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# SPEAK OUT

A Newsletter for our Community

WINTER  
2019

## COMMUNITY PLACE WEST



*“Be ready when opportunity comes... Luck is the time when preparation and opportunity meet.” - Roy D. Chapin Jr.*

Opportunity knocked when Riverside United Church was looking for a partner to share their available space, and we were ready!

There was an interview process where we presented who we are, what we do, and what we believe. Our values aligned with Riverside Church, and we entered a partnership to share their available space. By believing in the power of collaboration, we see this as a strong partnership with various volunteer opportunities and the ability to make new connections!



At the end of November, our day program on Dundas relocated and is now operating within this shared space, which will be known as Riverside Church/ PHSS Community Place West. Families and staff have dropped in to see the new place, and everyone loves it so far— **It's a fresh, welcoming space, with a fantastic location!** If we want to go for a walk in the afternoon, we are located in a great spot with the river and parks nearby.



**We have already participated in the church's Christmas Craft Show, will be hosting an open house together in the near future, and look forward to future opportunities to engage the community.**

## SHOUT OUT CORNER



“A big shout out to **the team at Clarke Rd.** They are an amazing team who support each other well, and truly know the definition of a team. They have made all the tenants feel very welcomed as well as the individual's we support. Thank you for all you do here at Clarke Rd.”

“**Bliss and Angela at Project Hope** have been a huge help this year in scheduling for families and they deserve to be recognized for all her hard work. Many of their staff work with the families I oversee, and when a staff member is unable to come into work with the families I can always rely on Bliss and Angela for help. Many Thanks!”

“**Pauline and Everett Zwiers** always go above and beyond to thank John's support team for their care. On staff appreciation day they brought by chocolate, candy and Tim Horton's cards for all staff. Thank-you both so much! You make us all feel like a million bucks!”

“**The staff team at Pol Court** deserves a huge shout out for being so amazing! The team really supported one another and helped each other after Jenny passed away. It was heartwarming to share stories over lunch together!”



“**Shout out to Tristan at Motion Specialties** from the Southdale crew—He always goes above and beyond with his service, takes the time to check in with everyone when he comes by, and has come in on his own time to help one of the guys with a technical problem with their personal equipment. He has helped them all to program their chairs to their TV to assist in their independence. He always follows up and finds alternate cost effective options for them when parts are not covered. This man deserves a shout out!”

“**HUGE SHOUT OUT TO THE LADIES GROUP AT WISTOW!** This team truly makes things happen and deserves a round of applause! Here are some of the people, if you've been missed, we're sorry! You are part of the team that makes it all happen and you do AMAZING WORK!”

- Jessica Blais
- Caitlin Miller-Hay
- Shelby Isbister
- Kelsey Bilton
- Alex Scherer
- Aubree Molinaro
- Megan Lamonaca
- Brandi Simard
- Betty Bannerman
- Catalina Fernandez
- Sarah Macdonald
- Jessica Lucas
- Nimmy Thomas
- Samantha Huckle
- Karli Sutton
- Shannon Delong Shewaga
- Priyanka Abraham
- & various staff from Project Hope & Dundas Day Program

We know that we have the BEST STAFF EVER, and we want to share it from the rooftops! Our staff are truly amazing and make dreams come true for the people we support. Whether directly making plans to fulfill a wish in a person centred plan, or quietly working behind the scenes to ensure everything runs smoothly, our staff are dedicated and inspiring!

KNOW SOMEONE AWESOME? YEAH YOU DO! [NOMINATE THEM!](#)

We'll publicly acknowledge them and the great work they do.

Send your shout out to Amanda Bartlett-Hindley at [amandab@phsscommunity.com](mailto:amandab@phsscommunity.com)



## DBOS PARTNERSHIP

partnership /'pɑ:tnər,SHɪp/



**“A partnership is an arrangement where parties, known as business partners, agree to cooperate to advance their mutual interests.”**

Two leading, accredited, not-for-profit agencies, DeafBlind Ontario Services and PHSS, have formed an integrative partnership to jointly advocate for and provide high quality, holistic and robust community supports to individuals who have highly specialized and unique needs across Ontario. The partnership comes at a time when significant changes are underway in Ontario’s health and social support systems as a means to help ensure these populations’ needs continue to be recognized and addressed.

