

Belonging in Action



Annual
report
2025-26

about

Community Living Essex County



Who We Are

At the heart of Community Living Essex County is a simple belief: everyone belongs. The Annual Report's theme, **Belonging in Action**, reflects our commitment to creating inclusive communities where people are valued, connected, and empowered to live meaningful lives.

This belief was born from the determination and vision of local families coming together to demand and create services and supports for their children with a focus on dignity, inclusion and opportunity. They started with a one-room school house, one teacher, four students and a borrowed station wagon. In September 1961, the organization was incorporated. Those early voices and actions laid the foundation for the work we continue today – 65 years later.

Today Community Living Essex County, a non-profit, charitable organization, provides personalized supports throughout Essex County to over 700 children, youth and adults who have an intellectual disability. Our services include accommodation supports, respite care, supported independent living, community participation, and employment supports.

We work in partnership with New Day, Leaders of Today (advocacy and leadership) and Ensemble (family leadership). Our Board of Directors, together with families, people supported, employees and community partners establish the organization's Strategic Directions through regular strategic planning.

Community Living Essex County continues to evolve and continues to be an organization that is proactive, future focused and committed to inspiring possibilities and ensuring **belonging in action** is a reality for everyone.

Our Mission

.....

We are committed to supporting people with an intellectual disability to achieve their goals and dreams, empowering them to flourish as full citizens who are valued in their community.

Our Vision

.....

A community that celebrates inclusion and inspires possibilities.

welcome message

Welcome to the Annual Report for the period of April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026. As Chair and Executive Director, this has been our first year in these roles, and as we reflect on the past year, we are incredibly proud of this agency and everyone connected to it.

We are proud of what has been accomplished through the dedication of our employees, board members, volunteers, people served and their family members, partners and supporters. Their resiliency, commitment and collaboration have helped us navigate challenges and embrace opportunities. It was another year of progress to increase possibilities, expand our impact, and work towards our strategic directions.

Throughout this Annual Report you'll see examples of these efforts, initiatives, milestones and achievements. A few examples include:

- We continued to increase our respite services
- A Fee for Service pilot project was introduced for virtual supports
- We broke fundraising records
- A three year Collective Agreement was negotiated and ratified by members of CUPE Local 3137 and our Board of Directors
- We welcomed two more people into Additional Dwelling Units

We are looking ahead and know Community Living Essex County will continue to evolve and will remain a strong, proactive and sustainable agency that expands inclusion and belonging.

We thank you and urge you to keep making a difference and inspiring possibilities every day.

Sincerely,



Chad A. Sutherland,
Chair



Corey Dalglish,
Executive Director



Happy Retirement
Karen Bolger!

After nearly 40 years of dedicated service, Karen retired in early August, 2025. From support worker to Executive Director... in every role she always inspired possibilities, drove meaningful progress and made an extraordinary difference. Karen's leadership, dedication and impact leaves a wonderful and lasting legacy. Thank you Karen and best wishes for a much deserved, long, joyful and healthy retirement.



Welcome
Corey
Dalglish!

The Board of Directors selected Corey Dalglish to lead the agency following the retirement of Karen Bolger. Corey began his career at Community Living Essex County as a Support Worker before advancing into a number of management roles. Throughout his career, he has demonstrated exceptional leadership, dedication, and a strong commitment to the agency's mission and values. The Board was pleased to welcome Corey to the role of Executive Director and the continued positive impact of his leadership and vision.

facts about Community Living Essex County



728
Employees

42%

of workforce
celebrating
10+ years



712
People
Served



537
goals set by
people we
support



634
virtual support
sessions
delivered



92%
Satisfaction
-People we support



97%
Satisfaction
-Families we support



\$349,460
fundraised
in the last year

9640

followers across
our social platforms

Key accomplishments

2025-26

Future-Proofing for the Future of Supports

This year, Community Living Essex County continued the second phase of its Future-Proofing Initiative in partnership with People Minded Business. Through stakeholder engagement, environmental scanning, and collaborative planning, we worked to better understand the evolving needs of people with intellectual disabilities and their families. This work included identifying strategic priorities, establishing organizational Objectives and Key Results (OKRs), and gaining a clearer understanding of the true cost of service delivery to support long-term sustainability and future fee-based service planning.



“



Jared’s house doesn’t feel like a ‘congregated setting’, it feels welcoming, and when we look at the few things we have added, knowing we can add more to make Jared’s home even more ‘his’ fills our hearts with joy.

