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# 2022-2023 AGM PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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With the lifting of many of the pandemic restrictions, 2023 has seen a return to a wide variety of activities and a "seize the day" outlook. It is wonderful to see the strength of the day options programs, to enjoy the resumption of old favourites such as the Community Living dances, and to watch field trips and other exciting adventures become the norm again.

As a Board, and in conjunction with staff, we continue to emphasize the goals from our strategic plan: Communication, Staff Development, Services, Collaboration, Social Responsibility and Technology. The website use, social media, and the staff newsletter, have all assisted with communication. Our association has been boosted by the hiring of a substantial number of new staff, and there is a focus on providing opportunities for our employees to expand their leadership skills. Services, especially opportunities for participation in social and recreational activities, have grown. We continue to nurture relationships with like-minded organizations with our support and collaboration. The decision to become more socially responsible was not taken lightly, and the purchase and leasing of hybrid vehicles, along with a serious effort to reduce environmental waste such as paper and plastic, are steps toward that goal. The Finance and H.R. departments have both had software upgrades to make their work responsibilities more efficient, and we have made cyber-security a top priority as part of our commitment to improving the use of technology.

We are sorry to see two of our long-serving Board members retire this year. Heather Collins is stepping away after serving on the Board for ten years. Chris King, Past-President, has served on the Board for a total of 25 years. Both Heather and Chris have been very active on Board committees and have worked hard to keep the Board strong. We wish them all the best as they pursue other activities. They will be missed. The Board is pleased to welcome Alanna Boyer, mental health nurse, and Jason Boyd, Sarnia Police officer, as new members this year.

Our biggest news of this year is, of course, the retirement of our esteemed Executive Director, John Hagens, who will retire on December 8, 2023 after serving Community Living Sarnia-Lambton for nearly 34 years. John has a passion for work in our sector. We are proud of our mission statement, "That all persons live in a state of dignity, share in all elements of living in the community, and have the opportunity to participate effectively." John Hagens has lived that mission statement every day of the past few decades, and I'm sure will continue to positively impact the lives of everyone he meets in the future. We wish John the best of all good things in his retirement.

The Board is very happy to welcome Corry Thomas, who will be stepping into John's shoes as our new Executive Director. Corry has been working with John, and with staff members, over the past few months to enable a smooth transition and prepare for his new role. Corry has an extensive background of education and experience, and we are confident he will guide Community Living Sarnia-Lambton through all future growth and challenges.

The Board is grateful for the continued high level of professionalism and caring shown by the CLSL staff. We know that our association is strong because of you, and that our people supported are safer and happier because of your kindness and your commitment to excellence. Thank-you so much for all that you do.

On behalf of the Board of Directors,

Lorna Cooper, President

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## 2022 – 2023 AGM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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First, from a leadership perspective, the Annual Year of 2022-2023 was one of uncertainty and change, due to my illness commencing in March 2022. I would foremost like to thank Jenny Greensmith for filling the Executive Director's role during the first half the Annual Year, from April 2022 to October of 2022, and for continuing in a support role from October 2022 to June 2023, while I was able to ease back to work full-time. Her leadership was exemplary and much appreciated. At the Board level, I would like to thank our President Lorna Cooper for her steadfastness and leadership during this challenging time and for her foresight in 'finding' Jenny.

Further, we had leadership changes at the senior management level, with the retirement of our Controller, Pam Atkinson, and the 'onboarding' of our new Controller, Charles dos Passos, who Pam trained well. Charles has done an amazing job of coming to understand the complexity of our finance systems, the support services they underpin and of molding his team. We continue to bode Pam well in her retirement.

Even though events like our former Annual Christmas Dinner Dance had to again be withheld, optimism began to build towards the end of winter and into spring of 2023, with the diminishing impact of Covid-19. The re-engagement of open community-based activities and events, and centre-based supports, such as bowling and Friendship Clubs, our Wawanosh Community First & Seniors supports, the Activity Centre, jobPath and children and adult respite programs all again began offering increased options in which to engage. Coming out from under Covid-19, our Employment Transitions also began to thrive and offer employment with employers who were re-engaging in and growing their businesses. Our Passport program, which provides individualized funding to help adults with a developmental disability, grew to 150 non-CLSL Housing participants. Blended throughout these activities, events and support options were the fruits of innovative technology tools and skills gained during the isolation of Covid-19. We all learned how to communicate and work collaboratively in new and creative ways.

With our new Strategic Plan in full swing and serving as a beacon until 2025, the Board and management faithfully referenced it to build our future in the realms of Communication, Staff Development, Services, Collaboration, Social Responsibility and Technology. It is rewarding to witness what such focus can accomplish, such as the addition of a leased townhouse and an apartment, the addition and replacement of hybrid regular and accessible vehicles and the attainment of new leased spaces at the Lochiel-Kiwanis Centre for additional and enhanced respite options for families with children and adults who have a disability. Of significance, for future stability and cost-containment and for building equity, CLSL was able to complete the purchase of its administration building at 551 Exmouth St. on August 11, 2022, following a prolonged period of negotiations.

