



**OPTIONS
NORTHWEST**

Live Life Your Way

**2022-2023
Annual Report**

OPTIONS NORTHWEST

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



Our Revised Mission & Values

Our Purpose

Within the City and District of Thunder Bay, our purpose is to support people with development disabilities in their quest to live life their way. We recognize that 'living life their way' is unique to each individual and that we live in a very diverse community.

Our Mission

We provide high quality, professional and ethical service, ensuring safety for all that:

- Builds skills, capabilities, and confidence of people.
- Assists people to reach their goals and live their dreams.
- Promotes wellness, independence, empowerment, and informed choices.
- Ensures that quality, and continuous improvement is embedded in everything we do.

Our Values

We will:

- Be respectful, compassionate, inclusive, and fair.
- Collaborate with people and the community.
- Be accountable to the people we support, ourselves and our teams, to our communities and funders.

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 President & Executive Director

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the Leadership Team of OPTIONS NORTHWEST, we would like to present to you the Annual Report for the 2022/2023 fiscal year. We are delighted to be able to meet with OPTIONS employees, community partners, people we support, and their families today in-person.

We are pleased to report another exceptional year for OPTIONS NORTHWEST. As the Agency recovers from the pandemic, it continues to provide outstanding services and support to people living with a developmental disability. This success is a testament to the amazing work and strength of OPTIONS employees, volunteers, and community partners.

This year's Annual Report communicates two important messages. First, we would like to share some inspiring stories and insights of people we support as well as OPTIONS employees from the year. Secondly, we would like to tell you about our Strategic Plan (2023-2026) that was developed this year by the Board of Directors.

People at OPTIONS are getting out much more and are enjoying the fabulous activities and events our community has to offer. People are back to the movies, bowling, and swimming. They also are visiting their favourite restaurants for a meal or enjoying a hot chocolate at Tim Hortons. It's wonderful seeing people getting out and having fun.



The following are highlights from the year:

- April was World Autism Month – an annual opportunity for a dedicated conversation and celebration of Autism. The Agency 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 had many on-site Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) inspections conducted by the Thunder Bay District Health Unit and did exceptionally well.
- In May, the Agency began the process of preparing a Strategic Plan for the next 3 years. The process was collaborative and included the organization's leaders, supervisors, board members, community partners, employees, people supported and their families. The Strategic Plan defines OPTIONS' vision for the future and identifies its goals and objectives.
- Also in May, the Dual Diagnosis Transitional Rehabilitation Housing proposal was prepared jointly with the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre and submitted to the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Children, Communities and Social Services (MCCSS).
- The Agency continues to meet virtually with its community and provincial partners. As always, these meetings allow us to help children and adults that need our services as well as learn from each other.

- The Community Resource Team provided multiple clinical services to 289 people in our community including 261 adults and 28 children.
- The Wage Enhancement program that has been in place the last few years provides direct support workers an additional \$3/hour was made permanent by the provincial government. The Board of Directors, Leadership Team, and employees are truly grateful for the government's recognition of the challenging work done by direct support employees.
- We celebrated National AccessAbility Week 2022 in June.

This special week is an opportunity to:

- o Celebrate the valuable contributions and leadership of Canadians with disabilities.
 - o Highlight the work of people, organizations and communities that are removing barriers.
 - o Reflect on ongoing efforts to become a better, more accessible, more inclusive Canada.
- In June the Board of Directors and staff celebrated OPTIONS' successes for 2021/22 at the 3rd virtual Annual General Meeting.
 - Also in June, the Agency began the process to implement the latest technology platform created by UKG for Human Resources, Payroll, and Scheduling.
 - In July, Alliance Information Management System (AIMS) was implemented in the Agency's homes and community support areas. AIMS is an efficient and effective tool to keep track of important documents and notes related to people we support.



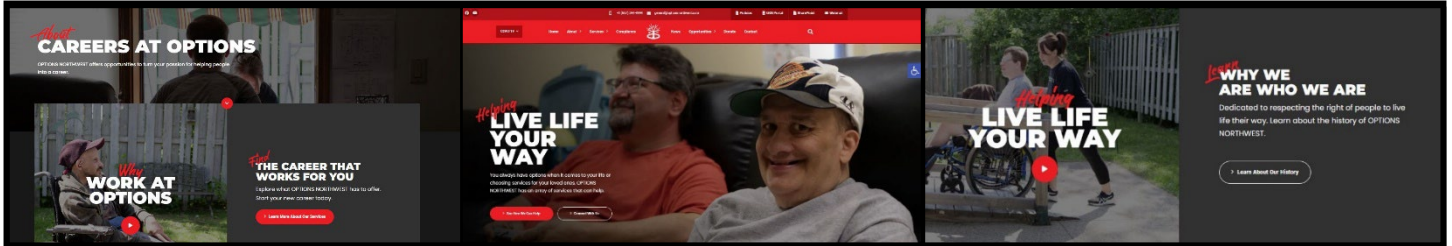
- July and August brought great weather for everyone to enjoy. OPTIONS staff were able to take some time off to rest and relax with family and friends. Back at the Office, we had Mini-Donuts and Epic Cones providing OPTIONS employees and people supported with delicious treats that were enjoyed and appreciated by all in attendance.



- The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services conducted an on-site Quality Assurance Measures review in August. The review outcome was very positive and is evidence of the wonderful work OPTIONS employees do every day.
- In September an additional home was opened to help support two people who transitioned from the Child and Youth sector.
- On September 30th OPTIONS closed its offices to honour the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation 2022. The day honours the lost children and Survivors of residential schools, their families and communities. OPTIONS employees and people supported participated in the Honouring our Children Reconciliation Run in support of Mazinaajim Children's Foundation (Dilico Anishinabek Family Care) at Boulevard Lake.