Kim Lachance
Parent

”

Growing Virtual Supports and Connections

We continued to expand our virtual support offerings, creating more opportunities for people to learn new skills, participate in activities, and connect with peers from the comfort of their homes. These flexible supports help increase accessibility and reduce barriers to participation.

Expanding Innovative Housing Options

With the support of affordable housing grant funding, two additional Tiny Homes were completed this year. These homes are helping adults with intellectual disabilities experience greater independence, autonomy, and community inclusion through personalized living environments designed to support their goals and aspirations.



“

The out-of-home respite services provide us something that is truly invaluable — time to rest, recharge, and spend meaningful time together as a family.

Brynlyn, Simon, Noah, Julia
and Ethan Williams Family

”

Reopening Children’s Respite Services

After several years of staffing challenges following the pandemic, Community Living Essex County successfully reopened Children’s Respite Services this year. The return of this important support provides much-needed relief, recreation, and assistance to families across Essex County.

Key accomplishments

2025-26

Launching the Connection Series for Families

This year marked the launch of the Connection Series - a new initiative offering in-person information sessions and networking opportunities for families of children and adults with intellectual disabilities. Sessions focused on practical and timely topics such as RDSPs, summer supports, navigating the DSO system, planning for supports after age 18, wills and estate planning, and housing options.

Advancing Our Human Resources Information System (HRIS)

We continued the successful implementation of a comprehensive new Human Resources Information System (HRIS), helping us gain stronger insights into recruitment, retention, scheduling, and workforce trends. The system is strengthening operational efficiency and supporting data-informed workforce planning. Advanced Scheduling remains the final major module to be implemented in 2026/2027.

Rebuilding and Strengthening Our Workforce

A significant organizational priority this year was rebuilding staffing levels following the pandemic. Through focused recruitment efforts, Community Living Essex County successfully welcomed a substantial number of new employees, bringing staffing levels back to pre-pandemic capacity. This progress supports greater continuity of care, stronger relationships, and higher-quality supports and services for the people we support.



Compliance result

98.9%

We are incredibly proud to share that the Agency was found to be compliant with 278 of the 281 Quality Assurance Measures

This review included inspection of the following:

83 individual records of people we support were reviewed

32 staff files

15 support locations

11 board member files

The MCCSS Compliance team had great things to say about the amazing work being done. The team spoke specifically of the quality of our Personal Outcomes Planning process, noting that the plans are well balanced and provide a true picture of the person. Additional areas of strength identified include Behavioural Support Plans and ongoing oversight, financial documentation and oversight and our process for managing medications. The compliance team spoke favourably about our Share Vision database as well, noting the many changes and their correlation to ensuring quality support.

impact stories

Brianne's Passion for Art and Advocacy

Brianne is an accomplished, talented artist, self advocate and volunteer making a very meaningful impact. This featured painting reflects the creativity and perspective she brings to everything she does.

She is self-employed and owns Brianne's Art Creations and Photography. Her artwork has appeared at many art shows and festivals, is regularly featured at the Carnegie Art and Visitor Centre and Arts Society of Kingsville, and she often donates her art for fundraising. She's also a wonderful art teacher and hosts in-person and virtual paint classes.

As a self-advocate, Brianne is a leader, mentor and advocate for people who have an intellectual disability not only locally but provincially. She's the President of New Day, Leaders of Today. Brianne is also a Director on Community Living Essex



County's volunteer Board of Directors and is currently in her third term. She confidently brings the voice of people supported to the Board discussions and decision making. She's also an elected member of Community Living Ontario's Council, which is comprised of self-advocates from across Ontario. Brianne's volunteerism is endless and includes long standing participation on the Ruthven Apple Festival Committee, Mayor's Luncheon Planning Committee, Speaking Out Conference planning committee, and Hogs for Hospice, just to name a few.

We congratulate Brianne on all her accomplishments and thank her for making a difference and inspiring possibilities for so many.



“

This artwork celebrates connection, inclusion, and the beauty of every person belonging. The blossoms, colours, and movement reflect how we lift each other up and create a place where everyone feels welcomed.