This is my 33<sup>rd</sup> and my last AGM as Executive Director of CLSL, prior to my retirement. My work at CLSL has been a joy and utmost privilege, a career, and a lifestyle much more than employment. It is time for a leadership change, innovative approaches, fresh ideas, and new visions, and that is how it is supposed to be. Our management team has been and continues to be amazing, committed and foresightful. Our staff, during good times and times of trial and turmoil, have remained resolute, dependable, and strong advocates for our people supported and their families. And our Board of volunteer Directors has remained vigilant in its oversight of CLSL, and highly supportive of its Executive Director. CLSL is strong and in good hands, and I wish our new Executive Director, Corry Thomas, his management and staff team and our new Board of Directors all the best as CLSL strives towards the future.

*John Hagens, Executive Director*

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# 2022 – 2023 AGM COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT REPORT

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The purpose of the Community Involvement Program is to facilitate inclusion of individuals with intellectual disabilities socially within their community. This is achieved through participation in existing and new community-based recreational, leisure and social activities. Such involvement is made possible with the support of volunteers, staff, community groups and other organizations who help to match the interests and needs of the participants. Following the retirement of Norma Hills in June 2022, I took on the duties of the Volunteer Coordinator and continued to provide the Community Involvement programs in her place.

During the 2022-2023 service year, some activities were resumed, while others remained on hold due to COVID-19 issues. These programs saw great involvement from their participants:

- The 10-pin bowling league involved 43 participants and 5 volunteer coaches.
- The 5-pin bowling league involved 47 participants and 5 volunteers.
- The Friendship Clubs were very popular.
- Dances – one dance was held in September for 58 dancers, then these were put back on hold due to COVID-19 issues.
- Some volunteer opportunities within CLSL were opened up to new and returning volunteers.

Community Living Sarnia – Lambton remains committed to continuing with these activities for all those who wish to participate, while developing new opportunities for community inclusion.

Other programs and activities will hopefully resume in the 2023-2024 service year:

- Regular community dances
- Adult social swim
- Summer bus trips
- Special community events (ex. Mayors' Luncheon, family picnic, Christmas dinner/dance, etc.)

The volunteer programs were also resumed after the COVID-19 restrictions put them on hold. While not quite up to pre-pandemic numbers, the base is starting to re-grow as existing volunteers return and new volunteers come forward and are matched to their interests and the needs of the organization, its people and the volunteers themselves. Growth in this area remains a priority.

*Sandra Kameka, Community Involvement Assistant*

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## 2022-2023 AGM COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION & DAY OPTIONS REPORT

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Community Living Sarnia-Lambton offers a variety of service options for individuals interested in developing community connections an/or participating in life-long learning and hub activities; as well as for families / caregivers requiring day respite.

In April 2022, **Wawanosh Community First & Seniors** and the **Activity Centre** were still operating at about 30% capacity. But, by Oct 2022, we were able to expand, bringing the majority of our staff back from residential and increasing supports and services to about 50% capacity. Due to the Covid-19 virus, a great deal of supports continued to be provided in-house and focused on both fun and education.

During the first part of the fiscal year, we learned about, and celebrated national and international holidays and events including the Summer Olympics and we enjoyed many life-long learning sessions about the natural world (studying fireflies, turtles, and polar bears, to name a few), about various cultures throughout the world (ie. the Kayapo in South America) and about life-saving measures (like calling 9-1-1). We assisted people to connect with virtual activities of their choosing across the country, trying our hand at collaborative art, Art for the Mind, Healing Dance for Seniors, and bead-creation over Zoom, for example. Some folks even shared their artistic talent with the rest of Canada by submitting their painted tiles to the Canada Connects Mural Mosaic project (tiles will be on display as part of permanent installed structures in various communities). We also enjoyed as many outdoor activities as possible during the nicer weather, joining walking clubs and hiking the many trails throughout Lambton County, visiting hot spots including Greenhill Gardens and the Starlight Casino, going on hayrides, attending plays, volunteering at the Colour Run at Alexander Mackenzie High School, etc.

In the summer of 2022, one of our participants realized his dream of meeting Captain Chris Hadfield and was able to perform a duet with him singing, "Space Oddity". Now How Cool is That!



January 2023 kicked off our re-entry into the community and we were all extremely excited to resume our volunteer experiences. We regularly sorted donations and food at the Inn of the Good Shepherd and prepared meals to be distributed to those in need at the Salvation Army. We also supported their Christmas campaign, gathering toys for hampers and ringing their Christmas donation kettlebells at Walmart.



We began joining in on community classes and activities once again. One eager young lady started going to Lambton Literacy to improve her reading skills, another couple joined a knitting class together at Strangway, while another ambitious gentleman joined the chess club at Strangway and practices regularly, often beating staff opponents at Wawanosh. Some seniors began utilizing the Mobile Market through the Inn of the Good Shepherd, gaining access to fresh fruits and vegetables to cook at home, while others connected with new friends through low impact exercise at the LHCRC and coffee time at the Cardiac Rehab Centre. One Senior thoroughly enjoyed her connection with New Beginnings (an ABI and Stroke Recovery program) running twice a week. And a very musically talented young man started attending jam sessions playing his chamber and bagpipes for others to enjoy. We'll save the rest of that story for next year!



And the community also began reconnecting with us as students from the grade 5/6 class at Queen Elizabeth school provided participants at the Activity Centre entertainment and camaraderie.

We ended the year working on vision boards for many participants, focusing on personal goals and community engagement.

For those persons choosing to stay home this past year, both virtual programming and limited face-to-face supports also continued. The most popular Zoom sessions were yoga, meditation and body systems, along with an Introduction to Sign Language.

We look forward to future growth as we continue to expand services, to create new community connections, and to assist people in their journey to belonging.

