



# SPEAK OUT

A Newsletter for our Community

SPRING 2021

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## CONNECTIONS IN CHAOS

Last year, the City of London asked for public votes for projects to enhance the community. A mural for the Richmond & York Underpass was approved, and we are proud to have been included!

Sandra and others from PHSS were asked to be a part of the project where many artists and community members contributed to 13 different murals for the underpass, collectively titled "Connections in Chaos." Each person had a piece or two to decorate and artists Melanie Schambach and Alejandro Zuluaga put it all together.

Each mural is made up of small, themed pieces that, when put together, makes up the larger mural. Sandra contributed to two pieces: *Belonging*, and *Diversified Beauty*, and is very proud that her artwork is part of the London community!

Be sure to drive by and check them out if you're in the area!



## SHOUT OUTS

“Shout out to the **Team at Southdale**—Everyone has stepped up in such a big way to get through a really challenging time for staff coverage; many staff working every weekend, last minute shifts, working together to shift switch-all while providing creative and engaging supports! Thank you for your help!”

“The **Team at Hartson** were so thoughtful! They came to know that Dominic wasn’t feeling so great, and decided to drop off a Swiss Chalet chicken pot pie for lunch for the men at Riverside. It was generous and appreciated!”

“Shout out to the **Deer Valley Team** for rallying together to cover all the open shifts and supporting the men through the pandemic—they really went above and beyond!”

“Huge thank you to the **Team at Cranbrook**—they transitioned two people into the location through COVID, and shown resiliency through working collaboratively with other teams. They have adapted to the changing needs of the house and worked really well with other locations.”

The **Team at Community Place North** has been providing a bunch of activities on the PHSS Social to encourage people to be social and have fun! From weekly crafting demos to monthly themed activity boxes, they have really shown their creativity and passion for planning interactive activities!



It has been a long and challenging year... but our staff have been truly amazing and we cannot fully express the depth of our gratitude!

## ALL PHSS STAFF (aka SUPERSTARS) DESERVE A SHOUT OUT

Our frontline support workers have flexed their creative muscles to keep activities fresh and exciting, connect people with their families and friends, and support each other. They have stepped up to the challenge to ensure that shifts are covered and people are safe and healthy.

Our support workers show up in person, and so do the office staff! Throughout the pandemic, office staff have continued to support the organization from the main office, adapting processes for the virtual environment, and doing their best to support the front-line staff and Senior Team.

**And let’s not forget our Senior Team! They continue to adapt to the constantly changing COVID environment and work with our staff teams to do everything possible to maintain high quality supports for the people we support.**

While we are physically apart, our collective efforts help keep each other safe and healthy. Thank you for everything you have been doing and continue to do!



## COVID UPDATE

*What you are doing makes a difference!* Because of you, PHSS is proud to report that we have had **NO POSITIVE CASES** among the people we support!

This is tremendous news, and we are eternally grateful to all our staff for stepping up during this time, and to all the families who continue to support us and follow the health guidelines.

We know that this past year has been difficult—with kids at home, being advised not to visit with family and friends, activities being cancelled, and not being able to go out into the community without risk of exposure. Thank you for doing what you can to ensure that we all stay safe and healthy!

We hope that you are safe and healthy during this COVID-19 pandemic, and following the recommendations set out by our public health leaders. We are committed to you, our supporters, and are providing the most up to date information on our website: [www.PHSScommunity.com](http://www.PHSScommunity.com)



## HERE WE GROW AGAIN!

Although the pandemic continues, families continue to be in need, and we are please to share that we continue to expand our services to assist families in our community! We are proud to provide residential supports for six people and their families:

- Opened our second location in Ottawa, supporting two people;
- Opened new location in London to support two gentlemen;
- Providing support to two ladies in a temporary location in London while their home is being built. Once the house is built, a third person will be supported there.



SOMETHING BIG IS COMING!



We are launching a province-wide **ONLINE 50/50 DRAW** with our partners DeafBlind Ontario Services and Community Living Chatham-Kent!