The objective of the partnership is to develop opportunities to integrate administration, systems and approaches that will allow for more efficient, person-focused services while operating in a more cost-effective manner. The partnership will enhance the ability of DeafBlind Ontario Services and PHSS to share specialized expertise and services for the benefit of the people they support, while working together to promote the unique needs of these populations who require access to integrated support services and health care across Ontario.

Our two organizations provide different but complementary services: DeafBlind Ontario Services is a not-for-profit organization that helps individuals who are deafblind to increase their independence and improve their quality of life through specialized services. They provide Intervenor Services, trained specialists who facilitate the exchange of information and assist with communication to empower people with deafblindness to thrive. While we, at PHSS, continue to provide 24-hour support to people with significant developmental and/or physical disabilities and complex medical needs so they can live in their own homes, participate in the community, and enjoy life with family and friends.

This is a big year for DeafBlind Ontario! They are celebrating 30 years as a leader in the field, providing specialized services and support to individuals with deafblindness. Founded in 1989, their reach extends with programs across the province into a wide range of communities in Ontario. Please help us congratulate them on this milestone!

We are looking forward to growing this partnership, and our combined presence across Ontario, to ensure these populations’ needs continue to be recognized and addressed.



SIGN UP TO RECEIVE OUR NEWSLETTER VIA EMAIL!

You will be the first to receive each SPEAK OUT newsletter

Sign up at the bottom of our website:  
[www.PHSScommunity.com](http://www.PHSScommunity.com)

Or email Amanda to be put on the e-mailing list:  
[amandab@phsscommunity.com](mailto:amandab@phsscommunity.com)

SAVE THE POSTAGE, SAVE THE PLANET  
*Go paperless!*

## THE CHANGING HEALTHCARE LANDSCAPE

Ontario Health Teams are being introduced to provide a new way of organizing and delivering care that is more connected to people in their local communities. Under Ontario Health Teams, health care providers (including hospitals, doctors and home and community care providers) will aim to work as one coordinated team.

It is a time of great change in the healthcare sector, and PHSS has worked diligently to be part of the discussion and ensure that our complex population has a voice at the table. Two teams we are involved in proceeded to the full application stage, and two are currently in development for the next round of applications. During the first set of OHT announcements in November, one of the applications in which we are a full signing partner was identified as one of the first 24 Ontario Health Teams.

There is a lot of work to be accomplished in short time frame and we commit to keeping you informed throughout the process. **If you have any questions about Ontario Health Teams and PHSS' involvement,** please contact Brian Dunne at [briand@phsscommunity.com](mailto:briand@phsscommunity.com).

More information about Ontario Health Teams is available on the Ministry's website. It is updated on a regular basis with new information, resource documents and copies of webinars to learn more: <http://health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/connectedcare/oht/>

Reap personal growth, feel good, and make a difference in the life of a person with a disability.

Many opportunities exist for individuals interested in volunteering with PHSS. Volunteers provide support at all levels of the organization. Opportunities are available for those interested in providing support in group settings, as well as assisting with special events and fundraising.

For more information, visit our website: [www.phsscommunity.com](http://www.phsscommunity.com)



## IN MEMORY OF JENNY SHARPE

Jennifer Sharpe was a unique and exceptional woman. She was silly, determined, bright and very clever.

She had an infectious smile, a contagious laugh, and a mischievous way that would make you wonder what secrets she held.

She had a love for good food, road trips, and keeping everyone on their toes.

She communicated in her own special way that left no doubt to anyone what her message was.

Jennifer will be deeply missed by so many, but never ever forgotten.