THANK YOU to all – staff, participants, families/caregivers. We couldn't do it without you!

*Becky Boersma, Director, Community Employment, Passports & Day Options*

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# 2022-2023 AGM PASSPORT SERVICES REPORT

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The Passport Program, funded by MCCSS, provides individualized funding to help adults with a developmental disability be involved in their communities and live as independently as possible by providing funding for community participation services and supports, activities of daily living and person-directed planning. The program also provides funding for caregiver respite services and supports for primary caregivers of an adult with a developmental disability.

Community Living Sarnia-Lambton is one of many Transfer Payment Agencies for the Passport Program. Services offered by CLSL that a person can use their Passport funding for are:

- Individual Support Employee (ISE) direct supports
- Fee-for-Service Programs, such as Respite or Day Options
- Activity Fees (ie Bus trip to a Blue Jay Game, bowling fees, Tickets to a game, etc.),
- Processing of bill reimbursements (ie. Transportation costs to and from applicable activities or programs; cell phone and/or internet costs; memberships, etc)
- Purchases for technology (ie laptop, cell phone, etc) or supplies and equipment (ie craft supplies, a bike, sporting equipment)

In April 2022, Norma Hills was overseeing Passport Services and was based out of the Administration building. At that time, there were about 185 people receiving Passport services with CLSL. Though there were some who had 1:1 Individual Support workers, most people were using their funds for purchasing eligible equipment and supplies under the COVID-19 Temporary Changes to Passport Funding Guidelines. Norma retired in the summer and, with the absence of our Executive Director at the time, we determined to relocate the Passport office to Wawanosh Community First where it could be overseen by the Day Options Director. Unfortunately, Norma's replacement resigned for personal reasons in November and recruitment began again. The new Passport Supervisor, Lisa Lebeau, began her position in January 2023.

During Lisa's first few months, as Covid-19 restrictions were lightening, people were becoming eager to get out and access the community more, to do things and go places they enjoyed like concerts, shows, hockey games, day supports, etc. Suddenly, there were over 30 people on a waitlist for a 1:1 ISE workers to assist them to do these things. By the end of March, we had hired a few new ISE's and had reduced the waitlist by a quarter. But, by the end of March, the number of people using CLSL as their Transfer Payment Agency had increased by about another 20 people.

During this same period, both Becky and Lisa were becoming more familiar with the program and were busy developing new practices and new Service Agreements for persons / families. We were also becoming more aware of the inherent challenges that come with being a Transfer Payment Agency. First, and most obvious, is the workload - the number of people directly overseen by one Supervisor is daunting. Second, are the legal liabilities that must be understood and navigated as we assist and/or flow funds to people/families who may use the funds to hire their own employees. Third is the tracking mechanism that must be put in place to manage the funding for that amount of people effectively. Thankfully, we have a great accounting dept for that! And, the final challenge is operating such services in a manner that is successful and feasible within the confines of available funding to do so. But, as we move into a new fiscal year, we look forward to facing these challenges head-on.

*Becky Boersma, Director, Community Employment, Passports & Day Options*

# 2022-2023 AGM CHILDREN & ADULT RESPITE SERVICES REPORT

**Our Respite Support Services supports families who have children and adults living at home with a wide range of abilities, including those with developmental and/or physical disabilities, those who are medically fragile and children with mental health issues.**

Respite supports are offered to individuals and their families in out-of-home programs and in the community. Various funding sources are accessed by families or within our community to cover fees for service or to accommodate those requiring more specialized supports. We strive to meet with all families to explore individualized respite support plans geared towards personal and family needs and interests in an effort to remain creative and responsive.

Our **Children's Program** normally offers three key options: **'out of home' respite at our 'Augusta' respite home, weekly group activity programs at the Lochiel Kiwanis Community Centre (LKCC) and the Summer Youth Adventures (SYA) Day Camp.** These programs are fortunate to partner with Pathways Centre for Children for regular pool use. We have yet to return significantly to being able to individual support requests for daytime or overnight visits at one of the respite homes or 1:1 matches, usually using Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (ACSD) or Special Services at Home (SSAH) or in response needs identified through Community Resolution Table (CRT) and/or STARRting Point. Some supports and programs have been limited due to ongoing staffing shortages. New referrals average 5 per month for regular children's respite and we have done 50 new intakes so far in 2023.



This year brought a close to our provision of residential placement for two local youth identified as having Complex Special Needs (CSN). Part of this transition saw Apt 11 transfer to our Housing Department.

We continue to administer the Children's Mental Health (CMH) respite funds within Lambton County. Referrals for this service are coordinated with STARRting Point at the Family Counselling Centre (FCC). We work closely with the FCC, Children's Aid Society, St. Clair Child and Youth Services, Pathways Centre for Children, Bluewater Health, the Child and Parent Resource

Institute (CPRI) and both local school boards. It is a group-based model that meets once a week for an average of 3 hours. Some participants join our regular respite programs, based on individual needs and to plan for success.

Children's Respite supports one-hundred-thirty (130) children through funding by MCCSS. It is of special note that our CMH program is tasked to provide support to ten (10) children this year and with our group model approach we were able to serve twelve (12) children in 2020/2021.

