



**OPTIONS
NORTHWEST**
live life your way

**Annual Report
2021-2022**

OPTIONS NORTHWEST
95 N. Cumberland Street
Thunder Bay, Ontario · P7A 4M1
807-344-4994 · optionsnorthwest.com



OPTIONS NORTHWEST

live life your way

Our Vision

Dedicated to respecting the right of people to live life their way.

Our Mission

Through personalized OPTIONS, we collaborate with people and community partners to develop and offer creative personal and clinical services for individuals.

Our Philosophy

OPTIONS recognizes people's diverse strengths and believes in the rights of all to:

-  Be respected
-  Be connected
-  Be informed and gain knowledge
-  Be self-reliant
-  Advocacy

OPTIONS NORTHWEST, its employees, students, volunteers, and the Board of Directors want to formally acknowledge that we are in the Robinson-Superior territory of 1850 and the land on which we live, work and support families and people with disabilities is the traditional territory of the Anishinaabek and Fort William First Nation.



A Message from the Board of Directors & Executive Director

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the Leadership Team of OPTIONS NORTHWEST, we would like to take this opportunity to present to you the Annual General Report for the 2021/2022 fiscal year. We are pleased to be able to meet with OPTIONS employees and Membership today, albeit in a different time and place than we traditionally gather because of the global COVID-19 pandemic. It is our hope that next year we will celebrate our AGM together in-person while enjoying a wonderful meal and each other's company.

In reflecting back on the past year and the fact that we are still faced with uncertainties related to COVID-19 we come to realize and are proud of the work that has been accomplished to support people with developmental disabilities in our community.

This year's AGM report communicates two important messages to our OPTIONS NORTHWEST community. The first is to share all of the ways OPTIONS has navigated through the COVID-19 Pandemic. This was only possible through the remarkable resilience and talents demonstrated by our amazing employees during an incredibly challenging time.

We also would like to share some inspiring stories and insights of people we support and employees from the year.

Everyone at OPTIONS worked extremely hard to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the homes and to protect both employees and people we support. We were diligent in following the recommendations and directives from Ontario Public Health and the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. The following protective measures were implemented prior to or during the year:

- Employees in the homes continued to properly wear PPE (gowns, masks, and goggles)
- People we support, and employees were encouraged to get triple-vaccinated (almost all are triple-vaccinated)
- Employees working directly with people we support were tested (Rapid Antigen Test) twice per week
- Office staff were encouraged to work from home when possible
- Employees and visitors in our offices were required to wear masks
- Virtual meetings when possible and appropriate continued to replace in-person meetings across the Agency



Due to COVID-19, this year once again was challenging to get people out and about to enjoy the simple things in life such as going out to shop, having lunch at a favourite restaurant, or watching a movie at Silver City. Employees found many creative ways to accomplish a lot with the individuals such as having virtual: Bingo Nights, Cooking Classes, and Arts & Crafts.



Although the year was not a typical one the Agency did deliver on its mission and provided excellent services and supports to people we serve.

Highlights from the year include:

- April was World Autism Month ... an annual opportunity for a dedicated conversation and celebration of Autism. The Agency shared a communique on Autism with employees and took the time to remember the importance of the month and the people we support that are living with Autism.
- Throughout the year the Agency continued to meet virtually with many of its community partners (Avenue II, Community Living Thunder Bay, March of Dimes, Lutheran Community Care, Wesway, Superior Greenstone Association of Community Living, Children's Centre Thunder Bay, Children's Aid Society Thunder Bay, Dilico Anishinabek Family Care) as well as several provincial partners. Through these meetings, we were able to help children and adults with developmental disabilities that needed our services as well as learn from and support each other.
- The Community Resource Team provided clinical support to 270 people in our community including 246 adults and 24 children. Many people received more than one CRT service.
- The Board of Directors had two retirements, Karen Kemp and Sheila Waywanko and was able to recruit a new board member, Erin Dunn.
- Gift cards to locally owned and operated restaurants were provided to all frontline employees over the holiday season as a way to acknowledge and thank them for their dedication to their work and for being there for the people we support.
- The Temporary Wage Enhancement program that provides frontline workers an additional \$3/hour was continued by the provincial government. The Agency is truly grateful for the government's recognition of the challenging work that employees do especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- We celebrated National Accessibility Week 2021 in June. It was a time to celebrate the valuable contributions of Canadians with disabilities. Specifically for OPTIONS, it was a time to remember what accessibility means for the people we support - it means working together to build an inclusive community for people with developmental disabilities.



- In June, the Board of Directors and staff celebrated the Agency's successes for the previous year at the 2nd virtual Annual General Meeting.
- July and August brought sunshine, warm weather, and longer days to enjoy. All employees were able to take some time off to rest, relax and recharge.
- On September 30th the Agency closed its offices in the afternoon to honour the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and Orange Shirt Day 2021. National Day for Truth and Reconciliation honours the lost children and Survivors of residential schools, their families and communities. September 30th was also the eighth annual Orange Shirt Day, an Indigenous-led day that honours the children who survived residential schools and remembers those who did not. Employees participated in various local community events centred around Truth and Reconciliation. Employees later shared their experiences of the day at their Cumberland Coffee Meeting.



- The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services visited us in October to conduct a two-part site review of our operations. Part one was COVID-19 Preparedness and Prevention review and the Part two was a condensed version of the Quality Assurance Measures review. The Agency passed with “flying colours” which is a testament of the amazing work direct support professionals, the clinical team and supervisors do in congregate living settings every day.
- In December we celebrated the holidays by having the Leadership Team deliver turkey dinners to Supported Independent Living, Home Share, and Congregate Living Homes. It was wonderful to see so many of the people we support light up with bright smiles when we showed up with our deliveries. Santa and his Elf also made an appearance and had some fun.
- Despite the many challenges that the pandemic presented, our offices remained open to the public. Our Hub program that provides an opportunity for people to visit and do crafts, play games, and enjoy snacks or a meal did open during the fall. This program has been a great addition to the Agency and is enjoyed by many.
- Throughout the year we also ran three COVID-19 vaccine clinics for the people we support. Vaccinating the people we support along with employees and using proper PPE has significantly mitigated the spread of COVID-19 in the homes.
- In March 2022 we increased Positive Behaviour Supports at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre from 28 hours per week to 40 hours per week.
- The Agency had a very successful year because of its competent, compassionate, caring, and committed employees and supervisors. This coupled with the guidance and support of the Leadership Team and Board of Directors we continue to deliver quality services to the people we support in our community as well as helped people live life their way.

