

New Directions

FALL 2020

GUELPH
Independent **LIVING**

Quarterly Agency Newsletter

www.guelphindependentliving.org



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GIL is being creative in delivering its Leisure program this year. Watch for a surprise on its way in time for Christmas.



On December 3
celebrate
"Inclusive, accessible and sustainable societies"
in recognition of
International Day of
Persons with Disabilities

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK ...

"These so-called bleak times are necessary to go through in order to get to a much, much better place." ~ David Lynch

We now find ourselves more than eight months into this pandemic. In a world that is challenging on many levels, I am sincerely grateful and appreciative of the hard work, understanding and patience of clients and employees in a very unbalanced and ever-changing environment.

While I remain hopeful that things will improve in the near year, so long as this virus remains a part of our lives, the measures Guelph Independent Living has put in place to keep everyone safe and healthy will continue. These measures include personal protective equipment, daily screeners for clients and employees, reduced client services based on staffing avail-

ability and working from home if possible (Admin). All are based on Public Health Ontario guidelines, the need to physical distance and minimize interactions between people.

This edition of GIL's agency newsletter is designed to highlight positive things happening within the organization as well as in the Guelph community and beyond; I hope you enjoy it.

Keep well. Keep safe.

Janet



THANK YOU - LEANNE WARREN



The GIL Board of Directors extends their thanks to Leanne Warren for her contributions to the agency including two years as Board Chair. Leanne brought a breadth of skills to her role, always with a focus on accessibility and client independence. We look forward to continuing to cross paths with her as the Accessibility Project Specialist with the City of Guelph.

GIL BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The GIL Board of Directors met virtually via ZOOM on September 22, 2020; highlights include:

- Willow Place building updates on the commercial space construction project, unit turnovers and policy development regarding pets and arrears payments;
- Discussion about the development of a new strategic plan for GIL;

CONGRATULATIONS VICTOR MACIULIS

Thank you to Vic for overseeing the agency's finances for the past 10+ years. GIL wishes Vic all the best in his retirement as he embarks on the next chapter of his life. We know he will keep busy skiing, biking, attending bootcamp, and spending time with family and friends.



UNITED WAY CAMPAIGN

This year's United Way fundraising campaign may look different with COVID precautions limiting in-person fundraisers; however, GIL employees remain diligent in raising funds for this valuable cause.

In October we held an employee raffle with store gift cards as prizes and raised over \$500. In November we are having two 50/50 draws to add to our total.

Additionally we are holding a food drive to benefit Chalmers Community Services Centre and the

United Way. Boxes of donated food items will be collected from Admin and all staff offices to be delivered to Chalmers in early December. These items will help those who are experiencing food insecurity.

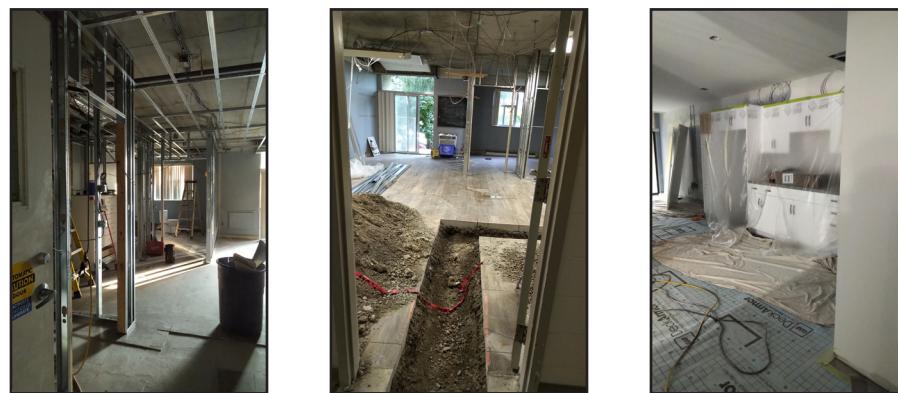


United Way
Guelph Wellington
Dufferin

NEW UNITS AT 238 WILLOW

Guelph Independent Living is pleased to announce the opening of two new 1-bedroom affordable market rent apartments at 238 Willow Road. The units are located on the lower level of the building in the former GIL main office space. Construction costs and city development fees were covered through funding made available through the County of Wellington and building capital reserves (which will be refunded by rent from the units).