**6**

GRAND PRIZE DRAWS  
OVER 6 MONTHS

**2**

EARLY BIRD DRAWS  
OF \$1,000 EACH

Proceeds will benefit all three organizations to enhance the lives of the people we support!

***That's what we call a WIN-WIN... WIN!***

First draw May 28th! Tickets available at [www.WINWINWIN5050.ca](http://www.WINWINWIN5050.ca)

Learn more about the partnership on our website: [www.PHSScommunity.com](http://www.PHSScommunity.com)

Licence #: RAF1203195



## Let's Get Social!

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



## People of PHSS—Gord Kittmer

Inspired by the Humans of New York stories, we want to introduce the people we support in a new campaign called People of PHSS! Everyone has their own story, their own personality, and we want to share their unique perspectives.



**Gord Kittmer**

*People say that Gord has an infectious smile that can brighten any room; wouldn't you agree? Gord's smile is accompanied by an adventurous spirit. He just loves getting involved in every new experience and opportunity that comes his way! He's got a passion for motorsports, farming, and all things mechanical.*

*COVID has been tough in many ways. He has missed visiting his family and friends, but stays optimistic and can't wait to go back to work on his farm and Rocky's Harley Davidson. Gord has a vibrant social life, and is finding creative ways to be adventurous and live out his motto:*

***"Life is either a daring adventure or nothing at all!"***



## EXPRESS YOURSELF

***The Possibilities in Paint program is back!!***

After a brief hiatus due to the pandemic, we have found a way to provide the Possibilities in Paint program and engage participants' creativity virtually!

Workshops are done over Zoom, and participants receive all their paint and materials delivered to them at home!



## 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!*





## MEANINGFUL MOMENTS



In the past year, Matthew purchased a baby budgie from Jungle Services in London, and named him Floyd! When Matthew first got him, Floyd was only 3 months old. With a bit of help and guidance from Jungle Services, Matthew and Floyd are bonding and look to be the best of friends!

He has used this time during the pandemic to learn about birds and do some training with Floyd. Matthew can now get Floyd to sit on his finger, and they often hang out and watch TV together.

Thank you to Gerry for sharing his experience with birds to help Matthew learn about bird care and training!



Ellen recently received a brand new iPad with keyboard, thanks to Trixie Kretschmer—the iPad belonged to her sister, Yvonne, who passed away suddenly last summer. Yvonne was an active member at Hutton House, and it was really important to Trixie to donate the iPad to someone who would make good use of both the iPad and keyboard. What a beautiful and thoughtful way to honour her sister's memory.

Trixie has been very generous to PHSS in the past, donating a large amount of craft supplies. Thank you for your generosity Trixie, Ellen is very excited to use her new iPad!



Ladies Group is back and the ladies thinking outside the box to come up with creative activities! What have they been up to? Crafts, dance class with Studio 8 Dance, and arranged a virtual visit to S.A.M.Y.'s Alpaca Farm!

They got a tour of the farm and saw goats, llamas, alpacas and the resident cat. They also got to take an alpaca on a virtual walk, and visited the store to see all the products they make from the fur, such as dryer balls, slippers, socks, and even hats!

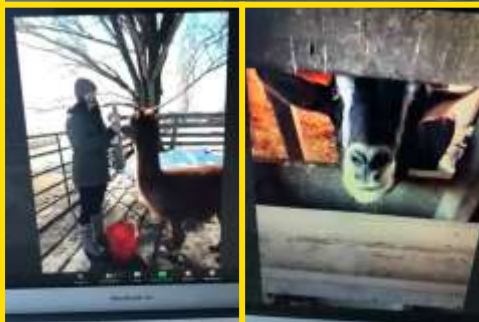
Check them out for yourself!

**S.A.M.Y.'s Alpaca Farm & Fibre Studio**

<https://samysalpaca.com/>

Kerwood, ON

Up next on their virtual outings: a Toronto Zoo tour!



## INCLUSIVE INSTRUMENTS

Megan attends the Community Place West Day Program. Although closed right now due to COVID-19, PHSS has found a way to engage with Megan and her family—through music!

