

COMMUNITY LIVING  
Huntsville



# Annual Report

2021-2022



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## BOARD CHAIR'S MESSAGE

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Welcome to Community Living Huntsville's 2021-2022 Annual Report, and thank you for taking the time to look through these pages. We trust it will provide information and stories to show who we are as an organization, and also spark or deepen your interest in inspiring inclusion for people with developmental disabilities, and their families, in North Muskoka.

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to challenge our organization, and the people and families we serve, for a second year. Focusing on inclusion, and keeping true to our vision of "opening doors in an inclusive community", has been a struggle in an era of physical distance and self-isolation. But we have persevered, thanks to the efforts and hard work of Suzanne Willett and the entire Community Living staff. We are fortunate to have such an incredible team at Community Living Huntsville.

And to our board of directors, thank you for your guidance, but even more so for your passion. We have "Zoomed" through another year!

Sincerely,

*Myke Malone*

Chair, Board of Directors



## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

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And we thought 2020 was tough.

People and families we support, our team, and our community endured another difficult and exhausting year of pandemic measures and challenges in 2021–2022. Together, we persevered. The past year had more than its share of hardship, isolation, frustration, and grief, but so too did it have strength, community, and compassion.

We were overwhelmed by our community's support. Community members shared Community Living Month selfies and bought our 'Inclusion is Elemental' T-shirts. Our anonymous Back-to-School Angel outfitted children we support with bundles of school supplies and new clothes so they could start the new school year off with confidence and excitement. Community members, including a young man named Jensen, age 3, donated a mountain of items for our annual Children's Christmas Toy Drive. And we cannot thank our community enough for rallying for inclusion by raising more than \$65,000 toward a new accessible van that now provides adults we support with reliable, discreet, and vital transportation. It really does take a community, and we are so grateful for ours.



We are grateful, too, for our team. Thank you to our leadership team, managers, and supervisors for the incredible effort and continuous support you have provided your teams, people and families, and the organization through COVID complications, staff shortages, and more. Thank you to our frontline team members, who showed such care, professionalism, and teamwork, in an incredibly difficult time. And thank you to our board of directors for your guidance, expertise, and dedication.

As we head into 2022, we celebrate 60 years serving North Muskoka. Let's take our experiences and use them compassionately to create a more inclusive future for everyone that goes beyond what was and forward into what could be – a new and better normal.

Sincerely,

*Suzanne Willett*

Executive Director

Inspiring possibilities  
since 1962

## Our Vision

Opening doors in  
an inclusive community.

## Our Purpose

Fostering inclusiveness for  
people to live, work and play in  
unique and purposeful ways.

*Community Living Huntsville is  
a not-for-profit, registered  
charity that supports and  
advocates alongside people  
with developmental disabilities  
to live the life they choose in  
their community.*

*Find more at [clhuntsville.ca](http://clhuntsville.ca)  
or follow us on Facebook,  
Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn,  
and TikTok.*

## A BIT ABOUT WHO WE ARE

### Celebrating our history and our future

Today it would be hard to imagine a world where children are sent away from their homes and communities because they live with developmental disabilities. Prior to the 1960s, this was the reality for many families in Muskoka. Parents and caregivers were advised to send their children to a residential institution to receive the supports they needed. Institutions like the former Huronia Regional Centre in Orillia and the local Lakewood Nursing Home in Huntsville were far from ideal. Here children and adults lived in segregated buildings and had little to no choice in their daily lives.

The “community living movement” inspired new possibilities. This grassroots movement believed that, with the right supports in place, people living with developmental disabilities could stay in their own communities and participate as valued community members.

In Huntsville, parents of children with developmental disabilities started the Blue Horizons Nursery School. Run by volunteers out of church basements, the school was part of the shift where inclusion could be possible.

By 1971, this progressive group established a not-for-

profit organization and hired its first two part-time staff. The organization expanded its services to support older children and adults through skills programs and group homes.

In 1987, the organization was renamed Community Living Huntsville to reflect its purpose to support people living with developmental disabilities to be recognized as important members of their community. Community Living Huntsville now operated an integrated Resource Teacher program to support children in mainstream schools and daycares. The organization also provided supports for people to live independently in their own homes. By 1990, Community Living Huntsville started its Supported Employment program, an opportunity for people to connect with local employers who would value their skills and contributions.

Community Living Huntsville has evolved to become an organization with a rich history of disability rights and inclusion. We support over 300 children and adults, and their families, in North Muskoka. We are a proud employer of roughly 80 people in our community.

While Community Living Huntsville has changed over the years, one thing remains the same – we continue to support the growth of an inclusive community where everyone’s voices are heard, their decisions are respected, and their contributions are valued.

*Community Living Huntsville respectfully acknowledges that we are on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg under the terms of Robinson-Huron Treaty No. 61 of 1850 and the Williams Treaties of 1923. We are grateful to be here. We hope you are too. We commit to acknowledge, learn, educate, create opportunity, honour sacred places, and take actions toward real truth and reconciliation in support of our commitment to walking the path together in respect, peace, and harmony for future generations. G’chi miigwech. Thank you very much.*

## A BIT ABOUT WHAT WE DO

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Community Living Huntsville supports more than 300 children and adults, and their families, in North Muskoka. We envision a future where the community listens to and honours the voice, respects the rights, and values the contributions of everyone.

### Children and Youth Services

Our Children and Youth Services include Resource Consultants and Family Support Workers.

Resource Consultants support families with children ages 18 months to six years, who have a developmental delay or are at risk for a developmental delay. No diagnosis is needed to access these supports.

Family Support Workers support families with children ages six to 18 or 21, who are in school and diagnosed with developmental disabilities.

Our team also works in collaboration with licensed childcare centres and schools to promote inclusion, and ensure all children and youth are able to access support. We support families to access respite services, too.

### Adult Services

We provide a variety of government-funded supports and services for adults with developmental disabilities, including Group Living, Sup-

ported Independent Living, Community Participation, Supported Employment, and Planning Services.

Our Group Living team supports people to live in a group home in their community with flexible 24-hour supports tailored to their needs. People are encouraged and supported to be as independent as possible and make their own decisions.

