

## IWD Back For 2019

Julie Keon will be the guest speaker for the 2019 International Women's Day event being held March 8, 2019 at Janna and Kerry's Over Easy Bar & Grill. More details on Page 3.

## Living With Lydia

Community Living board member, Elaine Neigel, shares her story about raising a daughter with Down Syndrome and things she has learned along the way.

## Working At CLUOV

Robyn Beauchamp, a Community Living Worker with our agency, shares her employment story. We're recruiting for Community Living Workers - could you be one?

# In Touch

WINTER 2019

COMMUNITY LIVING  
Upper Ottawa Valley

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## Finding New Ways To Grow Inclusion

Community Living has been working on divesting itself of agency-owned properties and making partnerships with local landlords and developers to promote more inclusive options for people they support. That initiative has been well-received locally, and by other agencies who are hoping to learn how they can also make it happen.

Executive Director Chris Grayson has been on a speaking tour of sorts, travelling to Temiskaming, Simcoe, Barrie and other Community Living agencies to share how things have worked in Pembroke.

"I think my biggest take away is to look at our organization in a mirror and to truly see the things that we



CLUOV's Chris Grayson and CL Temiskaming South.

do well," said Tony Rachwalski, Executive Director of Community Living Temiskaming South. "I believe that most agencies like ours are ingrained in the history of how things get accomplished and we forget that status quo does not work if we want to do better for the people we support."

Rachwalski said he appreciated how things were modified in

Pembroke to create a locally-organized solution as opposed to a "one size fits all" approach.

"One of the areas that I truly believe can assist us all in moving the yardstick from where we are today to true inclusion in our communities is in sharing what's working amongst the masses," said Rachwalski.

In 2018, Grayson shared the community's positive reaction in supporting the agency's new housing initiatives at a provincial conference. Since then, other agencies have asked Grayson to speak more specifically to them and help create local solutions.

"I have benefited from the best practices of others in the past and I am happy to share what has worked for us," says Grayson.



Natasha Aube and Kayla McMillan, two Community Living Workers.



Maegan Blackmore and Tina Williams at the CLUOV staff meeting.



Jessica Pierunek and her family take part in the CLUOV Family Skate.



# Staff Fun For The Holidays

December was a fun month at Community Living Upper Ottawa Valley as the Social Committee planned a bunch of holiday events. The 12 Days of Christmas offered a variety of staff giveaways with gifts purchased from local businesses and inclusive employers. There were also two special events - a free Family Skate at the Pembroke Memorial Centre and a free Family Swim at the Kinsmen Pool. Another holiday gift was a free lunch, catered by The Kitchen Eatery. Purchases were made from Metro and Food Basics, our inclusive

employers, as well as M&M Meat Shops and Canadian Tire. The Social Committee organizes fun, staff events throughout the year. Another spirited event took place at the staff meeting in November. Staff were organized into groups of five and had to work together to construct a gingerbread house. To make it a bit more challenging, everyone had to use their non-dominant hand. The best part of the activity was how it tasted afterwards but we had a good time reinforcing the value of working together to accomplish goals.



Tammy Rosien was a winner in our staff's 12 Days of Christmas fun!

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Jennifer Debenham, Jill Davidson and Sue Lafontaine.



Julie, Sherri, Diedre, Melissa and Shelby participate on Christmas Sweater day.

# Receiving 100% Compliance

Community Living ended 2018 on a high note. In a December 5, 2018 letter to Executive Director Chris Grayson, Kevin Lockwood, Manager of the Development Services Compliance Team for MCCSS, noted that "Community Living Upper Ottawa Valley was found to be IN COMPLIANCE with Ontario Regulation 299/10 of SIPDDA (Quality Assurance Measures) and/or policy directives applicable to MCCSS-funded services and supports for adults with developmental disabilities."

inspections to ensure that people who access services and supports, their families, others acting on their behalf and the general public can expect that services funded by MCCSS are provided in a safe environment that meets the needs of the individual. During a compliance inspection, the ministry typically reviews records and documentation, policies and procedures, and conducts a site inspection, to evaluate and determine whether service agencies are adhering to the requirements. When an agency is found to be in compliance, the ministry issues a letter noting that compliance.