**Megan's parents are former music teachers and department heads** at Sir Wilfred Laurier Secondary School, and have lead El Sistema groups in London. Music is their life and they are thrilled that Megan can join in with them.

Music is an impactful form of expression and people with physical and developmental disabilities are often unable to play traditional instruments, so **playing music has not typically been an accessible and inclusive activity—until now.**

PHSS has connected with Ryan McCaul—a **past staff member and a Western Music Program Master's graduate** who is passionate about helping people with disabilities to create music and connections! Ryan has been adapting instruments to make them work for the people using them: drum pads, guitar, or in **Megan's case, a vocoder.**

### **Check out what Megan's family wrote about her experience so far:**

*We have been very impressed with the work that Ryan has done on our behalf and his ongoing support. Megan now has an amazing "instrument" where her computer plays a song that she knows with video, and as she vocalizes, she activates chords through the speaker that match the chords in the music.*

*We also have a piano keyboard that Ryan has programmed to respond to Megan's voice and allow her to sing along with any song. Ryan is very knowledgeable and computer savvy, so he has improved versions of Megan's instrument every week.*

*We are very excited and very appreciative of Ryan's commitment. The instrument he has developed for Megan is not only brilliant, it is the first tool we have ever had to truly allow Megan to develop—not just exist.*

*Steve and Margaret*



### About Ryan & Inclusive Instruments

Our MISSION is to unlock the musical potential in every person, and to create meaningful, inclusive connections for anyone living with a disability. We create custom musical instruments based on each individual's needs, interests, and abilities,



and offer inclusive music sessions so that everyone is able to connect with a musical community.

Find out more at <https://www.inclusiveinstruments.org/>



# UPCOMING EVENTS

For information and to register: [www.PHSScommunity.com](http://www.PHSScommunity.com)



## A Taste for Travel

**When:** June 17, 2021

**Where:** Online

Travel the world—from your kitchen! Join us for an interactive VIRTUAL cooking experience! Featuring fresh, high-quality ingredients shipped right to your door, this will be an event you don't want to miss! Proceeds will benefit the Lori Hicks Memorial Vacation Fund.



## 2021 Summer Games

**When:** June 21-25, 2021

**Where:** Online

The Bowl-a-thon looks a little different again this year, but we want to keep the spirit of fun and competition! Register a team, collect pledges, and have fun! More details will come soon!



## PHSS Annual General Meeting

**When:** August 12, 2021

**Where:** Online

We're not quite sure what August will bring, but we're definitely planning to do some sort of activity! More information will be shared closer to the event, so save the date for now!



## 19th Annual Leo Kirwin Memorial Golf Tournament

The 2020 tournament was cancelled due to COVID-19, but we are working with East Park to host a safe and enjoyable tournament in 2021!

**Save the Date:** Friday, August 20, 2021

Stay tuned for more information.

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!!







## DONOR SPOTLIGHT

### Nancy Mikula



#### What is your connection to PHSS?

My sister, Janet, is supported by PHSS—her life has been enhanced considerably since her move to London in 1993, and we consider the organization to be an integral part of Janet's extended family for the last 28 years. PHSS supports have been exceptional and life changing for our family, especially when serious illnesses and conditions have developed.

#### Why do you give to the Staff Support in Hospital Fund?

Sometimes, hospitalization has been necessary for her medical care, and we are so grateful that PHSS sends staff to accompany Janet in these circumstances. Advocacy to ensure her voice is heard is paramount because it is an extremely stressful time for her, the staff, and our family.

It is essential that we all work together to advocate for the best care and outcomes possible. PHSS staff are integral to our loved ones in this setting and continue to inspire our family.

**“My monthly donations are a small way to provide assistance for an extremely important opportunity to ensure that Janet and others will have their voices heard during hospital stays.”**

PHSS is one of the very few agencies that continues to send support staff with the people we support while they are in hospital. Given the unique care and communication needs, our staff are also a significant advocate for the needs, preferences, and wants for those who may have alternative forms of communication. It provides comfort, reduces stress and anxiety, as well as eases the burden on family members, knowing there is a trusted, familiar face with their loved one. Unfortunately, we do not receive additional funding to provide this; donations made to the Staff Support in Hospital Fund help us ensure that we can continue to provide this compassionate service.

