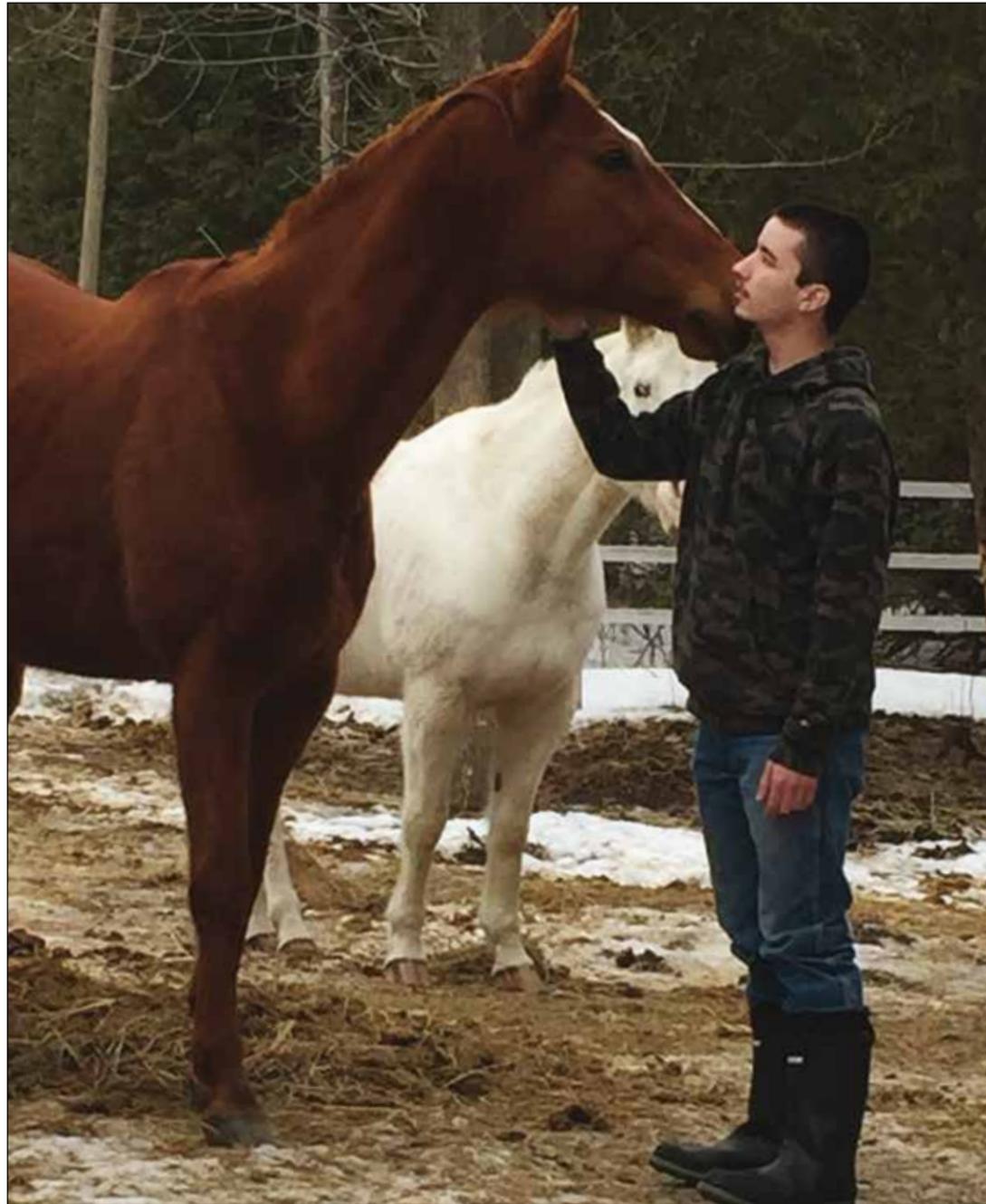


COMMUNITY LIVING  
Owen Sound and District

# Perspectives



## One Year at the Ranch

By Andrew Defrederico

I started working on the farm a year ago when the person who owns the farm required more assistance.