Our Supported Independent Living team supports people to live in their own home in their community. Support is flexible and tailored to a person's needs and interests.

Our Community Participation team offers people support to meaningfully participate in their community as fully as they choose. Supports are tailored to the person, and focus on people living the life they choose in an inclusive community.

Our Supported Employment team supports people in developing their employment-related skills, securing jobs that meet their interests, skills, abilities and experience, and offers on-the-job coaching and ongoing collaboration with employees and employers as needed to help ensure everyone's needs are met. We also partner with Fleming Muskoka-Kawarthas Employment Services to offer employment supports to jobseekers supported by the Ontario Disability Support Program, who have complex barriers to employment, in the Huntsville area.

Our Planning Services support people to explore, discover, and work toward the life they want to live in their community. Our team listens to what the person feels is important, now and into future, guides a planning process that focuses on the person as the decision maker, and supports the person to realize their plan.

We focus on self-determination, person-directed planning, capacity building, relationships and networks, and community participation and contribution, with community as a first resource to achieving a person's goals.

### Connections

Our fee-based Connections program is available to people and families with Developmental Services Ontario Passport funds or other personal funds who want to purchase our supports and services. Our coordinator works with people to create personalized plans, access services, and build a life that is truly their own based on their budget and interests.

### Pathways

Our Pathways Program for adults, diagnosed with developmental disabilities but deemed ineligible for government-funded supports through Developmental Services Ontario or waitlisted for services, offers supports and services free to people in need. Pathways relies on donations, fund-raised dollars, and charitable grants.

## REPORTS FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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### Community Engagement Committee

What a year! Despite continued public health restrictions and isolation, Community Living Huntsville continued to persevere and move forward with our fundraising efforts.

The year started out with a focus on a new, much needed accessible van, one that was more discreet, better in the snow, and much more reliable. Although we couldn't meet in person for any of our events, in just over six months, through our Artists for Inclusion online auction, T-shirt sales, donations, and grants, we

raised more than \$65,000 and purchased the new van. We are thrilled by its reliability and how it looks. The passenger seat can even be removed to accommodate a wheelchair, and the people we support can now sit upfront with the driver, too.

The year also saw the community creatively and generously support us. We are so grateful for the organizations and volunteers who took it upon themselves to create and host fundraisers on our behalf. The Huntsville Polar Bear Dip, Tall Trees' Culinary Trip Around the World, and Rotary's Road Rally Scavenger Hunt are a few to name, collectively raising more than \$12,000 in support of Community Living Huntsville.

We are so grateful for all the businesses, service clubs, and people, who continued to help us navigate through the pandemic with donations and support. We look forward to continued partnership and support into the new year, as we now shift our focus onto innovative and vital housing solutions for people and families we support.

*Tish Firman*

Chair, Community Engagement Committee

*Jennifer Jerrett*

Community Engagement Specialist

## REPORTS FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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### Governance Committee

It has been another productive year for the Governance Committee. The committee met on a regular basis over the past year to ensure one-third of the board policies were reviewed, and to ensure the organization was on track with the Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act (ONCA) as it came into effect on October 19, 2021, after years of waiting.

A few updates were required to the organization's bylaw, as were articles of amendment, to ensure compliance with ONCA. These will be presented to the membership on October 18, 2022, for approval. Once approved, the articles of amendment will be filed with the Ontario Business Registry, and the organization will be in compliance with ONCA, which is two years before the October 2024 deadline.

On January 24, 2022, the organization received a letter from the Canada Revenue Agency,

Charities Directorate that the updated Supplemental Letters Patent were approved.

Thank you to committee members Debbie Kirwin, Myke Malone, Morgan Lonsdale, Matt Huddleston and Suzanne Willett for their commitment to the governance of the organization.

*Myke Malone*

Chair, Board of Directors

## Finance Committee

The Finance and Audit Committee, consisting of at least three board members, assists the board to ensure the organization operates in a financially prudent manner with appropriate controls in place to safeguard assets and to identify and mitigate financial risks.

The committee oversaw a yearly budget in excess of \$6 million. The main funding partners were the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, the District of Muskoka, Fleming

Muskoka-Kawartha Employment Services, and donors, both corporate and individual.

The committee met regularly to receive and approve financial reports and budgets.

The committee is confident that all government statutory filings were completed on time.

The complexities of the organization's financials has become apparent to the committee and we wish to acknowledge the excellent performance of the organization's finance and accounting personnel for their willingness to go above and beyond what would normally be expected to keep

the financial records timely and accurate. The committee would also like to thank BDO Canada for assigning an experienced Certified Professional Accountant to the organization's annual audit.

As chairperson, I wish to thank Lee Russell and committee members Myke Malone, Morgan Lonsdale, Lorraine Morin, and Suzanne Willett for their commitment to the organization.

*Jim Alexander*

Chair, Finance Committee



## Nominations Committee Report

### Community Living Huntsville Board of Directors 2021-2022:

Myke Malone – Chair  
Morgan Lonsdale – Vice-Chair  
Jim Alexander – Director/Treasurer  
Matt Huddlestone – Past Chair  
Helena Renwick – Director  
Debbie Kirwin – Director  
Lorraine Morin – Director  
Tish Firman – Director  
Heather Hunter – Director  
Bernadette Lovegrove – Director

The Community Living board of directors started

the year with 10 board members. We are ending the year with eight board members, as two members had to end their terms early.

We thank these board members for their contribution, time, and commitment to Community Living Huntsville.

