



community **living** society

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June 2026

the Communicator

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Message from the CEO - Janice Barr

A New Housing Partnership

CLS has been actively developing partnerships with housing providers to facilitate access to affordable housing (Persons with Disabilities (PWD) shelter rates) for the people we support. Often the people we support want to live independently with support from CLS, but housing affordability is the barrier to realizing this choice. Our housing partnerships remove this barrier and help people realize their dreams.

We are pleased to report that we have once again expanded our partnership with the Community Land Trust (CLT). The CLT has awarded CLS 3 units (one wheelchair accessible) in a new building (referred to as McHardy) in Vancouver. The Independent Living Program is in the process of interviewing applicants to live in these new units.

Theater Project

The UBC Centre for Inclusion and Citizenship, The Massey Theatre and 16 co-creators from CLS have again partnered to create a play to help bring awareness to the experiences and barriers people with disabilities often encounter in their lives. Following two very successful and well received productions, *Romance, Relationships and Rights*, and *We Deserve to Work*, the theatre company and its partners performed their third production, *We All Need a Home* June 4, 5, and 6, 2026 at the Massrey Theatre.

This production highlighted the challenges people with disabilities encounter when looking for housing. These challenges may be due to accessibility issues, affordability or simply availability of housing. As they developed the play, many of the co-creators drew from their own lived experiences in finding appropriate housing.

The opening night included an Inclusive Housing Showcase with several housing providers showcasing their work prior to the performance. Shane Simpson, Chair of the CLBC Board of Directors and former Minister for Social Development and Poverty Reduction opened the evening. Following the performance, CLS hosted a reception.

Employee Conference

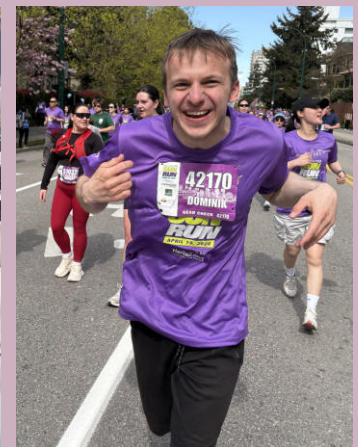
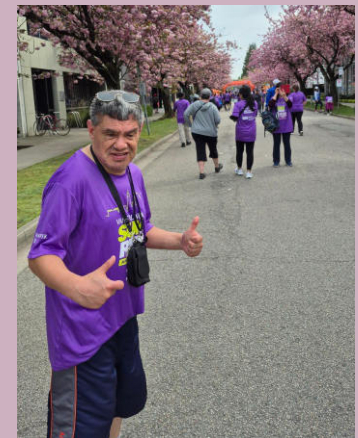
For the second year, CLS will be hosting an employee conference on June 9th. We expect that 350 to 400 CLS employees to attend. The conference includes:

- An introduction to CLS's Practice Framework - a framework that guides the work we do and shows how we empower every person with dignity and respect to stay in control of their lives.
- Active Support workshop - building on our current knowledge of Active Support this session will apply our current learnings in an interactive, in depth session.
- Communication - this overview session will introduce the various types of augmentative/alternative communication (AAC) available.

Sun Run 2026!

It was a lovely sunny day on April 19th when CLS Sun Runners took to the streets of Vancouver to participate in the annual Vancouver Sun Run.

Congratulations everyone !!





Birthday Party for Mom

Pierce planned a heartfelt surprise birthday party for their mom after learning she had never had a birthday celebration. Known for always being the first to arrive with treats, cake and gifts for others, Pierce's mom is a cherished and generous presence within the community. Wanting to give back, Pierce took the lead in organizing a special day just for her.

Pierce created a photo collage, picked out flowers, and chose their mom's favourite birthday cake. Pierce's friends also joined in by selecting gifts personalized to her interests and making cards. Pierce was clearly proud of the celebration and eagerly captured the moments by taking photos and videos.

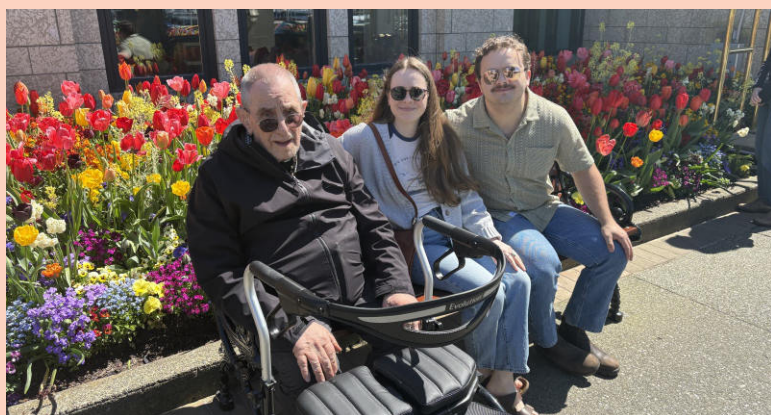
A New Home for Christmas

Oscar and his family waited patiently for him to move into an independent living home with CLS and one of our housing partners. In December 2025, Oscar moved into his new home just in time for Christmas. They were grateful for Oscar to finally live on his own where he can start developing new skills and habits with the help from CLS staff. Oscar is very capable and navigates through life independently. He moved everything into his new place and took it slow - staying at Sawmill CO-OP for four days at a time. This helped him gradually get comfortable with his new place, and the staff that will support him to achieve new heights as he learns how to maintain and live in his own space.



Good Luck Puck

Gerene attended an Abbotsford Canucks hockey game. She made a sign letting the players and staff know that she was their good luck and that she should get a puck. After holding up the sign all game she finally was rewarded with a puck. She was so happy.



