



Community Living
South Muskoka
Serving those with a Developmental Disability

Community Engagement Edition

I want to start by thanking the staff for sharing such inspiring stories. During the early days of the COVID pandemic, we had an outpouring of community support to help us manage the crisis. I am thrilled to share that the community continues to show amazing support to us which is now manifesting in different ways. You are going to read heartwarming stories about community inclusion and examples of meaningful lives.

I also want to take this opportunity to send a special thank you to the volunteers and donors who enable our agency to make a difference to those in need. This past Christmas, a group of students from the [Gravenhurst High School](#) came together to make almost 100 Holiday meals with [Boston Pizza](#) donating the containers! I can't express enough the gratitude we have for this wonderful partnership! So many of the people we support and families with young children who have a developmental disability would not have had a turkey dinner without you!! We were also able to provide extra food to 75 people this past holiday season. This is all because of your donations and the volunteers who help us fundraise and run events.

Speaking of events, you are going to see a great article and pictures highlighting our participation in the [Bracebridge Fire and Ice Festival](#) this year. We have had a booth since the first festival, and this year was probably our busiest ever. A big thank you to our staff volunteers and community volunteers for making this happen. And thank you to those who dropped by for a visit and donated some money for a hot chocolate and snowshoe.

A key part of our agency is our volunteer Board of Directors who dedicate their time to the governance of Community Living South Muskoka. They are forward-thinking and have been dedicating extra time to do strategic planning and prepare for the changes coming to our sector with [Journey to Belonging](#). I can't thank them enough for their support and desire to ensure that CLSM is able to meet the challenges of the future. Thank you!

Respectfully submitted,

Krista Haiduk-Collier
CEO

SUCCESS FACTOR - A HIGHLY VALUED COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

Building Strong Relationships within our Community

Submitted by Rachelle Lawrence, Community Participation Support Worker

Beginning in the spring of 2023, [Monsignor Michael O'Leary Catholic School](#) in Bracebridge approached Community Living South Muskoka to discuss paid employment opportunities as the lunch monitoring with individuals we support.

Originally, our partnership started with two individuals pursuing paid employment, and the following September 2023, we added to that roster, two more paid employees and a volunteer in the Breakfast Program. Our partnership with the Catholic Board of Education continues to grow as we have recently enrolled a person in an adult continuing education course in Custodial Training.

Laura works as a lunch-hour monitor at Monsignor Michael O'Leary School. While talking with Laura, she shared the following, "I like my job. I like to help out with the little kids. I go to the classroom and make sure they sit at their desks and eat their lunches, then I go outside and make sure they are playing safe, and if they need help, I get the teacher for them".

Tamica works as a lunch-hour monitor too, and shares, "I like my job. Everyone is very welcoming and nice. The kids are very nice. The best part of the job is getting to help kids". Community Living South Muskoka is committed to furthering the inclusion of the people we support in areas of employment throughout the South Muskoka region.



**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

What Inclusion Looks Like

Submitted by Joanne Warden, Community Participation Support Worker

A great indicator that our community is moving in the right direction when it comes to inclusion, is the reception Patrick and Randy have had at [The Gravenhurst Seniors Centre](#). Patrick and Randy became fast friends this fall, living together in the same group home on Muskoka Beach Road. They are active, outgoing guys who are known for their eagerness to go out and experience life, luckily there is so much for them to do in Gravenhurst!

The Gravenhurst Seniors Centre on First Street N offers a phenomenal array of activities, and Patrick and Randy have quickly become regulars who participate every week at the Seniors in activities including bean bag toss, bingo, carpet bowling, and shuffleboard - even a shuffleboard tournament! Patrick and Randy are also involved in "Olympic Bowling" and "Olympic Curling" activities on a weekly basis. Patrick recently tried his hand at darts and was hooked, and Randy is eager to try the game this February.

The staff at the house find that both Patrick and Randy are excited and eager the morning of their visits to the Seniors Centre, and are also excited to share with them the wins and losses of their day. Perhaps one of the most endearing feelings is for staff to see how happy they are when they return from their outings.

When asked about his time spent at the Seniors Centre, Randy said "The people are nice, kind and I like talking to the people and how the people talk to me. I like playing bingo, shuffleboard and all the games there". Patrick shared similar sentiments, "I like seeing the people like shuffleboard and darts it's fun". Patrick has also developed a love for the musical offerings available at the Seniors Centre, and is pictured above learning how to play the Tongue drum, a drum that has a cultural significance in various parts of the world, and are typically associated with meditation and spiritual ceremonies.

