



community **living** society

imagine it - live it

Winter 2026

the Communicator



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Message from Janice Barr, CEO



Happy New Year. I hope you had an enjoyable holiday season. I was happy to be invited to enjoy many celebrations at homes and programs over the holiday season. CLS once again celebrated “A Very Elvis Christmas” at a beautiful hall in Burnaby on December 5th. We had over 250 Supported Individuals and employees attend the event enjoying great food, music and dancing. It truly was a joy to see how much fun everyone had. We are looking forward to a busy and productive 2026 with another 'all employee' training session in June and CARF Accreditation survey in November.

Participation in Research Study

In 2025 Community Living Society was invited to participate in a national research study on *Evaluating the Implementation of a Dementia Screening Program for People with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities*. This study's goal was to understand how a tool called the NTG-EDSD (National Task Group - Early Detection Screen for Dementia) is being implemented across nine organizations in Canada. The focus was on identifying internal processes, key facilitators and barriers as well as the supports needed to enhance screening implementation and support the overall care of aging adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (IDD). In December we received a preliminary report on the research findings. We are pleased to present a synopsis of these findings below.

Researchers were on site and met with Supported Individuals, employees, family members and key external stakeholders for two days in October 2025. The

researchers conducted seven interviews and five focus groups involving 22 people. We thank everyone who participated in the important study.

CLS started using the NTG-EDSD tool approximately one year ago. Dementia screening using the NTG-EDSD tool is one part of the Late Life Planning Process, which supports individuals, families, and employees with care and decision-making.

All Managers and Team Leads have completed NTG dementia training. Additionally, several employees completed “train-the-trainer” sessions to build capacity to provide ongoing internal training within the organization. CLS has a strong commitment to aging in place and is a provincial leader in this area, leading the Late Life Planning initiative funded by the British Columbia Chief Executive Officer (BC CEO) Network.

CLS leaders have played a key role in advocacy with the BC CEO Network and CLBC to support individuals as they age and have championed the NTG-EDSD screening program rollout within CLS. The tool allows employees to anticipate and communicate changing care needs and identify potential signs of dementia. The NTG-EDSD has supported healthcare access, appointments and has identified housing accessibility needs. Employees reported that the tool is relatively straightforward and easy to complete.

CLS is a larger organization and has resources to dedicate towards age and dementia-related initiatives such as NTG-

EDSD screening. They have a lower employee turnover rate relative to the sector and a shallow organizational hierarchy that supports oversight, management, and employee retention.

The Health Services for Community Living (HSCL) and Developmental Disabilities Mental health (DDMH) teams are made up of providers that have expertise and passion for working with people with IDD. When they are able to be accessed, these teams were described to provide high quality care to supported individuals.

Participants described gaps in healthcare service and resources for Supported Individuals. While the HSCL and DDMH teams are critical units of care, reported access barriers included long wait times, insufficient staffing, and exclusive eligibility criteria. Participants reported that all healthcare providers should receive more training to work with people with IDD. Siloing of health and social services can constrain CLS' ability to support individuals to age in place.

Receiving more funding to support individuals with age-related changes requires significant persistence and advocacy. When a Supported Individual's needs change, funding is not guaranteed through CLBC, as health is only one component of the assessment. Once a Supported Individual moves into long-term care, they are no longer supported by CLBC.

CLBC does not have any standards on supporting people as they age or more specifically, if they develop dementia. Concerns were raised that this results in variability in aging supports provided across community agencies.

Suggested Recommendations

- CLBC to create a standard on aging. Broader policies will support CLS and other agencies with caring for individuals as they age.
- CLBC to streamline processes for Guide to Service Allocation(GSA) re-assessment. The changing needs of individuals as they age must be reflected in the funding they receive, as determined by the GSA.
- Provide more instructions on the NTG-EDSD screener. Minimize differences in interpretation by more explicitly outlining what items on the NTG-EDSD are asking.

A Change Years in the Making

I'm thrilled to share the inspiring journey of Jean who lives at the 12th Avenue home. Throughout much of her life, Jean has preferred the comfort of staying in her suite. However, with the patience, dedication, and creativity of the incredible team, Jean has made some truly remarkable progress.

Today, Jean is not only stepping out of her suite more often, she is also participating in activities around the house. She has started helping in the kitchen by chopping vegetables and now spends up to 10–20 minutes outside her suite at a time. This is a significant milestone in her journey toward greater independence and community inclusion.

She now enjoys birthday celebrations of her housemates, and at other homes. This progress is a testament to the incredible support and perseverance of the entire 12th Avenue team. A special thank-you to Greg and the team for their unwavering commitment to Jean's well-being and growth.

With the team's support and Jean's courage, we're seeing real, lasting transformation, and we couldn't be prouder.

Sapana Patil, Manager of Staffed Homes



Andrew's New Home

Recently there was a staff meeting at the Mountain Drive home. Andrew, who usually only enjoys one on one interactions, was very amused by most of his staff being in one room at the same time. Andrew is enjoying his new home tremendously and has shown great improvements over the last 15 months since moving to Mountain Drive.

Shaun Vecchio, Manager of Staffed Homes

Active Support

The Active Support Trainer Group would like to introduce themselves. This group was formed in early 2025 as part of the Community Living Society's plan to reinvigorate our training and communications around Active Support. The Active Support Trainer Group will support ongoing training around Active Support for CLS teams and Leaders acting as mentors, trainers and coaches. They are a passionate group of people, eager to support others to embrace and put Active Support into practice.