Planning for the units began in June 2019 and included business plan development, approval by the County of Wellington and City of Guelph, engineering work, increasing the number of onsite parking spaces and opening



PHONE IT FORWARD

"Donate a smartphone. Change the life of someone who's blind"

Don't know what to do with that old smartphone? Phone It Forward, part of the CNIB Foundation, gives Canadians an opportunity to donate their old phones, receive a tax receipt, and empower people who are blind.

Phone It Forward will wipe the donated phone to the highest data security standards and load it with accessible apps. It is then given directly to a Canadian with sight loss who will receive one-to-one training, discounted maintenance, and data plan support.

Accessible smartphone apps make it possible to

do many things that may have seemed challenging before. It can help someone with sight loss to:

- take medication safely
- find their way through an unfamiliar place
- do many day-to-day tasks that are often taken for granted

To donate your phone, or learn more about Phone It Forward, visit phoneitforward.ca or call 1-833-554-502



“TRENDING – HOW AND WHY STUFF GETS POPULAR”

Guelph author and journalist, Kira Vermond, has been nominated for the Yellow Cedar Award for her children's book, Trending: How and Why Stuff Gets Popular, published by Owlkids Books in Toronto. The Yellow Cedar Award is awarded by the Ontario Library Association's (OLA) 2021 Forest of Reading program, the largest recreational reading award program in Canada with children voting for the winners each year in May.

Trending is a fun short nonfiction which explores what a fad is, how they catch on, and what makes us join in on the craze. The book also looks at the interesting and even startling effects fads can have, even in changing the course of history.

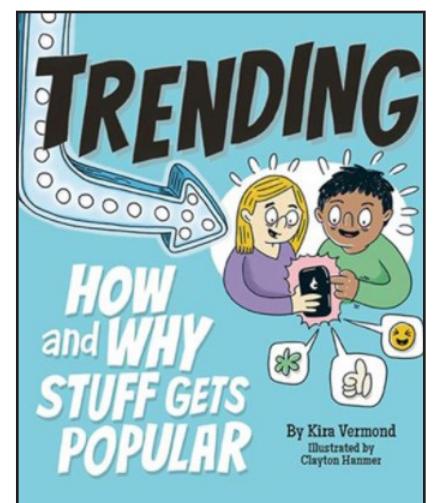
"I'm so super excited about this nomination for Trending," Vermond said about the book. *"For years I've been interested in fads, trends and why people follow the herd, so this book was a true labour of love."*

With fads always in the back of her mind, Vermond discovered there were no children's books on the topic of trends, which surprised her as fads are a big part of kid's lives, she stated. Especially with so much happening online. And through more research she learned fads play a great deal in everyone's lives.

She uses quinoa as an example, which was popular a few years ago, stating we all ate quinoa for a while. Vermond said, because the fad took off and then slowly fizzled out, she asks what happens to all the quinoa farmers and the people who are directly affected by the industry? *"It can have really serious and far-reaching consequences in our lives,"* said Vermond.

The book also has a podcast, [The Buzz: Kids Edition](#) which Vermond produced during her free time during the COVID-19 lockdown. Using music and sound effects the story comes alive and covers everything from Crocs and unicorn drinks to beaver felt hats and propaganda.

<https://www.guelphtoday.com>



ENTER TO WIN A COPY OF “TRENDING”

Please call Rowena at 519-836-1812 ext 249 and leave your name and phone number for a chance to win one of two books. Draw will take place December 4.

WEBSITE UPDATE

Guelph Independent Living operates in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians Disability Act (AODA). The requirements of the Act are to identify and remove barriers for individuals living with disabilities in our province including mandated standards that information is present in many formats.