- In October the Agency received training on Personal Outcome Measures from Community Living Thunder Bay. POM is a tool that uses 21 factors and indicators to help define, measure, and improve personal quality of life for the people we support. The Agency plans to implement this tool and associated practices in the fall of 2023.
- Also in October, the Agency partnered with St. Joseph's Care Group – Indigenous Services to provide Indigenous cultural support and training to OPTIONS employees and people supported.
- In November the Agency launched its refreshed website complete with easy search/access tools and program videos.



- December was a time to celebrate the holidays as employees, people we support, and their families gathered at the Italian Cultural Centre to enjoy a great meal and wonderful company. Even Santa and his Elf showed up which brought bright smiles to people's faces. A special Thank You to Tbaytel who joined the end of the event as part of their 12 Days of Christmas project. They surprised the people we support with gift cards from some of their favourite places.
- OPTIONS once again provided meaningful and successful services and support to people living with developmental disabilities in 2022-23. This accomplishment is only possible because of OPTIONS' competent, caring, and dedicated employees, supervisors, leadership, and Board of Directors.
- We want to thank and acknowledge the OPTIONS community for their kindness, creativity, and support during the past year:
 - o People we support, and their families
 - o Employees and supervisors
 - o Union partners - UNIFOR and ONA
 - o Community partners – adult and children's services agencies
 - o Thunder Bay District Health Unit
 - o Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre
 - o St. Joseph's Care Group – Indigenous Services
 - o Provincial partners
 - o Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
 - o Leadership Team and Board of Directors
- The dedication of everyone to ensuring people are supported to live life their way is greatly appreciated...

Thank you,

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 Supportive Living
Lisa Maki, Director of Clinical Services
Sharon Morrison, Director of Finance
Chris Wiseman, Manager of Supportive Living
Bryanna Lund, Manager of Human Resources



Strategic Plan

Our Purpose

Within the City and District of Thunder Bay, our purpose is to support people with development disabilities in their quest to live life their way. We recognize that 'living life their way' is unique to each individual and that we live in a very diverse community.

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Our Thematic Goal

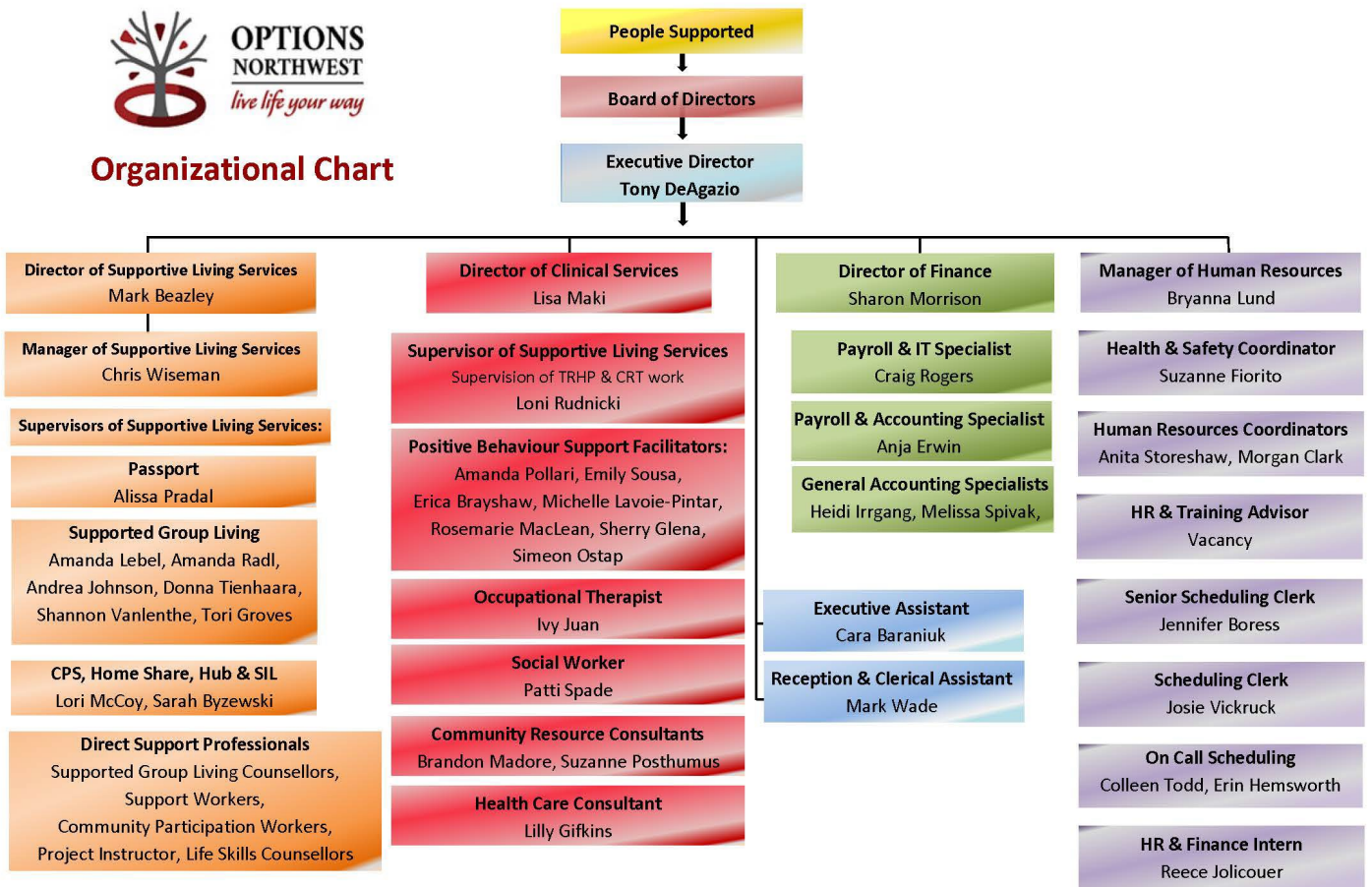
We will focus on supporting and developing people. Those we support as well as our employees. We will invest in tools and technologies to ensure that we have the capacity to successfully meet our service and care commitments as well as our contractual obligations to people, our communities, and our funders.