### *Some Recent Children's Respite Caregiver Notes of Appreciation:*

"I would like to take a minute to thank all of you for your time, patience, caring ways, professionalism and just being the amazing people you are. Andrew thinks the world of you guys and so do we, as you already know. I am so thankful to have such an amazing group of people there for my boy and knowing he is safe and happy to be in your care. When I drop him off to you, he says "you can go home now", LOL. Your hard work, professionalism and caring ways do not go unnoticed." *JW*

"Such unbelievable amazing human beings! Thank you from the bottom of my heart." *SB*

"I had my first full night sleep in almost 6 years. That alone is worth everything! LL

"Our family feels so lucky to be able to go to the Respitality events. It gives us a chance to talk with other parents. We never have to worry about our son as he is well taken care of by the staff or with us at the event. The staff make us feel welcome and comfortable. At one event we were one of two lucky winners of a family meal (gift card) donated by a local business!" *MM*

To participate in **Adult Respite** supports, a referral must be received from Developmental Services Ontario (DSO). During this past year we have received numerous referrals from DSO. Adult Respite supports ninety (90) adults also funded by MCCSS.

We provide transitional life skill experiences and social activities for adults at our program locations and in the community. We are pleased to now have a new adult program room at the LKCC! We are offering a variety of activities at this location such as day respite, cooking program and a support day for adults who are medically fragile. We have had an overwhelming response to these programs. Not only have we offered activities in Sarnia, but we also offer a cooking program in Grand Bend at the Alhambra Hall on Monday evenings. Transportation is provided to anyone unable to find a ride who lives in the county.



In June we had a BBQ at the Alhambra Hall in Grand Bend. Everyone played games, received a summer gift bag and painted rocks. We provided transportation to ensure everyone could participate. During the summer we had picnics, hikes and games at the Pinery Provincial Park, Canatara Park and Centennial Park.

On July 9<sup>th</sup>, three participants from our Adult Respite Program, along with support staff, had the honour of visiting Community Living Wikwemikong Anishinabek's summer camp for four days as an adult respite cultural exchange. Everyone was over the top excited crossing Georgian Bay on the Chi-Cheemaun ferry, taking a boat ride to Indian Head in Killarney to enjoy some famous fish & chips. We also enjoyed hiking to the stunning Topaz Lake – certainly a gem of Killarney Provincial Park. During the month of August Community Living Wikwemikong respite participants and their support staff visited Sarnia -Lambton and stayed at our respite apartments to enjoy some Community Living Sarnia-Lambton hospitality.

CLSL is proud of our new **Respitivity Program**, generously funded in part by the Sarnia Community Foundation. We were inspired by other 'respitivity' ideas around Canada and the World. We wanted to use this concept of connecting respite and hospitality to create an innovative approach for meaningful caregiver breaks in our community. This allows us to celebrate the lives of unpaid caregivers. We were proud present this new program at the International Short Break Association (ISBA) Conference in Poland. Next steps involve exploring solutions to other respite barriers that caregivers experience; developing sustainability of the program and building provincial partnerships; building on local partnerships to purchase activities and services or to receive in-kind donations to the program; and promoting these businesses through our social media and networks while building our profile in the community. We will continue to make grant applications, as well as seek corporate funders. And we will keep the conversation alive with our caregivers to ensure we collaboratively build meaningful short breaks and continue strengthening our community for all.

Thank you to our families, employees and community partners for your continued patience and understanding. We will continue to do our best to work with each family towards safe and meaningful respite support.

***Adult Respite Parent Testimonial:***

"We went to a Respitivity dinner for families and respite was provided for our son, Andrew. The dinner was elegant, and the staff made up feel special. We were asked if we had any dietary restrictions to ensure we were able to enjoy our dinner without any worries.

We never stop to think how we parent is exceptional - we just parent.

We really felt someone else recognizing us as parents was very touching. We don't take time for ourselves, or our relationship there just is no time and asking for help just makes us feel guilty.

This night out meant a lot, we got to socialize with other parents and just spend time together.

We knew Andrew was having a wonderful time with the respite staff." *VR*

***Kristy Bodkin and Connie Smits, Children and Adult Respite Supervisors***



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# 2022-2023 AGM HOUSING SUPPORTS REPORT

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## Preface

This last year has been one of change. Sadly, we lost two of the people that we support. Lisa lived at our Champlain home and Gary lived at our Murphy home. They are both missed by all who knew them. With every loss comes an opportunity for us to welcome new people into our services. Our housing program supports eighty-one persons, fifty-one of whom reside in 24/7 congregate living homes (of which CLSL has thirteen homes), thirty of whom reside either in their own apartment or in one of four shared homes or townhomes, and one of whom resides in a Host Home. We were glad to have the Covid-19 restrictions finally lifted within all of the residential locations. To provide more of an overview of what transpired in our homes, each home is hereby sharing a brief introduction of the people supported and what has been transpiring within their homes over the last year.

## Finch Home

The four people who live at the Finch home have taken advantage of many opportunities this past year. We have an amazing staff team who makes sure the Finch four get out as often as possible. They have participated in many adventures such as a blue jay's game, African Lion Safari, Niagara Falls, Camping, Shania Twain and Jonas Brothers concert, Duc Cruise, Sting games and an Immersive Disney Animation experience. Some of the activities they participated in on a regular basis are bowling, swimming, dances, and friendship club.

Rounding out the week, two of our individuals attend the Activity Center Monday to Friday for half days. The other two individuals attend the senior's program at Wawanosh on Monday, Wednesday, and Fridays. A wheelchair swing was purchased for the Finch house, and we are anxiously waiting for a cement pad to be poured so that it can be set up and utilized!! The Finch home has plans for many updates in 2023, such as a new kitchen which includes a new counter and cupboards and a fresh coat of paint within the home.

