



ANNUAL REPORT

April 2023- March 2024



23
24

CONTENT

- 01 : A Message from our CEO and Board President
- 02 : Board of Directors
- 03 : Service Highlights
- 04 : A Year in Review
- 05 : Endless Possibilities
- 06 : Students and Volunteers
- 07 : Grant News
- 08 : Committee Updates
- 09 : A Year in Review Ctd
- 10 : Awards
- 11 : In Memoriam





A Message from our CEO and Board President

This past year will be remembered as the year we were able to reconnect in person. The 'End of Summer' Barbecue was a highlight, demonstrating the joy of gathering together again. Over 365 people attended, celebrating the simple pleasure of each other's company and the end of a fantastic season.

Once again, the WDDS staff have shown exceptional dedication to those we support. We are privileged to employ such a talented and generous team committed to our mission, vision, and values. As we navigate the sector transformation outlined in the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services' "Journey to Belonging," WDDS employees continue to provide quality supports and services that respect individuals and promote choice and inclusion. Upholding the rights of those we support remains central to our work. It's also important to recognize and build upon our team's strengths to maintain the high quality of service for which our organization is known.

Over the past year, we have worked together to enhance employee engagement, strengthen recruitment and retention, and improve our onboarding processes.

Our new Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) Committee is committed to fostering a more inclusive, diverse, equitable, anti-racist, accessible, and respectful environment for everyone at WDDS, including those we support, our employees, volunteers, and Board Members.

One strategy to strengthen our Service Excellence has been to offer employees opportunities to enhance their skills to meet the unique and complex needs of those we support. We now have in-house trainers for Mental Health First Aid and Applied Suicide Intervention, ensuring teams have ongoing access to responsive mental health training. Our in-house trainers also provide Dementia Capable Supports training, and forty staff members have received Person-Centered Risk Training to improve the quality of person-directed planning.

As we move into our 65th year as an organization, we do so with hope and determination. We are ready to face the challenges and opportunities ahead. Together, we will build a future where inclusivity, diversity, and choice are paramount, and continue building a community where everybody belongs.

Respectfully,
Pam Roe, Board President
Kelly Christo, Chief Executive Officer

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.

2023

2024

Officers

President: Pam Roe

Vice President/Secretary:
John Bedell

Past President: Janet Thomson

Treasurer: Garry Honcoop

Directors

Sue Dolan

Barbara Dabrowska

Carrie Innes Olah

Melissa Machin

SERVICE *highlights*



Summer Camp

Last year Summer Camp was held at the Covenant Church, which was a new location for the campers. Camp was divided into two age groups: 10 to 13 and 14 to 21, which alternated for 6 weeks. We facilitated themed weeks like Wacky Science, Around the World in 5 Days, Underwater Adventure, Animal Planet and Superheroes. The Campers enjoyed building volcanoes, Zumba, crafts, tie dying, and lots of other indoor and outdoor fun. We especially enjoyed an on site visit from the Woodstock Fire Fighters in their fire truck. We are looking forward to camp again this year!



Options

Options welcomed five new participants, emphasizing experiential learning for life, wellness, social skills, and citizenship. The Wake Up café offered affordable refreshments weekly. Collaborations with Woodingford Lodge, United Way, Greenhouse Academy, and Woodstock Lawn Bowling Club provided practical learning and social engagement opportunities. Participants toured Van Dyks greenhouse, learning about plant varieties and gardening. Options helped people gain independence, with some joining the Lawn Bowling Club and moving closer to living independently. Future plans include reviving Community Roots, integrating horticulture with cooking classes, and taking over the Salvation Army food bank connection.



NEXUS

Nexus gained five new participants, focusing on employable skills, entrepreneurship, and active citizenship. We focused on reviving the 'Speaking Out About Rights' self-advocacy group, woodworking classes, and community contributions like the weekly breakfast hub, lunch bag café, and volunteering at the Salvation Army food bank. Nexus partnered with CMHA and the Woodstock Public Library for mental health discussions and horticulture workshops, enhancing participant engagement. Participants have grown in confidence and mastered new skills. Next year, Nexus will launch an online learning hub, expand the 60 Young St Gardens, explore the textile industry with a local charity, and take on more volunteer roles at Woodingford Lodge.



