COMMUNITY LIVING
St. Catharines

Inspiring Possibilities

Annual Report

2025-2026

Our Mission

People with intellectual disabilities have the opportunity to participate in all elements of living in the community

Board of Directors and Executive Leadership

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Warren Burger
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Senior Management

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Community and Fund Development

Michelle Shedden
Director of Operations

William (Bill) Bye
Finance Controller

Larissa Wall
Senior Manager Human Resources

Message from the CEO and Board Chair

As we reflect on the past year at Community Living St. Catharines, we do so with gratitude and optimism. This year brought change and challenges, but also meaningful progress. It reinforced what remains central to our success: the strength, commitment, and resilience of the people who make up our organization.

Throughout the year, we continued to strengthen our services, adapt to change, and build capacity for the future. Our progress was made possible by the dedication of staff who advance our mission every day through professionalism, compassion, and a strong belief in the people we support.

We recognize the significant demands placed on our teams this year. Through transition and increased responsibilities, staff continued to provide quality support with dignity, respect, and care. Their efforts are deeply valued and appreciated.

Looking ahead, we remain guided by our strategic focus on People and Partnerships. We will continue to invest in staff, strengthen community relationships, and support people to pursue their goals, make meaningful choices, and participate fully in their communities.

We extend our sincere thanks to our Board of Directors, families, community partners, and supporters for their leadership, trust, and collaboration. Their confidence in our mission strengthens our ability to serve the community effectively.

Most importantly, we recognize the people we support. Their accomplishments, aspirations, and individuality are the foundation of our work and remind us that inclusion is an ongoing commitment.

As we look ahead, we do so with confidence in our shared purpose and in the future we will continue to build together.

With sincere gratitude and appreciation,

Susan Fielding-York
Chief Executive Officer

Rick Jones
Board Chair

Quality Assurance

In 2025, Community Living St. Catharines (CLSC) did not have a Developmental Services (DS) Compliance Inspection. Although an inspection did not take place, CLSC continued to maintain its readiness for a Ministry review.

Throughout the year, staff worked collaboratively to **'Stay Ready'** by maintaining practices that support compliance with Ministry requirements. Internal reviews helped ensure that agency records and processes remained current and aligned with Ministry expectations.

We sincerely thank all employees for their continued commitment to following agency policies and practices. Their teamwork and attention to compliance help CLSC maintain quality services and be prepared for future Ministry reviews.

CLSC will continue to monitor its practices, address areas for improvement, and maintain compliance with Ministry requirements.

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Community Support Services (CSS) - Children

CSS Children supports children and youth between the ages of 4 and 18, with a strong focus on empowering families to navigate community services and supports with confidence. Through individualized consultation, staff work collaboratively with families to build advocacy skills, strengthen their understanding of available resources, and increase their ability to access opportunities that support their child's growth and development.

Services include connecting families to community programs and supports, facilitating access to school-based resources, and assisting with planning for important life transitions. By fostering strong partnerships with families and service providers, CSS Children helps ensure that children and youth receive the supports they need to reach their full potential.

Over the past year, the team provided support to 168 children and youth. Referrals continue to increase steadily, reflecting both the growing demand for family-centered consultation services and the ongoing need for individualized support. Through a collaborative and strengths-based approach, CSS Children remains committed to helping families access resources, navigate complex systems, and create positive outcomes for their children and youth.

Adult Planning

To meet the growing demand for person-directed planning services across the community, Adult Planning successfully expanded its team by hiring a second Adult Planner. During the year, the program supported 213 individuals referred through Developmental Services Ontario (DSO).

Adult Planning offers short-term, goal-focused support designed to help individuals identify their strengths, needs, aspirations, and natural support networks. Adult Planners work alongside each person to develop meaningful goals, connect them to community opportunities and resources, and facilitate access to services through Community Living St. Catharines and other community partners. Once goals have been achieved and community connections are established, individuals are discharged from the service, ensuring ongoing access for others in need of support.

