

# CLAPW Newsletter Spring 2024



## A Note From Lisa

Welcome to Spring! Even though the winter was very mild and “snow free” for the most part, it still is wonderful to welcome this new season. Spring always makes me think of growth and renewal. Growth and renewal are two words that could easily be applied to CLAPW with all that is going on at the agency. As I write this, we are beginning the process of developing our next strategic plan which will be used to guide our work over the next four years. We plan to continue to build on the progress of our last plan and ready ourselves for the changes to come to the developmental services sector through the implementation of the MCCSS Journey to Belonging.

Our family group, funded by the Ontario Caregivers’ Organization, continues to meet and is expanding thanks to the leadership of parent and board member Sylvia Thornton. If you want more information about this family group, please reach out to Sylvia at [sylviathornton99@icloud.com](mailto:sylviathornton99@icloud.com).

Over the winter, people involved in community participation supports at Dowty sliced, diced, and created wonderful hearty meals for people involved in our Supported Independent Living program. This effort was made possible by a Partnership Grant from the Town of Ajax and was key to ensuring that people had their nutritional needs met at a time when food prices were soaring.

And with thanks to the Durham Community Foundation, we have been able to buy air conditioners for people involved in our Supported Independent Living Program. We are grateful to our community partners.

Although disappointed not to see a 5% increase in funding to the developmental sector in the recent spring budget, we were heartened to see the sector pull together and advocate not only for increases to the base budgets (something that has been almost non-existent for the past 30 years), but also an increase in funding for families through the Special Service at Home Program, Individualized Funding, and Passports. We plan



to further our advocacy efforts on the Day at Legislature on May 08th.

May is Community Living Month, and we are thrilled that the Region of Durham has agreed to light up the Regional Headquarters in Community Living colours (blue and green) on May 01. They also plan to proclaim May as Community Living Month on their website and on their social media feeds. It is great to see our partners sharing the message about authentic inclusion of people who have an intellectual disability. Our advocates group presented to Ajax Town Council on April 15th and asked them to do the same. On May 23 we are hosting a BBQ at Dowty to celebrate.

And finally, we are currently seeking a new board member, ideally someone with a finance background. Our board typically meets 10 times a year and, as a governance board, provides leadership, oversight, and support to the organization throughout the year. People committed to the agency mission and interested in governance can reach out to myself - [lisa.mcneebaker@clapw.org](mailto:lisa.mcneebaker@clapw.org) or Board President Jackie Stewart - [jackie.stewart@clapw.org](mailto:jackie.stewart@clapw.org) for more information.

I am looking forward to seeing folks as the weather improves and we plan several events at CLAPW.



**Pink Shirt Day**



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# Family Group



Parents/Caregivers learned how to paint a selected picture with the help of CLAPW's own Lena Reilly. Meanwhile, our sons, daughters, and siblings were supported by Wendy Holliday and entertained by musician Iain Anderson and his guitar. With Iain's guidance, everyone had the opportunity to hold and practice with it. Photographer Brittany took some amazing pictures of our family members and they all took home a photo of themselves with the guitar.

*- Submitted by Sylvia Thornton*

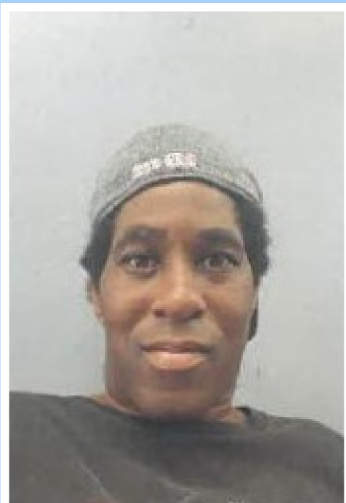
# We Will Remember

**Chris Reid**

**1976-2024**

Since our last newsletter, we mourn the loss of a valued member of the CLAPW community, who had been connected with us for several years. Our heartfelt condolences go out to his family.

In February of 2000, Chris Reid joined CLAPW, beginning a memorable journey. Seeking work in Whitby, he found a home at the Wholesale Club in 2002, supported by our Employment Supports Team. Chris was a dedicated team player who loved his job and consistently showed thoughtfulness towards others. His hard work and warm smile endeared him to his coworkers. Your absence will be deeply felt, Chris. Rest easy, knowing you made a lasting impact.





