

New Directions

GUELPH
Independent LIVING
...at home with you!

Summer 2014

Quarterly newsletter for GIL clients



Awards Night and AGM

By Janet Redman

Our agency Awards Night and Annual General Meeting held on June 19 was a wonderful evening: we enjoyed Kim Middleton's keynote address outlining her personal challenges and accomplishments involved in her numerous marathon swims, heard about the agency's accomplishments in 2013-2014 and future goals in 2014-2015, and



concluded the evening with the celebration of 17 employees who received service awards. Included in these awards were seven employees achieving 20 or 25 years of amazing work and commitment at GIL. Thank you to all of the clients, staff, Board members, funders and community partners who attend this celebration. An extra thanks to the clients who assisted GIL in presenting the service awards; I know that the employees appreciated your involvement.

In 2013-14, GIL was able to continue toward its mission of "commitment to our clients living with dignity by delivering quality programs, housing and supportive services." It was a year of growth and change. Three of the most significant events that contributed to the agency's continued success this past year were:

- the expansion of the Outreach program through Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network (WWLHIN) funding
- the agency acting as a mentor to sister organizations in the expansion of the Seniors

Supported Living program across the WWLHIN area, based on the Grange and Dublin model, and

- the change in leadership within the Executive Director role.



Looking forward, GIL will continue to work with its community partners to collaborate and explore efficiencies that will enhance the services for the client population. The Board is committed to the development of a new strategic plan for 2014-2017 to align with the missions of the agency's funders, including the WWLHIN and the County of Wellington. The agency is also looking at opportunities to develop a transportation program for clients, develop Standard Operating Procedures manuals, participate in the Supportive Housing Task Force in Waterloo Wellington and review GIL's Bylaws and Financial Policies.



GIL couldn't do this work without our clients, dedicated and hardworking staff, compassionate volunteers, community partners and the financial support of funders and donors. Thank you to all as GIL builds on its successes into the future.

Wishing everyone a wonderful, warm and relaxing summer...

Norm Moisan – Secretary, Treasurer

Norm wanted to give back to the community, and when GIL approached him to join the Board, it seemed like a good fit.

Norm is a chartered accountant who owns his own accounting firm and has almost 15 years of experience in the not-for-profit sector. Norm cites his well developed skills in charity budgeting and

interpreting financial documents as the greatest assets he brings to the Board.

Norm is married to Theresa and has a young daughter Joelle and a son Xavier.

When he's not working, Norm likes to help non-profit organization in their financial and processes needs.



From L to R: Patricia, Donna, Norm, Julie, Michael and Ravi

Michael Moore – Director at Large

Michael volunteers at GIL because he wants to give back to the community and learn about what programs and services are available in Guelph. He brings leadership to the board through his educational experience in the community and in the writing of curriculum, policies and procedures.

When it comes to his greatest accomplishment, Michael feels that building community programs that

work for “at risk students” and connecting with youth to prepare them for their next steps is where he finds his greatest satisfaction.

He has a wife Cheryl, daughter Sarah, son Nicholas, and dog named Buttercup. Michael describes himself as a down to earth, caring and hard-working person who enjoys helping people and students.

Patricia Stiles – Director at Large

A previous GIL Board member suggested that Patricia become involved with GIL, as her nursing background in the community sector and her previous experience on both local and provincial boards would be helpful to the agency.

Patricia was involved with the Alzheimer Society of Ontario, and sat on the board of the Registered Nurses for Mental Health.

Her long career in mental health and geriatric nursing, working both at the Homewood Health Centre and Waterloo Wellington Community Care Access Centre, provided her with a strong foundation

regarding the health care sector and working with vulnerable clients who rely on care providers for their health care and housing needs.

Her husband Paul and she celebrated their 40-year anniversary last year. On top of her four sons, Patricia has two granddaughters and three grandsons. The family also has an Australian Shepherd dog and two cats.

Patricia enjoys volunteering at Homewood and swimming all year round. She also loves to read and bake and is a Toronto Blue Jays fan.



