

ISSUE
May 2021



Community Living South Muskoka

Vision

The “Go To” expert for those impacted by a developmental disability.

Mission

Community Living South Muskoka provides lifetime support to all those impacted by a developmental disability, utilizing skilled staff and effective partnerships involving the individual, the family and the community with the result that the individual is accepted as a valued community member.

Values

Excellence

Trust

Respect

Success Factors

A Highly Valued

Community Organization

A Leader in Innovation

Person Centered

Valued, Skilled Staff



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A Message From Your Board Chair

As I started to write this article, I reflected on some of the past newsletter articles I have written. I know that, given the heavy responsibilities that come with our jobs, I have often taken a light hearted approach.

But today, even as the “stay at home” order officially ends, I find it hard to joke about where we have been and where we have yet to go.

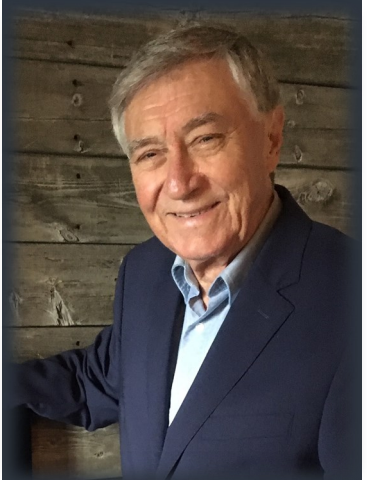
Amazingly, with diligence and adherence to the tough public health rules, we have avoided the outbreaks that have afflicted many in our sector. Many in our community may not fully understand how tough it has been, and may not realize the patience needed to work and live under these conditions. And, while this is most onerous on those that work and live in our residences and families at home caring for their children, all of our staff have shown resilience and have gladly pitched in when it has been required. In the last month, on two occasions, we have faced some incredibly challenging situations that have required a team approach and for staff and management to drop everything to respond. On both occasions our team has risen to the challenge and avoided a bigger crisis. Congratulations, and thank you. What you probably don’t know, is how our board of directors is prepared to respond on behalf of our staff if required.

When a serious incident occurs, as Chair of the Board, I immediately get a call from our CEO Krista to let me know what has happened and what is being done. Since each board member has a specific responsibility, I contact the board member responsible for public communications, Ryan Griffiths. Since the OPP were involved, Ryan immediately begins checking for any information that may be made public. While the OPP are very discrete, we have to be prepared if there should be a news story run. Ryan and I run down the known facts and prepare a response plan to help us resolve the issue and call upon the community for support if needed. The motto, of course, is the old scout motto, be prepared. Thanks to our staff, we have never yet had to implement these plans, but we will always be ready if required.

I am sure that each of you have your own story of how the pandemic has affected you, your job and your family. Perhaps, like me, you are tired of hearing that “there is a light at the end of the tunnel.” All I can say is that there is still some tunnel ahead and that light is still very faint. Of course, that may be just because I have so much hair in my eyes that apparently can’t be professionally removed until mid July. OK, I had to throw in something a little lighter.

With second vaccine shots now being booked, mine is June 16, there is some reason for optimism. Maybe by late September, we will actually be able to gather enough people in the barn for the AGM and to enjoy a hamburger together. Fingers Crossed!

Gord Haugh
Board Chair



“Amazingly, with diligence and adherence to the tough public health rules, we have avoided the outbreaks that have afflicted many in our sector. Congratulations, and thank you.”

***- Gord Haugh,
Board Chair***

Success Factor - A Highly Valued Community Organization

Ensure that the Community recognizes, respects & is inspired by CLSM

Community Living Month “Shines a Light” in Ontario



May is Community Living Month in Ontario and to commemorate this special occasion, Community Living branches and notable landmarks all across Ontario lit up in green and blue to #ShineALight and raise awareness for people living with Developmental Disabilities, their families and our hard working essential staff.

Close to home in Bracebridge, CLSM partnered with The Town of Bracebridge and Bracebridge Generation to light the bridge at the falls in green and blue from May 1st – May 7th. Our neighbours to the north, Community Living Huntsville, worked with the Town of Huntsville to have many local businesses lit in the colours on May 6th. Community Living Toronto worked with the City of Toronto to have City Hall at Nathan Phillips Square as well as the CN Tower lit up on May 6th. They also worked with Windsor College in London Ontario, who also showed their support.

These are just a few locations that participated; there were hundreds of charities, businesses, landmarks and households all across Ontario shining bright throughout the month of May. While we wait for a chance to celebrate together in person, we will come together in spirit and commemoration to celebrate Community Living and all that we stand for.

Thank you to everyone who showed their support!