Referrals to Adult Planning often involve individuals with intellectual disabilities who may also experience complex challenges, including mental health concerns, physical disabilities, involvement with the criminal justice system, substance use, and financial, food, or housing insecurity. Adult Planners provide support through referrals, advocacy, and coordinated connections to community agencies and resources that address these needs while helping individuals work toward their personal goals.

Collaboration with community partners remains a cornerstone of the program. Adult Planning works closely with a broad network of service providers, including Bethesda Adult Clinical Services; Canadian Mental Health Association; Carolyn Fast Consulting; Community Care/ Housing Help Centre; Community Integration through Co-operative Education (CICE) at Niagara College; District School Board of Niagara, N-TEC Employment Services,; March of Dimes; Quest Community Health Centre; Niagara Regional Housing; and RecFit Services. Through these partnerships, Adult Planners help individuals navigate services, strengthen community connections, and access coordinated supports that promote independence, inclusion, and meaningful participation in community life.

Adult Planning also continues to represent Community Living St. Catharines through participation on the Community Integration through Co-operative Education (CICE) Program Advisory Committee at Niagara College. This committee brings together representatives from the social services and employment sectors to review program outcomes, share updates, and provide feedback on proposed program enhancements. CICE offers valuable post-secondary education opportunities for individuals with learning challenges and remains a viable pathway for many individuals supported through Adult Planning.

In addition, Adult Planning actively participates in the Situation Table, a collaborative community initiative that addresses situations involving individuals with complex needs and elevated risk. Both Adult Planning staff members have received the specialized training required to participate in this coordinated community response, strengthening the program's ability to support individuals whose needs extend beyond the scope of traditional planning services.

Community Development

Community Development has had a particularly active and productive year, and we could not have achieved all that we did without the incredible support of our volunteers and community partners. This year, five volunteers supported our activities alongside our Best Buddies, while students from Ridley College generously collected personal care products for the people we support.

Through our partnership with Brock University, Best Buddies continues to create opportunities for meaningful friendships, social inclusion, leadership development, and community participation. This year, the program included 56 volunteers and 44 Buddies, with monthly group events held from October to April at various locations throughout the community. Activities included a Best Buddies Flag-Raising ceremony; a visit to the Film House; a Bingo Lunch and Hearts & Crafts event; bowling at Parkway Social; and Niagara IceDogs and Boston Pizza fundraisers. These events provided many opportunities for connection, friendship, and fun.

Throughout the year, Community Living St. Catharines offered a variety of special events and community activities that provided opportunities for the people we support to connect, celebrate, and participate in meaningful experiences. Community Living Month was highlighted by a coffee and Flag-Raising celebration; live music with Brad Boland; a Spring Dance; a trip to a Toronto-Blue Jays game; scrimmage with the Niagara River Lions; site decorating contest that encouraged participation across the organization; and an Ice Cream Social to conclude the month.

Other activities throughout the year included a Valentine's Day Dance; several Grub Crawls, including one attended by Mayor Matt Sisco; a picnic at Lakeside Park; a Barbecue and a Drumming demonstration where we watched the Mayor put his skills to the test against our talented drummers. Participants also attended a Niagara River Lions game as well as an outing to King Pin Bowling.

We received a generous donation from the Natural Scientists in School Program, which enabled us to offer a free online Community Workshop to 22 people we support. We also enjoyed lunch in the Courtyard followed by Ice Cream generously provided by Symetric.

These events created opportunities for friendship, inclusion, fun, and participation while

strengthening Community Living's connection to the broader community. We have also been implementing a new process using HubSpot, an all-in-one platform that helps streamline activity and event registrations.

The Drop-In Program continues to be a welcoming and social space where the people we support can come together, catch up with friends, enjoy a coffee, play games, share some laughs, and simply spend time together. Every Thursday, participants have the opportunity to connect in a relaxed and friendly environment where everyone feels comfortable, valued, and included. This year, the program welcomed approximately 20 participants each week. It continues to be a wonderful opportunity to take a break, connect with others, and enjoy a few hours of fun, friendship, and community.

