

2023-2024

Annual

Report

**OPTIONS
NORTHWEST**



95 N. Cumberland Street ~ Thunder Bay, Ontario ~ P7A 4M1

807-344-4994 ~ optionsnorthwest.com



OPTIONS NORTHWEST

*Live Life
Your Way*

Our Purpose

Within the City and District of Thunder Bay, our purpose is to support people with developmental 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.



Message from Board and Executive Director

Welcome to the 2024 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of OPTIONS NORTHWEST. We are very pleased to meet with employees, people we support, and their families, and community partners today as we celebrate an extraordinary year for OPTIONS NORTHWEST. It has been an honour for OPTIONS to support people in achieving their goals for independence to the extent possible and community inclusion over the past year. 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 2023/2024 fiscal year.

This year's Annual Report communicates the inspiring stories and insights of people we support as well as OPTIONS NORTHWEST employees from the year. The report also tells you about the work we've been doing towards achieving strategic goals in our Strategic Plan (2023-2026).

A big part of today's celebration is reserved for staff appreciation based on milestone years of service, but let us be the first to acknowledge the committed contributions our staff make every day. OPTIONS NORTHWEST continues to provide outstanding services and support to people living with a developmental disability because of the amazing work the employees, students, and volunteers do.



The following are some highlights of the past year:

April

- 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 and Neurodiversity.
- 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.
- UKG launched across the agency.

May

- The Agency released its 3-year Strategic Plan (2023-2026). The Strategic Plan was developed by the Board of Directors in collaboration with agency's leaders, supervisors, employees, people supported and their families, and community partners. The Strategic Plan defines OPTIONS' vision for the future and outlines the key areas the agency will be working on over the next 3 years.
- The Agency continues to meet with its community and provincial partners to support children and adults as well as learn from each other.
- Submitted a Business Case Plan for Dual Diagnosis Transition Rehabilitation Housing Project (DD TRHP).
- Lisa began work on the Alternative Level of Care Committee (ALC).
- Managed a booth at the Dare to Dream Service Provider Fair.





June

- We celebrated National AccessAbility Week. This special week is an opportunity to:
 - Celebrate the valuable contributions and leadership of Canadians with disabilities.
 - Highlight the work of people, organizations and communities that are removing barriers.
 - 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 2022/23 at its Annual General Meeting.
- A Spring Booster Vaccine clinic was held with Thunder Bay District Health Unit.
- CRT ran a Speech Language Clinic at our office.



July

- July and August offered great weather for everyone to enjoy! OPTIONS employees were able to take some time off to rest and relax with family and friends.
- Hosted a meeting with Bob Walsh from OASIS to discuss service needs and advocacy.
- The Hub moved to the new location at The Boys and Girls Club. People supported have had a great time visiting and building relationships with others at the new location.
- The Hub hosted a barbeque at the 95 office.



August

- Dual Diagnosis Transition Housing Rehabilitation Project property was purchased.
- We worked with Dr. Yona Lunsky's team on ALC Project.

September

- The Board of Directors welcomed 3 new Directors. We are so happy to have Kerri-Lee Turcotte, Stephanie Milenko and Erika Bishop join the agency!
- CRT participated in the Franco Festival Thunder Bay with an information booth.
- Brandon Madore and Rosemarie MacLean from CRT attended the Journey to Belonging Conference.
- MCCSS, Minister Parsa visited the agency with Kevin Holland, MPP.
- Participated in the Day of Truth and Reconciliation in the homes and at The Hub as well as the Mazinaajim Children's Foundation Honouring Our Children Walk/Run on Saturday, September 30th at Boulevard Lake.





October

- The Hub held a Halloween Drop in at The Boys and Girls Club that saw record attendance and lots of happy faces!
- The Hub also hosted a Halloween Trunk or Treat event for the first time that was well received by everyone involved.
- Lisa Maki and Loni Rudnicki attended a Child Adolescence Mental Health conference. A case scenario was highlighted at the conference as an ideal model to aspire toward that we did the work on.
- MCCSS conducted an on-site Quality Assurance Measures review. The review outcome was very positive and is evidence of the wonderful work OPTIONS employees do every day.
- We did not renew the lease on our 86 Cumberland Office. Human Resources and Finance moved back to our 95 Cumberland Office where everyone is under one roof again.



November

- Organized a COVID19 and Influenza Vaccine Clinic with Thunder Bay District Health Unit
- Upward Appraisals were sent out.
- CRT Clinicians attended Peter Marks training.
- Children’s Holiday Party for children of employees. A wonderful time was had by all, and Santa even stopped by for an early visit!

December

- 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.



- Our Annual Spirit of the Holidays program saw record nominations. We were able to shop for 47 people to help brighten their holiday season!
- Mike Lavoie, Program Supervisor at MCCSS and Joanne Wenger, Regional Program Manager at MCCSS joined the December Board Meeting to discuss services, needs, and advocate.
- CRT turned the 3rd floor into a sweet world of wonder with a Willy Wonka themed night for people supported, employees and families to all enjoy.

January

- We launched a new Individual Support Plan process for all people supported using AIMS.
- CRT launched the second year of the PEERS group.



