



Community Living South Muskoka

May 2025

Vision

An inclusive
community
where all are
Valued,
Respected, and
Thrive.

Our Mission

Building
independence,
fostering
inclusion, and
empowering
people living with
a developmental
disability across
their lifespan

Values

Excellence

Trust

Respect

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Message From Your CEO

This spring edition of our newsletter highlights some of the fun and incredible things happening here at our agency. It is easy to get caught up with the uncertainty of tariffs and the topsy-turvy world we live in, which I believe makes it more important than ever to focus on the positive things we do and the changes we make each and every day for the people we are here to serve. Within this edition, you will find a sample of some wonderful moments captured in writing and photography that demonstrates the commitment of staff and the community to ensure we live in an inclusive world.

May is designated as Community Living Month, a time spent celebrating inclusion and the accomplishments of those we support. This year, our annual pancake breakfast will be held on May 9, 2025, at Morrison Meadows. We will be using this opportunity to highlight the positive impacts individuals with disabilities are having in their communities.

This May, we will host our annual CLSM Idol Talent Show on Wednesday afternoons at our beautiful farm property, Morrison Meadows. We are thrilled to announce that the finale this year will be held at the Rene Caisse theatre in Bracebridge on May 21, 2025. Entry is by donation, and we anticipate that this event is sure to bring smiles and warm hearts to attendees.

Throughout the month of May, CLSM will be having a 50/50 fundraiser. This fundraising initiative is aimed to secure a vehicle for the agency. This essential addition will allow supported individuals easier access to the community. The Community Living Month wrap-up party will be on May 28th at the Bracebridge Barrel House, featuring an encore performance from the CLSM Idol Talent Show winners and will be drawing the 50/50 ticket winner. We hope you can join us for all the festivities! A special thank you to Lake of Bays Brewery for your continuous support!

This summer, we have decided to switch it up a bit, moving away from our big Music festival and instead hosting a new "Summer Music Series" to guarantee that you won't miss out on the enjoyment. The series is starting with Dancin' for Diversity at the Bracebridge Hall on July 10 followed by a Country Legends Tribute show on August 14th. Last but not least, we will be Cruisin' for Inclusion on the Wenonah on August 22, 2025. Tickets are limited for all three events, so we encourage you to purchase your tickets in advance, so you won't be disappointed.

I would like to conclude by thanking our incredibly generous donors and sponsors. Your support has been instrumental in addressing food security and housing needs, and this year's new goal of raising funds for an inclusive vehicle. Your contributions make such a large impact to those who are living well below the poverty line and are the most vulnerable citizens in our community.

Thank you for all you do!



Spring Poem by Caroline

In the spring.
Birdies start to sing.
And build their nest.
Where they can rest.
And lots of sun.
With lots of fun.
And sniffing the fresh air.
Also sometimes cool out there.
and the start of pesty bugs
and mothers protecting their young.
and giving them hugs
with all their love
And a slight warm breeze.
Will not make us sneeze.
And makes us smile .
For a long long long while.
And grin.
With our chinny chin chin.

Love Caroline.





Community Living South Muskoka

An inclusive community where all are Valued, Respected, and Thrive

UPCOMING EVENTS

MAY 2025

*May is
Community Living
Month*

check them out!



