



PERSPECTIVES

The Newsletter for Community Living Owen Sound & District



THE SKY IS THE LIMIT!

by Tasha Dadswell and Cathy Foster

Madison is a delightful little girl who lives in Port Elgin with her grandparents. She is curious, precocious and loves to learn new things. She has made a big impact on the world around her and loves to experience things in her own way and on her own terms.

Over the last couple of years, Madison has grown leaps and bounds. She has also had to overcome many obstacles that were in her path. Madison has learning, language and social challenges. She also has some medical stuff that can show up and get in her way. Her grandparents have formed a wonderful support circle for her that has helped her to succeed and experience some great joy and stability.

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COMMUNITY CHAMPION RECOGNIZED

Community Living's own Ken (Kenny) Burtwistle received a special honour in October when he was selected to drop the first puck at an Owen Sound Attack game! A dedicated and passionate Attack fan, Ken rarely misses a game or practice, making this moment extra special for him.

Ken was chosen for this honour because of his longstanding commitment to the Special Olympics, where he has been a proud member of the Special Olympics Bowling team for many years.

If you see Ken around town, be sure to give him a high five—he's a true community champion!

THE SKY IS THE LIMIT!....CONTINUED

by Tasha Dadswell and Cathy Foster

One of the biggest challenges for Madison was education. Like most other children, Madison started off her educational journey in the school system. She went to school every day and everyone did their best, but it was just not a good fit for her. Madison's existing medical conditions worsened and she was getting sick very frequently. The illnesses caused regression in other areas and Madison was not able to learn as she was very stressed.

Knowing that a change was necessary, Madison's grandparents decided to move to home schooling. They knew that there had to be a different way to help Madison learn and they were concerned because when she left school at the end of grade one, she was not able to recognize letters, numbers or colours or even hold a crayon. Her grandmother worked hard with her to develop a curriculum to let her learn at her own pace and in her own way and it has been very successful for her.

In a little over a year, Madison has learned to sing the alphabet, count to 10, hold a crayon and trace letters and lines. She is also learning to draw pictures and use colours. They have worked on physiotherapy and speech goals as well.

Madison and her family also joined a home-schooling group where they go on field trips and experience community with new friends. She has visited an apple orchard, Safety Village and a museum. They also participated in the Adopt an Elder program at a local long term care facility.



It has been a big year of growth and change for Madison and her grandparents are so proud of her. Late last summer, Madison completed all aspects of Kindergarten and it was time for the graduation party to celebrate. Her family and friends were invited to come together for snacks and celebration. She was presented with a diploma and a special science award, while in her purple cap and gown! The accomplishment was celebrated with a trip to Rounds Ranch for pictures and horseback riding.

Congratulations Madison!

FUN FACT

The World's Longest Hug Happened at a Community Event – Two friends in Canada hugged for 32 hours straight at an event promoting togetherness. That's some serious commitment to community!



INTRODUCING OUR NEW LOGO: A SYMBOL OF UNITY AND IMPACT

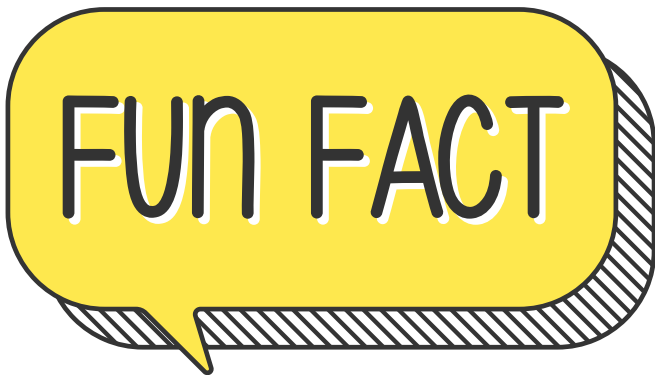
We're thrilled to unveil the new logo for our newly merged advocacy group! Formerly known as Sound Advocates and Shore Advocates, we have come together as a stronger, united force dedicated to inclusion and celebrating the diversity of our community.

Our new logo reflects this unity, incorporating elements of both the shore and sound, symbolizing the voices of our community coming together to make waves for change. This fresh identity represents our commitment to amplifying voices, fostering belonging, and advocating for a more inclusive future.

Stay tuned—big things are on the horizon!

JOIN US!

