

# In Touch

COMMUNITY LIVING UPPER OTTAWA VALLEY



## Planning for a pandemic: No need to fear, wise to be prepared

Each week we hear new reports of the bird flu in distant parts of the world. Experts tell us that it is only a matter of time before we face a “pandemic” – an illness that spreads worldwide and affects millions of people.

Should we be afraid?

No, says Patti Smith, the senior public health nurse who is in charge of pandemic planning for the Renfrew County and District Health Unit.

Should we be concerned?

Yes, says Smith. Each of us should plan ahead so that we can take care of ourselves when the flu hits.

“The numbers look scary,” she admits, quoting statistics that indicate as many as 15,000 people in Renfrew County could come down with the flu and 70 to 500 of those people might need to be admitted to hospital.

“It’s going to be a bad flu, but most of us will be able to get better at home,” Smith predicts.

She says each of us should adopt good habits now to prevent the spread of flu. Here’s what you can do now:

### An ounce of prevention

- Sanitize your hands. Wash your hands often. A virus can live on your skin for several hours, and spread onto everything you touch. A good scrubbing with soap can destroy the virus before it gets started.
- Always cover your mouth when you cough, and throw away your Kleenex right after you have used it.

- Share a warm smile and a friendly greeting, instead of shaking hands.
- Use your own glass, spoon and fork. If you are sharing food or a drink, divide it up first and then eat your share with your own utensils.
- If you live with someone who has the flu, make sure they use their own facecloth and towel.

### Being prepared

If several people get sick at the same time, stores and other services may have to close for a while. Preparing ahead is a good idea:

- Have lots of juice and bottled water in your cupboard.
- Keep a good supply of canned and frozen food.
- Think ahead about who you would be able to call for help.
- Stock up on Kleenex.
- Get an annual flu shot.

### If you get the flu

Remember that getting the flu is not a disaster. Treat this like any other time you feel under the weather.

- Get plenty of rest.
- Drink lots of fluids.
- Do not smoke.
- Keep warm.
- Gargle.
- Limit your contact with others.

You should see a doctor if you have trouble breathing, if your fever doesn’t go away in three or four days, if you feel especially drowsy or weak, or if you have extreme pain in your ear.

“We all need to take care of ourselves and our family and friends,” Smith concludes. “Planning ahead in case a pandemic happens is like a good insurance policy,” she says. “You hope you never need it, but if you do you are glad you have it.”



Stephen Gorr checks out the well-stocked emergency supply cupboard at Community Living’s respite home on Hunter Street.

# President's message

It hard to believe that in a few months my second term as president of Community Living will end. It's been an incredible two years that saw building new homes, achieving accreditation and now working to bring people back to our community from institutions and setting the association's course through strategic planning.

Our goal and vision is as relevant as it was when adopted in 1990 and speaks to a community of possibilities and belonging for all people. To make progress towards our ultimate goal it is necessary for the board of directors to

plan and set priorities with everyone's input to focus resources to achieve short-term goals.

Over the last five years we have achieved many outcomes as the result of strategic planning. For example: our focus on assisting people supported to plan and make transitions, increased public awareness and our new office.

The board has assigned the task of collecting this information to its quality enhancement committee chaired by director Gerry Mansveld. Currently Gerry's committee is setting up small focus

groups with people supported, families, community partners and staff as another means of generating ideas and responding to feedback through the strategic plan.

Enclosed with this newsletter is a simple but powerful exercise we ask you to complete and return in the stamped addressed envelope included. Volunteers and staff have completed this exercise and it is amazing the amount and quality of information it provides.

**Dave Marcus, President  
Community Living Upper Ottawa Valley**

## In memory of Jack Minns

As president of the Civitan Club in 1958, Jack Minns became the local champion for an association to support people with intellectual disabilities. Civitan International was a key supporter of people with disabilities, and Jack was ready to bring their work to the Valley.

After publicizing the idea in the local media, he invited parents of handicapped children in the region to a meeting. When 15 to 20 people showed up, he returned to the Civitans to report the positive results.

The momentum had begun, and Jack was soon elected president of the newly-formed Pembroke and District Association for the Mentally Retarded.

