

New Directions

Winter 2023

G U E L P H
Independent **LIVING**

Quarterly Agency Newsletter

www.guelphindependentliving.org

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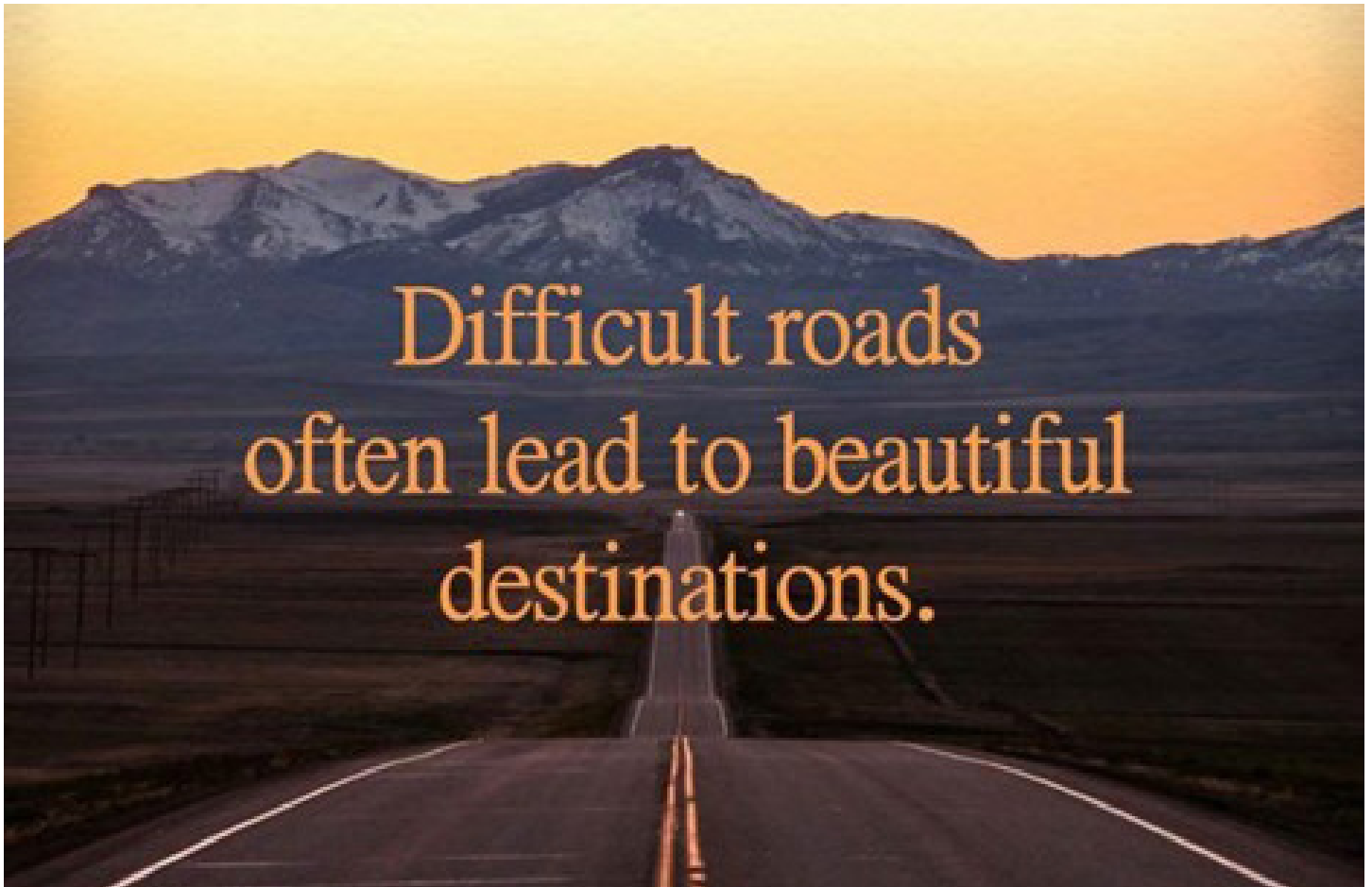
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**“Alone we can do so little;
together we can do so much.”**

~Helen Keller

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK...



Hi everyone, we all might have come across this saying above – this is so true in many facets or situations in all our lives. This saying speaks so much into the direction of Guelph Independent Living's journey.

Our goal to continue providing high quality client care, engage and listen to our clients, frontline staff and administration often goes through difficult roads – the pathways we take to create strong support system that provides clear direction, build resiliency and strengthen procedures, ensures us all that our destination will be beautiful.

We continue to invest into our people, and systems to enhance our communication and be more realistic

in our approach to genuine client care. Our clients comes first and we strive for our best to support the most vital member in this journey – our clients!