A Fun Ferry Trip

Robert went on a short getaway to Victoria, where he was able to have a great visit with his cousin Debbie, enjoy some great meals out and an enjoyable ferry journey. He said that he had a great time, and the trip achieved its intended goals of family connection and community engagement.



A Real Community

Three individuals from the CLS Independent Living Program - Ryan, Chris, and Byron - are active and valued members of the Chelsea Buchannon-East community. Ryan and Byron moved into Chelsea Buchannon-East in mid-2022, followed by Chris in mid-2023. Ryan serves as the main host for many of the building's activities, with Chris and Byron providing ongoing support. Together, they regularly volunteer to help with the building's needs, including decorating both buildings each year for the Christmas season, welcoming new residents, and participating in every Tuesday morning coffee conversation. They are also planning summer activities, including a neighbourhood picnic, to continue strengthening community connections. All three of them are known for their kindness and willingness to help their senior neighbours, whether it is assisting with garbage disposal or helping carry appliances within their apartments.

Byron continues to work at Mountain Equipment Company, where he has built a long career of over 27 years. He lives independently at Chelsea Buchannon-East and is very active as the chairperson of the CLS Self-Advocates Committee, and a member of the CLS Board of Directors. Byron also plays an important role in fostering community in the building, helping host weekly coffee conversations and building meaningful relationships with neighbours. Through one of these connections, he met a UBC teacher living in the building who later offered to help him receive new dentures as part of a teaching opportunity, which he was very grateful for.

All three men help to create a friendly, supportive, and inclusive community every day.

A Social Media Star!

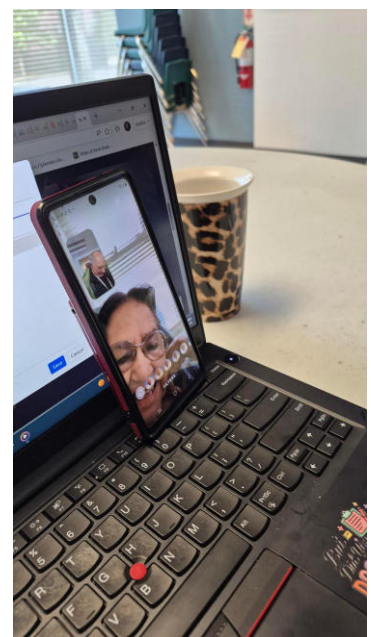
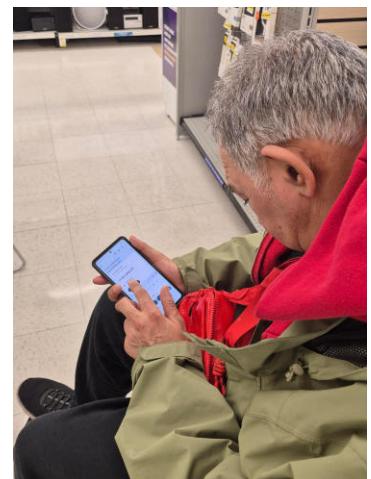
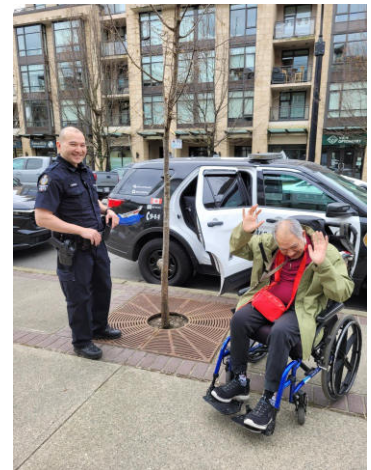
Over the past few months, Vinny has been developing his social media presence, which has supported him in strengthening relationships with his family and reconnecting with old friends. It has also helped him build a positive social identity through sharing content related to adaptive fitness, including his interest in exercise and strength training.

Through platforms such as TikTok and Instagram, Vinny has been able to share highlights of his activities and connect with others in meaningful ways, supporting engagement in conversation when meeting people in the community. He has made several positive connections as a result of his online presence, which has encouraged further social interaction in everyday settings.

Vinny's use of social media has also supported communication with his family. His mother, who is 95, recently joined Instagram and TikTok to stay connected and follow his updates. As Vinny does not always use verbal communication, social media and video calling have become valuable tools for maintaining regular contact, with video calls with his mother becoming an important and enjoyable part of his routine.

Vinny has also created business cards featuring his social media handles, which he shares within the community. He has been engaging positively with local contacts, including HandyDART drivers and community members, who are familiar with his online presence. His younger brother often jokes about him being an "influencer," reflecting the visibility he has developed in his personal network.

Overall, Vinny's growing online presence has supported both communication and community connection and continues to be a meaningful part of his social engagement and self-expression.



Employee Profiles



Romeo Banting Flores

CLC at Eastlawn

What is your favourite thing about working at CLS?

My favourite thing about working at CLS is rendering service to the Supported Individuals because when I do this I feel that I do something good in the world, and it helps me a lot to know who I really am: my traits, my capability of doing good things and of course my personality in general.

What is a passion or hobby of yours?

Teaching and singing. I am a singer and I have been singing since I was younger and I did this as a part time job when I was still studying back home. I also wrote and sang some songs that I uploaded in various social media platforms. Teaching, because I finished and graduated in the Education Program at the University in the Philippines, and I passed the licensure to be a teacher. I worked as a teacher/instructor in the Philippines for 17 years before I came to Canada. Here in Canada, I finished Adult Education which also helps me in teaching - even it is just a part time job, well just to satisfy myself doing what I love to do.

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

My mother. I want to tell and thank her for bringing me here on earth, rearing me and moulding me to who I am. Because of her, I gained knowledge, learned so many things like my talents not only in singing but also arts and painting, etc. I would also want to tell her that I am happy for having traits of being meek, liking to help and teach other people, being positive in life, honest, and understanding things with humbleness and being patient in all circumstances, etc.