## BECOME A PHSS PARTNER!

### Why consider donating monthly?

It's easier to budget a smaller amount given regularly;

It's convenient—no need to continuously go online or send a cheque to donate;

You won't forget—no need to set a reminder for your annual giving;

You can make an ongoing impact

Simply visit our website at

[www.PHSScommunity.com](http://www.PHSScommunity.com) **and click on “Donate”**

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!

# SoulCollage

Written by Sandra, Kellie, Denise, and Regena

One of the main things that has helped us stay connected through the COVID-19 shutdown has been the continuation of our weekly SoulCollage® class. Being connected to each other outside of our homes has been important. We set up Facebook Messenger for our group and it felt great to know we had access to talk about anything we wanted relating to our life and the pandemic situation.

Exploring SoulCollage® through images and words opened conversation between us, and we really reflected on the current situation: we could voice our challenges and our hopes for a safe future, reflect on our strengths, and discuss how our fears could hijack us and make it hard to stay positive. We did not judge each other in our feelings and emotions, we just assured each other that even when we felt stuck, we were actually still moving and learning and growing. We use our SoulCollage® to deal with everyday things that come up.

It has given us the opportunity to strategize, help ourselves, and each other. Kellie has found a new way to communicate with us, and sharing memories and experiences have helped us connect. It was surprising to hear Kellie share from her heart. Regena has said that it has helped her process her thoughts better. Sandra said it helped her express some powerful feelings during COVID. Denise has said her connections with us are definitely stronger through this experience.

SoulCollage® has helped us understand our roles as clients, staff, and women, and that everyone has struggles and works through tough times. We can come together, even though we are different people **because we experience the same “stuff”: love, fear, face challenges, and hope for the future.**



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)



## ZOOM-ING WITH ERIC ETHERIDGE



Eric Etheridge decided to have a private zoom call with Ladies Group! He has visited them in person multiple times since meeting them a few years ago, and wanted to reach out to the ladies during these challenging times to boost their spirits! What a thoughtful gesture!

He told them all about how him and his wife Kalsey Kulyk bought a van to live in, had a stage put on top and they are going to be travelling around to put on socially distanced concerts for their fans!

Follow their journey @loveontheroadofficial on IG or Facebook!

## IMPROVING HEALTH & WELLNESS

2020 has been a challenging year for all of us—and the Health and Wellness Committee is there to help! They have arranged a number of activities and events geared toward nutrition, exercise, and mental health! **Check out some of the fun things they've been doing!**

- **Fierce 'n Fit Boxing with Taveena**

Taveena Kum is a certified Boxing Coach and Boxing Official, a two-time National Champion, former member of the Canadian National Boxing team, has represented Canada on the international stage, and is scheduled to participate in the 2021 Tokyo Olympics. It has been Taveena's goal to share the benefits of boxing by creating an inclusive environment focusing on youth and adults with physical or developmental disabilities through her Fierce 'n Fit Boxing Program!



- **Zumba—Dancing up a sweat with virtual Zumba sessions!**



- **Celebrating movements and advocacy days**

Pink Shirt Day, World Cancer Day, Black History Month, International Women's Day, and more!

- **Mindfulness Meditation**

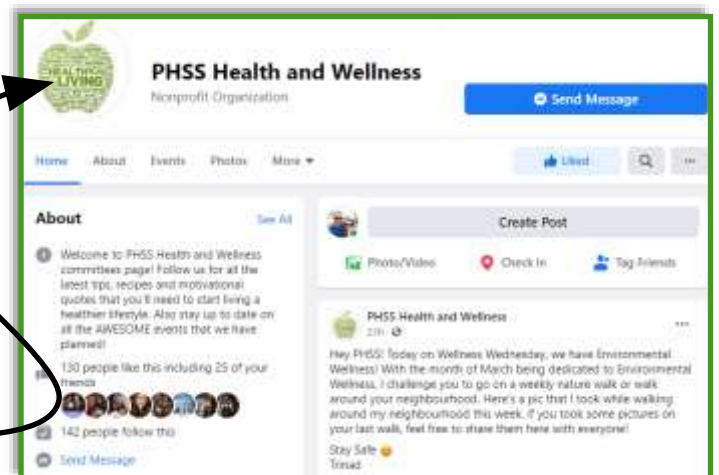
We teamed up with *The Art of Living* to offer 25 PHSS staff Sky Breath Meditation in The Happiness Program. Belén Montefalcone, Internationally Certified Yoga & Meditation Teacher, work with staff over 3 relaxing, yet focused, days to learn the skill of clearing their minds from stress with breath meditation.