Connections

Connections resumed in-person activities, promoting social interactions through fitness at the YMCA, yard games, and Zumba classes. Partnerships with Maggie Hagedorn Zumba Fitness and the YMCA fostered inclusive and enjoyable experiences. The service effectively brought people together, encouraging friendships and social engagement. Next year, Connections will transition into a planning department service, enhancing collaboration for better community participation.



DAY RESPITE Another year has gone by & Day Respite continues to thrive, delving into 'all things fun & fulfilling!' There has been an ever-growing (& eclectic) evolution of kinetic, learning, artistic & social activities for people who attend our program from home. Most notably, we work silently behind the scenes tending to plants, creating seasonal displays, beautifying meeting spaces, networking with other teams & working on entrepreneurial projects (including campfire starters, guitar picks, essential oil pendants & Holiday Cacti propagation). We take a great deal of pride in creating a space that is warm, welcoming & filled with intentional endeavors. Everyone supported has an individualized 'life & learning' book waiting to be shared. Come visit us to experience the whimsical world that is Day Respite!



SUPPORTED INDEPENDENT LIVING

Supported Independent Living Case Managers continue to focus on the growth and development of the people we support: fostering independence, teaching and training new skills, making healthy choices and facilitating community involvement. We supported people to try activities like Pickleball, geocaching, Pokémon Go, amusement parks, waterparks, and concerts. The team continues to navigate and connect with additional supports and services available for our aging population. The SIL team has participated in trainings in addictions, mental health, and homelessness to enhance their skills to best support people.



ACCOMMODATION SUPPORT

Over the past year, the people we support were finally able to resume their regular activities as pandemic restrictions were lifted. Support Staff demonstrated resilience and flexibility by shifting their focus to community activities and helping individuals achieve their goals. Many people focused on improving their overall well-being by attending aqua fit, VON fitness classes, Zumba, walking trails, and learning to cook and eat healthily. Others focused on reconnecting with their community by learning to take the bus independently, visiting family and friends they hadn't seen in a while, and traveling to various tourist attractions. Another highlight this year was the return of the Christmas Dinner and Dance and the Valentine's Dance -two events that had been greatly missed by many! Everyone is looking forward to the year ahead and the new adventures it will bring.

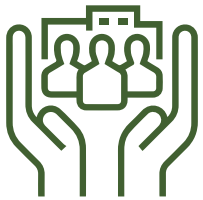


FAMILY SERVICES

Family Services works with families with children under the age of 18 who require assistance in navigating services and supports, funding and transitions. We have seen an increase in intakes this year, with a large number of families seeking service navigation transitioning into adult services. Family Services has continued to be members of the Family Support Workers of Ontario (FSWO), hosted the West Region meeting in November 2023, attended the FSWO Annual General Meeting in Niagara Falls this past May and will be hosting next year's AGM in the spring. We continue to make connections within the community (Oxford Respite Network, Oxford-Elgin FASD Community of Practice, South Western Autism Network) to stay up to date with government information and come together to discuss ongoing and new programs that are available to families.

Joblinks

Think Abilities, Think Success



Supported Employment: Supported Employment saw new team additions and partnerships, leading to permanent hires and the creation of a new department at Toyota Motor Manufacturing. The launch at CAMI, though small, aims to grow. Collaborations with TMMC and CAMI focus on productivity, employee well-being, and exploring innovative ways to enhance opportunities to support people reach their employment goals.



Training and Volunteerism: This year, the Coordinator of Training facilitated the G1 Beginners preparation course, helping 22 people obtain their licenses. Collaborations with DriveTest Center, Total Rentals, and Safety49 enabled participants to acquire essential licenses and skills. The Coordinator of Training developed a streamlined volunteer placement process. Future plans include expanding training programs within the London Regional Employment Services network and generating income to sustain the program.