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

Europe - particularly Paris, I hope someday I would be able to do it.



Kiran Pooni

CLC at Mentmore

What is your favourite thing about working at CLS?

I love building relationships with the Supported Individuals I work with and being able to take them out into the community and spending time with them one on one whether it be going to the mall or having lunch.

What is a passion or hobby of yours?

I am very passionate about making my own bracelets and love watching the Vancouver Canucks with my family.

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

I would love to see my friends that are in India. It has been a long time since I have seen them and it would make me very happy to see them again.

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

I want to travel around Europe. I have never touched any part of Europe, and I would love to go at least once



Amy Normand
Manager of Home Share

What is your favourite thing about working at CLS?

I feel really grateful that every day I have the opportunity to make a positive change in the community around me, big or small. Also, all the amazing people we get to meet and support, work with, and learn from.

What is a passion or hobby of yours?

Lately I am really into yoga, riding my road bike, and going to the beach. I also have a goal this year to learn to knit.

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

I think it would be really cool to have met Jane Goodall. She seemed like such a lovely lady and I feel like I could learn a lot from her.

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

I really want to travel to Japan and Korea, I think that will be my next international trip. But to be honest, I want to travel everywhere, so it's hard to say!

Congratulations!

Promotions & New Appointments at CLS

Anna-Christine Avefjall
Acting Manager of Community Inclusion

Nick Herrera
Acting Team Lead - Rover Community Inclusion

Tiziana Nolet
Acting Director of Programs

Kaitlyn Cheng
Acting Manager of Finance

Marie Salazar
Acting Team Lead - Community Inclusion

Tara Walker
Team Lead - Holly House

Tolulope Adamu
Manager of Supported Living (43 Hastings and Madison)

Stephen Adekunle
Manager of Staffed Homes

Glenet Brown
Acting Employment Developer

Niall McCann
Human Resources Administrator

Kitana Ferguson
Home Share Coordinator



Nathan Jibola

December 21, 2025

Son to Damilola Olasinde,
CLC at Maginnis



Olivia

January 11, 2026

Daughter to
Kaylie Logan,
CLC at Nelson

Happy Work Anniversary

Congratulations to all celebrating work anniversaries from February 2026 - May 2026

3 Years

Hadayatullah Mohaideen
Obi Ifediora
Carolina Viterbo
George George
Simran Kaur
Jashan Jashan
Jude Ifesemen
Shelley Tomlinson
Janet Fraser
Sanaz Safa
Guia Olivares
David Nguyen
Leighton Fong Hoon
Ami Sangha
Milo Temple
Steven Bacic
Henry Hector-Amihero
Glenet Brown
Karen Bitz
Eric Boy
Carina Eriksson

4 Years

Jasdeep Mangat
Kayla Balaz
Jedi Chu
Gurjeet Kaur
Lise Tougas
Denise Lauinger
Navdeep Kaur
Maria Consuelo Belmonte
Lisa Shen
Manmeet Beri
Rachell Lacar
Day Lawal
Nydia Soler Gomez
Lerma Macaburas
Annabel Salem
Kaylee Spaetgens
Natasha Kaloya
Trevor Forster
Desiree Johnstone
Joan Frias

5 Years

Braulia Jocol Garcia
Quinten Silcox
Darlene Robotham
Sadiah Khan
Winta Gebru
Ruth Adogo

6 Years

Harrison Nguyen
Murray Campbell
Alexis Binns
Cheryl Kumar

7 Years

Mel Hawkes
Johnny Dhaliwal
Jessica Beasley
Naz Jablonsky
Marlene Green-Holness
Melody Kruppa
Rinawati Qadeer
Javi Sidhu
Meron Aregy
Mellany Hugo

8 Years

John Feng
Tushar Kalange
Nikhil Roshan
Christopher Whittle
Buki Akinwunmi
Sarahlyn Turay
Joseph Gosselin
Alyssa Minniss
Harpreet Grewal
Robin Gibson

9 Years

Victoria Olaniyan
Inderjot Sidhu
Robert Smith

10 Years

Gurjit Ghuman
Kpanah Suwarly
Adam Johnstone
Andrew Fernando
Djenebou Dukuly
Gloria Aragones Aliaga
Antonio Kanu

11 Years

Romeo Banting Flores
Elvessa Pineda
Slavka Obretenov Bohac
Barbara Lago
Amy Liu

12 Years

Aaron McQueen

13 Years

Amanda Smith
Brett Carlyle
Leni Loconte

14 Years

Julie Baxter-Lee

15 Years

Lili Marian
Ron Torres

16 Years

Kate Lund
Elena Unabia
Hamid Khatami

17 Years

Diane Ebner

18 Years

Terry Greenwood
Lila Johnson

19 Years

Simi Bate
Ali Fard-Behbahani

20 Years

Comfort Coker

21 Years

Chris Hopkinson

23 Years

Lorraine Lepine

25 Years

Shammi Singh

26 Years

Tony Maravilla
Charlene Francis

27 Years

Mobina Ali
Purnima Maharaj
Kristi Wilken
Paul Hetherington

29 Years

Laura Pedersen

30 Years

Marcela Herrera

31 Years

Dawn Mahovich
Kasia Hislop

33 Years

Delia Fabros

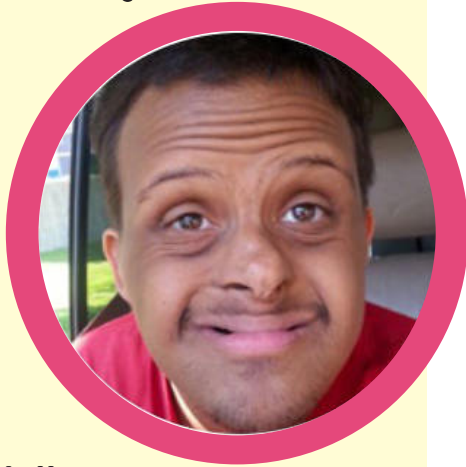
34 Years

Tracy Quinn

35 Years

Elke Tilgner

In Memory



Hosen Abdalla

June 11, 1990 - February 25, 2026

It is with great sadness that we are sharing that Hosen Abdalla whom we supported in Individualized Supports (IS) suddenly passed away on Feb 25th. He leaves behind his mother Kamaria, and sisters Ruqi and Nadia.