Submitted By Taylor Watson



Photo Credit: Community Living Huntsville (CLH Office)

Success Factor - A Highly Valued Community Organization

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Pancake Week is Back!

To kick off Community Living Month in May of last year, you may remember CLSM's partnership with Food Basics and A&W in Bracebridge for Pancake Week. We were very grateful to have these businesses by our side, and to show their support, A&W donated all pancake proceeds back to our agency for the first week of May and Food Basics donated pancake breakfast supplies to all of our group residences.

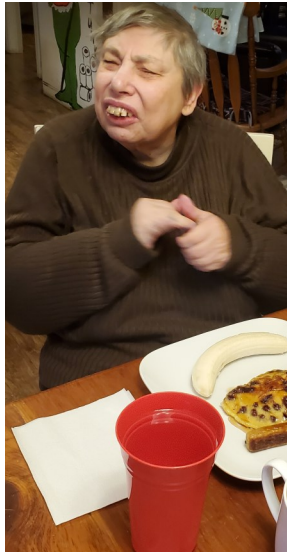
To build on the success of our first Pancake Week we decided to do it again! Once again, Food Basics made their very special donation of supplies to the homes and A&W donated all pancake proceeds from May 1st—May 9th. We were amazed to see the increase in pancake sales this year with A&W selling 142 pancake orders and raising \$568 in proceeds!

We can't express enough how thankful we are to have the ongoing support from our community and local businesses. In the past year we have been working closely with Muskoka Paramedic Services and Rexall in Bracebridge, and to express our appreciation we made sure to deliver pancakes to each Location (we also threw some in for the Bracebridge Fire Department).

A special thank you to Chantelle and the Team at A&W, Dan and the Team at Food Basics, and to everyone who supported CLSM by enjoying pancakes for Pancake Week!

Submitted by Taylor Watson

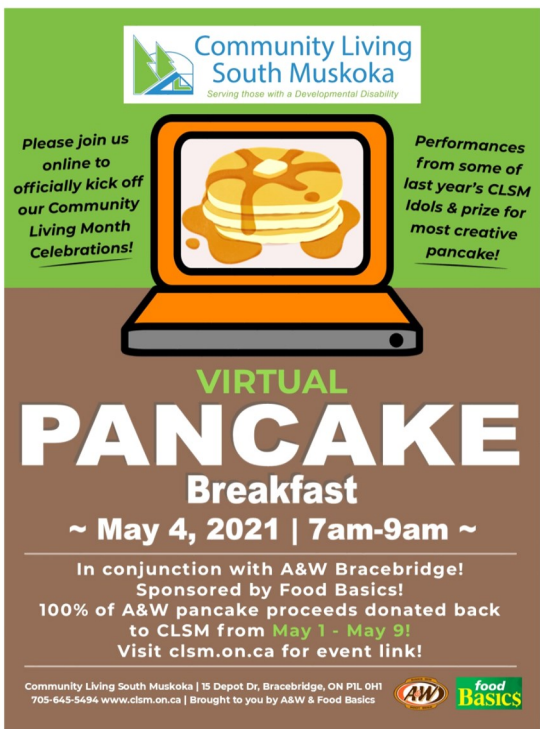




Success Factor - A Highly Valued Community Organization

Ensure that the Community recognizes, respects & is inspired by CLSM

Virtual Pancake Breakfast Makes for a Sweet Morning



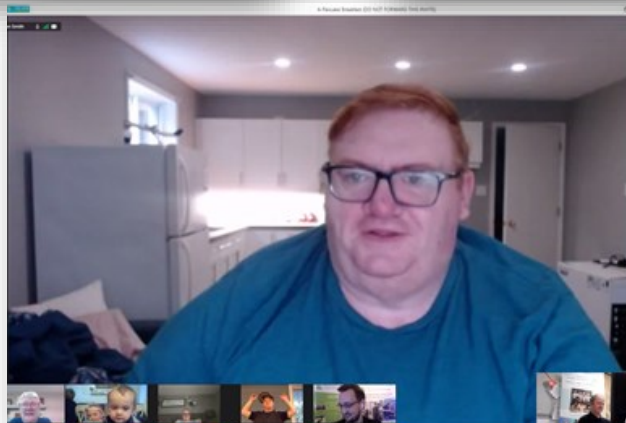
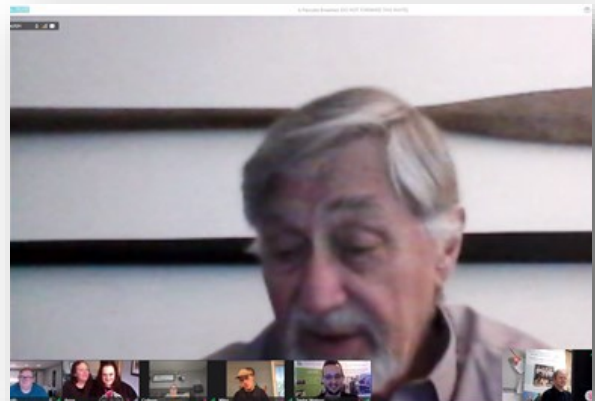
Before the pandemic, CLSM would always welcome in Community Living Month with our Annual Pancake Breakfast at our 15 Depot Drive office. Unfortunately with the rapidly changing landscape that was unfolding in May of 2020, we decided it was best to cancel this event.