MAY

1 ←

50/50 CL MONTH

May 1-28 tickets available @
select locations

MAY

4 ←

A&W PANCAKE WEEK

May 4-10 A&W Bracebridge



MAY

9 ←

ANNUAL CLSM PANCAKE
BREAKFAST

7-9am @ Morrison Meadows

MAY

21 ←

CLSM IDOL FINALE

Renee Caisse Theatre
Doors @ 6:30pm



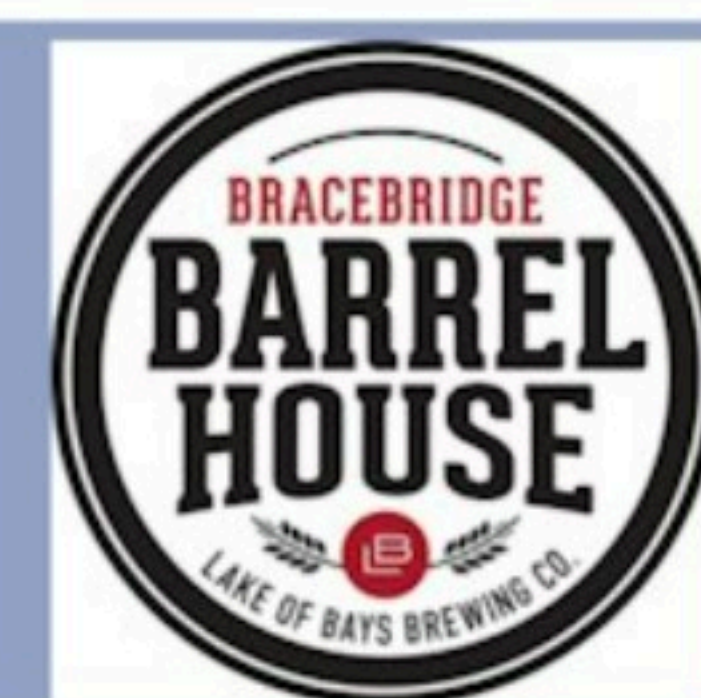
MAY

28 ←

CL Month Wrap Up Party

Bracebridge
Barrelhouse

50/50 Draw



Find Us At: Muskoka Lumber Community Centre



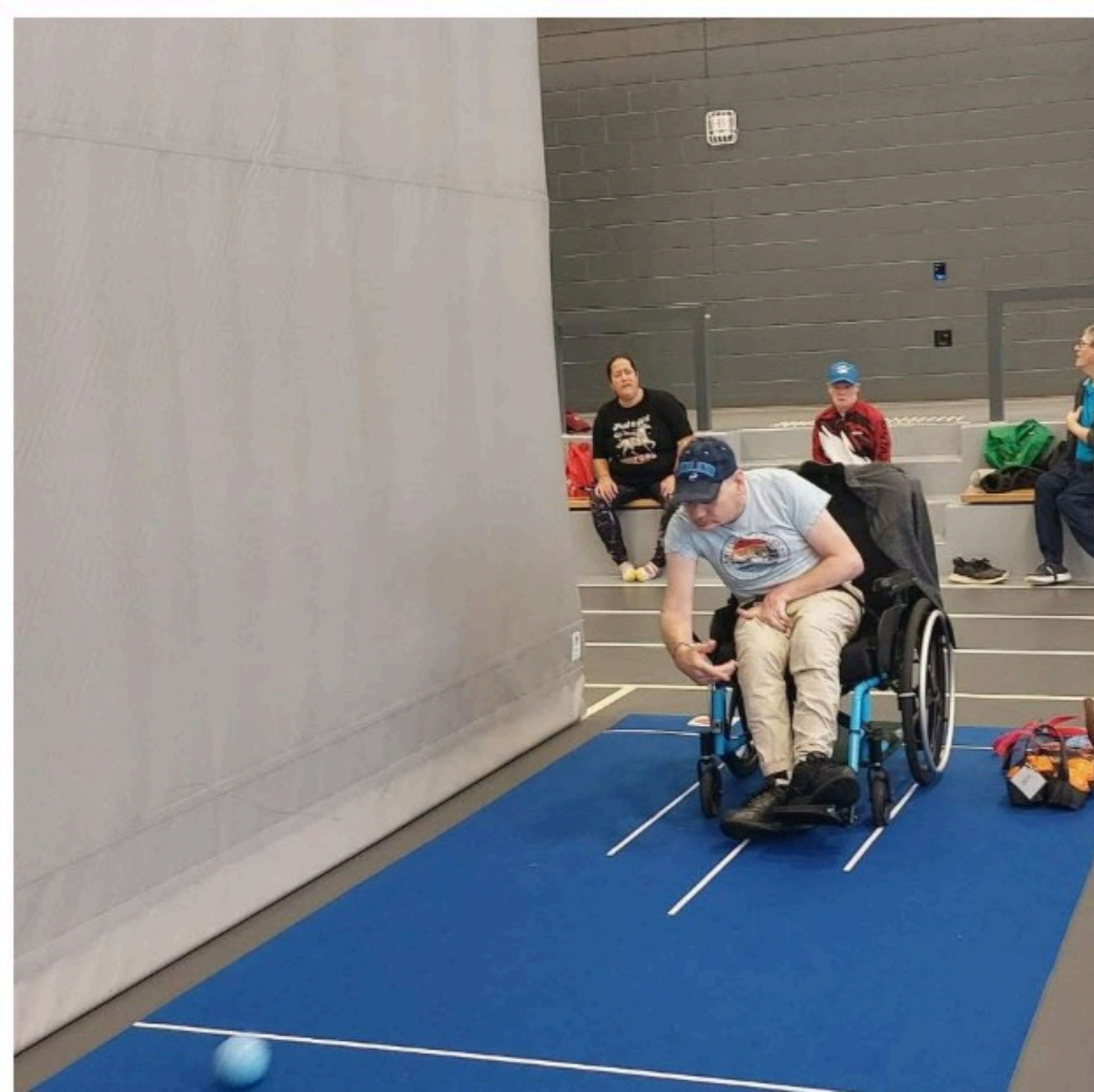
The individuals supported and staff at CLSM take pleasure in visiting the newly built Muskoka Lumber Community Centre. Advertised as a social hub that brings together various activities and services in a single location is an understatement.

The centre has a state of the art library which offers quiet reading areas, a community puzzle making table and a variety of programming. The "Therapeutic Paws" is always a hit.

The accessible sports-related facilities are also visited quite frequently. The multi-sport fieldhouse is enjoyed by the indoor lawn bowling team to ensure they are ready for when the snow melts.

