

# New Directions

## Summer 2018

GUELPH  
Independent LIVING

Quarterly Agency Newsletter  
[www.guelphindependentliving.org](http://www.guelphindependentliving.org)



## Inside:

- Executive Director's Message
- GIL Board Highlights
- Annual General Meeting
- Service Award Recipients
- Client Memorials
- GIL Picnic
- 2018 National AccessAbility Week
- Harvest Market
- Dopey Challenge
- GIL Promotional Video
- 'Sharing My Story'
- Leisure Event Schedule

## Mark Your Calendar!

**Thursday September 13**

St. Jacobs Market

**Thursday October 4**

Oktoberfest Lunch  
United Way Fundraiser

**Thursday November 21**

Boston Pizza, Gift of Lights

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK...

As Leanne Warren, Board Chair, and I reflect back on the 2017-18 fiscal year, four words come to mind: pride, partnerships, dedication and planning.

We are proud to be part of this organization. Between the two of us, we have over 40 years devoted to the vision and mission of Guelph Independent Living (GIL) both as a current or past employee and as a Board member. The work of GIL is vital to the lives of our many clients and tenants, and immensely important to the community. The words **'Independent Living'** have many definitions; for us, they mean providing quality support services and housing to allow the individuals we serve to live with choice and dignity.

We continue to partner with stakeholders in Guelph and beyond. This year, we worked closely with the Independent Living Centre of Waterloo Region on two exciting ventures: Advanced Care Planning information sessions and a quality project titled *"Equity in Attendant Services: Providing the Right Amount of Support, Every Time"* through the IDEAS Program offered by the Ministry of Health and Health Quality Ontario. This project work continues by involving other Independent Living service providers as we work to strengthen the importance of attendant services across Ontario. Other partnerships established this year include the Transitions Network Committee Guelph Wellington involving agencies and advocates supporting youth with disabilities

and the Supportive Housing Think Tank, a planning workshop offered at the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association annual conference.

We are humbled by our dedicated group of employees who support our agency's mission, providing valuable services to our many clients and tenants on a daily basis. Whether it is personal care, long meetings or filling last-minute shift vacancies; everyone's role is important to our success. In addition to our employees, we are fortunate to have the dedication of a skilled Board of Directors, a network of community partners and the financial contributions of funders and donors. Our deepest thanks go out to all of these individuals who support GIL's ability to serve.

Finally, we plan for the future. This year marks the end of our 2015-2018 Strategic Plan so this fall, the Board will embark on an assessment of objectives achieved within each of the six strategic directions: Organizational Identity, Service Models, Growth, Quality Assurance, Partnerships and Governance. Once completed, planning will begin for the next chapter in the journey of Guelph Independent Living.

Looking forward to the 2018-2019 year,

*Janet Redman*  
Executive Director



### United Way Fundraiser

Thursday October 4

1:00 - 3:00 p.m

87 Neeve Community Room

Suggested Donation of \$10 per person

Bring a friend or family member to enjoy a delicious barbeque, photo booth, raffle and bake sale!

# GIL BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

## From the June 21, 2018 meeting include:

- Updates and timelines for the 2018-2021 Property Management contract proposals,
- Review of the Energy Audit for Willow Place plus status updates on the boiler and hallway lighting replacement projects and GreenON funding application,
- Approval of Annual Information Return (Housing) and WWLHIN Schedule G – Declaration of Compliance (Health) for April 1, 2017 - March 31, 2018, and
- Executive Director’s report with updates on union negotiations, summer student projects and the hiring of a new Scheduler

## The Board approved and announced the Board Executive for 2018-2019:

Chair – Leanne Warren  
Vice Chair – Eleanor Ross  
Secretary – Nigel Smith  
Treasurer – Ravi Sathasivam

## The slate of Board members for the 2018-2019 year as announced:



Back row: Mike Moore, Eleanor Ross, Cindy Kinnon, Nigel Smith, Leanne Warren  
Front row: Ravi Sathasivam, Mike Greer, Debbie Stanley

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Guelph Independent Living held its Annual General Meeting on June 21, 2018. Board Chair, Leanne Warren opened the evening by welcoming everyone and delivering the Indigenous Recognition. The Senior Leadership Team followed; providing an overview of the agency's activities for the 2017-2018 fiscal year including highlights from the Leisure program, Human Resources, 238 Willow and Finance. The Board then completed approvals of the 2017-2018 audited financial statements for both Health and Housing portfolios, appointment of the auditors for 2018-2019, ratification of all activities of the Board of Directors over the past year and appointment of the Board Executive for the upcoming year.