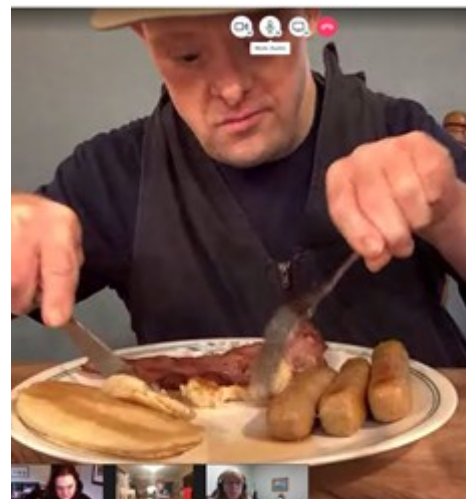
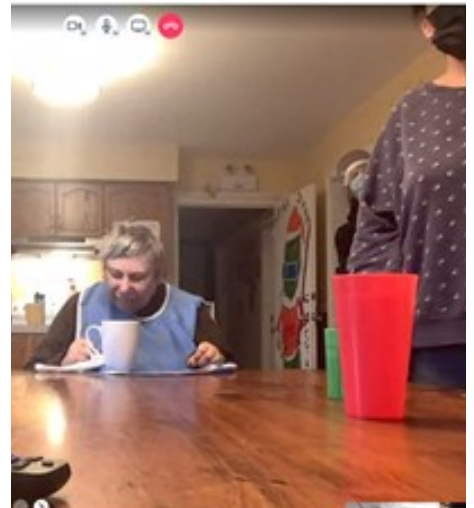
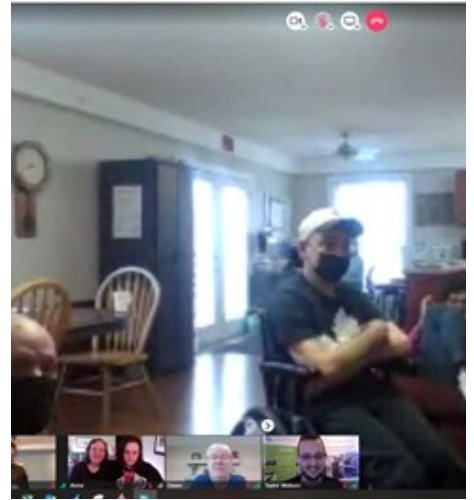
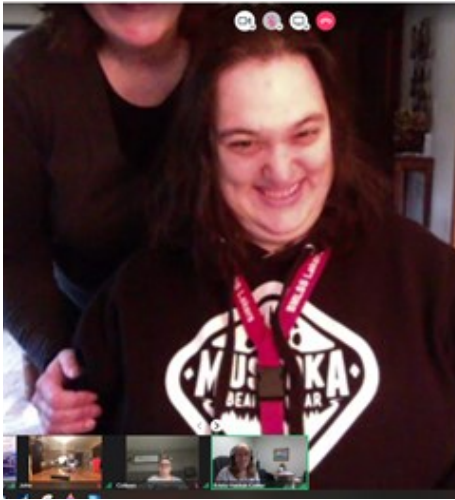
This year, we wanted to bring it back and decided to host our first ever Virtual Pancake Breakfast. Coinciding with Pancake Week, all of our group residences joined us and enjoyed the pancakes that were graciously donated to them by Food Basics, and a handful of staff who joined were enjoying A&W pancakes.

Together we shared stories and memories from Pancakes Breakfasts of previous years, said hello to our friends and watched some videos from CLSM Idol in 2020. We were excited to welcome in everyone who joined us, including many of our staff and supported individuals, our Board Chair Gord Haugh and Mayor Graydon Smith from Bracebridge, to name a few.

We are unsure what the coming months will bring but it is good to know that we can utilize our virtual platforms to host events such as our Pancake Breakfast. Regardless of how things unfold, we hope you will join us for our Pancake Breakfast in 2022 to help us kick off Community Living Month!