The team at Finch has many more adventures planned to have fun and reach goals for the upcoming year!!

## Tom Hodgson Home

There are four individuals at the Tom Hodgson home who love to laugh, listen to music, go on outings, and enjoy the company of each other and the staff. This past year the individuals have been busy with attending adventures such as Rock the park, Blue Jays' baseball game, driving in the community, fishing, and going on a Duc Cruise. Regular activities that these four engaged in included bowling, going to dances, and attending friendship club.

Three of the individuals at Tom Hodgson attended Wawanosh Seniors program and the fourth person attended Community First at the Wawanosh location. They continue to attend every Tuesday and

Thursday for the day. This allowed for many opportunities to get out, go on adventures and try new skills.

The house received an amazing update and the whole basement level was replaced with a new floor. The last year has been a bit of a struggle with some of the individuals we support aging and experiencing health concerns, however the staff are wonderful advocates for them and pull together to ensure the best care is always given. With many new goals set for this coming year, it will be great to see where the people at Tom Hodgson are headed.

### Murphy Home

Murphy House is home to 7 residents who range in age from 22 to 69. It has been a year of change and growth as two different generations have learned to live together. There has been a return to normal activities such as bowling, friendship, dances, swimming, Special Olympics track and field, summer trips, trips to sporting events and the theater. The Paul Elvis show was a big hit as LNs' brother took to the stage as an Elvis impersonator. Daily activities are a choice made by all, many have returned to day options programming and others have opted to stay home. There is a cohesiveness between the people supported and the staff team that is awesome to witness. The realization of dreams and goals is always at the forefront of what this program is about. Everyone plays their own part to form a resilient, compassionate, and dedicated team and it is reflected in how happy the people supported are.

### Grace Home

Grace Manse is home to 4 residents. One of the ladies supported will welcome you to the home as she plays cards or listens to music in her lower-level bedroom or she may have a chat with you. On the upper level, there are 3 people who live together. They have different personalities and have different needs. Each of them is happy to be back to regular home visits with family and friends, as well as returning to normal activities such as dances at Grace United Church, swimming and going out with staff on trips in the community. Two of the people supported in the home, EV and MZ, have returned to day options programming at the Activity Centre two days a week while KG has decided for now that 1:1 time with staff during the day is what she prefers. LS has returned to the Seniors program and enjoys spending time with her friends. The Grace Manse staff team have the best interests of the people supported in mind and are always looking for better ways to keep them healthy, safe, and happy. The staff are passionate, always willing to take on a new challenge and ready to help LS, EV, KG and MZ have new experiences.

### 144/146 Essex

Essex is a duplex with 4 people residing on each side. Over the last year the team has been working very hard to integrate the people living at Essex back into the community after the Covid-19 restrictions were lifted. They love being back at the day programs throughout the week. Some activities they have enjoyed over the last year include going out for dinners, going to the Sarnia Sting games, going on the Dino stroll, attending the Blue Jays game, going to the local theaters, and going to the hockey hall of fame. Everyone has loved attending monthly backyard parties that have included crafts, music, and different themed activities.

## Euphemia

When you walk into Euphemia you meet 4 people: HM, BD, EP and NP. The house is a fully accessible home with items to fit the needs of everyone that lives there. The team is always looking for activities and adventures to attend to enrich the lives of the people Supported. Over the past year they have attended local sporting events like the legionnaires and Sarnia sting hockey games, the Circus, monster Jam, local runs and walks and the Disney experience. This group is always looking for new things to experience and adventures to try.

## Champlain

Champlain made the most of another year passing!

As the pandemic becomes more of an inconvenient memory, we are transitioning back into a new normal that includes more of their regular activities with a constant buzz out and about in the community. There were a plethora of adventures ranging from a relaxing day at the local beach to an afternoon taking in a play at the Imperial Theatre; multiple demolition derbies across the county and some WWE Summerslam action in Detroit.

A year ago, September brought with it a heartbreaking loss when one of our own, Lisa, passed away. The staff and everyone supported rallied together and mourned the loss and celebrated her beautiful life. They continue to include memories of her in their activities and visit her grave site to bring words of love and sometimes her favourite cookies.

Then in December, they welcomed MS to the home as the newest part of their Champlain family. She was readily welcomed and found her way into everyone's heart with her witty sense of humour and sarcasm! Being a childhood friend of ST, it was like a reuniting of sisters which, you can imagine, brings with it an innate joy and rejuvenation to everyone around.

We continue to be blessed with many new and existing staff on our team, each of them bringing their own unique ideas and energy into the home. Their desire to make each person's life as inclusive and fulfilling as possible is an inspiration every day.

## McCaw

McCaw has continued through another season of change and growth as they went from a home of two to a home of three over the past year.

JW and EA welcomed AMN into her new home where she has been getting settled into her new surroundings, starting with a fresh new coat of purple paint on the walls of her bedroom as tribute to her St Clair school spirit! She brought with her a lot of spunk and mischief that has played very well with her housemates and staffing team. Everyone has learned a lot about each other as they share their space and experience new things as a result of their growing home.