Garden Team: The Garden Team employed six people, and maintained WDDS' gardens and community spaces while fostering work skills. Collaborations with Nexus and Movement Church were pivotal. The social enterprise provided supportive employment for people with disabilities, aiming to develop a self-sustaining enterprise for greater inclusivity, job skill development, and addressing service gaps.



Joblinks Employment Services: Joblinks Employment Services expanded support to all job seekers in Oxford County through Integrated Employment Services, forming new collaborations with local employers and Ontario Works. Despite the transition challenges, the team met intake and retention goals, securing jobs for 36 people and supporting 67 in job retention. Future plans include adapting to changing employment needs, offering creative opportunities, and supporting people with disabilities.





Having a blast at the big summer BBQ



Week of appreciation for non-profit employees



Celebrating Pride month with a Pride Roundtable



Ellie enjoying the views by the river



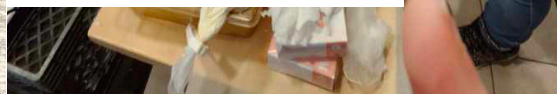
Justin trying new foods at the African Experience Festival



Volunteering at the
Woodstock Truck Show



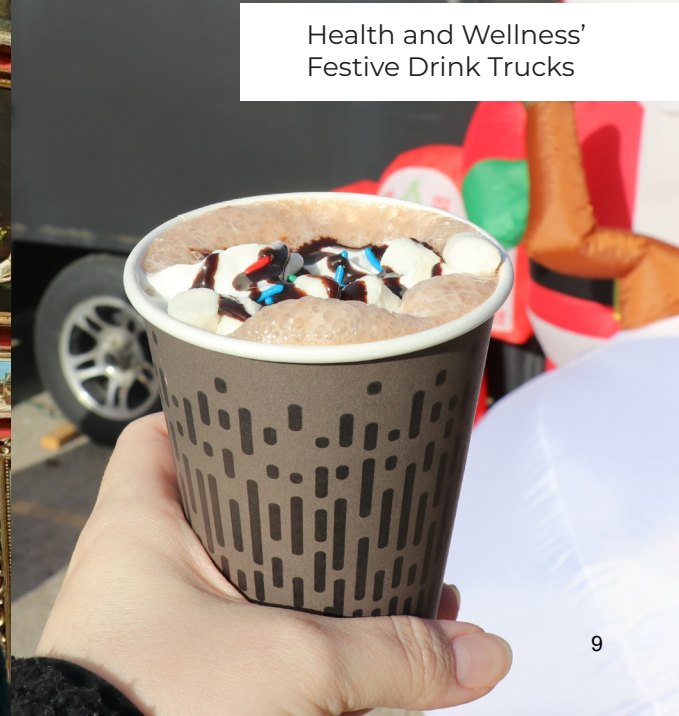
Decorating Smile Cookies
at Tim Hortons



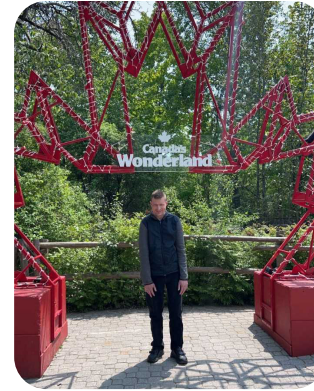
Roberto checking out the
pieces at the Art Gallery



