

COMMUNITY LIVING
Owen Sound and District

Perspectives



Ken Burtwistle, Community Living Mail Carrier

Submitted by
Jazmine McClelland

Ken has been an employee at Community Living Owen Sound for many years. He is a valued employee and co-worker. Ken had the opportunity to chat about his position with Community Living and would like to share a little about his history with the agency.

When talking about how he got the opportunity to become the mail carrier at Community Living, Ken said, "Sue had a conversation with me about taking over the job for Tom. She took me in her office and offered me the mail job."

Ken speaks very highly of his position with Community Living and is grateful every day for the opportunity. He said he's been working for the agency "for a long time... before I was the mail guy I did janitorial work around the office."

Not only does Ken take care of the mail run at Community Living, he also does "a lot of jobs at the office." As Ken says, things like "emptying the blue box, taking out the garbage/ cardboard, and cutting the

grass in the summer months."

These are some of the responsibilities that Ken is happy and proud to take on.

As COVID-19 has affected many people's jobs, Ken's was no exception. Now, because of COVID Ken's job looks a little different. Ken explains it this way: "because of COVID I've had to wear a mask while in the office. I need to keep six paces away from others, I don't touch my co-workers, and I need to sign in and take a temperature check. I've found all of that challenging to get used to but I understand that it helps me keep myself and others safe."

Even without COVID in mind, Ken says he has challenges that arise annually. "Walking in the snow can be a challenge when the sidewalks aren't plowed." Ken overcomes this challenge and is still able to get the mail to the office by taking a different route, wearing appropriate apparel, and being educated on road conditions and safety.

Along with challenges come things to appreciate and be thankful for. Ken has expressed that he has many things he

appreciates about Community Living. "I am thankful for my belongings at the office, my mail bag, the nice office spaces, and my paycheque from Community Living..."

I am thankful for my co-workers, I like the nice people; Kim, Lorraine and Sue. They are all nice people to talk to."

Ken is a very social guy so having the opportunity to have professional work relationships is very meaningful to him.

As Ken has been a part of the work force for much of his adult life, the question remains of how long is Ken wanting to keep active in the work force. "I'm 65. I'm doing okay with the mail run. It's a lot of walking but I like working for Community Living. I like my job. I'd like to keep doing this for as long as I'm able."

Ken takes pride in his career. He recognizes the opportunity for hard work and dedication paying off. This is more than just a job to Ken. It is responsibility, empowerment, and gained experiences.

Ken's boss with Community Living, Sue Skinner, has offered

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February is National Inclusive Education Month in Canada

By Leanne Hopkins, manager,
Child and Family Services

When I was approached about the upcoming issue of this newsletter and asked if there was anything Children's Services might like to submit I suggested something be written about inclusion knowing that February was National Inclusive Education Month in Canada, and inclusion is a relevant topic for Community Living to address.

There, done, check the box.

But for days afterwards, thoughts about inclusion stuck in my mind and would rattle

around in my brain in the wee hours of the night to the point that I find myself now at the keyboard grappling with this idea of putting thoughts into words on paper. Something weird might come of it like Tom Cruise writing his mission statement and then leaving his workplace with a goldfish in hand. Still, it feels like the right time to express an opinion. Not a mission statement, really, just more of a confession.

To be honest, now with decades working in developmental services

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Coping With Loss

Submitted by Cathy Foster

The dictionary defines loss as "the fact or process of losing something or someone... the state or feeling of grief when deprived of someone or something." It can be applied to many things: hair, time, patience, weight, connection, life.

2020 has been a year unlike any other the world has seen for a very long time. As we have collectively moved through this year and moment in time, we have all experienced loss on some level. Loss is linked to transition, change and the end of the way we have known things to be. By its definition, loss is expected to cause some hurt. It's human nature to respond that way to it, either permanently or initially.

The loss of our connection with someone, either by them moving on or passing on, is perhaps the most profound sense of loss we will ever experience. It hurts and we have to wade through

the process of learning how to be without them.

