

In Touch

COMMUNITY LIVING UPPER OTTAWA VALLEY



Self advocates are developing a strong voice

Standing up for yourself is not an easy thing to do.

To be effective, you need to know your rights and you have to be able to present your case so that others will understand it.

It takes preparation, courage, and commitment.

Nine members of the new self advocates committee of Community Living Upper Ottawa Valley are working together to develop their abilities to stand up for themselves.

As committee members, they meet every second week to share information about their rights and plan activities to educate others.

They take turns chairing the sessions, following a formal agenda and wasting no time getting down to business.

Members of the group are tackling such important topics as employment, the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, the power of language and labels, and the importance of respect.

They have met with the local member of provincial parliament and they've presented to Pembroke city council. They have made speeches to various groups, including a presentation at Cathedral School with Pembroke Police Officer Ron Gibson about bullying.

The committee participated in the Community Living

strategic planning process by making a proposal about the role of self-advocacy. Their goals are to do more public speaking, raise awareness throughout the community about the needs and rights of people with intellectual disabilities, and take action on issues such as inclusive education, pay equity and disability pension shortfalls.

Members of the committee have also attended conferences and workshops throughout eastern Ontario and hosted meetings in Pembroke for others.

Nancy Druve is one of the newest members of the group.

One of her first activities was attending an eastern Ontario meeting in Sturgeon Falls.

"I felt like a queen there," she says as she reminisces about the hayrides, bonfires and dance organized for the participants.

She also learned a lot about her rights and herself. The guest speaker for the meeting was from British Columbia and talked about marriage and families.

The group's work will continue in many different ways, including school poster contests, information sessions and other community involvement.



Members of the Community Living self advocates committee take a break with other self advocates from across Ontario at a conference in Sturgeon Falls.

Social capital is all about belonging and contributing

If they gave out awards for regular attendance at Calvary Baptist Church, it is a pretty safe bet that William Gorgerat would be among the recipients.

For the past 30 years, he has been faithfully attending the services and social functions there.

He loves to help out in the Sunday School, taking care of the birthday bank and pencils.

He also enjoys social activities, and has a large photo album to prove it.

The photos in that album represent more than a simple record of William's activities within the church. They are also a symbol of friendship.

Most of them have been taken by Karen Harrison, a fellow church member.

A note inside the album sums up her feelings:

"This book was made with love for you because you have been a good friend and because you are so faithful to our church," it says. "I hope that as you look at the photos, you will have many happy memories of the time you have spent with us, your friends."

"I love to take pictures and I know he enjoys them," Karen adds. The Harrison

family have all contributed to the album, including selecting the western theme that William loves.

When William attended a Community Living regional meeting this fall, he proudly took the album with him. Others who saw it there were surprised to learn that the photos had been collected by his friends. They had automatically assumed that it was the work of his support workers at Community Living.

"That's what social capital is all about," explains Community Living's Tina Williams. "It's making connections within your community and building relationships."

"The more social capital you have, the less vulnerable you are," she adds.

William's experiences prove her point. If he misses a church service, his circle of friends will find out why. They work together to make sure he has rides to and from church, and they support him in his day-to-day activities.

For example, when William didn't receive Karen's birthday card she helped him get to the root of a mail delivery problem.

In return, Karen is quick to point out that she and others benefit from their friendship with William.

"I have learned so much from him," she says, pointing to her experiences with his planning meetings and the role he has played with her family.

"It has enriched me," Karen concludes.



William Gorgerat always enjoys a good meal with his fellow church members, left. He is also pleased to be part of the team, above.



A good job can be a key ingredient to life's success

The next time you start to take your job for granted or begrudge the time and energy it consumes, talk to someone who is struggling to find work.

For many people, getting a job is often a primary personal goal. Part of the appeal is the idea of a pay cheque, but mostly it is about self-worth and the opportunity to contribute and be part of a group.

"All of those relationships, the development of roles where people start to count on you for things. All that enriches your life," comments Community Living's Kathy Bennett.

That's why she and other people at the agency take such a keen interest in recognizing local employers.

This fall's employer recognition event featured Steven Langfield, owner of Deep River's Giant Tiger store, as the employer champion and keynote speaker. His employee, Richard Holohan, was the employee champion of the evening.

"I work for the greatest boss," he told the people gathered for the evening. "I have come to know many customers and co-workers better by working around the store."

"Richard has become a strong member of the team and our operation is better for having him as an employee," his boss responded.

"We now have 93 people who have found paying jobs," says Kathy. "Many others work in volunteer roles."

In the next few months, staff expect to meet the board of directors' goal of engaging at least five new employers for the people they serve.

"We're well on our way," comments Kathy Bennett, noting that 12 of the agency's workers have taken specialized training to build their skills in approaching potential employers and assisting people to find work.