Community Development continued its partnership with the Niagara Centre for Excellence in Inclusive and Adaptive Physical Activity, working alongside Dr. Maureen Connolly, Professor of Physical Education and Kinesiology at Brock University. Through this partnership, we continue to promote the Evergreen Program, which provides opportunities for individuals aged 50 and older to remain active, engaged, and connected within their community.

Adult Supports

Adult Supports 2026: Supporting people to achieve their goals, empowering staff to reach their potential and building an Adult Supports Program that is ready for the future has been a strong focus and worth celebrating.

Professional Development

Staff Schedule Care

Staff Schedule Care continues with operational updates. With the support we have had from Jenn, Diane, Liz, Sarah, Julie, Brie, Diane and Program Supervisors and teams, having you all collaborating together is appreciated and many thanks to all employees for their patience and commitment in moving towards a paperless system.

Beyond Awareness: Experiential Learning for Inclusive Support

Our Adult Support Supervisors participated in a training facilitated by Jodie, one of our DSP 2's and a Health & Safety Representative, and our Adult Support Supervisor, Sarah. This training focused on the sensory barriers people experience when interacting with/navigating their environment. It allowed them to put themselves in the shoes of the people we support, which helped build more patience, compassion and empathy. Sarah and Jodie will be visiting your teams shortly to present this inclusive support training.

Growth Mindset

Our Human Resources Generalist, Jenny, facilitated a lunch and learn on the topic of Growth Mindset. This opportunity was provided to any Administrative Staff within our head office and those in leadership positions. In attendance we had Administrative Assistants, Coordinators, Consultants, Supervisors and Managers. Jenny taught us the difference between a growth mindset and a fixed one, encouraging staff to continue to grow their skill sets and try new things.

This training was first facilitated to our DSP2's, showing them how a growth mindset allows for internal leaders to grow, be challenged, and be ready to move with the sector as legislation and the needs of individuals we support are not static and continue to shift. They were tasked to bring this to the teams they lead with their supervisors to ensure continuity and celebrate the growth that not only people supported achieve, but staff too.

People We Support Updates

Adult Supports has welcomed new and younger individuals into service. This shift brings new perspectives, goals and expectations to the program. Individuals are often seeking opportunities centered around independence, employment, relationships, technology as well as recreation and community inclusion. With efforts to include employees in professional development opportunities, this allows teams to adapt services to ensure supports remain relevant, innovative and responsive to all the individuals we support.

Able Sail

We have had many people we support attend and enjoy Able Sail this year. It was Jason's first time going since 2022 – he had a great time on the water and got to spend time with his friend Denise.

Community Participation Supports (CPS) Operational Success

Learning, Participation and Community Engagement

This year, participants had many opportunities to learn, connect, create, stay active, and be involved in their community. Through academics, current events, social skills, computers, cooking, baking, art, music, and hands-on learning workshops, participants continued to build skills and explore new interests.

The group also demonstrated flexibility and inclusion by coordinating a virtual class for a participant who was recovering from a leg injury, allowing them to remain connected and continue participating in learning and group activities while at home.

Health and recreation remained an important part of the year, with activities including yoga, stretching, DrumFit, swimming, bowling, sports, pickleball, dance, gym games, walking, and visits to parks and

recreation centres across the Niagara Region. Participants also enjoyed summer outings and community experiences such as Safari Niagara, Niagara Takes Flight, Mini Putt, Wild Waterworks, the driving range, batting cages, Sherkston Shores, and Rock 'n' Bowl.

Community involvement and giving back were also key highlights. Participants volunteered weekly at Meyer's Greenhouse, participated in the community literacy book-sorting program in Welland and other opportunities to contribute to the community.

One special project involved participants decorating grocery bags for Sobeys' "Feed the Need in Our Community" initiative, with the decorated bags being used to support donations to Community Care. Their artwork was proudly displayed at Sobeys, which even featured a poster recognizing the Community Living artwork and the participants' contribution.

Participants also enjoyed musical guests, karaoke, concerts, creative arts, holiday celebrations, birthday celebrations, themed events, bingo, games, and opportunities to share their own knowledge and interests with peers.