Community Living Huntsville's board of directors provides the following recommendations for the upcoming 2022-2023 term:

#### Members Recommended for Reappointment:

Morgan Lonsdale

#### Proposed New Members to the Board:

John Garlick  
Tammy Hunt  
Crystal Paroschy

#### Proposed Board of Directors 2022-2023:

Jim Alexander  
Tish Firman  
John Garlick  
Tammy Hunt  
Heather Hunter  
Debbie Kirwin  
Morgan Lonsdale  
Bernadette Lovegrove  
Myke Malone  
Lorraine Morin  
Crystal Paroschy

*Myke Malone*

Chair, Nominations Committee



## John Garlick

Born in London, England, in 1937. Qualified as a Professional Engineer from Kingston (UK) University 1959. Was General Manager of the leading European Particle Board company from 1969 to 1975. Immigrated to Canada with my wife and three children in 1975 and took a partnership in an Engineering Consultancy in Vancouver, specializing in the Wood Products Industry. President from 1977 to 1982. My first project and the beginning of a lifetime relationship was the design of the Domtar Particle Board plant in Huntsville. I returned to Huntsville again as a Consultant to Domtar to expand the mill in 1991, and ran this and the other two Domtar mills in the USA as a temporary General Manager while the company was being sold. 1991 to 1994 and again 1996 to 1998.

I partnered in my own OSB Mill in Inverness, Scotland, sold out to Noranda 1986 to 1990. And for the next 25 years did independent consulting to major Institutions and Forest Products companies around the world, working throughout Europe, Africa, Australia and North America. In 1996 I returned to Huntsville from Australia and married a local lady, Sonja Clarke, in 2000.

We have 10 grandkids between us scattered around Scotland and North America. I have been on the Fairvern LTC Home board since 2014 with

# A passionate team of dedicated volunteers who champion inclusion in our community

a special interest in the development of the new home. The new home has been approved and the Fairvern board is now dissolved, so I would like to join the Community Living board and hope that my previous experiences are of use to the local community. I look forward to the possible opportunity to serve with many old friends on the Community Living board.

## Tammy Hunt

My name is Tammy Hunt and I was born and raised in this fabulous town. I am married with five wonderful children.

As the co-owner of The Hudson Hair Salon and Spa, we had the opportunity to start The Hudson Charity in 2021. This charity is to help raise funds for a deserving Huntsville High School student in the way of a bursary, but we have also expanded it to help raise awareness for all those with disabilities to create an inclusive downtown Huntsville.

I couldn't be more excited to be a part of this new chapter, in such an incredible community with amazing people.

## Crystal Paroschy

Born and raised in Huntsville, Crystal has some deep roots within the community. Upon graduating from Huntsville High School, she attended Sir Sandford Fleming College where she graduated with a diploma in Business Administration, and then continued her education, obtaining a diploma in Floral Design.

After living on the East Coast for a short time, Crystal knew she wanted to return and build her life in Huntsville. She worked as a floral designer as well as within Community Services for the Town of Huntsville as a lifeguard and swimming instructor. When the opportunity arose, Crystal moved into the Clerks department at the Town of Huntsville where she now holds the position of Deputy Clerk and Accessibility Coordinator.

Crystal is a proud member of her community and is eager to help foster equity and inclusion for all. She enjoys seeing people flourish to their full potential and looks forward to helping Huntsville grow into an even better place for everyone to work, live, and enjoy life.

## Strategic Plan 2019 - 2023

**Purpose Statement:** Fostering inclusiveness for people to live, work, and play in unique and purposeful ways.



### Strategic Direction #1: Intentional Innovation

#### Goal #1

**Be intentional about applying creativity, using technology, and engaging partners to find innovative solutions to:**

- a) Affordable housing
- b) Lifetime transition services for:
  - i. Children
  - ii. Youth & their families entering the adult service system
  - iii. People requiring supports associated with aging & end of life
  - iv. People requiring new or altered supports due to aging family members
- c) Expanding meaningful employment & other opportunities in the community
- d) Influencing education & life-long learning organizations
- e) Moving community awareness and advocacy efforts forward



### Strategic Direction #2: Cohesive & Creative Workplace Culture

#### Goal #2

**Cultivate a cohesive and creative workplace culture by engaging Community Living Huntsville's staff team, in:**

- a) Identifying together, why Community Living Huntsville is adopting an innovative approach to our work, and how each of our stakeholders will benefit
- b) Using collaborative and creative approaches to seize opportunities & solve challenges
- c) Developing a culture that promotes informed risk-taking in a safe environment, and learning from the things we have tried
- d) Working across programs to try new things and to provide seamless support
- e) Exploring learning opportunities that enable the team to communicate more effectively, both internally & with members of our community



### Strategic Direction #3: Resource Development

#### Goal #3

**Access new funds and resources to promote sustainable supports for people using services by:**

- a) Reaching out to existing & new partners from the private and public sectors, to co-create mutually beneficial initiatives
- b) Having a voice, role and vote at decision-making tables locally, regionally, and provincially
- c) Growing direct funding and fee-for-service options
- d) Expanding the application of Community Living Huntsville's sustainable fundraising model
- e) Exploring social enterprise as an opportunity for fund development
- f) Designing and implementing a deliberate and focused approach to finding efficiencies
- g) Connecting with other organizations in the geographical area to explore possibilities of ways to share resources to minimize administrative costs and maximize effectiveness, while maintaining Community Living Huntsville's identity



## Kindness, excitement, and a return to the classroom

A smile beamed from a child's face on his first day of school in September 2021.

"Thank you for providing Dominic with all this amazing gear to head off to his first day of Kindergarten!" said his family, as they shared a photo of him with his new backpack.

Our anonymous Back-to-School Angel had once more delivered hand-picked and personalized back-to-school kits stuffed with new backpacks, supplies, clothes, shoes, and more, for children Community Living Huntsville supports. The thoughtfully curated bundles ensured students had some of the tools they needed to confidently – and excitedly – kick off a new school year.

It was a generous kindness in an especially difficult time. The previous year, children, teens, and their families saw childcare centres and schools open and close in waves, as the COVID-19 pandemic continued. While some students thrived at home, others often felt socially isolated and underserved by online classes. Many families felt pinched pocketbooks and frayed nerves.

"The priority, of course, was to keep everyone safe, and yet the consequences had an impact," says Stacey Bullock, Manager, Children and Youth Services, for Community Living Huntsville.



**Left:** Kevin Rows (left), Family Support Worker, and Stacey Bullock, Manager, Children and Youth Services, help ready a generous mountain of donations for students from our Back-To-School Angel. Photo by Community Living Huntsville. **Right:** Dominic is off to school with his new gear from our Back-To-School Angel. Photo provided by family.