Hosen was always a joy to be around. He enjoyed going to music at Queen's Park. He spent time with peers going for walks and liked watching the animals in the park while having lunch. His favourite activity was to find new swing sets in the community.

Hosen communicated in his own way. He enjoyed having conversations using sounds. Clapping, rocking back and forth, and smiling.

His Mom often told new staff that Hosen grew up with CLS supports and they've been a part of his entire life. Through this difficult time, his mom has found comfort knowing that those around Hosen will remember him as an angel.

He had a gentle way of sharing his heart in the world, and we are honoured to have been there to witness it.

Joslyn Reaume

*April 19, 1965
– March 2, 2026*



It is with deep sadness that we announce the passing of Joslyn Reaume who lived at the Duthie home. If you ever visited Duthie, you would know that Joslyn was truly the heart of the home.

Joslyn found joy in the simple and beautiful things in life. She loved music—especially The Monkees—and took great delight in going for drives and walks, exploring new places in her community, visiting the library, cuddling her stuffed animals, baking, and enjoying her favourite treats: cookies and cheese. She also loved meeting new people and connecting with them in her own special way.

Joslyn cherished her close relationship with her sister, Joanne, who was deeply involved in her life. Over the past two years, they shared a meaningful project together: creating and maintaining the beautiful flowerpots that line the fence in front of the house. Tending to those flowers became a source of joy, creativity, and connection for them both.

Her smile was contagious, and her giggles had a way of lighting up every heart in the room. Joslyn loved parties more than anyone, and her Halloween costumes were always a highlight—bringing laughter, colour, and excitement to everyone around her.

Throughout her hospitalization, she was surrounded by unwavering love and support from her family and her CLS support staff. The team cared deeply for her—she was adored, cherished, and held in the highest affection by everyone who had the privilege of knowing her.

During her end-of-life care, both current staff and many who had supported her over the years came to visit and say their goodbyes. They gathered to be near her, to share stories, reflect on treasured memories, and look through photographs capturing the joyful moments that shaped Joslyn's life.

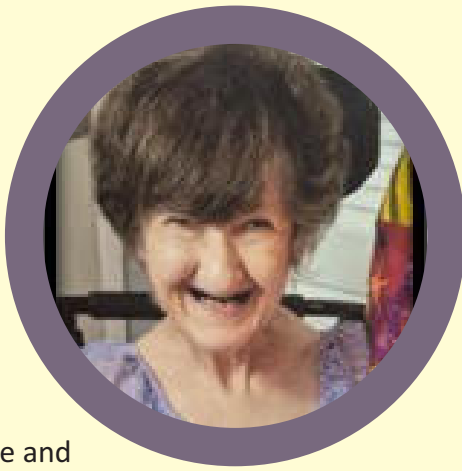
Joslyn's sister was profoundly moved by the compassion and dedication shown to her over the years. She shared her heartfelt appreciation, expressing that CLS staff were more than caregivers—they were family.

Joslyn will be deeply missed by many. Her memory, her laughter, and her gentle spirit will continue to live on in the hearts of all who knew and loved her.

Shelley Hartung

*September 8, 1958 –
April 23, 2026*

It is with deep sadness that we announce the passing of Shelley Hartung, a long-time and cherished member of the Nelson House and CLS community.



Shelley lived a life filled with simple joys and meaningful connections. She loved going for drives and walks, exploring new places in her community, enjoying music programs, visiting restaurants, baking, and treating herself to her favourites—pizza and ice cream. These moments brought her comfort, happiness, and a sense of adventure.

Shelley has been part of the CLS community for many years. After leaving Woodlands, Shelley moved to a home-share and began attending Burnaby Day Supports, where she took part in activities like swimming and visiting doggie day care. She then lived at Holly House for many years, forming close and lasting relationships. When her physical health changed, Shelley moved to Nelson House, where the environment was better suited to her needs and where she continued to be surrounded by care and support.

Despite the many challenges she faced, Shelley always found a way to express what she wanted—often a snack, a coffee, or simply the chance to go out and enjoy the world around her. She was a fighter in every sense, meeting each obstacle with strength, resilience, and a spirit that inspired those around her.

Recently, Shelley reconnected with former roommates, renewing bonds that had shaped earlier chapters of her life. She also began FaceTiming with her brother, Perry, who lives in Nova Scotia. Perry expressed deep gratitude for the compassion and support shown to Shelley throughout the years.

Shelley will be deeply missed by all who knew her—staff, friends, housemates, and her family. Her presence, her determination, and the quiet joy she found in everyday moments will be remembered with love.

In Memory



Lorne Krauss

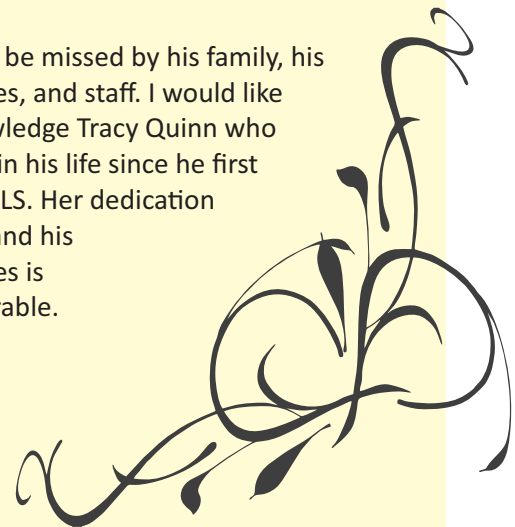
April 15, 1964 - March 6, 2026

We are saddened to let you know Lorne Krauss from the Gilley home passed away on Friday March 6th in the hospital.