# #5 to Survive Campaign Update

Thank you to everyone who participated in the #5tosurvive campaign. Collectively, across the province we sent more than 11,000 letters to Premier Ford, Minister Parsa and local MPP's including the Finance Minister Peter Bethlenfalvy. While we did not see the 5% increase we were asking for (which is disappointing given that we have only seen a 3.9% increase to agency base budgets in the past 30 years), we did see some financial commitments which will have a positive impact on people who have intellectual disabilities.

Key highlights from the 2024 Provincial budget include:

- **Children, Community and Social Services:** \$310 million over three years to community organizations that support vulnerable populations, which includes people with developmental disabilities, among other groups.
- **Ontario Autism Program:** \$120 million funding increase, which is double the amount provided in the 2023-24 fiscal year. This investment is to increase enrollment, improve access to supports such as applied behaviour analysis therapy, speech-language and occupational therapy, and mental health services for children and youth with autism.
- **Special Education:** \$18 million investment to support the most vulnerable students, which includes an \$8 million investment to help students with special needs navigate the education system and transitioning out of it and another \$10 million is earmarked specifically for higher-needs students.
- **Mental Health Services:** an additional \$396 million over three years to support access and expanding mental health and addiction services. This is in addition to the original \$3.8 billion over 10 years announced previously.

## National Volunteer Week

I have been talking to Melissa since September 2023.

She has been an absolute delight. I have learned quite a few things from her, she is a wonderful human being with so much unfiltered love to give. She loves to talk, all of our sessions are where we talk about each individual day of our week and what we are excited about or looking forward to in the coming week.

She has taught me that there is always something to look forward to, no matter how small.



Thanks for this opportunity Sharon (Volunteer Coordinator) where I can view life from a different lens.

*- Monica Wicks*

# Triumphs: Celebrating Successes and Achievements



## Supported Employment Program: Celebrating Commitment, Dependability and Friendliness in the Workplace

Sharon, a valued member of the Lakeridge Health team, has been honoured by her fellow staff with the *March Shout Out Award*, recognizing her remarkable contributions for displaying unwavering reliability, dedication, and friendliness while fulfilling her duties as a cleaner across two locations over the past year and a half. Supervisor Karen Chartier commends Sharon's exemplary work ethic and uplifting demeanor, affirming her as a truly deserving recipient of this award.

## A Journey of Courage and Compassion: Taking a Plunge for the Special Olympics

Crystal fearlessly dove into the frigid depths, plunging into the bone-chilling waters of the Durham Regional Police Service and The Oshawa Generals' Polar Plunge, all in unwavering support of the Special Olympics—a cause dear to her heart. This annual event not only serves as a significant fundraiser for Special Olympics athletes but also shines a spotlight on the invaluable programs offered by the Special Olympics, raising crucial awareness along with funds.



## Persistence in Achieving a Long-Pursued Goal

Doug achieved his goal of becoming a member of The Knights of Columbus. The Knights of Columbus is a Catholic organization that is internationally known.

The Knights believe in unity with a motto “None of us is as good as all of us.” Members of the Knights of Columbus believe – that together – they can accomplish far more than any of person could do individually. All members of this organization do charity work and donate money to important causes.

# CLAPW Entrepreneurs

## Discover Handcrafted All-Occasion Cards by Melissa!

Looking for the perfect greeting card to add a personal touch to any occasion? Look no further!

Join us at CLAPW Ajax, located at 177 Dowty Road, where a delightful selection of handmade cards awaits you every Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday.

Need assistance or have any inquiries? Reach out to us via email at [custodiomeli@gmail.com](mailto:custodiomeli@gmail.com) or [custodiomaria@rogers.com](mailto:custodiomaria@rogers.com). You can also give us a call or text at (905) 744-1346, and ask for Melissa or Maria.

Payment options are convenient and hassle-free! Whether you prefer cash or e-transfer, we've got you covered. Simply send your e-transfers to [custodiom16@gmail.com](mailto:custodiom16@gmail.com).

And the best part? Our charming cards are priced at just \$3 each, whether you're looking for a small token of affection or a grand gesture! With Designs for Every Occasion!