*"Wherever a beautiful soul has been,  
there is a trail of beautiful memories"* --Author Unknown





## OH, THE PLACES YOU WILL GO!

It's been an exciting year with cool new pop-up events! This year, people visited Toronto to experience some of the many pop-ups: the Happy Place, Hide n Seek, and the one currently running until the new year, the Dr. Seuss Experience!

These popular pop-up exhibits create an immersive experience, with loads of photo opportunities. HideSeek was a pop-up for adults dedicated to all things childhood nostalgia. Fun rooms included Dream World, a giant fort made of pillows, that leads to another room decorated with those classic glow-in-the-dark star stickers. Even better than that might have been the room filled from top to bottom with the ultimate 90's kid toy: slinkies, or the room full of Velcro paddles that you can throw Velcro balls to stick on the wall!

The Dr. Seuss Experience is totally immersive, referencing books from *The Lorax* to *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*. Immediately upon entry, you'll encounter a maze inspired by *Oh, The Places You'll Go!* made up of thousands of balloons. The *Horton Hears a Who* room is filled with fuzzy "clovers" that also have an audible element if you listen carefully. You can also walk through a forest of Truffula trees like *The Lorax*!



## WE'VE GOT A NEW LOOK!

Our name may be changing, but our dedication to the people we support, values and mission remain the same as we continue to provide excellent, high-quality supports and services.

At the Annual General Meeting this year, we unveiled a new brand! The name 'PHSS' will stand for everything we believe in: Participating, Housing, Supports, and Services. The new brand identity and tagline, "Medical & Complex Care in Community" reflects PHSS' commitment to being a leader in community inclusion, and ensuring that everyone, including vulnerable populations of people with disabilities and those who require complex care, has the opportunity to participate in the community and live life to its fullest.



We have continued to evolve over the last 30 years and it was time to update our identity to better reflect our expanding provincial presence. This year was an extremely exciting year because we officially expanded beyond southwestern Ontario, and opened a house in Ottawa supporting three gentlemen.

You may have already started to see changes to our identity: website, social media, email signatures, letterheads and templates. Thank you to everyone for your support and commitment to the organization and the people we serve! It is because of our amazing staff and supporters that we have been able to evolve throughout the years and expand our services to meet the evolving needs of those we serve.

Connect with us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter! @PHSScommunity



## Make a Green Choice!



## GREETINGS FROM OTTAWA!



Our first Ottawa location opened in May, supporting three wonderful gentlemen who have lived together for many years.

They get along well, and the last eight

months have been very busy! The staff team there have been getting to know them, and have had a great summer exploring many of the attractions our nation's capital has to offer. Favourites have included: The National Art Gallery, the Central Experimental Farm, and the Space and Technology Museum. As we await major renovations in the house, we are all excited to see what 2020 brings.





## SANDRA GOING TO NATIONALS



Sandra started playing boccia ball in 2004, and it has become her favourite sport. Playing Boccia is an important part of her life, as it has allowed her to see her true potential as an athlete and further improved her ability as a team member.

She has been playing Boccia for the London Cannonballs for many years, and this year she finally had a chance to go to compete at the national championship! Knowing she needed a bit of extra financial help to make this happen, Sandra hosted a GoFundMe as well as a spaghetti dinner, raising over \$2000 to help pay her fees and purchase a new ramp! Sandra would like to thank everyone for their support, and for their good luck wishes!



With her team, she represented Ontario at the Boccia Nationals in Victoria, BC in November, where she and her team played hard!

Sandra ranked 9th in Canada, and her team brought home a gold and a silver medal! Congratulations Team Ontario!



## Featurette: Where Do You Work?

In each newsletter, we're going to feature a person we support and the job(s) they have, and each edition will feature someone new! You'll get to see the work people do and how they engage the community! Interested in hiring someone? Contact us today! [info@phsscommunity.com](mailto:info@phsscommunity.com)

### PETER BOURNS - SHREDDER EXTRAORDINAIRE



Peter comes into the office each week, dressed up with his sweater and tie, and is ready to get some shredding done. He takes it very seriously: he gets a pop, pulls up his chair, and gets to work.