Throughout the year, participants were encouraged to try new things, develop friendships, teach and learn from one another, and take an active role in their community. They also came together to support one another through significant moments, including the loss of two peers, demonstrating the importance of connection, compassion, and community.

Overall, the year was filled with learning, laughter, creativity, recreation, meaningful community participation, inclusion, and opportunities to build confidence and independence.

Our Dedication to Community

Adult Supports is more than a program, it is a community of people growing, achieving and creating new possibilities. With the dedication of CLSC Adult Supports employees, we continue to help build meaningful lives while developing a stronger workforce and responding to community changing needs.

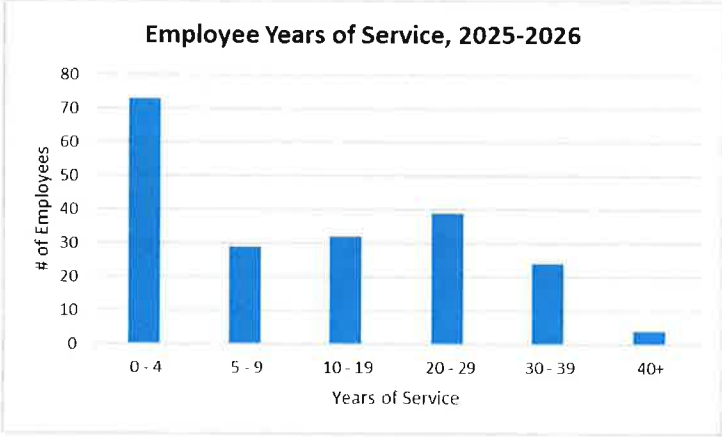
Human Resources

Human Resources at a Glance:
As of March 31, 2026 Community Living St. Catharines (CLSC) employed 201 dedicated team members who continue to support our mission and positively impact the lives of the individuals we serve. Throughout the year, we strengthened our workforce by welcoming talented new employees across several departments.

New Team Members:
Between April 1, 2025 and March 31, 2026, CLSC welcomed:

* 22 Direct Support Professionals
* 1 Financial Controller
* 1 Supervisor, Community Participation Support and Supported Independent Living-Host Family
* 1 Maintenance Technician
* 1 Finance Coordinator
* 1 Adult Planner
* 1 Administrative and Social Media Assistant

In addition, CLSC successfully participated in the Canada Summer Jobs Program 2025, hiring 3 summer contract employees in Human Resources, Maintenance and Quality Assurance. These opportunities provided valuable work experience while supporting key organizational initiatives. Our HR summer contract employee was retained in a temporary role as our Adult Support Program Coordinator and is now our HR Generalist, whose profile focuses on Recruitment and Training.



Celebrating Employee Loyalty:
CLSC's workforce continues to demonstrate exceptional dedication and longevity:

- One-third of employees have been with CLSC for 20 years or more, reflecting the organization's strong culture, employee engagement and commitment to retention.
- During the year, 26 employees celebrated service milestones ranging from 5 to 40 years.
- Of these milestones, 10 employees achieved the remarkable accomplishment of 30 or more years of services with CLSC.

The continued commitment of our long-serving employees represents an invaluable contribution to the success and stability of the organization.

Learning, Development and Workplace Safety:
Employee learning and development remained a key priority throughout the year.
Between April 1, 2025 and March 21, 2026, Human Resources coordinated:

- 57 in-person trainings sessions
- 8 comprehensive online training bundles through the Surge Learning Platform.