Our Strategic Priorities

1. Employees – We will develop and implement a Human Resource Development Plan and increase our internal capacity, including training and leadership opportunities to meet the organization's current and future needs.
2. People we Support – We will create the capacity, through internal development and/or through strategic partnerships, to provide Mental Health and Addictions services as well as meeting the increasingly complex needs of the people we support.
3. Our Community Partners – We will explore the role of OPTIONS NORTHWEST together with community partners, to address the gaps in care for the youth in our community as they transition to adulthood.
4. Our Ministry Partners – We will assess and develop a strategy to meet the need for 'multi-sectoral' funding and relationships as we continue our transition into new service areas.
5. Our Governance – We will continue to build our Governance and Board capacity and processes that match our organization's current and expected growth, challenges, and emerging risks.



Organizational Chart



Current Structure as March 31, 2023



Thank You!

The Leadership Team at OPTIONS NORTHWEST would like to thank:

- People receiving services and their families.
- Employees, students, volunteers, and community partners.
- Everyone who submitted photos and stories for this report.
- The Board of Directors.
- Everyone who participated in OPTIONS events throughout the year.
- Everyone who submitted photos and stories for this report.



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



Employee Recognition

5 Years

Colleen Todd, Mark Beazley, Sarah Niles, Shannon Vanlenthe, Sarah Hampel, Sarah Byzewski,
Brenda Fidler, Kennedy Lukasek, Cheonga Caitlyn Lee, Vladimir Perdomo Pedroso

10 Years

Stephanie Cavezza, Victoria Groves, Rhonda Perzan, Jodi Podlewski

15 Years

Craig Rogers, Erin Hemsworth, Kevin Gvora, Alana McKay, Stephen McNally, Jolene Finnie

20 Years

Ivy Juan, Rhonda Johnson, Marcie Hurlbert, Michelle Ahtila,
Jennifer Boress, Lisa Coccimiglio, Kristi Green, Pamela Stefanato

25 Years

Donna Tienhaara, Vince Tropea, Chris Wiseman, Joe DeSantis, Michael Cheung

30 Years

Michael Cambly, Suzanne Crocker, Christy Tienhaara, Terri Lacey

35 Years

Susan Chondon, Leigh Neilson

45 Years

Lilly Gifkins

Retirements April 2022 – March 2023

Kathleen Joffers, Josie Vickruck, Sherry Scheppner, Shelley Prystanski, Carolle Cerquiera, Shirley Bilokryli

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



Supportive Living Services

What a difference a year makes!!! With the easing of most of our Covid-19 protocols it almost feels like we are approaching a sense of normalcy around the agency.

For the first time in three years, we were able to resume some of our indoor activities and gatherings with limited Covid protocols in place. This was well received and a welcome opportunity for the people we support to get back doing the things they love doing!



The long wait was over, and we were able to resume our annual Christmas Luncheon. One of my favourite times of the year, we finally were able to come together and kick off the Christmas season and enjoy a nice meal with one another. Of course, this meant that Santa and his Elf made a special trip as well to visit everyone as they were also told previous years to stay home and not be in big gatherings.

The past year OPTIONS was able to take a closer look at what upgrades are needed to our homes and put some capital dollars towards fixing the homes that really needed work. Most notably, the carpet that has been on the walls for years is finally making an exit. You will soon see new protection going up that will be cleaning friendly and more aesthetically appealing than the old carpet. All of our homes were in need of window upgrades and OPTIONS was able to secure capital dollars to replace the aging windows at our sites. These upgrades as well as others will continue during the spring 2023. Off note, we continue to work with our landlords to improve and upgrade the homes we are renting.



OPTIONS was also able to acquire 4 new vehicles to the current fleet we have operating. This included 2 new accessible vans and a regular Mini van and smaller SUV. These purchases are very valuable and opportunities do not come often. It is my hope we that can sustain the service of transportation for the agency for years to come. Eight of our homes went through a lengthy process in designing and then voting on a new schedule that included the addition of 12.5 hour shifts. Essentially, working these 12.5 hour shifts compresses an employees work week enabling them to have more time off during the week. These homes will trial these schedules over the next 6 months, after which they will vote to keep permanently or not.

In closing, it is truly an honor and blessing knowing that we have such supportive and caring staff that work with the people we support who really needed us in order to help people meet their goals. 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 Supportive Living



Maryanne Took It To The Ring!

A Passport Outing to Remember!

Maryanne loves to watch wrestling. On September 2, 2022, she went to the West Thunder Community Centre to watch CWE wrestling. She had so much fun. When we got back to the house, I asked her if her throat hurt, she said “yes” and I said it's because you were yelling so much. She wants to go again next time they are in town.