February

- The Peer Connections Group was formed. This group consists of people supported who advocate for what they would like to see happening around the agency.
- The Hub held a Valentine’s Day Drop in at the Boys and Girls Club.
- The Plant Pals group had their first drop in to get ready for spring planting.



March

- Submitted a proposal advocating for MCCSS to consider increasing Children Funding Budget
- The Leadership Team hosted an employee appreciation breakfast for administrative employees.
- Brandon and Michelle attended the Inclusion Symposium conference. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion were themes at the training.

OPTIONS once again provided meaningful and successful services and support to people living with developmental disabilities in 2023-24. 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:

- People we support, and their families
- Employees and supervisors
- Union partners - UNIFOR and ONA
- Community partners – adult and children’s service agencies
- Thunder Bay District Health Unit
- Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre
- St. Joseph’s Care Group – Indigenous Services & Dual Diagnosis Program
- Provincial partners
- Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS)
- Leadership Team and Board of Directors
- North Community Network of Specialized Care/HANDS

The dedication of everyone to ensuring people are supported to live life their way is greatly appreciated...

Thank you,

Leigh Abthorpe
Board President

Tony DeAgazio
Executive Director

Board of Directors

Leigh Abthorpe, President	Tom Nesti, Director
Erin Dunn, Vice President	Erika Bishop, Director
Patricia Maxton, Treasurer	Kerri-Lee Turcotte, Director
Anna Gosselin, Director	Stephanie Milenko, 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
 Morgan Clark, Manager of Human Resources



Strategic Plan 2023-2026 Update

OPTIONS NORTHWEST began its strategic planning effort in September 2022 and engaged Compass to facilitate and guide the process. After several years of working under pandemic related challenges and restrictions in how people did their work in supporting and caring for others, the timing was perfect to look ahead and build a strategic plan that will guide the future work of the organization for 2023-2026 period.

We began our work with the following key things in mind:

- Using the planning effort to create a greater degree of understanding and alignment throughout the organization including the Board, leadership, staff, community partners and people we support and their families.
- Engaging thoroughly within the organization as well as with external stakeholders.
- Building in leadership and governance lessons along the way.

Given the high level of engagement and the spirit of every conversation throughout the planning process, it is safe to say OPTIONS NORTHWEST achieved all of the above.

What follows is a summary of the work that has been done on each of the Strategic Goals during the year 2023-2024 related to Employees, People we Support, Community Partners, Ministry Partners, and Board Governance:

1. Employees (Training opportunities):

- Skills and capacity assessment for current and future needs.
- Identified and delivered training to employees:
 - Mental Health First Aid
 - Addiction training
 - ASIST training
 - Behaviour training
 - Trauma informed training
 - Autism training
 - Micro credential courses
 - Mental Health training
 - Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion conference
 - Journey to Belonging conference
 - Inclusion symposium
 - Teamwork, burnout, resiliency, and intergenerational training
 - Repairing the Sacred Circle training (Truth and Reconciliation)
- Identified and delivered training to Leadership Team:
 - Psychological Safe Workplace Training
 - Leadership coaching
 - Intergenerational training
 - Core competencies (developmental services sector)



Tori Groves, First Aid Instructor & Amanda Label, NCI Instructor

2. People we Support:

- Groups Formed:
 - Peer connections – committee was formed
 - PEERS, plant pals – groups
 - Forensic conference – mental health training for DDTRHP program
- Expanded working relationship with the network – provide speech services
- HANDS – expanded capacity – clear on scope of practice
 - Grief
 - Social interest
 - Personal care / hygiene
 - Sexuality and relationships
- Spring BOOSTER CLINIC (Covid-19)
- Published – Ideal practice transitioning someone from alternative living care to the community



Plant Pals Gardens



3. Community Partners

- OASIS – systemic advocacy
- Meet with CLTB as a leadership group
- Met with Executive Directors of community partners – opportunities to expand services and collaboration
- Meeting with Minister Michael Parsa and MPP Kevin Holland – advocating for services
- Dare to Dream – Service provider fair
- Career fair – Opportunities Northwest
- Using social media to boost agency profile
- Agency Hub opened at Boys & Girls Club



Suzanne Posthumus and Michelle Lavoie-Pintar
Dare to Dream

4. Ministry Partners

- Advocating to MCCSS to consider increasing children funding
- DD TRHP funding – Dual Diagnosis transition rehabilitation housing program
- HR / Finance intern – Provincial grant
- Local Service Systems Planning Table meets monthly with MCCSS

5. Governance

- Board and Leadership Team developed strategic plan
- Board recruitment
- Board Governance training

2023-2026
OPTIONS NORTHWEST STRATEGIC PLAN

OUR THEMATIC GOAL
We will focus on supporting and developing people we support and employees, their abilities, and skills, as well as investing in tools and technologies that will ensure 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 create the internal capacity, including investing in needed tools and technologies to meet our organization and employees' 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 growing complex needs of 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 adults.
- 4 Our Ministry Partners** – We will assess and develop a strategy to meet the need for 'multi-sectorial' funding and relationships as we continue our transition into new service areas.
- 5 Our Governance** – We will build our Governance and Board capacity and processes that match our organization's current and expected growth, challenges, and emerging risks.