Some new things are small like figuring out who will sit where in the van now or who enjoys playing a card game outside together on a sunny day? And some new things are big like JW's airplane ride over Sarnia, EA's day trip to Niagara Falls where she enjoyed the splashes on the Hornblower or AMN's night out watching her favourite Dancing with the Stars crush at a live performance!

There are so many things to be thankful for and we cannot wait to see what the year ahead brings!

## Apartment 200

Apartment 200 has had a busy year. JC was busy with socializing in the community attending local events such as Rib Fest, summer concerts, and going for walks. JC continued to go to Tim Hortons daily, socializing with customers. He has been doing great! JC has been taking part in the friendship group on Tuesday evenings and recently started attending a day program called the stable life. The best parts of this year for him were traveling to the East Coast in July and again in September with his sister to see his mom and dad, brothers, sisters and many nieces' nephews and cousins. If you were to ask him what his favorite parts of the trip are he will tell you the pop and chips were the best and the bands he saw. JC, along with his support team are looking forward to the coming year and the many adventures he will take.

## Kemsley Home

The team at Kemsley just keeps clucking along... in case you haven't heard our chicken crew has grown. This very happy flock provide hours of entertainment for both the staff and people supported. Over the summer months the beautiful backyard is a center point at Kemsley and provides an outdoor oasis.

JM has experienced a year of growth and achievement. He has begun to attend Vibe and is loving it. This has been a great opportunity to build new friendships. JM has joined Friendship Group and really loved a visit from the fire service dog. He is always up for a new adventure and Rock Glen has become a favorite spot for a walk. This year he has gained so much independence! He found a love of bowling this year and likes to go with his friends once a week in the winter. JM also went to several new places this year including the butterfly conservatory, the Flying Squirrel, and he really enjoyed the Disney Immersive experience that came to London. His contagious smile and kind personality never cease to amaze any of his staff who all love to work with him.

This year MH took on some new adventures! He went to the butterfly conservatory in April and got some new chickens! As always, he has been a big help around his home and helped lay wood chips and dirt in his backyard this summer. MH really enjoys car rides and coffee and has had a great sense of enthusiasm for walks this year! One of his favourite things this year has been stopping at the humane society to pet all the cats in the cat room.

## Colborne Road

The theme for the Colborne team, for both staff and people supported over the last year, has been growth and opportunity. The staff team has worked very hard to meet the ever-changing needs of the residents of the home, including completing specialized training and adding new team members. This has been made clear in the successes that our people supported have experienced.

KL has continued to grow in both her independence and self-confidence. Her world has grown as she has reconnected with old friends over the last year, which is very important to KL as she values her connections with peers. She has participated in many of the outings CLSL has offered and went on a trip to Medieval Times this past summer. She is also an integral part of the Ladies Walking Group each Monday evening. Her independence continues to grow each day and the staff are very excited to see where the next year takes her!

CC made a splash this summer! After a hiatus from swimming, he was able to take part in a well-loved activity and went for a swim in his parents' pool. Both his parents and he were very excited! CC enjoys Friendship group on Tuesday evenings and especially loves to share his rendition of "Down by the Bay" with the crowd. His love for music continues to flourish and he enjoyed a visit to the Imperial Theatre to watch a Billy Joel impersonator. CC is a huge Billy Joel fan!

SW had a very busy year and experienced a lot of changes in his interests and experiences. He and his support staff worked together to reconnect him with activities that he has enjoyed such as bowling, art projects and walks around his neighborhood. SW is always a celebrity everywhere he goes and loves to wave at everyone that passes by. He attended a CLSL dance which was one of his goals. SW is a very resilient soul who rises to any challenge he is faced with!

### Supported Independent Living Program (SIL)

Everyone involved in the Supported Independent Living Program was happy to spend the year slowly getting together again.

The cooking program was just starting up; however, the staff group ensured all those interested enjoyed a homemade Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner with all the trimmings and homemade pumpkin pie for dessert, plus Bailey's famous pistachio salad, delivered to their doors.

The men's walking group continued, and community activities were pursued with great delight.

A trip to the Niagara Comic Con was a great hit, when several of the group went to meet and chat with TV celebrities, and numerous WWE wrestlers. The highlight of the trip was seeing the DeLorean Time Machine from the movie Back to the Future!

The new office space at Oakdale YMCA was set up and is being used frequently by the SIL staff. People supported drop in or participate in activities there on a regular basis and enjoy the weekly cooking program or shooting hoops in the gym.

Throughout the coming year, our goal is to re-start the Social Skills Group and expand the cooking program. We all look forward to planning and getting away on more trips, exploring the community near and far!

### Pontiac, Unit 50

After a brief period of adjustment and mild discord, the three gentlemen living at Pontiac 50, a shared townhome - TR, KC, and LF - have settled into a pattern of mainly harmonious cohabitation. All three gentlemen currently participate in some form of regular employment with a view to eventually expanding their vocational horizons. They also attend programs such as Wawanosh and Vibe, and regularly contribute to household chores such as cleaning, grocery shopping, and meal preparation. KC speaks much more frequently about his inner thoughts and feelings, something his grandmother appreciates greatly. LF seems to be taking more pride in his appearance and seeks to help staff whenever he can. TR continues to be a ball of energy but seems more focused on his goals and plans for the future. Their staff and supervisor have certainly appreciated getting to know these fine gentlemen.

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# 2022-2023 AGM COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT REPORT

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Community Living Sarnia-Lambton offers a variety of employment service options for individuals who have a desire to work within the community.