Ravi Sathasivam – Director at Large

Ravi has always been concerned with the aging population and with the dilemma of how we are preparing to sustain it. He has had his own personal experience with his mother-in-law and the struggles she is facing as she ages.

Ravi accumulated analytical and strategic skills during his 20+ years in the banking/financial industry. During the merger of Canada Trust and TD, he managed the United States dollars’ (USD) portfolio.

Married for 35 years, Ravi and his wife have a son who is 26 and an aspiring accountant. When he isn't

volunteering, Ravi enjoys the sport of cricket and even represented Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) at one time. Nowadays, he remains actively involved in the sport through coaching. He also works out at the YMCA doing cardio and strength training and participates in yoga classes.

Ravi is also a member of the board at the Elliott Community and is a volunteer driver for Family and Children’s Services of Guelph. He describes himself as being friendly, approachable and always willing to listen and lend a helping hand.

Heat-Related Illness

Watch for Signs

Heat-related illnesses can quickly progress from heat exhaustion to heat stroke – and even result in death.

Heat Exhaustion

Take Action

- Move** to a cooler, shaded location.
- Remove** as much clothing as possible (socks and shoes too).
- Cool down** by applying cool wet cloths or ice to your head, face or neck. Spray yourself with cool water.
- Drink** water, clear juice, or a sports drink.
- Get medical aid** if you don't start to feel better.
- Have** someone stay with you until help arrives.

Heat Stroke

Call 911 immediately; this is a medical emergency.

- Stay** with the person until help arrives.
- Move** to a cooler, shaded location.
- Remove** as much clothing as possible (socks and shoes too).
- Wet** the person's skin and clothing with cool water.
- Apply** cold, wet cloths or ice to head, face, neck, armpits, and groin.
- Offer** sips of water, but do not force the person to drink.

SensiMAT

Pressure ulcers, also known as bedsores, are common for those with limited mobility, such as wheelchair users. They happen when the skin presses against a surface for prolonged periods because of the inability to change positions.

Most people shift positions unconsciously; just like breathing, it is automatic. But in the US and Canada, for instance, there are three million wheelchair users, of which over 300,000 have spinal cord injuries that impair sensations under the torso and increases susceptibility to bedsores injuries. Bedsores can lead to risks of infection, hospitalization and mortality.

Co-founders William Mann and David Mravyan developed the idea for SensiMAT when they were working on a mandatory project for their MBA at the Richard Ivey School of Business in Canada. The Toronto Rehabilitation Institute gave them the inspiration.

SensiMAT is a “smart cushion” filled with pressure sensors that can detect how long a person has been

Track Pressure

SensiMAT Systems' proprietary PressureRisk™ algorithm analyzes pressure sensors in your seat and alerts you when you have a high amount of built up pressure

Relieve Pressure

Perform pressure relieving exercises as you normally would, to lower your PressureRisk™

Analyze Trends

Access powerful analytics that allow you to visualize your pressure profile, to help you stick with your relief regimen

sitting in the same position. It fits underneath a wheelchair cushion and connects to a mobile app via Bluetooth to monitor the data. Visual indicators will turn from green to yellow then red after user-adjusted time has elapsed signaling to the user that he/she should change positions. If it detects movement, then the lights go back to green.

The data synchronizes to SensiMAT's server that healthcare professionals can access through a web portal to monitor patients. The cushion and mobile app sell for under \$600. A similar product that clients could take outside a hospital or clinic would come with a \$15,000 price tag.

By Melissa Ip, www.socialenterprisebuzz.com

Tips for Being Active in the Heat

The extra daylight hours of summer make it the perfect season for squeezing in more activity—but the heat can deter even the most dedicated of outdoor exercisers. Follow these tips to stay cool when you're out walking this season.

Get acclimated. Don't shock your body by trying to do too much too soon when the temperature's high—your body needs time to adjust to the heat.

Plan your workouts. Plan your walks for early morning or evening and not during peak sunshine hours when temperatures are the highest.

Stay cool in your clothes. Wear light moisture-wicking clothes—not cotton—so your clothes repel moisture and don't stick to you. Moisture-wicking socks also prevent blisters.

Up your intake of water. If you're active, you need more than the standard one cup of water eight times a day.