My support worker asked me if I wanted to work on the farm, and assist the owners to do whatever work they needed

to be done, and I accepted the job offer immediately.

I very much enjoy doing

hands-on work, and hard labour, which is what this job requires. So, that is why I accepted the job without

“I very much enjoy doing hands-on work, and hard labour, which is what this job requires... it’s always been a passion of mine to learn new things and to work out a sweat. I knew this job was perfect for me!”

hesitation. I don’t know why, but it’s always been a passion of mine to learn

new things and to work out a sweat. I knew this job was perfect for me!

The farm is out in Kingston Beach and is a very beautifully scenic place. The farm is a small horse farm with large fields and forests on both sides. Still, it’s size

and features do not exclude the similar hard work as there

See *‘It is a Very’* on Page 4

## Social Media, A Bright Light

By Ava Sandink

**Can you say a bit about your family; very general, nothing that will identify who you are?**

My partner and I live in a small village in the Beaver Valley. He runs his own business and I am an art teacher. Our first child was born last spring and it was apparent right from birth that something was wrong. She was diagnosed with Hypotonia (low muscle tone), Developmental Delay, and in December, we discovered she was having seizures. We are being followed by a wonderful team at SickKids in Toronto,

who are relentless in trying to find the cause, but it has been a very difficult year. Our little girl is receiving all of the therapies we can access in our area and we are trying our best to give her every opportunity to reach her fullest potential.

**How did you get the idea to use social media as a resource?**

My daughter and I had a month-long visit to SickKids when she was two weeks old. She was having difficulty feeding and her heart rate was inconsistent. The onslaught of doctors, specialists, tests,

See *‘Support’* on Page 2

## Social Role Valorization Training Shifts Focus for Support Worker

By Mary Carson

Before attending the Social Role Valorization training, my shifts at work were goal-oriented. I would think of or even decide goals for the people that I support and how they could achieve them. I believed that if I wasn’t prepared to have a structured day that I would fail as a support worker. This all changed after an exhausting yet extremely exciting week of Social Role Valorization training.

My brain was on overdrive for the following weeks. How could I change MY attitudes and MY roles in valuing the people in my life? So, I decided to change the direction of my shifts and gear them towards what each person values in their own lives.

I make sure that I follow through on requests made (no empty promises!), but

that I also expect that in return. I decided to start from straightforward, essential ways of supporting with conscious care. Is the men’s clothing age-appropriate? Instead of making their breakfast for them because it’s quicker, what if I ask if they’d like help with a particular step in making their breakfast?

My new goals focused more on what can I do to help someone discover and decide what the “good things in life” are and how can I effectively support people to help them increase their social role, but not by doing it for them. What I have learned through all of this training is that actively listening and being conscientious of my own actions towards anyone in my life is a great way for someone to feel valued in their lives.

*Thank You, Jenn!*

The Newsletter Committee wants to extend our thanks to Jennifer Ramsay for her years of dedication to the newsletter committee.



## 150 Ways

In honour of Canada's 150th Birthday this year, the Communication Strategy Committee has launched a new Kindness initiative. We will be sharing our poster "150 Ideas to Spread Kindness" throughout our community and within area schools. Pictured here are Penny and Kyle from the Communication Strategy Committee holding the poster.



## RDSP Award

Congratulations to Margaret Benedictus and Ashley Neabel on being selected for the Christine Elliott/Jim Flaherty RDSP Award June 21, 2017.



Julisa Taylor with Mr. Brian Hopson, director with the Mayer Family Foundation and past president of Community Living Owen Sound and District.

## The Mayer Family Foundation

The Mayer Family Foundation — Community Living Bursary was recently awarded to Ms. Julisa Taylor of Owen Sound. Julisa will be attending Georgian College, Community Integration through Cooperative Education program in the fall. This is the first year that the Community Integration through College Education program has been offered at the Owen Sound campus.