What is Active Support?

“Active Support is a way of providing the right support for a person to be engaged and have a good quality of life.”

It provides tools and knowledge to support someone with developmental disabilities to: “be engaged, interact with others, communicate, make choices, and participate in activities at home or in the community.” *La Trobe University – Skills for Active Support.* If you would like more information about this please reach out to the Active Support Group (email below).

This Year:

In 2025, the group supported the all employee training session where over 350 people were trained in Active Support with Julie Beadle-Brown. Additionally, in the winter of 2025, the Active Support Trainer Group offered Active Support training for an additional 75 people, with more sessions scheduled for early 2026. Active Support will continue to be offered on a regular basis to ensure all employees receive training, including those new to CLS.

Who's Who?

The Active Support Trainer Group is made up of Leaders from across CLS, with nearly all programs represented. Members include:



Shane Temple
Team Lead,
Staffed Homes



Taranjeet Bhangu
Manager, Supported Living



Andrew Malin
Coordinator,
Individualized Supports



Christina Montonen
Acting Director,
Staffed Homes



Srijana Timalsina
Manager, Roving Team
Staffed Homes



Greg Joiner
Team Lead,
Staffed Homes



Nicolas Herrera
Team Lead,
Day Supports



Tiziana Nolet
Manager,
Day Supports



Max Sumner
Director of Programs



Marcelle Herrera
Director of Programs

The Active Support Trainer Group welcomes you to reach out if you have any questions or would like additional information about this team can support you and your team.

Email: ActiveSupportTrainers@clsbc.ca

Employee Profiles



Nelson Ellis

Community Living Counsellor
- L.I.F.E

What is your favorite thing about working at CLS?

I enjoy seeing people succeed in ways they thought they couldn't. It's very rewarding to watch someone overcome challenges, grow, and gain independence.

What is a passion or hobby of yours?

I have spent too much money and time on Fortnite.

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

Carly Rae Jepsen. So, I can thank her for making the finest pop music of the last decade.

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

The North Pole. I know Santa is real, and I'm confident I can find him.



Izzy Carter

Community Living Counsellor - Guildford

What is your favourite thing about working at CLS?

My favorite thing about working for CLS is the joy I see in the individuals when we interact, and I can support them to have the best day possible. Knowing they are happy, at peace, and enjoying themselves makes doing this job so rewarding and fulfilling to me personally and professionally.

What is a passion or hobby of yours?

Anything that has to do with art. I love all forms of art so much drawing, painting, working with clay, music, acting, singing all the things but crocheting is a passion and a skill I love to spend my time with. I like to make full complicated outfits. But I also love making small things for the people in my life. I would like to have a side business where I could make personal customized pieces for people all over. The ability to bring an idea to life and sharing it with others fills me with so much happiness, joy, and pride in my work.

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

I love history so I would be interested in meeting so many fascinating, historical figures, however one person I would give anything in the world to me would be my birth mother. I was adopted at the age of 3 and I never got to build memories with her before her passing. I have always had a deep yearning to learn where and who I came from. I have so many questions I want to know everything about her and what she thinks about me and how I turned out. But regardless of never having those questions answered I know she loved me with her whole being and wanted the best for me which is why she put me up for adoption because she wanted me to have the best possible life even if she couldn't be apart of it and for that I thank her for everything.

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

I've had the insane pleasure to have travelled to so many places with my mother. When I was younger we cruised a lot, and that would provide us with the opportunity to visit amazing places all over the world. I've always wanted to go to two places. The first is going back to my birthplace and specifically go to the orphanage I was raised in. I was born in Port-au-Prince Haiti in 1995 which was in the middle of a lot of political conflict. Unfortunately, after the 2000's the government made it really hard to visit Haiti so the only way we could visit Haiti was via a cruise ship visiting a small island that was run by the cruise ship company. I've been back to my home country many times, but not to my place of birth. And the second place I'd like to visit is the entire continent of Africa at some point in my life I was gifted a ancestry, DNA testing kit and found out that I have roots in sub-Saharan Africa. I would love to visit some of the countries there especially since I found out that I'm 39% Nigerian! I desperately want to visit Nigeria. I love learning about new things, and I would love to immerse myself in different cultures. I want to learn about everything, especially where my ancestors came from. And for special consideration I would love to visit the country of Asia.

Happy Work Anniversary

Congratulations to all celebrating work anniversaries from September 2025 - January 2026

3 Years

Shelley Tomlinson
Florence Okumoh
Janet Fraser
Sanaz Safa
Leighton Fong Hoon
Sophie Lim
Guia Olivares
David Nguyen
Ami Sangha
Milo Temple
Steven Bacic
Henry Hector-Amiwero
Glenet Brown
Karen Bitz
Eric Boy
Carina Eriksson
Jasmine Sandhu
Luis Mata
Manisha Sharma
Ghazale Nazarishirzi
Fathima Rifka Hidayathulla
Julia Rivera Josep
Navneet Dhillon
Mary-Anne Makowski
Mika Sarmiento
Priya Lata
Rico Askin
Brittney Van Veld
Lina Vargas
Harinder Bhatti
Joel Ruma
Breanne Brooks
Noel Acosta
Kelsey Kanyamuna
Anthony Fawcett
Fanta Toure
Avneet Kaur
Aileen Castel
Joy Tully