The hockey arena draws much attention whether it's participating in the agencies fundraiser night with the Bears Junior C, watching local teams play or getting a tasty treat at the concession stand.

In short, everyone has a good reason to use these new facilities. We are very lucky to have this facility in our community.



Whats Happening at Morrison Meadows

Morrison Meadows Happenings.... As I was scrolling through photos of all that has been happening at Morrison Meadows and thinking about what to write I am in awe of all that we have accomplished and experienced at the Clubhouse this past year. Being new to supporting the individuals at MM's and trying to accommodate various needs in our individuals it sure has been a learning curve, but a good one!

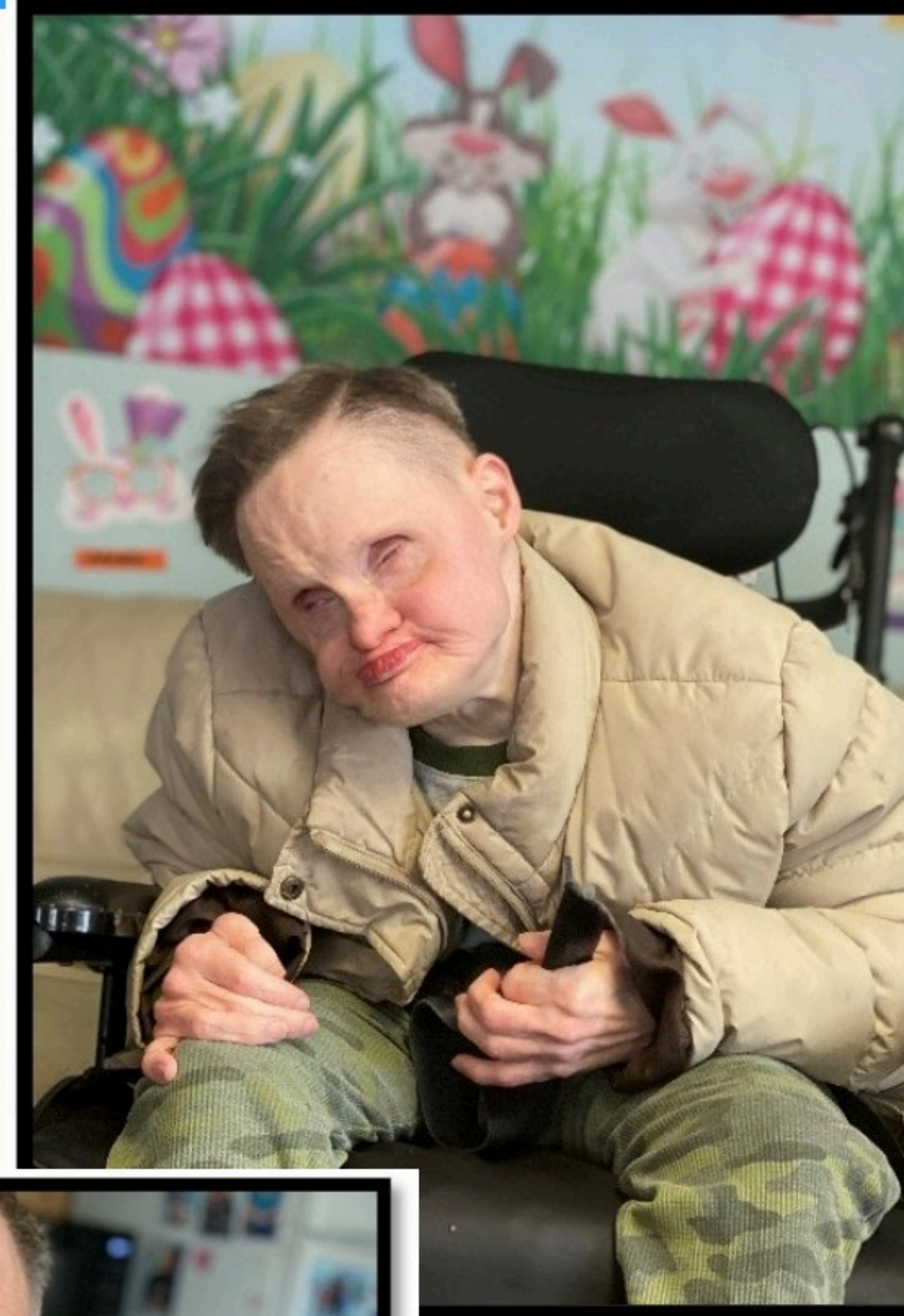
Since starting here at MM's, I have developed a monthly activity calendar which informs support staff, those individuals who participate and as well as their caregivers of what is going on. The calendar is more than just a 'schedule of activities', it is an interactive tool to encourage caregivers to also be proactive at home in providing meaningful and purposeful activities to build positive lasting memories with their loved ones.

Back in September 2024 we kicked off the fall with a 'Meet and Greet' event involving the caregivers to come together and meet myself and be able to connect with each other. Another event was held just before Christmas which involved fun activities such as Christmas crafts and delicious food!