Brianne Taggart

”

impact stories



Shane's New Wheels, New Freedom

Shane, who receives Supported Independent Living supports in Amherstburg, recently achieved an important personal goal by saving up to purchase his own enclosed scooter. The scooter is already opening new doors to greater independence, giving Shane the freedom to run errands, visit friends, and stay connected to his community on his own schedule. Proud of what he accomplished, Shane is excited for the opportunities and confidence this new level of mobility will bring to his everyday life.

Josh's Journey to Independent Living

Josh reached a significant milestone in March with a move into his own apartment, the result of a long-term goal years in the making. His path to independent living included earlier experiences in a 24-hour supported ensuite setting and a brief period living with a roommate, each step building readiness for this next chapter. This transition reflects Josh's self-determination, supported by a dedicated support team, his family, and enabling technology that helps promote both independence and safety.

Josh continues to build a full and active life in his community, which includes a weekly paper route and recently becoming an Advocates Against Abuse instructor.



impact stories

Thriving in Her Community

Since moving from a retirement home into her own home with Community Living Essex County, Brianne has embraced a new chapter filled with independence, connection, and opportunity.

Living with two housemates closer to her own age, Brianne now enjoys a home environment that matches her energy and enthusiasm for staying active and trying new things. While she often felt isolated in her previous living situation, her days are now full of meaningful activities, friendships, and a strong sense of belonging.

Brianne especially enjoys being close to her community centre, where she regularly attends Aquafit and fitness classes. One of her favourite activities is riding her bike, something she could not do in her previous living situation, and she



now happily explores her new community on two wheels.

Brianne says she loves getting out, meeting people her age, and looks forward to all the new adventures ahead.

Ethan's Move to Kingsville

Ethan has been settling into life in Kingsville and is already making himself at home. One of the best parts of the move has been being closer to family, especially his grandma, and having more opportunities to spend meaningful time together.

He has also been connecting with friends and building a strong routine in his new community. With work keeping him busy and helping him build independence, Ethan is gaining confidence and adjusting well to this exciting new chapter.

Ethan especially enjoys the outdoors. He loves

being near the lake and spending time outside in the yard, making the most of the fresh air and peaceful surroundings that Kingsville has to offer.

He also has some exciting things ahead, including a local gym membership and a brand-new bike that will help him get around independently and explore even more of his community.

Overall, Ethan's move to Kingsville has been a positive fresh start filled with family, friendships, personal growth, and new opportunities for belonging and independence.

celebrating milestones that matter

Every year of service represents dedication, compassion, and impact. We proudly recognize the employees celebrating milestone anniversaries in 2026 and thank them for the difference they make every day.

This milestone list is for anniversaries from July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026.



**35
YEARS**

- ★ Bonnie Vidal
- ★ Kim Butler
- ★ Sharon Butzer
- ★ Cathy Grein
- ★ Carla Gregorczyk



**25
YEARS**

- ★ Kelly Dunn
- ★ Ashley McFarland
- ★ Mary Goulet
- ★ Patty Bachmeier
- ★ Sandi-Lynn Whittaker



**20
YEARS**

- ★ Kathleen Skreptak
- ★ Katherine Theuma
- ★ Tommy Triolet
- ★ Dayna Taylor
- ★ Amanda Martin
- ★ Rebecca Wigle
- ★ Matthew Berthiaume
- ★ Grace Ugbeye
- ★ Megan Garant
- ★ Laura Julie St. John
- ★ Bethany Sims
- ★ Lori Harman
- ★ Caitlyn Sharron
- ★ Elizabeth Raffoul
- ★ Nicole Pollett



**15
YEARS**

- ★ Valerie Smith
- ★ Derek Roy
- ★ Chris Williams
- ★ Arley Hutchins
- ★ Amy Thomas
- ★ Karen Ford
- ★ Karen Gardiner
- ★ Jason Obeid
- ★ Christina Vamvakas



**10
YEARS**

- ★ Zorica Keser-Boskovic
- ★ Meaghan Skov
- ★ Susan Irwin
- ★ Nathan Vickery
- ★ Samantha Dawson
- ★ Melissa Yakubu
- ★ Bruce DeBacker
- ★ Sarayn Wilding
- ★ Brittany Snow
- ★ Olivia Raffoul
- ★ Amanda Pritchard
- ★ Monica Dass
- ★ Ramona Mihai
- ★ Jessica Beneteau
- ★ Madeleine Barry
- ★ Randelle O'Driscoll
- ★ Kristine Quinn
- ★ Ebo Essilfie-Amoah
- ★ Sukhwinder Tatla
- ★ Dawn Weidemann
- ★ Meghan Thornton









about:

Career Compass Employment Supports helps people with intellectual disabilities explore their interests, build skills, and pursue meaningful employment opportunities within their community. Through personalized support, job coaching, workplace partnerships, and skill development, the program empowers individuals to gain confidence, increase independence, and contribute their unique strengths in inclusive work environments. Whether someone is preparing for their first job or exploring new career pathways, Career Compass focuses on helping each person reach their employment goals at their own pace.



