

New Directions

Summer 2017

GUELPH
Independent **LIVING**

Quarterly Agency Newsletter

www.guelphindependentliving.org



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Mark it in Your Calendar!

Thursday September 14

St. Jacobs Market

Saturday October 7

OctoberFEAST Food Truck Festival

Thursday November 30

Christmas Shopping Trip to Conestoga Mall

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK

On June 22, 2017, Guelph Independent Living (GIL) hosted our Annual General Meeting. Following the formal business portion of the meeting, we celebrated the achievements of seven employees receiving length of service awards this year for 5 to 25 years of work at GIL. We also said good-bye to Board members: Donna Lychwa who completed six years with GIL, four of those being as the Board Chair, and Joanne Doyle who served two years.

As part of the evening's program, Mike Greer shared his 'Blood, Sweat and Wheels – Unbreakable Spirit' presentation with the audience. Mike talked about his own disability (Osteogenesis Imperfecta) and his work experience over the past 15 years, primarily helping large companies understand the importance of workplace accommodations; which has morphed into advocacy work with the Guelph Accessibility Advisory Committee, the Guelph GAP Guelph Accessibility Project and the Rick Hanson Ambassador Program. Finally, he shared his passion for travel and wheelchair racing.

2016-2017 Highlights:

This year has been one of change and reorganization for the Ministry of Health; specifically the Patients First Act and transition of Community Care Access Centres into their Local Health Integration Networks (Waterloo Wellington's was completed on May 17, 2017). Through partnerships and new initiatives, GIL will continue to align and assess the progress of its service delivery within the four key objectives; Access, Connect, Inform and Protect; of the Patients First legislation.

To promote GIL's Independent Living philosophy, we took advantage of two opportunities this year. First, the GIL Board presentation about our important, unique service provision model to the Waterloo Wellington LHIN and community partners. "Joe's Story" (the life of a long-term Outreach client) provided a wonderful opportunity to showcase how Independent Living allows clients to live successfully in the community of their choice. Secondly, our agency was featured in an episode of Canada in Perspective on AMI-tv; titled "Essential Service: PSWs". A GIL client and two employees spoke about GIL's perspective on how attendants are an essential part of many people's lives, but is the current system sustainable?

Work on our strategic objectives included completion of the Board's succession plan and finalizing the committee structure with Executive, Governance and Performance committees. Operationally, we conducted a capacity audit of the current administrative structure to develop efficiencies and implement changes. We also focused on Quality Assurance and Partnerships; working with the Independent Living Centre of Waterloo Region, we were successful in our application to the IDEAS program run by Health Quality Ontario. This project is looking at "Equity in Attendant Services – providing the right amount of support, every time".

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

In addition, significant achievements were realized through:

- Participation in an Operational Review and completion of a Building Condition assessment at our 238 Willow Road building
- Development of a Client Orientation manual with client input at meetings and draft review; and
- Implementation of an Online training platform for employees.

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.

Janet

GIL BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Highlights of the June 22, 2017 GIL Board of Directors meeting include:

- Approval of the new Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) tenant lease;
- Results from the County of Wellington's RGI File Review report; action plan to be developed;
- Approval of Annual Information Return (Housing) and WWLHIN Schedule G – Declaration of Compliance (Health) for April 1, 2016 - March 31, 2017;

- Approval of the GIL Finance and Administration Policies;
- Nomination of Debbie Stanley as a new Board member; and,
- Approval of the Board executive for 2016-2017:
 - Chair – Leanne. Warren
 - Vice Chair – Eleanor. Ross
 - Secretary – Nigel. Smith
 - Treasurer – Ravi. Sathasivam

UPDATE ON GIL'S COMMUNICATION PROJECT

In 2016, GIL participated in a Quality Advantage (QA) Project, funded by the Ontario Community Support Association (OCSA). The focus of our project was communications (an issue identified in our 2015 client survey), and the goal was to improve client experience with timely response to calls and emails made to the Administration office. Thank you to all clients and GIL employees who participated in surveys and questionnaires in relation to this project.

