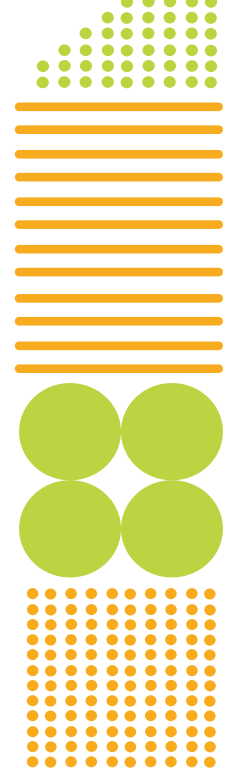




ANNUAL REPORT

April 2024- March 2025



24
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A Message from our CEO and Board President



As we reflect on the past year, we are filled with heartfelt appreciation for the dedication, compassion, and resilience demonstrated by each and every member of our team. Our commitment to those we serve is the foundation of our mission, and your unwavering service makes a meaningful difference every day as we champion a community where everybody belongs.

This year marked a remarkable milestone- 65 years of service in our community. We proudly celebrated this achievement with a Sapphire Gala held during our annual Christmas Dinner and Dance. It was a memorable evening that honored our history while embracing a bright and promising future.

Throughout the year, we remained committed to fostering staff engagement and appreciation, weaving our anniversary celebration into a variety of events. Highlights included the Wellness Fair and BBQ, a fun Car Show and Yard Sale, and the ever-popular Years of Service Celebration, where we recognized the enduring contributions of our long-standing team members. These events not only commemorated our legacy but also strengthened the sense of community that defines who we are. Here's to the past 65 years- and the many more to come.

We were also proud to introduce a new form of recognition: The Mal Coubrough Employee Award of Excellence. This award was established in memory of a long-standing and deeply respected Board Member. It

celebrates an employee, nominated by their peers, who goes above and beyond in their role- someone who exemplifies advocacy, positivity, and collaboration. The recipient is recognized not only for their compassion and innovative problem-solving but also for their unwavering commitment to championing the rights and well-being of those they support.

Professional development remained a strong focus, with training opportunities in Mental Health First Aid, ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training), and Trauma-Informed Supports, ensuring our team is equipped with the tools and knowledge to provide the highest standard of support. We also established new partnerships with COBS Bread, Woodstock Hospital and Unified Flex Packaging, while strengthening existing relationships - enhancing our collaborative efforts and expanding the impact of our services.

As we continue to navigate sector transformation, our focus remains steadfast: delivering service excellence and ensuring that the voices of the people we support are not only heard- but recognized as the most important. Their experiences, perspectives, and rights guide everything we do. We look forward to the year ahead with optimism and purpose- knowing that together, we will continue to grow and make a lasting difference.

**With gratitude,
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.

2024

2025

Officers

President: Pam Roe

Vice President/Secretary:

John Bedell

Past President: Janet Thomson

Treasurer: Garry Honcoop

Directors

Sue Dolan

Carrie Innes Olah

Melissa Machin

SERVICE *highlights*



Summer Camp

At summer camp, we aimed to create an environment filled with fun, excitement, learning, and play. We strengthened our community connections through special visits from the Woodstock Fire Department, local farms, and dedicated volunteers. Each week was packed with engaging themes like Wacky Science, Animals, Around the World, and Superheroes. Our campers enjoyed a wide variety of activities, including sports, arts and crafts, games, science experiments, baking, and so much more!



COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION SERVICES

This year, we brought together Options and Nexus to form one inclusive and integrated Day Learning program. Participants had many opportunities to explore their interests and try new experiences, with a focus on life skills, wellness, social connection, employment, and active citizenship. We welcomed many new faces and expanded popular programs like the Wake Up Café and the Breakfast Hub, now running twice a week with generous support from COBS Bread. New classes like Dinner Club, Baking for Others, Pay It Forward, and Grocery Shopping & Budgeting helped people build confidence in the kitchen and beyond. Creativity thrived through Music, Photography, Art, and Stitchery Hubs. Hands-on learning took place in Woodworking, Science Lab, Horticulture, Event Planning, and the Side Hustle class. Participants also gave back to the community through volunteer roles at the Woodstock Hospital, Goodwill, and other local organizations. Social connection and wellness were supported through partnerships with the Woodstock Badminton Club, Woodstock Lawn Bowling Club, Movement Church, Greenhouse Academy, Woodstock Public Library, and more. We look forward to another year of creating fun, meaningful, and interest-based programming that meets the needs of the people who access our services.



PLANNING AND CONNECTIONS

Planning and Connections supports people in building lives rooted in belonging, purpose, and personal meaning. This year, the team worked alongside people, families, and support staff to identify goals, strengthen networks, and create real opportunities for community participation. Through regular planning meetings, personal visions became action—like exploring new interests, reconnecting with passions, or hosting a karaoke night. Connections brought people together around shared goals, with programs like the Crafter's Hub with DoGood, social hubs, and group trips. Events like car shows and seasonal celebrations created space for joy and connection. Participation grew from 10 to 47 people across 24 events. This growth reflects the care, creativity, and collaboration that guide this work—and the importance of honouring what matters to each person.



SERVICE *highlights*



SUPPORTED INDEPENDENT LIVING

Supported Independent Living Case Managers remained dedicated to promoting the growth and independence of the people we support. Their work included fostering self-reliance, teaching new life skills, encouraging healthy choices, and facilitating active community participation. This year people engaged in a variety of enriching experiences, like live theatre, animal therapy sessions, cooking classes, and fitness activities. The team continues to strengthen connections with additional supports and services, particularly for people who are aging or facing challenges related to addiction, mental health, and homelessness, in an ongoing effort to enhance overall well-being.