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

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

- Builds skills, abilities, and confidence of people
- Assists people to reach their goals and live their dreams
- Promotes wellness, independence, empowerment, and informed choices
- While ensuring that quality and continuous improvement reinforces everything we do

VALUES
We will:

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OPTIONS NORTHWEST
live life your way

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN GETTING ON BOARD?

OPTIONS NORTHWEST is Currently Recruiting for their Volunteer Board of Directors

Are you Interested in Making a Difference in your Community?

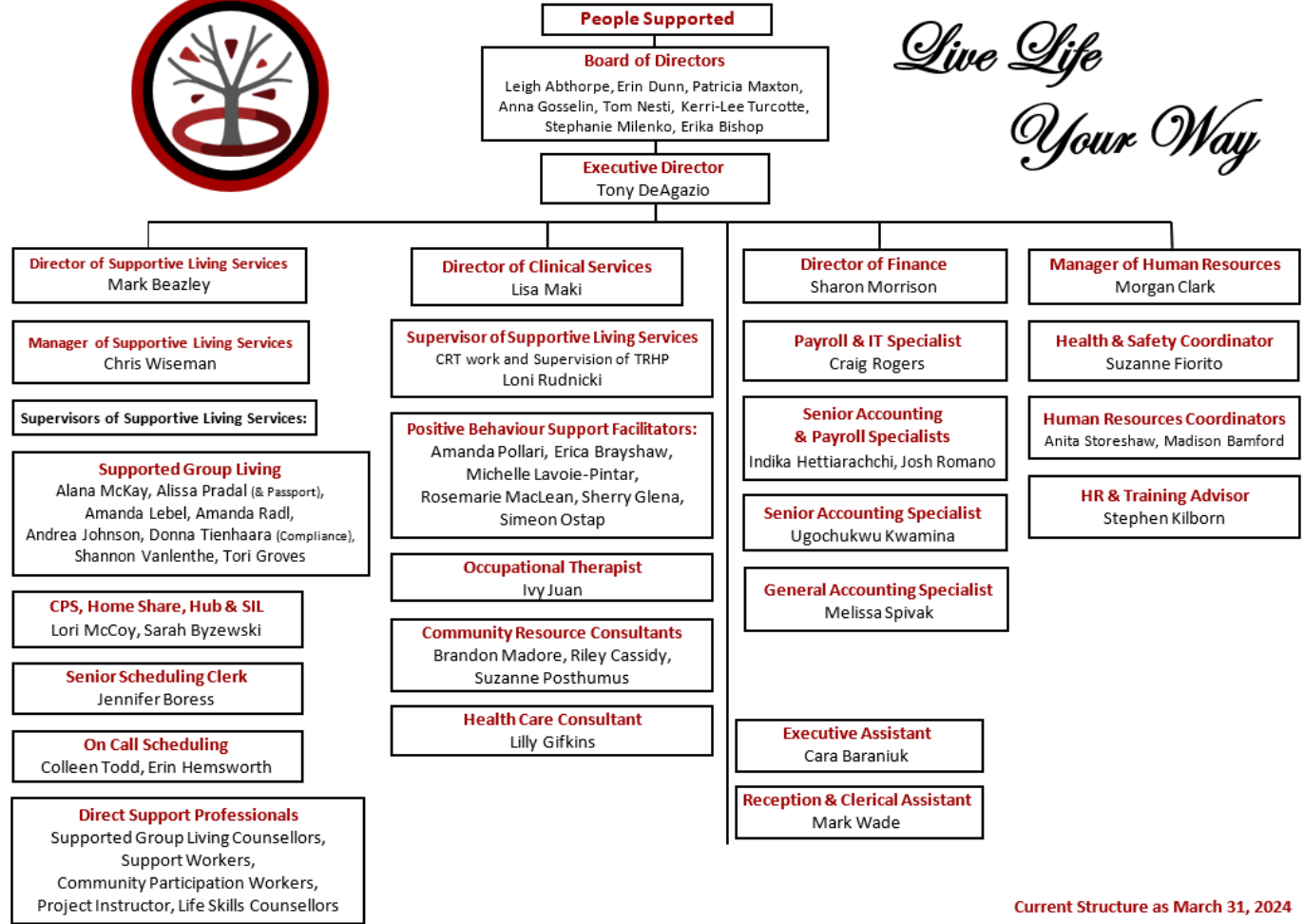
OPTIONS NORTHWEST Personal Support Services is a community based, non-profit, charitable organization funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS). The Governance function for the Corporation is vested in a volunteer Board of Directors. We are looking for Board Members who are committed to supporting individuals with a developmental disability to live life their way. Volunteer inquiries for Board positions are always welcome and can be directed to general@optionsnorthwest.com. To apply, visit <https://optionsnorthwest.ninesixtygroup.com/volunteer-application/>



OPTIONS NORTHWEST ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



*Live Life
Your Way*



Current Structure as March 31, 2024

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

35 Years

Dione Doliska

30 Years

Deanna Debnam, Cathy Kapoor, Karen Leveque, Jamie Ward,
Suzanne Fiorito, Elaine Tsekouras, Dawn Munro, Sherry Glena,
Angela McCandless, Bill Boucher, Jennifer Kukkee