The Grey & Bruce Advocates are always welcoming NEW advocates to the table. Want to join a meeting? We meet the first Friday of every month. Pop into the Link on the Shore or the Link 2nd Ave to learn more!



Humans Are Wired for Community – Scientific studies show that social connections release oxytocin, the “feel-good” hormone, which is why strong communities make us happier and healthier.

Some Communities Have Secret Handshakes – In parts of Africa, Latin America, and even small towns worldwide, community members develop unique greetings or handshakes to identify and welcome one another.



CELEBRATING COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY LIVING
Owen Sound and District

Retro Dance Party





LOCAL HEROES

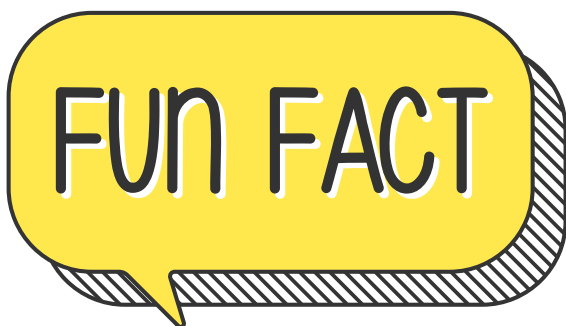
Did you know that Country 93, one of our awesome local radio stations, celebrates local heroes?

We're so PROUD to see both Deanna and Karen recognized for their efforts.

Here's Deanna's nomination:

Her nominator, Justin, wrote, "Deanna is a Case Worker with Community Living. Recently, Deanna was made aware (from Karen) that an individual in the community had become unresponsive and required emergency care. Deanna and Karen found them, immediately called 911 and set out on performing CPR until the paramedics arrived. Thanks to her quick thinking, medical training, and calm demeanour under pressure, the person in crisis survived. This act of bravery not only saved this person's life, but highlighted Deanna's deep commitment to her community and her readiness to act selflessly in a moment of crisis. Her actions attest to a profound sense of care and responsibility for others, which serves as an inspiration not only to her team, but to everyone who has the privilege of knowing her."

For her contribution to community, Karen (pictured) was awarded a certificate for being a Good Samaritan.



There's a Town Where Everyone is an Artist – In Guatapé, Colombia, the entire town is covered in colourful murals, proving that art can unite a whole community.



THE ANNUAL CHRISTMAS DINNER & DANCE: A NIGHT TO REMEMBER!





A POLAR PLUNGE!

By Cathy Foster



On Sunday February 23, the Grey Bruce OPP Polar Plunge took place at the Shallow Lake Community Centre. Some very brave souls participated in the fundraising event for Special Olympics. Colton and Jacob were part of the group that represented Owen Sound Special Olympics and they did an amazing job!



TWENTY SIX YEARS LATER....A PERSONAL ESSAY

Submitted by: Robert Mepsted

Back in 1991 the doctor had found a tumor on the base of my brain and in 1998 I had it removed, I spent 19 hours on the operating table. I had to learn how to walk all over again and I could not go for walks around the hospital wing without a nurse in case I fall. I ended up with 3 spinal taps, the doctor could not find out what was wrong, so they wanted to do another one and I said 'no way' because they hurt... it is like getting shot with a bullet. When I got home, I had a walker which was no good in the snow so after a while I got rid of the walker and went to a cane and I had to have therapy on my right hand because with it being out straight for 19 hours, I could not move my baby finger. I could not go downtown without a babysitter in case I walked into a moving car, I walked into parking meters and light posts because of my balance. The tumor was imbedded around my main nerves which was my left ear, and today I still have side effects like my balance and my left side of my face is numb. See I was born with tumors and now I have only one left which I have to put up with because it cannot be removed. And this year it will be 26 years that I had the operation, and I have to wear a hearing aid in my left ear to help with my balance.