Our Children and Youth Services team's Resource Consultants support families of children ages 18-months to 6-years old who have developmental delays or risks of developmental delays, while the team's Family Support Workers support children and youth ages 6- to 21-years old, who are in school and diagnosed with a developmental disability, and their families.

The team supports and advocates alongside roughly 120 children and youth enrolled in school and their families.

"Some were really struggling with the isolation,

anxiety, and impact on mental health," says Stacey. "We were also seeing an impact on pre-school children – if they had not been able to attend a childcare centre, their social skills may not have had as full an opportunity to develop as they would have pre-COVID."

The new school year saw many students both excited and nervous about a return to the classroom after so much unstructured time apart. Yet, even as schools reopened, some families hesitated.

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“We, as a community, needed our students, families, teachers, and education staff to feel confident in returning to in-person learning, and we supported and encouraged additional provincial efforts on enhanced pandemic measures in classrooms, as a priority, to foster that confidence,” says Stacey. “We also recognized the challenges and stresses that the constantly changing pandemic had put on teachers, who may be parents as well.”

As the school year continued, our team celebrated Inclusive Education Month in February by saying ‘Thank You’ to educators and administrators in North Muskoka schools for creating inclusive spaces for all children and youth in our community.

Team members put together care packages with treats, resources, and words of thanks, and then dropped them off at area elementary schools and Huntsville High School.

“We wanted to thank all our education partners for promoting inclusive learning environments that support all students, with and without disabilities, to learn and participate together,” says Stacey.

She notes every child, with or without disabilities, depends on school for socialization and development, and inclusive learning environments promote understanding, connection, and strong-



**Top Left:** Caitlin Griffin, Resource Consultant, shares words of thanks to area educators and school administrators from the Community Living Huntsville Children and Youth Services team, during National Inclusive Education Month. **Bottom Left:** Yvonne Bush, Resource Consultant, and Gwen Jones, Family Support Worker, get ready to hit the road with care packages for area education partners, during National Inclusive Education Month 2022. **Right:** Education partners across North Muskoka receive care packages from our Children and Youth Services team. Photos by Community Living Huntsville.

er communities. “Every student, with or without disabilities, may face different obstacles and have different levels of coping skills because no two people, nor their circumstances, are entirely the same,” says

Stacey. “As a community, what is most needed right now is kindness and understanding. Everyone has different struggles happening and what can make the biggest impact for that person, on that day, is to just be kind.”

## **'I'm not sitting down': Huntsville's Rex Malloy takes COVID-19 era one step at a time**

What has Rex Malloy been doing to keep busy during the COVID-19 pandemic?

"Oh, not too much," the Huntsville resident, 84, smiles.

Rex, like everyone, had his routine thrown off by the public health crisis. A social person who usually meets friends for lunch, hits the course every week for golf, avidly volunteers in his community, travels, and always provides game-day support for Huntsville Junior C Otters games at the Canada Summit Centre, found himself, like so many others, at home.

Public health restrictions, provincial lockdowns, and the isolation they caused left Rex unable to visit his usual indoor community spaces, enjoy meals out with friends, or even pop into local businesses to warm up on cold walks, which meant limits on his usual activities and social interactions.

He remained supported by his Community Living Huntsville Supported Independent Living staff, though, with added support in the pandemic,

too. While it was tough at first for Rex, who likes to do things for himself, it did mean he had added support for transportation, at-home meals, connection, and more, in the pandemic months.

He also kept in touch with friends during trips to the grocery store, and kept up to date with Huntsville Otters news, at a distance. But he eagerly awaited the pandemic's end.

In the meantime, he walked.

"I said, 'I'm not sitting down here – I'm going to get up and go for a walk,'" laughs Rex.

Often seen trekking around town even before the pandemic, he kept up his exercise, which aided his physical and mental health through the difficult time.

"When I get home I fall asleep," he smiles. "The fresh air makes you go to sleep."

And while before the pandemic he usually

walked to the arena to catch hockey games, lately he had walked into the summit centre to receive both his scheduled COVID-19 vaccine doses.

Now he says he is pleased restrictions have started to loosen. It has meant recent visits to the mall and lunches with his pals, a return to Community Golf at Deerhurst Resort with friends and mentors, and an eagerness to cheer for his favourite local hockey team with fellow fans in the stands.

His mood seemed cheerful, which is understandable, as the community seems poised for a return to its spirit of togetherness and inclusion after a harmful period of isolation that affected so many people.

*Community Living Ontario presented Rex Malloy with the Jason Rae Leadership Award in 2019 for his dedicated advocacy on inclusion for people with developmental disabilities, leadership, and community contributions.*

## **The community seems poised for a return to its spirit of togetherness and inclusion after a harmful period of isolation that has affected so many people.**



*Rex Malloy (left), a Huntsville resident and advocate for people with developmental disabilities, and Kaitlyn Sword, a Direct Support Professional with Community Living Huntsville's Supported Independent Living team, enjoy a walk to a public park in September. Photo by Community Living Huntsville.*

## Disability, talent, and the workplace: celebrating NDEAM 2021 in Huntsville

It's time to engage talent in the disability inclusion evolution.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) is an annual campaign led by the Ontario Disability Employment Network (ODEN) each October to promote disability inclusion in employment. The 2021 campaign theme was Engaging Talent in the Disability Inclusion Evolution, which referenced the evolution of the modern workplace.

"Disability often gets left out of the business conversation about diversity and inclusion in the workplace. That is changing," stated ODEN.

"Organizations that understand the power of investing in the talent of skilled people who have a disability invest in success."

Community Living Huntsville is a passionate advocate for inclusive



*Jeff, who works as a house cleaner at Deerhurst Resort in Huntsville, says he likes the income, purpose, and social connection that comes with employment. Photo by Community Living Huntsville.*

hiring. The not-for-profit organization has provided Supported Employment services for adults with developmental disabilities in the Huntsville area since 1990 and has inclusive employment relationships with more than 125 local business-

es and organizations.