25 Years

Debra Trethewey, Charles Lindsey, Filamena Steadwell, John Gallo

20 Years

Erica Gallo, Laura Plexman, Amanda Lebel, Micheal Beyer

15 Years

Patti Spade, Elena Cushway

10 Years

Jennifer Adomko, Kelly Anderson, Deanna Bailey

5 Years

Laura Steadwell, Rosemol David, Marnie Amos, Jilna Jose Kalambukattu,
Kerri Kowalchuk, Warren Bruyere, Rebecca Hlady, Jibi Vijayakumar Syamala,
Cara Baraniuk, Evelyn Miller, Courtney Koetter, Trudy Silver, Andrea Johnson, Kaija Ranta,
Alexis Pratola, Rachelle Davidson, Mary Varghese, Jillian Fiorito, Geethu Saneesh,
Renee Furlotte, Pamela Cain, Sharise Budd, Joseph Byzewski, Uzma Shaikh, Ryley Vescio

Retirements

Cynthia Prince, Sherry Devereaux, Anja Erwin, Leigh Neilson

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



In Memory

Lindsay Tuomi

Lindsay was born on February 24, 1980. She lived for many years with her sisters and parents in Manitouwadge. As her many health concerns increased, she came to live at Frederica St. Our Lindsay, who was often referred to as Munchki, Linny or Lindsay Loo had a smile or a laugh for everyone she met. Lindsay was often said to have nine lives. She battled through many very serious illnesses and health concerns but somehow, she'd surprise everyone and bounce back even spunkier than before.

While she was home with us at Frederica St, she enjoyed being at the counter with everyone ripping up paper, scattering it around, gobbling up marshmallows, or chilling in the bath with her dolls and toys. Although Lindsay used few words, she had a special way of communicating if she wanted you to be next to her. She would take your hand raise it to her cheek and show you how she liked her face stroked. This was where she would dazzle us with those bright blue eyes and contagious smile.

On July 1, 2023, while in hospital again struggling with serious health and breathing issues, she reached for my hand for the last time. On this day she peacefully passed away.

Rest in Peace Lindsay Loo ~ Lacey Anderson



Tammy McDonald



James Hoare



Bryan Holyk

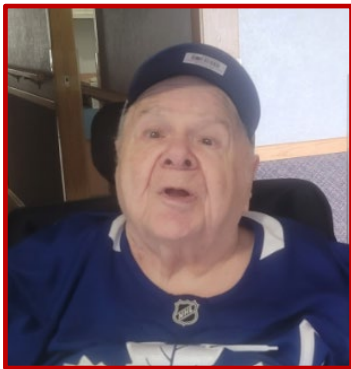


Tammy, James and Bryan were 3 of the original individuals to move into the Glengary home. They were all well known in the community and well liked by their peers.

Each had their own unique personalities and laughs that could light up a room. They will truly be missed by everyone. If they have taught us anything; it is to be kind and laugh often.

~ Kristi Green

Ron Manning



Ron was the oldest recipient of service with OPTIONS NORTHWEST at 81 years old. He was the heart and soul of this home and will be remembered for his kind and gentle heart, for his warm smile and his stubborn nature. He loved to be out in the community around people, always wanted to be part of the conversation, or to just sit back and enjoy people watching. He really got a kick out of "coffee talk" at home and all the funny stories shared daily by staff, all while enjoying a hot cup of coffee of course. Some of his favourite ways to fill his days were to watch a hockey game or The Price is Right. He enjoyed playing with his blocks in the front room, where he could watch all the action on Frederica St., all while listening to one of his many cd's. Rons final days were filled with all his favourite foods and activities. He was given the V.I.P treatment up until his peaceful passing at home on April 28th, 2023. Ron will be fondly remembered and is missed dearly.

~ Jaime Carpenter

Chris Moosberger

Christopher Moosberger came to the Francis St home straight from Hogarth Hospital and remained there for the rest of his life. For over 25 years he brightened everyone's days with his mischievous nature. Although Chris was non-verbal, his huge smile spoke all the words you needed to hear. Chris had many years of health struggles but battled through with the help of his caring staff. Chris fought until the end but unfortunately left us on August 15, 2023. His love of music and the outdoors will have a lasting impact on all who had the pleasure of working with him.





Supportive Living Update

This past year has seen a few new changes under the services programs. One of the biggest changes was the opening of the HUB at the Boys and Girls Club. The HUB started small, we made space at the 95 office in order to start a variety of different programs and skill building exercises. We wanted the HUB to be a place of education, inclusion, community, and safety for the people we support. If you haven't already, I encourage everyone to stop in or participate in any number of the programs being offered. Great place to learn, socialize and be out in the community.



With the help of our community partner St. Joseph's Care Group Cultural Services Program, we were able to train all employees in Repairing the Sacred Circle. This training aligns with repairing and recognizing Truth and Reconciliation in our community.

When one door opens, unfortunately another closes. This year we had 6 individuals we support pass away. This is always hard as the people we support become almost like family members for us because we spend so much time together in their home. One home in the agency in particular went through the process of grief 3 times this past year, Glengary. However, I can't express enough, the resiliency, the strength and the ability to lean on one another that this team has shown over the last year. The Glengary staff through all this were true leaders in supporting individuals while they were at their weakest moments. Overnights holding hands in the hospital, constant communication with family or by the bedside in the home, the staff were there during the last moments of the people we support. Truly grateful to say I work with these staff as well as the staff in our other homes, you are the best.