The compliance inspection took place on December 3-5, 2018. The ministry conducts compliance



Realtor Gloria Neville attends the Housing Wine & Cheese event.



# Keon Speaks At IWD 2019 Event

Julie Keon, a certified Life-Cycle Celebrant and Death Educator will be the guest speaker at Community Living Upper Ottawa Valley's 2019 International Women's Day event. The breakfast event takes place Friday, March 8, 2019, at Janna & Kerry's Over Easy Bar & Grill in Downtown Pembroke. The event will run from 8:00am to 9:30am. Buy one ticket for \$15 and get one free.

Keon will share her life experience story of raising a medically fragile child while pursuing her career goals. Keon also wrote a book, *What I Would Tell You* (and will have

copies available at the breakfast). Her message resonates with Community Living's core work of helping people who need to do things a little bit differently in order to fit into the existing community structure.

This is Community Living's second event to celebrate International Women's Day, following a successful women's breakfast in 2018. If you or a woman you know would like to attend, tickets can be reserved through Diedre Lambert at 613-735-0659 ext.113 or [dlambert@cluov.ca](mailto:dlambert@cluov.ca).



Julie Keon, the IWD 2019 speaker.



## Looking For Good Tenants?

**Community Living Upper Ottawa Valley is looking to fill housing rental needs for long-term tenants who are supported by our agency. If you have a rental property or are building housing units, please contact us.**

**Call: 613-735-0659  
Ext. 113 - Diedre**

## CLUOV Hosts PTSD Training

In September, Community Living was pleased to be able to bring Dr. Al Vecchione to Pembroke to offer training on understanding post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). CLUOV invited 30 professionals from Community Mental Health, Acute Mental Health, FACT Team, Bernadette McCann House and the Robbie Dean Centre to take part in a two-day training session.

Amici Associates, LLC is a small agency located in the upper valley of Vermont that provides wrap-around services for individuals with emotional, behavioural and/or developmental disabilities.

Amici began as the dream of Elia

(Al) Vecchione and his son Leo Vecchione as an option designed to provide intentional and supportive services for individuals who have exhausted other avenues of intervention and were in need of a wrap-around approach to changing behaviour.

Community Living was able to access the funds for the training through the Strategic Program Investment Fund (SPI). Funding was available through the Huronia, Rideau and Southwestern Regional class action settlement for understanding and dealing with PTSD in people who have a disability.

### Could you Share Your Home?

A spare room could give someone a place to call home. Ask us!

## LifeShare

Email Stephanie Moss: [info@cluov.ca](mailto:info@cluov.ca)



Donna McMahon attends the Speakers Bureau drop-in event.



Acute Mental Health staff attend the Al Vecchione training.

# CLUOV Wishes Staff Best In Retirement

Community Living Upper Ottawa Valley sent best wishes to two members of their staff who recently retired.

Donna Locke, Director of Supports and Services, retired at the end of January. Donna spent 32 years with Community Living and served as in the interim Executive

Director for a time. She saw the agency through a number of transitions including ARC Industries and our recent housing transitions. Donna was a mentor to many staff and she will be missed.

Also retiring is Wendy Cayen. Wendy has a special connection in her work at CLUOV; her sister,

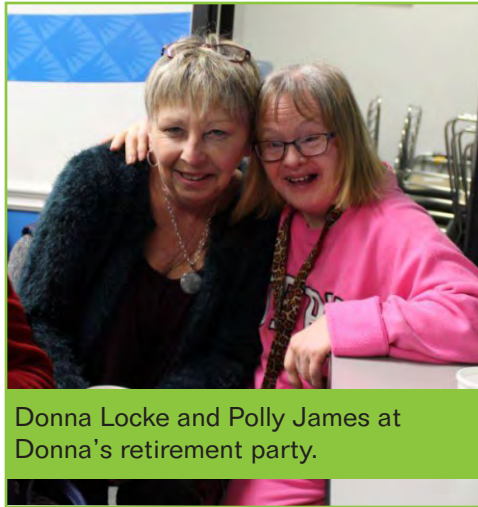
Gayle, is supported through Community Living.