Our focus at the Clubhouse has been mostly on the creative 'artsy' side since that is my specialty. From painting murals for the clubhouse to murals for the Pines or decorating for the various seasons, painting has been a warm welcome from those who enter the doors of the clubhouse.

Sometimes it is structured painting, free painting (doing whatever they wish and providing them with supplies), to instructional drawing sessions and purposeful painting to help decorate the clubhouse with. We have also made various crafts and gifts to take home to their loved ones. Activities planned are based on our individuals interests and needs. This winter we had a chance to get out on some of those really cold days and experience snow shoeing and having a couple of campfires.

At the clubhouse music is also another very important aspect to our program involving sensory and movement. We have utilized exercise balls during our music programs and also tongue drumming (no, we did not use our tongues! 😊). One of our individuals responds well to music and therefore we try to incorporate that into our daily routine in the mornings.





Slowly we are having various other individuals that are supported from the community, other group homes and long term care homes come through our doors. Sometimes we have some who are very shy but slowly we see them become more and more comfortable as they attend consistently on a regular basis. Our vision for the Clubhouse is to have a warm place of belonging and inclusion, meaning ALL are warmly welcome!

Partnerships! We have had the joy of having the Pines residents come out to the clubhouse a couple of times this past year and join us in our program. How amazing it was to listen to the residents and our individuals converse and do activities together!

We have had opportunity to also connect with the Dewey Institute students prior to Christmas. Imagine the excitement from JG, one of our individuals when he came in one morning and I told him we had a surprise for them. JG prior had always talked about "CHINA!" and when I told him we had friends all the way from China coming today for a visit, what joy he had on his face when he heard this great news! We have been able to connect with the students twice so far with two different sets of students, some being the same from the first group. A wrap up get together is being worked out for June where they will come and share some of their culture with us!

I am especially excited to be able to mentor one of our high school students Olivia from BMLSS. Olivia started with us shortly after Christmas in her 2nd semester of Co-op. What a great opportunity to share and mentor the next generation in working with those with special needs!

As we start to see warmer weather and the snow start to disappear, we are excited to start our indoor gardening program and be able to get outside for our walks along with outdoor activities. We are hoping to partner with the school groups in a gardening program which will be spearheaded by Kim Irons and the assistance of our individuals at the group home. We look forward to building and creating lasting friendships and memories together as we look to exciting and meaningful activities here at the Clubhouse!

Written By: Lisa Friesen- CPSW for Morrison Meadows

Amy's Corner



Hi there and thanks for coming back to my corner. I have been up to some really cool things lately and I want to tell you about them.

I go to Special Olympics Bowling every Wednesday in Bracebridge and we just had a tournament in April in Barrie. It was a lot of fun, and I met a new friend. I joined in lawn Bowling with the Muskoka Lawn Bowling Club every Tuesday at the new Muskoka Lumber Center. I really enjoyed doing it with friends, and got really good at it! I was able to bowl around the block and not hit it and go boom shuck a luck a.

The Rec Room was a lot of fun. I really liked bowling, and the ski ball machines. I went on the King Kong of Skull Island VR game, and that was scary. Mario Kart was awesome that we all raced each other. I tried a new food that day that I really liked, but the pickled beet was too sour! I also got to go to the trampoline Park in Barrie. I really liked the long trampoline, where you keep jumping. I went on the flat trampoline's as I didn't want to jump off anything.

I was lucky enough to go to Shen Yun in Hamilton. My mind was blown away by the dances being beautiful. The pretty dresses and outfits were amazing. It was a very magical show, and I am looking forward to going to it next year if it comes back.

I met some new friends going to Trivia at the Barrelhouse. I really enjoy going every Tuesday and making lifelong friendships with Laurie, Wyndam and Dillon. Paige, Liz and I went for a snow shoe in Huntsville and really enjoyed the treat after with the Muskoka STUFFED cookie company. We also fed the little chickadees

Zoo to you was a hit for a friends birthday at their house. My favorite animals were the all the fuzzy things, except the spider. The turtle was cool that roamed around the house. I got to hold another snake. I love going to the therapy dogs. They help me de-stress and help me with my anxiety. I like that I can see them at 505 and the library.

I was also lucky to join in a camping trip with Monica and others. We went to Arrowhead Park Had a great time and really enjoyed trying sledging. My belly still hurts from laughing so much! I can't wait to go for another camping trip!

I got a mask at the wrestling event. And it was really cool. Got intense at times. I was very happy that my friend was able to take me to go!

Looking forward to CLSM Idol, the pancake breakfast and the mom PROM coming up!!