**One of Peter's goals was to find a job, which he found and loves, and has now been doing this for over seven years!**



Peter is a friendly guy who loves his family, likes to make friends, do art, **and is Elvis' biggest fan!** Thanks Pete, for helping us at the office!





# Mark Your Calendar!



## 21st Annual Salute to Laudable Londoners

**When:** April 2020 (TBD)

**Where:** London Hunt & Country Club  
1431 Oxford St. W., London, ON N6H 1W1

Stay tuned for more information—our honouree and event details will be announced in the new year!



## 20th Annual Bowl-a-thon

**When:** June 7, 2020

**Where:** Fleetway  
720 Proudfoot Lane, London, ON N6H 5G5

**BOWLING... PIZZA... and PRIZES! SAVE THE DATE!!** More details will come in the new year!



## Annual General Meeting

**When:** August 13, 2020

**Where:** Fanshawe Conservation Area  
1424 Clarke Rd, London, ON N5V 5B9

**Save the Date for our Annual General Meeting/BBQ in the park!** You're welcome to join us for a social, laid back afternoon by the lake!



## 19th Annual Leo Kirwin Golf Tournament

**When:** August 21, 2020

**Where:** East Park  
1275 Hamilton Rd., London, ON N5W 1B1

Maybe the clubs are away for the winter now, but we want you to save the date for 2020! Join us on Friday, August 21 for a great day on the course.

For more information about PHSS and Foundation events, please visit our website: [www.PHSScommunity.com](http://www.PHSScommunity.com) or contact Amanda Bartlett-Hindley at [amandab@phsscommunity.com](mailto:amandab@phsscommunity.com)

### Let's Get Social!

Get the latest updates and information on our social media!!





**DID YOU KNOW?**

**Participation House Foundation is a registered charity! You will receive a tax receipt for any donation of \$10 or more!**

Charitable Registration Number: 89172 2043 RR0001

**Would you consider a monthly donation to show your ongoing support?**

Payments can be made by credit card, Interac or Paypal on CanadaHelps.org's secure online system. Online donations can also be designated in honour or memory.

**Simply visit our website at [www.participationhouse.com](http://www.participationhouse.com) and click on "Donate Now"**

You will be given the option to give a one-time donation or to arrange monthly contributions.

Your donations help individuals with severe physical, developmental and/or multiple disabilities to achieve their full potential in the community. On behalf of all the staff, families, friends, and more than 250 people we support - **THANK YOU!**



**We also welcome your cheques:**

Please make your cheque payable to:

**Enclosed is my contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_.**

**Participation House Foundation  
620 Colborne Street, Suite 101  
London, Ontario N6B 3R9**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Please direct my donation to the **Highest Priority Needs of Participation House**

Please direct my donation to providing **Staff for Hospitalizations**

Please direct my donation to the **Brian Dunne Housing & Accessibility Fund\***

Please direct my donation to the **Lori Hicks Vacation Fund**

Please direct my donation to the **Elizabeth Leighton Training & Education Fund\***

Please direct my donation to the **Community Place Building Fund**

Please direct my donation to the **Fulford Family & Consumer Fund\***

Please direct my donation to the **Enriching Lives Fund**

Please direct my donation to another fund:  
\_\_\_\_\_

*\*Note: The Board of Directors has established endowment funds so they will provide a lasting legacy of support. Donations are prudently invested and the income earned by these investments of the capital is used to support the work of Participation House Support Services as outlined by the fund terms of reference.*

## DID YOU KNOW?

**In 2012, 1 in 7 Canadians aged 15 or older reported having a disability**

We have developed a unique combination of residential living, home supports, day programs and recreation to meet the needs of people who have significant disabilities but also have much to offer our community – people who are good neighbours and great citizens. To meet the ongoing and future requirements of the people we support and those who could benefit from our services, Participation House Foundation has identified four areas of need:

### Equipment

**More than 8 out of 10 persons with disabilities use aids and assistive devices; having the appropriate aids can enable an individual to participate more fully in society.\*** For people meeting the challenge of multiple disabilities, up-to-date and well-maintained equipment is essential to maintain health and support independence and community involvement. The items range from something as simple as a shower commode to sophisticated communications devices or a \$25,000 air bed that helps prevent pressure ulcers.