Change ideas the QA committee put into place to date to improve client experience include:

- Creation of a dedicated Home Help phone line

- Acquisition of a more user friendly phone system for administration employees
- Implementation of more regular staff office hours for both Assisted Living and Outreach Coordinators

The next steps for continuing to improve client communications with the administration office include:

- Formation of a Communications Committee
- Development of a Communication Process and expectations for GIL employees
- Creation of an infographic to assist clients in knowing who to contact for what

Meet the Board - Mike Greer

Mike joined the GIL Board because he felt it would be a great opportunity to broaden his knowledge around a community organization that provides services to help people improve their quality of life.

Mike has a degree in Information Technology, and 10 years of experience in corporate IT software sales in some of the world's largest tech firms; Oracle, SAP, Microsoft, and GE. He is in the process of transitioning out of IT Sales, and committing to motivational speaking and consulting for disability advocacy full-time. He is a member of the City of Guelph's Accessibility Advisory Committee, and a contributor to WheelChairTraveling.com and SpecialMouse podcast. These activities have given him greater opportunities to have a voice for inclusion for all. In 2016 he became a Rick Hansen Foundation Ambassador, and he will soon be launching his own website BloodSweatandWheels.ca to further

his ability to share stories and information about his personal journey and other accessibility topics and issues.

Michael Greer is on a mission to help those with a disability have a greater voice around accessibility, in the home, office and travel. Born with a condition called Osteogenesis Imperfecta, he learned to adapt and deal with many challenges over the course of his life. He has a passion for travel and wheelchair racing and believes that his greatest personal accomplishment to date has been completing his first half marathon in September 2016. Mike is also the proud owner of two Pembroke Welsh Corgi's with very strong personalities - Gimli and Merida.



Meet the Board - Debbie Stanley

Debbie joined the GIL Board, because as an "adopted" Guelphite, she felt it was very important get involved in the community where she lives. GIL stood out to her as it aligns with her career - working with seniors and helping those who need some extra assistance. Debbie felt it was important that her volunteer work line up with her personal values. Coming from an accounting firm, and specializing in estates and trusts, gives Debbie a unique perspective into the financial world. She is extremely passionate about serving her clients and this passion flows into volunteering for the board as well.

Debbie feels that her greatest personal accomplishment was leaving the comfort of a successful career at an accounting firm to start her own practice to help and educate the community regarding estate

planning and estate administration.

Debbie also started a Women's Leadership lunch group that meets monthly in Guelph allowing other strong females a safe place to discuss wins, goals, losses and fears. She is on the board for Chalmers Community Services as well as on the committee for GenNext with United Way. In her spare time, Debbie likes to hike with her two chocolate Labrador retrievers, sit on her deck and read, or have friends over for wine and cheese nights.



2016-2017 Years of Service Awards

NAME: Ibby

YEARS OF SERVICE: 5

PROGRAM: Assisted Living - Willow/87 Neeve

Ibby is an anchor to both our night shift and Leisure program teams. Ibby always brings her positive, caring attitude to anything she participates in; making people feel welcome and appreciated. Care, compassion and humour are in her personal toolkit whenever she works with GIL clients. Thank you Ibby for all the fun and laughter you have brought to GIL over the last 5 years!

NAME: Chantale

YEARS OF SERVICE: 10

PROGRAM: Assisted Living - Willow/87 Neeve

Chantal has shown her commitment and leadership to the front-line team for 10 years. She has been a valuable member of several committees including Joint Health and Safety and is currently the Vice President of Union, Local 203. Chantale brings her energetic personality and positive attitude to work; making sure those around her have a good day. We are grateful and fortunate to have her as a GIL team member!

NAME: Barb

YEARS OF SERVICE: 10

PROGRAM: Assisted Living - 87 Neeve

For 10 years GIL has been able to count on Barb for her loyalty and reliability. She has a great rapport with her clients and coworkers. She is flexible and responsive; providing consistent service to our many clients. We appreciate all the hard work she has provided to Guelph Independent Living and would like to congratulate her on her 10 year service award!