Thanks for reading and I'll catch ya later

Submitted By: Amy Hall



RBC's Volunteer Contributions



RBC has been a key partner in ensuring we have a positive impact in our communities, providing needed supports and ensuring those with developmental disabilities can live with dignity. In 2024 we were able to focus on food security for those supported through CLSM. Each week many individuals and families require financial assistance to put food on the table and feed their families. Research demonstrates the family caregivers are 2.5 times more likely to be living in poverty, and it is exasperated for those who have children with complex needs. We have also been able to help offset the needs of the rising cost of food in our supported living homes where agencies have not seen increasing in funding to match the inflationary rate (only a total of 3% base funding increase in the last 10 years with food costs increasing more than 20%). With the ever-increasing cost of living many of those we support who rely solely on ODSP still fall well below the poverty line. With our fundraised dollars and donations, we are able to supplement grocery expenses for those individuals and families, living independently and supported living.



We also have been able to provide holiday meals at Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas utilizing partnerships with the local school and business. Thanks to RBC donations, we have provided hundreds of meals on holidays for those who would otherwise miss out on a homecooked holiday meal.

RBC has been a part of CLSM annual events for a number of years, from volunteering at our annual music festival fundraiser- Music At The Meadows, helping serve at our pancake breakfast, to guest judging at CLSM Idol annual competitions, collaborating at celebrity server nights at local restaurants and volunteering in other numerous ways with many of events preparation.

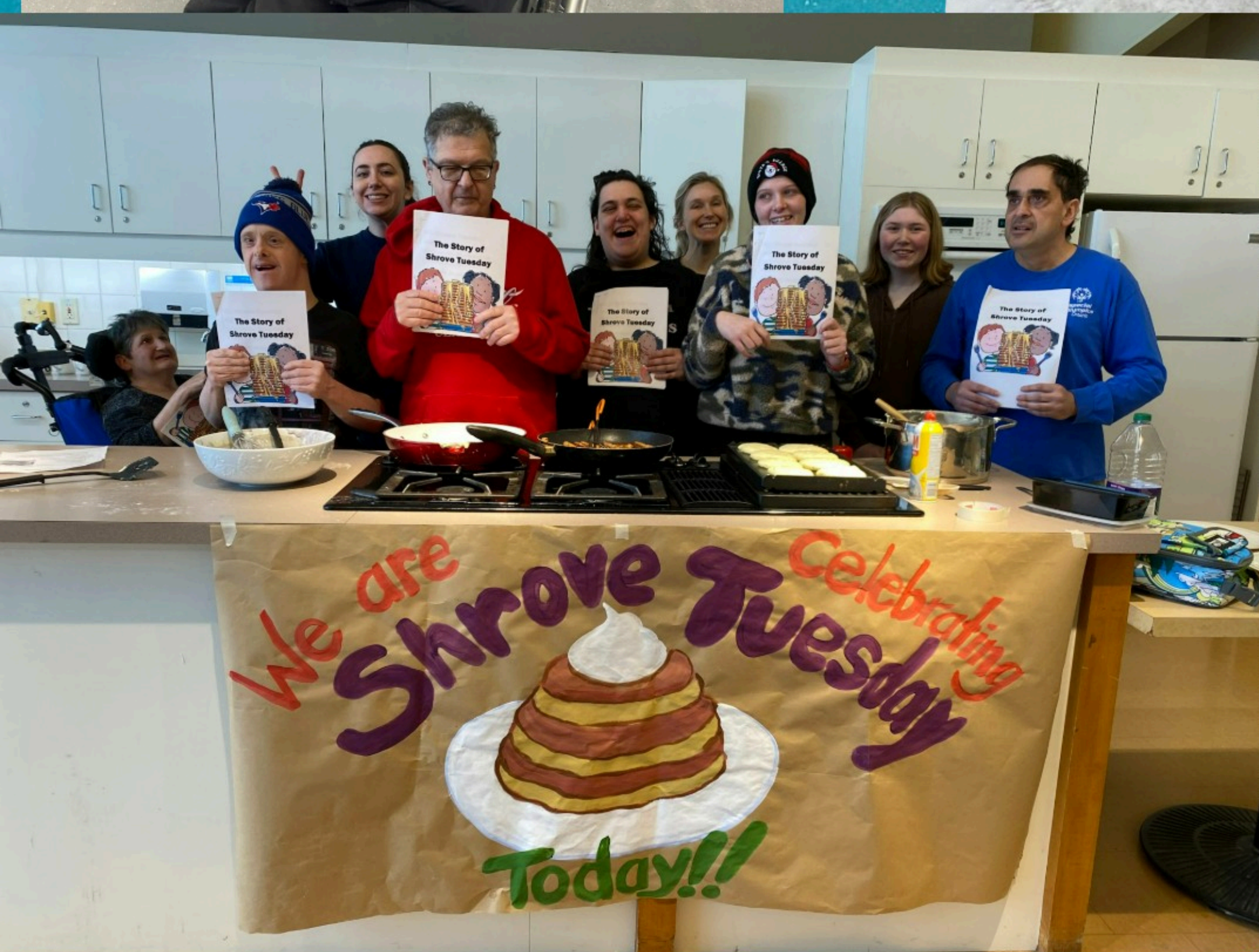


The support of RBC has allowed CLSM to continue to work closer to our fundraising goals, and growing our relationship with the community.