ACCOMMODATION SUPPORT

In Group Living, the year was marked by renewed community engagement and team development. Mental health and aging supports were at the forefront, with multiple teams completing ASIST and Mental Health First Aid training. Events like the 65th Anniversary Christmas Dinner and Runway of Stars sparked joy and brought people together. Day and overnight trips returned, allowing people to attend plays, games, and other meaningful activities. Teams worked creatively to support enriching daily experiences in and out of the home, supporting a growing number of aging adults with compassion and care. Despite staffing transitions, teams worked together to adapt, celebrate progress, and build confidence in their supports.

FAMILY SERVICES

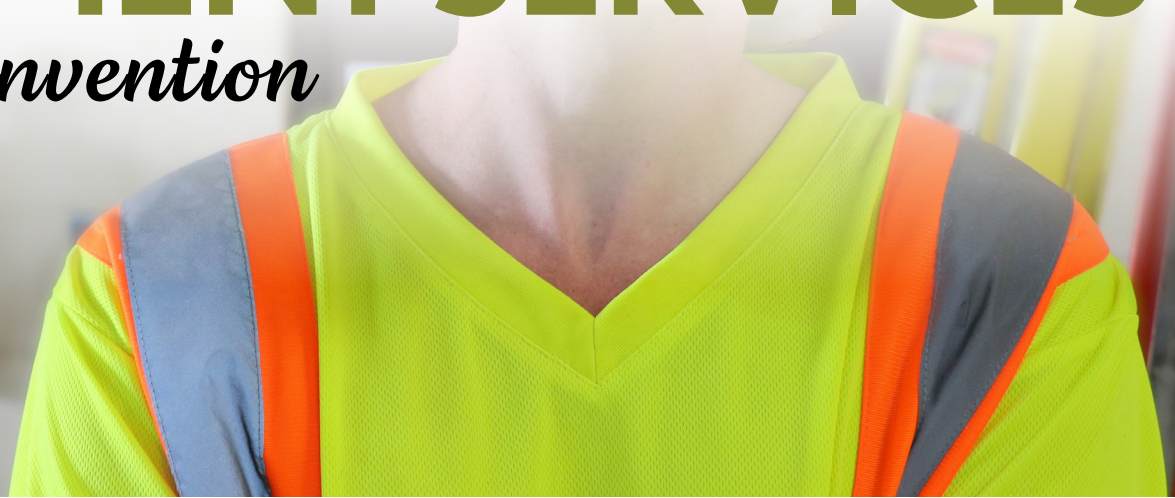
Family Services continued to support families navigating complex systems, with a growing number of intakes across all age ranges. A new waitlist was introduced, reflecting the increased demand and importance of this service. The coordinator attended multiple training sessions and networking meetings to bring fresh insights and resources to families. Strong partnerships with schools, children's agencies, and regional networks supported resilient service navigation. Despite the challenge of wait times, families reported feeling heard, supported, and prepared to take next steps. Over 100 children and 92 families were supported this year, reminding us of the vital role this service plays in our community.

DAY RESPITE

Day Respite thrived this year by offering "cup-filling" experiences rooted in creativity, connection, and intentional care. Designed for people who live at home, the program focused on artistic expression, learning, and movement. Unique initiatives like entrepreneurial projects, plant care, and collaboration with the Day Learning Services team fostered purpose and pride. Each participant had a personalized "Life & Learning" book to celebrate their progress and interests. Quietly powerful, this service is a vital support that keeps people engaged, curious, and connected to community.

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Resilience and Reinvention



This past year marked a profound shift for our Employment Services team, as we navigated sweeping changes to the Employment Services model in Ontario. With the introduction of a new ministry funder and transformed expectations, our team found itself in a time of reinvention, working hard to redesign our supports from the inside out while staying grounded in the core values that have always guided us.

One of the most significant changes was the **closure of Joblinks, our long-standing Employment Service that had proudly served our community for nearly 30 years**. For three decades, Joblinks helped hundreds of people find meaningful work, explore their talents, and experience the pride of earning a paycheck. It also connected local businesses with hardworking, dedicated employees who brought enthusiasm, loyalty, and heart to their workplaces. Its closure was not a reflection of the impact or need, but rather the result of systemic shifts that don't always

account for the unique journeys and needs of people with developmental disabilities in the employment landscape.

Even in the midst of challenge, our team found ways to honour the work of Joblinks while building something new. Over the past year, we supported over 100 people across Woodstock and Oxford County with employment training, career development, and personalized supports. We offered resume workshops, job search assistance, mock interviews, and mentorship to help people feel ready and confident to pursue their goals. Partnerships with local employers like Unified Flex Packaging, Deelights Bakery, LDCSB, and Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada (TMMC) created meaningful job opportunities and helped break down stigma around inclusive hiring.

One story that stood out this year was Rick's retirement after more than a decade at TMMC. Known for his perfect attendance

and warm spirit, Rick's farewell was filled with appreciation and joy, proof that inclusive employment leaves lasting legacies not only in the lives of the people we support, but in the cultures of the workplaces that welcome them.

As we look ahead, our focus is on building intentional, person-directed pathways to work, whether through paid employment, skill-building, or volunteerism. We remain committed to the belief that meaningful work is more than just a job, it's a doorway to community and belonging. We've seen how employment can transform lives, and we will continue to explore new, inclusive ways to open doors and walk beside people as they pursue their goals.