Health and Wellness'
Festive Drink Trucks

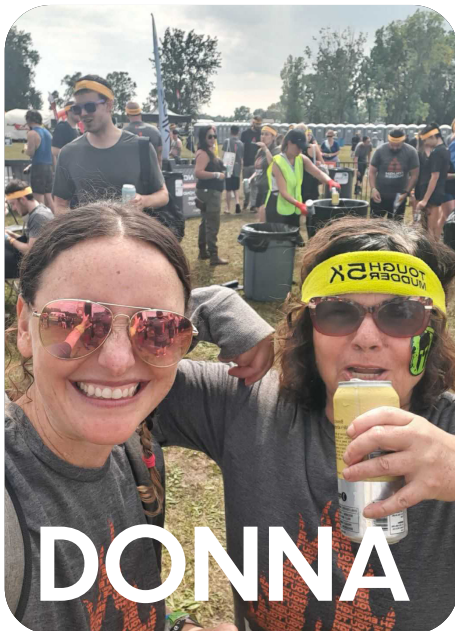


COREY



Corey enjoyed a fun filled day at Canada's Wonderland. Corey went on many rides, and even faced his fears and rode on the Behemoth and Leviathan (The 2 biggest coasters at Wonderland!!) Corey met up with his friend Matt and they explored all that Wonderland had to offer, including yummy funnel cakes.

ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES.



Donna is one Tough Mudder!! She trained hard and it paid off. Donna finished the 2023 Tough Mudder obstacle course with Crystal. As you can see, they had a blast! Donna is already planning her next race. Way to go Donna!



Justin got the chance to tour and explore the Brant-in-Store printing plant in Brantford. He saw all of the machines and robots working, and learned that there are only 4 colours used in printing worldwide; red, yellow, blue and black. Justin really enjoyed himself and followed all the safety measures. Well done Justin!





JIM



ROLAND



Marcus embraced the opportunity to explore Thames River Melons. He went apple picking, made his own apple turnover and a scarecrow to decorate his house. Marcus is quite the jack of all trades!



MARCUS



CHARLIE

Roland, Jim and Charlie enjoyed a day in the sun, checking out some awesome classic cars. They had a blast and got to talk to a lot of people. They stopped for ice cream after to celebrate the day!



ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES.



WAYNE

After much anticipation, Wayne traveled to the Muskoka Area to visit with his family. Time spent with family is important, and the sunshine adds to the joy and the smile on Wayne's face. Nothing better than summer sunshine and an open air train ride on the Portage Flyer Train along the Muskoka river. Wayne enjoyed the company of family and the beautiful scenery from the Muskoka river to the Fairy Lake Station. What a great trip- so much to see and do.



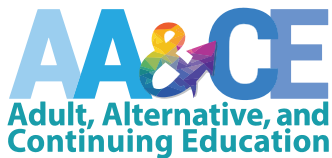
FANSHAWE



UNIVERSITY OF
WATERLOO



CONESTOGA
Connect Life and Learning



COMMUNITY
EMPLOYMENT
SERVICES

STUDENTS *and volunteers*



This year we welcomed 17 students for placements from various programs, including PSW, DSW, Recreation and Leisure, Management in Community Services, and the Supportive Care Program. These students joined us from Fanshawe College (London, Simcoe, and Woodstock campuses), Conestoga College, the University of Waterloo, Trillium College, and Wheable.

We are pleased to share that 6 of these students have applied for and been hired into positions within the organization after their placements.

We continue to foster strong relationships with local educational institutions by participating in career fairs at Fanshawe and Conestoga, as well as the Community Employment Services' Career Fair. Additionally, we have partnered with Fanshawe to conduct mock interviews, which help set students up for success in the sector.

Our volunteer team has also seen growth and engagement this year. We have four consistent volunteers—Alex, Mollie, Marcia, and Lana—who have been instrumental in supporting our programs. Our volunteers have been involved in special events such as the Christmas dinner and dance, Valentines events, as well as Nexus classes and person-specific activities.

We are also excited to announce that we have joined the Volunteer Network Committee for Oxford County, participating in monthly meetings and volunteer fairs around Oxford. This has been a fantastic opportunity to connect with the broader community and recruit more dedicated volunteers.

We can't thank our volunteers and students enough for all their time, expertise, and commitment. You are invaluable members of our community, and we couldn't do it without you!

GRANT *updates*

Communities Building Youth Futures: Empowering Youth for Success

COMMUNITIES BUILDING
Youth Futures
OXFORD COUNTY

Our 'Youth in Motion' program, funded by the Communities Building Youth Futures initiative and delivered by our Joblinks Employment Service, was piloted to support youth with disabilities prepare for their G1 test.

