

May is Community Living Month!

Message from the CEO

May is a time when people from across Ontario will celebrate the many successes of creating inclusive communities for people with developmental disabilities. Here at Community Living South Muskoka we are so fortunate to live in such caring and giving communities. We can see from the articles in this newspaper the truly inspiring accomplishments of the people we support, and the incredible people who truly care and ensure that all belong.

Our annual Pancake Breakfast on May 3, 2024, will once again highlight how belonging works in our community. From our many wonderful donors and sponsors, to those who hire people with disabilities, and our staff and families who help to ensure that all have a meaningful day, the breakfast is sure to be another wonderful celebration of accomplishments.

We also have our CLSM Talent Show taking place this May on Tuesday afternoons at our beautiful farm property, Morrison Meadows. We made some wonderful connections this year with the Gravenhurst Highschool who were able to make over 200 meals at Christmas and Easter for people and families we support who were in need! We decided to continue with this partnership and are holding our talent show grand finale at GHS at the end of May!

Other Community Living Month items to mention are the lighting up of Bracebridge Falls in our Green and Blue colours throughout the month; our pancake fundraiser at A&W Bracebridge May 1-15 (Rooty the Bear was there on May first for the kickoff!) and our CLSM Brew being done by Lake of Bays Brewery this year! We will also be doing a brew launch at the Barrel House in June which is sure to be a lot of fun!

We are especially excited to be hosting our third annual outdoor music festival at Morrison Meadows on August 24, 2024. Building on last year's success, we have another great line-up of local country and classic rock bands. We encourage you to purchase your tickets in advance so you won't be disappointed.

Once again, I would like to end by thanking our very generous donors and sponsors who have been helping us with food security and housing. You make such a big 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!

Happy May everyone!

Krista Haiduk

CEO, Community Living South Muskoka

SUCCESS FACTOR - A HIGHLY VALUED COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

Two Weeks of Pancakes with A&W Bracebridge!

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

May is Community Living Month and Community Living South Muskoka is kicking off the celebrations with “Two Weeks of Pancakes” sponsored by [A&W Bracebridge](#). From Wednesday, May 1 to Wednesday, May 15, A&W Bracebridge will donate all proceeds from pancake sales to Community Living South Muskoka.

When you tag [@community_living_south_muskoka](#) and [@awbracebridge](#) in a picture of you and yours eating pancakes, you’ll be entered into a draw to WIN both an A&W gift card + TICKETS to our annual outdoor music festival [@musicatthemedows](#) on August 24, 2024.

Thank you to those who stopped by for the first of many delicious pancake breakfasts -and a special shout-out to Sarah, Andrea, and Brandon at A&W Bracebridge for their support of Community Living Month - not all heroes wear capes!







SUCCESS FACTOR - A HIGHLY VALUED COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

Dementia Screenings - A Vital Service Provided by CLSM

Submitted by Monica Marchand - Community Participation Support Worker

What is Dementia Screening and the ASAP Tool?

The Dementia screening process began in the late 1990's and has grown from a small two-page test to the current 25 page document. The document, otherwise known as the ASAP tool (Abilities, Skills and Achievement Profile), was developed by Community Living South Muskoka and Hands The Family Health Network, as an aid to help in the screening of Alzheimer's disease and Dementia among individuals with developmental disabilities.

Dementia screening is initially completed as a baseline of cognitive and adaptive abilities for the individual, then it is re-administered to monitor that person's abilities and daily living skills across time.

Research recommends establishing a medical, ability and adaptive skill baseline profile for people with Down Syndrome and developmental disabilities in early adulthood to ensure optimum level of achievement and easier identification of decline later in life. We recommend that screening begin with people aged 25, with screening then completed every two to five years (depending on decline) until the age 40 and then completed on a yearly basis.

Why Do We Screen?

Changes in the brain may occur decades before symptoms show, but usually the brain compensates for these initial changes until decline accelerates beyond the person's capacity to manage the loss. Adults with Developmental Disabilities experience "accelerated aging", meaning they age faster than the general population.

For those with Down Syndrome, less than 10% show evidence of decline before age 35 years, but by age 50 years over 50% of individuals show evidence of decline. Research shows that while not all individuals with Down Syndrome will develop Alzheimer's like Dementia, they are at a higher risk. The purpose of the screening is to help us determine if decline is occurring as the person ages and if that may be related to Dementia. Screenings also help us determine the following information:

- Individual changes to support needs.
- Changes that may need to be made in living situations.
- Changes in staffing.
- Changes in recreation or leisure programming.
- Changes in volunteer or work settings.
- Changes in family contact.
- Possible mental health, medical or physical causes.
- Need for referral to specialists for diagnosis if decline of 30% or greater on the ability, skill and achievement profile in either cognitive ability and or adaptive skills.