We want to thank and acknowledge the OPTIONS community for their patience, kindness, creativity, and support during the past year. The unwavering dedication of everyone to ensuring people are protected and supported has given us immense hope and gratitude...

- The amazing people we support, and their families
- Our dedicated and talented employees and supervisors
- Our union partners of UNIFOR and ONA
- Our community partners - adult and children’s services agencies
- The Thunder Bay District Health Unit
- Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre
- Our provincial partners (OASIS, OADD, GLS, CLO, Provincial Network)
- Our funder the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
- Our Board of Directors
- Our committed Leadership Team

Meghan Hanbury

Board of Directors President

Tony DeAgazio

Executive Director



Board of Directors



Meghan Hanbury, President



Leigh Abthorpe, Vice President



Patricia Maxton, Treasurer



Anna Gosselin, Director



Tom Nesti, Director



Erin Dunn, Director

Leadership Team



Tony DeAgazio
Executive Director



Mark Beazley
Director of Community Services



Jill Thompson
Director of Human Resources



Sharon Morrison
Manger of Financial Services



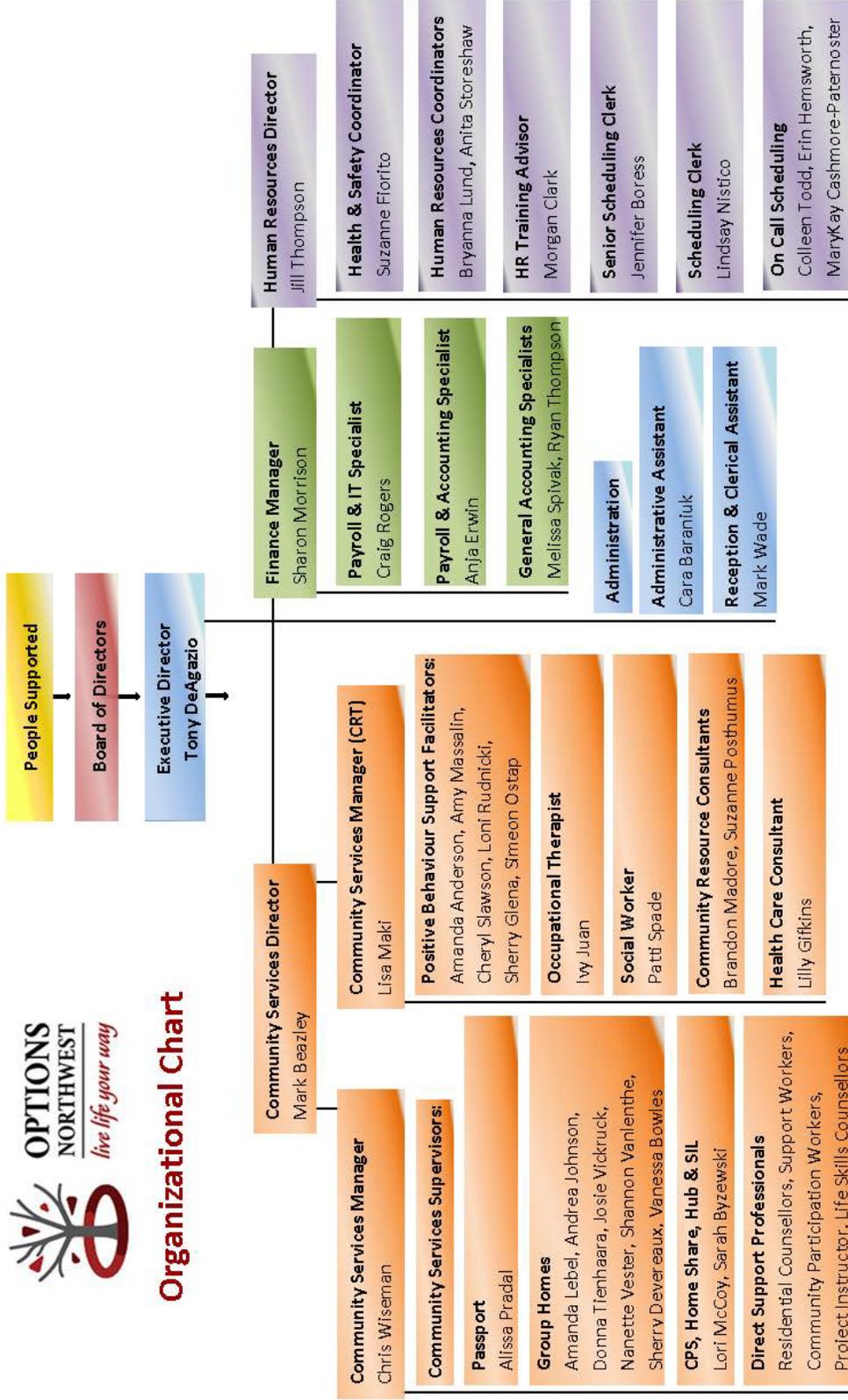
Chris Wiseman
Manger of Community Services



Lisa Maki
Manger of Community Services



Organizational Chart





Employee Recognition

Recognitions April 2021-March 2022

5 years

Taylor Lamothe, Riley Cassidy, Caroline Winters, Miranda Couch, Taylor Ferrence,
Jesse James, Michael Bellefontaine, Shinny Joy, Ambily Jose,
Carol Maxwell, Michelle Lemay-Menard, Lisa Maki

10 years

Jason Sabotic, Tiffany Squitti, Bryanna Lund, Alison Lajeunesse, Kelly McLean, Kaitlin Turk

15 years

Lacey Anderson, Roberta Wolch, Patricia Buwalda, Denise Davis, Anita Storeshaw

20 years

Tammy Cook, Dave Jones, Melanie Tiboni, Margaret Amanda Breukelman

25 years

Gayle Schutte

30 years

Cheryl Maki, Doreen Savela, Corrine Ceci, Eva Lowe

35 years

Angela Campbell



Retirements April 2021-March 2022

Anna Marie Eckensweiler, Rob Francis, Cheryl Maki,
Rosa Teresa Degrazia, Odile Bernard French, Nanette Vester,
Sheryl Dechaine, Monica Van Ramshorst, Josie Vickruck

