

COMMUNITY LIVING
Owen Sound and District

Perspectives



Supporting Through a Pandemic

Support Pool in a Pandemic World

Submitted by Vicki Reevey

It's no secret that COVID-19 has been a challenge for everyone — and our Support Pool is no exception to that. Over the past few months, the Support Pool offices in Owen Sound and Port Elgin have had to readjust to this new world we find ourselves in. While our offices are closed to the public, the Support Pools have continued to work with individuals throughout the

pandemic... we have just had to change how we do what we do.

With many in-person supports unable to happen because of Ministry guidelines — that are in place for everyone's health and safety — the Support Pool staff have had to become a little more creative to connect with those individuals we support. For many, the phone has become

See 'The Dedication' on Page 4

The Virtual Pod

Submitted by Cathy Foster

2020 has certainly provided its share of change and challenges, not only for families and individuals, but for business and industry as well. Many companies and agencies have had to change and adapt the way they provide services to ensure that people are safe and still getting the things that they need while maintaining human connection. Community Living Owen Sound and District is no different. We have had to follow suit and change the way we deliver services in our programs, including Teen Connect and 2nd Avenue.

In the summer time, Community Living Owen Sound and District usually offers a program that supported teens can access a few days a week. Teen Connect provides programming and opportunities to explore the community and resources within it. During weekdays, 2nd Avenue offers activities and programs that individuals

can sign up to participate in that offer similar opportunities. With the restrictions put in place due to COVID-19, these opportunities could not take place as they had traditionally, and a need was identified.

An idea was formulated to provide an option for social interaction, connection and activities that could be accessed by people during COVID-19. It would be a partnership between Family Support and Adult Services that would involve shared resources and supports so that many different people would have the opportunity to connect, learn something new and just have fun.

Times have been tough for all. With all this in mind, The Virtual Pod was created.

The Virtual Pod staff, Brooke Ramsay, Marissa Walker and Brianne Styles, worked hard to develop a program that was accessible to all interested people. The program involved both on and offline options that were available for people to

participate in. The online option via Zoom created opportunities for social interaction. Providing kits as an option for those who did not want to be online or who were not able to be, allowed more people to access the program and still be able to enjoy the activities at home, in their own time.

Each week, a schedule of options was created that people could choose to participate in either online or by receiving a kit. All of the themed activities were researched and put together by the Virtual Pod staff. These included things like Bingo, Mad Scientist, cooking, craft options, book and movie reviews and personal wellness. Initially, these activities were designed for participation by people aged teen through to adult, but with a commitment to making accommodations for all those interested, a larger population participated. At the peak of the summer

See 'Online' on Page 2

Back To Work

Submitted by Kim McCorkindale

March 2020 certainly will go in the history books for when the world shut down. The pandemic has impacted our economy and as a result the majority of people accessing our employment supports were affected because they had to leave their jobs.

The relations and the proven good work ethics of these workers were met with support from their employers. Many employers continued to pay their employees even when they were not open for business. Slowly, when things began to open at the end of June, people returned to their jobs as employers implemented new safety measures to ensure that their staff and the public were kept safe. Everyone needed to learn and become comfortable with wearing masks, thorough

hand washing, using hand sanitizer and social distancing.

It's been wonderful for so many to go back to work and see familiar faces, be productive, get out in the community and make money again.

The diversity of job opportunities in our business communities are wide spread. From retail, health, trade, administration and the food industry, employers were happy to welcome the return of their team members. The following are just a few people who are very thrilled to find a sense of normalcy by returning to work:

- Wayne M. at Saugeen Shore Family Dentistry,
- Ken P. at Care Partners in Owen Sound,
- Matthew M. at Southampton Olive Oil Company,

See 'Local' on Page 3

CANCELLATION NOTICE

Due to the restrictions of COVID-19 and ensuring the health, safety and well-being of others, Community Living Owen Sound and District will be cancelling the Christmas Dinner and Dance for 2020.