We continue to serve more than 70 people in our Supportive Group Living program, 11 in our Supported Independent Living program (SIL), 3 people in our Intensive Supportive Living. The area of SIL continues to grow as we welcome more individuals into this program each year.



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 to live life their way. 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!

~ Mark Beazley, Director of Supportive Living Services

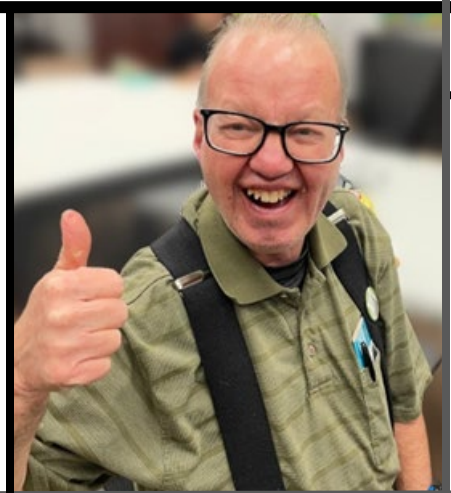


GET TO KNOW

OPTIONS NORTHWEST

At OPTIONS, we strive to help people who receive services “Live Life Their Way”.

We’d like to introduce some of the people who receive services through Supportive Living Services and our Supported Independent Living Program. We wouldn’t be OPTIONS NORTHWEST without the amazing people that we support!



JOE

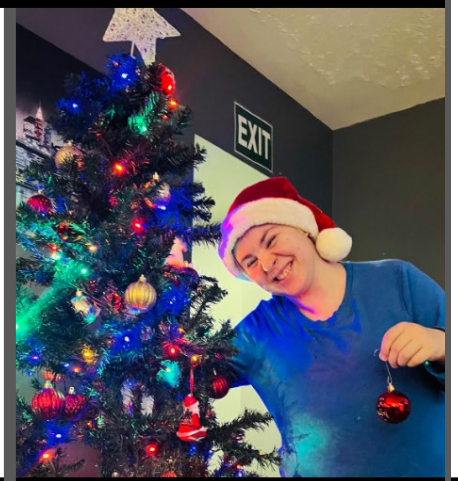
Joe’s favorite thing about ONW is his home and living with his housemates. His favourite place to eat out at is A&W. His favorite activities include bowling and the Friendship Group at his Church.

Joe is a super friendly and helpful guy. He is always out and about around the agency and in our community lending a hand to Mike, the Project Instructor. Joe’s positive attitude is one of a kind and his wonderful smile is contagious!

LIZ

Liz enjoys taking part in many of the Drop Ins and events put on by ONW. She likes to spend her free time with her friends and family. She enjoys listening to music, arts & crafts, drawing, bowling, socializing, and talking on the phone. Her favourite foods include pizza, spaghetti, and Pad Thai noodles. She likes to spend time with dogs because they are cuddly and furry. Liz’s favourite holiday is Christmas as she gets to spend time with her family and friends. She loves Christmas decorations, music, warm snowy days and building snowmen.

Liz is often out and about in the community keeping herself busy. Liz is creative and quite the artist. She enjoys a good chat and often does “rounds” at the ONW office visiting and catching up with staff.



RYLEY

Ryley likes everything about OPTIONS. He loves watching wrestling, golfing, and playing videogames. His favourite thing to cook and eat is pancakes. This past year Ryley went on a trip to Toronto with his friend Dave and they had a blast. They got to visit the Hockey Hall of Fame!

Ryley is a funny, happy person who makes friends easily. He enjoys getting out in the community. He also enjoys visiting the ONW office and “firing” everyone but making them “stay at work”.



KYLER

Kyler loves the way ONW brings the fun including recreational activities, learning new skills including cooking into his life. In his free time, he likes to socialize at The Hub. He enjoys bowling, golfing, mall walks, and lunch outings

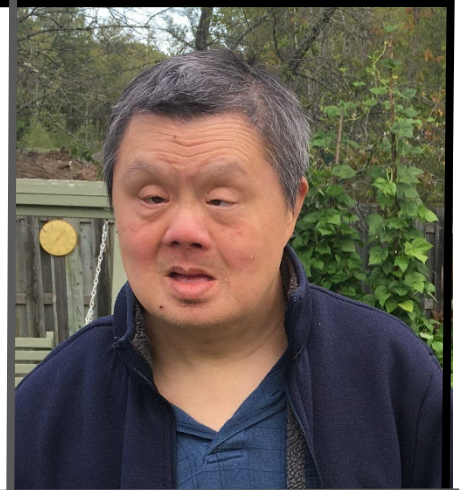


with support staff. His favourite place in Thunder Bay is Hillcrest Park because he loves the view. His proudest accomplishment is learning Indigenous language and helping others when they need help, it gives him inner happiness. He loves visits with dogs as he finds them to be very therapeutic. Kyler is well known around the agency as a phenomenal chef. He often takes the lead in cooking groups at The Hub. His specialty and everyone's favourite is Bannock!