4 Years

Nejda Carinik
Denise Lauinger
Navdeep Kaur
Maria Consuelo Belmonte
Lisa Shen
Manmeet Beri
Rachell Lacar
Day Lawal
Chi Nguyen
Nydia Soler Gomez
Trevor Forster
Lerma Macaburas
Annabel Salem
Kaylee Spaetgens
Natasha Kaloya
Desiree Johnstone
Joan Fries
Naveen Dhaliwal

5 Years

Tajinder Jaswal
Eloisa Bagaoisan
Izunna Dike
Jenny Madrid
Sapana Patil
Shagufta Jaria
Elizza Mae Asa
Janeth Labunog
Randall Lim
Susana Villareal
Monique Power
Taranjeet Bhangu

6 Years

Murray Campbell
Alexis Binns
Cheryl Kumar
Guido Lanciotti
Janice Barr
Gajadhar Singh
Hanna Del Portillo
Val McGowan
Shireen Syed
Izzy Carter
Maria Pasarivaki
Stephen Wu
Hayley Miller

7 Years

Naz Jablonsky
Marlene Green-Holness
Rinawati Qadeer
Javi Sidhu
Meron Aregy
Mellany Hugo
Nigel Dadswell
Dolly Motsumi
Amritpal Kaur
Amandeep Kaur
Alan Kuang
Catur Ningrum
Saeidreza Poursaeid Esfahani

8 Years

Melanie Ma
Nikhil Roshan
Christopher Whittle
Buki Akinwunmi
Sarahlyn Turay
Joseph Gosselin
Alyssa Minniss
Harpreet Grewal
Robin Gibson
Harminder Sekhon
Jade Braunwell
Criselda Tejada
Anjana Bharali
Eva Yu
Christine Bateman
Sandy Basi

9 Years

Sadia Khan
Winta Gebru
Ruth Adogo
Ana Suwaji
Jennifer Malin
Julie Sweeney
Yasmin Hussein
Kiran Pooni
Amy Negrete
Helen Li

10 Years

Victoria Olaniyan
Marivic Alban
Inderjot Sidhu
Robert Smith
Alanna Bellamy
Kailee Matthies
Christina Montonen
Christina Clarke
Christine Williams
Danyan Amankop Udoh
Parminder Bains
Mostafa Al Hamdan
David Musa
Sue Fawcett
Joel Kvarnberg
Caroline Sarich
Elysia Bernard

11 Years

Andrew Fernando
Djenebou Dukuly
Gloria Aragones Aliaga
Antonio Kanu
Natasha Hannan
Leila Kardan
Sandeep Hans
Katrina Macneil
Kristian Reyes
Jag Raniga

12 Years

Cate Sercombe
Renee Clark
Collin Stone
Mona Purewal

13 Years

Amanda Smith
Brett Carlyle
Leni Loconte

14 Years

Amanda Peacock
Will Crowe
Vicky Pascoe
Anna Gao
Dale Eady

15 Years

Ron Torres

16 Years

Kate Lund
Elena Unabia
Hamid Khatami
Jessica Hopkins
Zane McCarthy
Vikki Ruppel
Christina Gagno

17 Years

Diane Ebner
Monika Madarova

18 Years

Lila Johnson
Lynn Smith
June Sheck

19 Years

Ali Fard-Behbahani
Marcia Scott
Noel Blanco

20 Years

Stephen Bain
Sirjana Shrestha
Georgina Grant-Guillou
Ausif Nawaz

21 Years

Jodi Leech

22 Years

Faith Sabokdast

23 Years

Lorraine Lepine

25 Years

Shammi Singh
Bill Wesko

26 Years

Tony Maravilla
Charlene Francis
Joanne Hauer
Mark Embacher
Alla Melnikova

27 Years

Purnima Maharaj
Kristi Wilken
Paul Hetherington
Musare Iya-Songa
Shima Ali

28 Years

Lynde Manning

29 Years

Laura Pedersen
Rani Marwa
Hassan Hussein

30 Years

Marcela Herrera
Enrique Villanueva
Ian Mason
Charlotte Casson

31 Years

Kasia Hislop
Agata Leks
Danielle Walsh
Jacqueline Culliven

32 Years

Maria Sussi
Shannon Cole

33 Years

Myella McKenzie-Cook

34 Years

Tracy Quinn
David Wiegert

35 Years

Doug Smith

36 Years

Inthirani Arul
D'alquen Jackson

43 Years

Trudy McClughan

Congratulations!

Promotions & New Appointments at CLS

Harleen Maan

Acting Team Lead - Individualized Supports

Rylee Mackenzie

Team Lead - LIFE

Elysia Bernard

Manager - LIFE

Oso Okojie

Team Lead - Independent Living

Nicola Hsu

Assistant Coordinator - PotteryWorks

Timilehin Akinpeloye

Acting Team Lead - Individualized Supports

Alan Kuang

Acting Manager - Individualized Supports

Katrina MacNeil

Team Lead-Keith-1

In Memory



Lori Linda Lee

January 15, 1968 – December 29, 2025

Lori Lee passed away in Surrey Memorial Hospital early morning, December 29th, 2025.

Lori was living in a Home Share with Strive Living Society. During her hospitalization, both her home share provider and CLS IS staff provided consistent support. Lori had no family contact; however, she received ongoing support and advocacy through our IS team. Lori had a dedicated IS team, all her support staff cared deeply for her. Andrew Malin is been commended for his dedication and compassionate support of Lori throughout the years she was supported in the community.

