proudly celebrated the closing of its remaining institutions for people in Ontario with an intellectual disability. In March 2009, people moved from these institutions and returned to their own communities where the province said they would have opportunities to participate as active and engaged members of society. The



province also said they would provide the dollars to help these individuals re-establish themselves in their community. But, for several years, the province has asked agencies that support individuals with an intellectual disability to do more with little or no new funding.

In 2008/09, the province mandated that supports and services delivered by the sector increase, without the provision of any new funding. In 2010, more than \$20 million in funding the province had committed to Community Living agencies' base budgets was, instead, redirected to pay for changes required under new provincial legislation. Meanwhile waiting list for people requiring residential supports continues to increase.

We are all too aware of the hardships caused by the current funding situation.

[See 'A Call to Action' on page 4](#)

From the Desk of the C.E.O. - Jack Gillan



Community Living Peterborough will be making a great effort to have its voice heard during the upcoming Provincial election (October 6) campaign.

There are several issues that are critical for the developmental services sector to have addressed to ensure that agencies like ours are stable, families and individuals are provided the highest level of service and support, and those without service have

plans in place to address their needs. Our top three key issues of concern are:

- ⇒ **Funding and Sector Stability,**
- ⇒ **Adults Living in Poverty,**
- ⇒ **Waiting Lists.**

The Board President's message (above) asks members take an active role by attending all candidates meetings, asking direct questions to our candidates, talking to our MPP, and reaching out to your networks for support to ensure that we get an informed government representative.

GREAT NEWS IN HOUSING...

In August the City of Peterborough was granted by the Provincial Government an allocation of new funding to make housing more affordable in Peterborough. Since 2009, Community Living Peterborough has

been working closely with the City on a housing project in the south end, referred to as Jane Street. We have drawn up plans for two duplexes which we anticipate will allow us eight units of innovative housing for 12 people. We anticipate starting this project late winter to early spring of 2012 and that it will be ready for occupancy in the summer. The overall intention of this new housing is to continue our plan of decreasing the use of single family dwelling for housing and increase our supportive housing capacity for young adults wishing to move from their family home.

For the past two to three years your Board of Directors has recognized that the unmet need for housing for people supported will never be met if we wait for scarce dollars from the government.

[See 'From the Desk of ...' on page 4](#)

Back to school

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He's very much in tune with other kids, and he's shown us that he's drawn to other kids with exceptional needs, as they are drawn to Mitchell. I've read numerous studies that show kids are naturally oriented to 'seeing themselves in others.' and we believe that both of Mitchell's worlds will meet in the middle in the school environment we have chosen. We want inclusion for Mitchell but only if it makes sense for him and is to his benefit."

Bonnie and Jason successfully advocated for a more individualized form of support, and

this remains their primary wish for Mitchell as he commences school. "We want Mitchell to be in school with kids of *all* abilities, to experience and learn from his classmates in *all* programs. As much as we want Mitchell to be just like every other child, just like Molly his sister, he's not; there are lots of things he can do and many he cannot. We're going to try reverse integration this September, and Mitchell's school experience this year will direct our future placement decisions on his behalf."

Realizing the dream...

Jason and Bonnie share many dreams for Mitchell and his sister, including the goals of best possible health and excellence in

education. The path to attaining Mitchell's critical health care and developmental outcomes in school may present challenges, but his parents will always weigh program merits with their son's best interests as their guide. ♦

Community Living Peterborough's Family Support Services provides supports and services to children, youth, adults and their families, adhering to the Personal Outcomes Measures of the Council on Quality and Leadership (COL) More info: 705-743-2411

A Call to Action

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Agencies across the province have had to tighten their belts and try to find efficiencies that, in many cases, just don't exist. In Peterborough, we faced some difficult decisions and, through some extreme measures, managed to finish the year without a significant erosion of services. Clearly this is not sustainable. This year promises to offer the same challenges ahead, only magnified, with no end in sight without significant change.

The Board and the agency remain committed to our mission and vision of providing excellent quality supports to our customers and their families. We are working diligently to mitigate the impact to the people we support, our staff, our core services, our programs, and the agency overall. We are asking our membership and community partners to join with our communities and leaders to speak to the government as one voice, with one message. Not only is a cut to our base funding unacceptable, neither is an erosion of existing services, nor ignoring an ever expanding list of individuals in need of services. We envision a better future for the people we support and for our staff members, a future that the province is currently not willing to fund.

Community Living Peterborough has committed to being the lead voice in this city and county to lobby the provincial

government for positive changes to the province's developmental services funding. We will be far more successful with one loud voice if we all stand side-by-side to demand positive change across the province.

We ask that you take an active role by attending all candidates meetings, asking direct questions to our candidates, talking to our MPP, and reaching out to your networks for support.

We have the power and the opportunity, as a unified body, to directly affect the outcome of the upcoming election. It is time to be heard, and it is time for our government to start listening. If we are strategic enough and united as one, we have the opportunity to bring developmental services to the forefront of the election campaign. Please join us, be united, and speak out on behalf of the individuals and families we support. Let's see either our funding agreements, or our government, change this Fall.

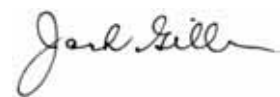
Act Now! Contact Jack Gillan at 705-743-2412 Ext. 516 or jgillan@communitylivingpeterborough.ca for more information and/or to join us in lobbying the electoral candidates to achieve our common goals. We also ask that you contact our local candidates or MPP, and the Honourable Madeleine Meilleur, Ministry of Community and Social Services, to ask that they carefully consider our concerns and issues. ♦

From the Desk of the C.E.O.

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They have directed the staff to continually source out innovative ways to meet the need. We have developed a five year campaign that we are referring to Home of our Own: "100 homes for 100 people," as a response to the Boards challenge. As a result, we have begun to use what funds and assets that we have differently, more resourcefully, and we will be looking to our members to help in this campaign. If you have ideas that you think may help, please email me or give me a call, all ideas will be fully considered.

Respectfully yours,



Jack Gillan
Chief Executive Officer
Community Living Peterborough
705-743-2411 X 516
jgillan@communitylivingpeterborough.ca

Community Living Peterborough
223 Aylmer St, Peterborough, ON K9J 3K3 Tel: 705-743-2411



www.communitylivingpeterborough.ca

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