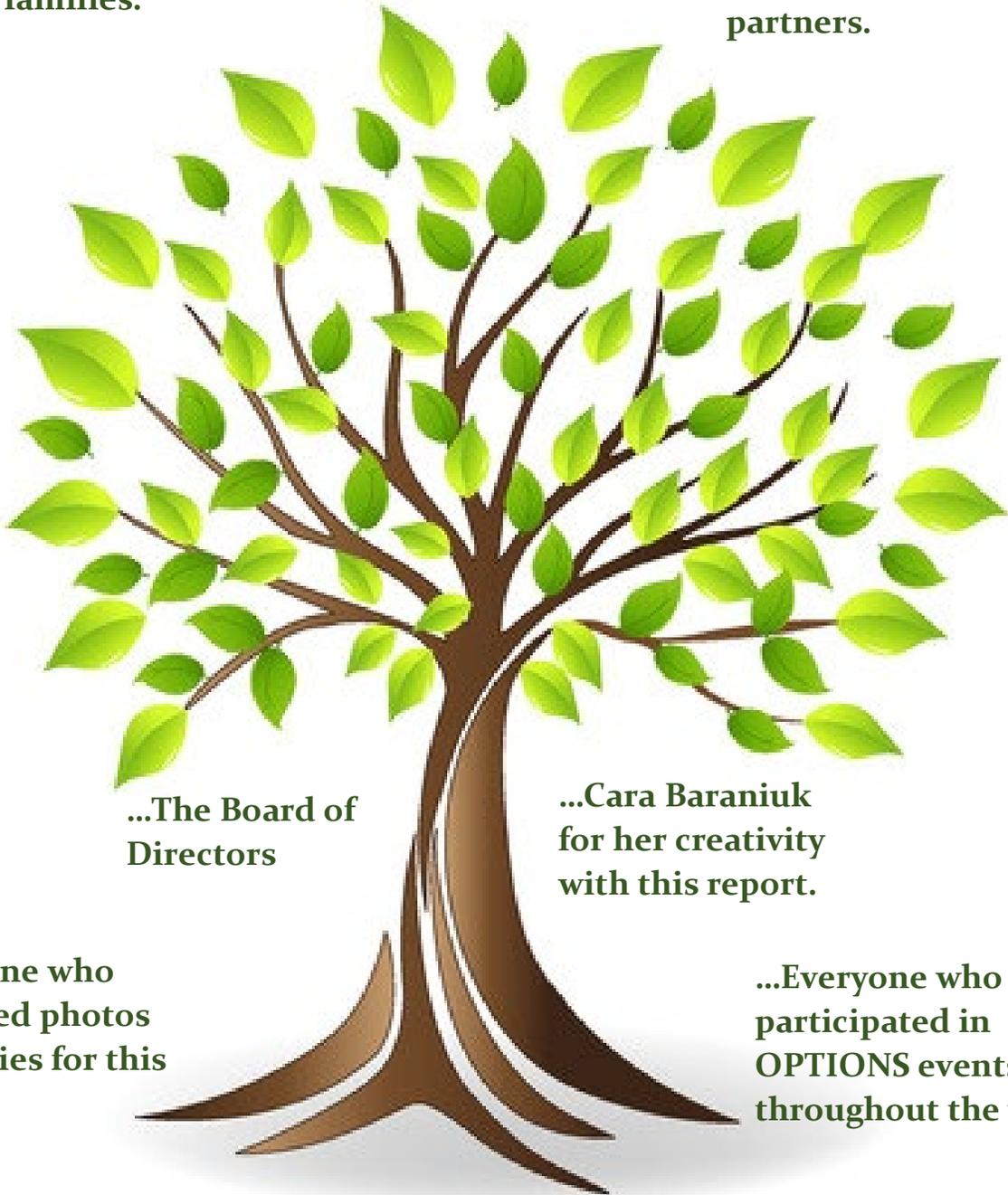
**Congratulations to all employees who celebrated a milestone year of service
with OPTIONS NORTHWEST. Thank you for everything you do!**



OPTIONS NORTHWEST would like to Thank...

...People receiving services and their families.

...Employees, students, volunteers, and community partners.



...The Board of Directors

...Cara Baraniuk for her creativity with this report.

...Everyone who submitted photos and stories for this report.

...Everyone who participated in OPTIONS events throughout the year.

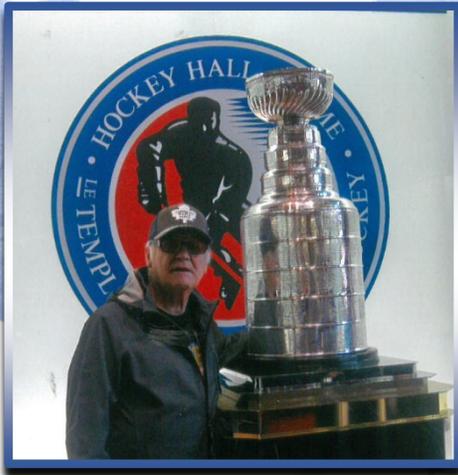
It is our privilege to support and partner with all of you!



In Memory Of Charlie Bone

“A Life that Touches
Others Goes on Forever.”

~ Anonymous



This is the time of year when I turn to watching the Stanley Cup Playoffs and I can't help but think of Charlie Bone. Charlie Bone passed last May and has been deeply missed by everyone at Nicholetts Rd. Charlie was a huge Maple Leafs Fan, something he and I had in common. Some of my fondest memories are watching the Leafs play hockey with Charlie. He would cheer and laugh as loud as he could. Charlie also loved going to the LU Thunderwolves with his longtime friend Dave where he would cheer and sometimes disagree with the referee. Also, when I think of Charlie, I see him with a big big smile on his face. Charlie also enjoyed fishing and pulled quite a few Pickerel out of Arrow Lake, the Kam River and Hazelwood Lake, although the one thing I remember most about Charlie was his big smile. Charlie was always smiling. He loved to joke around and was a glass half full kinda guy. Most importantly though Charlie cared about his friends and the people who supported him at Nicholetts Road. He would often ask, “how are you doing?, Are you ok?, Is your family doing well? “. He loved to sit around a cup of coffee and talk. Charlie also had a place in his heart for animals. He volunteered at one time for the Animal Shelter on Rosslyn Road where he would walk the dogs and feed them. And of course, Charlie cared deeply for his dog Marvin which he adopted from a local rescue. Charlie would spend many hours walking, brushing and sitting on the deck with Marvin, and he cared deeply for his dog. As well, Charlie enjoyed traveling. He travelled across Canada. From Winnipeg, to Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver, Toronto and Niagara Falls. Charlie loved his sister and nieces and went on many trips to Toronto to visit his family and talked about them often. While there Charlie also made sure to go to Rogers Centre and cheer on his favourite team the Toronto Maple Leafs. So, as I finish watching the Leafs play hockey tonight, I remember the caring, laughing man, with a smile that would light up a room, who will always be deeply missed and remembered at Nicholetts Road.