Following the formal business portion of the meeting, GIL celebrated the achievements of fourteen (14) employees receiving service awards ranging from five (5) to thirty (30) years

with GIL. Please see profiles of these dedicated and hardworking employees on pages 5-6 in the newsletter.

As part of the evening's program, Carlos Martins from Tee Talent shared his presentation titled '*How my disability made me become an Entrepreneur*' with the audience. Carlos spoke about how coming to Canada as an adult made him realize that his disability, losing his left foot to a shark attack, was an opportunity for growth rather than something to hide away. Carlos joined Shayne Smith and Sebastian Gemin to start up Tee Talent; a social enterprise that promotes the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in the workplace. This team's ultimate goal is to expand their business and create employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. To wrap up the evening, Carlos shared their adventures when they auditioned for Dragon's Den in February 2018.



## 2017-2018 SERVICE AWARDS

**Congratulations to all of these employees, GIL extends many thanks for your hard work and dedication to the agency and clients.**

### **Ashley L, 5 years**

Ashley has been GIL's super-organized, super-calm Scheduler since 2013. She always brings her positive caring attitude to everything she does: from speaking with clients on the phone about time changes to emailing workers about shift assignments. As a team player, Ashley always pitched in to help.



### **Emily C, 5 years**

Emily has been a great addition to the Assisted Living team over the years. Including a summer spent working on nights! She brings her positive engaging self to every shift and always leaves her clients better than when she finds them!



### **Jennifer G, 5 years**

In just 5 years, Jen has worked in every program at GIL – Outreach, Assisted Living, Seniors, back to Outreach and most recently Assisted Living in our 87Neeve program. Jen very much enjoys her time with the clients and they appreciate her infectious smile.



### **Marian R, 5 years**

When Marian started working with GIL she was on nights. Recently she moved to days and evenings. Marian brings her sense of humour to the workplace and her knack of keeping the schedule updated. Despite the challenges that go along with this work Marian keeps everyone laughing.



### **Pam H, 5 years**

Coworkers describe Pam, as SUPER FUNNY! Pam is a wonderful hard worker who is also kind and thoughtful. Pam is often called upon by coworkers and clients for her great insights and humorous contributions to any conversation.



### **Terhas T, 5 years**

Terhas has been an amazing asset to the Assisted Living team. She brings a quiet, contented calm assurance to her clients and coworkers. Terhas seamlessly works in both Assisted Living Programs and as well as 85 Neeve.



### **Laura W, 15 years**

Laura has been a valuable member to the Assisted Living team since 2002. She has dedicated herself to the clients who know her to provide great care paying attention to the small but significant details. Laura was the original Union President and gave herself tirelessly to the position. Laura loves to volunteer with GIL such as selling 50/50 tickets at the Guelph Storm hockey games.



### **Brandi W, 20 years**

Brandi has worked many night shifts as an Attendant Service Worker at Willow and 87 Neeve St, covered a maternity leave with the Home Help Program, and currently works at 85 Neeve with GIL's



## 2017-2018 SERVICE AWARDS

Seniors Assisted Living Program. Brandi's coworkers describe her as understanding, reliable, and fun to work with. Brandi is appreciated by both her coworkers and her clients, who look forward to her straightforward, optimistic and caring manner.

### **Connie G, 20 years**

Connie has been an anchor on our Willow Place team since 1998. Her sense of humour is infectious which she brings to work with her every day. She truly cares about the clients she has assisted both past and present. Her depth of knowledge is a valuable asset to GIL. Her client care is always completed to the highest standard.



### **Lisa M, 20 years**

Lisa has been a dedicated, compassionate employee of GIL with a great sense of humour. With 20 years of experience, Lisa shares her extensive skills with her clients and the newer workers on the team.



### **Maria R, 20 years**

Maria has provided wonderful care, professionalism, and wisdom with her coworkers and clients at both Assisted Living Programs. New workers and GIL are thankful for her skills in providing frontline training.