Let's continue to stay strong, be resilient and look forward to a future destination that will be beautiful for all.

Stay healthy!

Sincerely
Malcolm Ponnayan
Executive Director.

AGENCY HOLIDAY PARTY



GIL was delighted to host our very first in-person agency party on December 16, 2022, after a long hiatus due to the pandemic. The event, held at the Italian Canadian Club, was a joyous occasion for our staff, clients, and families, who enjoyed a delicious meal, festive tunes, a photo booth, and plenty of

laughter. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to Cindy Kinnon, the Board Chair, for her gracious opening remarks, warm welcome, and for acknowledging and thanking our dedicated staff for their years of service.



FALLS PREVENTION AND CLIENT SAFETY

Falls pose a significant risk to everyone's health and safety, and Falls Prevention is identified by the Ministry of Health as an important measurement tool for Service Providers as part of delivering quality support services. By tracking the incidents of falls and potential safety hazards, GIL can identify root cause, provide supports, referrals and/ or educational resources to clients to help increase awareness and maintain independence.

GIL is happy to report a decrease in client falls by 67% in 2022 compared to 2021. Falls reported occurred across all programs, involving 6 different individuals (there were 20 clients last year).

Approximately 20% of this year's falls resulted in clients needing medical attention, including calling non-emergency fire to assist in lifting clients off the floor, and calling 911 to assess clients after a fall.

The root causes were identified as unsuccessful independent/unsupervised transfers, loss of balance, and tripping hazards.

GIL recognizes our clients' right to live with risk; however, we also want everyone to remain healthy and safe at home. Please be reminded of these safety protocols:

- Call workers for assistance with transfers as needed or wait until someone is present;
- Use mobility equipment as required or work with your Occupational Therapist when equipment needs change;
- Remove tripping hazards and clutter from your home;
- Always move in a forward direction to ensure good sightlines;
- Use a personal alarm device (i.e. Lifeline) so help can be summoned quickly; and,
- Scan the environment in your home or the community.

We will continue to work with clients when additional supports or strategies may be needed to keep everyone safe!

SURVEY RESULTS - HOME HELP PROGRAM

Guelph Independent Living (GIL) distributed an annual survey in October 2022 to evaluate its brokered Homemaking program which has been operating in the city of Guelph since 2005. The Home Help program matches eligible clients, seniors and adults with physical disabilities, with screened homemakers who assist with routine household tasks such as light housekeeping, laundry, grocery shopping, and meal preparation. The client pays a fixed cost per 2-hour visit directly to the homemaker.

Currently, the program has 35 homemakers who support approximately 314 clients. GIL received positive feedback from most clients or from caregivers

of someone receiving Home Help assistance and the results demonstrated a high satisfaction rate for services.

The completed surveys provide GIL with a quantitative measurement of how many clients value the help they receive through the program and allow them to live independently and remain in their own homes longer.

Thank you to the team of homemakers who keep these client homes clean and organized.

PRESENTED BY SYSTEMS24-7

HOW TO WALK SAFELY

1. Watch where you step

- a. Look ahead at your intended path of travel. Are there uneven surfaces? Slippery surfaces? Steps? Anything that blocks your path?

2. Wear proper footwear

- a. Make sure you are wearing proper footwear for the weather (no flip flops in the winter), the environment you are in (does your footwear have proper ankle support), and what is required by your workplace (i.e. closed toed, slip resistant, steel toes etc.)
- b. Make sure your footwear is in good condition. No holes, treads and soles are still in tact and in good condition etc.



3. Take sturdy steps

- a. Walk according to the environment/path/weather etc. Small, wide steps provide the sturdiest base to help keep you upright while walking. Do the 'Penguin' walk when it is icy or your walking surface is uneven.



Keep your knees loose

Extend arms to the sides to keep balance



Point the feet out slightly



4. Use assistive devices

- a. This can include handrails, a buddy, walking sticks, walking close to walls for balance etc.

5. Try and keep your hands free

- a. If your hands are full, you can't try and catch your balance as effectively if they were free, in the event of a slip

SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

Guelph Council has approved a Single-Use Items Bylaw which aligns with new federal regulations announced in June 2022. The federal government has banned six categories of harmful single-use plastics, including checkout bags, cutlery, food service ware made from certain types of plastics, stir sticks, and straws (with some exceptions).

Manufacture and import of flexible straws will be allowed with certain sale restrictions:

- Businesses may sell packages of 20 or more SUP flexible straws for personal or family use but retailers cannot display packages in stores;
- A business cannot require a customer to disclose whether they have a disability or a need for a SUP flexible straw;
- Restaurants cannot provide a SUP flexible straw to a customer, but a customer can bring a SUP flexible straw with them and can provide them

to others in their social group at the restaurant; and

- Care institutions may continue to purchase SUP flexible straws in packages of 20 or more and provide them to patients or residents.