Quality Time with Family — Farm Life

Submitted by Fely Clarke

Pictures supplied by Joan Pledger (Christine's mother)

Hi, I am Christine Neary. I live independently in my own apartment. When my mother and stepfather heard of COVID-19 and self-isolation, they opened their door for me to be with them at the farm. I assisted them with farm chores. I bottle fed the lambs which I enjoyed immensely for it gave me a sense of purpose and freedom to enjoy their company. Sheep are such amazing animals. They look so cute and cuddly, and I love their presence. I

also did some gardening with my mother. Life on the farm is very engaging with animals and plants, as well as with my family. The chickens are now laying fresh eggs and it is truly pleasurable feeding them and collecting their eggs. The gorgeous flowers around the garden and farm are just bursting with enormous colours. It is such a pleasure to be with my family at the farm. I am now back in my apartment but occasionally my mom and my stepdad come and pick me up to be home again for more quality time with them and the farm life.



A Fire With Friends

Submitted by Sonya White

Joe Cooper, from one of our supported homes, who normally camps with his family every year was still able to have the camping experience with his housemates Roger Forget and Chris

Jackson in the back yard thanks to Sonya and Megan. They enjoyed an evening campfire in the back yard. He was very excited, and even asked if an outhouse could be brought in so he didn't have to go in the house.

Mayer Family Foundation Community Living Bursary



Congratulations to Brian Bennett who applied for and was approved to receive the Mayer Family Foundation Community Living Bursary to attend Georgian College this fall. This Bursary is a meaningful level of funding for residents of Bruce and Grey County who have a developmental / intellectual disability to pursue postsecondary education.

At the Apartments

Submitted by Cathy Foster

Nestled on 3rd Avenue East lies a lovely set of modern apartments that are home to six people. There is even a bus stop right outside the door and easy access to mobility transit. Extensive renovations were done to turn this area into the bright and inviting space it has become. These apartments were completed in December of 2018 and a grand opening was held by Community Living Owen Sound and District along with local dignitaries and partners to celebrate the special occasion.

The apartments share the same building with Adult Services for Community Living Owen Sound and District. There are six apartment units and five are occupied by individuals receiving support while the sixth houses a superintendent. People living in this building who are receiving support have come through the

Developmental Services Ontario matching and screening process. They are connected to the Supported Independent Living Program.



When the apartments opened after the renovations, the feedback from people was very positive. Each unit is very modern and contains an open concept kitchen and living room. There is also a large bedroom and private bathroom in each apartment. The tenants are free to use the common area that has a table and chairs with a lovely fireplace. Sometimes people gather here for pizza,

to do some crafts or to decorate for holidays.

The superintendent is available after hours daily to offer support or suggestions that may be needed during that time. There are also two staff members at this location that spend four hours each day on site offering assistance with supported independent living tasks such as meal prep, planning, assistance with cleaning, or introducing new skills that may help people in their apartments. People are also offered support to plan their Passport goals and other things of interest in their community such as accessing the movies, going bowling, attending shows at the Roxy or workouts at a gym, etc.

In addition to the support available from the staff at this location, people also have access to supports from Community Support staff who work out of the office space below the apartments.

Online Activities, Supply Packages Provided During COVID-19 Pandemic

Continued from front

program, it was accessed by 40 people ranging in age from 10 to 70 plus.

Once the activities were set and people registered, staff prepared for the activities. This was done by shopping for supplies and then sorting them for use. All items were washed to ensure safety before packing was done. Whether the activity was food based or other, all ingredients/supplies were packed up along with an instruction sheet for each activity. An individual bag was then prepared for each participant that contained everything required to participate in all of the week's activities. This allowed for as much independence as possible. Along the way, if families or an individual requested some modifications to make things more accessible, the staff did their best to make that happen. An example of this occurred when the concept of blanket registration came into place. Weekly signup for some families became challenging. The concept of registering a person for the group of activities that they enjoy for the whole summer was created and the result was a reduction in stress for some families and a more streamlined approach to registration.

the Virtual Pod team delivered them to all in-town participants. They also worked together with staff from the Support Pool to coordinate deliveries to participants in other areas, including Port Elgin. The Virtual Pod staff identified making the kits and delivering them as some of the best parts of the program because they were creating things that people were genuinely excited to receive and they witnessed that during the drop off.