To the Joblinks legacy: thank you for your service. Your impact lives on in every person who found their place and their power through work.



Having a blast at the Wellness Fair and big summer BBQ



Boogeying at the Blacklight Dance



Strutting our stuff at Runway of Stars 2024



Joe celebrating his birthday with lots of cake



Reel Treats World Down Syndrome Day Fundraiser



Taralee and Becky ringing in the New Year in style



Working hard making planters at the Greenhouse Academy



Corey, Dylan, and Murray taking a trip to the Aquarium



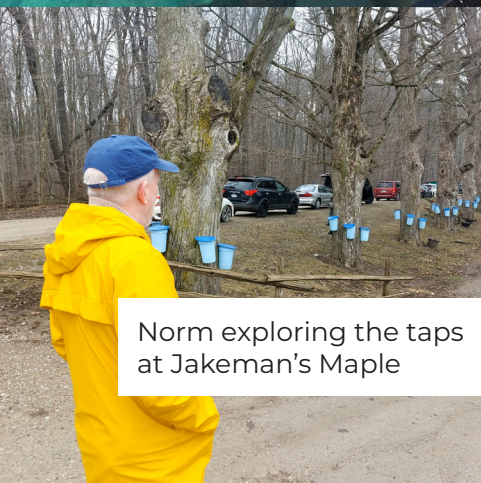
Shantelle showing off a Stitchery Hub creation



Evan tilling the community gardens at Movement Church



Charlie getting in on the action at a wrestling match



Norm exploring the taps at Jakeman's Maple



Wayne checking out the Cat Cafe in Stratford



All decked out in green for St. Patrick's Day

MARCUS

Marcus has had quite the busy year between hitting golf balls, bouncing through Bubble Planet, picking the perfect pumpkin at the patch, and adding 'Van Cleaning Expert' to his resume. He's making the most of every adventure, meeting new people, spending time with friends, and enjoying the freedom to do more of what makes him happy. Great job, Marcus!



Chris celebrated his well-earned retirement this year after 25 years of employment at Sobeys Woodstock. He was first connected with the job through WDDS' Joblinks service, and made so many memories and connections during his time there. Chris was well known at his job for his photographic memory and friendly nature. Happy retirement, Chris! Way to go!

ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES.



Justin has quite the green thumb. He has been working hard this year to plant, water, maintain, and harvest his own garden of nutritious foods! This is Justin harvesting some of the vegetables he helped to grow. Amazing job Justin.

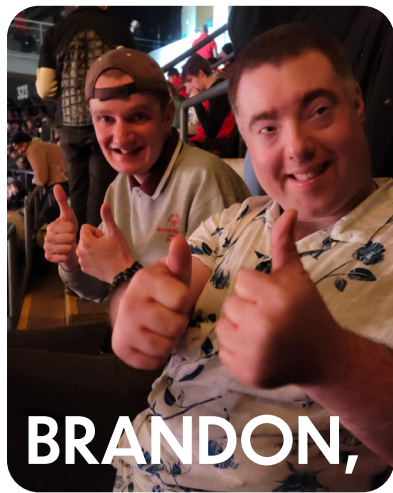


JUNE + LYNSEY



CHRIS

June and Lynsey have been collecting pop tabs within their networks in an effort to pay it forward. They have donated over 60lbs of pop tabs to the Woodstock region's Tabs 4 Wheelchairs project, which uses recycled metal to make mobility devices. Lynsey has been collecting pop tabs for almost 10 years now. Impressive!

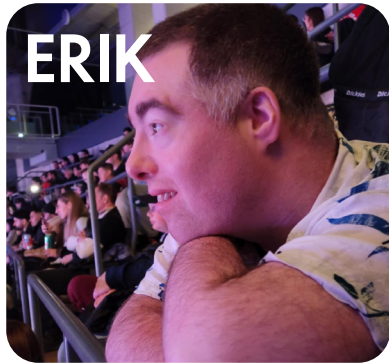


BRANDON,

Brandon, Justin, Dylan and Erik took a trip to Toronto to cheer on the Raptors as they won with a 108-97 win over the Hornets. They met the dancers, had some food, and thoroughly enjoyed the game together.