The Bursary is established

by the Mayer Family Foundation to provide a meaningful level of funding for residents of Bruce and Grey County who have a developmental/intellectual disability to pursue post-secondary education. This is the second year that the \$5,000 Bursary has been awarded. For further information, please contact Community Living Owen Sound and District at [info@comlivos.on.ca](mailto:info@comlivos.on.ca)

# Support Found Via Social Media

*Continued from front* procedures, meetings and paperwork kept me busy and distracted. I was hopeful we would leave with answers. We didn't. When we were back at home I was alone with a sick newborn who slept 20 hours a day.

I learned quickly to stay away from Google, as it offered only the most catastrophic outcomes, but I was still in need of so many answers. But more than that I needed to feel like someone else understood how I was feeling. I sought out Facebook, looking for other parents

and caregivers of children with Hypotonia. I wanted to see photos of healthy and happy children running around with friends and giving big hugs to mom. I wanted reassurance that my baby girl stood a chance.

A year into this journey, doctors are still reluctant to give us answers about our daughter's future. It is apparent that she is delayed, that she will never be a typical child, but beyond that, we just don't know. Social media has given me the chance to ask questions, to vent, to share in the joys and hardships and to feel like I am not so alone.

### Which social media platforms do you use?

I am definitely not someone who has their finger on the pulse in this digital age. I have a smartphone and a computer, but beyond emailing and texting, I am pretty lost. I imagine there are many other social media platforms besides Facebook that I could be accessing, but I am attached to my small community of moms and dads on there. I had never heard of Hypotonia before my daughter was born, and neither had most of the other families on there, yet there are thousands of us in the Hypotonia group with children of all ages sharing experiences, offering suggestions and providing support.

Because Hypotonia is a symptom of hundreds of different disorders and diseases, there are endless questions and having the expertise of so many parents

at your fingertips is truly a comfort. From the Hypotonia Facebook page, I discovered another page for Infantile Spasms (the form of epilepsy my daughter was diagnosed with), and even though she is seizure-free, I still follow many of the children on there to see how they are doing. I have also joined another group dedicated to baby-wearing children with special needs. Having low muscle tone makes it difficult to wear my

with words of comfort and empathy from the ones who understand what that feels like. More encouraging are the moms who show photos of their child playing sports or riding a bike and reminding us all that their child could not sit unassisted at that age either. I hold on to those words and photos with all my might.

We share our journeys, we offer up advice, provide links to therapies, programs, devices, etc. all in an effort to help one another cope better with the challenges of raising

“...the shared experience of having a child with a disability connects us all in a very strong way.”

little girl in a sling or carrier, something most parents take for granted, so having access to parents who have discovered what works best for them is incredibly helpful.

Having these platforms to ask specific questions and get a variety of responses from parents who have been there is so much more practical than asking those who may not truly understand the frustration in carrying a 25-pound baby with no head control, or how to encourage your baby to eat after coming off very potent steroids.

### How is social media helpful/supportive to your family?

As wonderful as our families and friends have been on this journey, I find the greatest support is from people I have never even met who live all over the world. We are all so different and we would likely never be in each others lives, yet the shared experience of having a child with a disability connects us all in a very strong way. The triumphs of someone's child rolling over or reaching for a toy for the first time are celebrated by all of us. Most people wouldn't understand what a big deal these things are. Seeing a video of someone's five-year-old son taking their first wobbly step with braces on their legs would likely be met with sympathy and pity by most, but for the rest of us, it's miraculous. The sadness and frustration of having my 13-month-old not be able to sit unassisted is met

a child with a disability. It's a group I never imagined I would join; a club that no ones wants to be a member of, yet here we are all trying our absolute hardest to be the best we can be for the strongest, sweetest and most loveable little people we know.

### Do you have any advice for other parents?

I do not feel qualified in offering advice to parents, as I am so new to all of this and still have so much more to learn. I do know that we all love our children beyond measure and we want the absolute best for them. I also know that when your child is met with challenges that you can't fix, the feelings of helplessness and sadness can be overwhelming. I think that that is when the world of social media can open up a space for support and healing. We often hear how social media is destroying our sense of community and making us all very lonely, but for someone who lives in rural Ontario with no other families that look like mine, I take comfort in clicking onto a page that is filled with families going through the same thing as I am.