As their Community Participation Support Worker, I am so proud of both of them and also every member of the Senior Centre who embrace Patrick and Randy without hesitation. This is what inclusion means to me!



SUCCESS FACTOR - A HIGHLY VALUED COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

Community Kitchens and CLSM

Submitted by Caitlin Syvret, Community Participation Support Worker

Community Kitchens is a cooking program offered twice a week by [Stevens' Your Independent Grocer](#) in Bracebridge. This program builds life skills as well as social skills and is a great way for the people supported by Community Living South Muskoka to be active in their community.

This program is fantastic for many reasons, one being the skills of autonomy that are developed by the individuals who attend. The activity begins with choosing a recipe for the week, and then the fun of assisted grocery shopping begins! The group then gets to work on making their lunch. Different skills are used to measure ingredients including safe knife handling, proper use of stove/oven, and clean-up. The group gets to eat one portion for lunch and they get to take a second portion home, including a variety of meals like sheet pan turmeric chicken and sheet pan veggies with rice, and meatloaf, mashed potatoes with gravy and Brussels sprouts - yum!

Recently, the group featured in the photograph was involved with a Ministry approved promotional video designed to promote Community Living South Muskoka. The video was recorded to showcase what a typical cooking group looks like, we considered the filming to be a big success and the individuals who participated were so excited and happy to help.

The photos that accompany this article are stills taken from the promotional video which was filmed at the end of October so that is why no one is wearing masks.





SUCCESS FACTOR - A HIGHLY VALUED COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

Music at the Meadows 2024

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

Tickers are now ON SALE!

Join us on Saturday, August 24 for our third annual Music at the Meadows outdoor music festival! Headlining at this year's festival is the legendary Grant Tingey and Hired Gun, also known as brothers Andrew and Rob Currie.

The night's line-up will feature the incredible local talent of Blue Moon, Cache Creek, Dunning Butchers, + more! We welcome back Jake from Northern Rhodes Artistry in Wood for his stellar live chainsaw carving experience that includes two free draws on finished carvings at the end of the night.

Come for the music, stay for the 50/50 draw, BBQ dinner, and Beer Garden by Lake of Bays Brewing Co. An inclusive, family friendly event that has quickly become one of the summer's hot ticket items. To stay up-to-date follow us on Instagram at @musicatthemeadows.





SUCCESS FACTOR - A HIGHLY VALUED COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

Fire and Ice 2024

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

The temperature was a balmy -1 for the 2024 Fire and Ice Festival in downtown Bracebridge and the result was a fantastic turnout for both the snowshoeing and treats available at the Community Living South Muskoka booth. Congratulations to the Town of Bracebridge on another awesome year of Fire and Ice!

Our team worked hard to make our booth standout, offering delicious, frothy, freshly churched hot chocolate all day long - we handed out over 900 cups and raised a total of \$700 in donations.

We had several volunteers join us for the event, including staff, local high school students, and people we support. Each volunteer found their stride as the day went on, helping handout hot chocolate and get both children and adults setup on their snowshoes!

Season after season, Sublime Graphics in Bracebridge creates the most fantastic signage for the agency that really helps us standout in the community - thank you to the great crew who support us and thank you for being such a reliable community partner.



SUCCESS FACTOR - A HIGHLY VALUED COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

The Adventures of Nell!

Submitted by Kate Sanders, Community Participation Support Worker

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

Line dancing has been a great fit for Nell, as she loves country music and lately has been expressing her desire to learn a new skill. Nell attended her first line dancing class at the [Gravenhurst YMCA](#) on November 17 and since then, has been attending classes every other Friday. The routines can be a bit tricky, but Nell is getting more familiar with the moves and therefore more comfortable with the routine overall. The majority of the class are over 50 and Nell has been enjoying socializing with peers her own age, and of course, everyone in the class seems to adore her! After the holiday break, Nell returned to class at the end of January and was so excited to see all of her new friends!

When Nell is not out line dancing, she still keeps it country and heads over to [Maple Lane Farms](#) in Bracebridge where she has a half-hour long lesson with her coach Sue. Nell always arrives early for her lesson and is so excited to work with the Stable Hands to help groom and tack the horse she'll be riding that day. One of Nell's favourite horses to ride is a ginger gelding named Dexter - Nell makes sure to spend time feeding Dexter apple and carrots after their lesson so that he knows how much she appreciates riding him.





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