60 new intakes since in 2025



67 people competitively employed



98% retention rate



2 new municipalities have hired people



32 Youth In Action participants in 2025



“ Working with the Career Compass team has been a wonderful experience. From day one, they took the time to understand our needs and worked closely with us to ensure we found the right candidate. Once the candidate was hired, the job coaches were attentive, detail-oriented, and highly receptive to feedback throughout the process. For any employer considering a partnership, I would strongly recommend working with Career Compass. **Zach Sinn, Manager, Human Resources at Red Sun Farms** ”

Key accomplishments:

Strengthened Education Partnerships

Continued our valued partnership with the Greater Essex County District School Board, including collaboration with the Community Integration through Co-operative Education (CICE) program to support student transitions into employment. Career Compass also partnered with the board to deliver pre-employment sessions in 12 schools across Windsor Essex County.



Community Engagement & Awareness

Hosted a successful Lunch Mob in celebration of National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) as part of the “Light It Up!” initiative, promoting inclusive hiring in our community.



Professional Development Leadership

Facilitated two professional development days in partnership with the Greater Essex County District School Board, focused on strengthening employability skills and inclusive practices for students.



“

Career Compass worked closely with me to find a job that truly fits my skills and interests. The team provided excellent training to help me succeed, and we had a great time throughout the process. I really enjoy my position. The work is rewarding, and everyone there is friendly and supportive.

Zuki P.

”

Provincial Recognition

Proud recipients of the Outstanding Employment Service Provider Award at the Ontario Disability Employment Network (ODEN) conference, recognizing our commitment to inclusive employment practices.



Youth in Action Growth

The 2025 Youth in Action (YIA) program reached a milestone year, with the highest number of applicants and job placements to date.



with gratitude:

Celebrating Our Donors, Sponsors, and Volunteers

At Community Living Essex County, we are deeply grateful for the generosity, time, and energy of the many individuals, businesses, and community partners who make our work possible. Together, we are creating a community where everyone belongs, and where people with intellectual disabilities are supported in achieving their goals and dreams.

The power of community:

Our Fundraising Highlights

Ruthven Apple Festival

Our 46th Annual Ruthven Apple Festival at Colasanti's Tropical Gardens was an incredible success – including the weather! Mother Nature shone down upon us for a record-breaking year, raising over \$108,000 and welcoming more than 20,000 guests throughout the two-day festival. These funds directly support the purchase and maintenance of accessible vehicles, helping the people we serve attend appointments, access volunteer opportunities, and participate fully in community life.

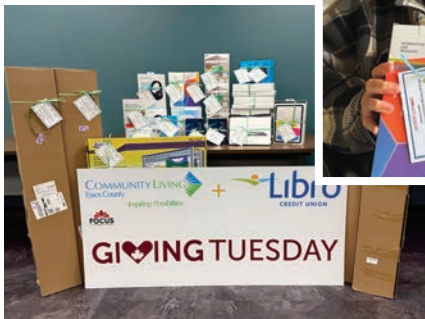


Annual Charity Golf Classic

In July, we hosted our 33rd Annual Charity Golf Classic at Sutton Creek Golf Club in McGregor, welcoming 124 golfers from across Essex County. The Municipal Cup was once again awarded to the Municipality of Lakeshore team, marking their second consecutive win. Beautiful weather and amazing support from our sponsors, volunteers and golfers make this event one to look forward to every year. Proceeds from this event support our Summer Supports program to help provide children and youth with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to gain meaningful experiences throughout the summer months. This year, we are happy to announce that the event raised \$19,200!

Jingle Bell Run, Walk and Wheel

In November, we held the 31st Annual Jingle Bell Run, Walk & Wheel, hosted by Ken Knapp Ford in Essex. The event took place on a cold and slushy day, with participants showing incredible enthusiasm and determination. We had over 600 registrations and raised an incredible record-breaking \$19,980. Despite the weather, we are grateful for the turnout, our awesome volunteers and community partners who helped make this event so successful and memorable.