"I almost felt a sense of relief from the people who were involved with retarded children, that people outside their immediate family were concerning themselves with a problem that had been solely theirs in the past," he later recalled.

Fund-raising was the first order of the day, and the community readily supported the new initiative. The fledgling association then set to work, hiring a teacher from Toronto. The expense of \$3,000 a year was intimidating, but the group quickly proved itself, developing a solid reputation for good work and a core base of community support.

When the opening bell sounded at that first workshop, 11 students and their teacher were ready to get to work. Their headquarters was two donated rooms in the Pembroke Legion hall.

"Everybody was a volunteer in those days," Jack commented. "There were no professionals, they were just people who were concerned and affectionately disposed towards these children."

The supporters couldn't find better inspiration than Minns himself. Driven by his lifelong friendship with Jim Cully, he put his heart into the organization and maintained his commitment throughout the years.

Most recently, his flair could be found in the flowers he donated and tended at the Community Living site on Pembroke Street West.

Jack Minns was one of Pembroke's colourful characters. He was a straight-speaker and a man who earned the respect of those he met. When he spoke about the impact of Community Living during our accreditation survey last year, people listened. Jack was a man of conviction who did not mince words.

Community Living Upper Ottawa Valley is honoured to have this opportunity to pay tribute to Jack. It was his initial vision nearly 50 years ago that paved the way for so much empowerment for so many.

Thank you, Jack!



**Jack Minns, right, with his lifelong friend Jim Cully.**

# In memory of Penny Pollock



Penny was a woman who easily gave love, compliments and kind words. Her smile won over anyone she was willing to share it with.

She was a fun-loving soul with a great sense of humour and a wonderful memory.

Penny was also strong-willed. Even when she was in poor health, she made her wishes and intentions known. She demanded respect. No one touched her things without her approval, and because of who she was, people didn't want to disappoint her.

Penny will be remembered fondly by her many friends, and especially her closest friends – Bruce Mainprize, Donna McMahon and Bev Schruder.

Maureen McKinnon was also a central figure in Penny's life. Their relationship blossomed throughout its 15 years, beyond that of support to true friendship.

Penny's personality shone through in all that she did, whether it was planning trips to visit family in Sudbury or shopping for the school supplies she loved – books, binders, pencils and pens. She took great pride in arranging her desk, with just the right spot for each item. If it was suggested that she had enough, things would mysteriously disappear and Penny would announce that it was time to go shopping again. Maureen made school shopping for her boys a ritual with Penny. Those years, Alex and Darren certainly had everything they needed and more, and in all the best styles and colours. Penny had a great time, and really appreciated the fact that she could indulge in her favourite shopping without

spending her own money. Who better to shop for than her two favourite boys?

Penny loved photographs and always had her favourites on display.

She looked forward to the strawberry social at the Champlain Trail Museum each summer, and was well-known by the regulars there.

Penny was the oldest child and only daughter in her family. She remembered her baby brothers fondly and always referred to them as "the boys". She proudly displayed her family photos.

Penny's role in the family was clear. Her stepmother shared these words in remembrance of Penny:

"Although I didn't have natural children, Penny couldn't have been any more of a daughter to me."

"A loving heart is still," she concluded.

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# In memory of Betty Ann Smith

The best word to describe Betty Ann is "spirited"!

Those who knew her could never be certain if they would get a big hug or a strong tongue-lashing whenever they met.

Betty Ann was genuine. No time was wasted with pretence or being fake.

She knew that the most important thing in life was family, and she knew what her role in a family should be. Her life was blessed with the love of the Mullen family – Shirley and Ellsworth

and their relatives, as well as Colleen Valois and Helene Obadiah. Betty Ann would tell you that these people were her family.

She was loyal in her relationships, holding each of her special friends dear to her heart through good times and bad. With Betty Ann, emotions ran deeply, and she shared the joy and the pain of the people she loved, including her special friends Michel and Ken.

We cannot remember Betty Ann without thinking of Tim Horton's, a place where she enjoyed two activities near and dear to her – seeing friends and relishing a great cup of coffee. It was a daily ritual that Betty Ann wouldn't miss. The staff became another "family" – friendly and somewhat like silent angels watching over Betty Ann.