Based on the weekly registrations, the Pod staff team would create emails for online participants with the necessary links to join activities by Zoom. Staff would then sign onto Zoom to run the activities with the participants. As the summer progressed, participants seemed to relax and enjoy themselves during the Zoom sessions. Participants and staff shared some laughs and interacted with each other. Staff commented that it was nice to see people recognize and address each other during the sessions and just have fun. Bingo, arts and crafts, and baking were the most popular group activities. Attendance for most online activities was noted as more than 90 per cent.

As with any program, there were a few challenges along the way. Some participants

could not get online without a lot of assistance and that was sometimes difficult for staff to provide. Some people were also nervous to try a new way to interact and participate. An additional challenge that was identified was a lack of respite for families and caregivers. Typically 2nd Avenue and Teen Connect would provide periods of respite while the individual attended activities out of the house. With activities being virtual, family members often provided support for their loved one to be able to participate in activities with the Virtual Pod.

There were some celebrations that were witnessed as well. By offering virtual participation, some people who were not interested in participating in person realized they preferred online interactions. People were provided with meaningful activities to be a part of. It also offered a regular and predictable schedule for people to look forward to during a time when connection was difficult. People had the opportunity to meet new people in a safe way when it was not possible to be together in person.

It was all about connection and the Virtual Pod certainly provided those opportunities for many people.

Thank you for a job well done.

Emily's Trip to Ottawa

Family means a lot to Emily, so staying in touch with family members is something that is very important to her. Emily uses the telephone, email, Facebook, handwritten cards and letters to keep connected with them, but nothing can replace face-to-face visits.

This past summer Emily went to Ottawa to visit her brother and sister-in-law and in doing so achieved a goal that has taken a couple of years of organizing. Emily, her family and support staff all worked together to plan and coordinate the trip. Emily was able to put some money away each week and worked with staff to research attractions and decide on the places she wanted to go while visiting our capital city. She was very fortunate that her brother and sister-in-law both are employed at national

museums, so those were first on her list. After the itinerary was set, Emily, her sister and a member of her support team, Linda, drove to Ottawa where Emily was able to share the experience of her sister-in-law's very advanced pregnancy. This was Emily's first niece or nephew and was very exciting news for her. She felt the baby move and kissed the pregnant tummy every chance she got.



To complete Emily's trip, on the way home from Ottawa, she also accomplished another goal of reconnecting with distant family members. Emily stopped at her late

grandmother's family cottage on Lake Simcoe, her first time there in 20 years. Emily's aunts and cousins were at the cottage and everyone was thrilled to see one another. Emily immediately went to the lake, took off her shoes and sat with her feet in the water. This was what she would do when she was a child at the cottage. She had such a wonderful

visit, and promises were made to continue to stay in touch and work on plans for her next trip.

Thanks to Emily and Linda for contributing to this article.

Leone Sewing Up a Storm Thanks to Passport Funding

Submitted by Fely Clarke
With the COVID-19 pandemic, like everybody else, Leone Mitchell found it hard and almost unbearable to handle. The sudden changes in social and physical gatherings, distancing, shopping / groceries with all the arrows to follow traffic, banking, and even the changes in our support time and travelling in company vehicles sitting arrangement, Leone found it very challenging. However, with a friend's encouragement of DIY (Do It Yourself) face masks, Leone stepped up to the plate and they made about 80 face masks in a variety of sizes and colours. Leone used her very old sewing machine but it was not able to keep up. An opportunity knocked

with Passport Funding and Leone was able to buy a new sewing machine. Having this opportunity gave Leone more confidence to make more masks. It truly kept her well occupied and gave her reasons to be more engaged and productive.

As Leone and her friend made face masks, some were given away for free and a few were sold to cover the material costs. Unfortunately, her friend moved to London, yet to this day Leone is still tinkering with creating something new for herself with her sewing machine. She is very much interested in keeping herself busy. She also does some plastic canvas projects such as creating coasters and Kleenex box holders. Now



Leone realizes whether with or without the pandemic, life must go on and she must keep moving forward by keeping herself physically, spiritually, and mentally healthy.