Community Living Upper Ottawa Valley held retirement parties for both women. Staff and people supported by the agency were sad to see them go but wished them well in their retirements.



**PEOPLE DRIVING CHANGE  
LEARNING EXCHANGE**  
2019  
from presence to citizenship

Sponsored by: Hicks Morley, Community Living Ontario, Arthur J. Gallagher, The Council on Quality and Leadership, ComVida Corporation and MCCSS



Donna Locke and Polly James at Donna's retirement party.



Wendy Cayen at her retirement party, after a career with us!

## From Presence To Citizenship 2019

Building inclusive communities for people with intellectual disabilities requires the entire community to participate. From Presence to Citizenship is a conference that unites people involved in the developmental services sector to share thought leadership and best practices. The event attracted 300 leaders in the sector. Locally, several staff members from Community Living Upper Ottawa Valley attended, as well as the Executive Director from Madawaska Valley Association for Community Living.

This year's event took place on February 6-8. Sponsors are Hicks Morley, Community Living Ontario, Arthur J. Gallagher, The Council on Quality and Leadership, ComVida Corporation and the MCCSS. More details on Page 7.

## Board of Directors 2018-19

Successful leadership of our organization begins with the volunteer members of our Board of Directors. Our 2018-19 board will be chaired by Shelley O'Malley while Megan Evans will have the role of Vice Chair. Laura Mayo is in the position of Treasurer and the Secretary is Colleen Whittier. The following eight people will comprise the role of Directors for the Board:

Dave Marcus, Keith Rae, Bob Smith, Elaine Neigel, Matthew Conway, Brian Gillespie, Cameron Scott and Avery Munro.

We are pleased to have a variety of people with different skills and backgrounds who are involved in our agency's leadership, and we enjoy the collaborative nature of the relationship between the Board of Directors and our staff.



Natasha, Karen, Gayle and Jeff with Operation Christmas Child boxes.



## Expanding Inclusive Employment Locally

For some people, finding a job is not an easy task. When you have a disability, it can be more difficult to convince an employer to see what you bring to the workforce. Several staff members at Community Living have been helping make the employee-employer connection for people supported for several years,

with great success. Individuals have secured casual, part-time and full-time positions, and some people supported have even started their own businesses.

In 2018, the agency decided to expand that initiative with BEE Successful and employment service specifically for people who have a

disability. The program runs across Renfrew County and staff at BEE Successful are looking to find the workplaces who choose to expand their staff to include someone with a disability. If you or someone you know could benefit from this service, see [www.beesuccessful.ca](http://www.beesuccessful.ca) or call 613-602-6572.



Stephanie Reid heads up the Bee Successful program at CLUOV.



Making a difference in someone's life every single day: Lindsey Presley!



Jill Davidson packs the 2018 Box of Possibilities lunch. Be ready for 2019!

## Book The Speakers Bureau

The Community Living Speakers Bureau is looking for opportunities to support their self-advocates at local groups and organizations. It's guaranteed to open your eyes to the struggles and the achievements of people with intellectual disabilities.

The Speakers Bureau is available to speak to small and large groups alike. Agencies that have booked them include schools, church

groups, service clubs and Algonquin College. The speakers are open to answering any questions.

For information on booking the Speakers Bureau for your club, contact Robyn Beauchamp at 613-735-0659 or [rbeauchamp@cluov.ca](mailto:rbeauchamp@cluov.ca).

IDEA: This is an easy way to be inclusive and featured in an upcoming newsletter and promotion with us! Book us today!

## Box of Possibilities Lunch: May 2nd

The annual lunch fundraiser for Community Living is going to be part of Community Living Month, happening this year on May 2nd.

The Box of Possibilities lunch offers a variety of lunch choices, fruit and snack delivered to local businesses. This year's deadline to order lunches will be April 26, 2019 - order forms will be sent out closer to the date.