## **Employment Transitions**



**Employment Transitions (ET)** assists individuals to gain and maintain long-term competitive employment in the community by matching individual interests with employer needs and by providing on-site job coaching as required.

During the 2022/2023 fiscal year, 96 individuals were supported in gaining or maintaining their employment, were working in paid jobs, full-time or part-time, regularly, or seasonally, dependent upon the requirements of their particular job. We gained 9 new employer partners who had never hired a person with a disability previously, this shows our name is getting out there and businesses are learning the value of hiring people with a disability.

In November 2022 the Sarnia Journal published an article featuring one of our past jobPath graduates, Ryan McLeod. The article served as a response to an earlier one that featured a local employer who was lamenting the difficulties his business was having because of being short-staffed and being unable to attract job candidates. This piece promoted job seekers with disabilities as good, reliable workers who can help fill staffing needs.

In late 2022, the Lambton Kent District School Board (LKDSB) approached CLSL about developing a partnership over the next year that focuses on assisting high school students with developmental disabilities, who are over the age of 18 and are no longer interested in school, become job ready. We look forward to providing further updates as this develops.

In the spring of 2023, as the Province of Ontario continued to roll out the new employment model (Employment Ontario Integrated Services (EOIS)), they announced that the new Service System Manager (SSM) would be The Corporation of the City of Windsor and Workforce Windsor-Essex and would operate under the name “Windsor Regional Employment Network” (WREN). WREN will oversee all EOIS service providers in the regions of Windsor-Essex, Chatham-Kent, and Sarnia-Lambton. As the current ODSP Employment Supports funding will be incorporated into EOIS, CLSL hopes to be selected as a service provider in this area. Further announcements regarding the selection process will take place later in 2023.

## **Summer Employment Transitions (SET)**

SET was developed to assist high-school and post-secondary students with disabilities, aged 16 – 29 years old, find summer employment through the provision of job search and intensive job coaching. The goal is to assist young people in their transition from school to work upon graduation.

In the summer of 2022, with COVID-19 lingering, we were thrilled to be able to hire 2 coordinators and 9 job coaches (University & College Students) to support 32 students with disabilities in paid employment. This year, 24 local employers provided a total of 36 jobs, ranging from 3 to 20 hours per week. All 32 students were successfully placed in at least 1 summer job and after 7 weeks of work, SET 2022 wrapped up nicely at the end of August.

## **JobPath**

During the 2022/23 year, four 6-week, in-person jobPath sessions ran, each consisting of 6 participants. From those sessions, 18 people gained competitive employment in various industries throughout our community.

jobPath operates through a federal grant, above and beyond our MCCSS funding base. We are happy to report that in February 2023, we received confirmation that funding will continue for the next 2 years, at which time we will re-submit another application for continued funding.

In March 2023, we were able to purchase VjobReady, a virtual reality training program used for career exploration and skill development. We are eager to explore the opportunities this state-of-the-art technology will provide local job seekers in both jobPath and ET.

Though we were not yet up to capacity, we are happy to report that the 2022/23 year was successful with the support and flexibility of our funder. With the pandemic heading in the right direction, we look forward to broadening capacity and future successes of the upcoming year.



## **Staffing Changes**

In November 2022, the Employment Transitions Manager, Laura Stokley, went off on Maternity Leave. Evan Dawe, who has worked for the program for about 4 years, was able to step into the managerial role nicely. In March 2023, we wished Murray Quinton a long and happy retirement after many years of job coaching.

*Becky Boersma, Director, Community Employment & Day Options*

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# 2023-2024 HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT

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Community Living Sarnia-Lambton remains a dynamic and expanding organization as a result of growth. Reflecting on the last year, the Agency has transitioned several people supported from our Respite programs into the residential program. This transition has meant addition 24/7 properties as well as the need to increase staffing levels to support the new residents at the supervisory and front-line levels.

Human Resources has continually had to scan and adapt to the changing environment and Government Legislation ensuring compliance. One major legislative change in the last year was the Disconnect From Work policy requirement. To help guide the organization through additional changes, this last year has seen increasing pressure in identifying the gaps in policies, and working collaboratively with other departments to develop policies and organizational guidelines that will provide greater clarity and efficiency. In writing the policies, it forced management to look closely at current practices and adapt new or better procedures to guide our recruitment, onboarding, training, and management of our all staff.

Our current staff compliment consists of 293 employees, 11 of which are currently inactive due to injury, LTD or parental leave. This staffing can be broken down further into 147 Full time staff, 142 Part time, and 4 contract employees. Of the 293 employees, 247 are classified as union employees represented by CUPE Local 4370.

We continue to be challenged with higher rates of absenteeism, employee burnout and diminished morale as employees struggle in the post-Covid environment that has led to changed attitudes towards work and led to a greater need for a work life balance. An HR challenge has been to find a manageable balance between supporting the shifting needs of our staff, the increasing demands placed on supervisors while ensuring that the people we support continue to receive the care and services they have come to expect from our organization. HR has dealt with these issues with increased communication, greater flexibility and learning new ways to support or accommodate our staff.

We have continued to rely on various technology platforms as a form of communication for staff, with Microsoft Teams and Zoom leading the way. Most staff meetings are offered both virtually and in person so that staff have greater flexibility, promoting a better work like balance. We have seen the full implementation of Go Easy Care to ease scheduling and move away from a manual paper time sheet process. Management has also spent much of the year sourcing and reviewing several Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS), which once implemented will enhance the maintenance of employee records, improve document flow and HR efficiencies.