Community Living staff members had clearly defined roles in Betty Ann's life. Nancy Goodbody, as her primary worker, shared a relationship marked by respect and admiration – even if Nancy couldn't live up to Betty Ann's expectations when it came to installing an inground pool. (The neighbours had one, so Betty Ann thought it would only be right if she got

one too, and it only seemed reasonable that Nancy would find the necessary funds or, failing that, start digging.)

Diane Mitchell and Gwen Brown were the experts in colouring Betty Ann's hair with just that certain tone of red. Duane was her personal handyman. Betty Ann of course, simply knew that he could fix anything – and on her timetable.

Betty Ann demanded and received respect from those around her. She made clear what she expected - from the people around her and from life.

Those expectations did not include barriers. Betty Ann was fiercely independent and committed to achieving her goals. She was comfortable with herself for who she was, and did not pretend or try to be anything else.

She had a genuine, sweet and mischievous smile that lit up her entire face.

Betty Ann loved animals and she had a passion for her doll collection.

A place in a family, a nice home, old friends, independence... and a really good cup of coffee. These were the important things in Betty Ann's life.

She will be missed.



# Self-advocacy takes independence to a new level

Learning how to stand up for yourself is an important part of life.

It can be a difficult thing for people to do because it requires confidence and awareness of your own goals and preferences.

Helping people with disabilities to identify and promote their own goals is a key initiative of Community Living Upper Ottawa Valley.

“We call it self-advocacy,” explains Executive Director Paul Melcher. “It gives people the power to set goals, make choices and solve problems in their lives.”

“Self-advocacy is speaking up for yourself, learning about your rights and responsibilities, living the way you want to, and respecting the right of others to do the same,” he adds.

Community Living supports the people it serves to advocate for themselves. The agency’s promotion of self-advocacy takes a variety of forms:

- Each person is encouraged to decide for themselves how they would like to spend their days – what they would like to do, and who they want to spend time with.
- People set their own goals, collaborating with Community Living planners and the people who make up their personal support networks.
- Everyone is encouraged to make their own decisions about where they would like to live and work.

## A cause for celebration

It is with great pleasure that Tom and Enid Holohan of Deep River and Ron and Lorraine Tremblay of Petawawa announce the engagement of their children, Richard to Jennifer. Congratulations and best wishes on this exciting development in your lives! We wish you many happy years together!

- People are encouraged to pursue their own interests - to sit on boards and committees, volunteer, and get involved in their community.
- The agency has supported people to meet with their members of parliament and city council to share their issues and concerns.

The Community Living speakers’ bureau has brought self-advocacy to life for a number of people in the Upper Ottawa Valley. The bureau is comprised of people who are supported by Community Living. Since last spring, they have been meeting once a month to share their ideas and develop their public speaking skills. Members of the group have had public speaking training from a member of Speakers International, and several of them

have now made their own presentations about respect, bullying, rights, and employment in their communities. They have been given support to meet with self-advocates in other parts of Ontario, to learn from each other and exchange ideas.

“Self-advocacy has tremendous power for people,” says Melcher. “It gives them the confidence to speak up. It helps them develop the ability to speak to others, and by doing that, it educates everyone.”

“By making their opinions known, these people will help change others’ attitudes about people with intellectual disabilities,” he concludes.

“It’s given people a voice in our society who have not been encouraged to speak up in the past. Whenever that happens, we all stand to gain.”



Above, the Community Living speakers’ bureau. Front row, Kyle Croft, Cheryl Tennant, Richard Holohan, Glen Ford, and back row, Jeff Shand, Jennifer Tremblay and Rick Crigger. Cheryl Tennant, at left, is sharing her thoughts with students at Cathedral School in Pembroke.

Community Living Upper Ottawa Valley now has an active Rights Restriction Review Committee. This impartial committee will assist us to ensure that people have the best quality of life; that people’s rights are not infringed upon; and that people are able to exercise their rights.

The community can expect that we will be offering more awareness and opportunities for people to learn about and exercise their rights. Please call Community Living Upper Ottawa Valley or visit our website at [www.communitylivingupperottawavalley.ca](http://www.communitylivingupperottawavalley.ca) for more information about rights or this committee.