From heartfelt Valentines to festive Christmas greetings, and everything in between, our collection includes cards for birthdays, Easter, Halloween, Thanksgiving, thank-yous, get-well wishes, Mother's Day, Father's Day, and so much more!





P L A N N I N G

# Strategic Plan Update

We are in the last months of our current Strategic Plan. Work is already underway on the next plan which will guide our work for the coming four years. Watch your email closely for an invitation to participate in surveys and in some cases, focus groups, as we complete the environment scan portion of the development of our plan. We are pleased to be working with Little Dynamo Consulting on this project.

## Key Achievements

- Transformation of day services including the addition of evening and weekend activities.
- Introduction of transitional aged youth summer and March Break programs.
- Strengthened relationships with post secondary education providers.
- Enhanced staff training focusing on rights, relationships, community access and system reform.
- Addition of a Case Manager to provide enhanced family supports with a focus on future planning.
- Creation of a family group.
- Expansion of supports to families through the brokering of Passports Funding.
- Expansion of the Host Family Program.
- Expansion of the Supported Independent Living Program.
- Increased advocacy with regional and provincial elected officials.
- Leadership around housing initiatives and increased partnerships with housing experts in Durham.
- Increased brand recognition and increased community partnerships.
- Receipt of a number of awards including the Accessibility Award from CLO, Accessibility Award from the Region of Durham, Prism Team Coaching Award, Town of Ajax Volunteer Award, as well as several others.
- Diversified funding sources including grants and donations.

If you have any questions or comments regarding the new Strategic Plan which is currently under development, please contact Committee Chair Denyse Newton at [denyse.newton@clapw.org](mailto:denyse.newton@clapw.org) or Lisa McNee Baker at [lisa.mcneebaker@clapw.org](mailto:lisa.mcneebaker@clapw.org).

# Annual Garden Contest



Dean



Bill



Ed Clapper



Deneen and Sean



As the lively hues of spring begin to bloom, anticipation mounts for the annual garden contest set to grace the landscapes of our homes in early summer. With the coveted Ed Clapper gnome awaiting its rightful owner, garden enthusiasts eagerly prepare to showcase their botanical masterpieces. The entire CLAPW community is invited to partake in the judging, each member lending their discerning eye to select the most awe-inspiring garden. Amidst the fragrant blossoms and lush greenery, excitement fills the air as participants vie for the esteemed title of "Best Garden." But the rewards extend beyond admiration, as one fortunate voter will be drawn to receive a generous \$100 Vandemeer gift card. Voting sheets and instructions will be available June 14th with voting taking place June 17th to July 1st .





Chris & Sean preparing chicken casserole



Kristina, Ashley, & Tarisai



Vanessa & Heather making tacos

# Supported Independent Living Meals

We have been in the kitchen at Dowty! We are delighted to announce that The Community Participation Program received a Partnership grant from the Town of Ajax for \$3,000!

Through the months of January to April we gathered in the Dowty kitchen. The SIL Cooking team rolled up our sleeves and tapped into our inner Julia Child twice a week! Alternating groups of 4 participants successfully prepared 24 recipes, ranging from unstuffed cabbage rolls to lemon chicken orzo soup!

The team provided meals for 22 people which were labelled and packaged for pick up. Cindy St. James and Chris Bennett, two members of our SIL Team, were greeted with a full freezer every Tuesday and Thursday. Holiday meals, such as Christmas and Easter, were provided by the SIL Cooking groups.

This grant from the Town of Ajax was beneficial in so many ways for the folks at Community Living Ajax-Pickering and Whitby. Dowty participants travelled to the grocery store each week with DSP Betty to obtain supplies. The groups worked together to organize grocery lists, purchase ingredients, and oversee the transactions. Shout out to staff member Shonda Taitt-Dwyer for creating the SIL Meals Calendar for documenting meals!

Every Monday and Friday Morning, alternating cooking groups worked to prep vegetables, practice their kitchen safety skills and hygiene. Along with practicing our craft, we have a stack of delicious recipes participants are eager to repeat for their loved ones. We are optimistic the team will provide another 100 meals by the end of April!