Go Leafs Go....

Submitted By: Chuck Lindsey





Community Services





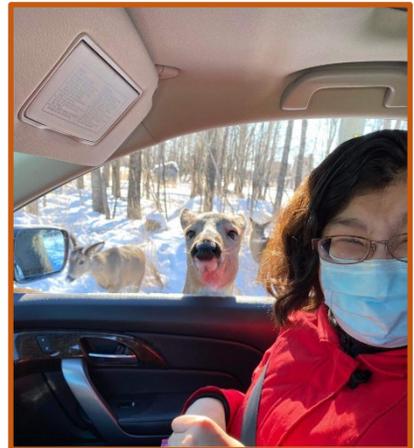
Community Services Update

One year after a world-wide pandemic and not much has changed from one year to the next. 2021 was a rollercoaster of COVID waves that the people supported, and our entire staff had to navigate throughout the year. It seemed as though just when thought we could see the light at the end of the road another wave would come and lock us down again.

The year also brought our first positive case of COVID-19 into the homes and affected some of the people we support. However, due to the fact all were double vaccinated the previous year most of the symptoms people experienced were relatively mild and they were able to bounce back rather quickly.

As proud as we were for getting everyone double-vaccinated the year before with two full day clinics, we can also say that all of the people we support had the opportunity to have their third booster dose in January 2022. Just another line of defense for people supported when trying to battle this ongoing virus.

The amazing work done by our employees who have adapted to do things different for the people we support continued throughout the year. You will see throughout this report pictures of people doing different things to keep them happy and engaged but most of all safe from the virus. Whether it was virtual bingo or attending virtual cooking classes, people supported took part in a variety of virtual activities and this could only be accomplished by the creativity of our awesome employees.



In closing, one can only hope that the next year is better than the last two. It seems like life is moving toward some sort of normalcy, which bodes well for the future. I am extremely proud of how the agency and the Community Services area has handled the pandemic over the past two years and keeping people safe from COVID-19. It is truly an honor and blessing knowing that we have such supportive and caring employees that work with the people we support who really needed us in order to keep them safe. I cannot express enough gratitude for all the hard work, the dedication and the ongoing care everyone provides for people. Your work does not go unnoticed.

Thank you!

Submitted By: Mark Beazley, Director of Community Services

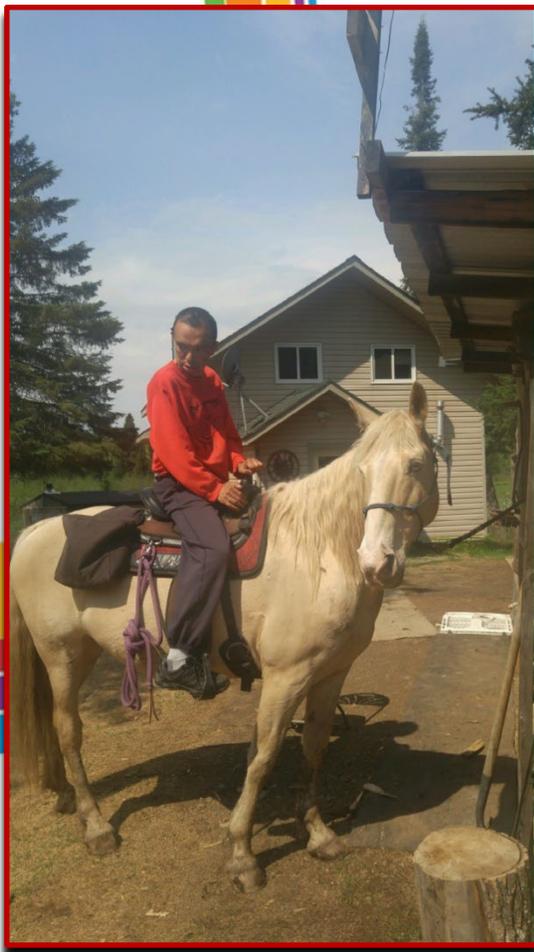


Dan and Stanley were able to get out to enjoy the Festival of India! Dan quite enjoyed the colour throw and dancing, Stanley seemed to really enjoy the music!

Was a fun time for all and everyone got pretty colourful! 😊

Submitted By: Kristi Green

**Be The Reason Why
Someone Feels Included,
Welcomed, Valued,
Listened To, Supported,
And LOVED.**



Ananias is a curious and courageous individual. He is always up for trying new things. Here he is trying horseback riding out at Whispered Dreams Ranch in Shabaqua. Ananias enjoys all sorts of activities outside and is always willing to try something new.

Submitted By: Chuck Lindsay



Bobbi went with Brad to see the beautiful ice at Silver Harbour this past winter.



Showing off the Green Thumbs of ONW!





Congratulations Ryley!

Ryley graduated from Confederation College from the CICE program. Here Ryley is holding a letter and certificate acknowledging that he graduated with full honours.

Ryley worked extremely hard for two years despite challenges due to COVID 19. He was diligent and hardworking and adapted to online learning in his second year even though this was difficult. Ryley completed placement at a grocery store and completed a placement in agriculture. Well done Ryley we are all very proud of you.

Submitted By: Chuck Lindsay



BE BRAVE
BE CREATIVE
BE KIND
BE THANKFUL
BE HAPPY
BE YOU



Liz spent the summer once a week at therapeutic riding having a blast with Angus the horse. Liz learned how to ride, run and trot with Angus. Liz and Angus also enjoyed a few games of bowling. She is excited to continue horseback riding this summer and is hoping for a brown horse this year.



Just in case that fantastic smile doesn't give it away... Dawn had a blast painting a gnome at DIY Studio.



Jenna, Tannia, Liz and Maryanne enjoyed 3 camping trips over the year. Their favorite staycation was at Mink Mountain where they spent 3 days and nights. The ladies spent their days exploring the woods, relaxing at the lake, and nights at the fire or in the hot tub. It was an amazing experience, and they are looking forward to their next getaway!



People at Kenwood have grown to enjoy movie days and nights together!



Rhubarb isn't just for pies as Julian and Nathan discovered last summer, it's also a great replacement for a hat.



David took interest to an abstract art piece displayed in Current River.



Let's Celebrate!





Welcome to OPTIONS!

