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the Communicator

Spring 2024

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'Good Luck' Les

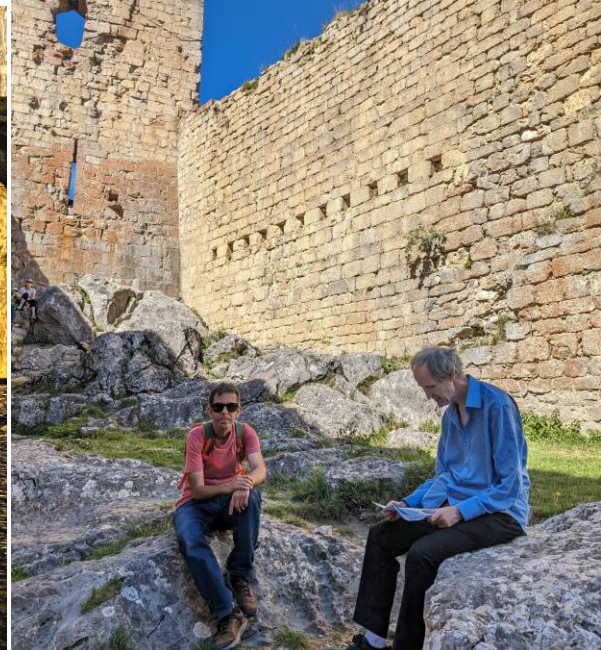
Linda's Road to Recovery



Vacation to France

Once again, the Neville team found some inexpensive plane tickets, this time taking them to the south of France, where hikes in the Pyrenees brought them to hidden caves and ancient castles.

Rob explored his interest in Roman ruins, Dan walked in the footsteps of Van Gogh in the brilliant light of Arles, Bill swam in the Mediterranean Sea and Dave documented it all with his new-found hobby of photography. Another one for the books (not to mention the CLS Communicator).



The Marvelous Mrs Munira

On December 28th we said farewell to Munira Vahanvaty as she set off into retirement.

As Janice Barr so eloquently put it “Munira was like a warm blanket when you walked into the Administration Centre”. Munira provided smiles and incredible support at the Administration Centre for 21 years.

She has made many friends in the community living family over those years and will be fondly remembered and fiercely missed. We wish her all the best in this next stage of her life.



Message from the CEO



Self-advocates group meet with the CLS Board of Directors



Ross Road

It's been lovely to see the flowers and trees blossoming throughout the Lower Mainland and the return to some warmer weather.

I am pleased to announce that CLS has formed a Self-Advocate group. The group is supported by Susan Powell (with the help of Marcela Herrera, Director of Programs) and consists of self-advocates from various CLS programs. The group has met several times to set their priorities and have connected with other Self-Advocate groups in the sector to learn about their initiatives and activities. Additionally, the group presented to the CLS Board of Directors to review their priorities and communicate what they have accomplished so far. In May 2024, CLS will be supporting 3 members of the CLS Self-Advocate group to attend the Inclusion BC Conference in Nanaimo. Their attendance at this provincial conference will be a wonderful opportunity to meet other provincial leaders and gain valuable knowledge about the priorities and issues in the sector.

Through our membership with the BC CEO Network, CLS was involved in drafting a position statement on Access to Health and Coordination of Care for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. This joint paper with Inclusion BC addresses the current challenges and significant erosion of health care services and supports for the people we support.

The Position Statement on Access to Health and Coordination of Care for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities:

[Letter to the Minister of Health](https://inclusionbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Letter-Min.-Dix-02.07.24-.pdf)

<https://inclusionbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Letter-Min.-Dix-02.07.24-.pdf>

[Position Statement - Technical Version](https://inclusionbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/PS-Access-to-Health-and-Coordinated-Care-Technical-Version-Jan-2024.pdf)

<https://inclusionbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/PS-Access-to-Health-and-Coordinated-Care-Technical-Version-Jan-2024.pdf>

[Position Statement - Plain Language Version](https://inclusionbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/PS-Access-to-Health-and-Coordinated-Care-Plain-Language-02.15.2024.pdf)

<https://inclusionbc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/PS-Access-to-Health-and-Coordinated-Care-Plain-Language-02.15.2024.pdf>

The paper will serve as the basis for provincial advocacy on issues in the upcoming provincial election in the Fall. The paper has been widely distributed including to, CLBC senior management, the Minister of Health, the Health Authorities and members of Inclusion BC and the BC CEO Network.

In December, CLS formed another housing partnership with New Vista Society – an organization that supports low-income housing across the Lower Mainland. We were pleased to secure an affordable housing unit for a CLS Supported Individual in one of their new developments. We are grateful for this new partnership with our Independent Living program.

We hosted our second “Bring on Spring” party on April 6th. Close to 100 employees and children attended this wonderful event that included, food, music, crafts, face painting, games, and of course the incredible Scruffles the balloon artist.

Finally, the reconstruction of the Ross Road home in North Vancouver is now well underway. The contractors have been secured, the foundation has been poured, and we are looking forward to completion of this new home.

Janice Barr, CEO

Employee Profiles



Sapana Patil

Sapana has worked for the CLS since December, 2021 and is the Manager of Staffed Homes, responsible for three homes.

What is your favourite thing about working at CLS?

I like to work with CLS because, not only does CLS always appreciate and motivate their employee's potentials and capabilities, but also provides them ample opportunities to grow and learn.

What is a passion or hobby of yours?

I always like to be helpful. I am passionate about my work. I love dogs and travelling.

If you could meet one person (dead or alive) who would it be?

Chris and David who lived at Sardis and have passed away.

Where do you want to travel, but have never been?

I would like to travel different scenic places such as Paris, Switzerland and Italy. Currently an Alaska cruise is on top of my bucket list.



Alan Kuang

Alan is a Coordinator for the Individualized Supports program and has been with the CLS since October, 2018.

What is your favourite thing about working at CLS?

It's a blessing to be able to do work that aligns with my personal values and at the same time positively impact individuals, their families, and the community.