Suzanne Fiorito is the Health and Safety Coordinator at OPTIONS. Kyler has appointed himself to be the Health and Safety Agent alongside Suzanne. 😊 She is happy for him to have that title. He now sports a badge on a lanyard. He very diligently ensures that monthly inspections are done on time with his assistance, the paperwork is delivered to Suzanne, and any hazards noted are taken care of right away. Suzanne appreciates the work he does with the staff to keep the Hub safe!

GORDIE

Gordie likes to spend his free time enjoying a good meal, walking in nature or looking at his favourite books. His favourite hobbies include swimming and outdoor activities like walking, gardening, and dog watching. Gordie's favourite food is a loaded hamburger and a side of fries, extra ketchup. He likes to collect books; he loves a good sturdy picture book to look at and hold. It gives him comfort to see the nice pictures. He loves ice cream, EVERY flavour is his favourite. YUMMYYY!! He looks forward to getting out and moving around the city, either in a vehicle or by walking daily. Gord's favourite place to eat...that's easy it's McDonalds. He loves to cook and bake. He likes many dishes and is great at mixing and stirring and especially loves taste testing. His favourite animal is probably the dog. He loves pictures of dogs and seeing "Doggies" when he is out walking.



DARLENE S.

Darlene had year full of adventure and accomplishments. She went for several long walks at the tree farm and the marina. Sometimes her dog Mork was lucky enough to come along. During July and August, Darlene served up some cool, creamy ice cream cones at Bannons Gas Bar where she worked. She enjoyed a full day at the CLE, riding as many rides as possible with other brave SIL participants. In the fall, she enjoyed going for a weekly coffee at the mall and catching up with friends. She was excited to see the new HUB location open and she can often be found hanging out, playing games, socializing or watching TV.



DAVID

David's favourite hobby is looking at, holding, and trying to fill up all of his orange and red cups with coffee. His favourite colours are red and bright orange because they remind him of coffee cups from Tims and Robins...sensing a theme here? David LOVES coffee!

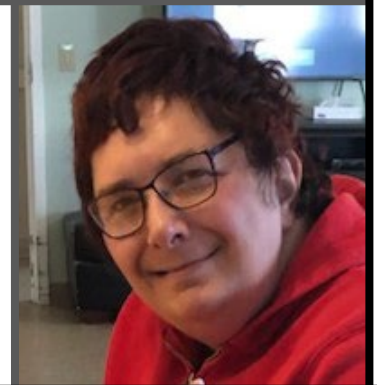


He enjoys going out to a coffee house, but anywhere that serves coffee is ok too. He looks forward to someone filling up his red cup with juice, tea, or you guessed it, coffee! He doesn't enjoy cooking or baking but sure does enjoy eating most of it! Another favourite of his is chocolate, and chocolate and coffee combined is a match made in heaven for sure. David loves many and all holidays, but it's mostly the cake, dessert and the mashed potatoes of a big holiday meal that he loves the most. If he could travel he would go see his family. He really cares for and misses his family who live far from him. He does Skype to see their faces sometimes which he likes to do. He likes to spend his free time relaxing at home with his feet tucked up under him in a cozy armchair with a bright red Tim Hortons cup in each of his hands!

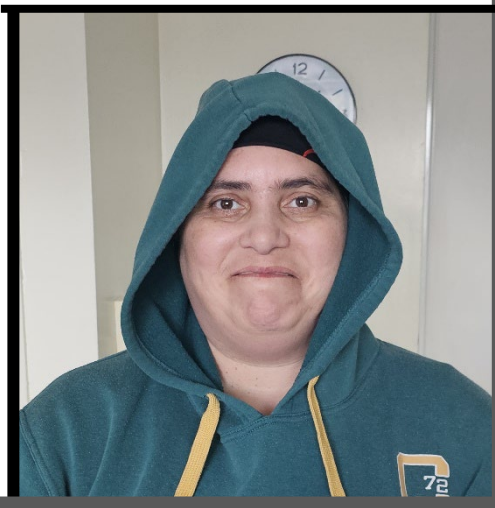
SANDRA

Sandra's favourite thing about ONW is the support she receives. She enjoys watching TV (especially 48 Hours), colouring, dance music, and doing puzzles. Her favourite place to visit in Thunder Bay is Wacky's. Her proudest accomplishment is getting her Birth Certificate. Sandra loves Christmas because it's the time of year that she receives gifts. She likes pizza and ice cream.

Sandra likes to get out in her community and take part in many events happening around the city. She enjoys participating in ONW Drop Ins and activities at the Hub. Sandra is a funny person and if you're not careful she will get you with a one liner that you can't come back from!



SHAWNA



Shawna's favourite thing about ONW is the Hub and hanging out with her friends. She likes to spend her free time listening to music, doing crafts, and watching sports on TV. Her favourite memories are of her late cat, Jules. She loves Chinese food and her favourite movie is The Terminator. Something unique about Shawna is that she loves everything to do with spiders!

Shawna is a great person to have a good conversation with. She can often be found at the Hub socializing and helping out. She is a very thoughtful, helpful person.

ALEX

Alex's favourite thing about OPTIONS is the staff who help him in making choices and decisions. He loves to play videogames, his favourite game being Hearts of Iron IV. Alex would like to travel to Germany one day to attend Oktoberfest! During his time at ONW he has started to meet goals and is proud of all of his accomplishments, especially getting out and going for a walk in his neighbourhood by himself. Way to go, Alex! One of his favourite things to make is Bannock which he enjoys doing with his Grandma!