Lori loved many things: classical music, creating ceramic pottery pieces at PotteryWorks, cuddling animals, going for drives, going out for food, knitting, snow cones, swimming, and swinging on the swings are only a few of the many things she enjoyed.

Lori spent much of her adult life living in a long-term care facility and only just began receiving funded supports through CLBC in 2020. She will be missed by many.

Moses Elijah

Sept 19, 2025

Son to Hanna Del Portillo
(CLC at Rosewood)



Salamatu Bamidele Sherif

Sept 11, 2025

Daughter to
Hadayatullah Mohaideen
(Team Lead at 133rd)



Deannah Eunice

Baylor

Sept 21, 2025

Daughter to

Dennis Baylor

(CLC at Kingsway)



In Memory



Honoring Katie's Life and the Impact of Compassionate Care

A few months ago, we experienced the loss of Katie, one of the individuals we had the privilege to support. Katie was a remarkable woman—caring, warm, and deeply appreciative of those who supported her. She had a way of making people feel valued, and in turn, she was cherished by everyone around her.

Recently, her family held a beautiful celebration of life in her honor. The service was filled with love and memories, from a heartfelt slideshow prepared by her sister to touching stories shared by those who knew her best. It was moving to see so many members of our team come together, standing alongside Katie's family during such an important moment. Her mother and loved ones expressed immense gratitude for the care and presence of our staff, and it was clear how much it meant to them to see us there.

For many of us, the celebration was also a reminder of something powerful: the work we do is noticed. In our daily routines, it can sometimes feel like our efforts go unseen. Yet, time and again, others recognize the compassion and dedication we bring to our roles. At the service, one person shared how they had often seen Katie walking with her support staff, and they could immediately see the care and attentiveness being offered. That simple observation was a testament to the meaningful difference our team makes every day.

Every act of support—big or small—carries weight. Whether it's assisting with daily tasks, sharing a laugh, or simply being present, these moments add up to create lives filled with dignity, joy, and connection. The families of those we support notice. The community notices. And most importantly, the individuals themselves notice.

Katie's life and the way she touched those around her serve as a powerful reminder of why our work matters. Let us continue to carry that spirit forward, knowing that even the smallest gestures of care have lasting impact. We honor her memory by continuing to show up with kindness, compassion, and dedication for every person we support.

To all of you: thank you for the extraordinary work you do each day. Your care is seen, it is valued, and it makes a difference.

Taranjeet Bhangu, Manager of Supported Living

Lila Rose "Jo" Dickey

July 14, 1926 – January 3, 2026



On January 3rd our community lost an icon. Jo Dickey devoted her life to ensuring people living with intellectual and developmental disabilities lived their lives with dignity, opportunity, and belonging. This was her passion, and Community Living Society continues to embrace her passion 50 years after she helped form this organization.

In 1955, Jo's youngest son Drew was born with multiple congenital disorders and lived with significant intellectual and developmental disabilities. At a time when institutionalization was widely recommended, Jo refused to underestimate her son or accept a future of exclusion. She rejected advice to send him away to an institution.

Jo was one of the leading advocates for the deinstitutionalization and community inclusion of people living with intellectual and developmental disabilities. With few alternatives available, Jo joined with other parents to create kindergarten and school programs for children excluded from public education. As a founding member of the Woodlands Parents' Group in the 1970's, Jo worked alongside other parents to challenge institutional care and advocate for accountability, dignity, and community-based alternatives. She believed that lasting change required empowering parents with knowledge, confidence, and a shared voice. She helped articulate a bold vision grounded in dignity and choice, where people living with intellectual and developmental disabilities could live meaningful lives within their communities. This collective work played a foundational role in shaping British Columbia's community living movement (Community Living Society) and in advancing systemic change that continues to benefit generations of families today. Through the 1970's and 80's, Jo served as Chair of the Board, then later Executive Director, for the Community Living Society. During this time, Jo also sat on the board of the Canadian Association for the Mentally Retarded (what is known now as Inclusion Canada), where she played a meaningful role in ensuring that Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms included protections for people with mental and physical disabilities. Jo advocated for and promoted the People First Movement. Jo's tireless efforts ultimately led to Drew's release from Woodlands, allowing him to live out his life until his passing with his friends Jack and Donald in their own home in North Vancouver.

Jo Dickey's life reminds us that lasting change begins with love, courage, and the steadfast belief that every person belongs. Community Living Society will always have the voice of families represented and emboldened in our mission, vision and values. Our sincere condolences to the Dickey family. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Jo Dickey Foundation to honour Jo's life and continue the work she believed in so deeply.

A Phenomenal Transformation

Kristin joined CLS late summer of 2021. She seemed to have a very exuberant personality, however, she was limiting herself from shining like we all knew she could. She had not left her home for months and struggled with community interactions or being involved in day to day activities.

Staff at her home, along with family and professionals, persevered and worked tirelessly to develop a rapport and trust with Kristin. This took a lot of time and patience. They developed ways of talking to her that validated, respected and encouraged her to strive for more in her life.

Over the last four years, she continued to show progress in every area and has gradually developed the confidence to leave her home increasing duration, frequency and the scope of activities out in community. Now, each week she goes out to parks and malls, has picnics and attends special events, music shows and goes grocery shopping. The transformation has been nothing short of phenomenal.