Community Living South Muskoka is one of the only agencies that completes this type of screening for the people we support. We currently have two Community Participation Staff trained to administer the ASAP profile and are screening approximately 67 people here at CLSM.

How Can Caregivers Help?

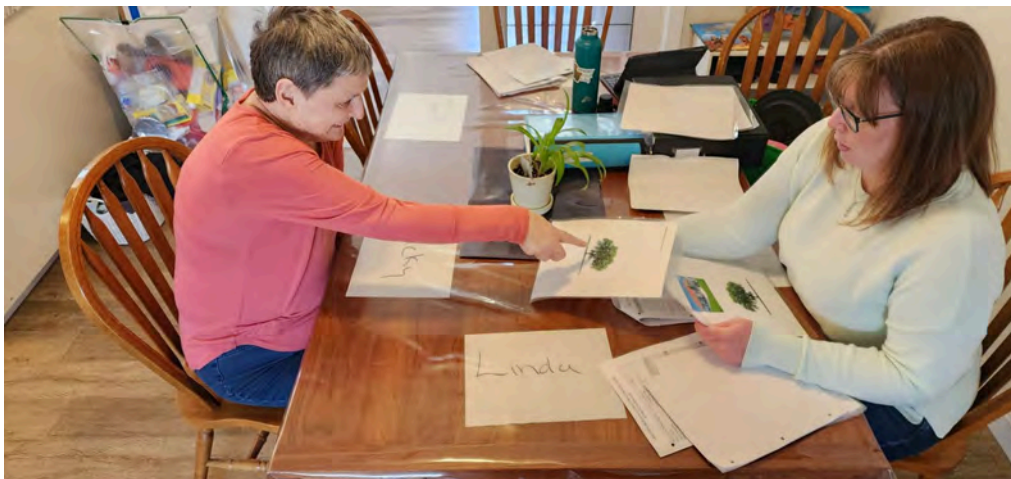
Remember the importance of communicating any change. Families, caregivers, and staff should document and communicate any changes they notice in an individual, which can include:

- Forgetfulness/memory loss of recent events.
- Disorientation/occasional confusion about time or place.
- Mild communication difficulties e.g., word finding.
- Social withdrawal.
- Shorter attention span.

- Personality changes and out of character behaviours.
- Changes in approach to family, friends and co-workers.
- Inability to follow through the routine.
- Difficulty in making decisions.
- Difficulty in learning new things or remembering changes to an established routine.
- Signs of depression e.g., loss of appetite, poor sleep, and physical complaints.
- Sporadic loss of ability to do complex familiar daily activities such as writing their name if previously able to do so.

These common symptoms may only happen sporadically but will increase in frequency as time progresses. Keeping a log book or journal is very helpful for your own reference, the screeners reference, and also for bring to appointments with the doctor.

Regarding our practitioners, Monica has been screening for the agency since 2001 and helped develop the screening tools with HANDS the Family Help Network. Monica returned to school to take the Dementia Studies Program at Georgian College to learn more about Alzheimer's and Dementia. Caitlin is fairly new as a screener but plays an important role in screening, monitoring and referring for further screening when necessary and has been a phenomenal addition to the dementia screening team.



MAKE AN IMPACT JOIN OUR BOARD

Community Living South Muskoka supports over 450 people with a developmental disability in South Muskoka.

You may have seen us at the North end of Muskoka Rd N in Gravenhurst, or across from the Home Depot in Bracebridge.

What you seldom see are over 175 staff who work daily to help those we support.

What you don't see are the homes and services we operate in Gravenhurst, Bracebridge and Honey Harbour.

What you might not realize is that we have an operating budget of over \$10,000,000 on salaries, daily needs, transportation and equipment, most of it right here in Muskoka.

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

REACH OUT!

khaiduk@clsm.on.ca



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Toronto Girl Time!

Submitted by Taylor Fry - Community Participation Support Worker

In March, the ladies (Frances, Shauna, Vanessa, and Lindsey) from CPS Gravenhurst headed overnight to Toronto for some girl time! They had the opportunity to stay in a hotel in downtown Toronto for some quality fun.

First, the girls headed to Famous People Players, the celebrity themed puppet show performed by a special-needs troupe, along with a fixed priced meal. The group enjoyed a lovely home cooked, three course lunch that was followed by a black light show. The theme of the show was "Flashback Fun", and the girls enjoyed singing and dancing along to a variety of retro songs performed by the Famous People Players crew!