So I guess if I were to give advice, I would encourage those who need a place filled with support, advice, expertise and even a sense of humour, to see if there is a Facebook page dedicated to your child's diagnosis. It has definitely been a bright light for me during the darker times.

**SAVE THE DATE: Thursday, December 7, 2017**

Community Living Owen Sound and District

*Christmas Dinner and Dance*

TICKETS ON SALE NOVEMBER 1, 2017





## Casual Part-time Staff Offer ‘Tremendous Skills that Should Be Applauded’

By Craig Rourke and Gareth Lloyd

Community Living Owen Sound and District are extremely fortunate to have a dynamic and enthusiastic group of casual part-time staff, who mostly work on a call-in relief basis throughout our Association.

The casual part-time team is made up of a diverse cross-section of people; some are new to the field, perhaps looking to start their career in Developmental Services, others are more experienced individuals who enjoy the flexibility and variety of the job. Some casual part-time staff are employed elsewhere but may want to work with Community Living as a second career, or to stay

connected to the Association and the people we support.

The role they fulfil is absolutely essential, as the group provides unique points of view, bringing new approaches and ideas to ensure the quality of life of people being supported is maintained or augmented. As Craig Rourke, manager of accommodation supports says, “If it wasn’t for the dedicated team we have, we would not be able to offer consistent quality services or ensure that adequate supports are available on a timely basis when coverage is required.” Tammy Robertson, manager of community supports added, “They are such an important part of the team. Without them we could not provide

the seamless support model that we strive to achieve.”

The job title can sometimes be a misnomer, as casual part-time staff may work as many or more hours than regular staff members depending on what is needed during a particular week. Their ability to respond to requests for coverage and aptitude at working with a number of different people and teams are tremendous skills that should be applauded. Their talents at building rapport with people, assisting during difficult times and stepping in at short notice may sometimes be taken for granted, but this set of people deserves acknowledgement for everything they do for the Association.

## Communication Strategy Committee Update

By Craig Rourke

The Communication Strategy Committee has been busy over the past year. Here are some highlights of past events:

**One World Festival: May 18, 2017:** Community Living Owen Sound and District participated in the One World Festival and had a booth where children could stop by and do crafts, watch a slideshow about Inclusion, and play an abridged version of Spinclusion. People receiving support and staff were at the booth interacting with the kids and guiding them through the crafts and games.

**May is Community Living Barbecue: May 31, 2017:** People from all across our area including Port Elgin, Southampton and Owen Sound came together for a barbecue at Harrison Park to share food, reconnect and celebrate May is Community Living Month. The weather cooperated and the event was a big success.

**Keystone Family Fun Day: June 10, 2017:** Members of the Communication Strategy Committee which includes people receiving support and staff participated in the

Keystone Family Fun Day at Kelso Beach and enjoyed the sun and the opportunity to meet lots of new people. We had a booth where families

roadside in Saugeen Shores as well as in Owen Sound.

**Inspiring Possibilities Awards:** At Graduation Ceremonies in June,



could do crafts, listen to stories about Inclusion, and play Spinclusion.

**Movie under the Stars: July 14, 2017:** Community Living sponsored a Movie under the Stars at Harrison Park. Before the Movie, the committee was on hand to do crafts, play Spinclusion and talk about inclusion with children and their families.

**Roadside Cleanups:** During the month of May people came together to do our part for the environment and cleaned up litter from areas along the

representatives from Community Living Owen Sound and District handed out awards to recognize local students for their work in championing Inclusion. A Grade 8 student from each of the following schools was recognized for their leadership when it comes to Inclusion: Alexandra Elementary School, Notre Dame Catholic School, Bayview Elementary School, Sydenham Community School, Northport Elementary School, GC Huston Community School and St. Joseph’s School.

## ReAction 4 Inclusion

Conference for Youth October 20-22, 2017

By Craig Rourke

This is a youth engagement initiative of Community Living Ontario that puts youth voice and experience at the centre of social justice, community change and school culture. It is a movement of youth for youth wanting to challenge society to change the way it approaches diversity and inclusion. For more information please visit [www.reaction4inclusion.com](http://www.reaction4inclusion.com).

