

# New Directions

## Summer 2016

GUELPH  
Independent **LIVING**

Quarterly publication for GIL clients

[www.guelphindependentliving.org](http://www.guelphindependentliving.org)



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## Mark it in Your Calendar!

**September 28** - Grand River Raceway

**October 16** - Footloose at the Dunfield Theatre  
Cambridge

**November 3 & 15** - UW Chili Cook-off Fundraisers

**November 30** - Annual Christmas Shopping Trip

## Slice of Summer!

*By Janet Redman*

On June 15, 2016, Guelph Independent Living (GIL) hosted our Annual General Meeting. Following the formal business portion of the meeting, we awarded eleven employees with Service Awards for length of service ranging from 5 – 25 years. Thank you to the clients who presented awards to front-line employees in attendance: Cheryl V (5 years), Susan M (5 years) and Kirsten S (5 years).

To celebrate GIL's accomplishments over the past year, Tricia Stiles (retiring Board member) shared the agency presentation recently delivered to the Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network (WWLHIN) at their May Board meeting. Tricia began with "Joe's story" which outlined the life of GIL client, Joe Weiler, who was able to live independently within the Guelph community for almost 30 years with support from GIL Outreach attendants. Tricia then provided an overview of GIL including its mission and vision, programs offered, Board-led integration activities, plus future opportunities and potential risks.

During the 2015-2016 fiscal year, the GIL Board of Directors worked with clients, employees and

stakeholders to develop a new strategic plan for 2015-2018 that focuses on six key areas. Foremost, we will strive for further improvement in relation to our service models, quality assurance and partnerships. In addition, we will explore opportunities for growth, strengthen governance and evolve our organizational identity. In preparation, we have begun to audit the capacity of the current administrative structure and develop efficiencies to assist in working toward our defined objectives.

The Board of Directors also completed the revision of its governing Bylaws plus drafted and approved a new set of Governance policies. Together, these initiatives will strengthen GIL's ability to move forward in a responsible and accountable manner.

Two significant capital projects were completed in 2015-16: the renovation of two new modified units at 238 Willow Road made possible through the partnership between our two principal funding agencies, the WWLHIN and the

County of Wellington – Housing Services. Tenants moved into these units in April 2015, bringing to 23 the number of fully accessible units, 16 of which receive 24-hour support services through GIL. A second project replaced the Make-Up Air units on the roof of the Willow Road building, improving the air quality throughout the common areas.



With funding support provided by the Ministry of Health, GIL implemented the second of the three-year Workplace Stabilization plan to increase wages of our front-line health employees.

In addition, significant achievements were realized through:

- Development and roll-out of a Medication policy;
- Implementation of biweekly electronic staff newsletter;
- Development of after-hours On-Call support for Outreach employees; and,
- Work on a Quality Assurance project to improve timely communication with clients.

To support clients, GIL again contracted with an outside agency to offer clients a thorough cleaning of their homes and offered information sessions featuring the Supervisor from Guelph Mobility Services and the Accessibility Coordinator from the City of Guelph.

At the heart of all of these achievements and programs lies a dedicated group of employees and volunteers, a network of community partners and the financial contributions of funders and donors. Our deepest thanks goes to all who have provided this support, recognizing that it comprises the essence of our ability to serve.

## GIL BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The GIL Board of Directors held meetings on May 25, 2016 and June 15, 2016; highlights include:

- Approval of the 2015-2016 Audited statements for both the Housing and Health portfolios,
- Approval of the Board's Succession Plan; a requirement for the County of Wellington. The Board also provided the plan to the WWLHIN,
- Operational Review currently underway by the County of Wellington and Building Condition Assessment to be scheduled during the summer; both reports to be sent to the Board for review and consideration,
- Results from the Annual Unit Inspections completed at Willow Place earlier in 2016,

- Approval of the WWLHIN Schedule G – Declaration of Compliance for April 1, 2015 - March 31, 2016,

- Results from the 2016 Board survey, and

- Approval of the Board executive for 2016-2017:

Chair – Leanne Warren

Vice Chair – Eleanor Ross

Secretary – Nigel Smith

Treasurer – Ravi Sathasivam

Past Chair – Donna Lychwa

# CLIENT TOWN HALL MEETINGS – MAY 2016 HIGHLIGHTS

Thank you to all of the clients who attended our Town Hall meetings held on June 3rd at both 87 Neeve and 238 Willow; it is good to continue to have a mechanism to receive valuable feedback and suggestions for continual improvement to our organization. Several items were presented by senior leadership for feedback including:

1. Notification when clients pass away – GIL recently lost two long-term clients from the Outreach program; both had received attendant services for over 20 years. Clients wishing to pay respects would like to receive notice in a timely manner. Based on suggestions, GIL will look at how to notify clients including funeral details (similar to that done for Workers) and publish a memorial in the next Agency newsletter.

2. Medication Policy – was rolled out to the agency earlier this year. Clients reported that they have not seen too many differences to service provision, although Workers seem apprehensive about making errors. Janet reported that GIL has been tracking errors and a Quality Committee involving front-line employees has been established to help identify root causes and ideas for improvement to reduce/eliminate errors. There has been no disciplines to-date as everyone is still becoming familiar with the new policy and procedures.

3. Annual General Meeting – was held on Wednesday June 15th at 6 pm at the Elliott Community Centre on Metcalfe. Clients and employees were all encouraged to attend to meet the Board of Directors, hear what GIL has accomplished over the

past year and to celebrate with employees receiving their Service Awards, including many who have been with the agency for 15-25 years.

4. Leisure Events – Clients reported receiving the list of the year's events, but would also appreciate more frequent reminders. GIL agreed to include event dates in each edition of the Agency newsletter and regularly update the GIL website.

### **The following items were discussed at Willow Place only:**

1. Operation Review and Building Condition Assessment (BCA) – details on the next page in 'Happenings at 238 Willow'.

2. ARGO Ceiling lifts – clients expressed concern about the number of repairs required on these lifts that were installed only 2 years old; GIL is also not satisfied with the product quality. References and product comparisons were completed when deciding what brand of lifts to purchase. GIL will communicate concerns with the Vendor and ARGO company.

3. Client/Tenant activity committee – questions were raised about an accessible/covered area outside where tenants can gather, as well as the option of using the Activity room for planned activities. Clients/tenants were encouraged to organize an independent committee: the Activity room can be booked through the Property Coordinator and a proposal for outdoor space can be forwarded to Janet for Board consideration.



# HAPPENINGS AT 238 WILLOW

Not only has Willow Road been torn up as the City of Guelph replaced the central water main plus connections and water supply lines to each home/building, it has been a busy summer onsite at our Willow apartment building!!

- In late May, our Housing Advisor from the County of Wellington was onsite to complete an Operational Review. This review looked at the Board's and Property Management's adherence to County Directives. The Board recently received the final report and will work diligently to make recommended changes to ensure the agency's compliance with legislative requirements.
- On July 12, an engineer from MTE Consultants Inc spent the day inspecting all building components

to gather details as part of a Building Condition Assessment (BCA). This assessment, completed every 5-6 years, provides information to the GIL Board to guide them in deciding what capital repairs/replacements should be completed to ensure the longevity of the building for a safe, healthy living environment. Thank you to those tenants who permitted us to tour their units as part of the BCA and to Building Superintendent, David, for sharing his extensive knowledge of the building.

- Finally, in early August Telus Mobility brought a large crane into the parking lot to remove their cellular towers and storage shed off the building roof, as a result of the termination of their contract with GIL.

# NEW CLIENT ORIENTATION GUIDE

We would like to introduce Scott Collings as the new GIL contract employee who is working on compiling an Orientation Guide for Clients and updating GIL's Standard Operating Procedures Manual for workers.

In response to numerous client queries and suggestions, GIL is in the process of creating an Orientation Guide for our clients. This short but concise guide will offer clients pertinent information about Guelph Independent Living, its policies, programs, service delivery model and the client-service provider relationship. Compiled utilizing

input from both clients and staff, we anticipate it will become a valuable tool for our clients, both those existing and new to GIL.

In conjunction with the afore mentioned Client Orientation Guide, GIL is also updating its Standard Operating Manual for front-line Workers. This manual will reflect new, as well updated and evolving GIL policies and procedures.

Watch for the roll-out of both documents in the fall of 2016.

## 2016 YEARS OF SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

### **Jennifer B, 10 years Assisted Living, Willow**

Jennifer's passion and dedication for the well-being of the clients are gifts she brings to the team. Jen always enjoys the challenge of helping a client to figure out ways to do a task as independently as possible.

Recently Jen returned to college and completed a diploma in Social Work and remains on our casual staff list. When Jen is not at work or in school she can be found at her loom creatively weaving many stunning creations.

### **David B, 5 years Willow Superintendant**

David is a hard working dedicated employee, with extensive knowledge in building maintenance and upkeep. He is committed to doing his best for the tenants at all times. He has a kind and willing heart always ready to lend a helping hand when the need arises.

When David is not on duty he enjoys woodworking and hanging out with Betty, his dog. David also loves spending time with his kids and grandkids.

### **Jennifer F, 5 years Assisted Living, 85 Neeve**

Jennifer works at the seniors program and is an active member of both the Joint Health & Safety Committee and the Leisure program.

Jen is reliable, consistent and you can always depend on her to help out in any way she can. Jen is an avid knitter, an accomplished baker and has a big generous heart to hold everyone together.

### **Sandy H, 20 years Assisted Living, Willow**

Sandy is a hard working dedicated member of the Night Shift team. She brings her many years of valuable experience to the clients she serves. Sandy is reliable, dependable and always conducts herself in a professional manner.

Sandy enjoys spending time with her family and extended family. She has a gracious heart always willing to lend a hand where needed.

### **Susan M, 5 years Outreach**

Susan is known for providing consistent quality care and her dedication to her clients and the team of people she works with. She is an enthusiastic member of our Joint Health and Safety Committee and recently became a certified member.

In her spare time, she taxis her daughter around to many activities.

### **Terry M, 20 years Assisted Living, 87 Neeve**

When Terry is not working frontline, you can find her participating as co-chair of the Joint Health and Safety committee, the Back Safety Mentor Program, the Employer-Employee Relations Committee, or completing monthly workplace Health and Safety inspections of the various work locations. Terry loves her role as a Leisure Attendant and is always willing and ready to assist GIL clients on various trips throughout the year.

In her spare time, Terry is involved in many community activities and volunteers her time whenever she can.

## **Julita N, 20 years Assisted Living, 87 Neeve**

Julita is a hard working member of the 87NV team. Julita is well liked by the clients she serves and by her co-workers.

Julita is a busy mom and wife. She and her family love to travel and enjoy many activities together. Her coworkers really enjoy Julita's culinary skills, especially her spring rolls.

## **Wanda O, 25 years Assisted Living, 85 Neeve**

Wanda O'Brien is a long standing employee who has been with GIL through many changes and developments. Wanda's wealth of experience and expertise, combined with her caring and empathetic nature, make her a wonderful member of our organization.

Wanda is an active member of our Leisure program, and enjoys the outings as much as the clients do. When not at work, she loves to spend time with her grandbabies.

## **Julia P, 10 years Outreach**

Julia brings a warmth and enthusiasm to her work, and has become a valued member of the Outreach team and those receiving GIL services. When not working frontline, she can be found assisting in the Back Safety Mentor Program. Julia is one of only 3 frontline GIL employees with no sick time in the last fiscal year (or two)!

Julia is an active member of the Accessibility Advisory Committee of Guelph, and in her spare time she supports the local music industry.

## **Kirsten S, 5 years Assisted Living, 87 Neeve**

Kirsten began working at GIL on the night shift team; recently moving to the day and evening shifts, lending her care and compassion to the clients she serves. She is known for her calming presence and her professionalism in all circumstances. Kirsten is a member of the Quality Assurance team and was recently voted into the Union Secretary Position.

In her spare time, Kirsten enjoys creative work and is known for frequenting the Michaels store.

## **Hushim T, 10 years Assisted Living, Willow**

Hushim is an anchor member of the WP team. She brings her care and compassion to the clients she serves with respect and professionalism. Hushim's attention to detail and sense of humour is appreciated by her clients. Her smile is infectious.

Hushim is proud of her heritage and has been known to teach traditional dances within her community. She is a wonderful cook and often brings her tasty treats to our team meetings.

## **Cheryl V, 5 years Outreach**

Cheryl is an enthusiastic, hard-working member of the Outreach team, and an active member of the Back Mentor Program. She is known for always being willing to assist with extra shifts, helping out in any way she can, and showing her dedication to the clients of GIL on every shift.

Outside of work, Cheryl is a proud mother to two grown children.

# Meet the Board - Leanne Warren

Leanne Warren worked for GIL until the end of 2005, and she truly enjoyed the experience. She believes in lifelong learning and feels that learning about this organization from the Board's perspective will be meaningful for her in that respect.

Leanne learned a lot while working for GIL, and as a result she continues to work in a similar capacity as the Accessibility Coordinator of the City of Guelph. She is very familiar with interpreting accessibility legislation, policy and program development and implementation. She believes that she brings with her the ability to understand and connect with barriers that people experience.

Leanne feels that her greatest personal accomplishment is when she is able to explain an important topic to someone and they understand it. This leads her to fulfill her need to engage others and give them another side to consider. She says she really gets a kick out of people taking the time to engage her with other perspectives for consideration as well.



Family is very important to Leanne. She was very fortunate to have found her soul-mate 34 years ago. They have two, now adult, children and three very busy little grand-daughters! Family is Leanne's first passion, but she's also an amateur photographer with a focus on architecture. She exercises her competitive side by taking courses and learning wherever she can, then imparting her knowledge on others, like her brothers and sister who, in her opinion, don't really know everything (that's where her regularly

repressed competitive side comes out)!

If there were one thing Leanne would like GIL staff, clients and community partners to know about her, it's that she really enjoys creating conditions where people can maximize their potential if they choose to do so, and supporting them as they wish.

Congratulations Leanne on your appointment as the new Chair of the GIL Board of Directors!

***“The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched - they must be felt with the heart.”***

*-- Hellen Keller*



## CLIENT MEMORIALS

**Joe Weiler** was a client of the Guelph Independent Living (GIL) Outreach program for over 25 years; he passed away on April 11, 2016 at the age of 60. Joe loved the outdoors; in earlier years he spent many hours enjoying fishing and hunting with his family and friends. In more recent years, he could be seen in his wheelchair enjoying the trails along the Speed River.

Thank you to Joe's family for giving their permission for GIL to share his story with our funders at the WWLHIN to raise awareness of the Independent Living philosophy and agencies designed to promote the independence of adults with physical disabilities.



**Grant Towriss** was a client with GIL for many years; originally with the Supportive Housing program when it was located at Twin Towers at 53 Speedvale and then later with the Outreach Program. He passed away suddenly on April 22, 2016 at the age of 63.

Grant loved to spend time with his family and friends; sharing with them his keen interest in music and card games.

Thank you to Grant for enriching our lives with his easy-going nature and infectious smile.

**Evelyn Herron** was only part of the Outreach program for a short period; passing away suddenly on July 8, 2016 at the age of 66. This photo of Evelyn was taken at the GIL picnic this year.

Through her countless hours of volunteering and advocacy work; Evelyn provided thought-provoking solutions and worked tirelessly to make the Guelph community a better place. You could always hear the compassion of those experiencing barriers in her messages.

She was an avid fan of both the Guelph Royals and Guelph Storm and could often be seen at their games.

Additional thanks for her work on GIL's Transportation program.



# DON'T GET SCAMMED!

Beware of tax fraud schemes. If you get a call or email that sounds like a scam, it probably is.

When the CRA contacts you, it makes sure your personal information is protected.

## The CRA will never:

- ask for personal information by email or text message;
- request payment by prepaid credit card;
- Share your tax information with another person or organization, unless you have agreed that it can be shared;
- leave personal information on an answering machine;
- threaten or use nasty language.

- When in doubt, check My Account or call 1-800-959-8281.
- To learn more about your personal income tax and benefit information, and to manage your tax affairs online, go to [www.cra.gc.ca/myaccount](http://www.cra.gc.ca/myaccount).

For information on scams or to report deceptive telemarketing, contact the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre (CAFC) online at [www.antifraudcentre.ca](http://www.antifraudcentre.ca) or toll free at 1-888-495-8501. If you believe you may be the victim of fraud or have given personal or financial information by mistake, contact your local police service.

For more information, go to [www.cra.gc.ca/fraudprevention](http://www.cra.gc.ca/fraudprevention)

# “FINDING YOUR WAY” EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY - ALZHEIMER SOCIETY

**Finding Your Way** is a new provincial program developed by the Alzheimer Society of Ontario and funded by the Government of Ontario. Aimed at educating community partners and the general public on the basics of dementia, it is also an important resource on how to keep people with dementia safe in our communities. 60% of people with dementia go missing at some point, and half of those who go missing for 24 hours end up injured or dead. Finding Your Way gives information that covers all aspects of keeping people safe - from proactive safety measures, to what to do when someone has gone missing, to what to do if you find someone who seems lost.

The Alzheimer Society of Waterloo Wellington is taking the lead in sharing this resource with the public and invites you to visit the Finding Your Way website to register for their free Online Learning course and add some helpful tools to your arsenal:

- Learn about dementia and how to communicate with someone with dementia
- Learn about the risks people with dementia face when navigating the community and how we can mitigate them

- Learn what to do when someone goes missing, and how to assist someone who seems lost
- Gain access to a number of incredible resources - checklists, brochures, videos, information on locating devices, and more

They also offer in-person seminars that cover Finding Your Way, and have a number of printed resources to serve your needs.

How can you participate in this initiative? Visit the site at [www.findingyourwayontario.ca](http://www.findingyourwayontario.ca), take the Online Learning course, and contact *Alzheimer Society of Waterloo Wellington* for more information! Happy learning!

*Robin Smart, Public Education Coordinator  
Alzheimer Society of Waterloo Wellington  
207 - 255 Woodlawn Rd. W., Guelph, ON N1H 8J1  
519-836-7672 X 3013*



# CHANGES TO THE AODA CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARD

The Ontario Government recently announced some significant changes to the Customer Service Standard under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

One of the important changes is that as of July 1, 2016, all staff and volunteers, regardless of their contact with the public, must receive training on the Customer Service Standard. Previously only those who dealt directly with the public had to be trained.

Another important amendment concerns service animals. The government has expanded the list of professionals authorized to provide documents indicating the need for a service animal. Doctors

and nurses were originally the only ones allowed to provide such authorization, but the list now includes psychologists, psychotherapists, audiologists, chiropractors and optometrists.

Finally, an organization can now only require a support person to accompany someone with a disability for the purposes of health or safety, and only in consultation with the person. If it is determined that a support person is required, the fee for the support person must be waived.

GIL policies, documents and training will be updated accordingly.

## ‘PEER CONNECTIONS’ - FROM SPINAL CORD INJURY ONTARIO

### Coming this Fall...

Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) Ontario’s Peer Connections are interactive networking events designed to create educational opportunities for discussion about a number of subjects of interest to people with SCI and their families and healthcare professionals.

SCI Ontario will also be recruiting for Peer Volunteers in the Guelph area. Peer Support Volunteers are those with personal experience with an SCI and family members of people with injuries. Our volunteers have “been there; done that” and are willing to help those who are newly injured, and their families, as they adjust to life with an SCI.

For more information please contact Angie Morton at [Angela.Morton@sciontario.org](mailto:Angela.Morton@sciontario.org) or **1-905-383-0216**.



# ACCESS RECOGNITION AWARDS 2016

The **Guelph Barrier Free Access Recognition Awards** for 2016 will be presented by Mayor Cam Guthrie during a televised City Council meeting. There are two streams of awards: the first is an outstanding accomplishment of an individual with a disability and the second is an outstanding contribution of an individual or business.

Do you want to nominate someone for an award? Here's the high level details:

### **Outstanding Contribution of an Individual or Business**

The nominee has made an outstanding contribution above and beyond the expectations and requirements of the current Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 (AODA) by removing barriers for individuals with disabilities.

OR

### **Outstanding Accomplishment of an Individual(s)**

The nominee with a disability has overcome their personal barriers to accomplish or fulfill a goal or a dream.

Applications for the Access Awareness awards can be found at Guelph Independent Living. **Deadline to submit an application is August 31, 2016.** More details can be found on the nomination form.



## LAUNCH OF “THE FRENCH CONNECTION”

### GIL'S NEW TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

Beginning in September 2016 Guelph Independent Living will roll out its NEW Transportation Program! The purpose of the program is to provide funding toward accessible transportation for adults and seniors with permanent physical impairments who are GIL clients receiving services through the GIL Assisted Living and Outreach programs'. Clients can apply to have a portion of their travel expenses funded in order to participate in their community.

Particulars include:

- \$1250 every three months beginning April 1 each year to be shared between eligible applicants;
- Guideline limit of \$300 per client per fiscal year to ensure equal access;
- Fund the least expensive method of transportation that accommodates the accessibility needs of the client;
- Priority given to medical related travel;
- Client pays first \$20 (minimum) for out-of-town

OR up to 25% for more lengthy/expensive trips and equivalent to current Guelph Mobility fee for in-town;

- Client applies to the GIL Admin office, preferably 14 days in advance for non-urgent trips and to their Program Staff office for urgent, last-minute trips;
- Client may have to pay for the travel upfront and then be reimbursed upon approval and proper invoicing to GIL.



For more information and/or to access this funding, please contact the GIL Admin office at 519-836-1812 extension 20. During the roll-out process, revisions may be made to the process to ensure there is equitable access to the Transportation Program funding.

Many thanks to the Program committee: clients Ken, Sarah and Evelyn; community partner Lynda French and Board member Donna Lychwa for all their hard work, input and great ideas.

# ROBIN GERUS – MOBILITY SUPERVISOR, GUELPH TRANSIT

As the Supervisor of Mobility Service, Guelph Transit, I am honored to serve the citizens of Guelph. I bring to this position 35 years of experience in the public transit industry, working with all modes of transportation. My management style is one that is transparent and built on trust. I have a “back to the basics” philosophy that is geared towards meeting our customers’ expectations. We understand the importance of developing good relationships with our customers to better



serve our community. Our Mobility Transit Service Dispatchers and Operators strive to provide the most efficient service possible. Together, we are proud of serving you, our valued customers. Please feel free to contact the Mobility offices during business hours at **519 822 1811** or call me directly at **519 822- 1811 extension 2461**.



## UPCOMING 2016 LEISURE EVENTS

DATE	EVENT	TIME	PRICE
Wednesday September 28	<b>Grand River Raceway, Elora</b>	5:30-10:00pm	\$25.00 each for clients & guests
Sunday, October 16	<b>Footloose at the Dunfield Theatre, Cambridge</b>	2:00-4:30pm	\$40.68 each for clients & guests
Wednesday November 30	<b>Christmas Shopping, Kitchener Fairview Mall</b>	10:00am- 3:00pm	Clients: \$10.00 Guests: \$20.00

## CHILI COOK-OFF LUNCHEON - SAVE THE DATE!

**85 Neeve - November 3, 12-1:30pm**

**Willow Place - November 15, 12-1:30pm**

*All proceeds go to the United Way Guelph Wellington Dufferin*

***Everyone is welcome to attend!***