This summer, Kristin had a very successful goal planning meeting where she disclosed that she may be ready to volunteer in the community. Recently she began volunteering at the local ABC Cat Rescue every two weeks. Her duties include feeding the cats, changing the litter boxes, washing the towels and blankets, and best of all, playing with them.

It is heart warming to see Kristin interacting with not only her staff, but others in the community. We all look forward to seeing Kristin continue to enjoy her life.

Shaun Vecchio, Manager of Staffed Homes



Eternal Anchor Experience

Gerene, Leslie, Shaun and Joanne from the Southern home attended a fund raiser through the day program that Gerene attends, who partnered with an agency who also provides supports to people with developmental disabilities in San Quintin Valley, Mexico. This agency is called Eternal Anchor. They were founded in 2014 to respond to the unmet opportunity of serving individuals and families impacted by disability in the communities of this rural area in Mexico.

This wonderful organization is changing lives, helping many families and creating awareness in their community about people with disabilities. We were treated to authentic Mexican cuisine, and beverages.

We all had a wonderful time!

Loving Pottery

Katharine has been attending PotteryWorks since June 2025. Her dedicated staff member Simran was persistent in figuring out transportation from North Vancouver to New Westminster and back. It was quite challenging but they cheerfully made it work together.

Katharine has done ceramics, wheel-work and a bit of slab-work. For Christmas she made presents for her family. A mug for her brother, a bird for her mother and a bowl for her sister-in-law. She's getting to be quite accomplished and really enjoys the achievement of acquiring new skills.

Cate Sercombe, Team Lead



Love Your Community – The Adopt-a-Street Program

On August 19th, Burnaby Day Supports embarked on their first Adopt-a-Street clean-up campaign to help keep their community clean.

In every community, the condition of the streets reflects the care and pride of its residents. The Adopt-a-Street Program is a grassroots initiative designed by the City of Burnaby to bring organizations together to take responsibility for the cleanliness and beauty of their surroundings.

This was a long-awaited dream which came through for the team as part of an effort to give back to the community. The team were provided with gadgets by the City of Burnaby to help keep Sardis Street (between Patterson and Barker Avenue) clean.

This community-driven program offers a simple but powerful way for Supported Individuals to make a lasting and positive impact in their communities. They were thanked by some residents for their effort; hence this program has come to stay, making it a bi-weekly program for the participants at Burnaby Day Supports - Kingsway Center.

The Joy of Giving Back

Erin has recently become a well known face at the North Shore women's centre.

She researched local women's shelters and learned that they are in need and wanted to help. She printed their wish lists, went shopping and put together care bags for donation.

Erin looks forward to continuing to give back to her community.





The Power of Social Media for Staying Connected

Erin has been actively engaging in her continuous learning journey, with a recent focus on staying connected through social media. She has found great joy in using Facebook to keep her family and friends updated and to maintain meaningful connections in her life.

Through Facebook, Erin reconnected with an old friend, which has led to several coffee dates and even a movie date. These experiences have been exciting for Erin and have helped strengthen her sense of community and belonging.

To build her skills further, Erin completed an online course focused on staying connected in the community. Through this course, she learned more about positive and safe ways to use social media and was able to independently reflect on how Facebook supports her social life and connections.

Erin confidently shared how she uses Facebook as a tool to communicate, plan social outings, and stay engaged with people who matter to her. She was very proud to receive her course certificate, proudly holding it as a symbol of her achievement and dedication to learning. Her journey highlights how continuous learning can support confidence, independence, and meaningful community connections.

Welcome Troy!

On August 18th we welcomed a new member to the Duthie home – Troy.

Troy settled in well and is really enjoying his new home and housemates. He has expressed gratitude for the change and often shares how happy he is with his new environment. One of his goals is to find a job, and he is very enthusiastic about taking steps in that direction.

Staff have supported him in creating a resume, which he is now submitting to several employers including Subway, McDonald's and Costco.

Troy is a happy, caring person with a love for food. He enjoys going for walks, watching his favorite DVDs (especially *Gilmore Girls*) and spending quality time with others. He also expressed interest in buying a phone and has a dream to visit Disneyland one day.

He has a passion for cooking and particularly enjoys eating Indian food, such as roti and chicken curry. He also loves popular foods like McDonald's and Subway.

Troy is now meeting his wife in the community once a week, where they spend quality time together and enjoy lunch. His wife also attended the Christmas party at Duthie and shared that she enjoyed the celebration and is happy for Troy.



Jason's Big Purchase

Jason was excited to purchase his first vehicle. With the support of his Home Share Provider and the CLS Employment Services team, Jason worked hard to save money for the vehicle and get his "L" then his "N".

Congratulations Jason – safe driving.



The Theatre Company Returns

After two very successful productions, the theatre company, in collaboration with UBC Canadian Institute for Inclusion and Citizenship (UBC CIIC), the Massey Theatre and CLS, and funding from the Vancouver Foundation, is now working on their third production, "We All Need a Home".

The first production, "Romance, Relationships and Rights" focused on relationships and the barriers and challenges which often arise for people with disabilities. Challenges in relationships are not only a persons with disabilities issue, but it was valuable, and in some cases, eye opening for audiences to observe this from their perspective. This play brought tears and joy to all the audiences who watched it. It was heartfelt, funny and thought provoking.

The second production, "We Deserve to Work" focused on employment for people with disabilities. Although this production was much more comedic, the message was still very strong. People with disabilities deserve to have meaningful employment, job security and an opportunity to contribute to society.