The organization believes skilled, talented people who have a disability should have the same employment opportunities as other jobseekers and that people who

have a disability are a talent pool that must be accessed for businesses to remain successful in the future.

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“Work helps me keep busy,” says Jeff, who works as a house cleaner at Deerhurst Resort. “And I feel like I’m part of something.”

He also notes he likes gainful employment and meeting new people at work, both of which are facilitated by an inclusive employer and the Community Living Huntsville Supported Employment team.

Jeff says the Community Living Huntsville team helped him apply for his job, supported him with workplace orientation, and helped him feel more comfortable on the job. His success is also due to his interest, skills, and attitude. “My favorite part of the job is driving in the golf cart,” he quipped.

Ginger Barkey, chief administrative officer for MBRP, says the high-performance exhaust systems manufacturer has long partnered with Community Living Huntsville, and a relationship with the Supported Employment team has offered the company an opportunity to build a successful employment relationship that helps meet its staffing needs.

“With our engagement with Community Living Huntsville’s Supported Employment program, we have been able to come alongside the worker with little to no experience in a manufacturing environment, and mentor and coach him to be a part of a productive team,” says Ginger. “The worker has been trained to support the night shift team, and can be relied upon to show up for work, and balance out the packaging team. This has reduced turnover for our team and therefore allowed further enhancement to our team building.”

Disability-inclusive hiring, according to ODEN, changes employees’ lives, enables businesses to fill roles, allows businesses to increase productivity, employee engagement and profitability, drives cultural change within a business, and often strengthens brand reputation.

Plus, according to a 2018 Accenture study, businesses that practise inclusive hiring of people who have a disability experience 72 per cent more productivity, a 45 per cent increase in workplace safety, 30 per cent higher profit margins, and two-times the net income of other

businesses in the study.

The goal is to get to a place where hiring qualified people who have a disability is “business as usual.” NDEAM presents an opportunity to put inclusive hiring in the spotlight.

And Community Living Huntsville literally put it in the spotlight with Light It Up! For NDEAM, a one-night-only, co-ordinated lighting event that happened across Canada on October 21, 2021. It lit its 99 West Road offices with purple and blue

floodlights for the event, and encouraged others to do the same.

“Access to employment is still a barrier for people with disabilities, including people in the Huntsville area,” says Diane Lupton, Manager, Community Supports, Community Living Huntsville. “Light It Up! For NDEAM helps keep the conversation about disability and employment, and the benefits of inclusive hiring, at the forefront with local businesses and community members.”



*Diane Lupton, Manager, Community Supports, says Community Living Huntsville works with employees and employers to promote and support disability inclusion in the workplace. Photo by Community Living Huntsville.*

## An end to homelessness: the power of transitional housing

Brian couldn't find anywhere to live.

"It's very expensive," says the soft-spoken Huntsville community member. "Not enough rooms for rent, not enough apartments to rent for under \$1,200."

The housing crisis, and the limited availability, fierce competition, and skyrocketing prices it has caused, has disproportionately affected marginalized community members, including people who live with the label of developmental disability. Homelessness is a stark reality. And it is getting worse.

Brian bounced between motels and hotels and other makeshift arrangements, never secure. Beset with uncertainty and instability, it was difficult, if not impossible, to build trust, benefit from social services and community supports, or realize self-worth and community belonging.

Community Living Huntsville took innovative action with its Transitional Housing Initiative. It leased a pair of two-bedroom apartments and offered them to young men it supports, who have developmental disabilities and were homeless or at risk of homelessness. The men could



*Brian says he enjoys the quiet stability of living in one of Community Living Huntsville's transitional housing apartments after a struggle with homelessness. Photo by Community Living Huntsville.*

have an apartment for up to four years, while accessing Community Living Huntsville supports and services. In return, each person would commit to intensive housing-related courses and programming, plus community building, to build their skills, connections, and confidence, while working with support toward securing a perma-

nent place to live. It is all about supporting people to have equal access to housing opportunities in their community.

Brian was the first person to move into one of the apartments. "I thought it was great," he says.

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"It's nice and quiet."

Not only is the apartment in a neighbourhood close to public transit and downtown services, it also meets one of Brian's personal needs: it has space for his vegetable garden. He grows things like summer squash, cucumbers, tomatoes, and carrots. He has built a relationship with a neighbour, who also enjoys gardening. Stable housing has given Brian consistent access to programs, services, and choice, so he can build his life and community.

Chris Jordan-Stevens, Supervisor, Supported Independent Living for Community Living Huntsville, knows housing is a basic human right. Without it, people are deprived of the stability everyone needs for a full and happy life, unable to fully participate socially and economically in their community, and easily pushed to the edges of it.

That is particularly true for people with developmental disabilities, who have a long and painful history of being excluded from their communities. Jordan-Stevens notes that, historically, government systems considered people with developmental disabilities as unable to live independently, institutionalizing them in dehumanizing conditions. That history makes self-determination and access to community-based housing enormously significant for people with

developmental disabilities, he said.

"Access to housing shows certain assumptions about people with disabilities are not only inherently wrong, but also dangerous," he says.

Brian says he likes his apartment, but wants a place of his own. And he knows when he is able to find it, his apartment will open to another community member.

Travis, who also lives in a transitional housing apartment, feels the same way.

Travis had to leave his previous housing and wasn't able to find a new place in the COVID-19 pandemic. Prices spiked and competition was aggressive. Ideally, he would like to build his own house. In the meantime, he wants an apartment he can share with his best four-legged pal, Lucky.

"It has to be pet friendly," he says. Travis has had particular difficulty finding a place because he needs one that will welcome Lucky. "Lucky is the friendliest dog," he says. "I'm not giving him up."

Travis and Lucky have been together for years and they have a strong emotional bond. Lucky isn't allowed to live in the transitional housing apartment, but he can come visit, conditionally. It is one of the reasons Travis likes living there. He also likes that he has access to Community Living Huntsville team members, support, and programs.

Team members have supported Travis to find employment, access community-based services, and navigate the ODSP system, as examples. And they will support him and others in its transitional housing to build housing-related skills, apply for apartments, prepare for interviews with landlords, and find a place that meets their needs, too.