**JUSTIN,
DYLAN+**



ERIK

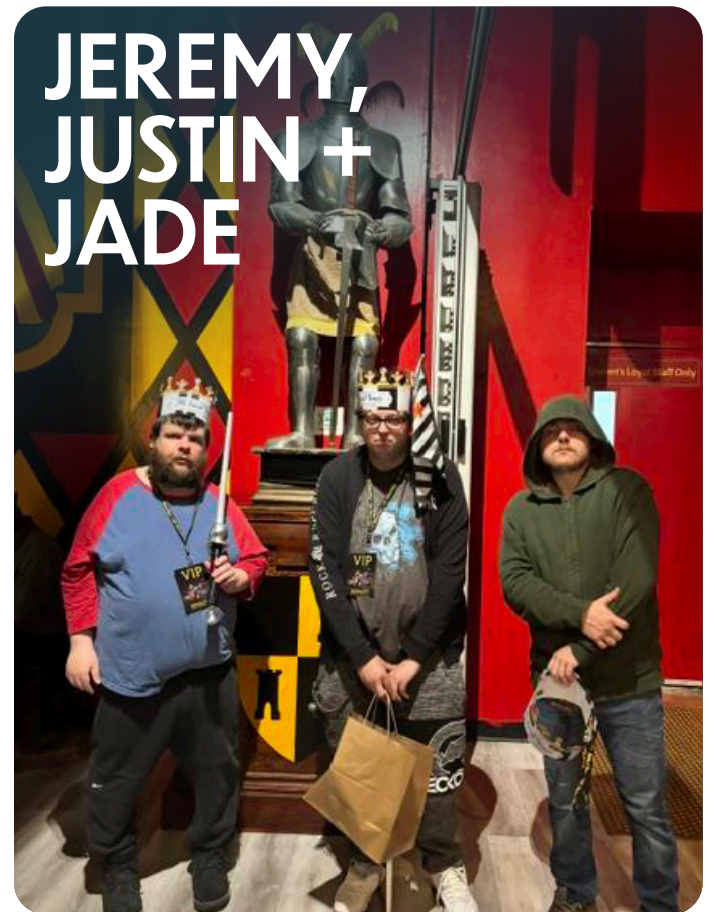
Chris has been a man on the move this year! It has been hard to keep up with him as he goes out to eat, visits mom's pool, goes bowling, and visits Ripley's Aquarium in Toronto!



CHRIS



Jeremy, Justin and Jade took a VIP trip to Medieval Times to enjoy a dinner and a show and to cheer on their knight. Even though another knight eventually took the victory, a good time was had by all.



**JEREMY,
JUSTIN +
JADE**

ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES.



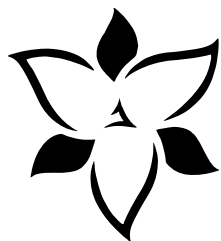
LISA



Lisa participated in Special Olympics baseball this year, and even won an award for her outstanding achievement and respect for her team. She celebrated at a ceremony for the athletes.

GRANT updates

Ontario
Trillium
Foundation



Fondation
Trillium
de l'Ontario

Ontario Trillium Foundation: Planning for Our Future

With generous support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, we received a Resilient Communities Fund Grant to enhance our planning capacity and reimagine how we support person-directed approaches. This grant allowed us to strengthen internal planning practices, invest in training, and create sustainable structures for both employee engagement and self-advocacy.

1 Planning Coordinator (One-Year Role):

A full-time Planning Coordinator was hired to lead the initiative, providing structure and guidance as we improved our planning processes, managed caseloads, and increased access to resources for both staff and people we support.

2 Training & Tools:

We purchased a one-year subscription to Open Future Learning, an on-demand platform created by self-advocates and allies, offering training in best practices for supporting people with developmental disabilities.

In addition, our planning team completed the Dare to Lead program by Helen Sanderson Associates, building leadership and person-directed planning skills.

3 Planning Champions Committee:

We established a new Planning Champions Committee made up of staff from across the organization to foster innovation, peer learning, and shared responsibility.



GRANT *updates*

Communities Building Youth Futures: Wellness Reset

COMMUNITIES BUILDING
Youth Futures
OXFORD COUNTY



Thanks to funding from Communities Building Youth Futures, our Wellness Reset initiative provided free, inclusive wellness programming for youth across Oxford County. The program explored wellness in many forms while fostering a sense of community. We explored Zumba, art classes, trail walks, cooking sessions, outdoor adventures and many other fun group activities.

Weekly events offered meaningful opportunities for youth with developmental disabilities and helped transitional-aged youth become familiar with our space, supports, and services. The initiative introduced 18 young people to WDDS, brought programming into two high schools, and connected with the broader community through events at 12 different locations. A dedicated drop-in spot, monthly calendars, and weekly email updates kept the momentum going and helped build lasting connections.



WELLNESS reset
WDDS



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.



**City of
Woodstock**

IDEA (INCLUSIVITY, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND ACCESSIBILITY)

The IDEA (Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility) Committee has made meaningful strides this year in laying a strong foundation for long-term impact. A key initiative has been the implementation of monthly diversity calendars, which promote awareness and celebration of various cultures, identities, and significant dates throughout the year. The committee has been actively reviewing agency policies to ensure that language is inclusive and reflective of our diverse community. These efforts aim to foster a more respectful and welcoming environment for all. Currently, the committee is excited to be developing a survey designed to gather valuable insights about the diversity within our organization. The information collected will guide future actions and initiatives that promote an inclusive, equitable, and accessible workplace for everyone. As the IDEA Committee continues to grow, we remain committed to creating a culture where every person feels seen, valued, and supported.

PLANNING CHAMPIONS

Thanks to an Ontario Trillium Foundation grant, WDDS launched a new committee this year—the Planning Champions—to help grow our planning department. The committee supports teams in building community-based, person-centred plans and offers a new orientation session for new hires. This session introduces staff to the planning process early on, walking through how to turn an idea into something tangible—whether that's planning a fun day trip, or connecting with peers and friends. The committee also helps teams stay on track with goal updates, compliance documentation, and ongoing conversations that keep planning with people responsive and meaningful.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The Health and Wellness committee continued to focus on bringing people together and making space for wellness. Our hot chocolate and summer drink trucks were well attended; This year we added some extra special activities to our festive drink truck to make it more interactive and fun. We hosted a summer Wellness Fair, where we invited wellness vendors, small animals to interact with, a free BBQ, live workshops, and lots of music and games. We hosted a Paint Night, a DoGood art workshop, and a few light-hearted challenges like growing tomatoes or spending more time outside. We also wrapped up our partnership with Sekond Skin Society, which offered accessible and helpful online workshops over the past year.