Funds raised from events like the Box of Possibilities lunch make a significant impact within the agency. While people supported qualify for funding in some aspects of their lives, it is often the "extras" that are unfunded, but which make a huge difference, that is covered off by CLUOV fundraising.

In 2018, more than 500 box lunches were ordered by the community. CLUOV is hoping to grow that number for 2019.



Consider the  
**Speakers Bureau**  
and support local self-advocates

Book the Speakers Bureau and hear the stories of local people who are advocates for inclusion and who have learned to be advocates for themselves.

Contact Robyn Beauchamp at 613-735-0659, ext.548  
or email her at [rbeauchamp@cluov.ca](mailto:rbeauchamp@cluov.ca)



Canadian architect Douglas Cardinal presents at the national housing event.

## ED Attends CMHC Housing Event

In November, Executive Director Chris Grayson attended Canada's National Housing Strategy. The first-ever event had a goal to help drive the success of Canada's housing sector by giving more Canadians affordable homes.

The event was hosted by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC).

Through the NHS, the federal government is bringing together the public, private and non-profit sectors to re-engage in affordable housing. Using a mix of funding, grants and loans, the strategy will create affordable, stable and livable communities. These communities will be located near amenities and transportation and have the opportunities needed to succeed. Ultimately, communities where families thrive.

The goal is to ensure Canadians across the country have access to housing that meets their needs and is affordable. To achieve this, the strategy will first focus on the most vulnerable Canadians.

Grayson shared CLUOV's transition away from group homes and how our local agency is building partnerships with landlords, home builders and property developers to explore new and alternative housing options for the people we support.

## Lydia's Learning Curves



Lydia and Elaine Neigel surprised the staff one day with slushies - they were great!

On March 17, 1999, we welcomed Lydia into our lives. Not only was she our first daughter, she was also our first child with Down Syndrome. Having a child with Down Syndrome comes with a learning curve of how to encourage our child and lead her to exceed whatever potential she was going to have.

We started with teaching Lydia sign language and learning it ourselves. As soon as she could match two things we used that skill to teach her to read. In elementary years, the school suggested Lydia be placed in a special class, but we mustered the courage to tell them "no thank you." In high school, it was challenging to find mainstream opportunities for our daughter. She loves the mainstream and wants to be there. We watch for allies to help us achieve these goals.

Lydia has had summer jobs and co-op placements just like any other teenager. We are realistic about her skill set and we think her skill set is rather amazing and merits a job with the pay and benefits that anyone else would receive. We are encouraged to help her work towards employment goals as she builds her resume, like many do, with volunteer work.

She is a power lifter who can press more than half her weight and she has recently taken up floor hockey. Lydia "catches air" on her three-wheeled bike and is a fine swimmer and local Streetlight Theatre Youth Wing actor.

As Lydia approaches her 20th birthday, we continue our learning curve. Along our journey, people have come into our lives to help us raise this spirited, amazing young lady. We celebrate the wins and take the rest in stride. It takes work and at times, it has been exhausting, but I think many parents would feel the same way. Now we worry about her future health, employment and education, again, as most parents do. All the while, we could not be more proud of our spunky girl and when we contemplate her future we are optimistic. If there is one thing we have most definitely learned, it is that we never underestimate her.

- Elaine is a member of the CLUOV Board of Directors.



Community Living Upper Ottawa Valley staff at the February conference.



## Collaboration In The Sector



Paul Born, guest speaker at From Presence to Citizenship kicks off the event.

The third annual From Presence to Citizenship conference took place in Toronto in early February with seven people from local Community Living agencies attending. Chris Grayson, Holly Tennian, Kathleen Mulligan-Lavallee, Maegan Blackmore, Robyn Beauchamp and Charity Ross attended from Community Living Upper Ottawa Valley, while Monica Prymack, Executive Director of Madawaska Valley Association for Community Living also attended.

This year's event was focused on helping communities and organizations "drive change" in their regions. Speakers included Paul Born, president of Tamarack Group, who discussed how to engage community stakeholders in a vision for the future. Peter Block discussed how local organizations are the lifeblood of the community and have the best opportunities to engage the full communities on issues requiring change. Other speakers included Vickie Cammack, Susan Stewart, David Chalmers and Doug Cartan.