Participants received free course materials, including the MTO Driver's Handbook, tailored learning in small classes, and personalized support and accommodations to write their G1 drivers test.



We are committed to supporting youth in achieving their goals, removing barriers to employment, providing the resources and assistance they need for success.



22

**PEOPLE OBTAINED
THEIR G1 LICENSE**

WDDS Summer Camp

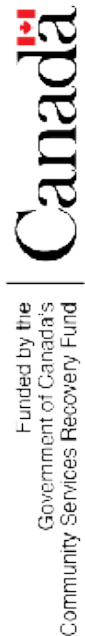
**Funded by Harry E. Foster Foundation,
City of Woodstock Community Grant,
and Canada Summer Jobs**

We are grateful to the Harry E. Foster Foundation, the City of Woodstock Community Grant, and Canada Summer Jobs for their continued support, enabling us to run our annual Summer Camp for youth with developmental disabilities in Oxford County. Since

1994, our Summer Camp has been a beacon of fun and respite for families, providing a safe and stimulating environment for youth aged 10 to 21.



GRANT *updates*



Ontario Trillium Foundation: Supporting Our Team's Wellness

We were awarded an Ontario Trillium Foundation Resilient Communities Fund Grant to enhance employee engagement and wellness. These initiatives were designed to support the long-term health and engagement of our staff and volunteers, ensuring a resilient and supportive community.

- 1 We hired a One Year Employee Engagement Coordinator: This role focuses on improving recruitment, onboarding, and engagement through various initiatives and policies.
- 2 Sekond Skin Society Platform: Providing access to health and wellness resources, including live virtual workshops for one year.
- 3 In-house Training: We are now equipped to offer Mental Health First Aid and ASIST training internally to build skills and support within our team.

Community Services Recovery Fund: Enhancing Person-Centered Supports

We received funding through the Community Services Recovery Fund, a \$400 million investment supporting community service organizations across Canada.

With this funding, we introduced Helen Sanderson's Person Centered Risk Training, empowering our team to handle risk with a person-centered approach. This two day training helped us ensure that people supported by our services have a high level of choice and control over their lives.





QUALITY ASSURANCE

The Quality Assurance Committee has had many new members join over the past year! The focus of the Committee is to ensure WDDS remains compliance ready at all times by completing internal audits, identifying trends and areas where staff would benefit from more training to ensure we are meeting Ministry expectations.



SEXUALITY AND RELATIONSHIPS

In our first full year, the Sexuality and Relationships Committee joined the orientation team to introduce new hires to education about rights, relationships, sexual identities, and gender expression. The committee hosted a Queer-focused “Conversations That Matter” roundtable, promoting inclusivity within our organization. We also partnered with Hutton House, Community Living London, and Thames Valley Family Services to run the “Sex and You” workshop, an all-day event providing sexual education to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their support team.



HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The Health & Wellbeing committee focuses on supporting our aging population, and was re-established in September 2023 with new members. We have been creating packages to help people with end-of-life decisions, including funeral arrangements and powers of attorney. A committee member assisted a team with the grieving process after a passing, providing valuable support and information on palliative care. Three members completed training to educate themselves and our greater team about dementia support in people with developmental disabilities.



HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Joint Health and Safety Committee continued to advocate for a safer workplace this year. We worked with the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development and collaborated with Southwestern Public Health and Infection Prevention and Control for annual inspections and outbreak support, and reviewing health and safety during agency-wide training. We conducted N95 mask fittings and developed new hire training. Two new policies were created and implemented: Naloxone kits for high-risk locations and a safety vest policy for agency vehicles. A training video on the new features of our agency vans was also created.



BEHAVIOUR SUPPORTS

The Behaviour Supports Committee continues to work with teams to create, update and improve plans to enhance supports. Over the last year the committee has worked on improving our master plans for Behaviour Support Plans, medication protocols and outlines to make each document more user friendly. Our Third Party Reviews were conducted twice in the last year and all plans were approved without recommendation.