Much of the training, including orientation, has been delivered in a hybrid format offering choice and flexibility. Staff development continues to be a priority. This year has seen a substantial increase in the purchase of various training packages including a 6-day leadership training for supervisors, a 3-day leadership workshop for primary staff and mentors, and Safe Management training to enhance on the job skills for our frontline staff. An additional training in the planning stages is the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion which will be rolled out to complement the DEI policy/program in late 2023, early 2024.

Technology continues to be our chosen medium for the hiring and onboarding process. Interviews are conducted virtually, which allows for a quicker process eliminating wasted time due to scheduling conflicts. We have also engaged the Microsoft Teams transcription tool in interviews, allowing us to document the interview process, and ensure a more fair and consistent process for all applicants. More recently we have incorporated the use of surveys via Survey Monkey to get feedback from new hires on our onboarding processes.

Recruitment of qualified staff is an ongoing challenge for our sector, due to Lambton College no longer offering the DSW program. This situation has led to collaboration with other partners like LCDS and CL Wallaceburg in efforts to find alternative and creative strategies to improve recruitment. Some projects include working with Lambton college in creating a micro credential program that would allow qualified applicants to work and attend school simultaneously as part of a long-term goal of getting their DSW



credentials.

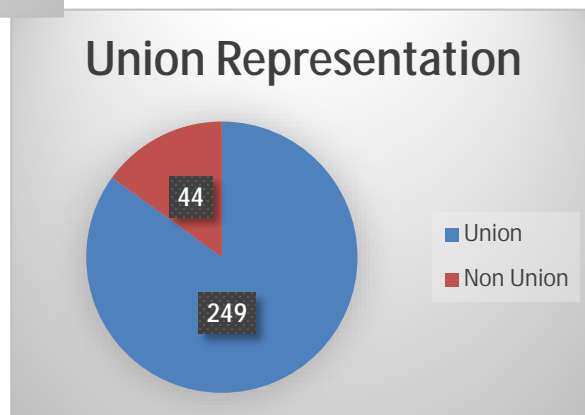
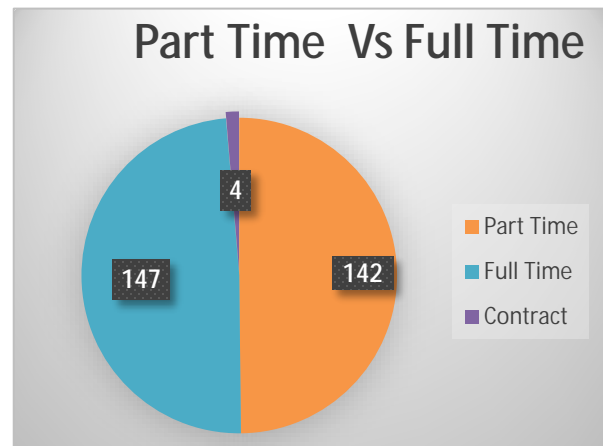
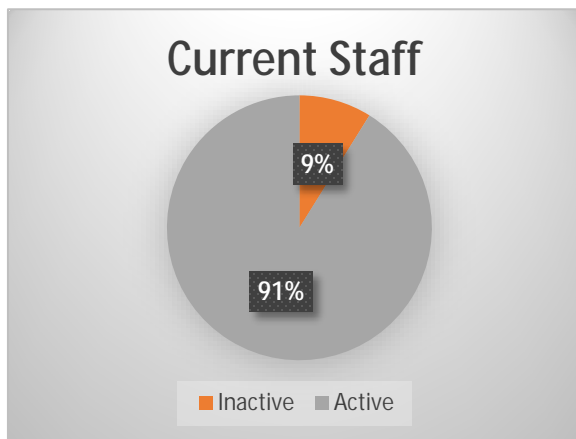
**Other Key Strategies moving forward:**

- Continued collaboration with community partners and enhanced outreach strategies by improving relationships with community partners like YMCA, Goodwill Employment center and the Newcomer Center that will result in an improvement in sourcing and hiring the quality workers we desire.
- Retention /succession planning program to engage, motivate employees and prevent inefficiencies in staffing.
- Services driven by evidence and outcomes; implementation of measurement tools
- A workforce that reflects the diversity of our community.
- Reduce staff turnover by understanding the changing needs of our staff and turnover patterns with the use of stay/exit interviews and surveys.
- Continue to optimize the number of full-time positions to help stabilize the workforce by providing opportunities for our employees to attain employment with added benefits.

The focus for 2024 will be to continue to review processes, policies, and procedures so that they align with the provisions in the collective agreement and the organization’s strategic plan. Performance management will be given more priority, so we can identify gaps in staff development earlier in the employee life cycle and correct them in efforts to give employees the skills and tools they need for growth, increased confidence, all of which are proven to enhance retention and attrition. We will continue to look at and invest in development opportunities for supervisors and frontline staff to identify and prepare future leaders. And lastly more frequent environmental scans in the form of surveys will be done to measure employee satisfaction.

With the implemented changes in the last year, and increased focus on the above-stated strategies moving forward, I am confident that Community Living Sarnia- Lambton will become a more desirable organization for those aspiring for a career in our sector.

*Below are charts that represent current Human Resource Metrics*



*Prepared by: Denisa Cholasta,  
Human Resource Director*