SEXUALITY AND RELATIONSHIPS

The Sexuality and Relationships Committee made significant progress this year by launching a new “Developmental Disability and Sexuality 101” training. The first session ran in 2025, with additional dates planned into 2026. The committee also plans to offer the training to other agencies across the sector. These sessions create safer, more informed spaces to talk about identity, rights, relationships, and consent. One guiding quote for the team has been, “Nothing about us, without us” - a powerful reminder to centre people's voices in decisions that affect them. Through partnerships and professional development, the committee is paving the way for more inclusive, stigma-free conversations across our sector.

COMMUNICATION AND TECH

The Communication and Technology Committee focused on removing barriers and promoting independence through accessible communication tools. This year, the committee helped develop communication boards and visual schedules to enhance engagement, and continued hosting a monthly story-sharing class for self-expression. The Proloquo app supported expressive communication, while a special 'Create and Share Your Story' night using Pictello allowed six participants to share personal stories in a meaningful way. The committee also explored new instructional resources like YouTube tutorials and ChatGPT to support both staff and the people we support in navigating communication technology.





QUALITY ASSURANCE

Over the past year, the Quality Assurance Committee has remained dedicated to supporting our Agency's goal of being full compliant at all times. Our focus has been on service excellence with regulatory standards, policies and best practices to ensure consistent quality and accountability. Conducting quarterly compliance audits, identifying gaps and working promptly with teams to implement corrective actions. As we move forward, our focus remains on proactive monitoring, transparent communication, and fostering a culture where compliance is not just a requirement, but a shared responsibility and core value.



HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Health & Safety Committee worked hard this year to foster a safer workplace through training, documentation, and awareness. New members were welcomed, and alternate reps were introduced to ensure ongoing support. Staff received additional instruction on PPE and infectious disease protocols, and training was delivered at the fall all-staff Training. Collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Southwestern Public Health strengthened prevention strategies. With a shared motto that "Health & Safety is everyone's responsibility," the committee remains committed to education, injury prevention, and creating a workplace where everyone feels protected and empowered.



HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Over the past year, the Health & Wellbeing committee has deepened its commitment to supporting both the people we serve and the teams who walk alongside them through the realities of aging, decline, and end of life. Recognizing the emotional toll that comes with loss, we have provided increased support to staff navigating grief and complex feelings associated with the decline or passing of people we support. This included access to resources, reflective spaces and open dialogue. We remain committed to fostering culture of compassion, preparedness and respectful care. Future goals include access to palliative care resources, deepening partnerships with community healthcare providers, and continuing to support staff wellbeing as they deliver care during life's most complex transitions.



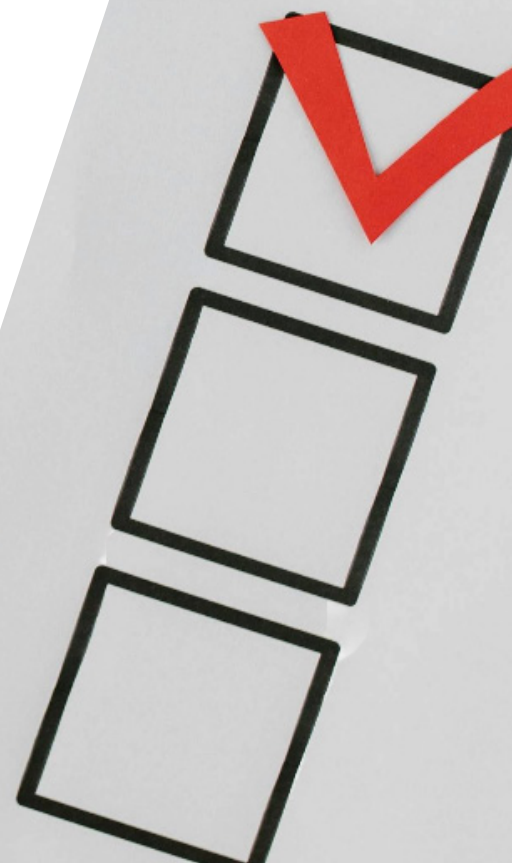
BEHAVIOUR SUPPORTS

This year, the Behaviour Supports Committee welcomed two new Direct Support Professionals and continued to promote understanding of behaviour as communication. The team focused on language, positive messaging, and training, including a presentation on power struggles during November's all-staff Training. Through events like Runway of Stars and the Christmas Dinner and Dance, the impact of positive behaviour supports became more visible. Staff and families gained confidence in interpreting needs and building connection-first supports. Ongoing collaboration with Regional Support Associates allowed for additional learning opportunities. The committee is proud of its work in increasing accessibility and inclusion for people who have historically experienced barriers in service.



MENTORSHIP

The Mentorship Committee reflected on feedback and re-imagined its approach. While formal mentoring didn't always match new hires' needs, shadow shifts were consistently celebrated. Moving forward, mentors will be embedded in leadership training and take on a more natural role within base teams. Shadow Shift Leaders were identified as positive role models to guide new staff during onboarding. This evolution recognizes that mentorship doesn't always need to be structured, it thrives in everyday relationships, confidence-building, and intentional welcome. This year's journey reflected our agency's growth in team connection, peer leadership, and genuine collaboration.