Brandon, Erik, and Victoria

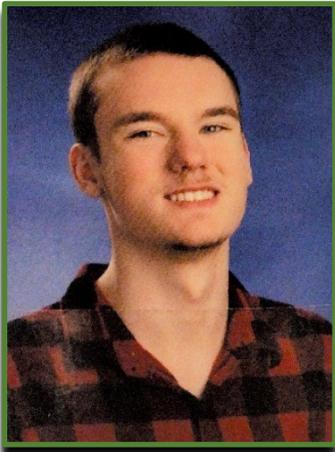
In June 2021, ONW welcomed three siblings Erik, Brandon and Victoria, who moved into their new home on Market Street. They moved from a much smaller home with support from Dilico. They have been thriving with all of the space in their new home, accessing new opportunities and presenting new characteristics as time passes. They are slowly purchasing things and making the home a perfect place for them to live.



Brandon and Victoria attend school daily, whether it be virtual or in person due to the pandemic. Brandon is excited to graduate at the end of June and join his big brother Erik at home next year. All three siblings have enjoyed going out to Kakabeka Falls, Mink Mountain boat launch, Silver Islet, and their favourite event going to pow wows on Mount McKay. They enjoy participating in activities involving their Indigenous culture. The siblings seem very excited to meet everyone in the agency as well as in their new neighborhood and can't wait for summer to come!

Submitted by Taylor Lamothe

Jared



I would like to extend a big warm welcome to Jared who recently moved in to Nicholetts Road. Jared has quickly become a treasured member of the Nicholetts household and brings a lot of excitement and joy with him. Jared enjoys track and field, playing soccer, swimming and horseback riding which he recently started at the riding stable up the road in Murillo. Jared is a enthusiastic Marvel movies fan. He and Ryley enjoy watching movies together ... especially Spider Man. We have gotten to know Jared and his family quite well since he moved in and we look forward to seeing them often.

Submitted By: Chuck Lindsay

Alan

Alan moved into Kenwood in December 2021. He is a very happy and caring person who gets along well his roommates. He brightens the days at Kenwood with his big smile, jokes and pranks. He enjoys stealing peoples' noses and sweeper is always up to no good stealing staff's cars and bags. He is very talkative and often rushes to the door to welcome visitors to Kenwood. It was a big change for Alan and his family to move into group living. Alan seems to have settled in nicely and is a great addition to the Kenwood home.



Submitted By: Shannon Vanlenthe



Supported Independent Living

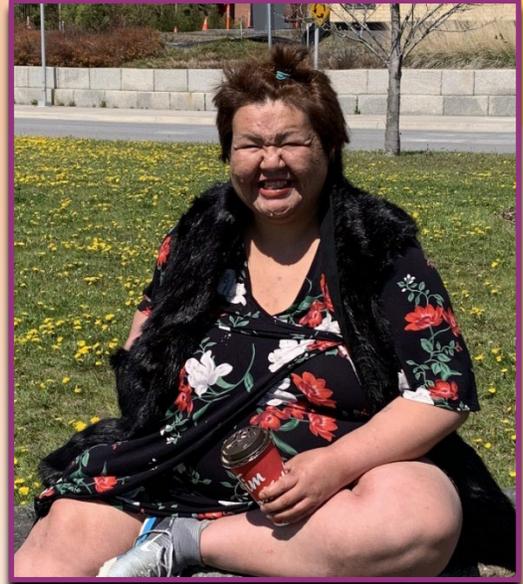
Shari has been working with the SIL program for quite some time now and has enjoyed great success along the way. Despite enduring a prolonged pandemic, among all of its subsequent challenges, Shari continues to live life her way; with excitement, joy, and optimism!

Shari has enjoyed and continues to enjoy embracing her Indigenous culture by way of attending traditional ceremonies, such as powwows, drumming circles, sacred fires, and practicing traditional methods, such as beading, smudging, and drumming with staff.

Shari hopes to return to Webequie this summer to visit family and further her connection with her culture.

Until then, Shari remains positive in most facets of life, embracing an optimistic outlook and caring persona in life.

- Submitted By: Riley Cassidy



David is a fun and outgoing individual that loves to participate in activities with other SIL participants and staff. He is very excited to spend more time outside as the weather continues to improve, and he is looking forward to doing things such as going fishing and going for hikes. David enjoys spending his time outdoors in our community and he knows all the best fishing spots in his neighbourhood! He was also very proud of the work that he did over the winter season with a local apartment rental company that he was employed with. David also managed to complete another goal that he had set out for himself this winter and that was completing a heavy equipment training course. This course allowed David to hit the books and learn all about the heavy machinery that he one day wishes to work on. Overall, David is always getting closer to completing his goals and we look forward to continuing to work with him on making some new ones for the summer!

- Submitted By: Denver Leach

I'm sure many would agree that 2021 brought challenges, but nothing too big for Darlene to overcome. Her creative ideas and outgoing personality provided her the opportunity to hang out with staff and watch movies and play games online, even during times of lockdown and isolation. She creatively used her Zoom account to keep in touch through weekly video chats.

Of course, as restrictions lifted, Darlene was cautiously excited to get back out in the community and visit pet stores, go job hunting, browse through the mall and hang out while sipping an iced coffee. As you can see in the picture, even her bearded dragon was happy to get out and about again.

Here's hoping 2022 is less challenging and just as much fun as 2021.

Submitted By: Pamela Cain





Hey,

It's Shawna! I am happy I got the opportunity to go out with my friends.

I like to be part of The Hub where I do crafts and my laundry. I like to have coffee there too with 1 cream and 2 sweeteners. I helped out with The Hub pizza party and gave everyone coffee and I cleaned the tables after.

I really like doing Passport activities with Mary, my support worker. I go bowling, help Rob out, and hang out with all my friends. I really like going to work out, for coffee and dessert, to the movies, to DIY Studio and for supper. Thank you for having me be part of The Hub and helping people out.

- Happy Days, Shawna S. 😊

Daniel is a fun-loving guy who likes to spend time outdoors and with his friends. He also loves to do things in his community such as go to the movies or hit the gym. One of Daniel's favourite sports is boxing and martial arts and he likes to get into the ring to show off his skills. Daniel is also very passionate about spending time outdoors and will always be out and about on a nice day. Daniel cares deeply about his friends and family and loves to spend time with them whenever he is not at the gym or on a hike.

Submitted By: Denver Leach



Shari enjoying the scenery and weather at Marina Park.



Virtual Cooking Program



Damian hanging out at Boulevard Lake



Kyler has enjoyed teaching staff and other people in the SIL program how to make Bannock. Kyler has dedicated many days to making Bannock for the office to enjoy a taste of his culture.