Submitted By: Monica Pawson

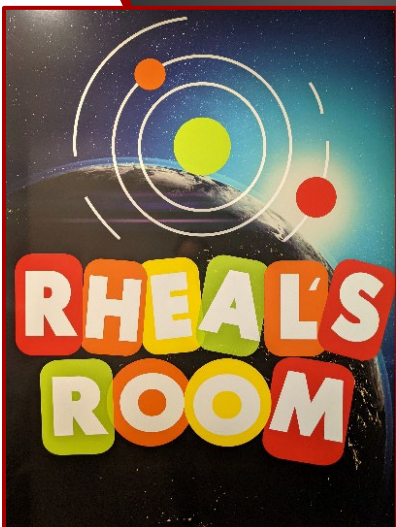


The Return of the CLE!

The 2022 CLE was exciting for a lot of people. It was an event that was greatly missed, and everyone had a great time being back at the fair.

Deb tried her luck with a duck and won some great prizes!

Tammy was thrilled to meet animals at the petting zoo.



Rheal's Room

Our Snoozelen Room “Rheal’s Room” has officially opened at our 95 Cumberland office and people supported by OPTIONS NORTHWEST have been booking the room in 1 hour increments as desired. People seem to really be enjoying all of the items in the room which include a bubble tube, projectors, an infinity mirror and a vibrating sensory chair. We look forward to the room being booked often through the year!

Keeping It Reel With

Ananias and Ryley

Ananias and Ryley spent the day fishing with Captain Archie on Lake Superior. They travelled to Silver Islet where they boarded a boat and bravely set out searching for Lake Trout. Ryley caught 3 trout and the largest Salmon and Ananias caught 4 Lake Trout. Ananias also really enjoyed keeping watch from the front of the boat with the binoculars and Ryley learned how to clean fish. The fish put up a real fight and it was a real special experience being out in Lake Superior. Everyone had a great time! Submitted By: Chuck Lindsay



Bill & Ryley



Ananias & Chuck



Captain Archie & Ananias



Cast Master Ryley

Horsin' Around With David & Jeff

David has expanded his love for animals by visiting Ropes for Hopes, David brushes his horse whose name is Jeff - before he leads the horse around stepping over logs and getting Jeff to step on a glove with his hooves. David really enjoys the new experiences and hopes to continue participating in future dates.

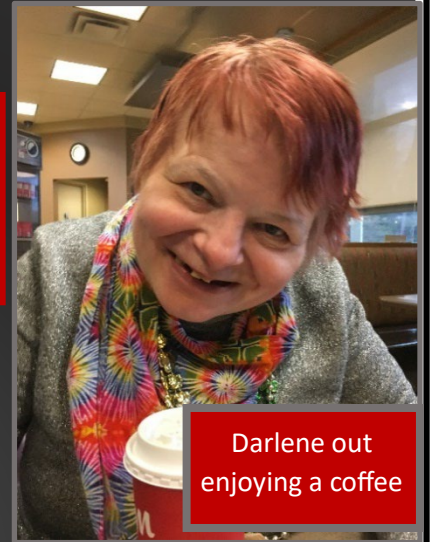
Submitted By: Curtis Armstrong



David at the Annual Torch Run



Gordie showing off his inner farming skills



Darlene out enjoying a coffee



Alan having a bubbly afternoon



Lillian getting ready for Spooky Season



Jeff cooling off with some Merla Mae ice cream



2 rogue Halloween Drop-In Party Crashers



Jenna, Tannia, Maryanne, & Liz picking plums



Welcome To OPTIONS

Alex & Jaiden

In October 2022, OPTIONS NORTHWEST welcomed Alex and Jaiden into service. Both young men live with 24 hour support in their own apartments, under one roof on Minot Avenue.

The Minot Teams have done a great job building rapport with Alex and Jaiden, as well as with community partners! These connections are essential to understanding the needs of the guys and providing them support to live life their way!

Over the next year, we look forward to supporting Alex and Jaiden to achieve their personal goals! Submitted By: Andrea Johnson

Jeff

In the summer of 2022 Kenwood welcomed a new roommate, Jeff. Jeff has been a positive addition to the house. He always has a smile on his face and likes cracking some funny jokes. He enjoys giving a helpful hand to all around him. He has made many connections with his roommates and staff in the home. He finds great joy in attending The Hub to participate in crafting, cooking and socializing. We welcome Jeff to OPTIONS NORTHWEST, and it is great to see how optimistic he is of his future in his new home. Submitted By: Michelle Ahtila



Seanna



Seanna is new to OPTIONS and is diving right in to all the services and recreational opportunities that we offer. Seanna has enjoyed joining Hub activities, getting creative with other individuals + staff, and is making new friendships and connections through our agency!

Submitted By: Alexis Pratola

Shealyn

In April 2022 OPTIONS welcomed Shealyn into her new home on Shuniah Street. She moved from her loving foster home, and her foster parents were very helpful in assisting us to get to know Shealyn. We have learned over the past year that Shealyn is a very fun and adventurous person as she is always up for trying something new. She loves long drives, nature walks, the sensory room, the Hub and has attended many concerts and events. Shealyn is happy in her home, and she is looking forward to all the fun that the summer holds! Submitted By: Tori Groves

Nathan

The gang at Nicholetts wish to extend a BIG warm welcome to Nathan. Nathan moved into Nicholetts during the fall and quickly enriched the lives of everyone there. Nathan enjoys participating in Special Olympics bowling and bocce ball. He especially enjoys being with his friends while participating in these sports.