What is a passion or hobby of yours?

Pretending that I can actually cook.

If you could meet one person (dead or alive) who would it be?

Nicholas Cage. I would like to know why my mom can't stop talking about him.

Where do you want to travel, but have never been?

I would like to visit a Lindor chocolate factory to see how they make them so darn delicious.



Rakel MacDonald

Rakel is a Recruiter for the CLS and started working here in December, 2023.

What is your favourite thing about working at CLS?

When I went to my first event at the cultural center and seeing everyone from supported individuals to the CEO being involved; I realized how involved everyone is at all levels and it was impressive.

What is a passion or hobby of yours?

I am passionate about travelling and learning new cultures. A hobby of mine is hiking.

If you could meet one person (dead or alive) who would it be?

Homer who is credited as the author of the Iliad and the Odyssey.

Where do you want to travel, but have never been?

I want to travel to Rwanda and Japan.

Promotions & New Appointments

Congratulations!

Dolina Del Amo Barcelo – Team Lead – Paisley
Navdeep Kaur – Team Lead – Duthie
Maria Consuelo Belmonte, Team Lead – Independent Living
Sapana Patil – Acting Manager of Staffed Homes
Harrison Nguyen – Senior Administrative Assistant
Axel Lanciotti – Team Lead – 133rd Upper and Lower
April Ordonez – Manager of Staffed Homes
Amanda Peacock – Manager of Individualized Supports
Rakel MacDonald – HR Recruiter
Allison Chan – Accounting Assistant
Gurman Kaur – Administrative Assistant
Alvin Sidhu – Accounting Manager



Sandy Basi and her husband are proud new parents to baby boy Riven Sandhu. Riven was born on November 28th and weighed 8 pounds, 9 ounces. Congratulations !!!

Employee Anniversaries

January 2024 - March 2024

Happy Work Anniversary

3 – 5 years

Braulia Jocol Garcia
Abraham Tesfayesus
Quinten Silcox
Darlene Robotham
Winta Gebru
Ruth Adogo
Sadia Khan
Ana Suwaji
Jennifer Malin
Julianne Sweeney
Yasmin Hussein
Murray Campbell
Angela Mezzatesta
Alexis Binns
Jessie Morris
Allison Boyce
Cheryl Kumar
Axel Lanciotti

Janice Barr
Janne Del Portillo Arias
Jennifer Barlad
Nazreen Jablonsky
Jabarjeet Sidhu
Marlene Green-Holness
Tara Thomas
Rinawati Qadeer
Alejandro Ioanid
Meron Aregy
Mellany Hugo
Saveta Bikicki
Abigail Frando
Ramil Tiu
Dolly Motsumi
Nigel Dadswell

6 – 10 years

Nikhil Roshan
Christopher Whittle
Sarahlyn Turay
Joseph Gosselin
Olubukunola Akinwunmi
Robin Gibson
Alyssa Minniss
Harpreet Grewal
Rachel Fehr
Harminder Sekhon
Victoria Olaniyan
Marivic Alban
Inderjot Sidhu
Robert Smith
Andrew Fernando
Djenebou Dukuly
Gloria Aragones Aliaga
Brima Kanu
Leila Kardan
Barbara Lago
Fariha Khan
Mingtao Liu
Julie Maxim
Andrew Malin
Daniel Cameron

11 – 20 years

Amanda Smith
Brett Carlyle
Leni Loconte
Tyler Vittie
Amanda Peacock
William Crowe
Brandie McDonald
Ronald Torres
Henry Nagel
Elena Unabia
Katelyn Lund
Hamid Khatami
Jessica Hopkins
Zane McCarthy
Diane Ebner
Lila Johnson
Lynn Smith
Ali Fard-Behbahani
Rukayat Lawal
Stephen Bain

21 – 33 years

Lorraine Lepine
Shammi Singh
Parminder Dhillon
Amy Saip
Tony Maravilla
Charlene Francis
Purnima Maharaj
Kristi Wilken
Paul Hetherington
Musare Iya-Songa
Laura Pedersen
Rani Marwa
Marcela Herrera
Kasia Hislop
Agata Leks
Tracy Quinn
Doug Smith

Linda's Road to Recovery

In November, 2023 Linda experienced some medical issues that caused a major road block in her experiencing regular day to day activities that she enjoyed so much. Linda is a bright and witty person (and artist) who knows what she wants!!

When Linda needed to leave her home to rehabilitate (for 8 weeks and 5 days), we all couldn't help but notice the void she left in the home. Her roommates missed the joyous and bright lady that would bring the livelihood to her home and the programs she attended.

When Linda started to feel lonely and down, we created a poster with memories to help her feel supported, it was called "Linda's Home Away From Home." It included pictures of Linda with her roommates, staff and many activities she enjoys.

Linda is now home and is hoping to return to her regular life with some adaptations. Through all of this, Linda recognizes all the hard work that staff at her home and day supports has been doing to help her feel at home even with the many changes. As they say "slow and steady wins the race"!! We were excited to have Linda home. We celebrated her with a lovely welcoming home party. It was wonderful to see Linda's joyous self back.