Submitted By: Alexis Pratola



Celebrating 75th birthday with his favourite staff Lori & Karen at the Marina. Larry would have loved 🥳 to have a party 🎉 but because of COVID he was just happy to get out. He sure is looking great for being 75.

Submitted by Karen Seguin



As one of the longest tenured members of the SIL program, Dylan has grown tremendously throughout his time with OPTIONS NORTHWEST. Most recently, Dylan has moved back into his own apartment, where he enjoys taking care of his three cats, gaming with friends online, writing, and spending time with friends/family.

As a caffeine fanatic, Dylan loves trying various coffee shops throughout the city, while also investing in his very own iced coffee machine at home; ultimately becoming a barista himself!

Dylan has a lot of awesome goals to work towards this year, such as completing his high school diploma, enrolling in college, and writing his very own book!

Dylan is looking forward to the summer and is excited to see where his journey takes him next!

- Submitted By: Riley Cassidy



The Hub!



It has definitely been a tough time to roll out a new program. As you all know, it's been a few months since The Hub opened up. We have been doing activities virtually for a while and then switched to in person. At a point, we also went into a hybrid model. It was a lot of trial and error, and it still is, but it is all worth it when the people show up, participate and have fun while also developing meaningful connections. Even with all the restrictions in place and having a hard time finding transportation to get to The Hub, there were a lot of you who showed up religiously and made the place really lively with laughter and fun. THANK YOU!

At The Hub, we do a lot of different activities like cooking, baking, painting, playing board games, card games, BINGO, making scrap books, Tye-dyeing, DIY-ing to name a few. People come in sometimes just to have a cup of coffee, watch tv and chat. Some people really like coming in to do their laundry at The Hub. Even if it's a quick in and out, we definitely love having you here!

Everyone has a place here – a place to express yourself and a place to be you!

Submitted By: Mary Varghese





PASSPORT



Thomas admired the beautiful artwork at the Art Gallery.



Laurie enjoyed the holiday decorations at Vanderwees!



Dawn enjoyed the view at Silver Islet.



Jane enjoyed the ABBA show at the Thunder Bay Community Auditorium



Brad rolled the strikes!



Shari had a blast at Disney Trivia Night followed by Karaoke!



Truth and Reconciliation Day



On Thursday September 30th, 2021, people we support, and the employees of OPTIONS recognized Truth & Reconciliation Day by wearing orange shirts #everychildmatterstbay. We joined the city of Thunder Bay in wearing Orange to honour the Indigenous children, families and survivors that have been, and continue to be, tragically affected by the legacy of residential schools. We encouraged all employees to plant a tree in remembrance, write a message of reconciliation on social media using #EveryChildMattersTbay, and participate in city-wide events run by the City of Thunder Bay and our partners during the week. Those activities included a two-day pow wow on Anemki-Wajiw. Many people we support were able to participate in these activities around the city and wore their orange shirts proudly.

Submitted By: Jill Thompson



Geraldine at the fire with Michelle. Geraldine made a day of it and was also able to attend a Tree planting ceremony at Vickers Park!





Spirit of Christmas 2021

This year I was fortunate enough to be able to help chair this committee. With giving to others at the centre of what we do, the Cumberland Offices continued to raise funds for the Spirit of Christmas through their personal contributions. We are very lucky to have such generosity from our office locations as this year's list was a mighty one.

There were 27 people who needed a little something "extra" and were nominated through the nomination forms completed and received during October & November. We were so happy to be able to purchase for all 27 people this year!

Time was spent by the committee members to ensure that all those who were nominated would be shopped for with their individualized items list given with their nomination. There are many things that those recipients love to receive, including clothing, makeup, gift cards, Lego, jewelry, headphones, kitchen/home supplies, just to name a few. After taking stock of all the individual preferences, the fun begins!! SHOPPING TIME!! We had a very healthy budget this year of \$150 per person, so the committee is keen on eyeing up a good sale or finding items that can help to stretch that budget further and ensure those bags are filled with wonderful and useful things!!

This year Cara Baraniuk and I spent some extra time picking up all those little extras that we would fill the bags with (candy, mugs, hot chocolate, etc), as well as picking up all the wrapping paper, bags, and tissue to go along with that!

We have in the past shopped for those who we are responsible for and then got together as a group to wrap and make up the bags (which end up being VERY HEAVY I may add). With Covid-19 still restricting our gathering together, everyone wrapped and wrapped and wrapped on their own.

This year's committee was brought together by Tony, and we began our preparation for this year's Spirit of Christmas endeavor. This year, the committee was made up of: Alissa Pradal, Mark Wade, Tony DeAgazio, Brandon Madore, Lori McCoy, Nanette Vester, Lisa Maki, Melissa Spivak, Anita Storeshaw, Andrea Johnson, Cara Baraniuk and myself (Jill Thompson).

As in so many years past, Laura Salini (who just happens to be my very talented sister) showed once again her talents and her most generous heart by donating her handmade scarves. Laura works all year long in order to be able to donate these scarves to not only our Spirit of Christmas campaign, but for other organizations such as Christmas Cheer. She is very proud of each and every scarf she makes, knowing they will help to keep someone warm during the cold winter months!

Other very special thank you's go out to Carolyn Grgurich who continues to give back to OPTIONS and our Spirit of Christmas campaign by way of baking her very delicious homemade baking! She never hesitates to give back and ensure that those people who receive the gifts have that "homemade" touch as well. And to Victoria Eckensweiler (and Anna-Marie too!) for donating the wonderful and warm socks this year – we thank you both as well. We know the socks helped to keep the toes warm of so many people!

On behalf of the Spirit of Christmas committee, and the Leadership Team, I would like to thank all of the Cumberland (95 and 86) employees who give so generously each year. We truly have a great team here who have giant hearts!

Submitted By: Jill Thompson

“Maybe Christmas (he thought) doesn’t come from a store. Maybe Christmas perhaps means a little bit more.”

— The Grinch





Christmas Dinner Deliveries

Once again, as the snow began to fall, our minds shifted to Christmas and how with the ongoing pandemic we could provide a little Christmas cheer to those people who live in the group homes as well as the SIL settings. The very difficult decision was made again this past year to forgo our traditional Christmas Luncheon at the Italian Hall. While we are all very sad that we were not able to get together and enjoy some fellowship and a meal together, we knew that for the safety and wellbeing of each other, we needed to postpone it once again. We teamed up once again with the Valhalla and the chefs prepared a great many feasts including a full turkey, potatoes, salads, vegetables, buns, pies and cakes for each group home and individual sized meals for the SIL folks. On December 22 and 23 the leadership team headed out in full force, along with Santa and his Elf to visit all the homes and spread some Christmas magic. Once again, everyone who received a meal was so grateful and to see the smiles and lovely decorated trees and homes for the holiday season was a boost we all needed. At a time when so many have so little, we were so happy to be able to share this joy with everyone. "Christmas isn't a season. It's a feeling." And how good that feeling was to see such joy and hope in the eyes of those people we support.