Roberto enjoying a Blue Jays game in Toronto



Michael among the fishes at the Aquarium



Justin taking a trip to see the Lion King



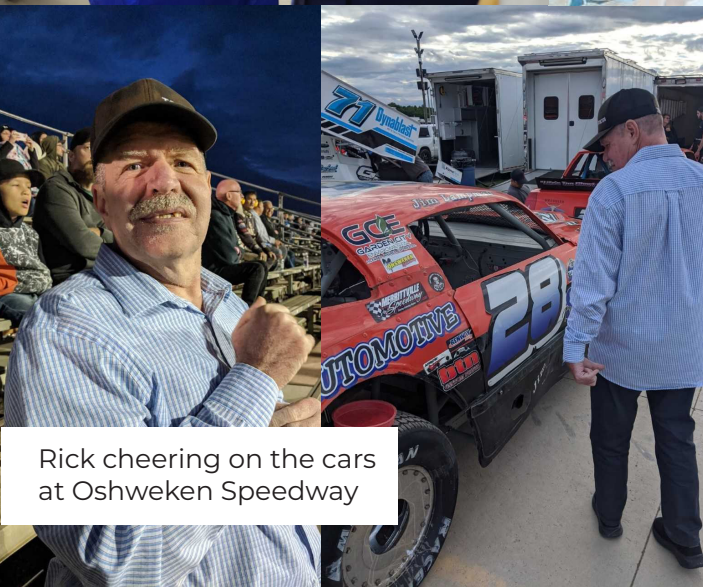
Kristen sorting clothes while volunteering at Goodwill



Lindsay showing off her magic and card tricks



Health and Wellness Festive Drink Truck fun



Rick cheering on the cars at Oshweken Speedway



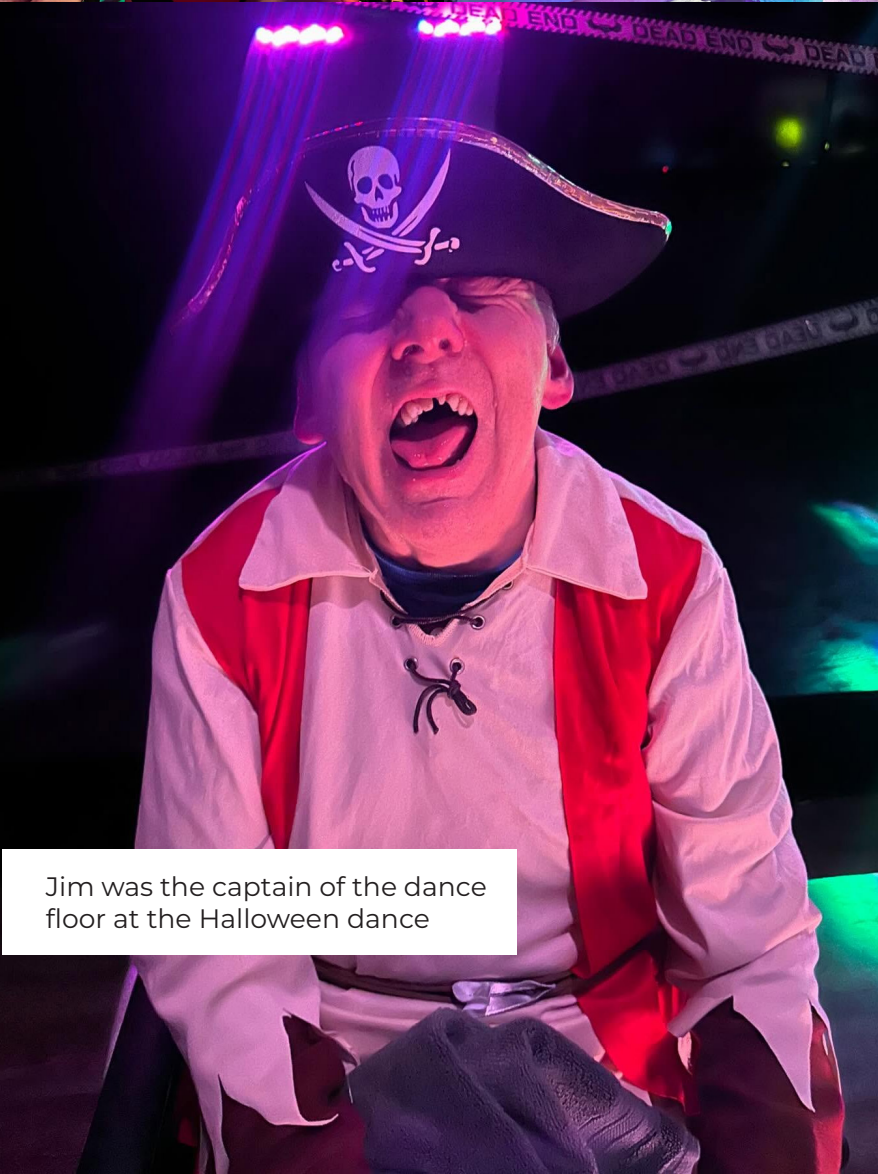
United Way Day of Caring with Libro Financial



Cathy bringing her festive joy to the Drink Truck photobooth



Marcus and Lisa picking the perfect pumpkin



Jim was the captain of the dance floor at the Halloween dance



Joanne showing her support on Pink Shirt Day



Having fun at the 65th anniversary Christmas Dinner and Dance



CELEBRATING



This year marked 65 years of Woodstock and District Developmental Services providing support to people with developmental disabilities and their families. Over the decades, we've had the privilege to grow and change in response to the needs of the people we support and the broader community.