Nathan is a huge and passionate Boston Bruins fan. This makes for a robust competition and camaraderie with the Leafs fans during the playoffs.

Nathan has a great sense of humour and is quite the practical joker. He has a huge smile that lights up the room and brings joy to all at the house.

Nathan is a very caring individual always willing to lend a hand and has built strong relationships with others at the house. He has become a cherished member of the Nicholetts family. Submitted By: Chuck Lindsay





The Hub

Skating Party

On February 23, 2023 The Hub held an agency wide skating party at North Neebing Community Centre Rink. Some players of The Kam River Fighting Walleye hockey team volunteered to help out. By the end of the hour everyone had tried skating whether sitting or standing. The day was full of smiles and giggles!



Once per month the Hub hosts karaoke which is always a hit! Sue had a great time her first time participating in the activity.



Alan got inked at the Hub! Don't worry, it's only marker.



Shawna joins the Hub activities often where she has made a lot of amazing and creative works of art.



Liz showed off her barbequing skills at Marina Park.



Elton and Joe stopped by to play video games and set some Pacman records.



Damian stops by a few times per week to help cook.



Supported Independent Living

David



David has a passion for everything outdoors! He loves to spend his time playing different sports and he enjoys sharing his knowledge of local fishing spots with others in the SIL program and staff. When David is not out in the community or with staff members, he is usually found helping some of the elderly residents in his neighborhood keep their yards clean and healthy. David has told staff that he loves to do this work to help the people in his neighborhood who may not be able to do this themselves, and he also loves to spend the time outside. David is also an avid fisherman who has spent many hours out on the lake and is looking forward to going on fishing trips this summer with staff and other people in the SIL program.

Submitted By: Denver Leach

Daniel

Daniel is a young man who loves to get outside to do activities such as skateboarding and BMX, and he enjoys spending time with friends and family. Daniel has also discovered a passion for cooking recently and has begun to make many different meals at the HUB with staff. These meals have been things such as homemade mac and cheese, fresh chicken sandwiches and even lasagna made from scratch. Daniel wants to continue to expand his knowledge of cooking and is looking forward to making many more meals at the OPTIONS NORTHWEST office to share with other people in the SIL program and staff. Submitted By: Denver Leach

Damian

Over the past year, Damian has experienced numerous accomplishments, many of which featuring his love for music. During this time, Damian has helped organize and participate in various live performances at venues such as Atmos Music Hall and The New Newfies Pub, where he has collaborated with other local artists from Thunder Bay and its surrounding area.

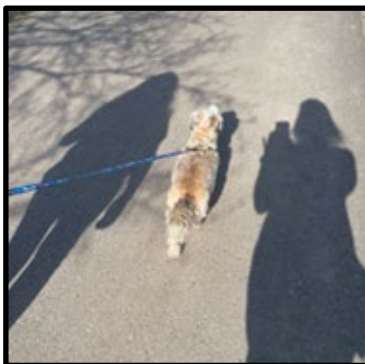
Additionally, Damian also shared his music talents at agency events, most recently during the Spring Fling at the Current River Rec Centre, where he volunteered to be the DJ, playing music and interacting with the crowd – his efforts stemming from this performance even landed him another ‘gig’ DJing for a Special Olympics event this Summer!

Let’s just hope that when he makes it big, he still remembers us!

Submitted By: Riley Cassidy



Darlene



It is so nice that Covid restrictions have lifted over the last year. It has allowed Darlene to get back out and do many of the activities that she enjoys most. She has enjoyed weekly walks to stay active. In the winter months she was creative with locations and alternated between the mall, Walmart and the Canada Games Complex. In the warmer months she enjoyed outdoor walks with her dog at the Marina, Kakabeka Falls and the college. Darlene also enjoyed hanging out and riding amusement park rides with friends at the CLE last summer. She enjoyed her experiences at the Hub drop-ins, hanging out, having coffee and gaming with the people there. She looks forward to more exciting adventures this year. Submitted By: Pam Cain

Kyler

Kyler has enjoyed an exciting year that has been full of new experiences and accomplishments, including acquiring a job at the Bannock Lady. In addition to his hard work in-store, where he bakes, prepares, and sells various traditional food items, he has shared his talents with other members of the SIL program, teaching them how to make various types of Bannock. Kyler has also shared this skill with other members of the agency, baking large quantities of Bannock that are used for agency events and group activities. Kyler welcomes all to come visit him throughout the summer at the Bannock Lady, located in Intercity Mall, so he can share some of these talents with you too. Submitted By: Riley Cassidy



Suzy

One of Suzy's dreams is to travel the world. During lockdown, she had the great idea to start planning recipes and cooking "foods from around the world" together virtually. Now thanks to our Hub kitchen, we've been able to continue travelling through our tastebuds and have made some delicious dishes! Some of which include ratatouille, chicken parmesan, and stir fry. I know I speak for all of us in the SIL program when I say we can't wait to see what Suzy's next recipe idea will be! Submitted By: Jillian Fiorito

Jessica

Jessica has been in purchased service for a few years now with OPTIONS. Jessica has enjoyed meeting with her staff weekly to go out and be integrated in the community. Jessica enjoys joining the OPTIONS events that are hosted in the community and the Hub. Submitted By: Alexis Pratola

Shawna

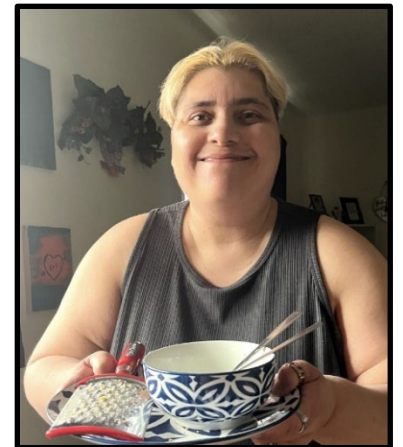
Shawna had a busy year!