So many laughs and fun times were had, and the ladies look forward to their next trip to the big city!



Mike and Doug's Unforgettable Niagara Falls Getaway

Submitted by Basil Niravath Thankachan - Residential Support Professional

Mike and Doug, two close friends, embarked on an extraordinary overnight staycation at the magnificent Niagara Falls. As they stepped into the Embassy Suites Niagara, the falls themselves greeted them—a breathtaking sight. Mike sat in quiet contemplation, while Doug's laughter echoed through the lobby. The anticipation was palpable.

The nearby theater beckoned, promising a magical evening. The duo attended an incredible magic show, leaving them spellbound. Doug's laughter filled the room as Mike tried to unravel the tricks. Afterward, they enjoyed a supper, with the falls as their backdrop.

Their suite provided a front-row seat to the falls. The sound of rushing water lulled them to sleep, and when morning arrived, they flung open the curtains to reveal the falls in all their glory.

But that wasn't all—the real adventure awaited at Clifton Hill. Mike and Doug had a mecca of fun, riding thrilling roller coasters, playing realistic action packed games, And guess what? They even brushed shoulders with world-famous actors! Selfies were snapped!!!!

As the sun dipped once more, Mike and Doug sat by the falls, reflecting on their whirlwind adventure. Niagara had woven its magic, leaving them with memories to cherish forever.



Children's & Youth Services "Meet and Greet" Nights for Respite Supports

Submitted by Kimberley Irons - Supervisor, Services and Supports

The Children's & Youth Services program ran a "Meet & Greet" night for Respite on Monday, April 15 at Stevens' Your Independent Grocer in Bracebridge. Respite care is a family support service that provides temporary relief from the physical/emotional pressures involved in caring for a family member who has a disability.

Families and respite providers came together in a 'speed dating' type setting to encourage families looking for respite supports for their children, to sit down and talk with screened providers looking to support. The night was a huge success! Many laughs, smiles and numbers were exchanged. New connections were made! Plus, we had treats 🍪

Respite creates greater opportunities for all family members to live actively and participate in community activities while allowing parents/guardians some relief. The result of this support is empowered children/adults with differing abilities and their families leading active and rewarding lives.

Community Living South Muskoka will be running these "Meet and Greet" events for respite throughout the year. Join us at our next event on July 15 from 6PM-8PM at [Stevens' Your Independent Grocer](#) in Bracebridge - meet at the stairs.

If you are a family in need of [Respite Services](#) or a provider wishing to provide supports. Please contact Madalyn Rebelo at mrebelo@clsm.on.ca or 705-706-3051.







SUCCESS FACTOR - A HIGHLY VALUED COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

Partnership with Boston Pizza Gravenhurst

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

Community Living South Muskoka has joined forces with [Boston Pizza Gravenhurst](#) to offer diners the option to contribute 15% from every meal purchased, to our agency!

How does this work? Anytime supporters and their families dine-in at Boston Pizza Gravenhurst in 2024, the restaurant will donate 15% back to Community Living South Muskoka to support our fundraising initiatives.

Just write "Community Living South Muskoka" on the back of your receipt and drop it into the designated drop box - BP will ensure the contribution is accounted for! Enjoy your meal out and support people with developmental disabilities.

This partnership would not have been possible without Lisa S - Community Participation Support Worker, who spearheaded this initiative with Boston Pizza Gravenhurst - thank you, Lisa!

Music at the Meadows 2024

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

Tickets to Music at the Meadows are ON SALE now!

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

Wood for his stellar live chainsaw carving experience that includes two free draws on finished carvings at the end of the night, as well as Blushing Bandit, an incredible local artist who has for the second year in a row now, has donated her artistic talents and time to design our festival poster which is pictured below!

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

See you at the Meadows!



SUCCESS FACTOR - A HIGHLY VALUED COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

Your Fundraising Dollars in Motion!

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

In 2023-2024 the team at Community Living South Muskoka worked with determination to ensure that dollars raised provide food security for the people we support. Here are some examples of your dollars in motion:

(1) There are people we support living on Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) who cannot afford to eat. People who are eligible for ODSP receive up to \$1,300/month for basic needs and shelter. This year we provided individuals in Supported Independent Living (SIL) with gift cards for food security over 80 individual times.

(2) We've ensured that the people and families we support can celebrate the holidays with dignity; in partnership with the Gravenhurst Highschool Hospitality Class and Boston Pizza, over 300 holiday meals have been cooked with love and distributed to our community, most recently 110 Easter dinners of ham, scalloped potatoes, and vegetables!