That process, that pain and grief, although very difficult, is very meaningful. It should hurt. It should be hard for us because it means that someone mattered. They were involved in our life and the life of our community. They were someone's friend, partner, child, sibling. They had jobs, hobbies and things that they loved to do to bring them joy. They cared about people and they made sure that they connected and invoked meaning in and for the lives of others. It means that they were included and part of the community in every way possible. It is a sign of a life incredibly well lived and a life to be celebrated!

When we say goodbye to people, their lives are often celebrated with memories, pictures and shared recollections of our experiences with them. This is often expressed in their

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“One Ringy Dingy”

Phone communication system now seamless across our office locations

Thanks to advancements in communication systems, Community Living Owen Sound and District now has all offices and support centres interconnected. This allows you to call any of the previous numbers and connect to all employees just by entering their three-digit extension. Also, as a bonus feature, all of the employees working from these offices have their own private number (10 digits) and have their own private voice or video conferencing capacity. During business hours employees can receive their calls at their desk of course, or outside of the office on their cell or other

internet connected device.

This new system comes at just the right time with many of our employees working from home versus the office.

With all of its advantages, any new technology comes with inevitable glitches. We are pretty confident in our phone directory configuration, however with nearly 100 individual extensions to program we may have our virtual wires crossed sometimes. If you notice a glitch we would appreciate hearing about it. Leave a message at ext 221.

Note that phone lines to the supported homes are not affected.

Reunited and it Tastes So Good!

Submitted by Maryanne Reid
Christmas would not be complete without friends, family, and delicious, fresh-from-the-oven, holiday treats. Laurie knows this well as her childhood home was full of baking made from recipes passed down through generations. Laurie had a goal to recreate some of these goodies last winter. She wanted to reconnect with her past and make something she once made alongside her mother in their kitchen, thick with the sweet smell of nostalgia and cinnamon.



As we all know, 2020 had its own plans. Laurie's goal was put on hold, as was her favourite activity of playing bingo with friends at 2nd Avenue.

Laurie had a busy life before the pandemic with lots of planned activities and time dedicated to her friendships. Laurie talks a lot about her friends Joe and Shawn, and how she loved helping them at Wednesday Bingos. Laurie

felt important, like she was making things easier for friends, taking pressure off of busy staff, and keeping herself active and involved. She missed this connection throughout the year, but even more so as the holidays approached.

Laurie and her staff together came up with the idea of transforming her old goal into a reconnection with her past and with the friends she has missed during COVID-19.

Christmas began with trips to the grocery store for molasses, ginger, shortening, and other tasty ingredients. Laurie whipped up three-and-a-half dozen cookies with barely a glance at the recipe, engrained in her mind from Christmases past. She sent every last one over to the residence of her friends thinking this should be enough to last through Christmas. However, less than a week later we were able to pick up the empty, crumbless container.

By fulfilling her goal of baking and sharing with friends, Laurie spent her holidays sandwiched between the love of family members that have passed, and the love of the family she has created for herself. Laurie enjoyed this so much she wants to make it a new Christmas tradition.

Ken is One-of-a-kind

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a few words about Ken and his employment: “I am always impressed with Ken's dedication to his job. He arrives to work on time, every time, knows what is expected of him, meets those expectations and carries out his job duties with pride and enthusiasm. With the same pride and enthusiasm,

we thank Ken for being so reliable and doing a great job!”

Ken has made many connections throughout the years as an employee; he will continue to make co-workers laugh and have feel-good moments. Ken is one-of-a-kind and Community Living is grateful and lucky to have him as a member of our team.

Crafting Cards for Seniors

Submitted by Fely Clarke

With some restrictions in place due to the pandemic, Jeremy Brown and I met once a week at the mall food court. We were sure to observe all the precautionary measures of COVID-19 pandemic training such as wearing a face mask, proper hand washing/ use of hand sanitizer, social distancing and following the signage footsteps on the floor for the flow of traffic. Jeremy has been good about following the guidelines and cooperative with all these precautionary measures in place.

I decided to incorporate making Christmas cards for one of the nursing homes here in Owen Sound into our weekly meeting times.