MENTORSHIP

The Mentorship Program supports new staff in their first year, enhancing experiences, success, growth and building positive networks. The committee met with new hires during orientation and completed over 34 shadow shifts across the organization. We recognized employees on their one-year work anniversary and were provided training on the modernized Core Competencies. This model benefits employees by offering job enhancement opportunities and clearer career paths. Moving forward, the committee will focus on agency-wide training using core competency activities.



HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The Health and Wellness committee was overjoyed to offer new activities and ideas for the staff this year. We offered fall decorating as a way to build team spirit and bring connection. The winter hot chocolate brought people together while enjoying the festivities of the season and in January we shared resources on Bell Let's Talk. The committee also assisted with Nonprofit staff appreciation week. Through the Sekond Skin Society platform, the committee was able to offer different workshops on various topics including health, finances, organization, and team challenges like water drinking and movement.



COMMUNICATION AND TECH

This year, we combined the Communication and Technology Committees and added new members. Through extensive training with the Deaf Blind Association, we focused on using technology to support independence. We updated tools like “All About Me” books and introduced the “Spill the Tea” initiative, offered twice monthly, providing a fun environment for practicing communication tools, updating tech, and training staff on various apps. These efforts have significantly improved communication and independence for those we support.



Lisa getting a fresh cut at the Barber



Having a great time at the Valentine's Dance



Roberto visiting Dundurn Castle in Hamilton



Matt taking a trip to the Butterfly Conservatory



Trying out Lawn Bowling at the Lawn Bowling Club



Everyone enjoys Zumba with Maggie



United Way and Enbridge Day of Caring





Crafting Connections enjoying some drinks and crafts



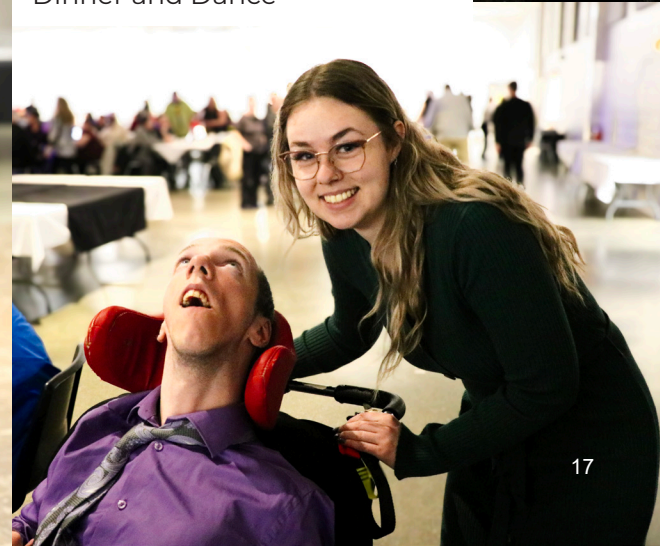
Scott sweating it out at the YMCA



Nexus tree planting with Greenhouse Academy



Having fun at the Christmas Dinner and Dance



ADAMS

2023 Les McKerral Award

BUILDING SUPPLY

"During the pandemic's height, when connection and community were vital, Adams generously provided the use of their community trailer, becoming an instrumental partner in fostering a sense of togetherness. The trailer became the cornerstone for initiatives like the hot chocolate truck and lemonade truck, bringing joy and a sense of normalcy to people facing isolation. Adams Building Supply delivered and set up the trailer with exceptional care, embodying the essence of creating a community where everybody belongs."

Beyond these impactful moments, Adams Building Supply has extended its support to WDD's fundraising endeavors. Their contribution, including the donation and delivery of significant items for our online auction and their inclusion of WDD's in their holiday giving campaign further underscores their dedication to enhancing the lives of people with developmental disabilities."