  Training topics included:
  - Workplace Violence Prevention
  - Quality Assurance Measures (QAM)
  - Fire Safety and Emergency Awareness

- WHMIS
- Slips, Trips and Falls Prevention and Musculoskeletal (MSD) Injury Prevention
- Infection Prevention and Control
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
- Additional compliance and workplace safety initiatives

Leadership Development

To further support professional growth and leadership excellence, CLSC invested in the Fred Pryor Learning platform, providing supervisors with access to:

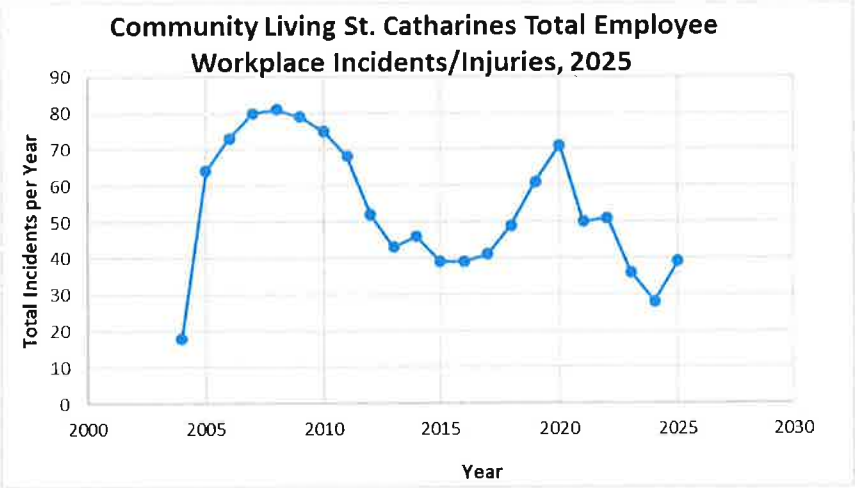
- More than 3500 live virtual seminars
- More than 5000 on-demand courses

Supervisors completed a total of 242 trainings, including each participating in a 2-day online Management Conference. This investment provides learning opportunities and supports the development of professional, knowledgeable leaders throughout the agency.

CLSC offered a variety of employee training programs which support continuous improvement, including:

- OT Transfer and Proper Body Mechanics Training
- Rational Detachment
- Ethical Decision Making
- DSP2 Growth Mindset Training
- Medication Training
- JHSC and Health & Safety Rep Workplace Inspections Training

These investments reflect CLSC's ongoing commitment to employee safety and professional growth.



HR Highlights:

Career Fair and Recruitment Activities

HR participated in many Job Fairs throughout the last year, highlighting the amazing work our employees do to support people in our community who have intellectual disabilities:

- Niagara College Career Fair
- Niagara Employee Help Centre Job Fair
- Niagara College Summer Healthcare Job Fair
- Brock University Experience Expo

Recognizing Employee Service

Employee recognition remained an important focus throughout the year. On November 20, 2025, CLSC proudly hosted its Employee Appreciation Years of Services Awards Dinner at Club Roma, celebrating employees reaching five-year service milestone increments.

The evening featured a special video tribute recognizing award recipients and highlighting their contributions to the organization. CLSC looks forward to continuing this tradition at the 2026 Employee Appreciation Years of Service Awards Dinner.

Thank You!

Celebrating Successful Milestones For People with Intellectual Disabilities

Community Living St. Catharines and its Board of Directors wish to extend their thanks and their appreciation to our growing number of donors, partners, and volunteers whose support of our goals and mission allowed us to expand our programs and provide new opportunities for the people we support.

OUR SUPPORTERS

The Fowler Family Foundation

Niagara Recycling

humeniuk foundation

Niagara Ice Dogs

Ontario Ministry of Health

Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services

Niagara River Lions

Ontario Trillium Foundation / Fondation Trillium de l'Ontario

Mark's

OUR PARTNERS

Best Buddies Canada

Red Roof Retreat

Brock University

Niagara College Canada

Mainstream People Supporting People

NR Public Health

Niagara Region

St. Catharines

Niagara Falls Canada

City of Thorold

Niagara-on-the-Lake

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Community Living St. Catharines

MCCSS AGM Remarks – October 27, 2026

Good evening, everyone,

On behalf of the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, I would like to extend my sincere regrets that I am unable to join you this evening for Community Living St. Catharines' Annual General Meeting.

I am pleased, however, to have the opportunity to share a few words and to recognize the important work of Community Living St. Catharines over the past year.