NAME: Connie C

YEARS OF SERVICE: 5

PROGRAM: Outreach

Connie has spent 5 years working as a full time employee of the Outreach program. She is recognized for her consistency with clients and her punctuality. Connie works efficiently to meet the needs of our diverse client population. Clients appreciate her for making sure they feel comfortable and secure during care provision. Thank you Connie for always working with compassion and energy at GIL!

NAME: Merla

YEARS OF SERVICE: 5

PROGRAM: Outreach

For the past 5 years Merla has worked in a variety of programs including Willow, 85 Neeve and Outreach. She is appreciated by both clients and coworkers for being a compassionate and caring team member. Her calm and self-assured nature makes her a valuable asset to GIL. Merla's sensitivity towards the different needs and preferences of others are always appreciated. Congratulations!

NAME: Julia

YEARS OF SERVICE: 10

PROGRAM: Outreach

Julia emulates compassion, strength and diligence in her work at Guelph Independent Living. For 10 years, she has exhibited continued and unwavering dedication to both her clients and agency. In addition to her participation on the Employee-Employer Relations committee, she also assists in training new employees so they transition seamlessly into working on their own. Clients express their appreciation to how Julia makes them feel secure and accepted. Thank you!

AGENCY UPDATES

NAME: Janet

YEARS OF SERVICE: 25

PROGRAM: Administration

Throughout her many positions over the past 25 years, Janet has continued to demonstrate quiet, thoughtful and fair leadership, most recently in the role of Executive Director. Janet has been instrumental in introducing new, innovative and collaborative initiatives both within the agency and within our community services sector. She is dedicated to clients, employees and the Board of Directors, and continually challenges herself to learn new skills. She is caring and compassionate and leads Guelph Independent Living with passion and integrity. Janet, thank you for your continued caring and compassion throughout these many years!



2017 CLIENT SURVEY RESULTS

Thank you to everyone who completed this year's client survey; we had almost a 50% response rate. Overall, the reported satisfaction rate was 71% 'very satisfied' and 29% 'somewhat satisfied' in regards to the organization, its employees and the services delivered.

When we break down the results, we discover our **areas of strength** are:

Workers are polite, courteous and helpful; generally arrive on time, work in a safe manner and maintain client confidentiality. Supervisors are respectful, approachable and respond to client concerns. Services meet client needs, and contribute to their independence and quality of life.

Whereas, the **areas identified for improvement** include:

More detailed explanation to clients of tasks GIL can assist with, working together to complete training for specific tasks (i.e. compression stockings); and reminding workers to communicate with the client while tasks are being completed. Supervisors could be more available and return calls in a more timely manner. Additional information about the conflict resolution process would also be helpful.

Fortunately, the distribution of GIL's new Client Orientation Manual is scheduled for this fall. This manual outlines our policies and procedures relating to client services and we hope it will be a useful resource guide, as well as answer some of the questions identified in the survey's areas for improvement.

GIL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

On Thursday, June 22, 2017 GIL held its Annual General Meeting at the Elliott Community Centre. Clients, employees, friends and family gathered to enjoy a night of celebrating GIL's accomplishments of 2016. A BBQ dinner was served, followed by a presentation covering GIL's 2016-2017 highlights. Thank you gifts were presented to both outgoing board members and employees celebrating length of service landmarks. We wrapped up the night with an inspiring talk by GIL Board member and disability rights advocate Mike Greer. Thank you to all who attended to help us celebrate another year of providing quality programs, housing, and supportive services at GIL.



ANNUAL GIL PICNIC

On Thursday, July 6, 2017 GIL held its Annual Summer Picnic at Riverside Park. Everyone gathered at the large pavilion to enjoy a delicious BBQ cooked and served by GIL's Admin team. This year's theme was Canada's 150th Anniversary with everyone dressed in red and white to celebrate our wonderful country. A photo booth (photos below) was a hit for attendees to dress up and show their Canadian pride! We had a great turn out to the event with a record number (over 140) of people who shared quality time with friends, family and colleagues. Thanks to all who attended to enjoy the sunny weather, great company and good food. We look forward to seeing everyone again next year!