### **Bonnie P, 25 years**

Bonnie is calm and unfazed by almost any situation. Her reliable peaceful demeanor helps the tenants at Dublin truly feel more secure knowing she is there when they need her. Over Bonnie's many years at GIL she has worked as both an Attendant Services Worker, and a Senior Support Worker. Until just recently, Bonnie was GIL's certified First Aid and CPR Instructor. We can thank Bonnie every time staff remain calm and in control in emergency situations, ensuring that clients receive excellent care.



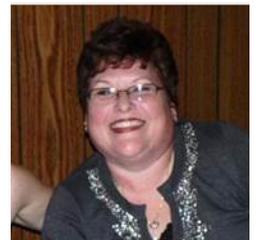
### **Sue O, 25 years**

Sue's long history with the 87 Neeve Program has given her a deep knowledge and understanding of the clients. Sue is a valuable asset to the team and always provides individualized care to GIL clients. Sue has dedicated 25 years to bettering the lives of the clients.



### **Lisa H, 30 years**

Lisa has set a milestone at GIL as our first 30-year service award recipient. Since 1988, Lisa has been appreciated by clients and coworkers for being a compassionate and caring team member. As an Attendant, she is naturally calm and self-assured; putting clients at ease. Looking forward to having her set the next milestone at GIL.



“Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.” – Francis of Assisi

# ADMINISTRATION OFFICE UPDATES



GIL would like to welcome Christina Gatto, as the new Scheduler. Christina was recruited after Ashley Larue notified the agency that she would not be returning after her maternity leave. We look forward to working with

Christina and also want to thank Paulina KostECKi for covering the Scheduler position for the last year.

Paulina has returned to her Outreach Support position at GIL.

Further reorganization within the Administration office has resulted in the redistribution and outsourcing of the Communications and Privacy Officer tasks. We wish Carla Henderson well with her future endeavours.



## CLIENT MEMORIALS

**Monica Walsh** was a client of the Guelph Independent Living Outreach Program since 2010; she passed away on July 14, 2018 at the age of 61.



Monica was a quiet lady with an infectious smile. She will be remembered for her fierce independence as she navigated life within her one-bedroom apartment and in the Guelph community. She was a Toronto Blue Jays fan; taking advantage of the GIL Leisure program trip by attending a game in 2016.

Thank you to Monica for sharing her strength and zest for life with all who knew her.

**Michael D'Abbenigno** was a client of Guelph Independent Living's 87 Neeve Program for only a short period. He passed away on July 22, 2018.



Known to those close to him as "Stronzo", he was an avid fisherman who loved the outdoors and was passionate about spending time with family and friends.

GIL Attendants were honoured to assist Mike to live independently during the last few months of his life.

**Joan Stahlbaum** became a client of Guelph Independent Living's 85 Neeve program in the fall of 2013; she passed away on August 10, 2018 at the age of 88.

Joan was known for her quick wit and humour. After retiring from a career in business and real estate, she enjoyed volunteering at the Homewood Health Center library, gardening and watching the Blue Jays baseball team.

Thank you to Joan for sharing her independence and determination with GIL and the Senior Support Worker team.

## ANNUAL GIL PICNIC

Everyone gathered at Riverside Park's large pavilion on July 5th to enjoy a delicious BBQ complete with salads, watermelon and cake for dessert. This year's theme was Super Heroes with best dressed costumes won by Lucy (aka Wonder Woman) and Cheryl (aka GIL Girl). We were pleased to have such a good turnout, and despite the hot weather and surprise downpours; everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. It was a great opportunity for everyone to mingle with old friends and meet new ones! Thank you to the Admin employees for preparing and serving the tasty meal, to the Leisure Attendants for assisting clients, and to all who came out to enjoy this annual event!



# 2018 NATIONAL ACCESSABILITY WEEK

This year's National AccessAbility Week was held from May 27 to June 2.