### Housing and Accessibility

PHSS homes are very special places. From the outside they look like any other warm and comfortable family home. Inside, modifications are made to ensure they are ideal for the people we support. Each person has a private bedroom that is a reflection of his or her personality. These houses quickly become homes, much loved by those who live there. While government funding may be available, it does not cover all expenses. PHSS understands its responsibility as a good neighbour to properly maintain our homes, both inside and out. Private funding and/or gifts-in-kind are welcome to create new homes when operational funds are available from the government.

### Transportation and Travel

Many of the people we support face significant mobility challenges, and are unable to get around without a wheelchair. When they want to leave their homes to participate in community activities, a van equipped with a wheelchair lift is essential. The goal is to pair each location with their own van, but many are still relying on ParaTransit.

**We currently anticipate that four of our accessible vans will need replacement within the next year.**

Reliable access to transportation is necessary for unexpected medical appointments or other urgent situations. Also, the spontaneity of activity such as going to see a movie, window-shopping at the mall or grabbing a coffee with friends at Tim Horton's is not an option when Paratransit must be booked days in advance. **An accessible van costs approximately \$65,000, with annual maintenance, gas and insurance costs of about \$15,000.**

Like anyone else, the people we support sometimes need a chance to unwind, have new experiences, see the world and visit distant family and friends. But travel, whether for a holiday or to compete in a bocce ball tournament, is difficult because of the additional costs for a full-time attendant. Private funding would allow more people to take holidays – a pleasure most of us take for granted.

### Education, Training and Therapy

Education, support and advocacy are ongoing needs for the people we support and their families. Additional funding would allow more people to participate in conferences and other educational activities, as well as provide therapy such as Occupational Therapy, physiotherapy, and specialized technology.

Our staff members, too, have ongoing education needs to ensure they can provide the best possible care and support. Government funding covers basic required training in areas such as first aid and CPR. It is more difficult to find funds for leadership, values training or training in specialized computer skills.

***Please help us meet our goal of independence for our neighbours and friends by making a financial contribution to Participation House Foundation – London.***

# DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Back in May, Lerner's announced that to celebrate their 90th anniversary, they would be donating \$90,000 to not-for-profit organizations and charities, identified by the community, that impacted them in a meaningful way. More than 250 inspiring stories were submitted, representing close to 90 charities, and we were fortunate to be selected as one of the Top 10 Finalists!

For a one month period, voting was open to the public—Lerner's received more than 12,000 votes and we want to thank everyone for voting and sharing the link to encourage others to vote for PHSS.

As a result of the support from you, our community, we will be receiving a donation of \$7,500, which will be used toward accessible transportation.

*"We started as a one-person shop in 1929, and over the course of 90 years, we've grown to become one of the largest firms in Southwestern Ontario. As we reflected on this significant milestone, we realized that we had to look beyond patting ourselves on the back with the typical gala or party. Without our clients, staff and friends, there would be no Lerner's story; so, we decided we should give back by **contributing to their stories**," said Graham Porter, Managing Partner. **"We were astounded by the overwhelming and supportive reaction to the Giveaway, and humbled by the stories that we read. In addition to the more than 100 charities and organizations that we continue to support on an annual basis, we were grateful to learn more about so many other inspirational organizations in the communities we serve, dedicated to tirelessly supporting so many diverse needs. Every story we received is powerful in its own way, and we're delighted to be able to give something back."***



All donations help individuals with complex medical, physical, and/or developmental needs to achieve their full potential in the community. On behalf of all the staff, families, friends, and more than 250 people we support – THANK YOU!

Donate online today at <https://www.PHSScommunity.com/donate>



## ONTARIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION

Ontario  
Trillium Foundation



Fondation Trillium  
de l'Ontario

An agency of the Government of Ontario  
Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

We are pleased to announce that we are receiving a \$150,000 capital grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation in order to finish the lower level of our Community Place North! The renovations are anticipated to be finished by Fall 2020, and will enhance our capacity for community integration.