“I am such a good cook now! I cook my beef recipe at home!” - **Sean A.**

“The jambalaya was a huge hit as well as any pasta dishes, the variety has been amazing.” - **Chris Bennett, Supported Independent Living Direct Support Professional**



Ken preparing beef stir-fry



Chris Bennett with the Christmas dinners



# Gallery



# Community Events



## Comicon

Toronto Comicon 2024 brought together thousands of sci-fi, horror, anime, comic, and gaming fans at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. Among them were some of CLAPW's supported individuals, who showcased their passion for cosplay. Inspired by Alien, Marvel and Star Wars characters, they connected, created, and celebrated their favorite fictional worlds.

## Dances

Individuals supported by CLAPW stepped into a world of enchantment at the Valentine's Masquerade Dance. They reveled in the magic of the evening by wearing their finest attire, donning intricate masks, dancing and finding connection and camaraderie. And when St. Patrick's Day arrived, everyone traded their masks for green garb and shamrocks. The dance floor echoed with laughter and jigs, as the revelers celebrated luck, friendship, and the joy of being part of a vibrant community.



COMMUNITY LIVING  
Ajax Pickering and Whitby  
Inspiring Possibilities

Join us for a  
**MAMMA MIA! Silver  
Screen Sing-A-Long!**

Fri, May 17, 2024  
7:00 PM - 9:30 PM EDT

St. Francis Centre for Community, Arts and Culture  
78 Church Street South Ajax, ON L1S6B3

There are 30 Tickets available! First come, first served!  
Email [cultureclub@clapw.org](mailto:cultureclub@clapw.org) to get your free tickets!

**SOLD OUT**

## Mamma Mia! Sing Along

On May 17th, CLAPW ABBA fans will be unleashing their inner "Dancing Queens" and taking a journey down memory lane, and singing along to their magical Mamma Mia! hits.

# Community Events

## Pancake Breakfast

We had a “full house” for a delicious Pancake Breakfast at Dowty Road. People chatted, sipped coffee, and savored fluffy stacks of pancakes. Thanks to our workplace Culture Club for hosting the event and the team of volunteers who cooked up a storm.



## Medieval Times

Penny, Ann, and Mario attended Medieval Times, and immersed themselves in a world of knights, jousting, and feasting and pageantry. As the arena echoed with clashing swords and applause, they enjoyed cheering for their favourite knight, transported to an age of chivalry and adventure.



## Community Living Month Barbeque

 Join us May 23rd for the

### COMMUNITY LIVING MONTH BBQ

177 Dowty Rd., Ajax, ON  
10:30AM-1:30PM

- \*Free BBQ
- \*Music & Games
- \*Performances by Community Living staff
- \*Community Living Participant Marketplace (Please bring cash)

Wear blue and green to show solidarity with Community Living month!

RSVP by May 20th to [siobhan.pearce@clapw.org](mailto:siobhan.pearce@clapw.org)



# Community Events

## Ajax Annual Green Project Clean Up Day



On April 30th, individuals and staff from CLAPW participated the Town of Ajax's annual Green Project Clean Up Day. It was an inspiring display of unity and dedication as everyone pitched in to make our community cleaner and more beautiful. Armed with gloves and bags, participants worked tirelessly to pick up refuse from public areas, exemplifying the meaning of community and the positive impact on our shared environment.

# Legal Tips From Pooran Law: Siblings May Now Manage an RDSP for a Beneficiary Who is not Capable of Being Their Own Plan Holder

The federal government has extended a measure allowing qualifying family members to open an RDSP for an adult beneficiary who does not have capacity to contract, and who does not have a guardian or attorney for property. The temporary measure was set to expire at the end of 2023 and is now extended to December 31, 2026.

The government has also broadened the definition of “qualifying family member” to include not only a parent, spouse, or common law partner of the RDSP beneficiary, but also an adult sibling of the beneficiary.

While the measure does not go far enough in ensuring access to the RDSP for people with disabilities, this is a step in the right direction and presents families with additional planning options, short of guardianship.



## Helpful Links

### Developmental Services Ontario

<https://www.dsontario.ca>

### Journey to Belonging

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/journey-belonging-choice-and-inclusion>

### Pooran Law

<https://pooranlaw.com>

# Farewells



## Karen Osborne

After a decade of unwavering dedication and tireless service to CLAPW, Karen Osborne, our esteemed Scheduler, has embarked on her well-deserved retirement journey. We extend our heartfelt gratitude for her steadfast support throughout the many years she dedicated to CLAPW.

