

Fall 2023 Newsletter

The fall at CLSM has seen a continuation of our fantastic spring and summer of fun and active participation in Muskoka! At the end of August, we held our second annual outdoor music festival at Morrison Meadows. The weather was fantastic and the music even better! A special thank you to all the wonderful volunteers who helped make it happen and our amazing sponsors and community partners. We are forever grateful for your support. I am pleased to share that we are already planning next year's Music at the Meadows event!



We also held a great AGM and staff awards night at the end of September. **We had a record turn out for the fun night of food and celebration of staff and CLSM's past year.** Congratulations to all the Core Values winners and to our years of service recipients. A special mention to our two 35-year-of-service recipients Sarajane and Kathy! We are so fortunate to have such dedicated and talented long-term employees here at CLSM.

Unfortunately, COVID has made a return to us this fall but we are working diligently with our health and safety committee and our IPAC Hub to keep everyone still participating in their regular routines as much as possible while being mindful of keeping everyone safe and healthy. It is a balancing act that we seem to be getting better at over time. **A big thank you to Leo and his team at Rexall for making sure we are vaccinated early for both COVID and the flu.**

Our fundraising team has been hard at work tackling food security and housing needs. We were able to ensure the people we support in SIL had enough money to make ends meet and still put some food on the table thanks to your generosity. We are working on plans to keep food and housing security at the top of everyone's minds as we launch our silent auction in November and promote Giving Tuesday. **I would also like to take a moment to thank the South Muskoka Golf and Curling Club** for their ongoing support and their members for their most generous contributions to our backpack fundraiser to support children with disabilities going to school this fall. Your contributions were incredible this year, supporting over 70 children with much needed school supplies.

October has been **National Disability Employment Awareness Month**. Disability Inclusion in the workforce is one way for us to work together to ensure both a stronger community as well as meet employers staffing needs. **Our supported employment team here works with almost 40 people who are competitively employed in our community.** You are welcome to join us for an open house at our 505 Hwy 118 location in Bracebridge on November 2 from 10:30 am to 12 noon to learn more about how we can meet your staffing needs with an inclusive workforce.

I would like to end by thanking each and every person who supports the work we do here at CLSM; from our staff, families, volunteer Board of Directors, community supporter and donors; we could not continue to operate without you. **Please consider our agency this Giving Tuesday. You make an incredible contribution to the lives of people with disabilities.**

Respectfully submitted,
Krista Haiduk-Collier
CEO



**DO YOU WANT TO HAVE AN IMPACT?
IN SEARCH OF A REWARDING WAY TO CONTRIBUTE YOUR TALENTS
AND BETTER YOUR COMMUNITY?**

A place on the CLSM Board of Directors might be just the place for you!

We support over 450 people with a Developmental Disability throughout the Muskoka area. You may have seen us at the North end of Muskoka Rd N in Gravenhurst, or across from the Home Depot in Bracebridge.

What you don't see are the homes and services we operate in Gravenhurst, Bracebridge and Honey Harbour. **What you seldom see** are our close to 200 staff who daily help those we support. What you might not realize is that we annually spend almost \$10,000,000 on things like salaries, daily needs, transportation and equipment, most of it right here in Muskoka.

The CLSM Board of Directors helps to build an inclusive community that embraces children, youth and adults with developmental support needs and their families.

If you would like to find out more about this exciting opportunity or simply more about the agency itself please contact Krista Haiduk-Collier by email at khaiduk@clsm.on.ca or by phone at **(705) 645 5494 ext 226** .



SUCCESS FACTOR - A HIGHLY VALUED COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

Submitted by Kate Trueland, Events, Promotions, and Volunteer Coordinator

Community Living South Muskoka **welcomed father and son Big Canoe** - Gord and Greg Metcalfe, to Morrison Meadows on Friday, September 29 to share their stories with the people we support. Gord and Greg's family and ancestors are Chippewas of Georgina Island, an Anishinaabe Nation located on the southern shores of Lake Simcoe.

We began the morning with **the reading of our Community Living South Muskoka land acknowledgement**,

"Community Living South Muskoka is located on the traditional land and treaty territory of the Anishinaabeg, which includes the Ojibew, Odawa, and the Potawatomi Nations, collectively known as the Three Fires Confederacy. The Huron-Wendat, Chippewa, and Algonkian peoples and the Haudenosaunee Nations have also walked on this territory over time. CLSM would like to acknowledge the First Peoples, who, for thousands of years before us, were and are still the keepers and caretakers of this land where we now live and work and in particular the Wahta Mohawk First Nations, The Potawatomi of Moose Deer Point, the Moon River Metis and Chippewa's of Rama".

We spent time together reflecting and reconciling through stories and open discussion to learn and commemorate the truth of the history of First Nations, Metis, and Inuit, and to Gord Metcalfe's story about being adopted by the Metcalfe family and not knowing he was Indigenous until later on in life. Gord shared, "I had all of these visions of other backyards and places that didn't fit with the life I was living. When the phone call came and they said I was native, everything made sense".

At the end of the ceremony, one of the people we supported offered his prayers to Gord and Greg, and the group then said their goodbyes and parted ways. Miigwetch to the Metcalfe family!



Music at the Meadows 2023

Submitted by Kate Trueland, Events, Promotions, and Volunteer Coordinator

We are thrilled to report that Music at the Meadows found its place in the Muskoka outdoor music festival circuit in 2023.

This annual fundraising event is our yearly opportunity to showcase what is so unique about Community Living South Muskoka: from our beautiful 35-acre farm Morrison Meadows, to the creative skillset of our team, to the incredible musical talent of the people we support. Music at the Meadows came together seamlessly this year because of the talent and contributions of every person who helped.