The ban on the manufacture and import of ring carriers will enter into force in June 2023.

Over the next 10 years, this ban on harmful single-use plastics, is expected to lead to the elimination of over 1.3 million tonnes of hard-to-recycle plastic waste and more than 22,000 tonnes of plastic pollution. This is equivalent to over one million full garbage bags.

Source: <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2022/12/change-is-here-canadas-ban-on-certain-harmful-single-use-plastics-starts-to-take-effect-this-month.html>



FOOD DELIVERIES FOR SENIORS

GIL utilized some of its OCSA funding to provide fresh and locally-sourced produce via an online subscription service called Fresh Box Market. In mid-November 2022, fresh fruits and vegetables were delivered to senior citizens in our community. Furthermore, on December 21, 2022, GIL collected and distributed Christmas hampers that were donated by the Salvation Army to seniors in our community.

We would like to express our gratitude to all those involved in the organization and delivery of the food hampers to the senior citizens in our community. A special mention goes out to Carla, our primary point of contact at the Salvation Army, who made sure that the pickup process went smoothly. We would also like to acknowledge the GIL employees

who collaborated and worked together to make this initiative possible.



2022 SURVEY RESULTS - GIL'S SUPPORTED LIVING PROGRAM

In October 2022, Guelph Independent Living (GIL) conducted an annual survey to evaluate the Supported Living program offered at both 229 Dublin and 130 Grange. The survey was distributed to tenants of both buildings to gather feedback on the support services provided by Senior Support Workers (SSW) Kirsten and Cheryl.

The results of the survey revealed a high satisfaction rate among tenants with the support services provided by both Kirsten and Cheryl. Tenants reported their SSWs were polite, empathetic, and approachable. Additionally, the survey results indicated that tenants preferred to stay informed about their building and community through monthly newsletters and bulletin boards.

The reopening of the community room has also been positively received by tenants, who have enjoyed a variety of activities such as arts and crafts, group exercises, and games. GIL has shared a summary of the feedback received with both workers, so they understand the value of the supports they provide to tenants who require assistance.

Overall, GIL is grateful for the ongoing commitment and hard work of Kirsten and Cheryl, and for the positive feedback received from tenants through this survey. The feedback is a valuable tool for GIL and County of Wellington Housing to improve services provided to tenants and to maintain high satisfaction rate.

MEDICATION ASSISTANCE

Guelph Independent Living provides clients with medication assistance if it is identified as a task for which they require support. Assistance may be verbal (reminders based on scheduled bookings), physical (help to open properly labelled/ original medication containers, placing medications in the client's hand and/or mouth), or controlled (use of a Medication Log to record assistance provided on an identified schedule from a blister pack).

Part of our policy is to track all reported incidents of medication errors to see where improvements to procedures and education can be made, with the goal being zero incidents. Errors are categorized into those made by clients, employees and/or Regulated Health Care Professionals (RHCPs) like doctors, Pharmacies, and hospital.

1. GIL is pleased to report there was a 63% decrease in worker errors, down from 11 to 4 errors in 2022. Client errors increased, largely due to several clients who were going through extreme challenges, which have now been addressed.
2. Of these incidents, the following details were noted: Less than half of the reported errors were related to employee actions (down from half in 2020)
3. No incidents occurred where a client required further/ immediate medical attention
4. Incidents were across all programs
5. Employee errors were related to medication:
 - not assisted with at scheduled time/day
 - given but not signed for
6. Client errors included:
 - not being home for scheduled bookings/ assistance
 - failing to take meds once set out
 - not picking up/ arranging delivery of medications from Pharmacy

ongoing employee training is implemented. This includes completing an online training module for all new hires, receiving hands-on direction, and undergoing additional training as necessary through incident reviews and assignments by Coordinators.

If you have any additional questions or concerns about how GIL assists with your medications, please contact your Program Coordinator.

Definitions:

9 'Rs' of Medication Safety specified in the GIL polic

Standard Rights:

1. The Right Person – confirm the client.
2. The Right Medication – read the medication bottle/blister pack and confirm with client.
3. The Right Dose – as listed on medication label/ blister pack (dosage/measurement).
4. The Right Time – often using the 24-hour clock.
5. The Right Route – as follows: oral, rectal (suppositories), sublingual (dissolved underneath the tongue), topical (includes ointments, eye drops, nose drops, transdermal patches, inhalant (puffers, oxygen) and parenteral (injected by needle or IV including tube feeds)

Best Practice Rights:

1. The Right Reason – i.e. PRN
2. The Right Frequency
3. The Right Site – i.e. injections, ointments
4. The Right Documentation



To ensure accurate assistance with medications,

GET A PRESCRIPTION FROM A PHARMACIST

Pharmacists can now treat common ailments and Renew Prescriptions for most medications

This new service allows pharmacists to treat and prescribe medication for thirteen common medical ailments, such as rashes, pink eye, insect bites, and urinary tract infections. This service is in addition to the ability for pharmacists to renew prescriptions for most medications such as blood pressure, diabetes and asthma medication.