While that support is important, the true focus is on finding the right match between job and job-seeker.

"The real relationship is between the employer and the employee," Kathy notes. "We're just there to facilitate that."

Kathy is convinced that gainful employment affects a person's entire life.

"Other things start to fall in place," she says, noting that people who have job responsibilities have more incentive to eat better and get the right amount of sleep.

They also enjoy the social activities that spring from the workplace, like Christmas parties, weddings and baby showers.

"For most of us, our job plays a big role in developing our social circle," she says. "It's a big part of who we are, and everyone should have an opportunity to experience that."



Community Living Upper Ottawa Valley President Gerry Mansveld congratulates this year's employer and employee champions, Steven Langfield and Richard Holohan of Deep River Giant Tiger, above. Ricky Crigger, right, was master of ceremonies for the event.



New retirement lifestyle is a cause for celebration

There were plenty of reasons to celebrate when friends and family of Gordon Welsh, Charlie Morris and Donna Grichen gathered in Petawawa earlier this fall.

At the ages of 78 and 62, Charlie and Gordon had just left behind decades of institutionalization at Rideau Regional Centre. Together with Donna, they now share their own home midway between Pembroke and Petawawa.

They were eager to share the joy of that new beginning and a completely new lifestyle. This was clearly a monumental move for each of them.

"They're having a nice retirement lifestyle," comments Community Living Service Coordinator Suzie Desjarlais. "It's a very positive thing."

She can quickly come up with a long list of reasons to celebrate this move:

- Charles and Gordon's return to their home community
- their reunion with family and friends
- the welcoming and friendly neighbours they've met
- the new freedom of choice enjoyed by the residents
- new beginnings
- and the cooperation of many different individuals and organizations to make it a success.

"Several agencies came into play in the best interests of these two gentlemen," Suzie notes, listing both past caregivers and the people who now support the residents in their new setting, including their Community Living workers, the Community Care Access Centre and Red Cross caregivers.

"They've all worked very hard to make this work," Suzie notes.

She also credits the staff at Rideau Regional Centre, where Charlie and Gordon had both lived for decades, with being very supportive and informative.

Team work at the ministry, facility and community levels set an example of how seniors leaving institutions can enjoy life in the community in their own home.

Corey Beard and Susan Torrie of the Ministry of Community and Social Services worked behind the scenes in coordinating roles and expedited the capital and operating agreements to make the home and support possible not only for people coming from the facilities, but for someone waiting for services from the community.

Josée Ouimette, regional planning facilitator with the Ministry of Community and Social Services, was also a key player in making the transition a success.

"She brought the groups together," Suzie explains, noting that local Community Living staff made several trips to the Rideau Regional Centre before Charlie and Gordon made their move.

"We wanted to get to know them," she says.

Once they were settled in the Ottawa Valley, the next step was to help the guys meet their neighbours. Gordon volunteered at Hubert's Nursery and became an active member of All Saints Anglican Church in

Petawawa, where the reception celebrating their new home was held. Charlie enjoys regular visits with his brother and sister, and other family members.

To widen their social circle even farther, the residents organized a yard sale last spring.

"Kudos to our community," comments Suzie. "They came out, they introduced themselves, and they've welcomed their new neighbours."

The Petawawa fire station is right around the corner, and members of the department have gone out of their way to welcome their new neighbours. Chief Steve Knott spoke at the open house, offering warm words of encouragement on their new venture.

Suzie concludes that the move out of the institution has been very positive for Charlie and Gordon. "Each person has their own story that they're bringing to this house, and we hope that they will be able to add many more chapters to those stories about living together in the community."



Gordon Welsh, right, celebrates with members of his family as a guest of honour at the open house in Petawawa this fall.





Red Fridays Support our Troops

BLANKETS FOR BABIES



Gloria Dunn, centre, who crochets infant-sized afghans, recently donated a number of them to the Pembroke Regional Hospital's Maternal / Childcare program for new babies.

Accompanying Ms. Dunn was Community Living Support Worker Suzanne Dupuis, left, and accepting the afghans on behalf of the Hospital was Karen Schreder, program director.

**Pembroke Regional Hospital
Spring 2006 Newsletter**



**Self Advocates thank Legal Aid
Staff for their presentation on
Changes to ODSP Left to right:
Ricky Crigger, Laura Hunter,
Felicity Stairs and Kyle Croft**

Social Capital

refers to the personal and reciprocal relationships that we have with other people – our families, friends, neighbours, social groups, and people we work with.

Increases in these social contacts have been associated with improved mental and physical health, lower rates of social problems and greater access to economic security. People who belong to organized social groups live longer than those who don't.

Human service organizations have historically emphasized their own programs and services that have limited the amount of social interaction that people have.

The future of human service organizations is to build and expand personal and reciprocal relationships in the local community for people with disabilities, their families, volunteers, and employees.