Through donations we have been able to bridge the gaps in care that are not funded by the government, such as over the counter medications. RBC helps to provide food, shelter and security for individuals in our Supported Independent Living Program and other community-based services who live on a fixed income. Some examples include, homecooked holiday meals, gift-cards for groceries, personal hygiene supplies, have a stocked food and supply bank internally, assistance with offsetting the cost of housing expenses, backpack and school supplies for children and teenagers attending school.



Don't dream your
life, but live your
dream
-Mark Twain-





Building Partnerships with our Future: Santa's Village



Community Living South Muskoka is happy to highlight our ongoing partnership with Santa's Village, which began many years ago followed by a pause that was reestablished in the summer of 2022. Since then, this partnership has become a shining example of inclusive employment and meaningful workplace support.

Santa's Village has demonstrated a strong commitment to their employees', offering flexibility and accommodation, individualized schedules, shorter work hours, and a trial-and-error approach that ensures individuals are placed in roles where they can truly shine. The focus is always on helping each person find success by contributing their strengths to the team.

As of summer 2024, five people supported through CLSM are proud to say they work at Santa's Village. They often share stories about their jobs, their accomplishments, and the new friendships they've formed—all with big smiles on their faces. It's clear they feel valued, supported, and part of something special. Word is out that this summer one more person supported will be joining the Santa's Elf team.

Santa's Village continues to be a role model for other employers, showing that with the right supports—such as welcoming job coaches on site—individuals facing employment barriers can thrive. We sincerely thank the entire Santa's Village team, from management and HR to payroll and frontline staff, for their commitment to making inclusive employment a reality.

Written By: Rachelle Lawrence



Supporting and Developing Values and Skilled Employees: Partnership with Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)



Community Living South Muskoka (CLSM) is proud to highlight our meaningful and growing partnership with Sue Tait, Mental Health Employment Support Consultant who works for the Muskoka Region of Haliburton Kawartha Lakes CMHA. Sue has become an essential part of our employment programs, providing ongoing support, expertise, and training that directly benefits the individuals we support.

Through one-on-one consultations, group training sessions, and collaborative planning, Sue equips both CLSM staff and clients with the tools they need to navigate mental health challenges in the workplace. Her guidance helps us build stronger, more personalized supports for each individual—ensuring that their unique needs are met with compassion, knowledge, and confidence.

Sue's impact goes beyond just training. She is a trusted advisor who helps troubleshoot challenges as they arise, suggests practical strategies, and connects us with additional community resources when needed. Her collaborative approach enhances our ability to prepare clients for employment and to maintain successful, meaningful work placements.

We're also thrilled to welcome Sue as a guest speaker in our upcoming peer advocacy workshops, where her insights will inspire and empower our participants to speak up, support each other, and continue growing in their roles.

Thanks to this partnership, CLSM is better equipped to provide well-rounded, mental health-informed support—benefiting our clients, staff, and the employers we work with every day.

We also want to say thank you to Sue for letting the agency use one of her beautiful paintings as this article's background image. Not only does Sue help navigate the mental health system, she is also a true advocate of her work and uses painting as an outlet.

Written By: Sarah Nawrocki and Rachelle Lawrence

Ensuring Our Financial Sustainability: Fundraising Initiatives

Fire & Ice



On January 25th, CLSM braved the cold and blistery weather to hand out free hot chocolate to the community (we gave out 500 cups!!!). We even brought snowshoes from our farm, Morrison Meadows, so people could snowshoe around Memorial Park. This was a very fun day for many and brought a lot of awarness to the community. Special shout-out to the two memebbers of the Muskoka Bears Junior C Team who volunteered their time at the booth.

Kahshe Hypnosis

On March 7th, Cyndi Tryon from Kahshe Hypnosis performed a sold-out live show at the Bracebridge Legion. During the stage show, hypnotist Cyndi Tryon created an atomsphere of fun and fascination, where she guided volunteers from the audience to unlock talents and behaviours they never imagined possible. Each moment was unpredictable, hilarious, and deeply captivating — a testament to the amazing capabilities of the human mind. Thank you Cyndi for partnering with the agency to have this amazing fundraising opportunity.



Holiday Meals

During the holidays - Easter and Christmas - the students from the Hospitality Program at Gravenhurst High School volunteer to make 150 meals for the agency. These meals are then provided to the individuals from the Supported Independent Living program as well as the children and families through our Childrens Services programs. We want to send out a heartfelt thank you to the hospitality teacher for making this partnership possible and thank you to all the students that have spent their time giving back to the community.

Thank you as well to Boston Pizza in Bracebridge for continously supplying the containers for every holiday meal.





