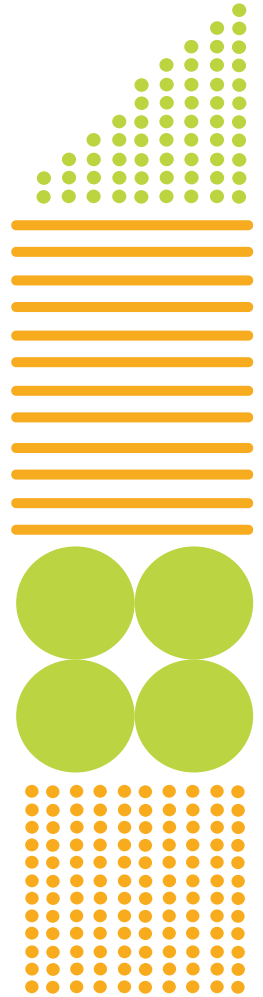




# ANNUAL REPORT

April 2021- March 2022




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- 02 Board of Directors
- 03 A Year in Review
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# A Message from Kelly Christo | CEO



Over the past year, Woodstock and District Developmental Services (WDDS) has been tested and challenged in many ways. Despite a year filled with fear, frustration and an unbelievable amount of stress, WDDS staff have shown incredible dedication to the people we support. Our organization could not have accomplished all that we have without the commitment and resilience of our staff, who sacrificed so much to get us through this past year. In February, we spent a week celebrating their contributions during the newly proclaimed Ontario Week of Appreciation for the Nonprofit Sector.

The Health and Wellness Committee, with help from resources made available through the Cultivating Community Wellness initiative, as well as those offered through MCCSS have been able to provide excellent resources to our employees to not only assist them with their own mental health and wellness but to also increase their skill set to assist those that we support.

Pandemic related restrictions continued to impact the services we were able to provide. We thank the generosity, patience and kindness that people, families and community members have shown us over the year. As restrictions ease, we hope to increase the number of people we serve, while also ensuring that our services are provided in such a way that further supports our community through smaller, more individualized supports and services.

Due to the uncertainty of the COVID-19 Omicron Variant and our dedication to ensuring the safety of all participants, WDDS made the difficult decision to cancel the popular Runway of Stars fundraising event. Energies were refocused to the organization and running of a very successful on-line auction. The success of this event was only made possible by the support and generosity of our community partners. We are so very grateful to everyone who made this such a positive event.

After many months working with Platinum Leadership, WDDS proudly shared the new 2021-2024 Strategic Plan – “Building a Community Where Everybody Belongs”. Between now and 2024, WDDS will continue to be guided by this plan focusing efforts and resources on Community, Organizational Culture, Service Excellence and Sustainability.

In summary, over the last year, despite being faced with adversity, we continued advocating for the rights and choices of people with intellectual disabilities. As we move forward, we are excited for the opportunities that the upcoming year will hold.



# WDDS

## Board of Directors



WDDS has a strong **Board of Directors** that plays an active role in determining the growth and direction of our agency. They are involved in long range planning and the development of long term strategies. Their ongoing contribution of time and sharing of expertise and resources is invaluable to the success of WDDS.

2021

2022

### Officers

President: Pam Roe

Vice President: Mal Coubrough

Past President: Janet Thomson

Treasurer: Garry Honcoop

### Directors

John Bedell

Barbara Dabrowska

Carrie Innes Olah

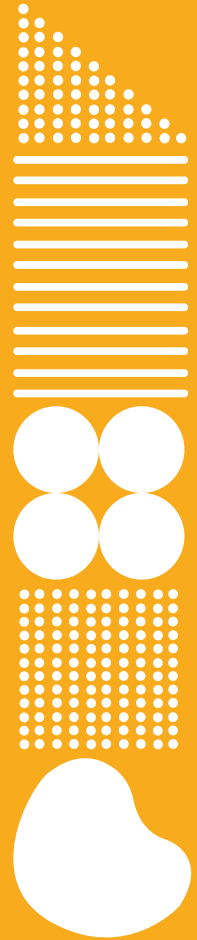
Melissa Machin





# *A year* IN REVIEW

- 01 : Service Highlights
- 02 : Endless Possibilities
- 03 : Volunteers and Students
- 04 : Committee Highlights
- 05 : Awards



# SERVICE *highlights*



## Summer Camp

We offered our first COVID-friendly Summer Camp at the Woodstock Christian school. It was our first year dividing into age group cohorts, which was very successful. Because we couldn't go out, we brought in people to teach Zumba, looming, reptile handling, painting lessons and more indoor fun. Thinking outside the box kept activities safe and local in the absence of day trips and outing availability.