Community Living Huntsville is dedicated to supporting and advocating alongside people in innovative ways. Its Transitional Housing Initiative has already changed lives. The initiative depends on fundraised dollars, donations, and charitable grants to continue and change more.



*Travis, with support from the Community Living Huntsville team, is working hard to find a place of his own where he and his dog, Lucky, can live long-term. Photo by Community Living Huntsville.*

## Community helps Rev Up Independence with new wheels

A new van is helping rev up independence in North Muskoka.

Thanks to the community's incredible support and generosity, Community Living Huntsville's Rev Up Independence Donation Drive, launched in August 2021, raised more than \$65,000 toward the successful purchase of a professionally modified, all-season, wheelchair-accessible vehicle. It arrived in March 2022.

The new van provides people we support, who live with developmental disabilities across North Muskoka, access to reliable, discreet, and vital transportation. People can now confidently reach essential appointments and services, volunteer roles, recreational activities, social engagements, community events, and more, so they can share in every element of living and have equal opportunity to participate.

"I like it," smiles Glen Slater, one of several people who has made use of the new vehicle. "It's a nice van."

Jamie Arnold, a Direct Support Professional with Community Living Huntsville's Community Participation team, calls the van a wonderful addition.



*Glen Slater (left) and Jamie Arnold are among the many people and staff praising Community Living Huntsville's new accessible van for supporting community inclusion. Photo by Community Living Huntsville.*

"It allows people we support to engage in the community in a more inclusive way than with past vehicles," says Jamie. "The new van also has a removable front seat, allowing Glen to sit up front while he jams out to the radio."

The donation drive launched as a vital but oversized, cumbersome, and persnickety white van was reaching the end of its road with us. While

essential, it was unreliable, difficult for staff to maneuver, and looked institutional.

The old van – when it worked – connected people with family, friends, and community activities, like live karaoke nights at the local pub, recreational swims at the Canada Summit Centre, and multiday out-of-town conferences for People

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First Ontario, an important self-advocacy movement for people with developmental disabilities, to name a few.

Jennifer Jerrett, Community Engagement Specialist for Community Living Huntsville, says most people in North Muskoka understand that access to transportation is essential.

"Everyone deserves access to a vehicle that meets their needs and can get them from their home to places they can live, work and play in meaningful ways," says Jennifer.

But the new van, she says, not only had to link people with their destinations, but also had to afford them the dignity that most people with private vehicles often take for granted.

"The old van was so large, it turned heads. It felt like driving around in a neon sign that screamed, 'Look at me!'" says Jennifer. "We wanted the new accessible vehicle that offered more dignity, privacy, and reliability to those who depended on it, and easier maneuvering for staff who drove it."

And we needed the community's help. While our not-for-profit organization receives provincial funds to offer some of its programs and services, it relies on donations and fundraised dollars for capital expenses, like a new vehicle.

Jennifer thanks everyone for rallying to raise the funds for the new van.

"Our community really put the fundraising pedal to the metal for inclusion," she says. "The new van is already hard at work providing people with vital access and connection. We cannot thank you enough."

The van was made possible by the many individual and corporate donors, some who wished to

remain anonymous, that helped make the purchase of the van a reality.

"We could not have done it without the community's support," says Jennifer. "Thank you to our donors for your contributions in support of community inclusion. We look forward to the new van serving people for years to come."



*Jennifer Jerrett, Community Engagement Specialist for Community Living Huntsville, says the not-for-profit organization is grateful to donors for their contributions toward its Rev Up Independence Donation Drive. The donation drive raised the funds needed to purchase an accessibly modified van in early 2022. Photo by Community Living Huntsville.*

## **‘You have to believe people deserve better’: love for family drives passion for inclusion**

One decision made all the difference for Lorraine Morin’s family.

Her brother, Marcel Chartrand, was labelled “mentally re\*\*\*\*\*” at age 4. No further diagnosis was provided, but the family believes Marcel may have suffered from lack of oxygen in the birth canal during a difficult labour. The family lived in Kapuskasing and had travelled to Toronto for assessments after concerns Marcel was developing skills at a slower pace than Lorraine, his younger sister.

“My mom and dad were told to put him in an institution,” says Lorraine. “Thankfully, they chose not to. I really don’t know if he would have flourished in an institution, that he would have done well, not nearly as well as he’s done. And there are terrible stories about institutions. Who knows what would have hap-



*Marcel Chartrand (left) and Lorraine Morin share a strong sibling bond built on love and community inclusion for people with developmental disabilities. Photo provided by Lorraine Morin.*

pened.”

She firmly believes people with developmental disabilities deserve equal opportunity to live, work, and play as included, valued, and re-

spected community members.

Lorraine, a retired inclusive business owner, and her husband, Gerry, have called Huntsville home since moving here from Kapuskas-

ing about 35 years ago. Lorraine joined the Community Living Huntsville board of directors in 2021.

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She remains closely connected with her Kapuskasing family, especially Marcel, who she FaceTimes with every day.

"I've always been his advocate," she says. It started when they were kids. She stuck up for her brother whenever he was bullied. Now, she advocates for services and supports so her brother can fully live his life in his community. She encourages him to try new things and, despite his shyness and initial anxiety, supports him to embrace social settings, which he loves once comfortable. She models the behaviour she wants to see in others.

Lorraine is helping Marcel plan for the future, too, as their parent age, but lack of housing options is a serious problem.

"The only option now, as our mom and dad are getting older, is a nursing home," says Lorraine. She, like the rising tide of people, families, and advocates across Ontario, is adamant long-term care is the wrong place for people with devel-

opmental disabilities who do not need those services.

Instead, argues Lorraine, communities need to create integrated, supportive housing near community-based services, and provide access to flexible supports that meets a person's changing needs through life. That way, people can continue to live their lives with self-determination as active, included community members, without the threat of separation from it.

It's the same reason she is grateful her brother was never forced into an institution as a child.