Submitted By: Jill Thompson





Human Resources Department

As I sit back and reflect upon this past year, I am amazed at how quickly the time seemed to fly by despite still being knee deep in a pandemic. The ladies in the HR Department have done an amazing job at keeping everything straight and have done a great job in bringing on 42 new employees to join the ranks of OPTIONS NORTHWEST. Many of these employees started as casual employees, and now 14 of them have transitioned into part-time roles and 1 has transitioned into a full-time role. We were finally able to bring people back together in person, so our General Orientations transitioned back to being done in person. I think we are all so grateful for the opportunity to gather together for those important moments.

We have also embarked upon two new projects this past fiscal year. Working together with the Nine-Sixty Group, we are getting ready to launch a new website, along with a social media campaign to showcase OPTIONS and encourage people to come work with us. We are also working with UKG to implement new software to streamline our scheduling, payroll, and HR systems. We look forward to a launch of this in the fall. The HR Department has also been able to participate in career fairs in person again! We attended the Opportunities Northwest Job Fair at the Valhalla Inn on March 31st. It was very well attended, and it was wonderful to be able to see and meet with so many people! We look forward to continuing to move forward and grow and thrive as not only a department but as an agency.



Submitted By: Jill Thompson





Finance Department

Since starting with the organization last summer, I have quickly learned what an amazing service area we work in. I enjoyed seeing pictures of people supported by the organization participating in cooking, baking, crafts, bowling, gardening, and other activities.

Members of the finance team welcomed me and provided great support as I learn my new role in the agency. They shared their knowledge, skill and information freely and are readily there to help. The team participated in training on a few occasions to build personal and team growth. I look forward to seeing where this year takes us.

Over the last year upgrades to laptops were completed. This provides the ability to adapt to changing work environments as the organization continues to grow. Installation of several dual monitors and sit-stand desks for employees was also completed to help improve the efficiency of work environments.

Last year 49 purchase orders were issued with 27 of them as regular blanket vendors. OPTIONS had 19,838 transactions posted to the ledger including Passport Individuals and 5,662 transactions for Individualized Funding. There are 469 assets that are maintained throughout the year.

Migration of data files from our servers to SharePoint was finalized. This gives the ability to access files seamlessly regardless of where one is working. It also allows staff to be less reliant on accessing the servers from external connections which improves data security and reduces the demands on the servers. The Board Portal was also migrated to SharePoint, which further streamlines IT operations.

The phone system server was upgraded and had an UPS (uninterrupted power supply) installed to ensure there is no disruption to the phones at any time. In a further effort to adapt to the changing work environment, the phone systems have been enabled to forward missed calls to employees' emails. This allows office staff to stay connected even when working remotely. In addition to the upgraded phone system, the server room at 95N was outfitted with a server rack that now stores all our servers, switches, and security IT components. With the installation of the server rack, the server room cabling was also upgraded and colour coded based on access location improving the ability to troubleshoot when needed.

The team does a fantastic job with their roles and responsibilities for the organization and contributes to the bigger team of the Agency. We look forward to the new year and any challenges and opportunities it presents.

Submitted By: Sharon Morrison
Manager, Financial Services



CRT Service Summary for AGM 2021-2022 Fiscal Year

It was another productive and exciting year for the Community Resource Team (CRT)! The CRT supported 270 people with a developmental disability in Thunder Bay and the surrounding district, comprised of 246 adults and 24 children over the 2021-2022 fiscal year. Many people received more than one CRT service.

Support was provided in the following areas:

- Speech Language
- Health Care
- Social Work
- Child and Adult Positive Behavioural Supports
- Single Plan of Care planning (partnership with children's sector)
- Forensic Behavioural Support (partnership with Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre)
- Occupational Therapy
- Behavioural Consultations
- Eligibility Assessments to see if people qualify for developmental services
- Access to specialized services through the North Community Network of Specialized Care including specialized accommodation funding
- Field work placements to 2 Northern Ontario Medical Students, 1 Developmental Service Worker student and 1 Social Service Worker student

We have successfully continued to offer and refine a hybrid model of support including some virtual and in person sessions. Again, CRT helped people attend the COVID vaccination clinics helping to get rid of barriers like transportation, working through anxiety of getting a needle and offering appointment reminder calls.

Much of the year we had faced staffing challenges, but the team was resilient and worked to help cover any gaps in services while we simultaneously worked to build the team. Our forensic and children partnerships continue to progress extremely well, and we are working to expand the forensic partnership. By the end of March 2022, we went from offering 28 to 40 hours per week of behavioural supports in the forensic setting. That speaks volumes of our clinicians and how they represent ONW in our values, mission, and philosophy in the work that they do.

I as well as two other CRT members have had the pleasure of joining the Speak Up Committee and work to further improve our workplace culture. In a short time of operation, it is amazing to see the creativity and solution focused approaches coming from this group.

I am very proud of the work we have been doing over the year and look forward to growing in service areas even more in the future. Thanks to all the OPTIONS NORTHWEST employees for your daily contributions that have helped us offer a quality service that helps improve the lives of people with developmental disabilities.

Submitted By: Lisa Maki



Damian is a young man who I support. He is incredibly gifted with words and even more so by turning them into lyrics for his raps. Music is a huge part of his life and I know he'd love for people to know that he hopes his lyrics impact others positively and that his message reaches people who may be feeling the same way as him. Damian's journey with music is inspiring. Damian can make you feel something deeply when you hear any one of his songs. I'd like to acknowledge his incredible strength and perseverance and how much music has brought joy and purpose in his life. You can catch Damian performing at many local gigs around town and by viewing a number of his music videos posted on YouTube.

Keep on living your dream, Damian!

Submitted By: Brandon Madore, Community Resource Consultant



Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does. ~ William James

ACTION FOR HAPPINESS




Darcia and her son Stephen have been learning a different approach to understanding and managing their emotions and actions using the Zones of Regulation curriculum.

Both are eager to attend the weekly sessions and practice skills learned. I laugh and joke with Darcia and Stephen that I must be a great teacher because they often arrive early, but Stephen says "No, it's the hot chocolate!" Ha! Ha! A good laugh before and during session always sets the stage for some good participation and learning.