Submitted by Taylor Watson





Success Factor - A Highly Valued Community Organization

Ensure that the Community recognizes, respects & is inspired by CLSM

The CLSM 50/50 Fundraiser Was a Win-Win

Normally at this time of year CLSM is preparing for our biggest fundraiser of the year, our Fundraising Cruise on the Wenonah Steamship. As with many of our initiatives, this year we were forced to look for other ways to raise funds for our agency.

Many may not be aware that a large portion of CLSM's technology is not funded by our government, and with the need for virtual connectivity at an all time high, our goal was to raise funds to support this need. We are also looking ahead, hoping we will be able to launch our Summer Youth Camp once more, and a portion of the funds raised will help to make this a reality.

This led us to host our first ever virtual 50/50 Fundraiser! The fundraiser kicked off on May 3rd and ran for the entire month of May. We opened up ticket sales on the Monday morning and saw our jackpot begin to rise immediately. As each day went by, the jackpot grew and grew creating much excitement and anticipation within the community.

Throughout the month we sold 14,670 tickets, raised a total of \$6,190, generating a jackpot of \$3,095 and raising that same amount for our agency. On May 31st at 5pm, Krista alongside Linda O'Hallarn from our Board of Directors pulled the winning ticket. Congratulations to Delia Desroches and the Team at our Honey Harbour group residence who came together to purchase the winning ticket!

Thank you to all who supported this new initiative and purchased tickets for the draw. Keep your eyes on the CLSM website and social media outlets to learn about future fundraisers and events!

Submitted by Taylor Watson



Tickets Sold:
14,670

Total Raised:
\$6,190

Jackpot:
\$3,095

Winner:
**Delia Desroches
& the Team at
Honey Harbour**

Individuals Amaze at the CLSM Talent Competition



Another annual tradition at CLSM and part of the Community Living Month celebrations is CLSM Idol. Every year our individuals start practicing as soon as the new year begins, preparing to perform in front of friends and family to showcase their skills. As with all of our events and initiatives since the start of the pandemic, we decided to switch things up this year and hold our first CLSM Talent Competition.

We held the performances virtually over 3 weeks throughout May, with the finale taking place at the end of the month. Each week we welcomed guest judges who would decide on two finalists to move forward to the finale. A very special thank you to Robbie Irvine from the Oar in Gravenhurst, Victoria Loshaw from Rexall in Bracebridge, David DeCaire and Teresa Blum from RBC, Brenda Rhodes and Marny Mowat from the Bracebridge Chamber of Commerce, Ryan Griffiths from Country 102, and Wendy Davidson for judging the competition!

What made this year extra special was the range of performances that were submitted. We got to see everything from song and dance to artwork, comedy acts and science experiments. It was amazing to see the hidden talents of the people we support! We hope that if we decide to hold another talent competition in the future, others will dig deep to think of what they can bring to the table.

After narrowing it down to our finalists, Wendy and Ryan were left to announce our winner. After much deliberation, they decided that choosing just one winner was impossible. Congratulation to our TWO winners, Alice McQuabbie for her amazing handmade blankets and Frank Assisi for his art display! Your talents are very deserving of the win.

Submitted by Taylor Watson



Success Factor - Person Centered

Providing Broader Community Experiences For The People We Serve

Virtual Activities Continue to Bring the Magic

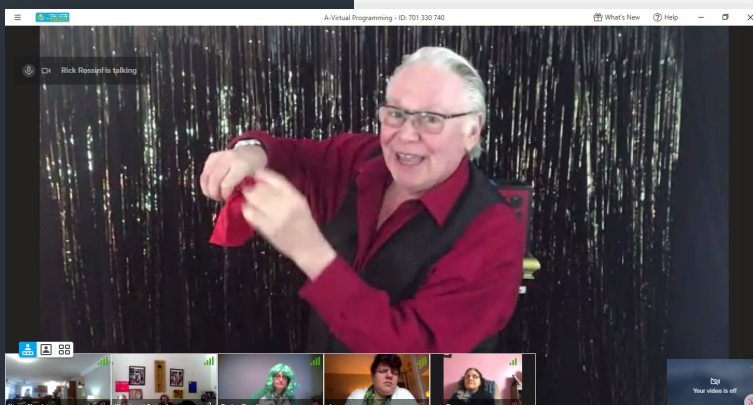
Kathy Kruger and Nadine Bowen have continued to bring joy, wellness, and entertainment to us all each week with their virtual activities calendar. New activities are being added often but the staples everyone has grown to love still remain, such as BlueJeans Bingo, cooking classes, exercise sessions and crafts.

In March, everyone came together to celebrate St. Patrick's Day as you will see in the pictures below. It was great to see everyone participating and wearing green to mark this occasion!