After the last production wrapped, the Company met to debrief and discuss future productions, if the opportunity arose. At that time, they decided any new play would be on the topic of "housing". No small task living in the Lower Mainland.

The actors, along with 3 new co-creators/self-advocates, came together again in May 2025 to begin work on this new production. With guidance and support from UBC CIIC, the

visit ciic.ubc.ca
for more
information



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
Canadian Institute for Inclusion and Citizenship



From the incredible theatre company of self advocate researchers, co-creators and actors that brought you *Romance, Relationships & Rights* and *We Deserve to Work!*, we are excited to announce our next production...



co-creators are involved in every aspect of the creative process, from developing the dialogue and script to choosing their characters' names.

The Massey Theatre is currently undergoing renovations. When the new production hits the stage in June 2026, it will be a much more accessible space for people using mobility aids. Some of these renovations include six new accessible washrooms, an elevator, as well as changes to the stage and seating in the theatre.

See you all June!



A Year in Review - Self-Advocates of CLS

In 2025, we held an election to decide on the Chair and Co-chair of the committee. Byron Schiller was voted in as Chair and Katharine Lahaise was voted in as Co-chair.

We created a workshop on Effective Mental Health and Art. We made a budget and invited people from other organizations. Dee Blackmore, the Coordinator for PotteryWorks at CLS, taught the workshop. We had 14 guests who did a drawing activity and worked with Polaroid photos. We thought this was an awesome experience.

We interviewed for new members. Four new people joined the committee.

Two members from the committee went to the Inclusion BC Conference in Richmond. They heard different speakers, saw some people acting, and went to the dinner and dance. They had a good time.

The committee invited Aaron McQueen, Chief Financial Officer at CLS to talk to us about fundraising.

Two members went to the Special Olympics Summer games in Prince George. They made us proud by attending, and with the medals they won!

One of the committee members was nominated and voted onto the CLS Board of Directors.

Several members volunteered at the CLS picnic on August 16th.

Brenda Henderson, Chief Operating Officer at CLS was invited to speak to us about writing a grant proposal. Three members volunteered to work on the grant proposal.

In the future we hope to host more events, fundraise, do a project and come up with a name and logo for the committee.

Sarena Myers and Jarred Samatte, members of the CLS Self-Advocate Committee

Salvation Army Kettle Workers

Every holiday season, Salvation Army kettle workers are a familiar and welcome sight outside local stores and shopping centres. Standing beside the iconic red kettles, they play an important role in raising funds that support individuals and families in need throughout the year. More than fundraisers, kettle workers bring warmth, friendliness, and community spirit to busy holiday shoppers, rain or shine.

One such worker is Bronwyn, whose enthusiasm and positivity make her a wonderful fit for the role. Friendly, bubbly, and social, Bronwyn leads an active lifestyle and enjoys volunteering, Zumba classes, and exploring the city. She loves being out in the community and connecting with new people.

Bronwyn brings previous experience from social enterprise employment, including making bath bombs, as well as several work experiences. She also completed a MentorAbility mentorship at Loot Toy in New Westminster, where she assisted with production tasks and folding boxes. Bronwyn thrives in roles that are tailored to her strengths and in supportive and inclusive environments.

When offered the opportunity to apply as a Salvation Army Kettle Bell Worker, Bronwyn jumped at the chance. She was excited to gain meaningful work experience, interact with the public, and work toward her goal of future part-time employment as a greeter or museum guide.

A little nervous at first, Bronwyn quickly grew comfortable ringing the bell and greeting passersby. After just one shift, she felt confident working independently without a job coach present. While standing for an entire shift can sometimes be challenging, Bronwyn stays positive by encouraging herself when she starts to feel tired and pushing through with determination. This role helped Bronwyn build confidence, develop valuable workplace skills, and earn extra spending money just in time for the holidays. She looked forward to every shift and shows up with enthusiasm, no matter the weather.

Lorenz is a friendly, community-minded 41-year-old whose generosity and positive attitude leave a lasting impression on everyone he meets. Having grown up in Canada and then spending several years living in the Philippines, Lorenz returned home about three years ago determined to rebuild stability in his life. The transition was not without challenges. After returning, Lorenz experienced housing instability and a lengthy gap in employment. Through perseverance and hard work, he recently reached a major milestone—securing a safe, private, and affordable place to call home. This achievement marked an important turning point and laid the foundation for his next steps.

While his formal work history is limited, Lorenz brings with him extensive volunteer experience and a strong desire to stay active through meaningful, purposeful work. Helping others has always been important to him, and he is very familiar with The Salvation Army's programs and services. When the opportunity to work as a Kettle Bell Worker became available, Lorenz enthusiastically stepped forward.

The role has provided Lorenz with valuable income and recent employment experience, helping to strengthen his résumé and build confidence. He took pride in representing an organization he believes in and truly enjoys connecting with members of the community through the Kettle Campaign. A dependable and committed team member, Lorenz stepped in to cover last-minute shifts when needed.

Lorenz's story is a powerful reminder of how meaningful seasonal work can support stability, confidence, and independence, while also giving back to the community. Lorenz remains motivated to continue working and hopes to find employment in either grounds maintenance on a golf course, warehouse work, stocking, dishwashing, or other active roles where he can stay busy, contribute, and continue moving forward with his goals.





IMPACT 2.0 Graduation

In September, after a summer full of learning, growth, and hands-on work experiences, a group of dedicated young individuals came together to celebrate their accomplishments at the IMPACT 2.0 program graduation.