Protect your skin. Wear a high SPF sunscreen and don't forget your neck, ears and hands.

Source: Prevention magazine



How to Select Footwear Based on Your Foot Type

Before selecting a shoe, it is important to know your foot type and the characteristics of a shoe best suited for you. Matching your foot type and making a wise decision



around footwear selection is very important, as an improperly chosen shoe can increase undesirable forces and thus increase your risk of injury.

The foot's structure is relatively unique to each individual and can even differ within the same individual from one side to the other.

You can determine your arch type by taking the "wet test." You can perform this easy assessment in the comfort of your own home by dipping your foot in water and then put it

on any surface that will leave an imprint. Match your shape to the pictogram above.



Normal arch

Normal feet leave

an imprint that has a flare but shows the forefoot and heel connected by a wide band.

Biomechanics: A normal foot lands on the outside of the heel and then rolls inward (pronates) slightly to absorb shock.

Best shoes: Stability shoes that offer a blend of cushioning, medial (centre) support and durability.

Flat arch

Flat arches leave a wide and "filled in" imprint.

Biomechanics: The flat or over-pronated foot usually strikes on the outside of the heel and rolls inward (pronates) excessively. Over time, this can cause overuse injuries, such as heel pain, "shin splints" and even knee pain.

Best shoes: Motion-control shoes or stability shoes with firm mid-soles and control features that reduce the degree of pronation. They may include features such as

a medial post (for pronation control), a polyurethane mid-sole (for increased steadiness) and a carbon rubber outsole (for durability).

High arch

High-arched feet leave an imprint showing a very narrow band connecting the forefoot and heel.

Biomechanics: A curved, high-arched or supinated foot (rolls outward) doesn't roll inward (pronate) enough, so it isn't an effective shock absorber.

Best shoes: Cushioned shoes with plenty of flexibility. These generally have the softest mid-soles and the least amount of medial

(centre) support.

Seven tips to ensure your shoes fit properly

Here are seven tips from the American Orthopaedic Foot and Ankle Society to help ensure the best possible fit for your feet:

1. Sizes vary among shoe brands and styles. Don't select shoes by the size marked inside the shoe. Judge the shoe by how it fits on your foot.
2. Have your feet measured regularly. The size of your feet changes as you grown older.
3. Have both feet measured. Most people have one larger foot. Fit to the largest foot.

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Stroke Can Happen at Any Age

Although strokes are most common in people over the age of 70, they can happen at any age. Learning to manage your risk factors can help create more survivors. Some risk factors like age, gender, family history and ethnicity are out of your control, but there are other factors completely within your grasp.



The Heart and Stroke

Foundation has identified some areas that you can manage to reduce your risk. These include:

- **Keep your blood pressure in check.** High blood pressure is often called the silent killer because it has no symptoms.
- **Breathe easy.** Quit smoking and you will immediately reduce your risk of heart attack and stroke.

- **Get active.** Physical activity can help you handle stress, lower blood pressure and cholesterol and maintain a healthy weight.
- **Eat smart.** Avoid trans fat and limit foods high in saturated fat.
- **Watch your weight.** Excess weight around the waist can increase your risk of heart disease and stroke.
- **Limit alcohol.** Consuming more than two alcoholic drinks per day may raise blood pressure levels and contribute to excess weight.
- **De-stress.** Identify the source of your stress, talk to friends and family and take time for yourself.

Visit the link below for more information:

<http://www.heartandstroke.com>

Source: Benefit Connector (OASSIS newsletter) June 2014

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4. Fit at the end of the day when your feet are largest.
5. Stand if possible during the fitting process and check that there is adequate space (three-eighths to one-half inch) for your longest toe at the end of each shoe.
6. Make sure the ball of your foot fits comfortably into the widest part (ball pocket) of the shoe.

7. Don't purchase shoes that feel too tight expecting them to stretch to fit. Many shoes are now available in specific widths.

Your feet are the foundation of your body. Wearing a proper fitting supportive shoe can help you live an active, pain-free life.