"I see his anxiety when he is in a social setting, and I don't know if he would have done well in an institution, being grouped together with people for no reason other than they had disabilities. And to be exposed to only that environment limits your ability to show what you can do," says Lorraine. "I really think

**"I really think the reason he has thrived as a person is because he was in a family setting with support, love, comfort, confidence, and community."**

the reason he has thrived as a person is because he was in a family setting with support, love, comfort, confidence, and community."

And Marcel has community. Lorraine notes, for example, that when her brother takes a walk around town everybody knows him. Inclusion has benefitted community attitudes over the years, too.

"Because Marcel has lived in Kapuskasing his whole life, and he is such a fun person who loves to laugh and joke around, he has a lot of people in the community who know that about him now, and they just treat him like Marcel. It's good that way," says Lorraine.

Her brother, she says, also has support from his local Community Living organization to further connect with community and meaningfully pursue his interests and passions, like cooking, hiking, and ice fishing: "He loves being outdoors."

Lorraine, as a board member for Community Living Huntsville, wants to continue to champion choice and inclusion for people and families in her community. That includes promoting community-based skills-building and employment opportunities for people with disabilities, boosting public understanding and acceptance of developmental disabilities, and advocating for access to community-based housing and supports.

She also wants people with disabilities to be considered, consulted, and heard when public infrastructure and housing development happens. She feels she has a supportive team at Community Living Huntsville. "I think it's a really good group of people with a similar passion," says Lorraine. "It's where their heart is. ... You have to believe that people with developmental disabilities deserve better than what they get."

## A serious life decision: Huntsville man moves out on his own with Community Living support

Coulter White made a serious life decision in 2021. Earlier that year Coulter, a Huntsville community member, decided to move out on his own for the first time. His family was moving out of town, and so Coulter had to choose. He chose to stay in Huntsville.

It was not a decision he nor his family made lightly – it's a big decision for anyone to make – but he says it was important to him to stay in his community. "Because I have friends and jobs here," says Coulter. "And my activities."

Knowing he would have support from Community Living Huntsville and its Supported Independent Living team, if he needed it, made the decision easier. Coulter could exercise his self-determination and independence – and there would be a reliable team nearby to help him foster it.

Coulter says the move into his new apartment went well. And he enjoys now living on his own. He says he likes having his own space where he keeps all his own stuff – especially his movies and music – and makes his own meals.

And he says that so far he is doing well. "It's



*Coulter White says staying in Huntsville was important to him, so he could keep his connections with work, friends, and community. Photo by Community Living Huntsville.*

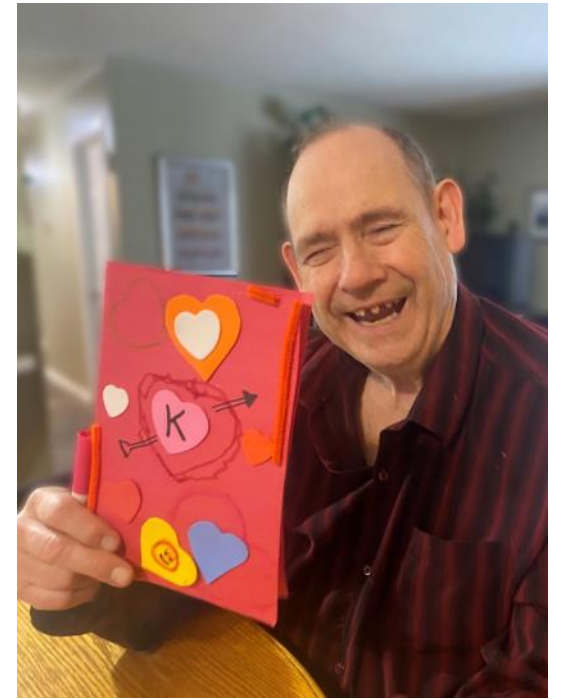
good," says Coulter.

Chris Jordan-Stevens, Supervisor, Supported Independent Living for Community Living Huntsville, says the team's role is to support people with developmental disabilities in a way that reflects people's own goals and values, and to make their own choices.

That could include support and skills building around daily living activities, household care and maintenance, menu planning, grocery shopping and meal preparation, support and advocacy for medical, dental, and specialist appointments,

budgeting, paying bills, and filing tax returns, and community connection to name a few. It all depends on the person. And the person always ultimately makes the decisions.

"Coulter's decision to move into his own apartment was a big step, though we've never doubted his ability to choose the kind of life he wants to live. At Community Living Huntsville, we are dedicating to supporting people to set and achieve their own goals," says Chris. "Coulter has incredible connections in community and they only continue to grow."





## PEOPLE AND BUSINESS OPERATIONS

### **‘We couldn’t do this journey without you’**

A note came across a Community Living Huntsville team member’s desk in early 2022.

“I just want to say, ‘Thank You,’ to you and all of the Community Living staff for being there for my family and myself,” the note said.

In a difficult time filled with pandemic challenges, province-wide staff shortages, and burnout, kind words can have such an impact.

Our team members are skilled and passionate.

They work with children with developmental delays or risks of developmental delays, people with developmental disabilities, families, and community partners to empower people in ways that enable choice, inclusion, and belonging and strengthen communities for everyone. As essential service providers, they had to find new and innovative ways to continue to support people and families – and each other – as the pandemic barrelled into a second year.

And they did it with care, professionalism, and kindness. “My goal is to foster independence. I find it really rewarding when we’re able to help people find that courage and strength,” says

Emily Kouyoumjian, Direct Support Professional, Supported Independent Living.

“When a person has a goal and you help them reach it? It’s a great feeling to see people get to that point in their lives,” says Lisa Du-Perre, Human Resources Assistant and former Direct Support Professional, Community Participation.

They also showed compassion for each other and themselves.

Community Living Huntsville team members created a Wellness Committee for staff in 2021. The committee aims to foster a workplace culture

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that supports professional, physical, and mental wellbeing, and makes related recommendations to senior leadership. It put Community Living Huntsville on the leading edge of growing efforts across the province to support Developmental Services staff mental health and wellbeing.