Last summer Shawna worked at Willow Springs where she made pizza and salad. She also worked at Willow Springs Nordic Centre where she made soup and bread.

She has kept busy with visits at The Hub where she participated in making crafts and celebrating different holidays.

Shawana went for many walks at Boulevard Lake, Vickers Park, and Marina Park.

She discovered a beautiful park near her home where she walked the trails, looked at flowers and befriended a chipmunk. Submitted By: Marcie Hurlbert



Dave & Kyler, The Handymen

On Tuesday and Thursday mornings Kyler and David accompany Mike on odd jobs around the agency such as house repair, seasonal maintenance, moving, set ups, and garbage runs. Dave and Kyler are both able to do a lot of heavy lifting quite easily. They are good at figuring out creative ways to solve problems to complete tasks.

Dave has his backhoe license which makes him very good at digging and moving large items. He enjoys and excels at dropping off sand and salt, cutting tree limbs and refilling sandbags.

Kyler is good at fine tasks like putting up TV brackets and shelves. He is also great at cooking and makes delicious Bannock, creative lunches, and snacks.

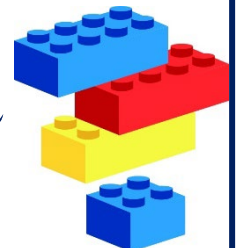
Both Kyler and David compliment one another's strengths. It is a pleasure to work with them both. Submitted By: Mike Beyer, Project Instructor

In Memory of

Brendan Dzijacky

"A Special Smile, A Special Face,
In Our Hearts, A Special Place,
Memories Are A
Gift To Treasure,
Ours Of You, Will
Last Forever."

-Anonymous





Community Resource Team

CRT Service Summary

It was another productive and exciting year for the Community Resource Team (CRT) with referral numbers on the constant rise. CRT supported 289 people with a developmental disability in Thunder Bay and the surrounding district, comprised of 261 adults and 28 children over the 2022-2023 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)-40 hours per week now
- 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 -2 funding contracts this time period and we closed the Evergreen apartment
- Field work placements to 2 Northern Ontario Medical students, 1 Developmental Service Worker student
- Board Certified Behaviour Analyst contracted to work with CRT clinician to maintain Registered Behaviour Technician status



Models of support include virtual, phone and in-person sessions. With vaccinations widely available now we returned to offering weekly groups such as CIRCLES and PEERS. Additional training modules were developed in supporting people with challenging behaviour that has been added to the ONW training repertoire. Clinicians also do training in General Orientation for new hires.

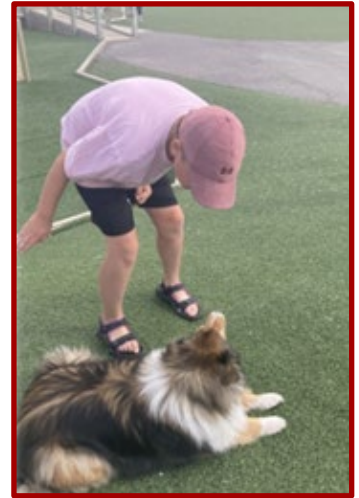
In addition to daily work CRT continues to have active membership with numerous committees. Examples of this are: Speak Up, DSW Advisory, Special Education Advisory Committee, ONW Rights Review, Third Party reviews of Behaviour Support Plans, and the Northern Community of Practice Applied Behaviour Analysis. In October I became the COVID Lead, and it has been nice to work more closely with many of you. In May 2022 a proposal was submitted to help people from the forensic unit transition to more community-based living in a cross sectorial partnership between Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre and ONW. We will have more details to share on that when funding is approved.

Creativity, talent, and dedication are abundant with OPTIONS NORTHWEST employees. Thanks for everything that you do! Submitted By: Lisa Maki, Director of Clinical Services

Carter and Dog Therapy



Michelle, our Registered Behaviour Therapist partnered with St. John’s Ambulance to help desensitize Carter, a 9-year-old boy who has Autism and has a fear of dogs. We worked with Jenn and Maggie to begin sessions in a controlled and calm environment which eventually led to visiting different dogs out in the community. Carter was even able to spend some time at the dog park with multiple dogs running around him. Carter continues to work weekly with Michelle tackling different situations where dogs are involved in his programming. Carter has come such a long way this past year! Good job!



Submitted By: Michelle Lavoie-Pintar

It’s Just a Bunch of Hocus Pocus!

CRT decided to form a team and participate in the first Witches Walk that Community Living Thunder Bay (CLTB) hosted. We dressed up as the Sanderson sisters from Hocus Pocus 2 and we were given a list of businesses to walk to and get our card signed.



There was also a dance after. Some of the businesses had a treat for us when we got there. All the funds raised were going toward purchasing an accessible van for CLTB. I bet you are wondering how Michelle got her hair to stand up that high. See answer at the bottom of the page.