Lorne came to CLS in June 1996. Lorne was an independent man and preferred to have his own space. If you got too close to him, he would give you a polite little nudge.

You could find him comfortably seated at his own table in the dining room, or outside in the garden enjoying the sun. He loved spending time in nature. Lorne enjoyed painting and being creative. He enjoyed spending time with his roommates, in his own way. When his brothers visited him, they would bring instruments and have sing-alongs for Lorne and his roommates. Everyone seemed to enjoy this, but especially Lorne.

Lorne will be missed by his family, his roommates, and staff. I would like to acknowledge Tracy Quinn who has been in his life since he first came to CLS. Her dedication to Lorne and his roommates is immeasurable.



A New Chapter for Terry

Terry's journey toward a richer, more connected life began when CLS was approached by CLBC to provide one-to-one individualized support. For many years, Terry had been living in a long-term care facility where his quality of life was very low. Due to the nature of his disabilities, he experienced profound isolation—he is both deaf and blind, and communication with others around him was extremely limited.

Born deaf, Terry communicates using tactile ASL. After recently losing his vision, he relies on placing his hands over the hands of the person signing to feel each word being communicated. Without consistent, skilled support, meaningful connection in his daily life was difficult.

His opportunities to leave home were rare—often only once a month when his brother, Bill, was able to travel to visit him. Terry required full support to safely access both his home and the wider community. Life had become quiet, limited, and disconnected. That began to change when CLS stepped in.

With the addition of the Individualized Supports program—and in particular, the dedication of his one-to-one support worker, Roberto—Terry's world started to open up in remarkable ways.

For many years, Terry held onto a simple but meaningful dream: to go to White Spot and enjoy his favourite meal. It was something he had long wanted but never had the opportunity to do. Recently, that dream became a reality.

With Roberto by his side, Terry made the journey to the nearest White Spot, travelling in his wheelchair. The trip took effort, and they paused for a couple of breaks along the way, but Terry's excitement was unmistakable. He was so happy he couldn't stop dancing in his chair, filled with anticipation for what lay ahead.

When they finally arrived and got settled in, Terry eagerly ordered his favourite meal—a Coca-Cola, a chicken burger, and french fries. As they ate, Terry and Roberto shared laughter and connection, joking about life, money, and

even driving. Terry spoke about his brother Bill, and the conversation flowed in a way that had been missing from his life for so long.

Terry enjoyed every bite of his meal with enthusiasm—so much so that crumbs covered his clothing. Roberto simply reassured him, smiling, “Don't worry about it—we're having a great time.” And that's exactly what they were having: a genuinely joyful moment, free from worry.

Afterward, they paid the bill and spent time outside together, reflecting on the day and reliving the highlights. It was a simple outing—but for Terry, it was life-changing. That one experience sparked something new.

Inspired and energized, Terry began to look ahead with curiosity and excitement. He expressed interest in joining an Individualized Supports group outing and visiting a bird sanctuary—new experiences that once felt out of reach.

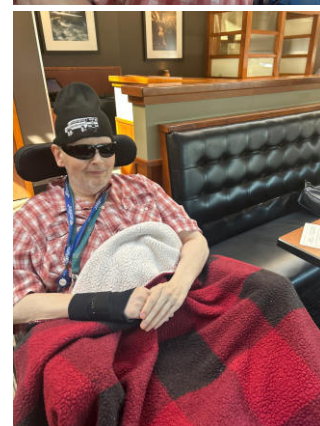
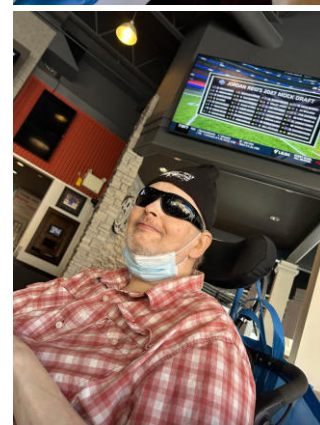
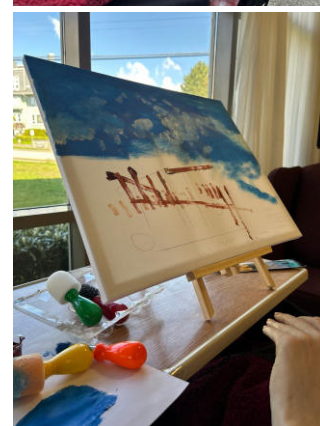
In preparation, Terry has begun wearing his hearing aids, for the first time in many years. When he put them on, he was surprised and delighted that he could make out the sound of someone laughing, he was thrilled, this may mean he would be able to hear some of the sounds of the birds at sanctuary too!

At the same time, Terry is rediscovering another passion: painting. With growing confidence and support, he is re-engaging with his creativity and expressing himself in new ways.

Terry's life is changing. Where once there was isolation, there is now connection. Where there were limitations, there are now opportunities. With support, encouragement, and meaningful relationships, he is taking chances, exploring new interests, and embracing each new day. Most recently he went to Boston Pizza, his second favourite restaurant!

For the first time in a long time, Terry is not just living—he is truly experiencing life.

And he can't wait to see what the next chapter brings.





The Great Reveal!

Last summer members from the CLS Self Advocate Committee volunteered at the CLS picnic. We wore t-shirts with our name on them. But the committee wanted an official logo.