To celebrate and help raise awareness of the occasion, the Guelph Barrier Free Committee hosted a flag raising ceremony on the afternoon of Monday May 28. The Rick Hansen Foundation provided an eye-catching flag design of blue, white and yellow which was proudly flown outside City Hall. The Committee was joined by guest speakers, Mayor Guthrie and Mike Greer. Mike is the local ambassador to the Rick Hansen Foundation and a GIL Board of Directors member. For the inaugural flag raising ceremony, the crowd was small but enthusiastic. We hope next year to draw an even larger crowd with whom we can celebrate.

Later that evening, the Committee hosted the 2018 Access Recognition Awards Ceremony. This year's well-deserving winners were presented their awards by the Mayor at the City Council Meeting, followed by an Awards reception.

This year's proud winners were:

- Millar Weddig, a 12 year old student, who to-date has fundraised over \$26,000 for Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada
- Grant Leemet for his amazing efforts with Limitless Guelph, a program which offers adapted recreation programs for children and youth of all abilities
- Josh Cassidy, 3-time Canadian Paralympian, for his tremendous efforts to spread inspiration, resilience and perseverance to the Guelph community and beyond
- Guelph Public Library – Outreach Services Program for their invaluable efforts to break down barriers and to meet the literary and informational needs of all Guelph citizens with their accessible program services

Those nominated for these awards may have gone above and beyond the expected to remove a barrier for people with a disability OR realized a significant life goal and have a disability. If you know of someone who falls into one of these categories, consider nominating them for the next awards.

The Guelph Barrier Free committee can be contacted through Sarah at the City of Guelph 519-822-1260 extension 3536; TTY 519-826-9771

*Leanne Warren*  
Board Chair



## WHAT'S HAPPENING AT WILLOW PLACE?

Recent upgrades include a new intercom system at the front entrance, two new exterior doors at the south entrance adjacent the parking garage and parking lot line painting.

GIL received the Energy Audit report completed by FINN Projects. The purpose of this audit is to assess building components, both interior and exterior, where improvements can be made to improve energy efficiency while saving money spent on hydro, natural gas and water utilities. The two main capital projects planned for

2018-19 based on the report findings are interior hallway lighting and boiler/water storage tank replacement.



And, as per the County of Wellington Housing Services' directives, GIL is currently tendering for an updated Property Management contract for November 2018 through October 2021. If there is any change as a result of this work, tenants will be notified accordingly.



### Min has announced her Retirement!

Please join us on  
**September 12<sup>th</sup>**

**3-5pm**

**87 Neeve Community Room**

to celebrate 30 years of dedicated  
service with

Guelph Independent Living.

# GUELPH'S NORTH END HARVEST MARKET

The North End Harvest Market (NEHM) is a collection of community organizations and friends that support a free fresh produce market for those struggling to put food on their plates. Their passionate and diverse team consists of a Market Manager, Guelph Neighbourhood Support Coalition, Chalmers Community Services, Upper Grand District School Board, Guelph United Ministries, Trinity United Church, North Riverside Neighbourhood Group, Immigrant Services, the Guelph Family Health Team, and First Nations, Metis, and Inuit Community. Together they have 'built a welcoming and powerful organization that wants to make sure that everyone in Guelph has access to fresh and healthy food'.

On July 19, NEHM held its annual 'Adopt a Week' fundraiser; inviting local businesses, corporations and the community to donate the cost of one week's worth of produce (\$600) to their market. The funds raised are used to purchase fresh produce made available free of charge to

registered families. To-date, six donors are already on board.

Since 2014, NEHM has become more than just a place of food distribution – it is also a place for advocacy, friendship, support and connections to community resources; a place for people to feel safe, to laugh and enjoy one another's company in a non-judgmental, supportive and diverse environment.

Approximately 250 people are regularly fed by the market on a bi-weekly basis and it has been found to be very successful in the community. Located in a portable at Waverley Drive Public School, it is open Wednesdays from 6:00-7:30 p.m. And for those looking to donate items, it is open Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m.