Jeremy is very crafty and thus was very engaged in his project. I supplied all the necessary items: blank cards, glue, decorations, and a wee bit of visual organization on

how to put things together to make our Christmas cards look pleasing. Jeremy is very patient and he just loved to touch things. To keep him more focused, we would do three cards and then go for a walk around the mall and come back to do three more. Jeremy also signed all of them personally for he loves to write. In total, Jeremy put 36 Christmas cards together and delivered them with a smile to the nursing home. Together, we did three extra blank cards and gave them to his mom, Janet, as our gift to her.

It was so nice to discover more of Jeremy's strengths and talents as it makes our weekly meeting times more productive and constructive.

Christmas Eve Dinner

Submitted by Gareth Lloyd

Over the holiday period several people remarked how different things seemed, and how the season didn't feel quite the same. People weren't able to get together, reliable family traditions were cancelled, and we thought people living in our supported homes and the staff that work there could use a nice surprise.

So, a couple of days before Christmas, chef Michelle and her two sous-chef elves Craig and Gareth whipped up a French-Canadian inspired feast for each of the homes. On the menu was a classic tourtière, roasted ginger carrots, roasted garlic potatoes with brioche rolls and coleslaw, as well as apple blossoms for dessert. Preparing and cooking for so many people while maintaining physical



distancing guidelines was challenging, but the three rallied together and ended up creating a delicious meal that was well-received and, from what we heard, well eaten!

Also included in the surprise delivery was a Christmas movie for each home with some

popcorn, chips and drinks, which again provided people with something fun to watch and something tasty to eat and drink in the safety of their own homes. We hope we were able to add a little bit of festive joy and spirit during this challenging year.

Ken Works at CarePartners

Submitted by Kim McCorkindale

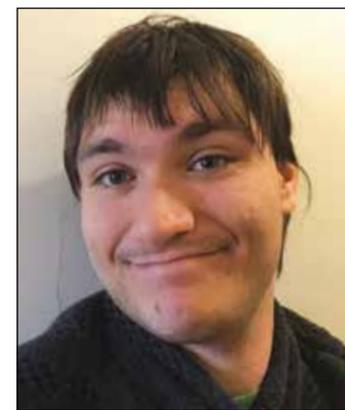
Every Thursday afternoon for the past two years Ken has been busy collating and assembling the various medical charts needed by the medical professionals at CarePartners. Ken's keen attention to detail is a valuable asset in completing these tasks. CarePartners is a health care agency that provides personal support workers, rehabilitation services and nursing care for patients in homes, schools, retirement homes, clinics, and workplaces.

Ken enjoys being able to work independently at a big table in a large room with lots of natural light. In this room there are many cardboard boxes filled with the medical forms

Ken needs to compile the charts. He is also responsible for breaking down the boxes when he empties them and taking them out to the recycling bin.

Ken is a dedicated and well-organized employee who always ensures his work is completed accurately. Seeing the empty shelves fill up with all the different types of charts that he has made during a shift brings Ken much satisfaction.

When asked about his job, Ken said with a smile, “I like going to work at CarePartners. Everyone is nice to me. I make my own money. My job is important.” Ken is very proud to be part of a team that does such vital work within our community.



During the pandemic Ken has been following strict guidelines on the job to ensure that he and the staff remain safe and healthy. When at work he wears a mask at all times, washes his hands frequently, uses hand sanitizer, and socially distances from other staff members in the office.

Home for the Holidays: A Special Project

Submitted by Cathy Foster

They say a picture is worth a thousand words. This is because a picture can convey complex situations, thoughts, actions and emotions far better than a written dialogue can. It captures truth and the essence of the moment.

This past year created so many situations of change and difference and Christmas was no exception. We had to figure out a different way to celebrate and in some situations, create new memories because many of us could not be with our families and loved ones due to COVID-19.