We are incredibly thankful for the community that has taken shape over the years. Every person who has accessed services, worked here, volunteered, attended an event, or supported us in any way has played a part in our shared story. WDDDS has always been about people: their contributions, relationships, and the connections we've built together.

We integrated our 65th anniversary theme into events throughout the year. Staff received custom 65th anniversary YETIs as a token of appreciation, we had a big summer BBQ and Wellness Fair, and our annual Christmas Dinner and Dance was transformed into a Sapphire Gala to mark the occasion.

One of the most memorable events was our 65th Anniversary Car Show and Community Yard Sale. We welcomed antique cars, shared a cake-cutting ceremony, offered face painting, and highlighted creative projects made by people we support. Community members were also invited to set up their own yard sale tables, making it a lively and inclusive way to celebrate our history and the people who continue to shape it.



LAURALEE ANDREW

2024 Les McKerral Award

MICHEAL CLARK

Laura and Michael have made a lasting impact at WDDs through their generosity and care. By coordinating regular deliveries of fresh food, they've helped address food insecurity and bring comfort and joy to many. But their contributions go far beyond the practical- "Michael and Laura are social catalysts," one nominator shared. "Through their insight, connections, and generosity, they've made a lasting difference for everyone involved." Their efforts have sparked wider community involvement and connection. For their compassion and leadership, we are proud to honour them with the Les McKerral Award.



Presented to a person or group who has enhanced the life of an individual living with a developmental disability or has made a significant contribution to WDDs.



MATT 2024 Dorothy Wright Award KIRKEY

Matthew's story is one of persistence, positivity, and growth. Since joining WDDS, he's built cooking skills, joined sports teams, and formed meaningful friendships. "Matt even created his own cookbook of his favourite meals that he can make at home," shared one nominator. His leadership shines through on the Special Olympics team, where he's known for helping others. "Matthew is a great teammate and mentor, always looking out for others." He's also built connections in the wider community, providing his support team tips to ride the bus and inviting friends from Yu-Gi-Oh! tournaments to join him to walk the Runway of Stars. We're thrilled to recognize Matthew with the Dorothy Wright Award.



Named after Dorothy Wright, a dedicated teacher of students with disabilities, this award recognizes extraordinary effort in achieving personal goals.



CRYSTAL

2024 Mal Coubrough Award of Excellence

WYMENGA

Crystal Wymenga is a passionate and dedicated leader who uplifts everyone around her. Whether she's running Zumba classes, proposing wellness initiatives, or mentoring her team, Crystal leads with heart. One nominator shared, "Crystal shows her passion in everything she does." Her ability to connect programs with community resources and empower people toward independence reflects her strong advocacy and vision. As another nominator put it, "Crystal makes work feel meaningful. She empowers others to feel proud of what they do." We are proud to honour Crystal with the Mal Coubrough Award of Excellence.



Recognizes the outstanding contributions of employees at WDDS. It is presented to employees (individuals or groups) who are seen as trailblazers, significantly impacting the lives of people with intellectual disabilities.



FANSHAWE



CONESTOGA

Connect Life and Learning

STUDENTS *and volunteers*



This year, we had the pleasure of welcoming placement students from a wide range of programs, including Personal Support Work, Developmental Services Work, Recreation and Leisure, Supportive Care, and Management in Community Services. These students joined us from Fanshawe College (London, Simcoe, and Woodstock campuses), Conestoga College, and Huron Park Secondary School.

A special thank you goes out to Logan from Huron Park Secondary School, who completed two coop terms with our Day Services team. Your enthusiasm and growth over the year made a lasting impact.

We remain committed to building strong ties with local schools and colleges, and this year was no exception. Our team participated in career fairs at Fanshawe and Conestoga, as well as the Community Service Providers Career Fair. We were also proud to support

Fanshawe students through mock interview sessions, helping to prepare the next generation of professionals in the field.

We are especially grateful for Marcia, Marg, Mollie, and Diane, volunteers who consistently lend their time and talents to a wide variety of programs. From events to celebrations to weekly workshops, their contributions have been deeply appreciated by all.

We're also thrilled to now be part of the Oxford County Volunteer Network Committee. Through meetings and local volunteer fairs, we've been able to connect with even more community members who are passionate about making a difference.

Thank you to every student and volunteer who chose to spend time with us this year. Your support, skills, and heart help make our community stronger. We are so lucky to have you alongside us.

FONDLY *Remembering*



John
Schmidt

August 6, 1963 - April 28, 2024 (age 60)



It is with deep sorrow that the family of John Schmidt announces his passing on April 28th, 2024, in Woodstock at the age of 60. He was predeceased by his parents, Alma and George Schmidt, and his older brother, Bill. He is survived by his siblings, Marge MacMaster (Fred), Chris Mihaly (Tony), Bob Schmidt (Karen), Dan Schmidt (Rose), Lloyd Schmidt (Julie) and Tracy Schmidt (Lisa). He will be missed by many nieces and nephews. Special thanks to John's second family in Woodstock, the Woodstock and District Developmental Services ("WDDS"), truly a community where everybody belongs. Words cannot fully convey the depth of our appreciation for all that they have done for John over the years, their unwavering love and care, and their constant source of strength. They have been not just caregivers, but a pillar of love and support, enriching John's life in ways we could never have imagined. Their dedication has been a guiding light through every joy and challenge, shaping John's life in countless ways. Special thanks is also extended to the many doctors and nurses who had assisted John with numerous challenges. John will be remembered as having 'a gentle soul' and enjoyed the simple things in life and above all was a people person. And, despite all of John's health issues, he was a fighter.