Jarred, one of the members, drafted an idea. We sent it to a graphic designer. She worked on it. Then she sent it back to us, along with some other ideas. For many months we looked at lots of ideas. This April we finally made a decision.

We picked this logo because it uses Jarred's idea. The colours will stand out on t-shirts so people will recognize us. The colours on the figures represent diversity. The words are about things that are important to the committee. The blue umbrellas show we are part of CLS.

Submitted by the CLS Self Advocates Committee



Thank you to the Vancouver Canucks for providing the opportunity for 32 people supported by CLS, their family members and staff to attend one of the final season games on April 4th. A great time was had by all.

The CLS Self Advocates Committee is Looking for New Members

The CLS Self Advocates Committee is looking for new members. We meet once a month on a Tuesday for 2 hours.

In the past the committee has worked on fund-raising, attended a workshop on Mental Health and Art, along with other activities.

If you are interested, please contact the Chair,
byronschiller@hotmail.com.

Please put "Self Advocate Committee" in the subject line.

Successes in Employment Services

On May 11, 2026, two Job Seekers from CLS Employment Services took part in mock interviews at Mr. Pets. Lynn Stewart, the Manager of Mr. Pets in Port Coquitlam conducted the interviews and provided individualized feedback for each participant.

These mock interviews are invaluable, as they gave participants a real-world interview experience. Practising interview skills with a Job Coach is helpful, but having a mock interview with a real employer can have a profound effect on the person and really help with job skill development.

The feedback scoring was provided using these parameters:

- Professionalism
 - o Qualities such as appearance, grooming, mannerism
- Engagement
 - o Are they present?
 - o Are they engaged in the conversation and asking questions?
- Communication
 - o Do they appear to want the job or voice they want the job?
 - o Do they seem interested in the interview/positions?

All Job Seekers were given interview questions ahead of time, researched Mr. Pets, and came well prepared with the support of their Job Coach who also brought them together to practice and provide peer feedback to one another.

Here are a few comments from the Job Seekers:

- Edward - I did find it helped very well for the mock interview and Mr. Pets Port Coquitlam was great!
- Abdul - Good Job, yes!
- Phoenix - I found the employer inspirational, and I found the mock interview very helpful.

They all did a great job, and the Job Coach will provide feedback to each of them individually.

Celebrating two years!

James recently celebrated his two-year anniversary as a shop hand at Kal Tire. Before this position he studied autobody and refinishing at Vancouver Community College and worked as a prep technician at Morita Autobody.

His daily tasks include loading and unloading delivery trucks; locating, organizing, and staging tires and parts for installation; and cleaning and other duties around the shop. At the beginning, James learned to distinguish tire brands and identify models approved for winter use. He also developed a strong understanding of safe work practices, including hand, eye, and ear protection, and the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS), through Kal Tire's safety programs.

James is hardworking and dependable and has never been late for work. Over the past few years, he has increased his confidence, built a strong, positive relationship with his team, and expanded his shifts to several days per week. James feels happy about working in an environment with friendly and supportive colleagues.

James's message to workers is:

**Be safe! Don't take risks.
Use common sense at work.**



Employee Awards



On March 11th we celebrated employees who won peer nominated awards and those who were celebrating years of service awards at the Annual Employee Awards Gala. Congratulations to all 2025 award nominees and recipients.

This year the following employees and teams were nominated for these awards:

Ali Hosseinzadeh	June Sheck	48B
Alla Melnikova	Manisha Sharma	Keith 1
Amy Negrete	Maria Imelda Tejada	Ross Road
Criselda Tejada	Noel Blanco	Villa Rosa
Divine Paronable	Rebecca Penn	Day Supports
Dusica Petrovic Segulja	Ron Torres	Waterfront Opportunity Centre
Edith Markser	Tina Chevalier	Employment Services
Elena Unabia	Tiziana Nolet	Surrey Day Supports
Elysia Bernard	Victoria Olaniyan	
Jennifer Hernandez	Yomi Kuponiyi	
Joanne Hauer	Zane McCarthy	

The Winners

Woodlands Parents' Group Award for Vision, Courage and Creativity

This award is for employees who demonstrate sincere motivation towards Vision, Courage and Creativity in approaches to support. They consistently think outside the conventional mindset to get things achieved for an individual or group. They are aligned with the original inspiration, vision and courage shown by the Woodlands Parents' Group.

Jennifer Hernandez

When Jennifer stepped into the Team Lead role at Villa Rosa in August 2022, the home was in deep transition. Staff changes, shifting dynamics, and the overall instability that left the environment fragile and in need of steady, compassionate leadership. Over the next three years,



Jennifer quietly transformed the home. She led with calm confidence—listening deeply, supporting with empathy, and always keeping a vision for growth. She believed in the Supported Individual's potential and focussed not only on meeting their daily needs but on helping them build fuller, more independent lives. Her approach, grounded in accountability and active support, helped them both flourish in ways once considered impossible: RV now has a paid job, and KM volunteers in the community.

Jennifer also built strong, trusting relationships with both families, making them true partners in the Supported Individuals' progress. At the same time, she nurtured a positive team culture—one where staff feel appreciated, connected, and proud of their work. Through creative touches like the “profile of the month,” thank-you boards, appreciation walls, birthday celebrations, and the playful “Livin' La Villa Rosa” shirts, she helped shape a team that laughs together, supports one another, and shows up united.

Today, Villa Rosa is a happier, more stable, more hopeful home—and much of that change can be traced back to Jennifer's steady, thoughtful leadership.

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 for an individual or group, specifically which engages them in a number of differing and creative ways.