In 2025/26, Community Living St. Catharines supported more than 580 children, youth and adults through a broad range of services, including:

- Community Participation Supports for 285 people;
- Children's case management for 168 children and youth;
- Host Family supports for 7 people;
- Supported Group Living for 71 people; and
- Supported Independent Living for 55 people.

These numbers are significant, but they tell only part of the story. Behind each number is a person, a family, and an opportunity to support greater independence, choice, inclusion and belonging.

Over the past year, Community Living St. Catharines has also continued to demonstrate leadership in responding to some of the most pressing needs within the Niagara developmental services system.

As an active participant in the ministry's Multi-Year Supportive Living Planning (MYSLP) strategy and Service Solutions process, CLSC welcomed more than six highly prioritized individuals into service in 2025/26. This included two individuals who had remained in hospital for prolonged periods despite no longer requiring hospital level care, as well as another individual whose living arrangement in the family home was at significant risk of breaking down. This in addition to individuals who came into service through the traditional matching and linking process.

CLSC has demonstrated a willingness to think differently about how existing resources can be used, exploring creative service models, reconfiguring supports and identifying opportunities to expand capacity, while continuing to ensure that people already receiving CLSC' services have housing and supports that are appropriate to their individual needs.

These efforts contributed to four individuals being supported through Service Solutions in Niagara, representing the highest Service Solutions result across all 10 communities in the West Region in 2025/26. This is an important accomplishment and reflects what can be achieved through flexibility, collaboration and shared problem-solving.

Leadership Across the Niagara Service System

I also want to recognize CLSC's leadership and contributions beyond its own organization.

Sue's has led the important work on behalf of the Niagara developmental services sector to help strengthen the service experiences and outcomes for adults with special needs involved with the Niagara hospital system. This has included gathering information and perspectives from the 12 developmental services providers, identifying trends and concerns, sharing information and educating hospital partners, and working collaboratively to develop solutions and protocols between our two sectors. This work is helping to strengthen admission and discharge planning and improve service experiences and outcomes for people with developmental disabilities, including individuals both connected and not yet connected to developmental services agencies.

Similarly, Michelle's leadership as (former) chair of our local service system planning table has been instrumental in advancing residential planning and coordinated problem-solving across Niagara. This has included supporting residential mapping meetings and helping partners work collectively to respond to complex service pressures. Niagara has a larger volume of people prioritized for residential planning through the Ministry's MYSLP strategy.

Due to need, service demand and recognizing the importance of planning across the lifespan, this work has also incorporated children's placing agencies bringing forward children and youth that are seeking services as existing service arrangements no longer adequately meet their needs.

Together, Michelle and Sue demonstrated strong collaboration and partnership, helping to move the work forward, with a shared focus on developing services that are responsive to individual need, increasing the sector's capacity to meet service demand, and working collectively to address operational and system level challenges.

Looking Ahead

The ministry is appreciative of CLSC, the services and supports it provides, and its leadership and contributions to the broader Niagara service system.

Looking ahead, there are opportunities to continue building on this work.

This includes considering expanding service offerings to in-home support options for individuals living with their families, providing greater choice and flexibility and meeting people where they are. Providing the right supports earlier can help strengthen the sustainability of existing family living arrangements.

Another important area to consider is supporting children and youth to remain within their home communities, through developing new service offerings such as evening respite and residential supports. Strengthening these options can help children and youth receive services closer to family and community while also supporting more successful transitions across the lifespan.

And importantly, CLSC has an opportunity to continue strengthening its Community Participation Supports in alignment with the ministry's Journey to Belonging vision. This means continuing the shift toward individualized, person-directed supports that promote valued social roles, meaningful relationships, community connections and genuine belonging.

The ministry recognizes that transformation takes time and requires creativity, partnership and a willingness to think and work differently. We appreciate CLSC's continued engagement in this work and its commitment to collaborating with the ministry, community partners, people receiving services and families.

On behalf of the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, thank you to the Board of Directors, leadership team, staff, volunteers, community partners, families and, most importantly, the people supported by Community Living St. Catharines for your contributions over the past year.

Please accept our best wishes for a successful Annual General Meeting and for continued success in the year ahead.

Thank you,

Melanie White