## Options

Options learners continued working toward their goals despite a challenging year. A full transition to online courses uncovered great opportunity for those who would not be able to participate otherwise. We were able to return to in person

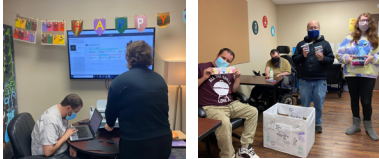
in the fall and again this spring so it's nice to see some familiar faces again! People attended classes in physical health, wellness, green living, problem solving, boundaries and conflict resolutions. We started life skills with the home alone curriculum at our Respite house. A big highlight was our GIVE learners' initiative to knit warm winter gear to donate to United Way Oxford.



## NEXUS

Nexus continued offering unique work skill-developing workshops, which included some opportunities in person and at times we transitioned to online workshops. We explored

horticulture and green industry skills, entrepreneurship skills with the Cricut, retail skills at Salvation Army, woodworking, and food prep skills at our local soup kitchen. We connected with valuable members of our community in a virtual Armchair Exchange networking workshop and ran a very successful donation drive collecting personal hygiene and goods for people in need with our leadership workshop.



## Joblinks

Think Abilities, Think Success

Joblinks had a very successful year, with many new placements and valuable coaching opportunities. We saw a huge increase in job availability in our

community and helped place qualified people in positions that suited their strengths. This year we hosted our first Employment open house for high school teachers and our community. We also launched our first free employment-focused and certification workshops: Food Handling, Commercial Cleaning, and Standard First Aid, which were well attended and resulted in a huge success rate for employment placements.



Within our Supported Employment ventures there were also many changes and much growth and development despite economic closures, rolling shut downs within Toyota and the end of the scanning job, which WDDS held for over a decade. During this year, we were able to negotiate and secure a new partnership for WDDS workers with Aramark who operates the kitchen within the Toyota plant. Yard Basics managed to also have a very successful year, despite crew shortages and working through the limitations required for safety due to the ongoing pandemic. At the end of the Yard Basics season, planning was completed to secure a new partnership with a local landscaping company who has partnered with us in February 2022, who will care for our lawn care needs and who will continue to employ individuals with disabilities. Both the Aramark and new landscaping ventures will ensure that there is a place for all people to work and thrive within the world of employment.



# SERVICE *highlights*



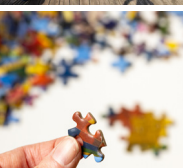
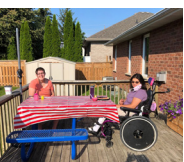
## DAY RESPITE

Respite supported 8 people who live at home in 2 separate cohorts. This service allowed family members an interlude throughout the week while the Respite support team focused on personalized care according to wants, needs & visions. We employed eclectic & innovative planning in the areas of Communication (iPad tools, American Sign Language, creative writing etc.), Expressive Music, Meaningful Movement/Kinetics, Healthy Living, Art, Social Networking, Community Outreach, Literacy & Self Assurance/Expression. This new Respite model has created a 'springboard effect,' allowing the people we serve to launch themselves into a future with unbridled potential. Increased, quality support has fueled the confidence required to step beyond boundaries & comfort zones. This can be reflected by planning creative trips into the community, collaborating food drives with a local Ministry, and creating and distributing entrepreneurial projects that reflect individual passions. Most remarkably, families have been on board with us every step of the way, making the journey that much more profound. It's this seamless partnership that will propel us forward as we continue to adjust to an unpredictable world.



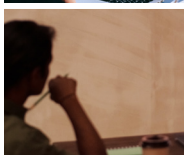
## SUPPORTED INDEPENDENT LIVING

In SIL, we got creative to make progress on people's goals through COVID, focusing on reconnecting into our community after the isolation of many shutdowns. Many of our visits were shifted outdoors when weather permitted, but we continued to support people with budgeting, finances, cleaning, cooking, developing relationships and life skills. When restrictions eased, we hosted a few nights of Christmas crafts and activities, which were well attended and enjoyed. Every third Friday we also hosted a group initiative called Fabulous Friday Fixins, a themed dinner using our kitchen where people are supported to prepare a meal together to take home.



## ACCOMMODATION SUPPORT

Resiliency and flexibility would be two words to represent how everyone has handled the last year with the pandemic and living in their homes. Teams became extra creative in helping people to have fun and have unique experiences in their home. We saw people start virtual music classes, gardening, cooking, crafts, and had a huge upswing in puzzle building masters. Many people upgraded their technology to take an online class or to connect with friends and family virtually, had distanced outdoor visits and picnics when it was safe to do so.