Committee members, who include team members from across the organization, launched several wellness-related initiatives in the committee's fledgling year, including a new health and wellness section in the weekly staff newsletter, an organization-wide self-directed wellness BIN-GO game, and team challenges in the Participation health and fitness app, to name a few.

Efforts included advocacy, too. Wellness Committee members spearheaded a joint letter, signed by board, management, union, committee, and community member representatives, that called on the province to permanently increase Direct Support Professional pay, in recognition of the essential nature of the work and to promote dignity and stability in the sector. The letter, which added to similar calls from others across Ontario, garnered an encouraging response from Merrilee Fullerton, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. Shortly afterward, the province announced its intent to make a pandemic-related \$3 per hour temporary wage enhancement permanent.

It was part of a year filled with gratitude for our

senior leadership, managers, supervisors, front-line team, and administrative staff.

"We are so proud of our team's care, dedication, and professionalism, especially over the last two years. They continued to make a difference in people's lives – and their community – every day," says Suzanne Willett, Executive Director for Community Living Huntsville. "It has been another exhausting year for our team members, but they stepped up for people and families they support, their team, and themselves. We are so proud of them."

And people and families have shared their thanks, too: "Today, know how appreciated you are," a family we support told our team. "We couldn't do this journey without you."



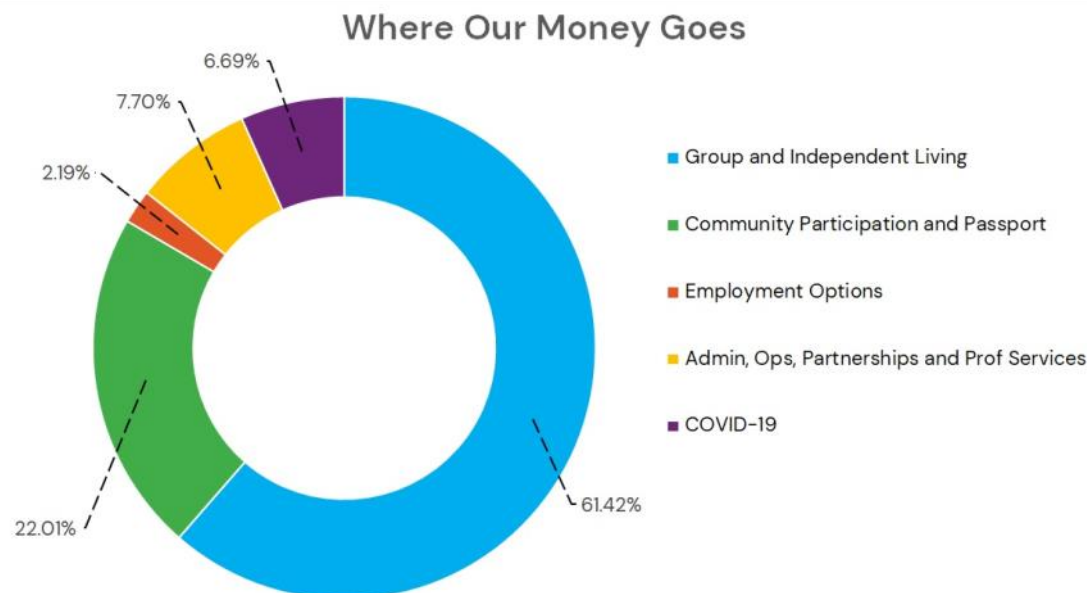
## 2021–2022 Financial Summary

Who knew we would still be wrestling with the COVID-19 pandemic three years later? Personal protective equipment, enhanced cleanings, and physical distancing remain a reality for our organization, as do new technology, staffing shortages, and advocacy efforts. Through it all, our team members have continued to show flexibility and resilience, while staying focused on supporting people, families, their teammates, and themselves.

This year, our leadership and finance teams led our organization through the launch of a new payroll and scheduling system. It is difficult to overstate the significance of this project and how much of a shift was needed for our team to adopt and adapt to the system. It hasn't been easy, and we continue to work through some backend ruffles, but we remain motivated by the efficiencies the system creates, as it merges five systems into one platform.

We continued to face staffing challenges, too. We were not alone. The pandemic has been difficult, to put it mildly, and we said goodbye to seasoned staff, who retired, relocated, or left the sector after some tough years. But we also welcomed many new staff members, too, and are optimistic for the year ahead, especially as the province has made a commitment to permanently increase Direct Support Professional pay by \$3 per hour. Collaborative efforts are underway to support Developmental Services staff mental health and wellbeing across Ontario as well.

While much of the world tries to move on from the pandemic, it remains very real for many immunocompromised people we support. Our team members continue to work hard to support people – and rebuild community in the wake of pandemic isolation and tension.



**\$6,748,806**

**Total Revenue**

**\$6,632,419**

**Total Expenses**

<b>REVENUE</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>2020-2021</b>	<b>%</b>
Province of Ontario	\$ 4,800,908.00	71.14%	\$ 4,820,137.00	80.11%
Flow through funding – Non-retainable revenue	\$ 1,326,533.00	19.66%	\$ 881,337.00	14.65%
COVID 19 funding	\$ 443,586.00	6.57%	\$ 267,257.00	4.44%
Fundraising and other income	\$ 177,779.00	2.63%	\$ 48,380.00	0.80%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 6,748,806.00</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>\$ 6,017,111.00</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
Salaries and Benefits	\$ 4,059,128.00	61.20%	\$ 3,683,002.00	61.81%
Program, Operating and Professional Expenses	\$ 2,120,958.00	31.98%	\$ 1,990,328.00	33.40%
COVID 19 expenses	\$ 443,586.00	6.69%	\$ 276,917.00	4.65%
Fundraising costs and other expenditures	\$ 8,747.00	0.13%	\$ 8,247.00	0.14%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 6,632,419.00</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>\$ 5,958,494.00</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
<b>Excess of Revenues over Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 116,387.00</b>		<b>\$ 58,617.00</b>	

To request a copy of Community Living Huntsville's full 2021-2022 financial report, please email [clh@clhuntsville.ca](mailto:clh@clhuntsville.ca).



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