Over the course of the summer, the youth engaged in a comprehensive program designed to foster self-discovery, build essential life and professional skills, while gaining hands-on employment experience. Through interactive workshops, mentorship, and guided reflection, these youth uncovered more about who they are, what drives them, and how they can make a meaningful impact in their communities and future careers.

Feedback from a Grateful Mother

Ty was frightened of many things and as a result did nothing on his own and never left his mother's side when we first started working with him. In the course of our work with Ty and with the support of his mother, things changed. The honesty and genuineness of his mother's words are a powerful endorsement and confirmation of the importance of our work. Her words are a good reflection of the sentiments of many families and network members of the participants in Employment Services.

Fear of many things delayed Ty's experiences of the wider world and gaining independence. He used to run from school. He would also hide in school or run off school grounds so they couldn't find him. One time Ty left school and the police were involved in the search to find him. It scared the family so badly that it made them very protective and as an adult Ty did not have many experiences or opportunities to show them what he was capable of.

Since working with the Employment Services team Ty now has a job and now walks to Subway after work to get a meal and meets his mother. Ty's mother Melodie is so proud of all the many small things that her son now does that he did not do prior to working with CLS.

Melodie wishes to thank CLS for all that we have done to help her son Ty. The family is so very appreciative and is so happy to see Ty doing things that he has been scared to try. CLS has been a blessing for them both.



HALLOWEEN

October 2025



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!



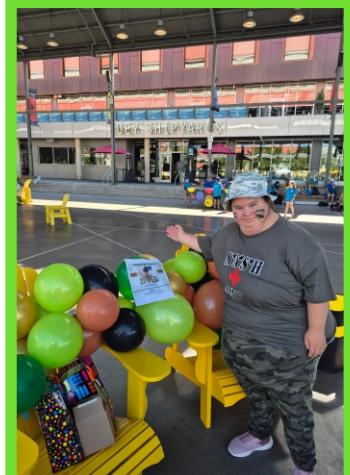
Eddie celebrates his 75th birthday



Donald (aka Cowboy) turns 77!



Linda celebrates turning 77



Pierce celebrates her birthday MASH style



Donald celebrates his 75th birthday



Dominik celebrates his 22nd birthday



Leslie celebrates his 75th birthday

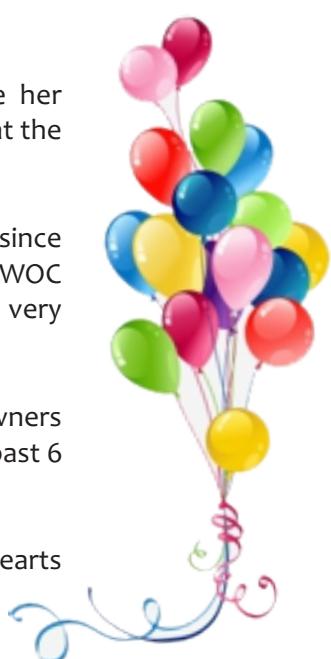


The Queen of the North Shore returned to celebrate her birthday with her nearest and dearest long-term friends at the Waterfront Opportunity Centre (WOC).

Sherrie retired from attending WOC in January and has since kept in contact with all her staff and friends. The team at WOC organized a reunion for Sherrie's 64th birthday at her very much-loved hang out spot - The Lonsdale Quay Market.

Sherrie was like a celebrity as all the locals and business owners flocked over to see her as she had not been present the past 6 months.

Sherrie had an amazing birthday and filled everyone's hearts with happiness.





Celebrating Christmas 2025





Surrey Music Program Gives Back

The Surrey Music Program at Chuck Bailey Recreation Centre is a very popular program, which has substantially increased in size over the past few years, with nearly 300 people attending each week. This year, we wanted our success to bring out the generous spirit of the attendees, so we hosted a 3-way donation drive at our last session of 2025. This benefited the Surrey Christmas Bureau, Food Bank and Lookout Housing + Health Society. Our hearts were full seeing so many people bringing donations and even happier to be able to help out those in our community!

Vinny Claus and Team Toy Drive

The participants at Waterfront Opportunity Centre organized a Christmas toy drive for BC Children's Hospital. They worked closely with the Patient Experience Team to create thoughtful gift lists and identify children and youth most in need. Each person selected a specific category—such as infants, children, or teens—and shopped accordingly. In addition, community donations were gathered to help expand the reach of the drive.

Everyone involved truly enjoyed giving back and felt a great sense of pride in the final toy haul before hand-delivering the gifts to the hospital. Of course, Vinny Claus was on the job—complete with a brand-new Santa suit, beard, and wheelchair sleigh—bringing joy and smiles to many patients and staff throughout the hospital.

The toy drive was a huge success overall. WOC later received a letter of thanks from BC Children's Hospital, and everyone involved felt incredibly proud of the impact they made.



Toy Box Donations

The Kingsway team in Burnaby chose to spread some cheer give back this year by donating to The Amazing Brentwood's Toy Box Donations, supporting families in need this season. All donations made to the Toy Box went directly to the Burnaby Christmas Bureau Toy Room and everyone was very happy to participate.