Community Living Owen Sound and District supports this Conference including offering subsidies to offset

the cost; if you would like information about how we can support you or your child to attend the conference, please contact: Craig Rourke at [croucke@comlivos.on.ca](mailto:croucke@comlivos.on.ca) (519) 371-9251 ext. 256. We would love to hear from local Youth who are interested in participating in this Social Inclusion Movement.



## A Conference for Self-Advocates

**SAVE THE DATE!**

Join us at the Unifor Centre in Port Elgin Ontario, October 13-15, 2017.

**SPEAKING OUT 2017 —**

**A Conference for Self-Advocates Presented by:**

Self-Advocates from Essex New Day Leaders of Today, London New Vision Advocates, Our Choice Matters — St. Thomas and Walkerton Action Committee.

“Looking Back and Moving Forward — A Ten Year Anniversary!”

**BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!**

**Key Note Speaker:**

Luca “Lazylegz” Patuelli — Dancer, Choreographer, Motivational Entertainer

‘NO Excuses No Limits!’ [www.lazylegz.com](http://www.lazylegz.com)

**Entertainment:**

DJ’s Penny and Jackie, and the Leask Brothers Band

**The Owen Sound ‘Sound Advocates’ will be presenting information about CyberBullying and Mental Health at this conference.**

## Mom’s Getaway Weekend

20th Anniversary Celebration May 27-28

By Sandra McManaman

On our 20th Anniversary, 23 participants took part in a nice relaxing celebratory weekend retreat at the Evergreen Resort in Red Bay. The theme this year was “Celebration”. A weekend to celebrate 20 years of moms getting together to meet, converse, relax, laugh, and encourage each other that taking care of themselves can mean the world of difference to someone else. Mom’s enjoyed the getaway from their normal hectic lives to be able to relax with no expectations.

Participants were busy taking part in reflexology, learning how to make their own jewelry, sign language, mod podge, and henna tattoos. They also took part in exploring the area on nature walks, or just sitting in the sun. Along with the saltwater pool, the ladies enjoyed a hot tub and sauna. Their evening was filled with laughter and competition from playing games.

Socialization at each meal topped off the weekend with lots of chatter, and lingering for hours sharing stories, offering advice and knowledge to one another.

Thanks for a wonderful weekend and Happy 20th Anniversary!



Back row, left to right: Susan Corbett, Melissa Pettigrew, MPP, Bill Walker, Mel Campbell, Stephanie Jackson. Front row left to right: Tim Garrod, Wendy Shepstone, Terri Johnston

## Community Living Legislature Day

By Stephanie Jackson

On May 9th 2017 a few members from the Sound Advocates and the Bruce Shoreline Advocates attended the annual Community Living Day at the Legislature in Toronto. The event started with a casual gathering and socializing with other self-advocates from around our province, followed by a lunch, presentations and then a tour of the building. A highlight of the day was when the group got to talk with Bill

Walker and get their photo taken with him. After the presentations everyone was allowed to attend an active legislature session. There are strict safety procedures to go through in order to be allowed to view the session. This was an exciting experience for those who had never been through a metal detector before. Everyone really enjoyed visiting the legislature building and walked away knowing a little bit more about our province!

## 'It is a Very Fun Job that Earns Me Lots of Experience and Knowledge'

Continued from front

is on a much larger farm. Every Tuesday morning, my support worker and I head out to the farm (weather conditions permitting). Almost every time, there is something different than the time before. We do a wide variety of work with varying skills and "elbow grease" when needed. These include: picking rocks in the field, trimming brush, lawn cutting, snow shovelling, carrying logs down the road to a fire pit... and yes, you guessed it, shovelling crap.

My favourite jobs to do on the farm would be trimming the brush and lawn cutting with the riding

lawnmower. They are enjoyable things I like to do, because they are hands-on, and very fun, in my opinion. The least favourite is shovelling crap and picking rocks, because it is dirty, and very hard on the back, respectively.

Overall, it is a very fun job that earns me lots of experience and knowledge, not only from doing the work but from being taught by my wonderful support worker many things pertaining to farm work and nature. He shares his knowledge and teaches me new skills which are things that I can have and carry on through my working experiences in the future.