We invite you to join us for an open house when everything is finished, to celebrate our progress and see the new space! Sign up for our email newsletter to get our event notifications!



# 18th ANNUAL LEO KIRWIN GOLF TOURNAMENT

It was a beautiful day to be out on the golf course, as over 100 people came out to support the 18th Annual Leo Kirwin Golf Tournament on August 16th!

**Team Petrocco was this year's winner with a score of 10 under par!** The tournament featured a fantastic barbequed steak or chicken lunch, prize draws, and silent auction with over 65 amazing items, including two fully stocked 8-bottle wine racks, a \$200 VIA Rail travel voucher, London Knights tickets, concert tickets, numerous gift certificates, and so much more!

Thank you to everyone who attended the event. Because of your support, we were able to raise over \$26,000! We hope to see you all again next year for the **19th Annual Leo Kirwin Golf Tournament!**

Save the date for next year: August 21, 2020



Thank you to everyone for coming out to the 18th Annual Golf Tournament!

A huge thank you to our corporate sponsors for their generous support!



Family Physiotherapy  
Centre Of London



## PILLAR COMMUNITY AWARDS

Healing Through the Arts was nominated for a Pillar Innovation Award in the Collaboration category, and selected as a top 3 finalist! Videos were created for each finalist, and were shown to almost 1000 participants at the award ceremony. Although we were not the award winner, there were numerous comments on how impressive and enriching the Healing Through the Arts program is. It was an honour to be recognized and to bring awareness to the program.



### WHAT IS HEALING THROUGH THE ARTS?

In collaboration with London Arts Council, L'Arche, and Hutton House, we developed a project called Healing Through the Arts to assist people who previously lived within institutions. The majority of these people do not use words to communicate, and have been overlooked and misunderstood as they cannot talk about their experiences. This project offers a creative solution to help them heal. Rather than providing formal art and music therapy where a medical model is used towards a clinical outcome, this program model involves participants in community-based art making and creative process, facilitated by professional artist-educators.



## POSSIBILITIES IN PAINT

*where art is more than a pretty picture*

As a staff member, when I was told I would be taking Diane to art I thought, ***“Me? You want me to do art? This isn't going to work, I have no art skills”*** but Diane and I went. At first, she was just like me and thought she didn't have the skills so she couldn't do art.

What we learned with the help of the wonderful Kathleen, is that EVERYONE can do art. Art became Diane's favourite activity and, as time went on, she no longer needed hand-over-hand assistance: she told me, ***“I can do it myself.”***

I looked forward to this shift every time because I had the opportunity to watch her grow and learn new skills and techniques. I started to see the confidence she was building through art transfer over to her everyday life. Art was giving her independence, confidence, and skills that she was able to use every day. Diane always beamed with pride when she finished a piece of artwork, and Kathleen always made Diane feel special, like she could do anything she put her mind to.

Unfortunately, Diane passed away in November 2018. This is when I saw the other very important part of Possibilities in Paint. Her family had beautiful keepsakes: pictures, cards and ornaments that Diane had made herself, and I saw the comfort it brought to her family to have those special treasures. We often think art is hard and takes special skills, but it doesn't have to. As Kathleen would say, you can't make a mistake. Possibilities in Paint opened my eyes and has taught me so much more than art.

- Cherelle Murray, PHSS Staff

## GINGERBREAD IN THE AIR

In a fun new tradition, people decorated and submitted gingerbread houses for a fun new contest! Judging was serious business, as they were each scored out of 5 on Holiday/Christmas theme, Creativity, Construction/Durability, Use of Candies, and Overall Arrangement. It was tough narrowing it down to only the top 3—they were all so creative! Congratulations to Project Hope for taking home 1st place!



## BAKING COOKIES WITH BRYAN

In the Person Centred Planning process, Bryan identified that he wanted to develop life skills that are needed around the house, to boost his confidence and increase his independence. This year, he has been working on those skills. On one relaxing Sunday morning, Bryan baked some cookies!

