



# Community Living South Muskoka

Winter  
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 the CEO*

I would like to start this message with a heartfelt thank you to everyone who is part of our Community Living Family. Your compassion, support and resilience have made all the difference to the people and families we support.

This season is a time when many people get together with friends and family to celebrate Christmas or other cultural and religious traditions. Whatever this time of year means to you, it offers the opportunity to pause, connect and acknowledge the exceptional commitment we have to caring for one another here at CLSM.

Throughout this year, I believe that our staff and volunteers have worked with compassion, professionalism and respect. While it has been a challenging year with a great deal of loss, the dedication to those we support and each other is truly what keeps us going. We are so fortunate to have so many people who serve our community with empathy and understanding.

To our partners, donors and supporters we extend a huge depth of gratitude for your trust in our agency. Your support allows us to respond to the needs of our communities' most vulnerable citizens. Our ability to provide welcoming, accessible services is only possible because of your generosity. This year we had one of our most successful fundraising years ever, raising over 70% of the funds needed for an accessible vehicle. We also raised money to continue with our food security and housing support. A special thank you to RBC for a community grant, to our volunteer board members and management team who cooked and provided over 120 thanksgiving turkey meals and to Gravenhurst High School who cooked and Boston Pizza who provided containers for over 145 Christmas dinners. We also would like to do a special thank you to the Tara Doyle group for providing Christmas meals to our homes. We are truly thankful to you for keeping the people we support with food on their tables.

As we look forward to 2026, we remain committed to working together to strengthen our community and ensure that everyone is valued and supported.

On behalf of the Board and Leadership team, I wish you all a safe and Happy Holidays!

Krista Haiduk-Collier  
CEO

# Upcoming Events

JAN 16: Muskoka Bears Junior C Collaboration Game

JAN 31: Fire & Ice

TBD: Hypnosis Show by Cyndi Tryon

MAR 28: Rock Solid Wrestling

MAY 8: Annual CLSM Pancake Breakfast

MAY 27: CLSM Idol Finale



# Building Partnerships for our Future: Loan Cupboard

The Loan Cupboard is a program that is run out of the Gravenhurst Scouts Hall, by two sisters, Emily and Sarah, that volunteer their time. The sisters took over the program from other ladies who were retiring, as it is a much-needed community resource. This program allows anyone to come and borrow medical equipment for however long it is needed for. There are wheelchairs, transfer chairs, shower chairs, bath benches, commodes, toilet seat raisers, crutches, canes, walkers, and much more! Anyone can come in and borrow an item, or 10!

The program runs strictly on monetary donations to cover the cost of insurance, rental space and fixing up any equipment that needs it so any donations when borrowing items is greatly appreciated. During a meeting at the Gravenhurst Accessibility Advisory Committee, the committee discussed how great the Loan Cupboard is but was not accessible to everyone. Luckily, Kelly Cleland, part of the management team and the advisory committee, was there and could see an opportunity for our individuals and how they could assist to make the program more accessible to the community.

The first person to start was Patrick who volunteered twice a week. He would wipe down all the equipment and help re-organize the space. As equipment donations come in, he would clean them and store them. Patrick is always there to help people get the items to their car for them and is always happy to have a chat! As the summer came, Patrick started his employment and it started to get hard juggling his employment and volunteering, so we reached out and asked if anyone else would like to help on a day! That is when Sara stepped up.

Sara enjoys her new volunteer placement at the Loan Cupboard on Wednesday mornings. She uses her social skills to greet everyone who comes in with a smile and a conversation. Sara often sees people she knows from the community and is always eager to help them get the items that they need for themselves or their loved one. She has been a great addition to the Loan Cupboard team!

Since Sara and Patrick have started volunteering, Emily and Sarah have seen a great increase in monetary donations as well as equipment donations. Now that the Loan Cupboard is more accessible, people in the community are able to access it when they need it, and know when it is open for drop ins!



# **Supporting and Developing Valued and Skilled Employees: Wellness Team**

The Wellness Team has been busy organizing fun activities and events for everyone to participate in.

During the summer, the second annual Cornhole Tournament took place. Congragulations to Jason and Aleisha for winning this year.

