



# THE DAILY OBSERVER

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■ **CLUOV:** Increasing awareness, helping everyone to be included

## Community Living Month

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LAURENTIAN VALLEY - Community Living Upper Ottawa Valley (CLUOV) is working hard to increase awareness and help all persons live in a state of dignity with guidance from its new executive director Chris Grayson.

Recently, Grayson and Melissa Hoffman, a member of Community Living stopped by the council chambers at Laurentian Valley to help spread their message.

The duo asked for the township's support Tuesday and asked that they name May, Community Living Month and fly the organization's flag outside the township office. Council happily agreed to help.

While Grayson acknowledged that there has had to be some damage control done since he became the executive director, he also announced plans for the organization to continue to move forward. The organization's goal is to help provide all inclusive environments and opportunities for persons with developmental disabilities.

Within the next month or so the organization is hosting an array of events and workshops to help others and to help increase awareness amongst communities, Grayson announced.

This Friday, CLUOV plans for an Ontario Trillium Foundation grant announcement and launch. The organization also be kicked off May as Community Living Month on April 30 with guest speaker Kelly Walker at Festival Hall.

Walker is a widely-known motivational speaker, musician and



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Left to right: Melissa Hoffman and executive director Chris Grayson from Community Living Upper Ottawa Valley ask the township of Laurentian Valley to help support Community Living and make May, Community Living Month.

expert on change and transition and came to Pembroke to offer two workshops, titled Working Happiness and Alive Again.

Working Happiness offered people a new perspective on work-life balance and helped people to take a look at how they can

try to stay energized in the midst of such a balancing act.

Later, in Alive Again: From Grief to New Beginnings, Walker helped people explore the dynamics of grief.

On May 5, an information session will be offered to families

on the institution class action claims process. Marilyn Dolmage will guide families. On May 28, Community Living will host the Chamber of Commerce and on May 29, the organization will host its annual memorial garden event.

Sarah Hyatt is a Daily Observer multimedia journalist.

**Editor's note:** Watch The Daily Observer and [www.thedailyobserver.ca](http://www.thedailyobserver.ca) in the coming days for a complete story on Walker's 'Alive Again' talk at Festival Hall.