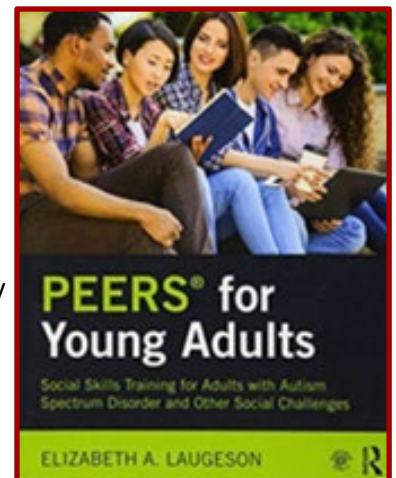
From Left to right:
Lisa Maki, Rosemarie MacLean,
Michelle Lavoie-Pintar

PEERS Graduation!!!



Our participants from the PEERS for young adults’ program have graduated! During our time together they have learned how to build skills around making and keeping friendships as well as tools for safe dating. This group had amazing communication skills and really got to know one another. We look forward to catching up soon and seeing how each participant is utilizing their new social skills! Congrats Graduates!!

Submitted By: Michelle Lavoie-Pintar



Answer: A plastic water bottle.

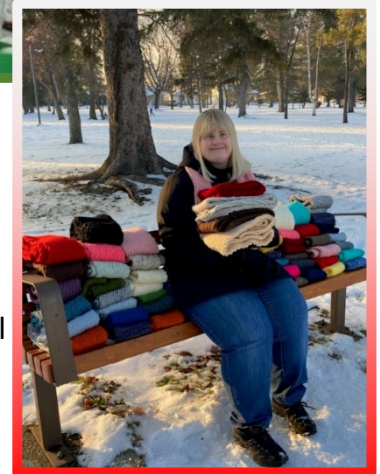


Christmas



Spirit of Christmas

Here is a picture of some of the Spirit of Christmas committee members. We wrap each item purchased and add it to the gift bags shown. We also had donations of cookies from Caroline Grgurich and the Eckensweiler family who donated socks, hot chocolate, and treats. Once again, Laura Salini donated her beautiful handknit scarves to give to everyone who received a gift. Thanks to all that contributed to nominating people, offering gift ideas, shopping, wrapping, delivering, and taking care of the financial matters. It sure made a lot of people happy and helped spread some extra holiday cheer!



The Spirit of Christmas surprise for Lyla!

The present just made its way through the door and Lyla's eyes widened in surprise with the size of the gift that was coming through her door. This gigantic box was all decked out in festive Christmas wrapping and bows. The excitement was too much, and Lyla immediately started unwrapping it at the front door and jumped back in awe with the biggest eyes and smile of what was in front of her. A brand-new microwave!



She couldn't believe it! We immediately set it up for use. Lyla mentioned that this was the best gift she had ever received. Lyla expressed that she is so thankful to OPTIONS NORTHWEST and the Spirit of Christmas committee. She said the gift was so thoughtful. Even the cats were tickled pink and got to enjoy the gift of the cardboard box to play and scratch in.

Submitted By: Sherry Glana, PBSF



Christmas Luncheon

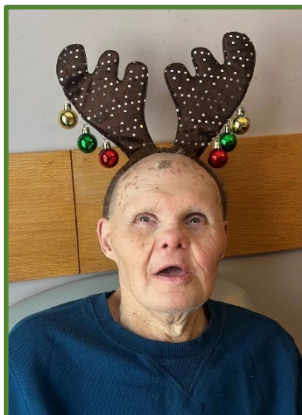
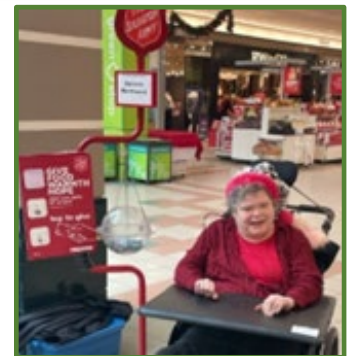
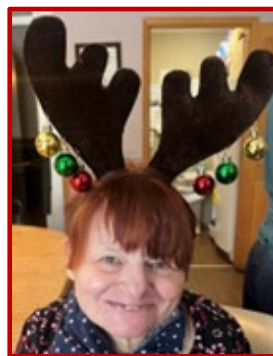
OPTIONS was able to hold the annual Christmas Luncheon for the first time in 2 years and everyone had an amazing time getting back together. People who receive services and their loved ones, the Board of Directors, and employees all came together for the festive get together.

Santa and his elf even made a visit!

TBayTel ended the party with their 12 days of Christmas event and generously gave all the people we support who were in attendance gift cards to some of their favourite places!



Christmas Around the Agency





National Day for Truth & Reconciliation

September 30, 2022, was National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and Orange Shirt Day. Since 2013, September 30 has been known as Orange Shirt Day, a day to honour the children who never returned home and Survivors of residential schools, as well as their families and communities. Public commemoration of the tragic and painful history and ongoing impacts of residential schools is a vital component of the reconciliation process.

Orange Shirt Day is an Indigenous-led grassroots commemorative day also intended to raise awareness of the individual, family and community inter-generation impacts of residential schools, and to promote the concept of “Every Child Matters”. The orange shirt is a symbol of the stripping away of culture, freedom and self-esteem experienced by Indigenous children over generations.

On September 30, OPTIONS employees wore orange. Employees and people supported joined the Honouring our Children Reconciliation Run and BBQ in support of Mazinaajim Children’s Foundation (Dilico Anishinabek Family Care) at Boulevard Lake.

Submitted By: Tony DeAgazio



Partnership with St. Joes N'doo'owe Binesi, Indigenous Health

In the fall of 2022 OPTIONS NORTHWEST joined into a partnership with St. Joes N'doo'owe Binesi, Indigenous Health to have all staff within OPTIONS NORTHWEST to participate in Repairing The Sacred Circle training with a completion goal of winter 2024. This training introduces concepts to participants such as colonization, race, racism, common stereotypes and how they contribute to health inequalities.