The "Garden Gnome" certainly collected many passport stamps while he traveled throughout South Muskoka.

In September, the wellness committee held its first annual wellness fair. A range of informational booths were present, including those from RBC, the Canadian Mental Health Association, and Human Resources. The interactive sessions featured Pilates and an introduction to naturopathy. This fair aimed to promote staff wellness routines and to ensure they are striving to achieve a healthy work-life balance. A big thank you to our community partners from CMHA MPS, Dr. Howie, RBC, Town of Bracebridge Parks and Rec Department and Maddy McLean.

The Book Club has provided an excellent opportunity for staff to engage with one another in a comfortable setting. Each month, a new book is picked from a different genre, allowing everyone to discover new books.

Other fun things the team has done recently is dress up days, a holiday cookie exchange, door decorating contest and a world kindness activity bingo.

## *Thank You To Our Members....*

*Lorie Vogels*

*Anita Moss*

*Kim Irons*

*Melody Bertolini*

*Delia Desroches*

*Jeff DeWetering*

*Scott Harris*

*Lisa Longpre*

*Jeanette van Leeuwen*

*Brittany Beaudry*

*David Laidlaw*

*Jen King*

*Lauren McVie*

*Lauren Speciher*

*Paige Sauder*

*Rianna Warren*



# Building Partnerships for our Future: Macaulay Tree House Community Pavilion

A project that has been about **2 years** in the making!! What started as feedback and a quick sketch of an idea- has completed!! From phone calls and text chats, to onsite visits, to planning and contracting - Macaulay Treehouse has been onboard with the growth of Morrison Meadows for our community and their families. We are excited to share a permanent 30x50 ft shade structure fully equipped with hydro and lights is now apart of our property at Morrison Meadows!! 🙌

We are beyond grateful for our partnership with MacaulayTree House over the years and as a result lead to the donation of all supplies and time for this project! No CLSM project is successful without community partners or support and we want to also thank and acknowledge both Keith Horsfield and Stevenson's Electric and Plumbing for your generosity for your donation of time and supplies. With the help of Fitzmaurice Bros Carpentry, we have loved watching this shade shelter unfold and we are excited to continue to share it with our community, families, partners and our own CLSM members!



# Poets Corner

On the chilly weather,  
People pile the leaves up together.  
And rake them up.  
And drink hot cocoa in a mug or cup.  
Especially with whipping cream.  
Making it tasty as it does seem.  
And cook a beef stew.  
And it is true..  
And hot tea.  
Also good for me.  
Those are my poems for my  
newsletter of Fall.

The End.  
Love Caroline.



# Amy's Corner

Hello again! This Summer has been a busy one, but I loved it...

## Third Edition



IDOL was really good this year. I sang You'll Think of Me by Keith Urban and made it to the finals! The finals were really cool this year. We did it at the Rene Caisse Theatre. It was awesome singing on a stage in front of a whole bunch of people. I didn't win this time.

Paige and I went to the silent disco in Huntsville. Man, was that fun! I really hope that we can have one here. We all wear head sets and they are lit up a certain colour. All the people are listening to the same song if they are lit up green. Same with Red and Blue. It was really cool. Mom Prom was new to me! I really like that there were vendors around. Especially the spray on tattoo and the Glo-In-The-dark (neon) paint! Destinee won prom queen! She looked so beautiful.

Monica took me to go to the Wolf Sanctuary! I had never been there and it was awesome! I asked a lot of questions. I thought it was funny putting our heads with the antlers. There are 5 wolves living there and they are a brothers and sisters. I really liked the art exhibits of past wolves. I have been doing the programming with Sky River Meadows every Tuesday afternoon. I really like seeing the goats, and I even caught a chicken! Passport held a summer bash to close out the year. Amanda's Exotic animals were there. I got to hold the turtle and others that we were allowed to hold. I loved getting tattoos and dancing to the music. I went to see GREASE at the Kings Wharf Theater with my friend Lorie. I liked the interaction at the end of the show. Grease lightening was my favorite!