KIDSABILITY - LOCAL INITIATIVES FOR YOUTH

Guelph Independent Living is part of the KidsAbility-led Transitions committee for Guelph Wellington. The committee has met several times with the main goal to finalize the Terms of Reference. Work to-date has included defining the committee's:

Purpose:

To build community capacity through communication, education and a shared community vision to facilitate the transition of youth to adult living. While the focus

is on those with a physical disability, the transition of those with a range of disabilities will also be supported.

Objectives:

- To foster the development of early and on-going planning for the transition to adulthood.
- To share and exchange information regarding community resources available in Guelph and Wellington County
- To improve our ability to support youth and families in early linkage with the adult service sector.

All services for the Guelph location of KidsAbility will be moving to a new location at 503 Imperial Street North in May 2018. A Youth Center will also be added at this new site.



INVICTUS GAMES: SEPT 24 - OCT 1, 2017

Invictus Games is an international Paralympic multisport event in which competitors are people who have served their country in the armed forces. It was created to showcase strength and support rehabilitation for wounded and injured servicemen from many different countries. This event uses the power of sport to inspire rehabilitation and reunite men and women who have fought alongside each other to recover together. This year, Toronto has the honour of hosting Invictus Games. The games will feature many adaptive sports including: archery, indoor rowing, powerlifting, cycling, sitting volleyball, swimming, wheelchair basketball, golf, and many more.

Tickets are available for the games in Toronto from September 23 to 30th; consider attending to commemorate the many veterans who have dedicated their lives to serving their countries.



MOVING THE WILLOW ROAD CROSSWALK

The crosswalk on Willow Road has experienced many issues since its installation years ago. It has been difficult for area residents to have their voices heard despite ongoing complaints sent to the City about the inaccessibility of the area. The path to access the crosswalk involves maneuvering along a sloped sidewalk, a series of ramps, and poorly managed asphalt which is especially difficult for people using wheelchairs and walkers. Many pedestrians find it difficult to use the pathway, so they risk crossing Willow Road without the aid of the crosswalk. Numerous people have tried making their complaints heard by sending in applications to get the crosswalk changed; to

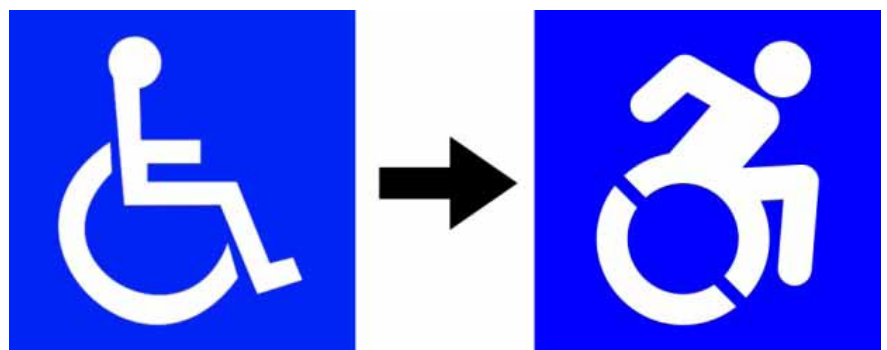
no avail until now. Finally, the City of Guelph has heard the concerns and is willing to make some changes. With the help of several residents at 238 Willow Road and city workers, careful planning was done about where to move the crosswalk. The final project will involve creating a concrete platform near Willow Place, allowing pedestrians to turn left and then cross to Applewood Crescent where the sidewalk entrance to Willow West mall is located.



Residents, including Karen and Chris, are thrilled something is finally being done about this inaccessible crosswalk. Thank you to everyone for being proactive and helping Guelph become a more accessible community.