Bryan rolled out the dough on the counter top and cut shapes in the dough using star and heart shaped cookie cutters. After cutting out the cookies and placing them on the baking sheet, Bryan put on the oven mitt and placed the cookies in the oven. After they were done, Bryan enjoyed a few of the cookies he made, and shared them with others. He was quite proud of himself, and has since been helping unload the dishwasher, prepare dinner, and water the garden outside. **Way to go, Bryan!!**





## AN EXPERIENCE OF A LIFETIME!

A past student who worked with PHSS through the Community Engaged Learning program at Western University put forth Sandra's name to attend an "Equitable AI in Public Health" conference in Toronto. Sandra and three staff attended this conference, and we did not realize how big of a deal it was to be included!

The participants included AI (Artificial Intelligence) professionals flown in from Switzerland and the UK. It also included health group professionals, and experts from the community to provide input on Equitable AI in Public Health.

The discussion was lead through three "Fishbowl" exercises that allowed all three expert groups (AI, Health, and Community) to share and discuss their ideas while the other two groups were positioned around the outside of the room, allowed to listening to the conversation and contribute their questions and comments at the end. This respectful approach allowed for each group to provide their thoughts and brainstorm together, and gave time for all others to think about what was said before interjecting.

The discussions were all very interesting! The overall discussion focused on incorporating AI into healthcare and making it more accessible to everyone.

- Panel 1 was the AI expert group, who were specialists in their sector and discussed AI software.
- Panel 2 consisted of specialists in the healthcare sector, and discussed pros/cons of AI use in public health.
- **Panel 3 (that's where we came in!) was the community group.** This discussion was about limited access to technology including financial barriers, as well as how AI should be a collaborative effort and co-designed for accessibility. (Building the technology and incorporating accessibility needs, rather than developing and then adapting it for accessibility)

This experience was like no other! We were honoured to have been asked to participate in this conference because we were included with the academic research community and our opinion was valued. In the room, **Sandra's disability was invisible; she was respected and seen for her thoughts and opinions.** Everyone was there to learn from one another.

Western University and the University of Toronto deserve a special shout out for creating the most accessible experience for Sandra. They removed a table to accommodate for accessibility so that she was able to sit in line with everyone else. They ensured that she felt included, even dining at the elegant faculty lounge at U of T.

It was an amazing experience professionally, personally, and socially. It was a great opportunity for networking, creating many new insights within PHSS (possibilities for AI, connections for legal guardianship, potential student placement, future initiatives with Western, and more.)

You never know where a path may lead... Sandra may be published in an academic journal!



## SPECIAL VISIT, SPECIAL LADY, SPECIAL OCCASION

Early in September, Janet Hatch celebrated her 60th birthday with a unique and wonderful visit to S.A.M.Y's Alpaca Farm and Fibre Studio, located just north of Strathroy. Janet, her friend Kim, parents, and sister were welcomed by owner Yvonne, her team and many curious alpacas waiting by the gate.

Upon entering the pasture, the gentle alpacas individually greeted, nuzzled, and encouraged petting from Janet and her guests. Friendly, well mannered alpacas ate from their hands and they even had the opportunity to bottle feed a young cria (baby llama) named Bella, who was orphaned in April. Janet and her group learned all their names and so much information about these endearing animals and the routines of care at the farm.

Their last activity of the day was going for a walk with the alpacas down the country lane. Their visit concluded when they returned to the farm and bid many thanks and appreciation to Yvonne, her team and Dozer (the affectionate St. Bernard mascot).

As Janet's sister says, "Memories are the heart of every special moment life sends our way. Our memories are countless as captured in Janet's many photos and videos and we cherish them everyday."



### Make a Green Choice!

Sign up at [www.PHSScommunity.com](http://www.PHSScommunity.com) to receive our newsletter straight to your inbox.