CLSM held an event series this summer as a fundraiser. I participated in all 3! On the Cruise I got to sing Shania Twain and I danced a lot with some new friends! The photo booth was so cool and I want it for my birthday. The Bracebridge Hall I got to sing again and sang Shania Twain. My friend Dylan came! He watched and supported me! The Country Concert was cool. He played a whole bunch of different instruments and it was awesome. He had a really good singing voice.

The AGM was fun. I like the chili that my friend made. I liked cheering on my friends and catching up with some that I haven't seen in a while, like Rick Maloney.

I recently went to the Dorset Tower to see the colours. I climbed all the way to the top! The last step to the top was very tiny and was nerve racking. A nice lady and man took our pictures. They were tourists from Toronto and Calgary but they have a cottage in Bracebridge.

Dawn and I got to go to Windemere house to speak at the 100 people that matter fundraiser. I talked about my work and what CLSM does to me, and guess what, we WON! We got a BIG cheque!

I went to a drag show with my friend Dylan. His friend was starring in it. I had fake eyelashes put on! I am looking forward to the Halloween one and I am going to win!

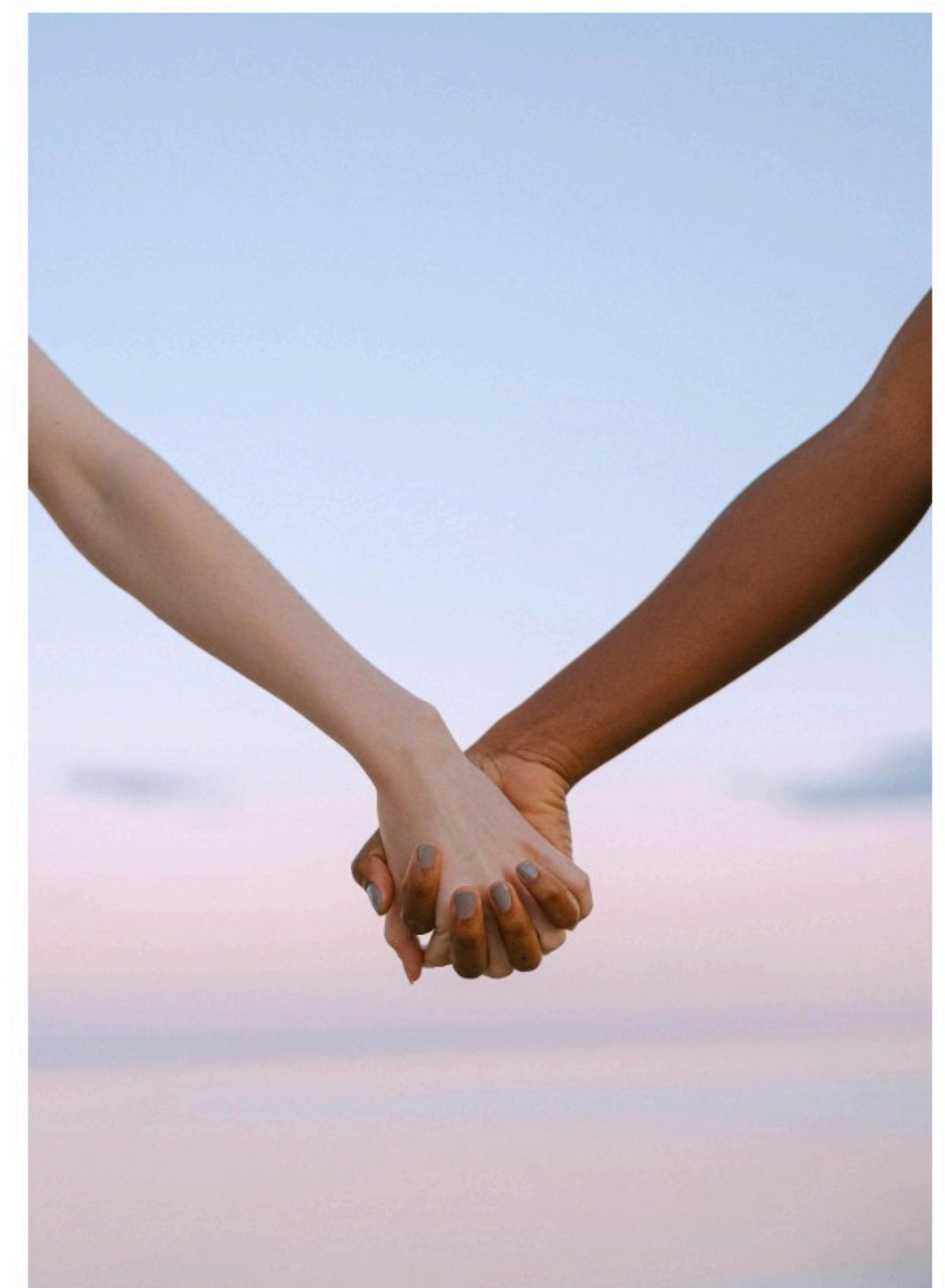
If you remember before, I help grow butterflies. This year I grew over 20 butterflies! I am really looking forward to seeing Cinderella on my Birthday, seeing the movie Wicked 2 and having a birthday party for my 40th birthday! That's an update for now! I'll see ya next time!