Source: Be Active, Spring/Summer 2014, BioPed, www.bioped.com

What to do During a Lightning Storm

If you are in a building:

- Stay away from windows, doors, fireplaces, radiators, stoves, metal pipes, sinks or other electrical charge conductors.
- Unplug TVs, radios, toasters and other electrical appliances.
- Don't use the phone or other electrical equipment.



If you are outside:

- Seek shelter in a building, cave or depressed area.

- If you are caught in the open, crouch with your feet close together, heels touching, cover your ears and keep your head down – it makes you a smaller target.
 - Keep away from telephone and power lines, fences, trees and hilltops.
 - Get off bicycles, motorcycles, tractors, etc.
- If you are in a car:**
- Stop the car, and stay in it.
 - Don't stop near trees or power lines that could fall.

Source: Canadian Red Cross

Relaunch of Qlinks

A LGBTQ+ Online Resource

HIV/AIDS Resources and Community Health (ARCH) is pleased to announce an update to www.qlinks.ca. This website is a one-stop resource developed to support healthy, connected LGBTQ+ communities. The website also has information for people and service providers looking to support LGBTQ+ people.

ARCH, formerly the AIDS Committee of Guelph and Wellington County, is the lead agency on Qlinks. "This online presence provides much-needed visibility for LGBTQ+ communities within our region," said Tom Hammond, Executive Director of ARCH.



The President of the Board of Directors, Nathan Lachowsky, stated, "The redevelopment of Qlinks helps to support ongoing connections within LGBTQ+ communities throughout Guelph, Wellington and Grey Bruce."

Five years after its inception, Qlinks has grown to include an events calendar, information about LGBTQ+ health and wellbeing and news, blogs and features on current LGBTQ+ issues. The website features photography by participants in ARCH's recent Homophobic Graffiti project and continues to seek local contributors.

Source: ARCH news release, May 8, 2014

Town Hall Meetings – May 2014

By Janet Redman

Thank you to all of the clients who attended our recent Town Hall meetings held on May 12 (87 NV) and 13 (WP); it was great to see everyone and have a chance to receive feedback and suggestions for continued improvements to the organization.

The meeting began by reviewing and updating the goals from the December meetings, which included the creation of a standard housekeeping checklist that can be modified to meet the needs and abilities of individual clients, as well as having clients review and provide input into the Housekeeping policy.

The second part of the Town Hall was an open forum to discuss new business and make additional goals for improvement.

Areas of discussion included:

1. **Housekeeping** – Could GIL hire specific housekeepers so that attendants can focus on personal care tasks?
2. **Client Manual** – Standard Operating Procedures would be helpful and informative to clients; especially new clients to provide clearer direction on agency policies that affect them.
3. **Staff** – Concerns that staff is stressed (rushing/running behind, have too many on-calls, clients have to wait for their bookings, staff not getting meal breaks). Noted: staff remains positive and professional.
4. **Scheduled Bookings vs. On-calls** - Do we need more scheduled bookings so that clients aren't constantly interrupted by others that call at the same time every day? Clients report that



attendants may arrive late, be interrupted by a Lifeline call, have to leave early and then run around trying to find a second attendant to assist them. Action: Coordinators to look at booking sheets to determine if additional regular bookings are an option.

5. **Training (Nights)** – New night workers require more training; clients report being tired/half asleep making it difficult for them to direct.

Explanation given of training parameters set to meet budget and scheduling restrictions. Action: Clients offered to help identify night trainers

6. **Wearing of PPE/Masks**

– Confirmed that it is a client's right to request that attendants wear a mask if they arrive at a booking coughing and/or sneezing. Action: Clients can contact the Supervisor to request a small supply of masks to keep on hand in their homes.

7. **Back Safety Mentors Program** – Implemented to improve the overall health and safety on the job by providing early intervention through observation and supportive feedback to new and current attendants. Mentors will work closely with the Coordinators to assess attendants in the specific areas of transfers, lifts, repositioning and range of motion, so that they can provide advice and support on good back health. A standard checklist has been developed. Mentors will not change a client's routine, transfer, lift, reposition or range of motion exercises; they will



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Recreation & Leisure Events

GIL has been planning Recreation and Leisure events for the remainder of 2014 and wants to give you a head's up on what to expect for the rest of the year. Here are some dates to keep in mind when you are planning and budgeting in the coming months.