Excerpts from the article by Ned Bekavac

Full details at: [www.guelphmercury.com/community-story/8747069-market-in-guelph-helps-feed-those-in-need/](http://www.guelphmercury.com/community-story/8747069-market-in-guelph-helps-feed-those-in-need/)

## DOPEY CHALLENGE

If you had asked me seven years ago when I did my first 5k race, if I would ever consider signing up for Run Disney's Dopey Challenge, I would have called you crazy. I would have said *"no way would I be willing to put my body and mind through the training required to wheel four consecutive days of racing to complete this challenge of challenges."*

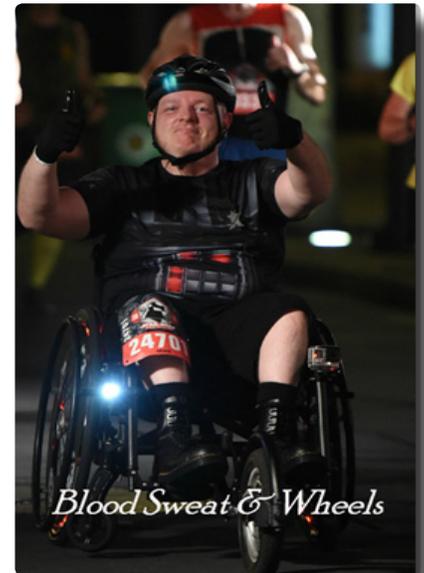
Well amazingly seven years later, I started out my training this spring for the 2019 Dopey Challenge, which will be held at Walt Disney World next January. Over the last few years, I have met some great fellow racers, who have helped me and in turn, I have been able to impart knowledge to others in the world of adaptive racing. This group is what has kept me motivated on pushing myself to continue to push my boundaries and my body. I have been moving from only doing 5K's, then adding 10K's and recently Half-Marathons.

I did my first Run Disney race back in 2015, competing in the Marathon Weekend's 5K and 10K, and just last year my wife and I did the Run Disney's Star Wars Half Marathon - Dark Side Challenge set of races (10K and Half) in 2017.

## DOPEY CHALLENGE CONT'D...

### 2017 DarkSide Challenge

I started to think about Dopey, shortly after completing the DarkSide Challenge, and more seriously after I completed the Canada Army Run Half back in September 2017. I use a #FreeWheel attachment for my wheelchair, which is a great point of entry into adaptive racing. The cost of a racing wheelchair or handcycle can be quite expensive! My Free-Wheel has malfunction with regard to the alignment and this has added an extra element of frustration to my racing. I always said that I wouldn't attempt a Marathon until I got the #FreeWheel aligned correctly or moved up to a racing chair. However after tweaking the #FreeWheel prior to my last half marathon, I finally got it to a point where it was manageable, and just recently I resolved the issue outright. As a result of the initial tweak, I personally recorded my last Half, and felt good physically and mentally after that race.



### 2017 ArmyRun Half Marathon

After achieving the personal record on my last half marathon, it put Dopey on my radar. It resulted in some serious discussions with my wife, and committing 100% to the Dopey Challenge. I was unsure of the year, but after gaining insight (training and what to expect) from my adaptive racer friends, I decided to set my sights on the Dopey Challenge.

Over the last six months, I have been following a training plan, tracking my nutrition, and applied for a grant in the spring to help fund a racing wheelchair. Sadly it was not approved. This didn't slow me down, but only strengthened my resolve to succeed with my current setup. With just six months to go, I am right on track for where I want to be. I just crossed the 38K mark and will be at the 42k mark and have completed my first training marathon distance ever in the next week or so.

I have a social media presence where you can follow my journey to Dopey and also my advocacy for those with disabilities.

Facebook: @BloodSweatandWheels

Instagram: BloodSweatandWheels

Twitter: OI\_Mike

### Dopey Challenge:

4 Races in 4 Days – 48.6 Miles: 5K, 10K, ½ Marathon & Full Marathon



Cheers!

Mike Greer

Board Member

## SUMMER STUDENT

Hi! My name is Alexa Matteis and I started my summer job at Guelph Independent Living on May 28, 2018. During my twelve week Canadian Summer Jobs contract, I have had the opportunity to work closely with the amazing Administration team and Property Coordinator as well as many of the wonderful GIL clients.

The duties and responsibilities that I was tasked with during my time with GIL have allowed me to expand my knowledge and grow my experience in both communication and administrative fields! Over the course of the summer, I have created a training and promotional video, updated privacy policies, created modules for the agency's online training platform, worked on employee newsletters, agency brochures and personnel files, and performed duties in the area of recruitment. WHEW!! This incredible experience has given me the opportunity to take on new and challenging responsibilities, while learning along the way. I am leaving GIL with some unique and valuable skills that can be applied to my studies and future endeavours. I am heading back to McMaster University for my third year in Communication Studies and hope to continue into Public Relations or Operations Management.