In 2023 we introduced a few new ideas to help us stand out as an event worth attending! We partnered with Algonquin Outfitters and Robinson's General Store for a VIP giveaway. We ensured that four lucky people had the best views, gear, and food and gave away four VIP tickets to Music at the Meadows. This included four front row seats compliments of Robinson's General Store, a Yeti rambled + free day rental vouchers from Algonquin Outfitters. Additionally, we welcomed artistic vendors this year to complement the musical talent, Northern Rhodes offered a live chainsaw carving and then donated three of those carvings to the agency, and Blushing Bandit created our first ever festival poster which was also donated back to the agency.

Our musical line-up was pretty legendary too: HEADLINING this year was Nashville's newest star, Dayna Reid who is preparing to go out on tour with Canadian country music star Tim Hick's! We welcomed local legends Cody Thompson and The Cache Creek Boys who belted out their original country tunes, playing music from the 60s, 70s, 80s old rock, old and new country! And from Gravenhurst, the incredible Grant Tingey & Hired Gun featuring Grant Tingey (singer, acoustic guitar), Blak e Tingey (harmonies, acoustic guitar), Andrew Currie (bass), Robert Currie (lead guitar) and Johnny Fay (drums).

Last year Music at the Meadows grossed over \$30,000, in 2023 we are happy to report that we grossed over \$42,500, a 45% increase from the year before. These funds enrich the lives of those in South Muskoka who are living with disabilities, including the provision of much needed food and housing security for the incredible people we support.

Finally, to our amazing sponsors, who are generous and thoughtful. Without the over 35 sponsorship contributions that were made in-kind, in-money, and in-talent, this event would not have been possible. Thank you to all of those who helped bring this community together in order to ensure a more secure future for the people we support.









SUCCESS FACTOR - PERSON CENTERED

Annual General Meeting 2023

Submitted by Cathy Gray, Executive Assistant

Over 100 supported people, staff, volunteers, local dignitaries and community partners converged at Morrison Meadows on September 25, 2023 for Community Living South Muskoka's Annual General Meeting. The venue was beautiful, with fall décor adorning the tables and the farm's trees awash in yellow and orange.

To further enhance the experience, Cody Thompson delighted attendees by providing top-notch musical entertainment during supper. His acoustic set was wonderful and added warmth and magic to the evening's festivities.

The event was the perfect occasion to celebrate all those who contribute to the success of CLSM. Board chair, Gord Haugh, offered sincere thanks to the members of the board, all dedicated volunteers who give so much of their time and talents to the agency. One of those volunteers, Linda O'Hallarn, was awarded the Volunteer of the Year award later in the evening and delivered a touching thank you to the supported people and staff who have kept her inspired. Heather's Home Healthcare was honoured as this year's Employer of the Year, while South Muskoka Curling and Golf Club received the award as the Community Partner of the Year.

Staff who have devoted years of service to the success of CLSM were also honoured during the evening. For the first time, two staff were recognized for thirty-five years of service: Kathy Kruger and Sarajane Charron. Twenty-four other dedicated staff were also recognized for their service from between five and thirty years. Well done, one and all!

A highlight of the evening was the presentation of eight Core Value Awards, four for individuals and four for teams. Each award winner has contributed in ways big and small to the outcomes of CLSM's supported people and to the goals of the organization as a whole.

Sincere thanks are extended to the many staff whose time and talents created a beautiful venue, a delicious meal and a very memorable evening.

SUCCESS FACTOR - PERSON CENTERED

Snuggle Up and Read!

Submitted by Lisa Salter, Community Participation Support Worker

Karen and Courtney have been teaming up with Beechgrove Public School in Gravenhurst for seven years now. They run “Snuggle Up and Read” with my assistance, a program for the Junior Kindergarten and Senior Kindergarten grades where the kids read to them weekly.

They lead two classes a week, of about 10-15 kids per class each. This program is the highlight of their year. Their goal is to work with kids and that is exactly what they do. From assisting with words and sounds, to giving high fives for their efforts. Everyone wins!

Karen and Courtney’s role is to listen and assist the kids as needed. They also keep track of each book that is read and document as children improve to help the teacher move them up to their next reading levels. They set up their classrooms independently for the program and call the kids one at a time out of their other activities. Doing this also helps the ladies with their confidence and speech needs. Once the reading is done, they are responsible for returning the books to the children’s cubby’s to go home at the end of the day.

The relationships that these two have formed with the staff at the school have been lasting. They are confident walking through the school and can banter with most of the teachers they come across in the halls. Karen and Courtney have also had invitations extended to assisting with extra curricular activities when they are available and are included in volunteer appreciation events at the end of each school year.



SUCCESS FACTOR - A LEADER IN INNOVATION

CLSM Employment Services

Submitted by Rachelle Lawrence, Community Participation Support Worker/Employment

Community Living South Muskoka presently has 43 people participating in our Employment Program with partners throughout the South Muskoka region that include Boston Pizza, Burger Shop, CLSM/ Morrison Meadows, Georgian College, Heather's Home Healthcare, Home Depot, Lakeside Construction, and Walmart.

40 people are actively employed throughout Muskoka, **30 people** are supported through the Developmental Services of Ontario (DSO, **13 people** are supported through the SSM (Employment Ontario Program), with **23 of our current employers** located in Muskoka.

Due to the seasonality of the South Muskoka region, some of the people we support are employed in seasonal positions with employers including Allport Marina, Camp Winston, Muskoka Bay Club, Muskoka Event Services, Muskoka Party Rentals, and Santa's Village. Some of the people we support have shared their feelings about their jobs,

"I like working at Santa's Village. I get to help customers, and it's a fun workplace".

- Trinity

"My favourite part of the job is collecting lots of dirty trays and loading the dishwasher. I get to sing Christmas Songs while wiping down tables [at Santa's Village]".

- Vanessa



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