SADIE



Sadie's favorite thing about Options Northwest is her home, and the people that help her here. She really enjoys long soaks in the Jacuzzi that we had installed. If Sadie had to pick her favorite restaurant she would pick Boston Pizza; but she also enjoys cooking in the home. She's made some kale chips as well as helped with meals and some fantastic baking. Sadie's schedule is usually quite full as she is very busy with different activities. This year just at the Auditorium she has seen many performances such as; Fay Gleeson Dancing, Terry Clark and Paul Brant, Brett Kissel, Mini Pop Kids, Serena Ryder, Cirque Musica, as well as Simply Spice. She also stayed active with Special O swimming every week which she would like to continue this year. In Sadie's spare time she also works at Tim Hortons on the weekends, if you see her stop and say Hello!

DAVID

David loves living and receiving supports through ONW. He loves where he lives and has created meaningful connections in his community! He loves walking down to Robins for a coffee and a chat and attending church every week- he is an important part of the congregation. David likes attending The Hub at OPTIONS and seeing his peers. He is involved in many Special Olympics activities including swimming, baseball, track and snowshoeing. He is looking forward to his swim competition in Waterloo with Special Olympics. He is excited to have his family from Calgary there to cheer him on!

David likes to help out at home by gardening, yard work and meal preparation. He is a very generous guy with a fantastic sense of humor!



DANIEL



Daniel is an outgoing individual who enjoys spending time with his friends and family and likes to be able to go out to different restaurants around the city to try new foods. Some of Daniel's favorite places to go are Norteño's for tacos, Bight Restaurant and Tomlin Subdivision. Daniel has also recently graduated from the CICE program at Confederation College and he was extremely proud of this achievement. He plans on continuing his education in the Culinary Program at the College next year and has told staff that he would like to pursue a career as a chef in the future.

MARISA

Marisa recently moved into one of the ONW homes and has brought a lot of action to her home! Marisa is a very active young woman who loves to be out and about throughout the city. She recently has started visiting The Hub and is very excited to meet everyone. Some of Marisa's favorite things to do is attend exercise classes at Movati, line dancing classes and spending time with her family and chocolate lab Ginny. She is a very vocal young woman and has an amazing sense of humour and loves to be silly and make her new staff and housemates laugh.

While Marisa has had some challenges adjusting to living with new people, she is happy to have her own place to live at and to be a strong independent princess. She looks forward to learning new things and attending all the fun events and meeting everyone at ONW!





Marsha



Nathan



Tannia

Shawna

Maryanne



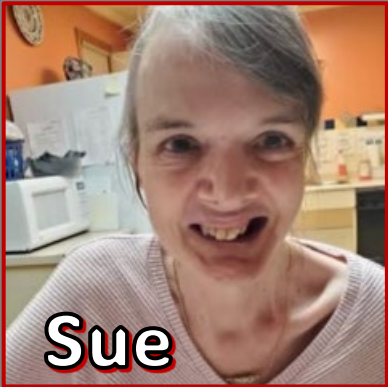
Alan



Dan



Darlene



Sue



Billie



Donna



Nancy



Elton



Jared & Ananias



Jane



Joe



Terry



Victoria



Cindy



Jenna



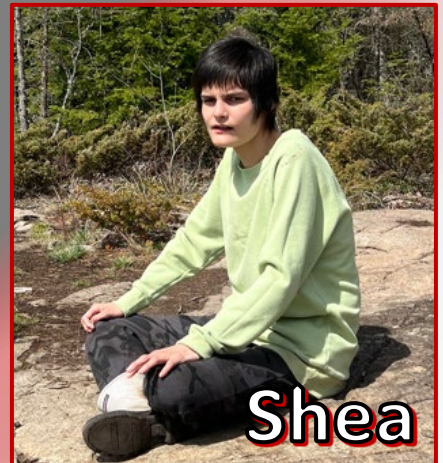
Leo



Dawn



Dave



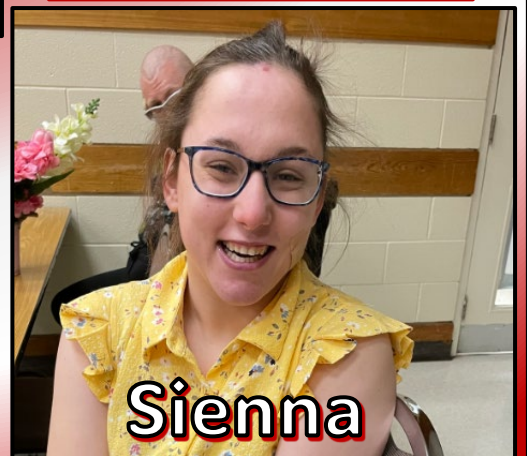
Shea



Brad



Jeff



Sienna



PASSPORT

This year Passport played a big role in helping individuals achieve goals that they may not have without the funding. People attended Church at different locations, out to the Auditorium to see many different performances put on individuals had the pleasure of seeing The Barenaked Ladies, Eagles Tribute bands, Serena Ryder, John Williams, Snowed in Comedy Tour, many different TBSO performances, different Dance performances, Queen, Spice Girls, Tina Turner, Bonnie Rait, Paul Brant and Terri Clark as well as Brett Kissel just to name a few. Two individuals also had the pleasure of attending a baseball game in Toronto watching the Toronto Blue Jays and the Washington Nationals. Many people also attended the different CWE (Wrestling performances) and had a fantastic time meeting the wrestlers and getting pictures taken. Many season passes were purchased for people to watch the Thunderwolves as well. Individuals were able to get out to the complex many times to swim or walk the track, as well as out to bowling at the different bowling alleys around town. Individuals also attended Festival of Colours, Wake the Giant, and Country on the Bay as well as many performances put on by Magnus Theatre.