Giving Tuesday

Our annual Giving Tuesday campaign raised nearly \$13,000 thanks to the generosity of our donors and community partners. Support included matching donations of up to \$6,000 from Libro Credit Union and a private donor, as well as proceeds from a Pasta Fundraiser hosted by Vernon's Tap & Grill. Funds raised allowed us to purchase devices such as iPads, smart watches, smart phones, wearable technology and more – tools that promote independence, connection and inclusion for the people we support.

Jingle Bell Jackpot Raffle

Our holiday fundraiser this year was our festive Jingle Bell Jackpot raffle! Tickets were sold through the month of December, and the draw took place over 10 days in January. Over 950 tickets were sold, with total prizes valued at \$12,700. We raised over \$14,000 and could not be more grateful for our donors, sponsors, and ticket-purchasers, who helped enhance the lives of the people we serve.



Technology and Innovation in Action *highlights:*

Tech Show Leaders

Community Living Essex County led the first-ever Developmental Services Technology Showcase in London in June 2025. The event highlighted innovative enabling technologies that support greater independence, autonomy, self-determination, communication, and life skills for people with intellectual disabilities. Business-focused sessions explored digital transformation, artificial intelligence, cyber security, data visualization, and emerging workplace technologies shaping the future of service delivery.



230+
Attendees



26
exhibitors



First Ever in Developmental Services
in Ontario / CL Essex County Led

Sector AI Leadership

Facilitated hands-on AI Labs for frontline employees, supervisors, managers, and leadership teams at Developmental Services organizations across Ontario, as well as the Windsor Region Employment Network. These interactive sessions focused on practical, responsible, and ethical use of generative AI in the workplace, helping organizations build confidence and readiness for emerging technologies.



6 Number of Orgs for
Which We Facilitated AI Labs



250+
Participants in AI Labs

Teaching People We Support About Internet and AI Safety

Expanded Community Living Essex County's Internet Safety curriculum for people supported to include education on artificial intelligence, helping individuals better understand AI-powered tools, online interactions, privacy considerations, and safe use of emerging technologies.

Modernizing Systems

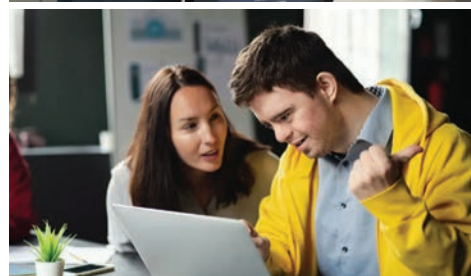
Successfully implemented a new payroll platform through the organization's Human Resources Information System (HRIS), ADP, helping modernize payroll operations, improve efficiency, and strengthen reporting and workforce management capabilities across the organization.

Responsible Use of AI

Continued organization-wide education on the safe, ethical, and effective use of artificial intelligence through the "Keeping AI Real" awareness series, while also strengthening cyber security awareness and phishing prevention training through KnowBe4 initiatives for employees across the organization.

Digital Transformation

Continued advancing digital transformation initiatives across the organization through ongoing modernization of systems, enhanced reporting and analytics capabilities, and exploration of innovative technologies that support both operational excellence and improved outcomes for people supported.

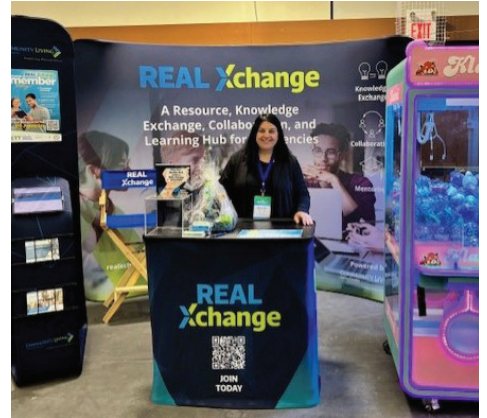


REAL Xchange

highlights:

This year, REAL Xchange continued to strengthen its role as a collaborative hub for knowledge sharing, innovation, and sector connection across developmental services and community support networks. Demonstrating this commitment to partnership and collaboration, REAL Xchange's Knowledge Translation and Transfer initiative - developed in partnership with Ontario Disability Employment Network, Partners for Planning, and Community Living Essex County - was recognized as a Semi-Finalist for the 2025 CharityVillage Collaborative Project Award, a national recognition celebrating outstanding collaboration and innovation within Canada's nonprofit and charitable sector.