Sheila
Colborne

Mar 22, 1942 - May 25, 2024 (age 82)



Passed away on May 25, 2024 at 82 years of age in Woodstock, Ontario. Loving sister of Janet Hickman (Dennis Bastien), Paul Colborne, Larry (Dawn) Colborne, Marie (Jim) Tolborg and Cheryl Colborne. Predeceased by her parents Leslie and Anna Colborne and brothers Daniel, Murray, Ralph, Peter, David, and Sister Cathy. Survived by many nieces and nephews.



FONDLY *Remembering*



Gary
Zehender

May 2, 1957 - August 28, 2024 (age 67)

It is with great sadness that we share the passing of Gary Zehender on August 28, 2024, in his 67th year. Gary, affectionately known as “Gare-bear,” will be deeply missed by his mother Maria Zehender; sisters Karen Veldkamp and Trish Zehender; brother-in-law Mike Ruysseveldt; nephew David Veldkamp and his wife Rachel; and niece Kristina Ferrier. He also leaves behind extended family, many friends, and a caring community at WDDS who were honoured to know him. Gary was a bright light, kind, funny, and full of life. He lit up every room with his warm energy, love of music, and infectious smile. Whether singing Mamma Mia or Johnny Cash, dancing at events, or thoughtfully colouring with his perfectly sharpened pencil crayons, Gary made everyday moments joyful. He will be remembered for his gentle heart, his vibrant spirit, and his ability to make others feel seen and loved.



Ted
Willacy

March 27, 1932 - Nov 13, 2024 (age 93)

WILLIACY, Edward (Ted) Richard passed away peacefully at his home, Woodingford Lodge in Ingersoll, on Wednesday, November 13, 2024 in his 93d year. One of 11 children born to the late William and Mary Williacy, and the last surviving member of his immediate family, he is predeceased by his siblings, William, Ruth, Betty, Francis, Clifford, Fred, Jack, Douglas, Viola, and Margaret. He was greatly loved and will be missed by his numerous nieces, nephews and great (and great-great) nieces and nephews. Ted's first job was in the greenhouse at the Oxford Regional Centre, where he worked for 20 years. He later worked for ARC Industries and his last and best job was the unofficial greeter at Woodingford Lodge in Ingersoll, where everyone was met with a big smile and a tip of his hat. He and his sister Betty lived on Broadview Ave in Woodstock for many years, where he was well known to all the neighbours for his friendly ways. He loved fishing at the cottage in Barry's Bay and he loved animals. He took great pleasure in the simple things in life, like his collection of ball caps, watches and pens. He made friends everywhere with his enjoyment of socializing, and his family was the centre of his world.



Jeffrey Ransome

Sept 21, 1967 – December 7, 2024 (age 57)

With sadness, but gratitude for his life, Jeffrey's family announces his passing, surrounded by a loving circle of family, at Woodstock Hospital on December 7, 2024 at the age of 57. Jeff is predeceased by his parents Doris and Bill Ransome, and is survived by his siblings, Sandra Bruinewoud, Frank Elsom (Linda), Bill Ransome (Barb) and Brenda Sampson and their families. He is forever remembered by his second family, Woodstock and District Developmental Services ("WDDS"), where he was surrounded by deep friendship, love and support throughout his life and his passing. Jeffrey was well known in the recreational department where he especially enjoyed music, singing and dancing. He also loved swimming, bowling and cheering on the Blue Jays. His life was full and well lived – he will be greatly missed.



Robbie Taylor

Oct 22, 1975 – Jan 22, 2025 (age 50)

Robbie passed away unexpectedly, surrounded by his family, at University Hospital in London on Wednesday, January 22, 2025, in his 50th year. Beloved son of Robert "Bob" (Caroline) and the late Dorothy Taylor (2015). Adored big brother to Mary Ann Grubb (Rodney) and proud uncle of "his little turkeys" Thomas and Joshua. Robbie is fondly remembered by his aunt, Marie Saska (Bob) and by his numerous loving cousins. He is predeceased by many aunts, and uncles and cousins on both the Taylor and Eedy sides of the family. He will also be missed by his many close friends. Robbie was a dedicated and long-time employee at Woodstock Mazda, for over 20 years. Extremely independent and socially inclined, Robbie was well-known around Woodstock. He was a regular visitor at his favourite restaurant, Harvey's, as well as on Woodstock Transit, where he saw the sights and chatted with the drivers. He was an avid Toronto Maple Leafs fan, knowledgeable in the team's history, and he loved the Toronto Blue Jays. He participated in Special Olympics, competing in baseball and bowling, and in recent years took up lawn bowling. There was little that Robbie couldn't accomplish if he set his mind to it. He lived a full life, he was greatly loved and he will be forever missed.



Jennifer Waugh

May 4 , 1969 – March 3, 2025 (age 55)

Passed away suddenly on March 3, 2025, at 55 years of age. Beloved mother of Gavin. Dear daughter of Dianne Waugh. Special sister of George (Wendy), Warren (Michelle), Deanna Waugh. Missed Aunt of Tracie, Hayley, Sabrina (Kodi), George, Racheal. Also survived by great nieces Autumn and Grace. Predeceased by her father George and brothers Ian and Chad. Jennifer will be greatly missed at WDDS, where she worked as a support worker since 1989.

The people we've known
shape who we become.

Their kindness in our actions,

their joy in our laughter,

their spirit in the way

we show up for others.