Community Living
South Muskoka

An inclusive community where all are Valued, Respected, and Thrive

SUMMER EVENT SERIES

CRUISIN' FOR INCLUSION

BOAT CRUISE
FUNDRAISER



FRIDAY
AUG 22

6:30 PM - 9:30 PM

CRUISIN' FOR INCLUSION

NIGHT AT THE HALL
FUNDRAISER

BRACEBRIDGE
HALL
FOOD, DRINK, MUSIC, ART

THURSDAY
JULY 10

DOORS AT 6:30

LIVE MUSIC • 50/50 DRAWS • & MORE

**Two Great Events for
One Great Cause**

Elizabeth's Journey

Elizabeth, affectionately called "Liz", began receiving support through CLSM in Children's Services in 2008. The agency acted as a dedicated resource and mentor to foster inclusiveness through the public and high school years.

Once Liz graduated from high school, CLSM assisted her in transitioning to adult services to help her gain more independence and responsibility. Two of the programs that would assist her to gain these were the Employment Services through SSM Fleming and Passport.

Through the Employment Services program, Liz's job coach assisted her in building confidence and learning valuable workplace skills needed to apply and maintain a job. Fortunately, with this program it doesn't end there, the job coach assists the individual through their entire working career. Liz and her coach have built a strong rapport and have established a great working relationship.

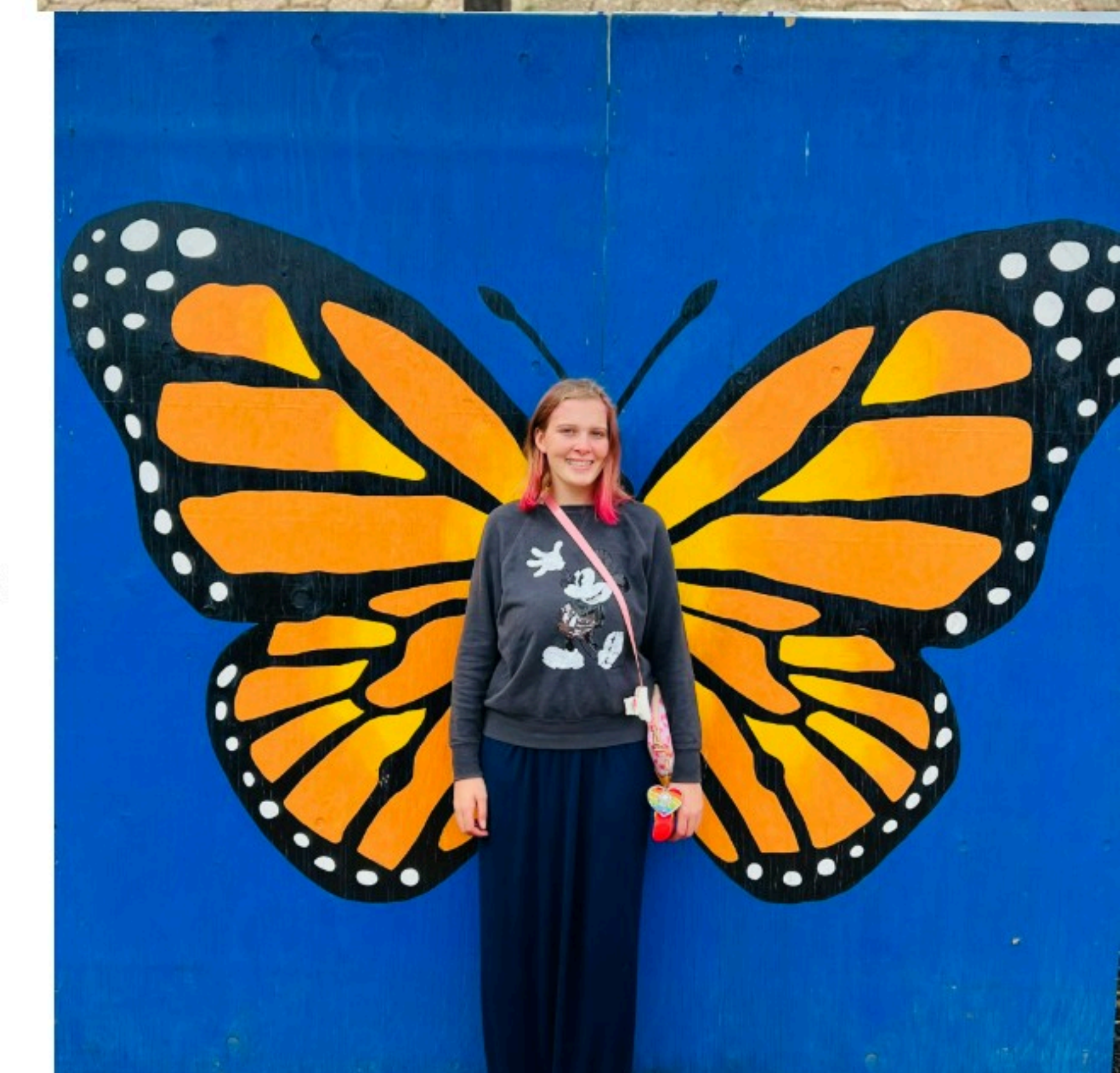
During the summer of 2023, Liz worked at Independent Grocer in Bracebridge in the bakery department. As time went on, Liz sought to broaden her skills and explore new opportunities. The following summer, in 2024, she applied to Santa's Village and was hired as part of the food and beverage team. Excited to embark on this new adventure, Liz quickly adapted after completing her training and orientation, requiring only minimal support. Known for her cheerful demeanor and positive attitude, Liz excelled in the kitchen, creating memorable moments such as making new friends and learning valuable skills. Her supervisor from the previous year consistently complimented her hard work and willingness to assist both management and teammates. Since Santa's Village is a seasonal employer, Liz's employment ended after Christmas.