(3) We've also provided food security to other programs in our agency, like our cooking programs where the people we support head over to the spectacular commercial kitchens at Stevens' Your Independent Grocers and work together to cook up a storm! Not only does this program drum up enthusiasm for the art of cooking, this program helps develop life skills that the people we support apply in their own homes.



It Takes a Town.

Submitted by Michael's Family

Our special Michael grew up in Utterson, about halfway between Bracebridge and Huntsville, in a family of six sisters and three brothers, far too many for Mike's liking when it came to keeping an eye on him. Our father died at the age of 45 of a heart attack, and shortly after, our mother found out that Mike, the youngest, was on his way. Now, 69 years later, it would be hard to imagine our family without him. He is the glue that holds us all together.

Mike lived with our mother in Utterson until she died in 1999. She had worked at The Pines for over 20 years before retiring. While she was alive, there was never any mention of Mike's care, but after she was gone it was well understood by all of us that we would look out for him. Our sister Sunny, always the one to get things started, called a meeting to decide on his care. Mike was there, and as usual, he had some ideas on the subject. He wanted his own apartment. When the shock wore off--none of his brothers and sisters had even remotely considered that option—Sunny said, well, why not give it a try?

Sister Nonie, in real estate for years in Port Sandfield, had moved to Bracebridge and found an apartment for Mike at 135 Quebec Street. The owner rented on a trial basis. Ground rules were set. He took Mike under his wing and gave him odd jobs such as helping with the recycling and garbage. He paid him in loonies and toonies and Mike was thrilled to be earning his own money. Family members made meals, usually for a month at a time, and froze them for microwaving. Mike liked to entertain, and Sunny often catered to his dinners but one no-nonsense rule was that he was to have no friends or alcohol in the apartment unless she was there. Brother Jim, an accountant with a business on Manitoba Street, had set up a charge account for him at the grocery store. When Mike realized he could charge wine at the store kiosk, he decided to throw his own wine and cheese party. The next week, Sunny ran into the mother of one of Mike's friends, who said how much her daughter had enjoyed Mike's party. To which Sunny said, What party? Mike lost his charge privileges over that one.

When high-energy Sunny retired from her job in Toronto and moved to Bracebridge, she had extra time on her hands so she and Mike volunteered at the Legion. The two of them were awarded Volunteer of the Year on at least one occasion, and Sunny won it several times.

The Legion and its members have been an outstanding support for Mike, and he has made friends there that he runs into all over town. The Legion made him an honorary member, complete with uniform, and he marches in the Remembrance Day parade, something he looks forward to all year. Peggy at Community Living said anywhere they go with Mike, he runs into one of his many friends.