On September 11, head to St. Jacobs and the newly rebuilt market. Bring lots of bags to stock up on all of your favourite fall fruit and vegetables. The bus will leave around 8:30 am and bring everyone back home in the late afternoon.



Mark October 30 on your calendar! It is Halloween Bowling at Woodlawn Bowl between 2 - 4 pm. Each game is only \$4.25 and bowling shoes are free! Stay tuned for more details.

Christmas is right around the corner, so plan on a trip to the Kitchener Fairview Mall for Christmas shopping on December 2.

December 11 is the Annual Agency Christmas Party at the Elliott Community between 1:30 - 4:00 pm.

For more information about any of these events, contact Kathleen at (519) 836-1812, ext. 20.

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only make recommendations on how Workers can perform these tasks more safely. Concerns about a client's routine should continue to be directed to the Coordinator for follow-up.

8. **GIL Agency Notices** – Memos and letters aren't always being delivered in a timely manner. Recommendation to email notices if possible and deliver hard copies as soon as possible; two



weeks prior for Leisure activities and agency events. Actions: Make a booking for attendants to slip memos/letters under client's apartment door. Telephone Outreach clients when

new attendants are training. Determine which clients can receive information electronically.

9. **On-Call/Shift Coverage for Outreach** – Takes away from booking times of Willow clients; reminder that scheduling issues should be redirected to Admin office during business hours.
10. **Conflict of Interest** – Much discussion regarding boundaries and why conflicts are so serious; also discussed that lack of action when conflicts are discovered could result in loss of funding as per GIL's contractual agreements with the WWLHIN and County of Wellington.
11. **Ceiling Lift Replacement** – GIL recently received funding from the WWLHIN for health and safety initiatives to replace aging ceiling lift units. Attendants participated in assessing the units and GIL will now determine what units will be replaced (oldest first). Load testing of tracking will be performed prior to installation.

Tea and Tales at the Enabling Garden

Every Friday until the end of August, the Enabling Garden will host a free hour of storytelling and iced tea beside the Speed River between 10:30 – 11:30 am.

The stories you will hear are for adults who enjoy a good tale told by a member of the Guelph Guild of Storytellers, and they won't include bunnies or billy goats. The guild members promote the oral tradition of storytelling with original, traditional, literary and personal stories.

The tentative schedule for August follows:

Aug. 1: Michael Doherty, Brian Holstein

Aug. 8 – (Brian Holstein), Sya VanGeest

Aug. 15 – Maryann Bailey, Jay Wilson

Aug. 22 – Beve Matson, Elizabeth Matson

Aug. 29 – Frank Toplin, Brian Holstein, Tannis Slimmon

If you can bring along a lawn chair and a drinking container, that would be great, but if you can't, the volunteers at the garden will help you.

For more information on the Guelph Guild of Storytellers, contact:

Sandy: 519-767-0017

Sya: 519-829-2152



Registered Disability Savings Plan

By Dan Matwey, MBA, CFP

Registered Disability Savings Plan: Buying a dollar for 25 cents!

In this issue, I will address the Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP), which I know many, but not all of you, will be familiar with. There will likely be others who have heard of RDSPs, but find the whole thing rather confusing and have not acted on it for that reason. I'm going to try to simplify things a bit and give you a better understanding. First of all, let's look at who can qualify to have an RDSP.

Who is eligible?

- You must first of all qualify for the Disability Tax Credit (discussed last newsletter);

- The account must be opened before Dec 31 of the year you turn 59;
- You must be a Canadian Resident; and
- You must have a valid Social Insurance Number.

That's fine and good you may say, but what exactly can it do for me? Well, actually it can do a lot of things. The RDSP is a long-term plan designed to help individuals with disabilities to have a better future, and there are a variety of ways it can do that. The first of which I'll discuss is Registered Disability Savings Grants and Bonds, which can be part of the plan. You are able to receive these until Dec 31 of the year you turn 49, so don't miss out if you are in a position to

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receive them. Perhaps the best way of illustrating how grants and bonds work is with an example.