NEW ACCESSIBILITY SYMBOL

A group of activists in Ontario has launched a petition demanding that the province adopt a new and improved version of the International Symbol of Access: a “dynamic” image that depicts a person in a wheelchair in motion – a person whose arms are bent behind them to indicate that they are moving the wheels on their chair. The activists championing the new image call themselves the Forward Movement. They argue that the dynamic image, developed by a team of accessibility designers in the United States and officially adopted by New York City a few years ago, places the person front and centre, before the disability. Symbols matter; not only do people remember them, but research shows that they change how we perceive the world and the people around us. A dynamic symbol, the theory goes, is more effective than a static symbol.



IDEAS PROJECT GRADUATION

An article in the winter edition of New Directions reported on Guelph Independent Living's partnership with the Independent Living Centre of Waterloo Region (ILCWR) to participate in a five-month accredited program to develop, implement and report on our learning project titled "Equity in Attendant Services: Providing the Right Amount of Support, Every Time".

Catharine Maxwell, Outreach Coordinator and Janet Redman, Executive Director recently completed the IDEAS (Improving & Driving Excellence Across Sectors) Advanced Learning Program where they learned key concepts and tools in quality improvement, leadership and change management to apply to this project.

The project aim was 'To ensure the equitable distribution of Outreach Attendant Services in the WWLHIN'. Originally the group's goal was to have a standard assessment to measure service allocation for 20% of WWLHIN attendant service outreach clients by July 1, 2017. With the help of a Health

Quality Ontario advisor, the group quickly discovered the task was more complicated than they thought and the existing assessment tool they thought would work was not that simple. Post-graduation, the group continues to explore assessment options and has sparked the interest of other Independent Living providers from across the province due to the potential broader impact to the health system.

The IDEAS program is funded by the Ministry of Health in partnership with Health Quality Ontario, ICES, and the University of Toronto.



SUMMER ADMIN STUDENT - AISHA



My name is Aisha Tokjuman and I started my summer job at Guelph Independent Living on May 29th. Over the course of my twelve weeks at GIL, I had the opportunity to work with many wonderful and hardworking people in the Administrative office at Woodlawn, and meet many clients and workers from the agency. Through this job, I was able to learn a number of new tasks including policy writing and requirements of personnel files. I have been very lucky to work with such great people in a supportive environment where I was challenged to complete new tasks. Now I am heading back to the University of Guelph for my third year in Psychology and hoping to continue into Human Resources or Industrial Organization.

Funding for this position was provided through the Canada Summer Job Program.

UPCOMING 2017 LEISURE EVENTS

DATE	EVENT	TIME	PRICE
Thursday September 14	St. Jacob's Market	Departure: 10:00am Event: 11:00am-3:00pm Return: 4:00pm	<i>Clients:</i> \$15.00 <i>Guests:</i> \$25.00
Saturday October 7	OctoberFEAST Food Truck Festival Waterloo Public Square, Uptown Waterloo	Departure: 10:00am Event: 11:00am-3:00pm Return: 4:00pm	<i>Clients:</i> \$15.00 <i>Guests:</i> \$25.00
Thursday November 30	Christmas Shopping Trip Conestoga Mall Waterloo	Departure: 10:00am Event: 11:00am-3:00pm Return: 4:00pm	<i>Clients:</i> \$15.00 <i>Guests:</i> \$25.00

*If you are interested in attending an event please contact **Kathleen at (519) 836-1812 x 220.***

Remember when calling your Program Supervisor; please leave a detailed message, including a convenient call back time, to allow for prioritization of tasks. Please be mindful of busy schedules and day-to-day urgent issues which may come up involving scheduling and client / employee emergencies. Thank you.

OFCP PARTNERSHIP WITH VALUE VILLAGE

The Ontario Federation for Cerebral Palsy (OFCP) is thrilled to announce a new initiative with long-time partner Value Village. The OFCP is proud to have an Exclusive Arrangement with 13 Value Village stores across Ontario, where the OFCP will be the Sole Beneficiary of all items donated at those stores, **including the 214 Silvercreek Parkway N, Guelph location.** The new partnership with these 13 Value Village locations will allow the OFCP to better communicate and interact with the local communities, and share the amazing work the OFCP does across Ontario. It will also allow the OFCP to host joint events like clothing drives, education days and other exciting initiatives. For more information visit www.ofcp.ca