The newsletter committee wanted to take a situation that was difficult and try to focus on the positive aspects it

created. We wanted to capture moments of happiness and joy in the midst of such a serious situation. We asked several staff members to snap pictures to capture how Christmas looked in 2020, including new traditions, old traditions, safe connections and celebrations. We wanted to present them all in a beautiful pictorial collage and let them speak for themselves — after all, they are worth thousands of printed words.

The newsletter committee would like to sincerely thank every person who assisted with this special project by taking the time to submit a picture. We could not have done this without you! We hope you enjoyed being 'Home for the Holidays' with us.



Passport Program Expanded Due to Pandemic-related Restrictions

Submitted by Jackie McCartney

For many, the past few months have been spent adjusting to new routines and schedules. Those weekly hockey games, 2nd Avenue or Supported Choices activities, direct supports, or visits with family and friends have had to be put on hold due to COVID-19 restrictions. These restrictions have impacted us all, regardless of which community we live in.

In an attempt to help those in receipt of Passport funding keep connected to family and friends, as well as to keep safe by staying at home, the

Passport program modified their guidelines to allow for more items be purchased that aren't usually permitted. These included sensory items, electronics, activities to support hobbies, home fitness and recreational items, and even personal protective items.

Some of the sensory items that people have purchased were fidget toys, compression blankets and sleeves, machines that illuminate multi-coloured lights and sounds, textile puzzles, and foot or hand massagers.

Many people looked at ways

to connect with family and friends electronically or used the internet to participate in online classes and workshops. With the temporary allowances from the Passport program, they were able to purchase items such as tablets, laptops, cellphones, gaming systems, and webcams.

For others, it was about bringing those activities and hobbies they once did with peers in a group in the community, to their homes. People have enjoyed purchasing craft items and kits, modelling kits, music, movies and books, as well as things that

they can enjoy playing with those they live with such as board games, card games, and puzzles. For those that were missing the community fitness centres, they were able to purchase items such as hand weights, punching bags and other workout equipment that kept them moving and active while staying safe at home.

Ensuring the safety of everyone was paramount for the Passport program. They are currently reimbursing the costs for personal protective equipment such as gloves, shields, and sanitizer. To help

limit the amount of times people need to leave their home, they are also currently covering the fees associated with grocery store deliveries and pharmacy deliveries.

At the time of writing, the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services have not shared when these temporary allowances of expenses will end. So, if you wish to get more information about the Passport program or explore ways to utilize your Passport funds, please contact Jackie McCartney, Passport Lead, or your support staff.

National Inclusive Education Month — Resources

Submitted by Cathy Foster

February is National Inclusive Education month in Canada. Advocating for inclusion is ongoing for many families over the course of their child's school career. Having resources to assist on this journey can be helpful in the moment, and also in times of reflection. Please find to follow a list of online links and resources that may be helpful to you and your family.

Inclusion Canada:

www.inclusioncanada.ca/education/

Government of Ontario Information:

www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-education

Government of Ontario Education Equity Action Plan:

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/about/education_equity_plan_en.pdf

Community Living Toronto:

www.connectability.ca/2011/03/25/parents-education-handbook/

Connectability Inclusive Education Quick Links:

www.connectability.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Inclusive-Education-Quick-Links.pdf

Community Living Ontario:

www.communitylivingontario.ca/en/links

(once there, scroll down to Inclusive Education)

www.communitylivingontario.ca/en/inclusive-education

If Inclusion Means Everyone Why Not Me?

2018 Research Report Upload available at:

www.communitylivingontario.ca/en/if-inclusion-means-everyone-why-not-me/

Good Things in Life Podcast with Genia Stephen

www.goodthingsinlife.org/podcasts

You will find a lot of information on a variety of topics in this podcast hosted by Genia Stephen, including several on education. Below, please find a list of a few that address inclusive education. It is worthwhile to spend the time to explore the rest of podcasts.