Over half of Ontario's 4,700 pharmacies have

started offering this service, and more are expected to join in the coming weeks and months. This service is designed to make it more convenient for people to connect to care closer to home, and will not cost extra when showing an Ontario health card. The cost of the medication will continue to be paid for directly or through a drug benefits plan. Additionally, this service is expected to increase access to care in rural parts of Ontario and free up doctors' time to provide care for more complex needs.

STEPS TO REDUCE WAIT TIMES FOR SURGERIES AND PROCEDURES

The Ontario government announced it is taking steps to reduce wait times for surgeries and procedures by expanding the role of community surgical and diagnostic centers. They plan to increase the number of surgeries performed in these centers and will strengthen oversight to ensure the highest standards of quality and safety are met.

They have a 3-step plan to integrate and use these facilities to speed up how quickly people can get surgeries and procedures using their health card.

Step one: is to tackle the existing backlog for cataract surgeries, which has one of the longest waits for procedures. New partnerships with community surgical and diagnostic centres in Windsor, Kitchener-Waterloo and Ottawa will add 14,000 additional cataract surgeries that will be performed each year with existing health human resources.

Step two: is to expand the scope of community surgical and diagnostic centres to address

regional needs with a focus on cataracts, MRI and CT imaging and colonoscopy and endoscopy procedures, these procedures will be non-urgent, low-risk and minimally invasive. While shortening wait times, this will allow hospitals to focus their efforts and resources on more complex and high-risk surgeries

Step three: As a next step, the government will introduce legislation that will, if passed, allow existing community diagnostic centres to conduct more MRI and CT scanning so that people can access publicly funded diagnostic services faster and closer to home.

The province will also be expanding surgeries for hip and knee replacements starting in 2024. The government is also planning to work with system partners and clinical experts to make sure the standards are met.

Source: <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1002641/ontario-reducing-wait-times-for-surgeries-and-procedures>

HOME AND VEHICLE MODIFICATION PROGRAM

The Home and Vehicle Modification Program provides home or vehicle modifications to eligible individuals and families to enable children and adults, including seniors, with disabilities that restrict mobility to continue living safely in their homes, participate in their communities and avoid job loss.

The program is intended for those who are in most need of assistance and before being considered eligible, applicants must first use any other sources

of funding that are available. Individuals who have an annual income over \$35,000 may be required to contribute towards the cost of the requested modifications.

Please visit the [March of Dimes](#) website to learn more about eligibility and how to apply.

RELAY FOR LIFE

Relay for Life at the University of Guelph is seeking attendees for their overnight event on March 11th from 7pm to 7am.

Relay for Life is an occasion that honors cancer survivors and commemorates the memories of those who have passed due to cancer. It involves fundraising activities conducted throughout the academic year to support the Canadian Cancer Society's search for a cure. The University of Guelph led as Canada's highest post-secondary fundraiser in 2022, generating over \$90,000. They are also proud to have taken part in Relay for Life for 19 years, having raised more than \$1.2 million for the Canadian Cancer Society.

Relay for Life understands that this is a challenging time, but will be following all necessary COVID-19 protocols to ensure the safety of all participants.

If you or anyone you know may be interested in joining this event, Relay for Life would greatly appreciate you reaching out to them. They plan to create a slideshow

to pay tribute to both cancer survivors and those who we've lost. If you would like to contribute by submitting a photo of a dear friend or family member who has passed or of yourself as a survivor, please contact relay@uoguelph.ca.

Survivors can register for the event at no cost, and they have the option to participate in the survivor lap around the track, which they can walk if they choose to. They are not obliged to stay for the full 12 hours.

If interested in registering, or for more information please contact relay@uoguelph.ca



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO DORIS AND NELLIE

In honor of Doris and Nellie's birthdays, the residents of 85 Neeve gathered together to commemorate their milestone celebration. During the event, a light meal and two beautiful cakes were served, and a toast was made to wish them both well. We express our appreciation to Wanda and Brandi for organizing such a delightful and considerate occasion in their honor.



HAPPENINGS AT DUBLIN AND GRANGE



Displayed above is a snapshot of the Christmas door decorating contest held at Dublin. Additionally, showcased below are the various crafts and ornaments skillfully crafted by Grange tenants. We

extend our gratitude to Kirsten and Cheryl for their efforts in bringing the community together and facilitating the creation of beautiful decorations during this festive season.