In accordance with these regulations, our agency completed and submitted an AODA Accessibility Compliance report this summer. This report ensures and confirms that our agency is currently meeting and acting in accordance with AODA guidelines. The Ontario government uses the reports submitted by organizations and businesses across the province so that Ontario is on track to becoming barrier free by 2025.

PROVINCIAL STOCKPILE DELIVERIES

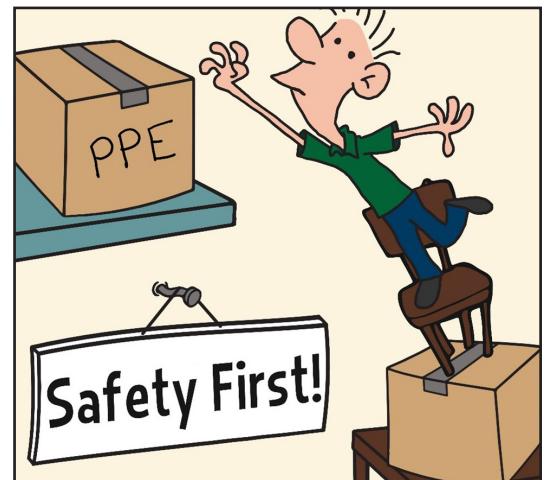
In early August, the provincial government announced they had secured sufficient and reliable stock of most personal protective equipment (PPE) to expand the pandemic stockpile support to requests from primary care and community-based health service providers including GIL. This resource will continue on a transitional and as-available basis at the discretion of the province.

Prior to this announcement, GIL had to attest to efforts made to secure and purchase their own PPE through vendors before turning to the provincial stockpile for emergency supply.

GIL has now been the recipient of several PPE supply allocations including surgical masks, hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, and goggles. As required, we continue to report our PPE inventory number

Furthermore, in order to continue complying with these standards, our website is required to reflect Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). The website is currently in compliance with WCAG 2.0 Level A; however, by January 2021 it is required to operate under the intermediate WCAG 2.0 Level AA standards. GIL is currently in the process of updating the website in preparation to introduce this platform in January with the necessary features.

We look forward to unveiling the website refresh.



RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS MONTH

November is Random Acts of Kindness Month at Dublin, Cheryl (SSW) has been working with tenants to come up with different ways to be kind and inspire each other. Below are a few of the lovely painted rocks decorated by the seniors at Dublin.



RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT ACCESSIBILITY

On October 29, 2020, the Ontario government launched a new educational campaign to increase awareness about accessibility, and help organizations identify and remove barriers for people with disabilities. This initiative is part of the government's ongoing work to create a more inclusive and accessible province through the [Advancing Accessibility in Ontario framework](#).

"Our government is committed to working together with our partners inside and outside of government to make Ontario more accessible and inclusive by 2025. We want everyone, especially people with disabilities and seniors, to be able to fully participate in everyday life in our communities and our economy," said Raymond Cho, Minister for Seniors and Accessibility. "Our new campaign will help foster understanding and encourage cultural change towards accessibility needs."

This campaign is designed to give people an opportunity to learn more about accessibility, inclusion and hiring people with disabilities. It also explains what people with disabilities can expect under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) along with guidelines and resources to help make it easier for businesses and employers to understand and implement their requirements under the AODA.

"Variety Village has worked with the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility on many initiatives and recognizes Ontario's work towards accessibility and inclusion," said Karen Stintz, President and CEO of Variety Village. "By bringing more attention to accessibility issues and engaging with partners, Ontario is helping to change the way people think about accessibility. Together, we become ambassadors for more inclusive communities."

BE READY, BE STEADY

November is Fall Prevention Month and Be Ready, Be Steady is the theme for this year's campaign. It is a call to action to be informed and ready to be steady on your feet.

Have you had a fall recently or know of a family member/friend who has fallen?

Have you or that family member/friend been less active as result?

Fear of falling refers to a persistent concern about having a fall which can stop an individual from participating in daily activities and lower quality of life. This is a rational fear, and according to the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI), 81% of hospitalized injuries in 2017-2019 were due to falls with the majority involving adults age 65 and over. The way to balance that fear is informed motivation, not paralysis.

Fear of falling can affect both physical and mental health. **We can be ready to be steady by using multiple approaches:**

1. Create a safe indoor and outdoor environment. Check out the Home Safety checklist on the next page for ideas as how to make improvements to reduce fall risks.

Walk like a Penguin!



**When things get cold and icy,
And your path looks kind of dicey,
Waddle on!**

**Keep your toes all pointed out-y
Keep your knees all loosey-goosey,
Waddle on!**

**Keep your hands outside your pockets,
Take short steps so you won't rocket,
Waddle on!**

**Take it slowly, Holey-moley,
So you won't fall down and roll-y,
Waddle on!**

2. Be physically active. It encourages muscle strength, balance, and flexibility. Many programs are available online during this time of Covid-19.
3. Talk to a friend about your fears.
4. Consider a medical alert button, which provides reassurance that, should a fall occur, a call to needed help is readily available.
5. Learn how to get up from a fall. This skill increases confidence that, should a fall occur, there will not be a "long lie" of being stranded and possibly injured.
6. Avoid letting fear cause social isolation; the company of others is essential for good emotional health.

Outdoor conditions conducive to tripping and falling may present bigger challenges. When outside, the following are important:

- Even sidewalks and walking surfaces
- Proper lighting
- Handrails and grip bars on stairs and by slippery surfaces
- Sturdy, safe footwear to reduce slips

Falls Prevention Checklist

Falls are the leading cause of hospitalization for people aged 65 and older. Reduce your risk of falling with these tips and suggestions.

Medication & Health

- Get regular check-ups and routine vision and hearing screenings.
- Ask your doctor about taking vitamin D and calcium supplements to promote bone health.
- Review all medications (including over-the-counter drugs) with your doctor and/or pharmacist at least once a year.
- Tell your doctor immediately if you feel dizzy or if you have changes in balance.
- Use one pharmacy to have all your prescriptions filled.



Tripping Hazards

- Remove loose mats and throw rugs.
- Remove excess furniture that prevents you from moving around the room easily.
- Wear indoor shoes/slippers with non-slip soles.



Assistive Devices

- Use a walker or a cane if your balance is unstable.
- Consider purchasing a wearable medical alert device in the event of an emergency while you are alone.



Exercise & Nutrition

- Join an exercise or falls prevention class in your area. (Call us for more info: 416-635-2860)
- Practice strength and balance exercises like wall push-ups or yoga.
- Eat and drink water regularly to prevent dehydration and dizziness.



Bathroom Safety

- Install non-slip flooring and at least two grab bars in your tub/shower area.
- Consider purchasing a bath bench and handheld shower head.
- Add night lights along the hall or path to the bathroom.



Stairs & Other Hazards

- Ensure there is a handrail on at least one side of all stairways, and add adhesive stair treads or carpet runner on the steps for traction.
- Place frequently used items within easy reach. Avoid standing on a stool or chair to reach items.

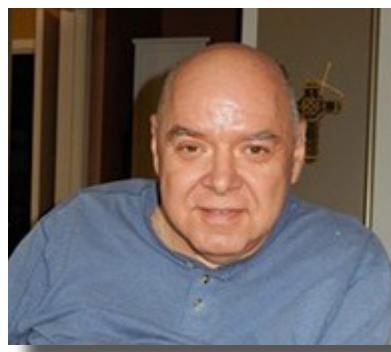


CLIENT MEMORIALS

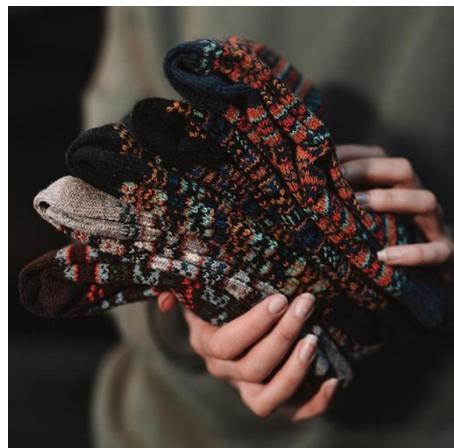
Mark Hennessey – Mark was a client in the Assisted Living program (first 87 Neeve, then Willow Place) for over 30 years. He passed away on Friday October 16 at the age of 60. Mark was dearly loved by all his family and friends.