# Cheers for Peers

COMMUNITY LIVING  
Specializing in care and safety

**CHEERS FOR PEERS**  
EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

**SHANNON GODDARD**

RECOGNIZED FOR PUTTING THE CLAPW MISSION INTO ACTION.

A blue banner with a white background and a pattern of small green dots. It features a circular portrait of Shannon Goddard, a woman with blonde hair, looking directly at the camera.

COMMUNITY LIVING  
Specializing in care and safety

**CHEERS FOR PEERS**  
EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

**CHRIS BENNETT**

RECOGNIZED FOR PUTTING THE CLAPW MISSION INTO ACTION.

A blue banner with a white background and a pattern of small green dots. It features a circular portrait of Chris Bennett, a woman with long blonde hair and sunglasses, smiling outdoors.

COMMUNITY LIVING  
Specializing in care and safety

**CHEERS FOR PEERS**  
EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

**SUE STRACHAN**

RECOGNIZED FOR PUTTING THE CLAPW MISSION INTO ACTION.

A blue banner with a white background and a pattern of small green dots. It features a circular portrait of Sue Strachan, a woman with glasses and a pink jacket, holding a water bottle and a plate of food in a kitchen setting.

# Spirit of Summer: March Break Edition

Our March Break Youth Camp was a great success! We planned a week packed with events and activities for youth 15-25. Playdium, Therapeutic Paws of Canada, Ajax Bowl, Landmark Theatre and making individual pizzas were just a few of the week's highlights. We look forward to our Summer Youth Camp starting in July.

Don't forget to follow our **Spirit of Summer** group on Facebook! Not only is this program (based out of the Youth Hub at Ajax High School) a load of fun, but it also helps keep young people active and teach them critical life skills such as mastering public transportation, and problem-solving.



Amaru



Joshua



Amanda, Thomas, Ethan



Thomas

Please message us at [spiritofsummer@clapw.org](mailto:spiritofsummer@clapw.org) for more information about attending the camp or to apply for a Summer Counsellor position.



# Spirit of Summer

Week	Theme		Cost
July 2-5	Outdoor Adventures		\$140
July 8-12	Game On		\$175
July 15-19	Ultimate Survivor		\$175
July 22-26	Force of Nature		\$175
July 29-August 2	Art Explosion		\$175
August 6-9	Down on the Farm		\$140
August 12-16	Mad About Science		\$175
August 19-23	Summer Send Off		\$175

## Important Information

Time: 9:00am – 3:00pm Monday – Friday (Closed July 1 & August 5)

Location: Ajax High School Youth Hub

Who Can Register: Those between 15 & 25 years of age

Cost Includes:

- ✓ Support staff
- ✓ Local public transportation
- ✓ Occasional snacks & Friday lunch
- ✓ Most venue admissions
- ✓ Activity supplies
- ✓ Start-up bag & T-Shirt

Note: Details subject to change. Limited spots available.

For registration information contact: [spiritofsummer@clapw.org](mailto:spiritofsummer@clapw.org) / 905-999-6718

# Garden Contest 2024



Participating locations need to let their manager know by May 6, 2024. Vandemeer Gift Cards will be provided (Please keep all receipts and return them to your manager).

Judging will take place from **June 14th until June 29th.**

Judging is available to everyone! You can email [cultureclub@clapw.org](mailto:cultureclub@clapw.org) to receive a judging sheet.

Judges: when visiting the various gardens, please make sure to have your judging sheets stamped off by a staff person at the location being viewed.

Completed sheets are to be returned no later than **July 2, 2024.**

Everyone submitting a judging sheet will be entered into a draw for a \$100 Vandemeer gift card and CLAPW swag.

*Don't  
Forget*

## **ED CLAPPER!**

Ed Clapper will be staying with the winner of the 2024 Garden Contest!

Previous Winners

- Include:
- Clark
  - Applewood
  - Cochrane
  - Dowty
  - Pringle



Register by emailing  
[cultureclub@clapw.org](mailto:cultureclub@clapw.org)

**Good  
Luck!**