The three-day conference also included a panel of guests from various aspects of the developmental services sector. Participating in the panel were several organizations including Community Living Ontario, Mills Community Support, the Plan Institute and the Durham Association for Families and Respite

Services. Community Living Upper Ottawa Valley and Community Living St. Mary's were also part of the panel discussion.

Conferences such as From Presence to Citizenship are an opportunity for agencies to get together and share best practices on issues impacting their ability to move forward with inclusion. Learning what has worked in other regions often saves agencies time and money. The developmental services sector has always been a group that is quick to share information with peers, and this conference helps keep the wheels turning for new ideas and action. Community Living Upper Ottawa Valley is one of the founders of this event through collaborative efforts with others in the sector.



Linda Murphy, a local family member participates on a conference panel.



Chris Grayson and Eric Goll, disability advocate and coach, at the conference.

## Bringing The Valley To The Main Stage

As the Executive Director of this agency, I am always proud to talk about how our community embraces inclusion with others. This year, I have visited many other agencies to talk about how we are moving to more inclusive housing and the interest in the developers and landlords to help us achieve our goals in that regard. We are not a huge community but we are making huge strides and that makes us an attractive case study for others.

In Barrie and Ottawa and other regions who have asked our agency to share our processes, how they decide to move forward is not always a carbon copy of what we have done. That's because although we are working towards the same goal of inclusion, we may each take different steps to get there. That happens often in our sector because depending on the needs and resources in our community, we may all need to approach our route to inclusion a little differently.

I need to send a significant "shout out" to my management team and our staff for helping us achieve these goals. It is a team effort within our agency as much as it is within our community. We make a difference here every single day and that's because of the commitment we all make to inclusion.

# What This Job Has Given Me

There are many things I enjoy about being a Community Living Worker. The atmosphere is definitely on the top of that list. My co-workers are kind and there is always someone asking how your day is going when you walk into the office. There are many friendly and genuine people who work here.

I also enjoy the chance to grow within the agency. There are opportunities to take contracts, both supervisory and frontline. This allows you to move around and have change in your career. All employees have the chance to be a part of many training seminars, go on road trips and attend conferences.

My job is also different every single day. There are literally no two days the same. There is a lot of fun in my job and I like to get everyone active and outside as much as



Robyn Beauchamp has been working with Community Living since 2017.

possible. This winter I have been skating, ice fishing and snowshoeing - no kidding! We participate fully in winter carnivals and seasonal events. In the summer I have been shooting hoops, walking or hanging out at the beach. (Still not kidding!)

Although we have to work some

holidays, I was surprised with how the community comes together and puts on events and meals so people spending the festive season alone can enjoy the holidays too.

I like to be a part of planning goals with people and helping figure out how to achieve them. There is no better feeling than helping someone accomplish something they never thought was possible.

The people who have shared their lives with me have really made an impact on my life. I have a better understanding of people with disabilities than I could have ever imagined. I believe that it is so important that others in our community should see the great things they can add to the world. They are some of the nicest, most caring people you will ever meet.

## Number One Perk Of The Job: Impact

At the close of 2018, CLUOV embarked on a recruiting research project to help us hire in the future. We asked current and past employees about their experience working with us, and we took a deep dive into how we communicate what we do at this agency.

Employees told us that their number one perk of the job was that they make a difference in someone's

life every single day. It could be something like teaching a life skill to helping secure employment - the results of their dedication are always right in front of them. New employees also mentioned the mentoring program and how senior staff helped them get comfortable with and expand in their roles.

The CLUOV workplace is comprised of people who have a

variety of backgrounds. Some are purposely in this sector and others happened upon with the idea of just being temporary, but never left!

As an employer of more than 130 casual, part-time and full-time staff, we are always looking to recruit people who want careers that matter. Sometimes our best experts on that subject are the people who work with us every day!



Emily Lessard wins one of the gift baskets during our holiday giveaways.



Leigh Sweeney of Bernadette McCann House and CLUOV's Grace Brum.



Ken Jones at a retirement gathering for Wendy Cayen.