The Zones teach how to manage emotions in problematic and frustrating situations, looks at recognizing body signals, triggers that set us off, how our feelings impact others, and provides a toolbox of individualized strategies that help guide you to feeling calm and making better decisions. This leads to improved emotional control and self-awareness.



Darcia comments that having visuals and regular check-ins helps keep her focused instead of being over-whelmed. Both Darcia and Stephen are enjoying the group and are using some of the key teachings with each other. They both find that when they check in with each other using a visual to see how they are feeling they are better equipped now to avoid a situation that may have arisen before. Stephen says he's doing much better at walking away from a situation. Great job Darcia and Stephen!

Stephen's chosen theme song for our group as sung by Stephen and Sherry is, Don't Stop Believing by Journey. A very mindful choice I would say! 😊

Submitted by Sherry Glana, Darcia, and Stephen 😊



A New Challenge and a New Home!

Moving to a new home can be very daunting for a lot of people, but even more so when you are moving from a place that you have lived for a majority of your life. Last year OPTIONS NORTHWEST, specifically the Community Resource Team (CRT), supported a person to do just that. Peenie Begg had lived in a variety of different institutions over his 75 years. Most recently he was living on the Forensic Mental Health Services ward of the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre since November of 2003. In 2021 a spot became available in a community group home for him. To say that everyone was thrilled that he would be able to live in the community with support would be an understatement. But everyone knew that in order for the transition to be successful a number of things had to be put into place. Peenie is a creature of habit and he had gotten used to his daily schedule and routines. So, with the work of both the hospital and the group home employees a transition plan was created and implemented which allowed for what they hoped would be a smooth transition. Of course, life sometimes throws challenges into the mix just to make things more interesting and one of those challenges was COVID. Not only did we have to help Peenie feel comfortable and confident in his choice to move into the community we had to make sure that we did it in as safe a way as possible. We knew that going into the home for pre visits would not be possible due to COVID. The team had to come up with alternative arrangements to help Peenie see the home, meet roommates and the employees that would be supporting him. The team's creativity and flexibility helped greatly in this process. The transition plan was created by Peenie, his team (hospital and group home) and the CRT. The plan was detailed and had everything from Peenie's likes and dislikes to his daily routines. It also included an outline of activities that the team would be implementing with Peenie to allow him to become familiar with his new home.



After several months of Peenie meeting virtually with group home employees, seeing pictures of this home and roommates, getting to pick out paint colours and curtains for his room, the team decided it was time for him to see at least the outside of his new home. The staff at the hospital arranged to take him for a drive by of the home and to their amazement the group employees were standing out in the cold all cheering hello and waving at Peenie. The hospital employees said that they had never seen Peenie smile so widely before. That was when the team knew that Peenie was ready for the move. So a date was set and transportation was arranged. It was time for the big move!

The date came and everyone was ready for the move. It was bittersweet to see everyone say their goodbyes and well wishes. Peenie seemed to be taking everything in stride though. He was ready to go. It has only been a little over a year since he moved but that year has brought a lot of changes for Peenie. Like every big move there were challenges. It took both the staff and Peenie time to adjust to all the changes, but eventually they all got into a routine. Peenie has been thriving in the new setting and seems to be enjoying his new freedom. The group home employees have quickly adapted to Peenie's needs. They are encouraging him every day to try new and fun things. This writer feels that even with the challenges this move has brought out the best in everyone. It was amazing to work with the hospital employees, the group home and Peenie in putting this plan into place and having a successful transition. Welcome to OPTIONS Peenie!!

Submitted by Loni Rudnicki, Positive Behaviour Support Facilitator, Community Resource Team



Collaboration



The process of 2 or more organizations working together to complete a task or achieve a goal.

Being part of the **Community Resource Team** has allowed a great many opportunities to collaborate and work with many different agencies in Thunder Bay and the surrounding district.

It has been and continues to be people working collaboratively to complete a project collectively in new and unique ways.

There are times when I have gone to meetings with 12 or more people from other agencies and programs within those agencies. Often the people being supported are requiring new and out of the box thinking to best provide support with housing, medications, support/respite, schooling, programming, food security, mental health, etc.

These times of collaboration can be challenging but also very rewarding.

Ideas are shared, brainstorming happens, flexibility is offered, people come forward and work a bit outside of their usual roles to come together and provide something unique and personalized.

And with the process of collaboration there comes HOPE!

Hope for change, the right support, and meeting each person where they are at to live their best life!

Some of the agencies that have collaborated with the Community Resource Team in the past and present:

Children's Centre Thunder Bay, George Jeffrey Children's Centre, Wesway, Shelter House, Lakehead Public Schools, Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board, Children's Aid Society of Thunder Bay, Dilico Anishinabek Family Care, Lutheran Community Care, Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre, St Joseph's Dual Diagnosis Mental Health Services, John Howard Society of Thunder Bay, Home and Community Care Support Services, Bayshore Health Care, Thunder Bay Police Service, The North Community Network of Specialized Care, Creative Therapy, Partners In Rehab, The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board, Community Living Thunder Bay, Superior Greenstone Association for Community Living, Norwest Community Health Centres, Developmental Services Ontario, Avenue II, Superior Greenstone Association for Community Living, and March of Dimes.

Submitted By: Suzanne Posthumus, Community Resource Consultant



OPTIONS NORTHWEST Personal Support Services
Schedule of Receipts and Expenditures
For the year ended March 31, 2022

	2022 <i>(unaudited)</i>	2021 <i>(unaudited)</i>
Receipts		
Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services	17,617,517	17,464,183
Individual rent and recoveries	853,632	875,138
Interest earned	14,175	13,318
Other recoveries	480,844	491,480
	18,966,168	18,844,119
Expenditures		
Salaries and benefits	14,270,814	13,817,784
Salaries and benefits - pandemic pay	-	554,543
Salaries and benefits - wage enhancement	1,010,242	492,427
Staff training	58,931	30,230
Building occupancy	932,358	971,586
Travel and communication	318,127	274,007
Supplies and equipment	794,995	1,043,974
Other program service expenditures	1,411,572	1,235,301
	18,797,039	18,419,852
	169,129	424,267 ¹
		171,000
		226,883
		26,384
		<u>424,267</u>

To view the complete set of financial statements, including the Independent Auditor's Report, or for any other comments or questions regarding this report, contact the Organization's offices at:
95 Cumberland Street North, Thunder Bay ON P7A 4M1 phone (807) 344-4994 fax (807) 346-5811