Surrey Day Supports

Community Living Society

WINNER 1st Place



A Gingerbread Win

Surrey Day Supports has been a long-time participant in the Downtown Surrey BIA Gingerbread Village, which raises money for the Surrey Food Bank, helping local families in need during the holiday season. Local organizations, schools, and residents get creative and compete under the theme *My Favourite Movie*, and the Day Supports Team chose *Home Alone/Home Alone 2* as their inspiration for their creation. This year's event also featured a celebrity judge - Food Network competition champion Jujhar Mann - who helped crown the Gingerbread stars. Along with the other submission to Gingerbread Village, the team in Surrey was proud to be a part of raising over \$2500 for the Food Bank and was also chosen as the 1st Place Winner in their category. Everyone is already looking forward to next year!

Photo Gallery





Christmas Bureau 2025



Care Packages 2025



Jared at the Inclusion Art Show



State of Newton 2025

73 studio seventy three

The past while has been a busy and inspiring one for our team, filled with opportunities to learn, connect, and give back. From arts and culture to community celebrations, we were thrilled to be part of so many meaningful moments.

We kicked things off with a visit to the Surrey Art Gallery to take in 20 Years of South Asian Arts: A Photographic Journey, a powerful and reflective exhibition that offered insight into culture, history, and storytelling through photography. We also attended the 7th Annual State of Newton, an important opportunity for the business community to come together and learn about upcoming investment opportunities, while highlighting the vital role Newton plays within the City of Surrey.

Arts and inclusion continued to be a strong theme as we attended the two-day Inclusive Art Show at the Roundhouse Community Arts and Recreation Centre, as well as the BC Teachers of English Language Arts Conference, where creativity and learning took centre stage. We were also pleased to attend the Housing Central Art Expo once again — a wonderful chance to reconnect with familiar faces and meet new folks in the arts community.

Celebrating people and achievements was another highlight. We created custom glass trophies for Employment Services and proudly attended the CLS Inclusive Employers Lunch. We also joined in on another Spooktacular, an annual event that draws more than 10,000 visitors and never fails to bring the community together. Of course, the CLS Very Elvis Christmas made the list too — always a crowd favourite and great fun.

We're especially thankful for the support of the Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG) Program. Carrie received a community grant, which she used to purchase items for care packages that were distributed to community members in need. Mridu also received an NSG grant and is using the funds to partner with a local high school to build a mini library that will soon be displayed on our street. Through the City of Surrey Cultural Grant, we were able to offer 50 participants the opportunity to create fused glass art at no cost.

Giving back remained front and centre this season. We donated art-themed items to the Arts Council of Surrey in support of their collection for the Surrey Christmas Bureau, and several team members volunteered directly at the Christmas Bureau as well. Carrie also made and donated handmade Christmas ornaments to both the Christmas Bureau and Sources, to be included in family holiday packages. Stephanie began volunteering weekly with ElderDog, lending her time and care to support seniors and their canine companions.



Sukh Dhaliwal

The holiday season brought plenty of festive moments too. We were delighted to host another holiday sale at Engineers and Geoscientists of British Columbia, welcomed families to a large Christmas-themed kids' class, and gathered for our annual holiday lunch with artists and neighbours — a favourite tradition and a lovely way to wrap up the year. We also attended the International Day of Persons with Disabilities event with the Surrey Accessible Leadership Team (SALT) and the City of Surrey, a meaningful reminder of the importance of inclusion and accessibility in our community.

As always, we're thankful for the people, partnerships, and opportunities that continue to shape our work. We're grateful to be part of such a creative and caring community.



Gambia 2025

You may remember African potter Lamin Saine, who volunteered in the PotteryWorks studio in 2023-24. Last November, I travelled to Gambia to visit the Saine family. While there, I gave some glazing workshops and enjoyed my time with the whole family. Several PotteryWorks staff donated art supplies for me to take to the Saine children, and they spent many hours of creative time with them.

When Lamin left to return home, CLS donated some decommissioned laptops for Lamin to take with him to his family. On my visit, I found the Saine children using the laptops to learn English. Having the laptops will greatly increase their educational opportunities. They send their many thanks to CLS for this donation.



James Lash's Woodlands Painting

In December 2022, James Lash saw an old photo of Woodlands and decided that he wanted to make a painting of it. James lived in Woodlands as a young man, and wanted to paint the building and a companion piece of the view of the Fraser River from the Woodlands site.

The finished painting was included in an exhibition at the Port Moody Railway Museum, entitled *Inclusion: The Journey to Community*. The painting came to the attention of the Fraser River Crossing constructors, responsible for building the new bridge that replaces the Patullo bridge. They asked to include it in an interpretive panel, that will be installed soon on the old Woodlands site in New Westminster, along with a biography of James.

Alarmingly, the painting was lost after that, for quite a long time, until one day Inclusion BC called PotteryWorks and asked if we knew anything about a large painting in their storeroom – and there it was found.

Recently, we asked James what he wanted to do with the painting and without hesitation he said “give it to the CLS office”. James presented the painting to Janice Barr, CEO of CLS, for permanent display in the CLS Administration Centre. Quite a journey for one painting!

Thank You to Rogers

CLS and Jas would like to thank our representative from Rogers for donating two tickets to the January 17th game against the Edmonton Oilers.

When CLS received the donated tickets we put a call out to our Leaders to see who would LOVE to go to a Canucks game. We then drew the lucky winner and Jas and Eva were off to the game.

Unfortunately the Oilers won that game. But they had a fantastic time.



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

Thank you for your consideration.

JOIN TODAY!

Become a CLS Member

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 visit our website at:

<https://www.communitylivingsociety.ca/support-the-cls/become-a-member/>