# CLSM Collaboration with Other Sectors to Better Meet Peoples Needs

On November 7 & 8, the District of Muskoka and Simcoe Muskoka Family Connexions held a Hate Free Symposium focusing on inclusion, diversity, equity and belonging. The first day of this event was by invitation only for youth living in Muskoka and youth-serving agencies, however the second day was open to the public.

Through active storytelling, shared dialogue, interactive workshops, and collaborative learning, this event aimed to turn knowledge into action and to inspire practical changes within schools and community spaces.

We were very happy to be included in this event and are looking forward to the next one.



On November 8, the Town of Bracebridge held a "Community Showcase and Volunteer Fair" event at the Muskoka Lumber Community Centre.

This event was focused on bringing a variety of community service organizations from across Bracebridge that play a vital role in supporting residents. Attendees had the opportunity to learn more about the programs and services available in the community, while meeting the people behind these organizations, and exploring ways to get involved through volunteering.

Another great experience was had to educate the public about the services at Community Living.





# Building Partnerships for Our Future: The Muskoka Bears Junior C

During the Thanksgiving Holiday Weekend, Community Living South Muskoka teamed up with the Muskoka Bears Junior C Team to be the selected charity for the game.

To highlight the agency, Liz skated around the rink carrying the CLSM flag, while Blane performed the ceremonial puck drop.

In the foyer, newsletters and informational materials were provided for those interested in learning more about the organization and its local contributions.

Additionally, foam fingers were available for a donation.

Thank you, Muskoka Bears, for being an inclusive and generous hockey league.



# Supporting and Developing Valued and Skilled Employees: Mental Health First Aid and Compassion Fatigue Training

During the fall, several staff members attended the Compassion Fatigue Training led by Colleen McLean, a Certified Trauma Integration Clinician, Trained Therapist and Owner of Sound Youth Counselling.

Madalyn Rebelo, Supervisor of Services and Supports, remarked that the workshop was meaningful and provided resources and skills to assist both herself and colleagues. The workshops helped to identify signs and symptoms of burnout. The instructor demonstrated techniques that can be integrated into daily routines to alleviate feelings of fatigue, while also highlighting areas where one should concentrate their energy and where it is unnecessary. Understanding how individuals prefer to rest and recharge proved to be a useful tool, as it varies from person to person.

The primary lesson that was established was to understand that while you can offer help and support to the best of your ability, it is crucial to maintain a balance by ensuring that you remain grounded and in a good space to effectively support others.

Several staff members also attended the Mental Health First Aid Training with Colleen. The course was very informative and covered a wide range of different mental health disorders and diagnoses. Each section showed the signs and symptoms of issues such as substance abuse, depression and personality disorders and then provided skills to be able to support the individual including hands on support with acronym to remember such as ALGE (Assess, Listen, Give Reassurance, Encourage Professional Help).

It is helpful to learn these signs and how to give assistance while also gaining a better understanding of mental health and reducing the stigmas.