He was an avid sports fan (especially hockey and baseball), lover of long nature walks and always ready for a new adventure.

Thank you to Mark for sharing his gentleness, great sense of humour, and fierce belief in the philosophy of Independent Living with us. We are all better for having known him.



ATTENDANT SERVICES DAY - OCTOBER 27



As part of Community Support Month, Attendant Services Day is a day to express our appreciation for all the invaluable work our employees provide as Attendants in client homes and in the community. GIL's Management team delivered a pair of Nordic socks to all our front-line workers to personally thank them for the quality care provided, each and every day. In the words of one Attendant, the socks are a "great symbol of warmth, comfort, and care...all of what we provide!"

HARVEST BAGS FOR THANKSGIVING

For many years GIL has received funding through the United Way to support our Recreation and Inclusion program. This year, GIL has looked at different ways to deliver the program while supporting 'recreational' type activities. To celebrate Thanksgiving, bags filled with yummy fall harvest and food items were delivered to GIL clients. Based on feedback they were a 'hit':



"Thank you very much for my lovely gift bag from Market Fresh. I love everything that is in the bag. Hope everyone has a wonderful Thanksgiving."

"Thank you – you made my day!"

"Thank you for thinking of me, that was very thoughtful"

IPAC WITHIN INDEPENDENT LIVING

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the unique service delivery model of Independent Living organizations like GIL. However, along with this uniqueness come challenges related to Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) practices.

Independent Living (IL) service providers across Ontario have been sharing information and concerns since March through their provincial association. Concerns include how IPAC guidelines for congregate settings and home & community care do not quite address the IL service model. These concerns

have also been raised by direct service managers (individuals who receive direct funding) through the Centre for Independent Living Toronto (CILT). To better meet our needs, IL providers and CILT have begun work to develop IPAC education and checklists for range of services from Supportive Housing to Outreach to direct service programs. A former IL Executive Director with a nursing background has been contracted to support with this work.

ONPHA CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

As with many interactions these days, the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association (ONPHA) hosted their annual conference on November 4 using a virtual platform.

The morning included a panel discussion about how COVID-19 has highlighted the need for affordable housing for ALL. The panelists discussed the development of modular units, non-traditional housing (i.e. motel conversion), and the need for partnerships across ministries to provide proper wrap-around support for tenant needs. Although the pandemic has identified many gaps, the panelists recommended not spending too much time looking back. Rather we need to move forward to create new opportunities and work toward the common goal to housing for ALL.

The afternoon featured two keynote speakers: Orlando Bowen and Marnie McBean.

Orlando Bowen is a former Toronto Argonaut who used his life experience to develop a youth leadership organization 'One Voice One Team'. His organization offers summer camps, school curriculum assemblies, and youth leadership programming across Ontario and North America. During his presenta-

tion, Orlando shared his thoughts about the challenges we face in society, and the important story is the one we create through how we live our lives. Discrimination exists; however, we all have a role to play in uplifting, motivating, and empowering each other towards an amazing future. Much is possible when we work together. More information is available at: <https://onevoiceoneteam.org/what-we-do/>



Marnie McBean was the second speaker who you may remember as a Canadian rower and three-time Olympic gold medalist. Her presentation focused on the premise that 'normal people achieve great things'; that often the hardest part of achieving a goal is getting started.

Marnie shared her philosophy about starting each day with a HAPPY mindset. She recommends:

1. Turning up your positive volume by being aware of your 'DONE list'
2. Listening to feedback and being open to new ideas
3. Anticipating that life will involve challenges and change
4. Knowing this is your journey; always focus on the tasks needed to move toward your goals.

Holiday Office Hours

Please note the GIL Administration Office will be closed:
Thursday December 24, Friday December 25, and Friday January 1