Included in this partnership we have weekly activities at 95. Cumberland including Cultural programming with a Cultural Practitioner that shares stories, drumming, and smudging. Practitioners have also been attending some of our homes to drum and story tell and meet individually with the people in the home.

Submitted By: Sarah Byzewski



N'DOO'OWE BINESI



Finance

Finance Summary

Reflecting on the past year, the Agency has been very busy. We enjoyed seeing all the photos of achievements, success stories and accomplishments of the people supported and by staff. Finance also has several achievements during the past year.

In the IT area, hard drives were upgraded in the Supportive Living Service locations to solid state drives to improve the functionality of the laptops. This was a vital upgrade as the agency has implemented AIMS organization wide and will be transitioning to an online program (UKG Pro and Dimensions) for Payroll, HRIS and Scheduling in 2023-2024. Finance and HR were heavily involved in the setup of our new Payroll, HRIS and Scheduling throughout most of 2022-2023. This was a huge undertaking for the two departments but was necessary for the organization to move forward and continue to adapt. The Payroll module (UKG Pro) was successfully launched on April 1, 2024.

During 2022-23-year 64 passport service agreements were maintained and monitored. Through COVID, the list of eligible expenses was expanded under the Passport program to support people and their families with community-based activities and settings were closed or offering reduced services. The changes allowed individuals to use their funding for goods and services that made it easier for them to stay at home during this time and practice physical distancing. This change resulted in a higher number of billings through the Passport Portal.

In Accounts Payable, 2,147 invoices were processed, 306 payments were made by cheque and 1,297 by electronic funds transfer. As well as, continuing to transition to pay as many vendors as possible electronically. There were 246 active vendors that were paid during the year, including suppliers, services, contractors, employee mileages, petty cash, and payroll remittances.

86 Peoples Financials binders were reviewed by the team for 2022.

Continued work with the Public Guardian and Trustee to administer funds for 15 individuals, including monthly individual petty cash for each, and special requests for funds, our busiest time for requests is summertime to fund camping, birthdays and at Christmas for individuals to have funds during special times of the year.

All contracting services went out for tender for the 2022-23 year, with a minimum of three quotes for each service, to ensure that we are receiving great quality and pricing from our contractors. We added some contractors to ensure that the organization had a good pool of services on board and renewed with some of our long-time contractors that continue to offer quality pricing and services.

Individualized Funding supported 33 service recipients, had 52 vendors that payments were made to and processed 650 transactions.

During the last year, the finance team was successful in obtaining and mentoring an Intern shared with Human Resources.

The team provided hard work, dedication and support to people supported, staff, vendors, and community partners to achieve the vision, mission and philosophy of the organization. Well done! Let's see what the new year brings and the opportunities that arise.

Submitted by: Anja Erwin, Craig Rogers, Melissa Spivak, Heidi Irrgang, Reece Jolicouer and Sharon Morrison



Human Resources

Like all areas within the agency this past year has been a very busy one for Human Resources. The team coordinated 5 General Orientations resulting in 82 new hires! They had to be very organized with coordinating interviews, sign ons and orientations to ensure timelines were being met especially with the opening of a new location. We continued to be present at many career fairs within the community such as the FWFN Health Fair, Healthcare Job Fair, Confederation College Career Fair, Lakehead University Career Fair and the Opportunities Northwest Job Fair.

The process of updating our HRIS/Payroll/Scheduling system also started within the last year. This was a big task to take on for the various departments involved and we are getting closer to launching UKG Pro/Dimensions. As those involved continue to learn about the features and functionality of the systems, we will send updates regarding different features as they become available. This is exciting for us as an agency because it will allow real time views of timecards and time off banks.

More information will be coming soon!

Throughout this past year the HR department has gone through a fair bit of change. We welcomed a HR/Finance Intern Reece in the fall, he has been learning various tasks within both departments. Also in the fall Jill Thompson, Director of Human Resources pursued another opportunity leaving a vacancy within the department. In January, the position of Manager of Human Resources was filled by myself. With myself moving into the new role, this left the Human Resources Coordinator position vacant. Morgan Clark was successful in this position leaving her previous position of Human Resources and Training Advisor (HRTA) vacant. We welcomed Madison into the HRTA position earlier this year! As a department we are continuing to transition into our roles. Looking forward to what this next year brings the department!



Reese & Morgan at the Opportunities Northwest job fair.

Submitted By: Bryanna Lund, Manager of Human Resources



Live Life Your Way!



OPTIONS NORTHWEST Personal Support Services
Schedule of Receipts and Expenditures
For the year ended March 31, 2023

	2023 <i>(unaudited)</i>	2022 <i>(unaudited)</i>
Receipts		
Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services	19,634,798	17,617,517
Individual rent and recoveries	964,656	853,632
Interest earned	80,936	14,175
Other recoveries	803,579	480,844
	21,483,969	18,966,168
Expenditures		
Salaries and benefits	15,882,875	14,270,814
Salaries and benefits - wage enhancement	1,314,937	1,010,242
Staff training	66,681	58,931
Building occupancy	943,714	932,358
Travel and communication	258,085	318,127
Supplies and equipment	1,128,174	794,995
Other program service expenditures	1,443,794	1,411,572
	21,038,260	18,797,039
	445,709	169,129
Summary		
OPTIONS operations	93,068	
Wage Enhancement	241,562	
Individualized Funding	83,741	
Passport	27,338	
Total	445,709	

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