George is a 37 year old with Cerebral Palsy who collects ODSP but also has a part time job. His total income this year will be \$22,500. George has had a RDSP since 2008 and would like to make a \$1,500 contribution to his plan this year. He wants to know what impact it will have on his account. Since George is contributing \$1,500, he will receive \$3,500 from the government in grants. Since he's under the age of 49, he'll also automatically receive a \$1,000 bond. After all is said and done, for the \$1,500 George contributed, there would now be a total of \$6,000 added to his account this year. In other words, it's like spending a quarter and receiving a dollar. Imagine if George did that for a number of years. You can see that it would turn into a significant amount of money. The maximum grant for any given year is \$3,500 and \$70,000 over the life of the plan.

What if you're not like George and don't have any money to put into the plan? Well, don't be discouraged because you're still eligible for the bonds. In fact, if you're under the age of 49 and have been eligible for the Tax Credit since 2008, you can go back and collect the bonds for all the years you've missed. Many people I've helped open a plan this year will have \$7,000 in their RDSP without contributing any money themselves – that alone is a very good reason to start a plan. One very important aspect to note about the grants and bonds is what's called a "vesting" period or a 10-year period where you're able to withdraw those funds without penalty. That's simply part of the government's plan for this to be a long-term savings strategy.

What else about RDSP's is important to know?
Perhaps the most important feature is that any money

you have in an RDSP can never affect your Ontario Disability Support Payments (ODSP). That includes the income or withdrawals you make at a later date. This is extremely useful for someone over the age of 49 who thinks the plan mayn't help them because they're too old to collect grants and bonds. This is where there are a lot of estate planning opportunities, particularly if someone expects to receive an inheritance from his/her parents. Often individuals will disqualify themselves from ODSP because they've put money in a bank, but there may very well be a way of avoiding that problem.

Other features about RDSPs:

- Flexibility of Account Holder: the individual who is the beneficiary doesn't have to manage the plan themselves. It could be a qualified family member or a legal guardian as well;
- Grants and bonds are retroactive back to 2008 for those who are eligible. This again is very important. Feel free to contact me if you need more details of how this works;
- Lifetime contributions to a plan can be up to \$200,000. This allows for many, many estate planning benefits, which your parents might be very interested in hearing about;
- Anybody can make contributions to the plan; and
- Investments grow tax deferred, which means the beneficiary will pay tax (on growth and government contributions) at time of withdrawal.

I can assure those of you who qualify that there is a tremendous benefit to opening an RDSP. I will gladly help you do that, or discuss if you think it's the right option for you. Or, better yet, if you would like to involve your family in a discussion to see how this fits with other plans already in place, that would be a very good idea as well. You can call or email me at:

Phone: 226 343-1104 (cell)
Email: dan.matwey@dfsinc.ca

Transportation Committee

Access to reliable, affordable transportation is an important issue GIL clients face. That is why Executive Director Janet Redman recently asked for your input relating to how not having reliable transportation may limit your ability to attend medical appointments, special family functions or other events in and around Guelph.

GIL has reviewed the completed surveys and now the planning begins. We would like your help.

Anyone interested in volunteering to be part of the Transportation Committee should contact Janet for more information. You can contact her via email at janet@guelphindependentliving.org. or call 519-836-1812, ext. 30 to speak to her directly.



Electronic Communications

As you read in the Town Hall article earlier in this newsletter, there is sometimes a delay in communications from the administration office to clients. One way to speed up the delivery of memos and notices is for GIL staff to email important information directly to you.

With the recent introduction of the Canadian Antispam Legislation (CASL), GIL needs your permission to send you electronic messages. If receiving emails from GIL is okay with you, please check the box below and provide your email address. Return this form to your program coordinator, and sit back and enjoy the benefits of up-to-date communications delivery right to your computer.

Yes, I would like to receive electronic communications from GIL (check this box).

Your email: _____

This newsletter is available in alternate formats. Contact Kathleen at kathleen@guelphindependentliving.org or (519) 836-1812, ext. 20 for more information.