Another new addition was a very special guest, Magician Rick! Rick wowed us all, made us laugh and always brought a huge smile along each week. Rick performed every Wednesday for 8 weeks and everyone was anxious to see what tricks he had up his sleeve.

Moving into the summer, Kathy and Nadine have thought of even more exciting activities for us all to look forward to. Thank you both for all you do for CLSM and for keeping us all connected and having fun!

Submitted by Taylor Watson



Success Factor - A Highly Valued Community Organization

Ensure that the Community recognizes, respects & is inspired by CLSM

Rolling Our #SleevesUp for Vaccines

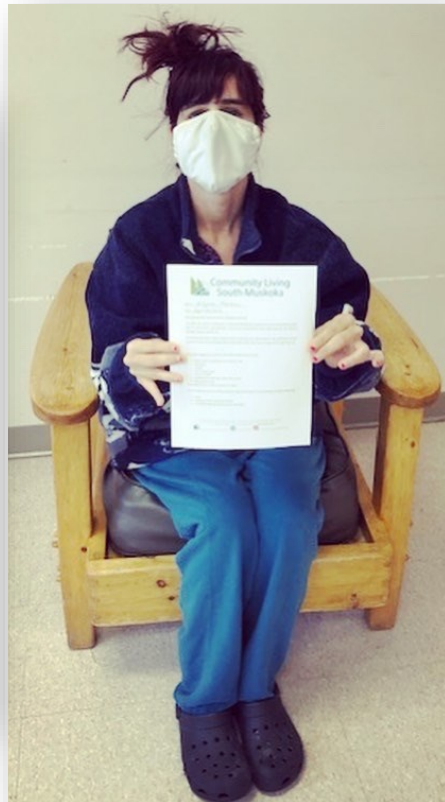
With the roll out of the COVID 19 vaccines continuing at pace, both our staff and supported individuals here at CLSM have been 'rolling up their sleeves' to help hasten a return to the things that bring us all joy such as, getting together with friends and family, going out in the community, summer BBQ's and much, much more!

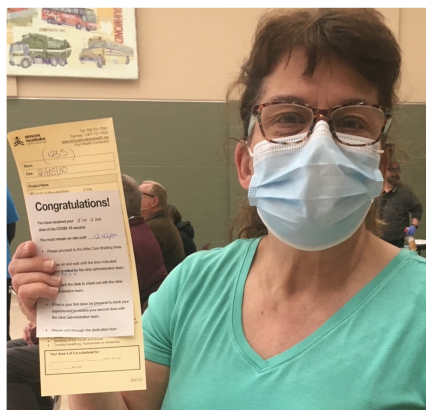
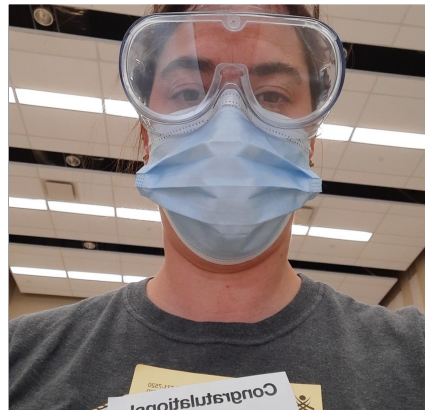
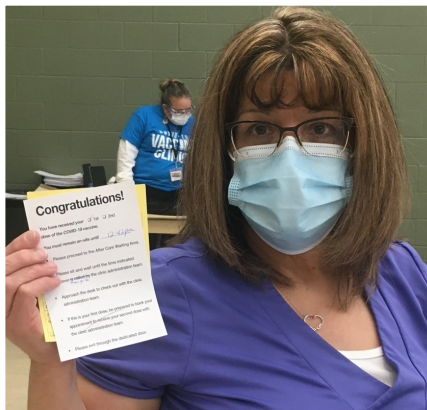
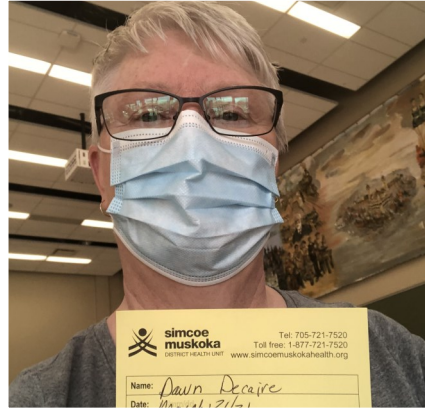
Since March our dedicated staffing team have been eligible to receive their first vaccination and we are very happy to note that to date over 90% have done so.

After much advocacy, April 27th and 28th saw CLSM run two very successful vaccine clinics for our supported individuals. These clinics along with others in the community has resulted in 100% of our supported individuals living in group residencies being vaccinated. A special thank you to Leo from Rexall Bracebridge, Bob at Rexall Gravenhurst, and Darcy and Michael from Community Paramedics for all their help with running the clinics.