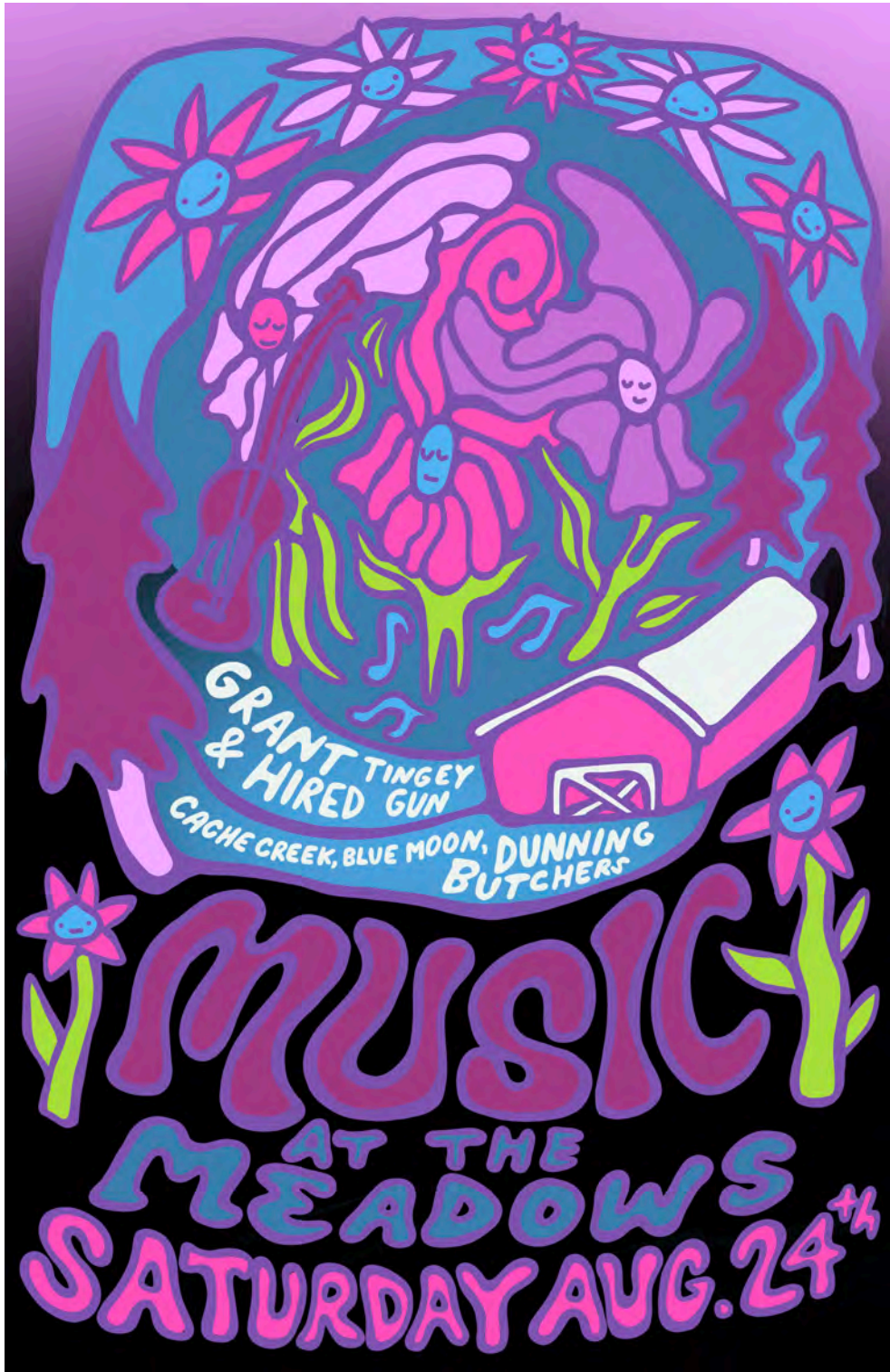
Mike worked at Santa's Village for several summers, a job he "retired" from when he turned 60. He also volunteered for the breakfast club at Bracebridge Public School and The Habitat for Humanity ReStore. Mike loves sports and took part in the Special Olympics in cross-country skiing. His coaches from Huntsville devoted many hours to training with the team and making the Special Olympics happen for Mike and other Muskoka participants. Mike also bowled regularly and curled, activities that wouldn't have been possible without the help of many caring volunteers. For the 20 years he lived in the apartment, he was a model tenant, quiet, considerate and dependable. He is by nature neat and tidy, and many great people helped with his cleaning and laundry over the years.

In 2020, age finally caught up with him and it was no longer safe for Mike to live on his own. A few months before the COVID-19 lockdown, he moved into the Community Living South Muskoka group home on Young Street where a kind and caring staff go over the top to make him comfortable and happy. He still misses his apartment but when he visits family members, he realizes how much he also misses the staff and his friends at the group home.

They take him to Fresh Kutz every Friday for breakfast and he lights up when he sees his friend Clarence and the staff there. A visit to Fresh Kutz has always been the highlight of his week, and he has been going there for breakfast since he first moved into his apartment. When he was living on his own, he didn't always remember to pay for his meal but he always made sure to leave a tip. Clarence didn't mind. Mike's family, he said.

The people of Bracebridge are truly amazing, and Mike is lucky to live in such a caring town. The family thanks all those who have made, and are making, his life rich and full.





May is
Community
Living Month!



To show their support,
A&W Bracebridge will
donate all proceeds from
pancake sales to CLSM.



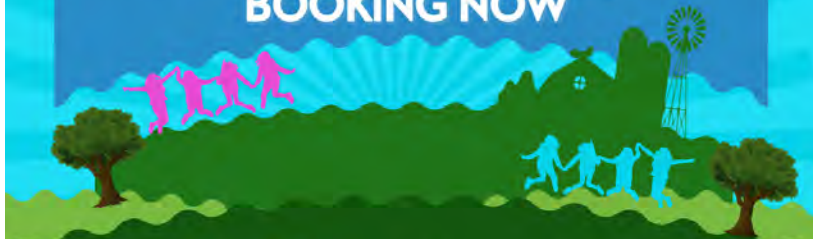
Two Weeks
of Pancakes
May 1-15!

\$4.50 for
3 pancakes!

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