Jason's Work Offers a Sense of Belonging



Submitted by Fely Clarke
Jason Karn was truly glad and wholeheartedly thankful to go back to work in August. He shreds papers/documents at our main office at least once a month. However, if it is needed, the office staff will call him to go more often and he is more than happy to oblige.

Jason is a very quiet man and he does his job independently. The COVID-19 pandemic stalled his routines for almost three months, but now that he is back, he is incredibly happy. When he is going to the office he meets people down the

street on his way to work and at the same time he gets some fresh air. It also adds physical activity for him as he walks to work most of the time. Seeing the familiar and new faces at the office as he is passing by makes him feel welcome and gives him a sense of belonging. He also highly appreciates the extra financial earnings as we all know the prices of most commodities have gone up. Jason enjoys doing his work as it keeps him engaged and gives him more reasons to be up and about as it adds a sense of accomplishment to his day.



Patrick Pick Awarded Chief Certificate of Merit

Submitted by Meredith McCash
On May 15, Patrick Pick was awarded the Chief Certificate of Merit by Chief Ambrose of the Owen Sound Police Services. This certificate is awarded annually by the Chief of Police during Police Week. Patrick was recognized for demonstrating bravery and quick judgement by seeking help for his mom

during a medical emergency. Patrick's mom sadly passed away on July 30 due to an unrelated health condition, but not before she was able to express great appreciation and pride in Patrick.

We congratulate you, Patrick, and send our condolences to you and your sister Jennah on the loss of your mom.

Celebrating You!

By Mom's Event Committee
Wow, what a crazy few months it has been! We really missed being able to host our annual "Celebrating You" event with all of our wonderful moms and caregivers back in April. We spent lots of time planning, brainstorming, and booking venues. We had an exciting day planned full of crafting, networking and relaxation. We really wanted to make it something special.

Although due to COVID-19 we could not hold the event in person, that hasn't stopped us from planning something new. We've been thinking about it for months, asking ourselves, 'What are moms interested in doing when they are on their own? What can we do; how can we have women connect with one another, have fun and ensure safety all at the same time?' So this is what we came up with... An evening

filled with crafts, fun and of course time to connect with one another! This fall our "Celebrating You" event will be held on Oct. 6 online. What a great idea! Moms, you can be in the comfort of your own home with a cozy blanket and maybe even a little something for your taste buds! We hope that this evening will give everyone the opportunity to network, engage and share stories all while having fun creating a DIY doormat for your home with the guidance of Krista Wismer from Kreative. We are looking forward to this event and seeing all of you again! We hope that in the future we will be able to have our event in person, as they are just so much fun. Until then we will continue to find creative ways to engage and connect with one another.

Stay home, stay safe, and stay strong!

Local, Equitable Employment

Continued from front

- Jessica B. at Shoppers Drug Mart,
- Steven M. at MP Alex Ruff's office,
- Kyle N. at Graham Design and Construction Ltd.

Thank you to the many businesses we have partnered with over the years who have provided equitable opportunities for people of all skills to find competitive

employment. In support of our communities we need to continue to shop locally to support Grey and Bruce County businesses.

If you are an employer and are looking for a hardworking, dependable and motivated employee give me a call and let's see if we can help meet/ fill your employee needs.
Kim McCorkindale, job developer.
(519) 470-9251 ext. 118.

Self-Care Resources

Self care is an important but often neglected aspect of many people's daily routines. Now, perhaps more than ever, people need to be able to rejuvenate themselves, be resilient and in a position to adapt very quickly. Maintaining existing practices of self-care and being open to trying new ones can help us do just that.

Below please find a list of resources compiled by the team members of Children and Family Services. Perhaps one of them will pique your interest.