As thoughts turn to summer and the long sunny days ahead hope springs eternal that by rolling up our sleeves we will be able to get together and enjoy each others company in person once more. Indeed with second vaccinations on the horizon there really is light at the end of this seemingly never ending tunnel!

Submitted by Declan Ormsby





Helping to Build “Bridges Out of Poverty”

Recently, 3 CLSM staff members attended “Bridges out of Poverty” Training. In a practical way this workshop helped us to understand that everyone operates within the hidden rules of the Class system we were raised in.

Each Class; Poverty, Middle Class and Wealth, have differences in the way we act. Most often businesses and services operate under the rules and mental models of the middle class. People who were raised in generational poverty can be caught in this cycle because they have never learned the rules of middle class. People who were raised in middle class or wealth cannot understand why people experiencing poverty can’t make positive changes to their circumstances.

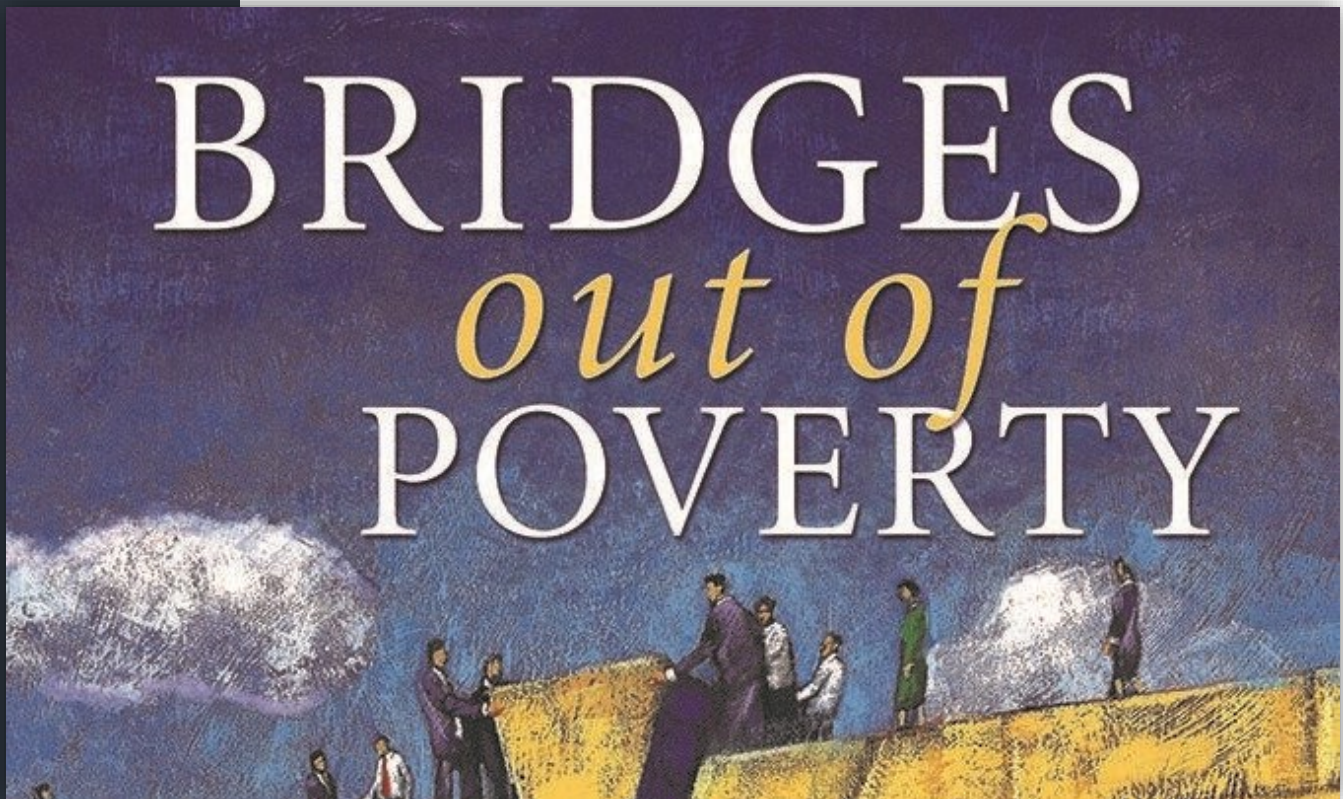
This is where the concept of ‘Bridges’ comes in. If all people can understand and address the causes of poverty we can build relationships based on respect. By understanding each other better we can work towards a community where everyone has the ability to be healthy and live well. Some of the ideas that came out of this workshop challenged me to think and understand the work that I do in a brand new way.