Having people within the agency and in the community be more aware of mental health struggles creates a more understand and supportive workplace that is more confident and capable of providing quality support to those in need. As our roles at CLSM expand, this awareness can have a lasting impact on someone's quality of life 0 it is important the teams our knowledge and confident in providing this assistance.

# Ensuring our Financial Sustainability: Summer Series Events

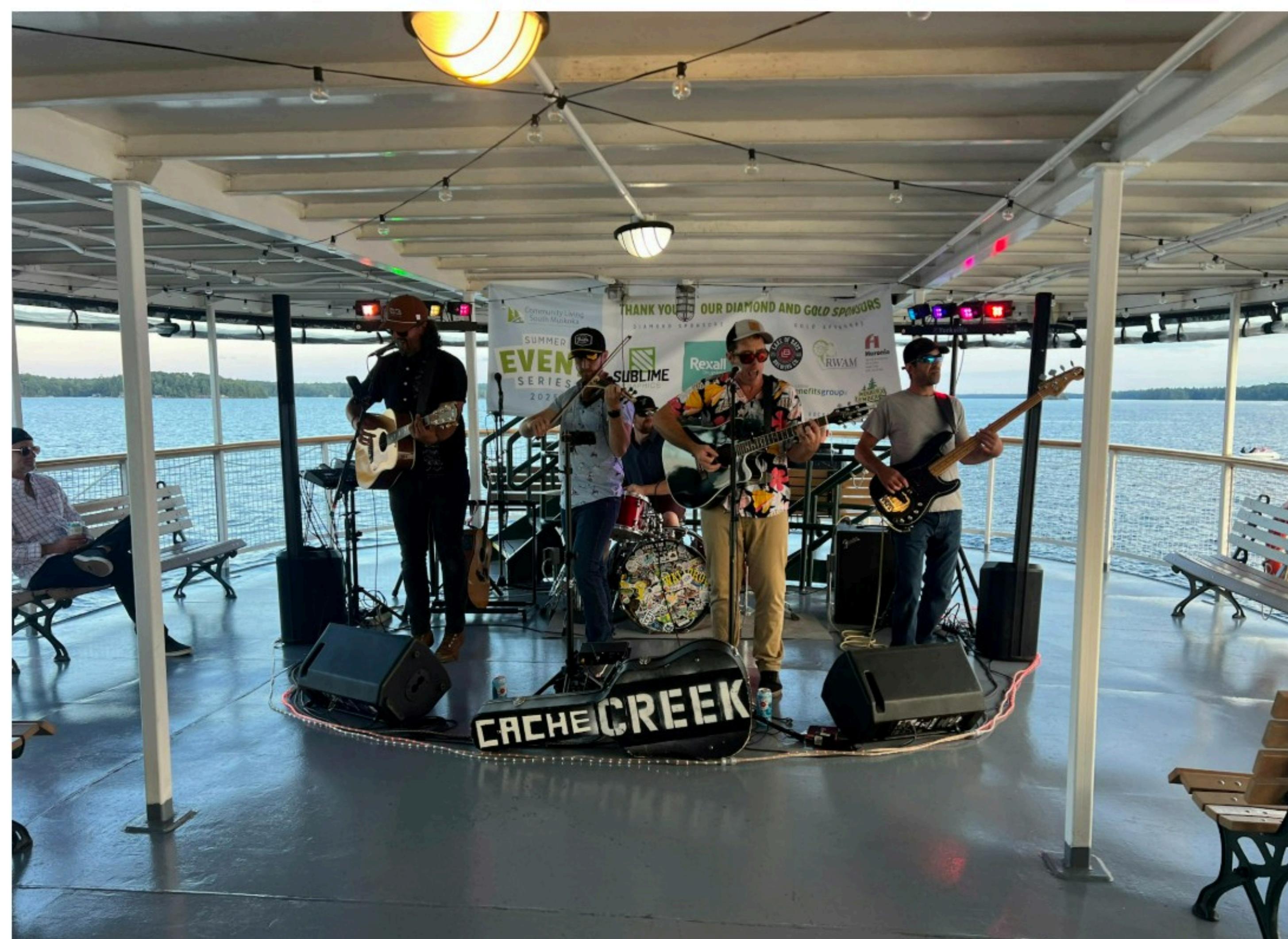
This summer the agency decided to switch gears and hold numerous events so more people could participate because of location and different styles of fundraising.