#83 The system never had any room for me-Jean-Luc Martel

#75 Dr. Temple Grandin on Inclusive Education

#74 Erin Sheldon on removing barriers

#72 Shelley Moore Blows-Up Special Ed

#70 Sometimes the path to inclusion in winding

#69 My son with Down Syndrome will go to college

#67 Common inclusive education fears of special needs parent with Marilyn Dolmage

#55 Keeping IEP's focused on what matters most with Lisa Lightner

#42 Inclusive Education Project-Legal help with Vickie Brett and Amanda Selogie

Improving the Capacity to Be Inclusive Cannot Be An Afterthought

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combined with lived experience, I really don't know what authentic inclusion is. I think I know what it is not. Or rather, have felt what it is not. And perhaps, that is it. Is it a feeling? Something that is a personal, unique and evolving experience has become quantified and qualified so that it can be defined and evaluated within the systems and structures of home, school and community, and in doing so has become impersonal and something that is merely just the opposite of exclusion? Are we content with that and with a dedicated month to amplify it? Is it just simply a matter of there, done, check the box? Is inclusion exclusive to education?

My all-knowing computer defines inclusion as “in-clu-sion (noun) 1. An action or state of including or of being included within a group or structure. Opposite: exclusion, omission. 2. The practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, such as those who have physical or mental disabilities and members of other minority groups.” So ... we continue to organize people into categories and groups and assign labels to rationalize, justify and give motivation to be inclusive?

Who hasn't experienced rejection? I mean that hurtful sense of being excluded; of not being invited, welcomed, or wanted. It doesn't have to be a grand rejection like a break up or a marriage proposal being declined. It's the simple, little everyday moments that can chip away at you. You know that nagging little twitchy feeling when your co-workers share a private joke or the room goes silent when you walk in. And it bothers you.

Now imagine your whole life and everything that you are and you represent feels like that nagging little twitchy feeling. You are on the periphery. You are marginalized. You are on the outside looking in OR you are in the goldfish bowl and everyone else is watching. It becomes exhausting asking for the accommodations and resources that will enable you to be included. It is frustrating and angering to have to continue to make the ask, to point out the obligations of others, to reference rights and policies, and you start to feel like you are a royal pain in the advocacy butt. Where you live is kind of — sort of accessible. (I don't mean to conflate accessibility with inclusion because they are two different things, but they also do go hand-in-hand.) Maybe you need an auto door opener to go into the restaurant

only to find the little button is on the wall behind the three-foot concrete flower pot and you have to borrow some kind soul's cane or crutch. Once you get close enough to push the button only then to find that the door is swinging out and sweeps you off your feet or out of your walker or scooter! Yes, universal design is important and proves that the means to improving the capacity to be inclusive cannot be an afterthought.

Maybe that's it? No more retrofitting and squeezing people in as afterthoughts. Imagine the day when inclusiveness is not policy driven. The day when the community has the will, spirit and capacity to authentically include everyone. For me, at this point in my personal and professional life, inclusion is action, thought, words and deeds absent of assumption or presumption of “cannot, does not, will not, want not” that would deny the opportunity for choice and decision-making on the part of the other. Authentic inclusion is social norms and collective behaviour ensuring everyone belongs.

So February is National Inclusive Education Month in Canada.

So is January, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November and December.

We Need to Say our Goodbyes in Different Ways

Continued from front

obituaries and through funerals or celebration of life experiences. Sometimes those can be tough to read or get through. But they also can bring warm memories, thoughts and smiles as you relive those moments in time. Holidays can be more difficult as it may cause us to remember past celebrations with them. When we can read comments and tributes to people it helps us to process our own

emotions. Recently, I read tributes that included “one of the good guys, a living example of how to go about your business with enthusiasm, loved and missed by many, the world was a better place with you in it and I will miss him.” With the sadness comes the wonderful acknowledgement of having had the privilege to know and interact with such an incredible human being.

Although 2020 perhaps did not give us the opportunity

to formally say our goodbyes to people we may have lost, it doesn't mean that they were not important or will be forgotten. It simply means that we need to say our goodbyes in different ways and pause to remember that the impact of someone departing is felt by all those they reached. Those memories will live on and that is an incredible gift. It helps to make us more open to embrace all the wonderful new things and people that may come our way.

PERSPECTIVES PURPOSE:

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

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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.



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