## FAMILY SERVICES

Family services partnered with Community Living Tillsonburg to host a presentation for families in Oxford County. This virtual information night focused on connecting with parents and providing valuable information for connecting to services. Our Family Services Coordinator also collaborated with community partners for presentations, such as FASD community of practice and was also a guest at the Wellkin Hub for parents and caregivers.





Organizing and participating in Orange Shirt Day on National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.



Love is Love!  
Celebrating Pride month



Health and Wellness' festive hot chocolate truck



Week of appreciation for non-profit employees



We raised over \$10,000 with our first online auction



Holiday 50/50 Fundraiser was a hit



Tallest Sunflower Challenge



Scavenger Hunt Challenge





**BRANDON + KYLER**



"Some horses will test you, some will teach you and some will bring out the best in you" Brandon, Kyler, Emily, Stacie and Mackenzie are all enjoying the Partners for Success horse program. Not only do they get to spend time with the horse, they are learning leadership skills, communication skills and working at building self-esteem.

# ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES.



**BRENDON**

Time to celebrate Brendon Birch. He has never been on a bike before and has just purchased his very first. He wants to work towards a healthier lifestyle and this was his first step. Brendon is super proud of his bike and all the opportunities it will bring.



**KEESHA**

Keesha has a dream to perform on a stage one day. She has been doing guitar lessons weekly, as well as music sessions. Keesha can be heard singing and playing music quite often during her days. Keesha was able to attend the Stratford Festival Canopy Theatre, where she saw a production live on stage. Keep reaching for your dreams Keesha!!





# STUDENTS *and volunteers*



This year was a wonderful year for welcoming students and volunteers to work with us. While many places were not offering placements or accepting volunteers, we saw an opportunity to connect people together safely and with purpose.

To ensure reached all kinds of students, we spent some time creating and executing regular presentations to college students, showcasing opportunities for their placements at WDDS.

We worked with two students from Fanshawe College, and one from Durham College, which included mock interviews, support with our Food Prep Workshop, and Summer Camp. We were happy to welcome two of these students onto our team permanently after their placement was finished.

We created a partnership with a local PSW program at Conestoga College, where students could do their placement while working with us. Their working hours contributed to their placement requirements, and we have onboarded and retained four fantastic people through this process.

A special shout out goes to our two Co-op students who joined us this year from St. Mary's Catholic Highschool and Notre Dame. Both were eager to get to work helping with our Auction sponsor recognition, organizing supplies for our sunflower challenge, and assisting with deliveries, games and meaningful activities with people supported.

Volunteers Josh and Molly were busy supporting people to have meaningful days, Josh by volunteering in Summer Camp and continuing his support throughout the year every Saturday. Molly contributed her incredible skills to our Nexus breakfast hub and showed us lots of tips and tricks in our Entrepreneurial skills Cricut Workshop.





# COMMITTEE *updates*



## BEHAVIOUR SUPPORTS

9 staff participated in the Community Capacity Development Initiative through RSA. During this training we learned how to complete and implement Functional Behaviour Assessments and Behaviour Support Plans. In total 5 Behaviour Support Plans were developed for people we support. The Behaviour Supports Committee is currently working on developing additional safety plans and Behaviour Support Plans for more people.



## HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Health and Wellbeing became a committee on its own to help provide resources to teams in regards to all things health related for the people we support. The main focus currently is supporting people as they age, making sure that we understand what supports teams are needing as well as the people supported.



## HEALTH AND WELLNESS

This committee offered wellness resources and staff engagement activities throughout the year. Most engagement was with our sunflower challenge where teams competed to grow the tallest sunflower. We also partnered with Castle Lumber and offered a hot chocolate truck to appreciate staff and people we support. We focused our efforts on Cultivating Community Wellness, which included attending webinars and Community of Practice and distributing those resources to our teams.



## COMMUNICATION

The Communication Committee started back up in 2021. The team began at the basics developing All About Me books, creating visual schedules for people to help them plan their days, exploring alternative and augmentative communication apps and resources, and started working at setting up technology to best help a person to communicate needs and wants.



## RUNWAY OF STARS

Due to COVID, We transferred our efforts into our first ever online auction. With help from over 40 sponsors we raised over \$10,000!



## TECHNOLOGY

The tech committee was launched this year with the intention of using technology to increase independence. The committee is exploring creative solutions with devices like smart TVs, Google, Alexa and wearable technology.



## MENTORSHIP

The mentorship program was rebooted this year. Mentors received training and have been connecting with our new hires during the onboarding process. Each mentee has access to a mentor for their first year of employment for support and guidance.



## HEALTH AND SAFETY

The H&S committee has been busily involved in the implementation of ongoing COVID policies and procedures. This committee has done a fantastic job of keeping everyone at WDDS safe and informed throughout the pandemic.