This was truly one of the best workshops I have ever attended.

Submitted by Jennifer Vanklink-Mandigo

“Some of the ideas that came out of this workshop challenged me to think and understand the work that I do in a brand new way.”

- Jennifer Vanklink-Mandigo, CPS Support Worker



Success Factor - Valued, Skilled Staff

Investing in our staff to build skill, confidence and tenure

Shining Stars Light Up CLSM

They say when the going gets tough the tough get going, and that is certainly the case for the team here at CLSM. Throughout the pandemic, the team has shown great resilience and tenacity to ensure that the individuals we support remain happy and healthy!

To recognize this hard work and dedication, we once again commenced our Shining Star awards, which provide staff the opportunity to nominate co-workers who they feel worthy of recognition.

The first two weeks of the awards have seen 10 staff nominated, from right across the agency, for reasons such as their tenacity, willingness to help, tireless work ethic, going the extra mile and much, much more! These staff truly represent what being a member of the CLSM team is all about.

This year as well as celebrating our shining stars in our internal communication, we are also celebrating them on our social media channels, highlighting the fantastic work being done each and every day by our amazing team.

Although this COVID tunnel has at times seemed never ending our shining stars are certainly helping to light the way!

Submitted by Declan Ormsby

“Although this COVID tunnel has at times seemed never ending our shining stars are certainly helping to light the way!”

*- Declan Ormsby
Executive Assistant,
Administration
Supervisor*



Linda Inspires New Book “Out Into The Big Wide Lake”



Linda Harbridge is a well known face at CLSM. Recently, her brother Paul released “Out Into The Big Wide Lake”, inspired by his love for his sister. The book is “an empowering and necessary picture book about a young girl with Down syndrome who gains confidence and independence through a visit to her grandparents”. (penguinrandomhouse.ca, May 2021).

The story follows Kate, who is visiting her grandparent’s home on the lake for the very first time. Although she is nervous for this new adventure, she is looking forward to whatever may lie ahead. She accompanies her grandfather while running errands across the lake, meets new people and makes new friends. She even learns how to pilot a boat! The time comes when she is faced with the challenge of running some errands on her own. Is she up to the task?

“Based on the author's sister, Kate is a lovable, brave, smart and feisty character who will capture your heart in this gorgeous and moving story about facing fears and gaining independence.” (penguinrandomhouse.ca, May 2021)

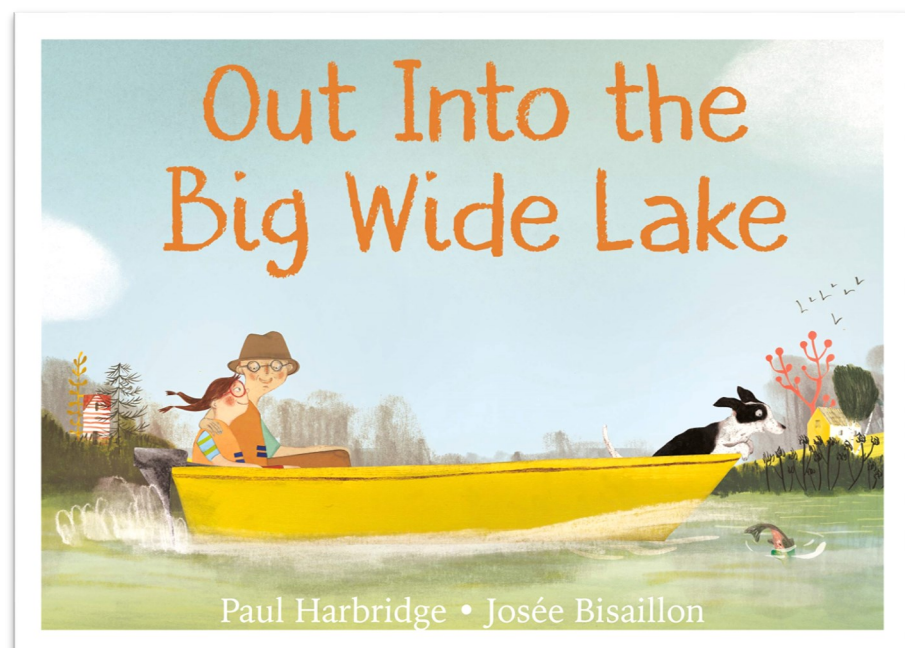
“First let me say that I loved that this book is a book about inclusion. The main character is a little girl that has down syndrome. You would not know this if you do not read the dedication page, but knowing that this story is about an actual girl with down syndrome is awesome, we need more stories like this.” (Cara BookShelfMomma, reviewer at goodreads.com, May 2021).