## CELEBRATE MEMORIES WITH DISNEY ON ICE



DISNEY ON ICE presents *Celebrate Memories*

Coming to Budweiser Gardens Feb. 20-23!

PHSS will receive a portion of each ticket for select performances sold through this fundraiser!!

Thursday, Feb 20, 2020 @ 7:00PM

Friday, Feb 21, 2020 @ 10:30AM & 7:00PM

Saturday, Feb 22, 2020 @ 7:00PM

Sunday, Feb 23, 2020 @ 5:00PM

**Budweiser**  
GARDENS

Here is the link to purchase from our fundraiser!!

<https://groupmatics.events/group/PHSSDOI>

## ROAD TRIP!

A bond with a sibling is hard to describe. It is a connection that runs deep. Spiritual. Everlasting.

Over the past few years, John, his family, and his support team have been working hard to support and encourage John to fulfill his goals.

One of those goals was a vacation to visit his brother Jake, sister in law Melissa, and his four nieces and nephews in our beautiful capital city of Ottawa. As the old saying goes, "it takes a village" but with his tribe, John made it happen!



John enjoyed an incredible four days with his family. They all enjoyed the hotel pool and hot tub. Exploring the capital city, family dinner at my brothers, picnic in the park, checking out the museum & going to church where his brother ministers.

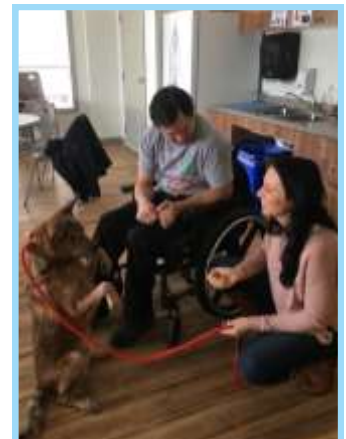
John also has a new friend, Bryan! Bryan has also always wanted to go to Ottawa so they split the gas, hotel and made a road trip adventure together. Both John and Bryan are crushing their goals this summer!



## MATTHEW MEETS LOCAL FACEBOOK CELEBRITY

Matthew spent time with Jellybean, who made it to the semi-finals in a Facebook contest called World's Most Amazing Dog. People from all over the world uploaded videos of their dog doing amazing tricks. Jellybean can catch a ball between his paws, hop on his hind legs, and even do the can-can!

Another thing to note: Jellybean is completely deaf! It was a great opportunity for Matthew and Jellybean to connect and spend time together, because they share the ability to communicate through sign language.





We want to  
hear from  
YOU!

PHSS is always searching for innovative ways to support people with developmental and/or complex physical needs to live in their own homes, participate in community and enjoy life with family and friends. We do our best, but we're not always perfect. We want to hear from you about our services and supports. "You" could be a parent, an advocate, a member, a person we support or a concerned citizen.

However, first you should try speaking with the person with whom you normally communicate. If you're not satisfied, contact the Chief Operational Officer, Carmell Tait.

If you feel your problem remains unsolved, contact the President/CEO. We will work to resolve your issue, and if need be, the President will raise it with the Board of Directors.

This procedure is intended to address issues that are within the power of PHSS. Issues such as insufficient government funding for services cannot be rectified through this route.

We are confident that if we all work together we can come up with solutions which will benefit all of us. We would also like to hear from you if you are pleased with our programs and services, and we will make sure your comments reach the staff and volunteers involved.

**Key Contacts:**

**Brian Dunne**

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**Carmell Tait**

Chief Operational Officer  
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Work with Us!

Are you a highly skilled and dedicated person committed to providing a safe, caring and enriching environment? Do you have a passion for encouraging and creating an inclusive community where people with disabilities participate in a meaningful way?

We are currently recruiting  
**PART-TIME SUPPORT WORKERS**

Developmental Services Worker (DSW) Apprenticeship programs are also available!

Please check out our website for opportunities and information about the DSW Apprenticeship program: [www.PHSScommunity.com/contact/employment](http://www.PHSScommunity.com/contact/employment)

**Let's Get Social!**

Connect with us



@PHSScommunity



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