## QUALITY ASSURANCE

The quality assurance committee has been working diligently to complete compliance audits. The team completes regular audits for ministry compliance guidelines, and works with teams to meet the standards.



Dorothy  
Wright  
Award

Chris  
Darnley

# AWARDS

This award is presented to a person who has shown extraordinary effort in attempting to meet their own goals

Chris has shown persistence, patience, and success in his new woodworking job with Eddycrest Sewing Furniture. Chris continues to live out his dream not only in employment, but in his personal life as well, Chris moved into his own apartment, which has been an amazing experience for him. He feels like he has found his place in the community and continues to thrive.



Les  
McKerral  
Award

Sherrie  
Thompson

This award is presented to a person who has enhanced the life of an individual living with a developmental disability, or has made a significant contribution to WDDS.

Sherrie continually offers her time and expertise to staff and people supported with thoughtfulness, patience and kindness. Sherrie has many gifts and a wide array of talents that has greatly benefited the people we support and WDDS as a whole. We would like to sincerely thank Sherrie for all that she has done both as a staff member as well as a volunteer.



# FONDLY *remembering*



*Emily*  
Ann Ferris

May 28, 1990 ~ November 30, 2021 (age 31)



FERRIS, Emily Ann - born May 28th, 1990, daughter of Roy Ferris and Deanna Ferris (Bakos), and beloved sister to Jessica and Meagan was called home to heaven suddenly on Tuesday November 30th. Emily had a zest for life that was supported and fostered by the love and devotion of Steve and Carol Harrington. Emily was and will continue to be an irreplaceable beacon of light that touched everyone she met with her infectious excitement and laughter. Emily was exceptional. Her memory is etched into each person fortunate enough to have met her and she will forever hold a special place in the hearts and home of the Harrington's and their family. Throughout the years, Emily has been loved and cared for by so many. Our families wish to extend a sincere thank you to HomeShare and Woodstock and District Developmental Services for the many years of support.

June 21, 1960 – December 3, 2021 (age 61)



*Bernie*  
Catling

CATLING, Bernie - In early December, we lost our dear friend, Bernie Catling. Bernie was a bright, funny, talkative fellow. He was rarely seen without his trademark hat and fleece vest. A self-proclaimed jack of all trades, Bernie was always quick to offer to grab his tool box and lend a helping hand. He also often claimed he was a millionaire! An admirer of all service workers, Bernie respected and often talked about how he would love to be a construction worker, policeman, or firefighter. He loved going to Long Point, where he enjoyed camping, fishing and campfires with his marshmallow stick. He loved his family fiercely, making weekly visits to his mom at Caressant Care prior to her passing, and he adored his beloved Irene, always looking forward to date nights & coffee together. Bernie had a wonderful rapport with his support staff, often chatting, joking, or taking silly face selfies and snapchats. Quotes such as, "You betcha!" and "Go for it!" will forever play in our minds in Bernie's voice. Bernie is deeply missed by his housemates and staff at 104 East Park, but we know he was just visiting. He's gone back to his triangle.



# FONDLY *remembering*



*Linda*  
Marie Worte

February 23, 1953 - February 18, 2022 (age 68)



WORTE, Linda Mary - Passed away peacefully at University Hospital, London, on Friday, February 18th, 2022, at the age of 68. Loving daughter of the late George and Blanche Worte. Dear sister to Howard Worte, Sharon Agla, Shirley and Harold Hacon, and sister-in-law to Holly Keizer. Cherished aunt to many nieces, nephews, great-nieces, and nephews, and 2 great great-nephews. Predeceased by her brothers Alvin and Charles Worte, brother-in-law Dick Agla, and sister-in-law Eunice Worte. Linda will be lovingly remembered by her dear friends Liz, Joe, and Sheila. Linda spent her childhood years in Lakeside Ontario until moving to a group home in Woodstock where she made lifelong friends. In the last two years, Linda enjoyed her time in Extendicare, London.



*Cathy*  
Jane Macey

September 9th, 1957 - March 3rd, 2022 (age 64)



MACEY: Catherine Jane "Cathy" - passed away peacefully at the Woodstock General Hospital on Thursday March 3, 2022 in her 65th year. Beloved daughter of the late William (Bill) and Elizabeth (Bess) Macey, originally from the Drumbo area. Fondly remembered by her Staff and friends, Charlie, Jim, Roland, and Gary. Thanks to the many folks at WDDS who enriched her life and were life long friends. Special Thanks to the Kocher Family and the George Family for their continued support of Cathy. She will be remembered by her many cousins and especially by Katerina Leonida.