Social Capital In Action



United Way Trivia Challenge



Pennington's Fashion Show



Sturgeon Falls Self Advocates Retreat



United Way Trivia Challenge



Being Part of the Neighbourhood



Employer Recognition



Conference on Quality and Leadership



United Way 24 Hour Slow Pitch Tournament

Community Living Training Calendar

November 2006 - February 2007

November 2nd, 8:30-12pm, What's Happening with our Labour Market? The Renfrew County Labour Market Working Group Representatives from several major local employers will discuss their critical labour market needs and the kinds of issues they are facing in finding the right employees.

November 7th-9th, 3rd Annual Passport to Community Participation Conference Huntsville Numerous sessions providing information on Passport Initiative and funding, transitional planning, Passport Mentoring Project and Inclusive School Cultures.

November 7-11, 8:30am -12, Seminar on Abuse, Neglect, Mistreatment and Exploitation Tina Williams, Quality Enhancement Manager will provide all Community Living staff the opportunity to learn definitions, strategies and community resources for identifying abuse, neglect, mistreatment and exploitation.

November 16-17, A.C.E. Self Advocate Conference, Campbellford, Cheryl Tennant and Amy Perkins present ideas and personal stories to self advocates and staff on community connections and overcoming barriers for community participation.

November 14,21 and 30th, 8:30-4:30 pm, (MBR) Management by Responsibility, Jim Slavin, Delphi Group (funded by Eastern Ontario Development Fund Grant) Course offered to staff that aids with leadership development, conflict resolution and the setting of SMART goals.

November 27-28 9-4 pm, Non-Violent Crisis Intervention (NVCi), Instructors Suzie Desjarlais and Diane Mitchell, 2 day course and refresher to train staff in the principles and techniques of NVCi to aid in resolving potentially violent situations. Introduction and review of the policies and procedures governing the use of non violent physical intervention will be completed and opportunity to discuss potential right's restrictions.

December 4-7 9-5, Personal Outcome Measures Self Assessment Workshop, Tina Williams, In House Trainer, provides staff with an understanding of personal outcome measures, the opportunity to complete two interviews and follow up with the group to aid in determining if outcomes are present.

January 3-5, 8:30-4:30, Focus on Best Possible Health, Medications, Rights & Employment and Kick off for Accreditation, Management Team and Committee Members will provide the staff with information on psychotropic medications, prevalent diagnoses and the recommended treatments and testing. Review the results of the right's restriction committee and results of the employment supports. Review goals and results from strategic planning and plan for CQL accreditation.

Please tell us what training you would like to see organized. 613-735-0659 Ext: 107 (Kathy Bennett)



1957 –2006

In Loving Memory Of Debbie Wilson: Excerpts from Eulogy by Beverly Anne Smith

We as a family were blessed by God when Deb arrived in our midst. Deb had a great life and taught 3 generations of nieces and nephews about tolerance, inclusion, acceptance and humour. We never questioned why Deb was the way she was, it was just a given. That was Deb.

Her love of music and dancing was well known as Deb had no shyness about jumping up when the music started and swaying those hips to the beat. She loved to sing and it didn't matter if she knew the words or not, she sang right along. She was also known to direct the choir as she sang along to the songs. Grandma and Deb spent many evenings out on the white swing softly swinging back and forth singing their favourite hymns. Music was in Deb's soul and she just had to let it out.

Deb had a great life. She was well traveled too. She loved her yearly visits in the motor home out west to see brother Bill. She traveled down to the east coast to her beloved Anne of Green Gables, and she flew to Florida for a holiday with Grandma and Heather one winter. One of Deb's favourite holidays was each June when she would go to the cottage at Moore's beach with her friends from PRC. Everyone has a special memory and story of Deb and I hope that we continue to remember all the good times and wonderful life that she had.

Grandpa and Grandma never missed a stride when they found out about Deb's disability. They just went ahead like everyday and they set the example for all of us. Deb was Deb.

Resources Available from Community Living

"Peace of Mind" which is a practical and loving guide to help families plan for the future of their relative with a disability. This step-by-step CD is produced by Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network (PLAN) and offers personal stories, testimonials and worksheets to get started.

Removing The Mystery" an estate planning guide for families of people with disabilities. This step-by-step CD was a project of the Long Term Planning and Support Program of The Ontario Federation for Cerebral Palsy.

"Safe and Secure – Six Steps To Creating A Personal Future Plan For People With Disabilities" written by Al Etmanski with Jack Collins & Vickie Cammack produced by Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network (PLAN).

"My Life Portfolio" is a planning guide and practical workbook for those interested in developing life goals and achieving their dreams created by Individualized Planning of The Ontario Federation for Cerebral Palsy.

DVDs:

- **David With F.A.S.**
- **F.A.S.: When Children Grow Up**
- **Autism: The Road Back**