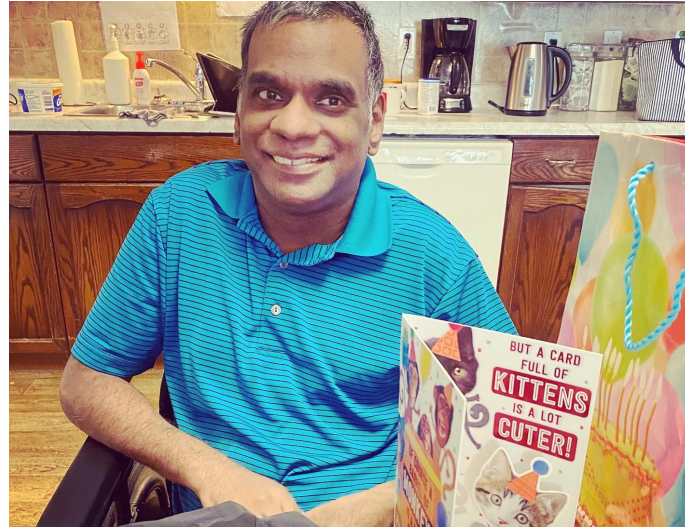
Out Into The Big Wide Lake is available for purchase at amazon.ca and chapters.indigo.ca.

Submitted by Taylor Watson

“Knowing that this story is about an actual girl with down syndrome is awesome, we need more stories like this.”

*- Cara
BookShelfMomma,
reviewer at
goodreads.com*





A Message From Your CEO

Community Living Month is an opportunity to celebrate the courage and resilience of our staff and those we support and their families. How have you been able to keep going? Is it your caring heart and courage or your strong work ethic and ability to adapt and be flexible? However you have done it, you have my admiration and on-going appreciation for all you do. We are surrounded by shining stars here at CLSM, and I could not be more proud to be part of this amazing team.

We had a great month of Community Living celebrations, with a virtual pancake breakfast and a pancake fundraiser at A&W raising \$568, a wonderful donation from Food Basics for the people we support to have a special breakfast, and a further \$500 donation from Callow Benefits. A big thank you to all of our sponsors! We also had weekly performances with our talent completing which showcased some incredible skills. The Bracebridge falls were alight with CLSM colours early in the month, along with countless other landmarks across the province including the CN Tower in Toronto. Our 50/50 draw raised a total of \$6,190, with Delia Desroches and the Team at our Honey Harbour residence taking home a jackpot of \$3,095. Congratulations to you all! The funds from this draw will go to keeping the people we support connected virtually and support our Youth this summer. Thank you to all who helped to promote the draw, supported us by purchasing tickets, and joined us in celebrating Community Living Month.

It was a long time in coming to fruition, but we are so pleased to now have all of our staff and the people we support who chose to be vaccinated with the first dose in their arms. That is over 90% of our staff and 100% of those living in our 24 hour support homes. We still have some way to go to get this number up for others we support in the community. Now, we are awaiting confirmation of when we can get our second clinics up and running. A special thank you to Leo from Rexall in Bracebridge, Bob at Rexall in Gravenhurst and Darcy and Michael from Community Paramedics for all of your help with running our clinics. A special thank you to the Simcoe Muskoka Health unit for working with us to get vaccines to those who most needed it! We can see the light at the end of this very long tunnel and are so happy to have it getting closer.

Speaking of light at the end of the tunnel, in anticipation of life after 'lockdown' we are in the midst of planning for 're-opening' once again. The past year has demonstrated that we do not need all the space at our 15 Depot Drive location and as a result, we are excited to share that we have a new smaller and more accessible Community Participation and Employment training space to be opening in July down on Ball's Flats across from the Habitat Restore beside Water Depot. In keeping with our commitment to do regular family engagement, we hosted our bi-monthly Family Town Hall meeting on Wednesday May 26th to discuss future supports and all things COVID.

We are also still moving forward with our plans for the Yurt at Morrison Meadows. Over two years ago we met to develop a strategic plan for a social enterprise on the property, and Yurts for our own use and potential respite/rental options was identified as something we wanted to pursue. The first fully accessible Yurt with a deck is being erected in early July.

Wishing everyone a healthy and happy summer ahead,

Krista Haiduk-Collier
CEO



"You have my admiration and on-going appreciation for all you do. We are surrounded by shining stars here at CLSM, and I could not be more proud to be part of this amazing team."

***- Krista Haiduk-Collier,
CEO***

SLEEVES UP



For _____

When Your Turn Comes,
ROLL UP YOUR SLEEVE
for the COVID-19 Vaccine

#sleevesupON _____