WEBSITES:

www.heysigmund.com

(Latest research and news in psychology)

www.fireflyfriends.com/uk/blog

(Real life stories, issues & experiences of day-to-day life by special needs parents and professionals, UK site)

www.baconandjuiceboxes.com

(Website that follows a family's journey with autism; real life experiences and stories; can also be found on Facebook at Bacon and Juiceboxes)

www.smho-smso.ca

(School Mental Health Ontario)

www.cmha.ca

(Canadian Mental Health Association website)

www.selfcare.ca

(Canadian online self-care resource)

www.momastery.com/blog/2012/01/04/2011-lesson-2-dont-carpe-diem

(Glennon Doyle's website and blog posts)

www.caregivingclub.com/caregiver-monday

(Caregiver online resource)

www.doyogawithme.com

(Site with free yoga class links)

www.connectability.ca

(Check out the Friendly Connections and Connected Families links)

BOOKS:

Not Cancelled: Canadian Kindness in the Face of Covid-19 by Heather Down and Catherine Kenwell

(a group of short stories highlighting experiences of kindness displayed by Canadians during the recent pandemic)

Untamed by Glennon Doyle



Congratulations!

Pictured from left are Marion Pegg, personal support worker, Sandra McManaman, family resource worker, and Sue Skinner, manager of quality assurance — three out of 12 staff members celebrating a milestone anniversary this year. It ranges from five years of service to 35 years of service. A special thank you for your hard work and commitment to the people and families that we support.

'The Dedication to Our Mission, Vision and Values Has Never Wavered'

Continued from front
our lifeline to our clients. If you were to walk down the halls at our offices, or visit a support worker on a work-from-home-day, (yes, we are doing our best to physically distance ourselves) you would likely hear many phone conversations where we are checking in with people. Many tears and laughter have been shared, successes have been celebrated and struggles have been worked through. It is amazing to hear the honest patience and concern in the voices of our support workers, who many people have come to rely on for reassurance and encouragement.

However, the phone is not the only way we have been able to connect. One support worker created handmade cards that she shared with the team so we could send greetings to those we support. I have heard of many notes and letters that have been sent, because we all know it is nice to get something in the mail that isn't a bill. Not only have cards and letters been sent, we have also received some cards and letters in return!

One support worker spoke to me about playing online games with someone they support and we were both surprised how fun it was even though it was on the computer

and not in person. FaceTime and Zoom have also been used as a way to connect and to be able to share a smile.

For some residents who live in long-term care homes and are still not able to go out, support workers have been able to brighten their days by dropping off a few treats here and there. It might be just some pop and chips or a coffee to many, but to those who are receiving it, it brings a little of the outside world to them and makes things feel more normal.

According to Tammy Robertson, manager of Community Supports, "change, flexibility, adaptable... these words are on the forefront of my mind when asked to describe the Support Pool/Community Supports." She continues, "During the past six months we have had to change the way we do and think about our supports. We are so used to promoting independence that it goes against our nature to say 'let me do that for you' or to set up activities that encourage them to stay at home and isolate. It was important for us to still stay connected with each person we support so we adapted our regular supports to weekly or daily phone calls, porch visits, grocery delivery, video meetings, and mental

health check-ins, training for handwashing, mask wearing, etc."

To give an idea of the supports provided, from April 6 to September 6, community support workers have been able to connect on average 199 times per week with people by phone and had on average 81 face-to-face visits each week. Robertson was pleased to say that her team has also "assisted the Supported Group Living teams by doing their weekly grocery shopping for them and over 10 community support workers were redeployed to assist with coverage in the homes when needed."

Today, as more places and opportunities open up, Robertson says "we are slowly adding to our community visits to help those who are no longer able to cope with the isolation and for those who want to reengage with their community in a safe way."

As the Support Pool and those we support work together to find our new 'normal' Robertson was able to summarize "the dedication to our mission, vision and values has never wavered by the staff and they have done a great job being innovative and positive as we move through the phases of this pandemic."

Great job Support Pool!

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, Cathy Foster, Vicki Reevey and 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.com

When you make a financial contribution to the Foundation for Community Living Owen Sound and District, you will support the Association in achieving their mission. 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.



COMMUNITY LIVING OWEN SOUND AND DISTRICT 2020 – 2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

President: Gary Dale **Vice-President:** Michael Forcier **Treasurer:** John Cherrie
Members: Robyn Bumstead, Deb Dickey, Ros Brooks, James Nicol, Dave Wenn, Paul Middlebrook and Ron Fenwick.

Community Living Owen Sound and District
769 4th Avenue East, Owen Sound, ON N4K 2N5
Telephone 519-371-9251, Fax 519-371-5168

Association Membership applications are available from our office.