Criselda Tejada

Criselda is a dedicated Team Lead and advocate for those she supports, ensuring they are treated with dignity and respect while living fully integrated lives in their communities. She exemplifies CLS' Vision, Mission and Values, inspiring her team to do the same. Over the past year, she established a relationship with the newly formed

Surrey Police Department, involving community inclusion teams and homes. Notably, one constable has even learned American Sign Language (ASL) to better communicate with the people we support.

Criselda has continued initiatives like the Community Cupboard donation and the Community Garden project, building connections with local church groups to sustain these efforts. She actively includes the people she supports in community projects, adapting opportunities to meet their needs, while ensuring that active support practices are fully applied and their choices respected.

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 Active Support philosophy and approach.



Ron Torres

Ron Torres is a dedicated advocate for the Kingsway Day Supports team, encouraging those he supports to lead independent lives. He fosters a relaxed and patient environment, allowing Supported Individuals to progress at their own pace, which quickly builds trust and strong relationships. Ron's sense of humour keeps the atmosphere light, making him approachable to both participants and staff.

He promotes peer conversations and empowers individuals to make their own choices, providing support and guidance as needed. For practical tasks, like making tea or coffee, he ensures everything is accessible to facilitate independence.

Ron is committed to empowering those he supports, leading by example for many years as a veteran of the Kingsway Team.

Team Award

The TEAM Award recognizes 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.



Keith 1

The Keith 1 team exemplify the CLS vision by going above and beyond to ensure that every person lives with dignity and enjoys a full life.

When faced with the challenge of relocating the men to a temporary home, the team demonstrated exceptional creativity and resilience. They not only managed the logistics of packing, moving, and setting up the new home, but also created a warm and welcoming environment where the men could feel comfortable and safe. Their efforts extended beyond physical relocation, they supported the men in exploring their new neighbourhood, discovering activities, and maintaining a sense of community despite renovation delays. This commitment reflects their ability to embrace change with enthusiasm and inspire confidence in those they support.

Years of Service Awards

3 Years

Lina Vargas
Navneet Dhillon
Mary-Anne Makowski
Mika Sarmiento
Priya Lata
Rico Askin
Harinder Bhatti
Joel Ruma
Breanne Brooks
Noel Acosta
Fanta Toure
Aileen Castel
Joy Tully
Mohinder Badyal
Toyin Obasa
Donald Guimpayan
Henry Brinas
Sylvior Birungi
Jesselin Tkenye
Christine Coffey
Jason Gonzaga
Nagaysha Brown
Kavindi Samarasinghe
Jessie Brown
Seema Bhagat
Shayna Bessette
Karen Aranas
Myrlin Java
Jennifer Hernandez
Jasdeep Mangat
Kayla Balaz
Jedi Chu
Lise Tougas
Denise Lauinger
Navdeep Kaur
Maria Conselo Belmonte
Lisa Shen
Manmeet Beri
Day Lawal
Nydia Soler Gomez
Trevor Forster
Lerma Macaburas
Annabel Salem
Natasha Kaloya
Desiree Johnstone
Joan Frias
Anthony Fawcett

5 years

Kiran Pooni
Amy Negrete
Helen Li Li
Julie Raymond
Verna Uy
Harneet Kaur
Kaitlyn Cheng
Harrison Nguyen
Murray Campbell
Guido Lanciotti
Alexis Binns
Cheryl Kumar
Janice Barr

10 Years

Natasha Hannan
Katrina Macneil
Jag Raniga
Sandeep Hans
Kristian Reyes
Xavier Luck
Kevin Pang
Kevin Sass
Samantha Dickson
Michael Robert Lewis
Romeo Banting Flores
Elvessa Pineda
Slavka Obretenov Bohac
Barbara Lago
Andrew Malin
Amy Liu
Julie Maxim

15 Years

Kate Lund
Elena Unabia
Hamid Khatami
Jessica Hopkins
Zane McCarthy

20 Years

Sirjana Shrestha
Georgina Grant-Guillou
Ausif Nawaz
Cristina Caampued
Joseph Dube
Dominique Gard
Chris Hopkins

25 Years

Bill Wesko
Ali Hosseinzadeh
Max Sumner
Dee Blackmore
Tony Maravilla
Charlene Francis

30 Years

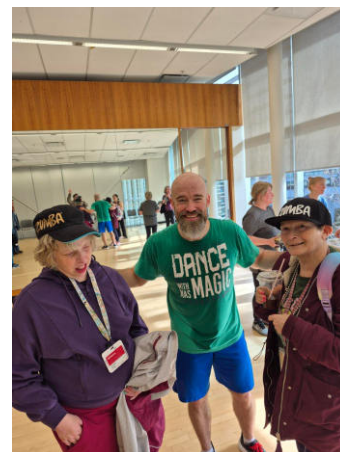
Enrique Villanueva
Ian Mason
Charlotte Casson
Tina Chevalier
Agata Leks

35 Years

Elke Tilgner



The team from WOC participated in World Earth Day Shoreline Cleanup on April 22nd. A great time was had by all, and the shoreline benefited from a cleanup.



Zumba Mondays

The group at Waterfront Opportunity Centre has been attending Zumba every Monday consistently since the start of the new year, and it has become a real highlight of the week for everyone involved. Staff have been genuinely delighted to witness the growth in confidence and participation from everyone who attends. Many began by simply watching from the doorway, then gradually moved to sitting at the back of the class and now are actively engaging and being well known by others in the class. Some are even taking a leading role alongside their now good friend and instructor, Eric. As you can see, everyone has even embraced their own Zumba swag, adding to the energy and sense of community in the room.

Happy Birthday



Kathy celebrated her 70th Birthday



Joan went to Hope to celebrate her 85th birthday with her twin sister, Joy. She spent meaningful time with family members she had not seen in many years, and they were able to celebrate together as a family. Happy 85th Birthday ladies.



This was Troy's first birthday since moving to Duthie, and it truly turned out to be something special.