- **Nutrition webinars with Rebecca Minshall, Registered Dietitian**

Rebecca Minshall, a registered dietician, joined us for a series of webinars all focused on nutrition: Eating Healthy on a Budget; The Truth About Dieting; Designing Your Diet for Mental Health; and Eating for the Earth. She offered two dates for each webinar to ensure that all staff were able to join if they wanted! Rebecca helped us all learn about the link between food and our physical, social, financial, and environmental wellness!

- **Sharing #WellnessWednesday tips**

Revisiting the 7 Dimensions of Wellness and sharing tips to enhance your health and wellness.



**AND MORE!!!**

Be sure to follow the PHSS Health and Wellness Facebook Page to join in on the fun and wellness activities!!



## DONORS OF DISTINCTION

PHSS would like to extend a special Thank You to the following  
for their generous support in 2020:

<i>Anonymous</i>	<i>LERNERS LLP LONDON</i>
<i>Linda Barbee</i>	<i>Bill and Jean Mahoney</i>
<i>Chris Bentley and Wendy Harris-Bentley</i>	<i>MITCHELL &amp; KATHRYN BARAN FAMILY</i>
<i>Dr. John and Perry Clouston</i>	<i>FOUNDATION</i>
<i>Ann Cross</i>	<i>Ken Morrison</i>
<i>Brian Dunne</i>	<i>Larry Myny</i>
<i>Liz Hewitt</i>	<i>Dr. Faisal Rehman</i>
<i>HAROLD E. BALLARD FOUNDATION</i>	<i>Maria and Bruno Sinosis</i>
<i>HICKS MORLEY HAMILTON STEWART STORIE LLP</i>	<i>Gary and Phyllis Thompson</i>
<i>Tom Jolliffe</i>	<i>Elizabeth Wasko</i>
<i>Andre Kozak</i>	<i>Willoughby Family Fund—a fund under London</i>
	<i>Community Foundation</i>

2020 was a challenging year—Thank you to all our financial donors  
who continue to support PHSS throughout the pandemic.  
*Your support makes all the difference!*

Anthony and Joy Abbott	Brad Beattie	Bob and Donna Bourne
Susan Agranove	Brenda Beattie	L. Bowers
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 Leslie and John Giesbrecht  
 George Glasser  
 GOLDLINE MOBILITY &  
 CONVERSIONS  
 Gordon and Laura Green  
 Rachael Griffin  
 Olivia Groeneweg  
 Victoria Haight



Our long-time COO, Carmell Tait, passed away this past year. To celebrate her life, vision, and legacy, we established the Carmell E. Tait. Memorial Fund for Advocacy and Social Justice.

Because of donors like you, this endowment fund is being invested with over \$30,000 to start!

As the fund matures, the interest earned will be used for initiatives that assist people we support, their families, and other families in need with a focus on advocacy and social justice.

*THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!*

Jo-Anne Hammond  
 Belinda Hammoud  
 Chantal Hampson  
 David and Mary Hancox  
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Howard and Linda Rundle	Margaret Szilassy	
	Linda Tait	

*Thank  
you*



**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 Interim COO, Shannon Riley.**

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**

President/Chief Executive Officer  
(519) 660-6635 ext. 227  
briand@phsscommunity.com

**Shannon Riley**

Interim Chief Operational Officer  
(519) 660-6635 ext. 235  
shannonr@phsscommunity.com

**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 always accepting resumes for  
**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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