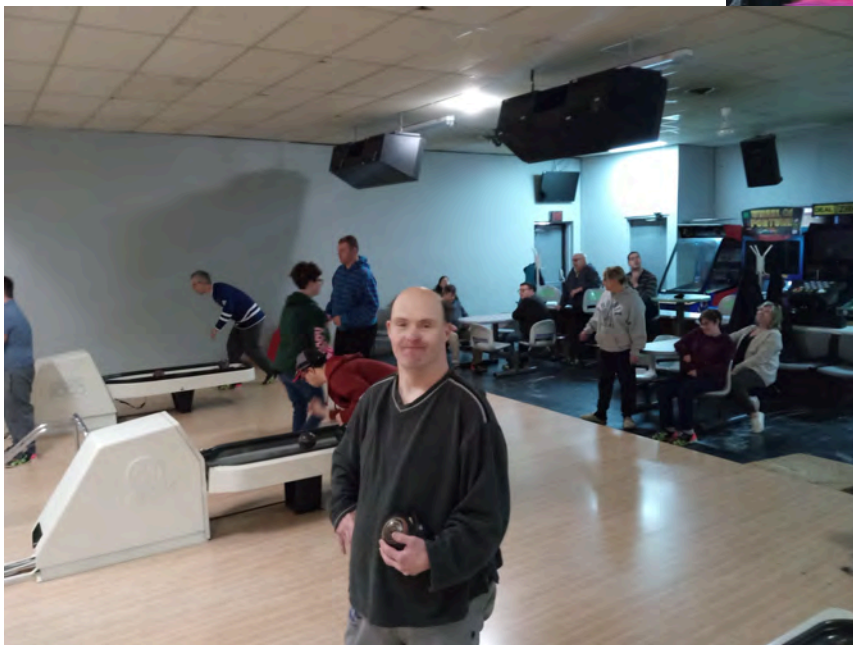
CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

By Alexis Kahgee Krista Rathwell

This fall, participants from four different communities (Walkerton, Wiarton, Owen Sound, and Port Elgin) came together each week to enjoy a game of bowling at Sunset Family Fun Centre in Port Elgin.

With Grey-Bruce being such a large geographical area, it can be hard for friends to stay connected if they live in different towns. Hosting Community Participation programs together across all three agencies offers an opportunity to get to know new people and reconnect with old friends.

Sunset Family Fun Centre has been an incredible community partner for our group, as they have been flexible and welcomed our growing group with open arms. We love to see the positive interactions the owners have with each person there, as well as the mixing and mingling of people from different communities.



Passport... to FUN!

The Community Living Owen Sound & District Passport Program isn't just about activities; it's about going on group outings with like-minded people who share passions. It's about learning new skills together and, most importantly, having a blast while doing it!



Visit our events calendar and see what exciting Passport activities are coming up next.



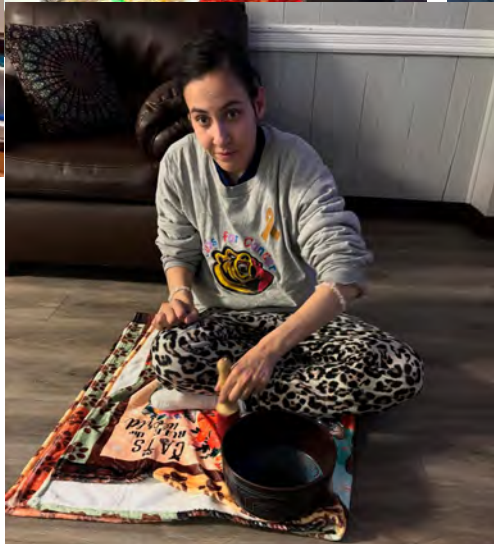
Community Snapshots



Makayla LOVED the opportunity to meet the world junior Goalie Carter George at REACH. One for the memory books!

Patrick and Wyatt had a great night at the Special Olympics Awards Ceremony! Both gentlemen had an excellent season with their team and Patrick even won most improved player!

Community Snapshots





GIVING TUESDAY

By Chloe Deschenes

We did it! Community Living Owen Sound & District rocked its first-ever Giving Tuesday—a global movement held annually after Black Friday and Cyber Monday that inspires people to give back. In 2024, this campaign raised over \$16 million across Canada, and we were proud to take part!

Our small-but-mighty city showed up in a BIG way, proving that passionate communities can drive real change. A huge shoutout to Rrampt, the City of Owen Sound, and River District Owen Sound for helping us spread the word, and to our social media champions for amplifying our message! 📣

So, what’s next? These funds will go toward empowering the self-advocates through opportunities like attending the Speaking Out Conference & Day at the Legislature and launching local advocacy projects.

This is just the beginning, and we can’t wait to build on this momentum in 2025! 🚀



May is Community Living month! We'll be celebrating community all month long!

EDITORIAL TEAM

Cathy Foster, Vicki Reevey,
Laura VanderHulst &
Heather Travis

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Michele Bell

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Al Smethurst, Judy Porteous



@communitylivingosd

communitylivingowensound.com

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