Jamie Adams
Adams Building Supply

Pam Roe
Board President



ALLISON

2023 Dorothy Wright Award

BRUNNAULT

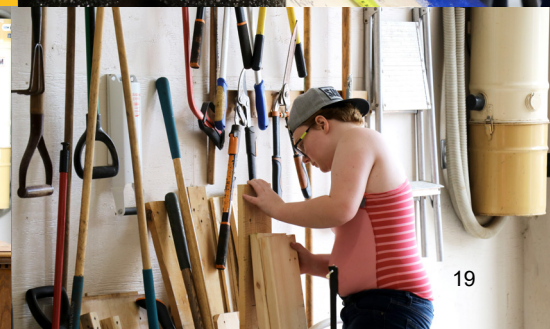
"Allison successfully graduated from high school in June of 2022. This change was very difficult for her as she had to say goodbye to some very important people in her life. It also gave her the opportunity to explore new interests and talents such as horseback riding lessons, joining Special Olympics Bowling, Baseball and Basketball, and attending different Options and Nexus programs. Woodworking has been a favourite Nexus hub that she has truly excelled at.

Allison has also connected with others in the agency and is excited to create new friendships. The past summer Allison was able to gain meaningful employment with the Garden Crew, learning how to tend to the gardens, and be job ready. She hopes to connect with Joblinks to explore other job opportunities."



Cindy and
Brian Wright

Ali B



FONDLY *Remembering*



Joanne
Dunnewold

November 30, 1961 – July 1, 2023 (age 61)

Having lived a good life, Joanne passed peacefully into the arms of the Good Shepherd, at Sakura House in Woodstock, Ontario. Beloved daughter of Hermina (nee Jansen) Dunnewold and the late Henry Dunnewold; cherished sister of the late Bill, Alyce (Greg) and Robert (Lily); and dear aunt of Adrienne, Albert, Eden, John, and Benjamin.

Fondly remembered by extended family in the Netherlands, most of whom she had the opportunity to meet. Joanne will also be remembered by her housemates, Jessica, Alicia, and Dennis; staff at her home in Woodstock; her faith community at Ingersoll Christian Reformed Church and the Covenant Christian Reformed Church, especially the members of the

Friendship programs there; Community Living Tillsonburg, Ingersoll Support Services, and Woodstock and District Developmental Services, where she made many friends over the years and from whom she received excellent support.

A special thank you goes out to the lovely caring individuals who supported Joanne in her home at Lansdowne house, even as her health declined; to the nursing teams and doctors at Woodstock Hospital where she had many stays in recent years; to the Oxford community palliative care team; and to the wonderful staff at Sakura House who provided compassionate comfort care in her final days.

FONDLY *Remembering*



Leisa
Vandecappelle

May 30, 1971 – July 2, 2023 (age 52)

Unexpectedly surrounded by her loving family at University Hospital, London on Sunday July 2, 2023. Leisa (nee Force) of Princeton in her 53rd year. Beloved Wife of Jason Van De Cappelle for 27 years. Loving Mother of Cole, Cody (Jenny), and Jaylee. Cherished daughter of Keith & Rosemary Force. Loved Sister of Laurie (Lloyd) Markham and Greg Force. Aunt of Danielle (Eric) Eagles and Taylor (Aaron) Tamachi. Dear daughter-in-law of Al & the late Karen Van De Cappelle. Also survived by her brother-in-law Brent (Helen) Van De Cappelle. Leisa will be sadly missed by her many family & friends.



Heather
Pascoe

May 17, 1953 - August 24, 2023 (age 70)

Heather Frances Elizabeth (nee Perry) - passed away peacefully on Thursday, August 24, 2023 at the Woodstock General Hospital. Heather Pascoe of Woodstock in her 71st year. Loving mother of Justin of Woodstock. Loving long time Friend of Tom Hess of Woodstock. Dear sister of Carol & Gerald Masters, Gary & Robin Perry, Jackie Perry, Nancy Perry (Dwayne), Tim & Maria Perry, Donna & Dave McKie all of Woodstock, Judy & Keith DesRoches of Eastwood, Colleen Richards and Joe Perry both of Woodstock and Jeff & Michelle Glendinning of Plattsville. She will be sadly missed by her many nieces and nephews. Predeceased by her parents Jack & Geneva (Bond) Perry and her brother Wayne (1964).