In the meantime, Liz began to attend our Peer Support Employment Workshop where individuals meet and can share job experiences. She learned quickly about a new job opportunity at Simcoe Muskoka Catholic School Board. Determined to find a position in the winter season, her employment coach and peers encouraged her to apply as a lunch monitor. In February 2025, she received the news that she got the job as a lunch monitor at Monsignor Michael O'Leary. In her new role, Liz supervises students during lunchtime and enjoys outdoor recess with the children. Her hard work and reliability has paid off as Liz has proved to be an asset to the school.

In addition to Employment Support, Liz is under the Passport program. Through Passport, she is able to participate in community activities and events with friends and passport workers. Liz enjoys cooking classes, doing recreational swimming, going to movies and concerts. One activity that she has recently taken up is horseback riding, where she not only enjoys riding lessons but also spending quality time grooming and bonding with the horse.

Liz is locally well known through her participation in many Special Olympics sports and her willingness to volunteer and help others. She is a strong advocate for herself and is a natural at fostering relationships in the community.

Written By: Rachelle Lawrence, Sarah Nawrocki and Erin Gilbert



Celebrating Dale's Independence

Everyday, we find ourselves among individuals who are pursuing their personal goals and achievements. It is always uplifting to witness their hard work first hand when they achieve success.

This story was sent in by Lindsay and the Team at Manitoba Street, commenting on how a supported individual pursued and excelled at one of her goals.



We're incredibly proud to share a heartwarming milestone: Dale has been independently taking a taxi every other Thursday to visit her family in Orillia—and she's absolutely loving it. At first, it was a new step for her. The idea of navigating the trip alone came with a bit of nervous excitement. But with gentle encouragement and a supportive plan in place, Dale took that first ride—and hasn't looked back. Now, every other Thursday, she gets herself ready, waits with anticipation, and rides with confidence. The taxi driver knows the route well, and Dale enjoys the familiar rhythm of the journey. By the time she arrives at her family's home, there's already someone waiting at the door, ready with a smile and fresh baked cookies. These visits have become a treasured routine. They've strengthened family bonds and brought Dale so much joy—and doing it independently has been a huge boost to her confidence. Dale's bi-weekly visits are more than just a trip—they're a beautiful reminder of the freedom that comes with growing confidence and support. We're so proud of her for taking this step, and we look forward to seeing her accomplish more growth and confidence in her community. 😊

Submitted By: Lindsay Ramsbottom and the Manitoba Street Team



A special thank you to Hometown Taxi for making this success possible.



ATTN: Local Businesses



Do you want to create awareness and visibility?

Differentiate your brand from the competition?

Build positive community and public relations?

If YES!

Why not consider a sponsorship opportunity with CLSM

PERKS FOR YOU!

*free tickets to event(s) in our summer series.

*expand your reach by having company name and logo throughout promotional materials such as flyers, signage etc.

*sponsor recognition, highlighting your support through our social media posts, website and newsletter.

*public thank you from the emcee during the event.

*knowing that your contribution will be going to a positive cause and will be directly enhancing someone's daily life.

If this is of interest please reach out to Erin at egilbart@clsm.on.ca



Safe Management Training

New SMG trainers for CLSM!

In February of this year Kim Young and Dawn DeCaire attended a one-week safe management training (SMG) in Oakville to become trained to teach this course for CLSM.

Kim and Dawn will now join Aleisha Burta as the SMG instructor team for Community Living South Muskoka. Both Kim and Dawn have now completed their first teaching session with the support of Aleisha.

Safe Management's Crisis Intervention Training, together with Trauma Informed Care, the Trauma Recovery Model, and other system interventions, makes a positive difference to both staff and the people we support.

The approach of our training relies heavily on the distinction between "Prevention" and "Management" of risky behaviour. "Prevention" involves those techniques that reduce the future probability of an aggressive incident. "Management" refers to all those techniques used at the time of an incident to reduce its intensity and/or duration.

With the continued implementation of SMG strategies paired with the Positive Based Support Model CLSM has been successful in reducing violence in the workplace.

Kim and Dawn both look forward to providing you with the skills needed in SMG to keep everyone safe.

Submitted by: Dawn DeCaire





Picture Submitted By: Erin Gilbert

*Thank you for your
continuous support*