Throughout the year, REAL Xchange was also represented at major sector conferences, sharing knowledge, presenting innovative initiatives, and engaging with professionals and organizations from across the province. REAL Xchange remains committed to fostering meaningful connection opportunities that bring professionals, community members, and organizations together, across the sector and beyond.



3651

Individual Members



834

Member Agencies



2588

Resources Posted



29

Collaborative Sessions



28

Mentorship Connections



178

Cities Reached



20

Countries Reached



1

Collective Effort



financial Summary

Resources for the years ending March 31, 2026 and March 31, 2025 (in millions)

Revenues	2025-26	2024-25	Expenditures	2025-26	2024-25
MCCSS	43.0	41.7	Accommodation Supports	40.8	39.8
Fees for service	6.0	6.2	Employment/Community Participation supports	2.6	2.4
Fundraising/donations	0.3	0.4	In and Out of Home Respite	2.6	2.7
Other grants and revenues	0.9	0.5	Community Relations/Other	0.1	0.1
Investment income	0.5	0.7	Administration	4.0	4.0
TOTAL	50.7	49.5	TOTAL	50.1	48.9

Grant-Funded Initiatives and Partnerships



Ontario Trillium Foundation – Resilient Communities Fund

Community Living Essex County continued work under the Ontario Trillium Foundation’s Resilient Communities Fund to support the organization’s Future-Proofing Initiative. This project focused on long-term sustainability, strategic planning, and preparing the organization to adapt to evolving service models within Developmental Services. Through this initiative, CLEC engaged stakeholders, explored emerging needs and trends, identified strategic priorities, and strengthened planning related to sustainability, workforce readiness, and future service delivery



Canada Ontario Community Housing Initiative Grant Funding – Tiny Homes

Through affordable community housing grant funding, Community Living Essex County completed two additional Tiny Homes this year. These innovative housing projects are helping adults with intellectual disabilities experience greater autonomy, independence, and inclusion within their communities. The Tiny Homes Initiative continues to demonstrate how creative partnerships and individualized housing approaches can support meaningful quality of life outcomes.



Community Foundation for Windsor-Essex – Together for Justice Grant

Community Living Essex County was successful in securing funding through the Together for Justice initiative, supported by the Community Foundation for Windsor-Essex County and partners. This funding is supporting the development of accessible resources, workshops, and education focused on rights awareness and navigating the justice system for people with intellectual disabilities and families living in rural Essex County. Work this year included the development of plain-language educational materials, digital resources, and community engagement opportunities aimed at improving access to information and advocacy supports.

2025-2026 Board of Directors

.....



Chad A. Sutherland,
Chair



Michelle Mastellotto,
1st Vice Chair



Sharon O'Hagan-Wong,
2nd Vice Chair



Gillian Heisz,
Treasurer



Robert Tomek,
Past Chair



Diane Bourbeau,
Director



Dan Gemus,
Director



Ron Giofu,
Director



Ian Phillips,
Director



Ray Renaud,
Director



Brianne Taggart,
Director



Corey Dalglish,
Secretary to the Board

Senior Leadership Team

.....

Corey Dalglish, *Executive Director*

Julie LaSorda, *Senior Director, Strategy, Innovation & Corporate Affairs*

Elizabeth Raffoul, *Director, Community Living Operations*

Kirti Ladwa, *Director, Finance*

Christine Meriweather, *Director, Human Resources*

Tim Davidson, *Director, Community Living Supports (North Area)*

Jacquelyn Ciliska, *Director, Community Living Supports (West Area)*

Carmela Battisti, *Director, Community Living Supports (South Area)*

Erin Alleva, *Director, Community Living Supports (Central Area)*



This circular organization chart reflects our person-centred approach by placing the people we support at the centre of everything we do. It highlights the collaborative relationships between support workers, leadership, governance, families, and the community, demonstrating how every role contributes to building an inclusive and supportive community.

Belonging in Action.



The Board of Directors, 2025/26



Head Office:

372 Talbot Street North,
Essex, Ontario
N8M 2W4

Charitable Registration:

118901974RR0001

With thanks and in recognition of ...

Our major funder – the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services.
And wish acknowledgement and appreciation to the Ontario Trillium Foundation.



Contact us:

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social media