The Night at Bracebridge Hall had a night full of fun and local talent. A night full of fun and local talent! Thank you to The Dunning Butchers, DJ Koop, David Laidlaw along with Frank A and to our amazing Idol performers, Amy H, Landon S and Kyle B.

Gordon Cormier performed a Country Legends Tribute Show at the Port Carling Community Centre. A great evening was had, filled with classical tunes, comedic relief, good company and a 50/50 raffle. CLSM is thrilled to have partnered with the Rotary Club of Bracebridge Muskoka Lakes for this fundiraiisng event and greatful for our partnership with Lake of Bays Brewery whose donation of beer to all our summer event series was well enjoyed.

Aboard the Wenona II, CLSM wrapped the summer events by Cruisin' for Inclusion around Lake Muskoka on the boat cruise fundraiser and it was an absolute blast. From passengers on the upper deck taking in the view, to dancers boogyin' to our live band Cache Creek at the stern, to enjoying a catered meal by The Bohemian Caterer or to the bidders who kept our silent auction on its toes, the night was successful!

No CLSM event goes without support of our community and we would like to thank again all of the sponsors, donors and everyone that came out to these events - your generosity resulted in a fun and successful summer.



# Summer Series Events continued...

We're thrilled to share some incredible news - Thanks to your generosity! Since the start of the wheelchair campaign earlier this year, we have successfully raised over \$71,000, which is half the funds required for our new wheelchair-accessible van.

With the support and approval of our Board of Directors, we have been able to purchase an accessible van ahead of schedule knowing that we are committed to continue with our fundraising efforts. This serves as a "double-win" and here is how:

- We have a new van for CLSM that has increased passenger capacity
- Instead of trading in or selling the old one, we repurposed the existing van to our Honey Harbour community in order to provide accessible transportation to people we support in that community.

## Funds Raised

Total To Date: \$71,000

Goal: \$100,000



# Success Story: Camping Trip

This summer, our Passport Program Coordinators facilitated a three-day camping retreat at a lakeside cottage for a group of eight individuals on a three-day camping retreat at a lakeside cottage.

This trip not only acted as an opportunity for those supported to connect with nature, experience a change of scenery, explore new things and form connection but also to simple just do their own thing and enjoy some time away from their usual routines while working on activities of daily living.

Participating in a multi-day camping trip provided opportunities that extend beyond daily programming. The experience encouraged independence through hands-on tasks like cooking, barbecuing and planning meals. Spending time in nature promoted physical and mental well-being, while collaborative activities contributed to building confidence, encourage teamwork, and strengthen social connections.

Throughout the trip, everyone took part in preparing and cooking all meals together, enjoying both outdoor and indoor activities, and participating in a variety of social and recreational activities.

Activities such as volleyball, fishing, paddle boarding and swimming were a highlight of the trip, with many participants experiencing these activities for the very first time.

Engaging in these activities enabled individuals to acquire new skills, conquer fears and achieve personal objectives -resulting in heightened self-esteem and a stronger sense of personal empowerment.

Now, the cold weather did chase the group indoors at some points, this was a great opportunity for some baking, board games, listening to tunes on the record player and just good old fashion "bon fire chat"- which couldn't actually take place over a bon fire due to wild fires just across the lake 😞

This allowed those who wanted to feel heard, to chat about things they've had on their chest, share laughter and build friendships with people they might not typically connect with.



The nurturing environment allowed each person to try new things at their own pace, contributing to a meaningful and memorable experience for all.

Our Passport Program is always looking for fun and creative ways to encourage personal growth, help those we support reach goals and most of all to offer meaningful experiences.

Submitted by: Paige Sauder and Melody Bertolini



Best wishes for a joyful  
Holiday Season and a  
Happy New Year.

From our staff, leadership  
team and volunteer Board  
of Directors