Troy was incredibly happy about the celebration and expressed so much appreciation for the team. He shared how grateful he is for all the effort and support the Duthie team has provided him.



You could genuinely see how much it meant to him to be surrounded by people who care. Troy spent a wonderful time with his wife, Michele, enjoyed live music, delicious food, and was surrounded by many guests who care about him.



Vinny and David's double birthday celebration



We completed our most recent City of Surrey Cultural Grant, which allowed us to continue offering free classes to community members who may not otherwise have the opportunity to participate, with a focus on supporting often overlooked and marginalized groups, helping to increase access to creative programming in a meaningful way. Two of the larger groups we were able to include were Let Her Talk (a peer support network for racialized self-identifying women and girls made by racialized women and girls), and Feather Circle (gatherings intended for wisdom sharing, mutual encouragement, and support towards reconciliation). We also collaborated with Discover Surrey in support of their Cherry Blossom themed events—a first of its kind. Participants created two cherry blossom dishes based on Stephanie's art pieces and were also provided with a cherry blossom designed cookie created by local bakery Cuppycakes. Our Saturday class schedule has become increasingly busy as regular weekday classes continue, with a noticeable increase in larger group take-home kit orders. We also hired a professional photographer for a studio photo shoot to capture updated headshots as well as group images for the team.

Mridu met with students from Frank Hurt Secondary School, who took on the assignment of building a mini library for our street, dividing into four teams to each design a library, with Mridu selecting the final piece to be installed. She received a generous donation from CUPE 402 to supply books for the project, with thanks also to Lyn Vera Lay, Artist-Educator, Community Connector, and Arts Coordinator, for making the connection with the school. Carrie also received another grant from the Neighbourhood Small Grants Network, which she plans to use once again to bring community members together to build and distribute care packages for those in need.

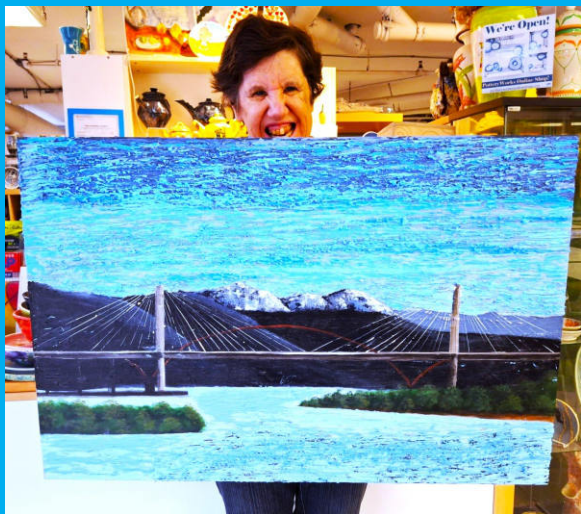
Community events and celebrations continued to be a strong focus, with Fatima hosting a vendor table at the SFU Hockey game, where the league provided CLS with complimentary

tickets and 50% of their 50/50 draw proceeds were donated to CLS. We also celebrated Lunar New Year with traditional games and treats thanks to Cheyenne and Eva, and supported Pink Shirt Day and artist James Groening, with the team wearing shirts he designed while sharing support on social media in standing up against bullying and promoting kindness. We participated in the annual anti-racism event hosted by PICS Society, where artists presented new and personally meaningful works, and Jill attended Herstory, the annual fundraising event hosted by the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, where she donated another art piece—this year, a dreamcatcher—contributing to another successful event. Studio artisans also entered the Arts Council of Surrey juried arts competition – Arts 2026, with work by Fatima, Kurt, and Jill selected for exhibition, on display from May 9 to August 1.

Stephanie had her first volunteer shift with Vancouver Food Runners, an organization that helps rescue surplus food and support community programs. Over the last while Jarred has been creating and selling Métis and Indigenous inspired artwork with the intention of donating a portion of proceeds to Métis Family Services. He recently had the opportunity to deliver the first cheque along with a Métis flag dish, meeting with Juan Franco, Director of Program and Practice, receiving a tour, and being gifted a beautiful sash.

Unfortunately for the Newton Canadian Baseball Association, after 75 years they have had to close their doors, and as part of their wind-down process remaining funds were allocated by donation to non-profits and charities, with Studio Seventy Three being chosen as a recipient. It was a very generous donation, and we will share an update once we determine how best to use these funds.

We're grateful for the continued opportunities to connect with community, support meaningful initiatives, and share creative experiences with so many people.



Pottery Works

Traditionally, in commercial art studios, the New Year is a time of developing new products and techniques, getting ready for the next season of shows. After the busiest show season of our 26 years last year, PotteryWorks is following this tradition. For the past few months, we have been producing new work. The potters are busy developing new forms and glazes and the Colour Collective painters are developing on the skills that they learned last year. Snap Photo Squad has been out in the community, hunting for that special shot that will look incredible at our shows.

A special mention has to go to the Colour Collective painters, who are having focussed and productive studio sessions, turning out paintings that clearly are progressions from their earlier work. When we exhibit the work of all artists, there is such excitement from the public, at what they have achieved. Stay tuned for their newest work, and prepare to be amazed by the works of James Lash, Sangeeta Rekhi, Bradley Merritt, Dan Tell, Linda Raudonus, Geoffrey Lee and Kaori Gokita. This is going to be good!



DONATE TODAY!

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

You can contribute by sending cash or a cheque to:
Community Living Society
7th Floor – 713 Columbia Street
New Westminster, BC, V3M 1B2

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

Donations via credit card can be made by visiting our website:

<https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/m/5841/donation>

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

contactus@clsbc.ca

Become a CLS Member

Date _____

First Name _____

Last Name _____

Phone _____

Address _____

Email _____

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.

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

contactus@clsbc.ca
Fax: 604-523-9399

Photo Gallery