## Barrett's Presence 'A Real Treat'

By The Children's Services Team

Our Children's Services office is a really nice place to work. When people first walk through our doors, they will often say things like, "This is a lovely place" or "You have such a nice space here." It takes work to keep a space looking nice and Barrett Gould works hard at keeping the Children's Services office clean and tidy. Four mornings a week, Barrett comes to our office with a support worker, and he sweeps and mops the floors, wipes down and disinfects surfaces, cleans windows, takes out garbage, cleans the bathrooms and does other miscellaneous tasks as needed. He also delivers our mail, does shredding and cleans snow off our dumpster.

It is a real treat for us at Children's Services to have Barrett work at our office because he has an infectious, happy disposition that brightens our days. With his enthusiastic "Hi!" and big

smile when he arrives, it is obvious that he enjoys coming to our office to work and that he takes his work seriously.

ten years now and when we moved six years ago to our current location at 865, 10th Street West, Barrett made



Last year we gave him some money to purchase a plant of his choosing for our office. When he brought the plant to our office he was thrilled to show us his purchase, a Ponytail Palm, and it now sits in a place of prominence in our boardroom. Thanks to Barrett's care, his plant has grown quite large and it looks stunning.

Barrett has been working in Children's Services for over

the transition with us and he easily adapted to the routine of our new office, highlighting his flexibility and readiness to take on change. Barrett is part of our team and he plays an important part in keeping us feeling good about the place in which we work. We thank you Barrett for your dedication, loyalty and hard work and we hope you continue to work for us for many years to come.

## From the Desks of the Family Support Team

By Meredith McAsh

Community Integration through Co-operative Education is now offered at Georgian College's Owen Sound Campus!

Community Integration through Co-operative Education is an inclusive and integrated two-year post-secondary certificate program designed for learners who require additional academic support. Community Integration through Co-operative Education helps students build greater confidence, independence, social skills, and self-advocacy. Students develop and practise employability skills essential for the workplace. Students are also integrated into classes of interest with students in other program areas.

Areas of study

- Business
- Office Administration

- Carpentry Techniques
- Personal Support Worker
- Communications
- Pre-Health Sciences Pathway to Advanced
- Culinary Diplomas & Degrees
- Early Childhood Educator
- Police Foundations
- Gas Technician
- Social Sciences
- Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning
- Welding Techniques

Community Integration through Co-operative Education learning facilitators support students academically by:

- attending integrated and core classes with Community Integration through Co-operative Education students, providing in-class support
- providing individualized and customized accommodations and modifications to Community Integration

through Co-operative Education students

- tutoring students for their integrated classes each week
- facilitating weekly small group learning skills and adaptive technology support sessions
- providing academic guidance and referring students to appropriate resources

Applicants must be at least 19 years of age OR have an OSSD/OSSC. They must require academic support and be sufficiently independent. Applicants can apply as early as the November before their intended year of study.

For more information, visit the 'full time programs' link at [georgiancollege.ca/academics](http://georgiancollege.ca/academics), or Contact Renée Ferguson, CICE program co-ordinator, Georgian College, Owen Sound at (705) 728-1968, ext. 6047 or [renee.ferguson@georgiancollege.ca](mailto:renee.ferguson@georgiancollege.ca)

### PERSPECTIVES PURPOSE:

Perspectives promotes acceptance of people with different abilities in our community. We celebrate successes and embrace new ideas, approaches and opportunities.

**Editorial Team:** Lorraine St. Germain, Erica Rooney, Ava Sandink, Tammy Robertson, Heather Thomson

**Photographer:** Charles Cottrell

**Executive Director:** Rick Hill

We encourage readers to use the newsletter for new ideas, contacts, websites and resources. Perspectives welcomes comments, contributions of articles or questions.

[www.communitylivingowensound.ca](http://www.communitylivingowensound.ca)

When you make a financial contribution to the Foundation for Community Living Owen Sound and District, you will make a difference in the lives of those you care about today and in the years to come. Consider making your donation today.

For more information and/or to make a donation, please contact the Foundation of Community Living Owen Sound and District at 519-371-9251.



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Association Membership applications are available from our office.