Author Jordan T. Lefaire

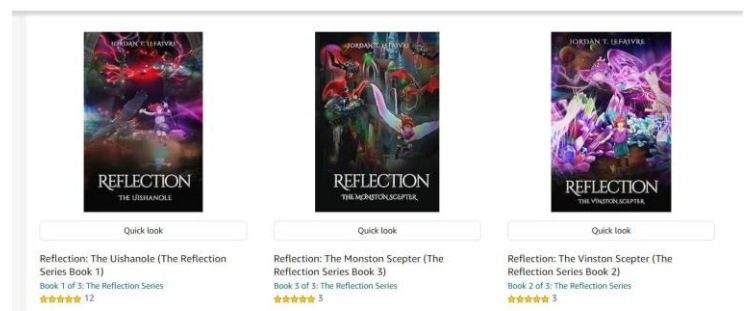
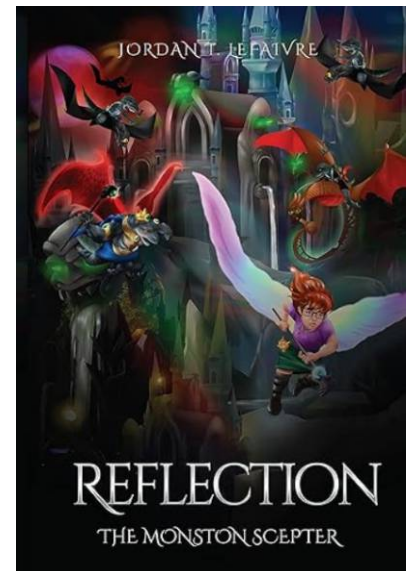
Jordan was supported by the CLS for 4 years in the Individualized Supports program. Jordan is young man with Autism. At age 12 years he started writing and throughout his time at CLS he was supported to pursue this talent by finding a publisher and someone to review and critique his work. His first three novels are now published and can be found on Amazon.

His novels are about a young autistic lady named Phoebe and the struggles she faces trying to fit in. The novels are fantasy based about Phoebe being pulled into different dimensions, her struggles and them becoming a far greater problem. Does Phoebe's autism weigh her down? Or will it be to her advantage for her quests in the new worlds she goes to? Jordan would love for Disney to see and pick up his novels and make them into 2D hand drawn animation. His goal is to spread great morals, autism awareness and understanding to all readers throughout the world.

<https://jtlldimension.weebly.com/>

<https://www.amazon.ca/stores/author/B07B46CGDN/allbooks?ingress=0&visitId=f06c3466-f761-4425-af1c-e1e2e32e4048>

Congratulations Jordan!



On March 12th we were able to host an in-person Employee Awards Gala. Over 100 employees and guests gathered at the Vancouver Golf Club for an evening of food, entertainment and recognition. This is an evening that celebrates employees who have reached milestone years of employment at the CLS as well as 4 nominated awards, of which we had a record number of nominations this year.

Congratulations to all recipients and thank you for your hard work and dedication to the CLS and Supported Individuals.



Woodlands Parents Group Award for Vision, Courage and Creativity

This award is presented to someone who:

- Demonstrates sincere motivation towards Vision, Courage and Creativity in approaches to support
- Thinks consistently outside the conventional mindset to get things achieved for an individual or group.
- Aligns with the original inspiration, vision and courage shown by the Woodlands Parents Group

Nominees

Shima Ali
D'Alquen Jackson
Elena Unabia

Nydia Soler Gomez
Lisa Shen

Sardis Team
Elysia Bernard

Kayla Balaz
Barb Lago

Woodlands Parents Group Award Winner: Nydia Soler Gomez

Nydia has only been working with CLS since March 2022, but in that short space of time has made herself well known and very popular with the individuals and teams that she supports.

After joining CLS, Nydia quickly moved into a leadership role as the Team Lead at Maginnis. She has led her team to create a warm, inviting and well managed home and excelled in many areas. Nydia has fostered great relationships between herself and the families, facilitating the building and continued relationships between the individuals and their families. An example of this is supporting one person to engage with her niece and nephew. This reconnection started with mailing cards and led to regular visits with them. Another example of this is a reconnection with two sisters for another person. She had not seen them for 4 or 5 years. Nydia went over and above what was expected to make this reunion happen.

Nydia was the driving force behind arranging multiple vacations for two people she supports. She recognized right away one person's love of action, colour, music and loud noises. She helped this person plan a vacation that captured these elements and was a trip to Disneyland, her first vacation in over 20 years and her first one outside

of Canada! This was a huge endeavour as the person used a wheelchair to get around in community, she needed to get a passport and she had never been on a plane. There were a lot of unknowns. Nydia supported the person on this trip and it was incredible.

The physical and mental health of all the individuals has been a focus of the Maginnis team, with Nydia leading the way. Joan's successes are a key example. Joan has overcome many of her fears with Nydia's encouragement and support, such as riding in elevators, travelling over bridges, and engaging in many community events. Joan has a much-increased positive outlook due to Nydia's consistent support in reinforcing the positive in Joan's life.

Nydia's team members state that "she's really been an inspiration to all of us, she brings an energy and positive attitude into the home every time she walks in". The individuals and the entire team really do adore her and are so appreciative of everything she brings into the home and workplace and all of the positive changes she has made at Maginnis.

Congratulations Nydia!



Community Integration and Inclusion Award

The Community Integration and Inclusion Award is presented to someone who consistently and significantly achieves success in a community inclusion and integration goal with an individual or group, specifically which engages them in a number of differing and creative ways.

Nominees

Nancy Aguilar
Kevin Sass
April Ordonez
Nick Herrera

Nelson Ellis
Joy Tully
Julie Sweeney
PotteryWorks Team

Katrina MacNeil
Elysia Bernard
David Weigert
Gina Tolonics

Newmarket Team
Employment Services Team
Noel Blanco
Cindy Williams

Community Integration and Inclusion Award Winners:

Joy Tully

Joy started at the Waterfront Opportunity Centre (WOC) in September 2022 and immediately showed herself to be an incredible team player, constantly working on new ideas for supporting individuals to be included in their community.

Joy has advocated and supported the people that attend WOC to be involved with and give back to their community. She and her team ensure that people's birthdays and various holidays are recognized and engages the people who attend WOC in choosing which days are celebrated and planning and organizing for these events.

Joy ensures everyone has an opportunity to be involved and enjoy their communities outside of the typical work week, such as supporting people to go to weekend or evening events.

Two great examples are when Joy supported Thomas to attend his first ever Canucks game. The result was a huge success both in terms of Thomas' enjoyment but also in the resilience and risk tolerance of all involved. Another example is supporting Jay, Pierce and David to attend a BC Lions' football game where they got to meet and befriend one of the players.

There are numerous other examples, rich experiences in the community happen most every week. Joy creatively finds ways to show the community just how amazing the folks that CLS supports are, such as at Easter, when Joy contacted the BC Children's Hospital Patient Experience Department and worked with them to get a list of items that could benefit the children. Everyone at WOC then created Easter goodie bags, which they delivered to the hospital, forming great connections.

Joy has a strong passion for everyone that she supports and has developed the team at WOC with the same mindset. She has inspired her team to not just be out in community, but to ensure that all folks are a part of it and welcomed by others.

Congratulations Joy!

Elysia Bernard

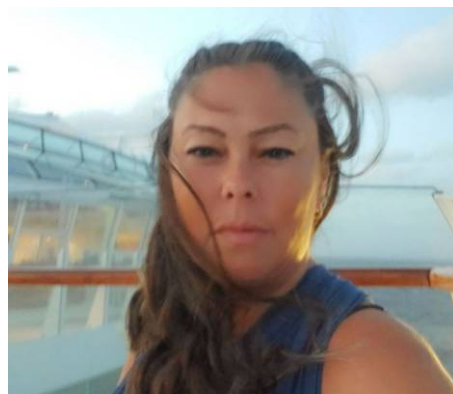
Elysia Bernard has worked with CLS since 2016 within our Individualised Supports program and latterly as the Coordinator for our LIFE program.

Her team members state that 'she is a fantastic advocate for CLS and the people we support, never too busy for anything or anyone'. Elysia is always there to offer solutions and ideas for working with and engaging the people we support. Elysia's team members state that she is a 'fantastic' manager and is always very clear in her communication with the team.

Elysia is creative in finding new activities. If an individual has expressed great interest in a community event Elysia will go above and beyond to support their wishes to attend. She role models encouraging people to make friendships within the program and positive connections outside of CLS.

She strongly encourages people to visit new places with staff and try new things, she will offer extra personal time if anyone has expressed interest in activities or wishes to have extra supported time, whether it's learning transit or learning to take Handy Dart. She always communicates about job opportunities if she feels it would be a good fit. Elysia is well respected by her peers, families and individuals alike. She is always there for her team.

Congratulations Elysia!



Person Centred Active Support Award

This award is presented to a team or an employee who has demonstrated through multiple examples of sustained active supports, attitude and passion, a commitment and embracement of the Person Centred Active Support philosophy and approach.

Nominees:

Newmarket Team
Nick Herrera
Quadling A Team
Jennifer Hernandez
Coopershawk Team
Katrina McNeil
Sophie Rhodes
158A Team
Sylvior Birungi
George Owusu
June Sheck
Jessica Hopkins
Jennifer Malin
Halle Golding
Keith 2 Team
Ron Torres
Maria Belmonte
Ed Villar
Eastlawn Team
Adrienne Millard
Nelson Ellis
Zane McCarthy
Trevor Forster
Steven Bacic
Hayley Albus
Susana Villareal

"Alone we
can do so
little.
Together we
can do so
much."

– Helen Keller

Person Centred Active Support Award Winner: June Sheck

June has been with CLS for over 16 years and has worked in a number of different programs and locations; but latterly at King George – part of Surrey Day Supports.

When it comes to Person Centered Active Support, June is natural. In her role, she has fully embraced Active Support and it is reflected in the way she interacts with the people she supports.

There are many examples, however the following captures it best. June regularly supports Andy (to maintain confidentiality, we will refer to this supported individual as Andy), who has high medical needs, and while many might find using active support challenging with him, June sees it as an opportunity to show that with the right type of assistance, everyone can do almost anything.

June helped develop an amazing goal "Andy Rocks" and encouraged this person with a consistent approach every time she supported him. The goal included painting rocks orange in honour of Truth and Reconciliation Day with positive messages on them, as well as a QR code to link the finder of these rocks to Indigenous Artists, the 94 Calls of Action and how we as Canadians can support reconciliation.

While Andy is often tired, June persevered each shift and would engage him by playing stimulating music, talking to and encouraging, then invite him to work on the goal. She used hand-under-hand assistance with most of the steps such as painting and writing on the rocks and had him listen to and choose what information he wanted for the QR codes. Once the rocks were completed, she supported him to randomly place his orange rocks in Holland Park the day before a Truth and Reconciliation event was happening for attendees to find. It was truly amazing to see the smile on his face when he was done placing the rocks in the park!

June was a big part in ensuring that he made a strong contribution to his community. She brings this amazing approach each and every day.

Congratulations June!



TEAM Award

The TEAM Award is presented to a team in CLS that deserves special recognition:

- A TEAM that has gone above and beyond others to embrace and live the CLS values
- A TEAM that has accomplished / achieved / reached a goal that has significantly enhanced and improved the quality of lives for individuals. These accomplishments / contributions support the CLS Mission, Vision and Values
- The impact of this TEAM's contribution has enriched the supported individual(s), the CLS and the community
- A TEAM that has demonstrate a true TEAM spirit

Nominees:

Quadling B
Burnaby Day Supports
PotteryWorks
97th
WOC
Sardis
Ayling
Coopershawk
Employment Services Team
Neville
Studio 73
Duthie
158A
Surrey Day Supports

Team Award Winners

Neville Team

The Neville team supports people with varying degrees of needs and the team is able to successfully balance their needs in a very engaging and person-centered manner. This team flies under the radar often, yet they have remained steadfast and stable for many years. This year, they yet again successfully saved up for and visited another continent as a group. This happens annually and they are the only team in CLS who have been able to provide vacation experiences that most of us can only dream of! The effort that goes into creating these dream vacations is definitely a 'team' effort.

The team are also known for producing and sharing home-grown crops which helps to bring their community together. It is in fact, hard to visit them as they are always out and about participating in activities such as the theatre project, art studios and exhibitions, visiting friends and family and living life!

They always have contagious smiles on their faces, and are proud of the work they do. They truly are an inspiration to everyone working in this organization.

Sardis Team

This is an amazing team. They have gone through so much change and loss the past few years, yet they remain positive, optimistic and resilient.

They have had several changes to the leadership team, the passing of one longtime roommate, the passing of a second within a few years. Chris moved in recently and changed the dynamics of the home. He is very independent, and the team weren't fully prepared for this. The other individuals have always needed more support. An adjustment was needed, and they did it.

Then with Mark moving in, there have been new challenges. He is a lovely man, and the team again is dealing with the challenges of someone living with dementia and all that entails.

Despite all of these challenges, the team has remained strong, creative and positive. They ensure everyone attends events, like Pub Nights in Burnaby. If there's a game on, you can find them enthusiastically watching it.

This year has been a challenging one for Chris. He had to move from his bachelor pad to Sardis. No one knew how it would go. It was a big change. Chris has blossomed living at Sardis. This year, he chose to stay at Sardis for Christmas rather than go to his brother's home. His family has praised the team for welcoming him and ensuring he is receiving the great care that he is.

This year, for the first time, Ted's family even remarked on the amazing care provided by the Sardis team after having switched day programs to CLS.

This team works so hard, they are diligent, thoughtful, person centred and FUN!



Years of Service Awards

Three Years

Maria Elena Pedro
Gagandeep Dhillon
Tina Feng
Victoria Taggart
Amy Negrette
Kiran Pooni
Ingrid Ferry
Helen Li
Chrystian Kwasnik
Rajwant Biln
Harmander Takhar
Verna Uy
Harneet Kaur
Julie Raymond
Ashley Verville
Kaitlyn Cheng
Harrison Nguyen
Jessie Morris
Angela Mezzatesta
Alexia Binns
Allison Boyce
Cheryl Kumar
Axel Lanciotti
Jennifer Barlad
Hanna Del Portillo

Five Years

Johnny Dhaliwal
Alyssa Nathoo
Sarabjit Lally
Amritpal Kaur
Alyssa Borella
Alan Kuang
Ali Enami
Amandeep Kaur
Catur Ningrum
Saeidreza Poursaeid Esfahani
Rachelle Nagy
Shem Francisco
Gurshvinder Brar
John Feng
Tushar Kalange
Roxane Padmore
Buki Akinwunmi
Christopher Whittle
Joseph Gosselin
Nikhil Roshan
Sarahlyn Turay
Alyssia Minnis
Rachel Fehr
Harpreet Grewal
Robin Gibson
Harmander Sekhon

Ten Years

Cate Sercombe
Renee Clark
Collin Stone
Mona Purewal
Ralph Artiza
Roxanne Wiseman
Amanda Smith
Leni Loconte
Brett Carlyle

Fifteen Years

Monika Madarova
Josephine Wong
Abdi Hussein
Jessy Singh
Ed Villar
Dawn Berryman
Lani Mapanao
John Davidson
Terry Greenwood
Lila Johnson
Lynn Smith

Twenty Years

Adelia Lamzon
Faith Sabokdast
Ahmad Shahlounezhad
Nick Chitheka
Lorraine Lepine

Twenty-five Years

Shima Ali
Duncan Williams
Kulwant Sidhu

Thirty Years

Maria Sussu
Shannon Cole
Jukka Tuisku
Delia Fabros

Thirty five Years

Graeme Weeks
Julie Haddock

Night To Shine

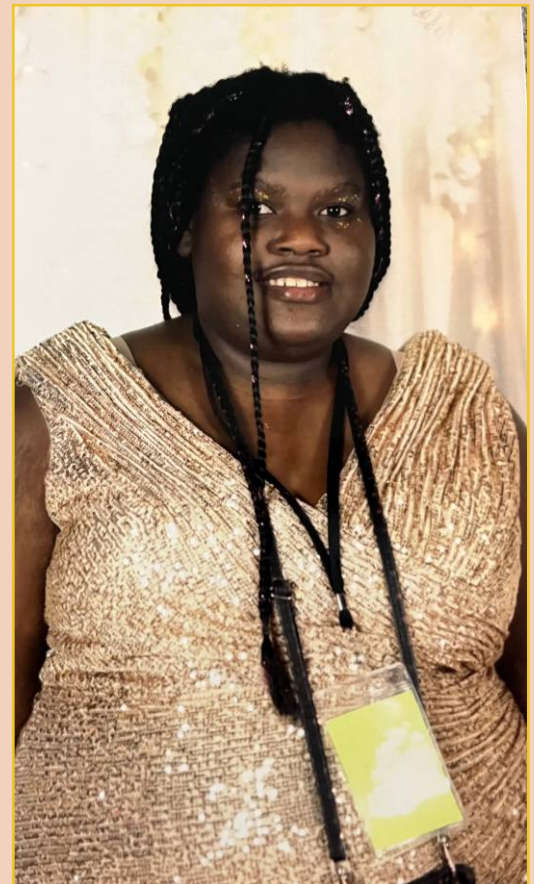
– February 7, 2024, Sponsored by The Tim Teabow Foundation

Night to Shine was a unforgettable prom night experience, centered on God's love, for people with special needs, ages 14 and older.

When arriving at the event Rebecca was welcomed with paparazzi and a red carpet entrance. She enjoyed activities through out the night including a limousine ride, a hair and make up station, a corsage, dancing, karaoke, gifts, and a catered dinner. At the end of the evening each person was part of a crowning ceremony where they received a crown or tiara.

Rebecca's favourite part of the event was that she was independent. Staff and parents were given a respite room and those in attendance were given buddies for the evening. Rebecca made new friends and had a night she will never forget

Night to Shine is a complimentary event for people with special needs hosted by local churches around the world. The event is open to anyone living with disabilities, ages 14 and older. Although each event is a little bit different, some activities included are a red carpet entrance, limousine rides, dancing, karaoke, gifts, a catered dinner, a Respite Room for parents and caregivers, a crowning ceremony where every honored guest will receive a crown or tiara, and more – Night to Shine is a celebration of God's love for YOU, our Kings and Queens!

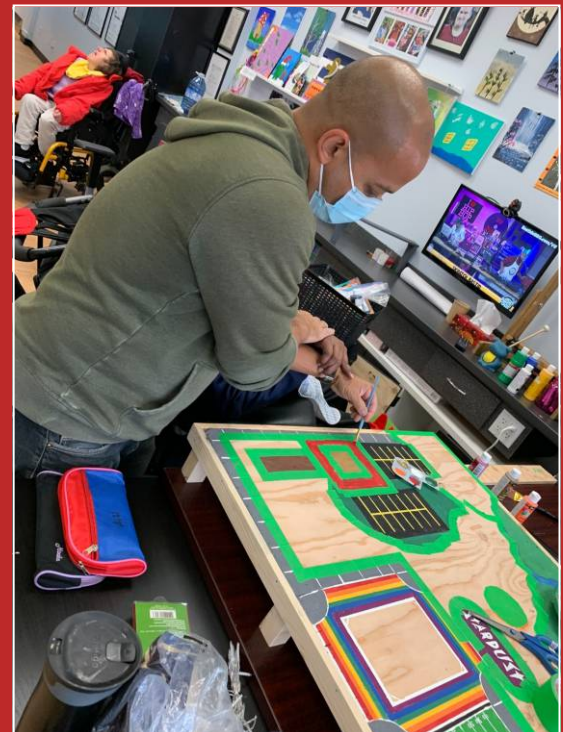


Since 2018, the Downtown Surrey Business Improvement Association has run the Gingerbread Village Competition at Central City Mall. The Surrey Day Supports staff and those who attend our services have submitted entries every year.

Over the years, our entries have evolved from simple pre-fabricated gingerbread houses from a box in 2018, to this year where we had poured sugar work and a moving train with lights. The weeks leading up to the display are full of actively supporting everyone to create their works of sugary art. Once things are glued into place with icing, you can feel a sense of pride coming from everyone's efforts. The drop off of the finished product takes place on Friday afternoon, with voting for the People's Choice Award starting the next day and into the following week. Anyone who participated in the construction of the CLS Day Supports Gingerbread Village piece is offered to go see our artwork, with excited smiles when we arrive. "We made that!" and "Look! It's us!" are things we hear when we tour around the exhibits.

Our first year we included decorated sugar cookies in the shape of Baby Yoda, which were an instant hit. We won first prize in our category and the People's Choice Award. This tradition has continued every year since, with both baby Yoda and winning first prize. This year we had more competition and did not win 1st prize, but that's okay. We will up our game for next year!

Gingerbread Village





Celebrating Christmas



Ayling Santa Visit



95th Christmas Party



Joslyn and Ed at Lafarge on New Years Eve



Duthie Christmas Party



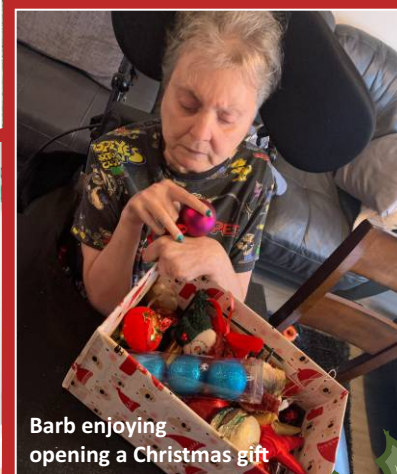
Christmas wishes for the Surrey Fire Department from 158A



158A Christmas Party



Ayling Santa Visit



Barb enjoying opening a Christmas gift





Elvis Christmas!



PHOTO GALLERY

Happy 55th Birthday Frank!



Happy Birthday Toni!



Rebecca's First Day on the Job
with Salvation Army



Cari Creating Butterflies



Gerene Having a Blast
at the Abbotsford Canucks Game



Shaun visits the
Surrey Fire Department





Thank you to Lyonridge Property Services who generously donated their time and products to light up two CLS homes for the holiday season.



PINK SHIRT DAY



Transit Training with the Employment Services

In March, we welcomed a group to participate in a hands-on Translink Transit Training session, led by Chris Chan, Manager of Travel for Translink.

We all gathered in New Westminster at the CLS training room for some basic information on how the system works, and how to access it. Chris was also able to answer everyone's questions.

Next, we walked to nearby New Westminster station where we met Andrea, who is a bus driver and also trains new drivers with Translink.

We were shown many things including how to indicate when to get off at a stop, best places to sit, safety, basic rules and etiquette, and how to use the bike rack on front of the bus.

After, we were given a short tour of the Skytrain Station. Participants learned where to find the map, how to use the available phone for help with travel, and some other travel and safety tips.

Bravo to all who braved the rainy and chilly weather!

We hope to offer transit training again soon!



Transit Training with Bronwyn and Miriam

Two Job seekers in CLS's have been supported to develop and expand their knowledge and confidence using public transit by Job Coach Tara Dhakal.

Starting in New Westminster:

- Bronwyn and Miriam both learned how to get to Lafarge station in Coquitlam.
- Miriam then learned how to get to Metrotown so she can start applying for jobs in that area.
- Bronwyn learned to get to CLS office and then out to Coquitlam to meet with her Job coach in order to learn how to get to her job at Dis Da Bomb.

Part of learning how to use transit also deals with unexpected challenges. For instance, Bronwyn had misplaced her bus pass and understandably became distraught. She was able to calm herself down quickly by breathing and self-reasoning. It was a wonderful moment for her and her Job Coach to see her then be able to continue with the transit training.

Bronwyn's mother, Louise, stated that they can see the growth and confidence occurring with Bronwyn. Miriam expressed she was very happy to feel the independence of expanding her knowledge of the transit system. I think the picture says it all.

The training has been an exciting confidence building experience for both Bronwyn and Miriam. Their world has just expanded. Thank you Tara for your excellent support and teaching.

Ambr has been a participant in the CLS Employment Services Program for just over a year. She recently graduated as a Makeup Artist at the Blanche Macdonald Center – Congratulations !

How long have you wanted to become a makeup artist?

About 5 years. The moment I knew was when I modeled for a student in a Makeup Artistry program at Blanche MacDonald. Being exposed to the school environment was exciting, gave me a new perspective and opened my eyes to a possible career in the field. I just graduated in December!

What was your biggest success in school?

Getting better grades than I thought I would and the school used my image and final exam makeup pictures for their online advertising!! I applied 3 times at this school but was not able to attend due to financial and support issues. CLS helped me break through that barrier by finding and applying for funding.

Being in a shelter for a few months while going to school was challenging, I also had some health issues but I took the opportunity to just focus on school and live a healthy lifestyle. I had a lot of ups and downs during the 6 month program. Meditation, self care and surrounding myself with like minded people helped me get through the

struggles. I was tempted to quit a few times but my Job Coach and support circle helped keep me focused and positive.

What are your career goals now?

My goal is to get a job at the MAC Pro store. I am applying for any makeup artist jobs I can find so I have the work experience to get hired at MAC. A makeup counter or beauty department of a store would be a good start for me. Since graduating, I was hired to apply makeup for a well-known performer at local Drag Show. Being a graduate with Makeup Artist certification opens up the door to more employment opportunities and gave me the education to apply makeup the way the client wants, and that will hold up under theatre lights. I also want to give back to the community by offering free or by donation makeup advice and makeovers to seniors in long-term care facilities.

My long-term goal is to start my own sustainable makeup line and manufacture a unique makeup brush line – the idea is top secret though! I would also like to take some business classes in the future.

Everyone at CLS has been so helpful and easy to communicate with. I am glad there are people who care about my future, even when I struggled with that. This program helped me find my stride, develop my work skills and achieve my dream.



Sarah is a recent graduate of the IMPACT 2.0 pilot project that CLS had the privilege of participating in last summer. The project aims to address unemployment rates for youth with disabilities.

Recently, Sarah transitioned into the CLS Employment Services program. She started her employment journey with a dog walking job. This allowed her to gain work experience, build endurance (which was a goal of hers) and of course receive a paycheck! Soon after, Sarah applied to a paid barista training program sponsored by Waves and the Kurdish Canadian Society and was accepted.

In addition to learning barista skills, participants are trained for cashier and other coffee shop duties as well as gaining a Foodsafe certification.

What is your favorite thing about your experience at Waves?

I love how accepting they are of people of different backgrounds and neurodivergent people. I love how you get to know regulars and suggest new drinks for people who are wanting something different.

What are your future goals and plans?

I am going to apply for a job at the Waves near my house. I also would like to work with neurodivergent people like me. Possibly get a horse and learn to ride it.

Sarah



The Inclusion Art Show is always a great success and we were thrilled to attend and are grateful to PosAbilities for this opportunity.

In October Lyn Verra Lay came to our studio and gave a free silk dyeing class. She is a wonderful artist herself and one of our biggest supporters.

In November we attended the BC Not-for-Profit Housing Association conference. Quite possibly our second largest sale of the year. We appreciate being included each year, seeing familiar faces, and meeting new people.

Each year, the Arts Council of Surrey put a call out for donations for the Christmas Bureau. It's fun going out to look for art related gifts that kids can enjoy.

We visited the Engineers and Geoscientists of BC for their yearly office sale. This has been going on for 8 years, and we are extremely appreciative for their support.

We closed November by attending the Surrey Board of Trade Arts Business Awards and were honoured to be a finalist in the Arts & Innovation category!

In December we completed our order of 500 polar bear and got to see a bunch of people at the CLS Elvis Christmas party. Both the Douglas College Training Centre and Walnut Grove Secondary had us out doing classes at their schools, which is always fun. We had several classes in the studio as well, and many people purchased take home kits to make projects in the comfort of their own home.

We are sad to share that we lost one of the artists that we sold his products for. Leonard (Len) James McKay, a Salish woodcarver from Nlaka'pamux Nation. We will miss his visits, his kindness, and his gentle soul.

This first quarter of 2024 had a strong emphasis on social advocacy. In late December, "[The Self Advocate](#)"* - a podcast about disability with an arts and culture focus – invited some of the artists to participate. Four artists answered questions about their artwork, their role at Studio73 and their participation in social awareness/advocacy. The episode aired on January 2nd.

* <https://podcasters.spotify.com/pod/show/alison-klein/episodes/Studio-73-e2du94r>

Artists were also called on by PICS (Progressive Intercultural Community Services) to produce art that would create meaningful conversation on anti-racism awareness. We already had a few pieces that would fit this request, they just needed to be made bigger. We decided to frame these pieces to enhance their beauty and the message. Other artists, however, created completely new designs for the event. They are all stunning and we look forward to sharing them all with you in the next newsletter.



BC Housing



Engineers and Geoscientists of BC 2023



Len



As always, we all wore their pink shirts on February 28th "Lift Each Other Up" by Cree artist, James Groening. Studio 73 was able to sell a number of these shirts, thanks to the support of CLS and local community members. Through our display at Pacific Arts Market (PAM), we were also able to sell several of his prints.

Jarred helped us out this quarter by attending an art exhibit in Vancouver put on by "Let Art Shine a Path". This event featured artists living with a disability and/or experiencing mental health challenges.

We had the pleasure of attending a Douglas College Training Centre's final art presentation. The LINC Engage Art Program is a project-based English language and arts program for new immigrants. Students showcased all the art they created during their semester (including glass projects from our class with them). Each person presented a brief introduction of themselves and one of their favorite memories/lessons. It was an emotional experience.

We had a lovely visit from one of our very good supporters, Nate Toeves, from Neil Squire Society. He is a gem of a person and we are truly grateful for his kindness.

We recognized Lunar New Year with traditional goodies and games.

Harpreet had her 50th birthday and went to Mexico to celebrate!

Lastly, we said goodbye to Renu, as she moved to the Okanagan. We will miss her dearly.

Farewell Renu



SBOT Arts Awards



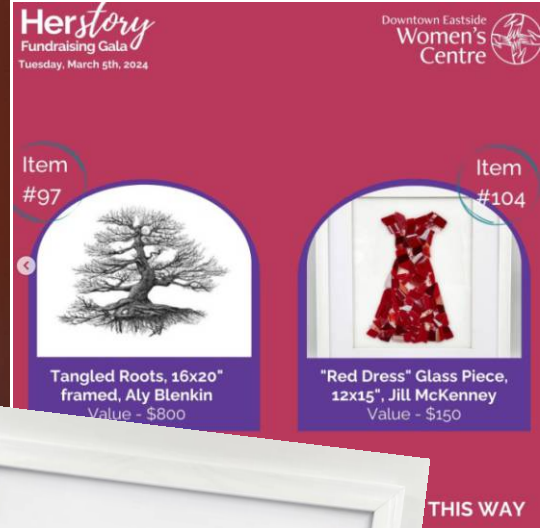
Inclusion Art Show 2023



Jarred and Harpreet at Let Art Shine a Path



Nate Toeves



Jill's Red Dress

Studio73 Artist, Jill McKenney, donated a piece of her artwork to a fundraiser hosted by the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre called "Her Story".

This event's goal is to raise support and awareness for the work they do and to celebrate strength and power of the women they serve. Their fundraising goal of \$150,000 was surpassed by reaching \$190,000! These funds directly support their essential meals program, while creating and maintaining safe spaces and opportunities for women in the downtown eastside community.

Jill's "Red Dress" was submitted as an auction item with a suggested price of \$150 and it fetched \$260.



New addition at Quad B

It has been Joanne's goal for a year to get a cat. She had one for many years and loves animals a lot. Her roommate Mackenzie also has been wanting a cat to live with them ever since she moved into the Quadling B home.

We started looking into cats and eventually we found this beautiful Siberian cat from an ethical breeder. The breeder originally wanted to keep this kitten because it was so well behaved but she wanted us to buy him because she loved the idea of him living with so many people and being very loved. It was a great connection with the breeder and she loved meeting Joanne.

We went to Langley and brought him home. Bandit moved in to Quadling B on Feb 15th. He is the sweetest, kindest, and most loving cat. He felt right at home here and everyone was mesmerized. He purrs at everyone who walks through the door and will come up and snuggle with you as soon as you sit down.

He has been a blessing to Quadling B and the ladies are so happy and loving their new companion.





Celebrating Chinese New Year

Every year, Justin celebrates Chinese New Year in Richmond where he wears his red sweater and practices his Mandarin speaking skills. The locals are very impressed with this. Justin has been taking Mandarin courses for about 5 years now. He celebrates the Lunar New Year and hopes to bring home all the luck and prosperity.



- HAPPY -
CHINESE

NEW YEAR 2024

Gong Xi Fa Cai



Ernie Evacuates - Finally

I have been the Manager of Eastlawn for almost two years and have been running the emergency drills with the staff and people living in the home every other month. Every time we ran an earthquake drill Ernie refused to participate or move from his chair. The request to get away from the window and to a safe place was always met with a "no" or waving us to go away. There were even times during fire drills when it took a long time to convince him to leave the home.

Finally, in October Ernie decided to participate in the Earthquake drill! He willingly got under the table, as well as in February during a fire drill he went to a safe space in the home and then evacuated the home with no issues! This demonstrates the importance of practicing and always trying to get everyone to participate. Hopefully by continuing this, Ernie will feel comfortable to follow the steps in a real emergency.

Jessica Beasley, Acting Director of Programs



‘Good Luck’ Les

Leslie attended the Abbotsford Canucks game on January 13th. They were down by a goal, then Leslie purchased a jersey, a toque and a scarf and as soon as he put them on, they scored two goals within a minute of each other and won the game.

He is definitely their good luck charm !!!



PotteryWorks

After a very busy holiday season, PotteryWorks has been focussing on developing new products and techniques. Those products include a colour collective coffee table book and new pottery and photography products.

Dan tell has started a large new painting, using a photo from his vacation in Carcassonne, France as reference.

Rob bell has developed a great new technique using pastels, achieving an updated look to his new work.

Snap Photo Club has been active throughout the last few months, producing some stunning new images. They will use them in a new group of photo cards and giclee' prints for upcoming shows.

Potters Arlynn Nobel, Jesselin T'Kenye and Lamin Saine have been busy giving wheel lessons and sculpture workshops to our artists. There's some exciting new work on its way for next show season.

Lamin has been volunteering at PotteryWorks for a while now and is hoping to remain in Canada. As a thank you, he created a wonderful piece of work that is on display in the Administration Centre. Thank you Lamin for this beautiful gift.

PotteryWorks had a wonderful article in The Source newspaper, about our artists and studio. Thank you to the reporter and editor for the article.

<https://thelastsource.com/en/2024/02/20/building-skills-and-confidence-potteryworks-helps-disabled-artists-develop-their-craft/>



Thank you to our donors and supporters for the 2023-2024 year



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Your generous donations provide real opportunities for the individuals supported by the CLS to live life to the fullest.

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Donation receipts sent to our office via cheque or cash will be issued for amounts in excess of \$10.

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If you have any questions, please contact us at 604.523.0303 or

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Thank you for your consideration.



JOIN TODAY!

Become a CLS Member

Date _____

First Name _____

Last Name _____

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There is no fee to be a CLS member. Memberships are renewed on an annual basis at or after the Annual General Meeting.

Members must:

- be 18+ years of age
- be interested in advancing the purposes and supporting the activities of the Society

Members cannot be:

- An employee or contractor of the CLS
- An employee of the government of the Province of British Columbia or Canada whose duties are concerned with the affairs of the Society.

If you would like to be a member of the CLS, please send this completed form to us:

By Mail:

7th Floor- 713 Columbia Street, New Westminster, BC, V3M 1B2

By Fax:

604-523-9399

By Email:

contactus@communitylivingsociety.ca