I am incredibly thankful to all the clients and employees who volunteered to share their stories and personal experiences about GIL for my work on the promotional video. This project was achievable because of all of the support and positive contributions I received from those who participated. I am moved beyond words by the amazing clients and employees who told their stories, clearly exhibiting how GIL continuously makes a difference in the lives of our clients. I would also like to thank Kathleen Fagan, Assisted Living and Special Projects Assistant, who took time out of her busy schedule to assist me in the execution and filming portion of the project. In addition, I would like to thank

Susan Bott, a GIL Outreach client, who so kindly wrote the article outlining her experience and her personal journey with GIL.

I am honoured to be able to create such a video, which will act as a resource to inform individuals about our agency and how GIL is committed to its clients, employees and the Guelph community.

Thank-you!  
*Alexa Matteis*  
Summer Student

Have an article idea for a future newsletter?

Please contact Rowena (519) 836-1812 x 233

or [rowena@guelphindependentliving.org](mailto:rowena@guelphindependentliving.org)

## TRAINING AND PROMOTIONAL VIDEO

GIL has recently created a training and promotional video highlighting how the organization works to achieve its mission: *“We are committed to our clients living with dignity by delivering quality programs, housing and supportive services”.*

By interviewing clients, employees and stakeholders alike, the video demonstrates a sense of what GIL means to each of these individuals and how its philosophy of Independent Living impacts its many clients. Profiles posted on the GIL website and social media accounts will provide audi-



ences with the opportunity to better understand the agency and how it proudly serves the Guelph community.

In addition to using the video for external communications, it will also be a great training tool for new employees to help them better understand what living independently (with supports) means to the clients.

We are deeply thankful to all of those who volunteered to share their stories and kind words about the agency we are all so proud to be associated with.

## ‘SHARING MY STORY’

**Q:** How long have you been a GIL client?

**A:** *I have been a GIL client for approximately 2 years*

**Q:** What does ‘directing your own care’ mean to you?

**A:** *GIL’s dedication to self-directed care means I’ve been involved in setting up a care plan that suits my needs and preferences and I get to direct the everyday assistance I receive. Both aspects help me be ‘me’*

**Q:** How does the support you receive from GIL allow you to be independent?

**A:** *The support from GIL has been a key part of enabling me to live my life how and where I want – at home*

**Q:** What do you believe is the most important message that the promotional video showcases?

**A:** *The promo video is a chance to show the varied client base that GIL serves*

*“The support from GIL is the missing link. I have wonderful family and friends; I am blessed and grateful for their support, but they cannot do everything all the time. I need independence and I need to still be my own woman and stand by myself, as best as I can and GIL fills that gap. They give me the support to be in my own home and the chance to be me.”*

*“The struggles that come from having M.S., like I do, sometimes can kind of fog the mirror that I see myself through. Some of the GIL workers have been there in wonderful ways to wipe that mirror clean, so I can see me as I am and see my value again.”*

*“GIL just means the chance to be home.”*

*Susan Bott  
GIL Client*

# UPCOMING LEISURE EVENTS

DATE	EVENT	TIME	PRICE
Thursday September 13	<b>St. Jacob's Market</b>	<b>Departure:</b> 9:00am <b>Event:</b> 11:00am-3:00pm <b>Return:</b> 4:00pm	<i>Clients: \$15.00 Guests: \$25.00</i>
Thursday October 4	<b>Oktoberfest Lunch/United Way Fundraiser</b> <b>87 Neeve Community Room</b>	<b>Event:</b> 1:00pm-3:00pm	<i>Suggested donation of \$10.00</i>
Thursday November 21	<b>Boston Pizza Dinner/Gift of Lights Bingemans Kitchener</b>	<b>Departure:</b> 4:30pm <b>Dinner:</b> 5:30-7:00pm <b>Lights:</b> 7:30-8:00pm <b>Return:</b> 9:00pm	<i>Clients: \$15.00 Guests: \$25.00 Plus money to pay for dinner</i>

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

Photos from the Burlington Sound of Music trip:

