

OASIS Bi-Monthly Newsletter - July 2016



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The OASIS newsletter is a bi-monthly newsletter keeping you up-to-date on our member agencies and the Ontarians they serve.



FROM SURVIVING TO THRIVING

This fall, OASIS will celebrate our 20th anniversary, and as we mark this important milestone, we take note of all our achievements. We are no longer the small collective of just six member organizations we started as. We are a leader in developmental services, a collaborator between our 190 member agencies and the province. We have much to celebrate.

We also must take note of the positive change in our role, within Canada. When we started we were fighting for the very survival of the people we served, making sure Ontarians with developmental exceptionalities were afforded decency. As Canada's sesquicentennial year approaches the role we play, and the respect afforded to the

The transformative role of technology, and innovative approaches are opening up new opportunities, our organizations are seeing this in their every day. In this newsletter you will hear stories of school children captivated by the positive message our member organizations are bringing to their assemblies. You will see how new technology is allowing a more independent life for those with intellectual special needs. And you will hear a heartwarming story of how, no matter the weather, the heart and spirit of our members will shine through.

As we head into the next chapter of OASIS and look forward to the progress another 20 years will make we have much to be hopeful for. We know there are many challenges ahead of us, it will take energy and focus to transform our services and grow the opportunities for those we serve.

If you have any thoughts on how we can better achieve these goals, or stories to share that show the good work we have done, or still have to do, please do not hesitate to contact me through the links on our website at www.oasisonline.ca.

Ann Kenney
President

AGENCIES MATTER



Top photo: Tiffany Ertel and Kathy Soloduka (bike) Bethany Collins and Erin Kelley (run)

Left photo: Erin Kelly and Bethany Collins cross the finish line after their send 3km run!

Right photo: At the finish line, Cassandra Ritchie was handing out medals to the women crossing the finish line.

Kincardine Women's Triathlon

The Kincardine Women's Triathlon (KWT) celebrated its 16th year this July, and Community Living Kincardine & District (CLKD) was happy to participate in the event once again! This year the weather did not co-operate, canceling the swimming portion, and turning the race into a duathlon. But the weather did not stop CLKD members from stepping up to the plate, and participating in any way they could. **Jackie MacDonald** and **Kim Sullivan**, who were originally scheduled to swim, volunteered to help out along the run course instead, cheering on the participants and helping to keep the course safe for spectators and runners alike. **Bethany Collins** and **Erin Kelley** completed both 3km run portions of the race, showing grit and determination while smiling the whole way through while **Kathy Soloduka** and **Tiffany Ertel** biked the 12km course together and kept up an incredible pace, despite some slick sections on the road. To finish off the race, several CLKD members greeted participants at the finish line, handing out medals and congratulating everyone for doing their best.

The partnership with the Kincardine Women's Triathlon has been incredibly positive for both CLKD and the KWT, as funds raised at the event support CLKD and their volunteer help is instrumental to the event's success. Kincardine Women's Triathlon organizers expressed their appreciation to the CLKD members who volunteered at the race, noting that the enthusiasm and cheers from the CLKD volunteers have helped inspire them to keep pushing even when they feel like giving up. Organizers have welcomed the participation of athletes of all abilities and are looking forward to the Inspiring Possibilities Relay teams next year.

SMART SUPPORT - Technology enables services

The Minister of Community and Social Services recently announced that Smart-Support Technology Enabled Services was approved for two years of funding, totaling \$278,000. This project was one of three projects submitted by Community Living Essex County to the Developmental Services Housing Task Force, earlier this year.

This project will equip adults and their support environments with innovative technology-enabled services that are customized based on a person's lifestyle, needs and available resources. Community Living Essex County will be partnering with a variety of organizations to ensure the partners have the expertise and specialized resources required to undertake this new approach to providing supports. Community Living Essex County plans to work in collaboration with the Engineering and Computer Sciences faculties at the University of Windsor, to have the students conduct research and examine the effectiveness of technology enabled services. *Imagine! Smart Homes* will provide consultation on design of services and implementation models with *Onsite Services*, a local IT specialist provider, consulting on the integration of technology.

This project will explore supports to facilitate an increase in independence for participants while decreasing their reliance on paid supports. This will free up resources that will in turn be redirected to those on waiting lists. The project will engage participants and their families through personal outcomes planning and assessment in the selection of appropriate technology enabled services to meet the individual's unique needs in a customized fashion. This project is part of Community Living Essex County's REAL Change initiative, a transformation strategy to design, and offer innovative, modern, flexible, and affordable support options to families.

The key objectives of Smart Support align with all of the Developmental Services Housing Task Force's Innovative Housing Solutions. The expansion of housing capacity by reducing existing paid support by 25%, and realigning resources to those on waiting lists through Developmental Services Ontario.

Smart Support will also enable adults with an intellectual disability to live more independently in their community through the use of technology in facilitating engagement with natural support networks. Ultimately the aim is to improve the quality of life and self-confidence of participants.

Celebrating Community Living Month with School Assembly Tour



CLKD members teaching students to use sign language

Community Living Kincardine & District (CLKD) recently toured local schools to help celebrate Community Living Month and to share a message of inclusion. At each school, Community Living Members and staff led a fun and interactive assembly that celebrated the abilities of everyone and encouraged students to be positive role models.

The assemblies began with an interactive performance of the song "I am Beautiful" by Christina Aguilera where the students were first taught how to sing the song using sign language and were then encouraged to sign along to the chorus during the performance. The activity was an opportunity to discuss the various ways that people communicate with one another and for the students to learn a new skill.

Jenny Raspberry-Martin, CLKD's Infant & Child Development Coordinator, spoke to the students about hurtful language, how to be a good friend and how to include everyone at school and in the community. She was joined by parents and their children from the *Homies with Extra Chromies* group, to talk about how we are all more alike than different and that we all deserve the opportunity to grow up feeling like part of the community.

The assemblies wrapped up with a performance of the play "Ian and Friends" by the CLKD Lighthouse Players, a story of a young man who moves to Kincardine and discovers some of the great things about the community. CLKD members have been recognized and greeted in the streets and several parents have shared that their children could not stop talking about the performance, and the adorable babies which visited their schools. CLKD looks forward to continuing to build its relationships with the schools in our area and helping children learn more about disabilities all year long.