~ Alissa Pradal, Passport and Supported Living Services Supervisor



THE HUB

"The Hub" is celebrating its 3rd year anniversary! The Hub was founded as a safe space where individuals could learn new skills, participate in cooking and crafting activities, and engage in various community events. Due to its success, The Hub relocated to 270 Windsor St in the Boys and Girls Club and has experienced significant growth. The program has accommodated as many as 264 participants in a month.

The staff at OPTIONS NORTHWEST takes pride in creating a vibrant, inclusive, and nonjudgmental environment at The Hub. They have organized activities like tie-dye shirt making, tea parties, cooking sessions, gym classes, yoga, kite making, and various community events. Additionally, they have hosted guest speakers, such as the health nurse from Thunder Bay District Health Unit, to discuss the importance of maintaining physical and mental well-being.

Over the past year, The Hub has expanded its reach and now serves individuals from various agencies including CLTB, LCC, CTR, Lakehead Public Schools, and Forensics. Every month, the staff shares a calendar with a wide range of daily activities, and an array of freshly cooked meals, such as chili, beef stew, pasta, and meatballs, is always available. Everyone is welcome at The Hub.

~ Lori McCoy, Supervisor of Supported Independent Living Program



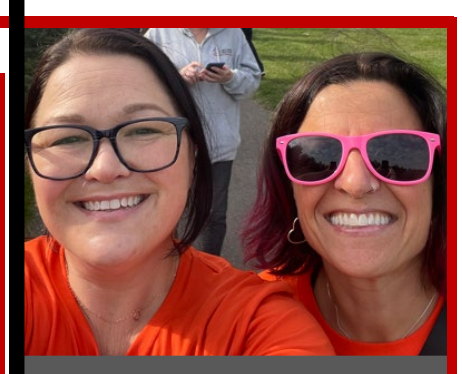
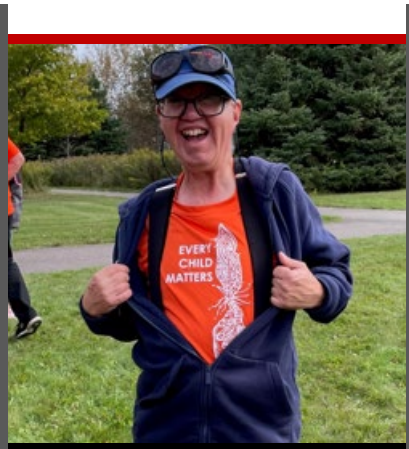


Cultural Programming

OPTIONS NORTHWEST staff and people we support have been working alongside N'DOO'OWE BINESI SJCG Indigenous Health Team, participating in weekly Cultural Programming within the 24 hour supported homes as well as weekly Friday activities at the HUB.

Along with participating in weekly activities OPTIONS staff are also participating in Repairing the Sacred Circle Training, Spring and Fall Feasts and the Sacred Fire Ceremony that brings awareness to Orange Shirt and Truth and Reconciliation Days. The agency also held their own Orange Shirt Day Walk at Mission Island and walked along side others at Boulevard On Sept 30th to bring awareness to Orange Shirt Day with all supports going to Mazinaajim Children's Foundation.

~ Sarah Byzewski, Supervisor of Supported Independent Living





Community Resource Team

The Community Resource Team (CRT) supported 308 people with a developmental disability in Thunder Bay and the surrounding district, comprised of 285 adults and 23 children. 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 -1 funding contract this time period
- Field work placements to 2 Northern Ontario Medical Students, 1 Developmental Service Worker student

This year we offered many groups including PEERS, Peer Connections, Siblings Group (for family members that have a sibling with a developmental disability), Snoezelen training and Plant Pals. Clinicians also do training in General Orientation for new hires and helped develop courses provincially that will be more widely shared with the developmental services sector.

In addition to daily work CRT continues to have active membership on numerous committees. Examples of this are: Development of Peer Connections, 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, and Pandemic Committee. We are still waiting to hear about funding for the Dual Diagnosis Transition Rehabilitation Housing Project and have completed additional reports for MCCSS as per their request.

Innovation, resourcefulness, and talent are attributes abundant within OPTIONS NORTHWEST employees. Thanks for making a positive difference in people's lives!

~ Lisa Maki, Director of Clinical Services





Peer Connections Committee

Peer Connections is a peer group of people supported, who all have a common goal of friendship, sharing ideas and working together to create real change. Peer Connections members meet together monthly. Some current plans by the committee include: members speaking to NOSM students visiting on May 2, 2024, an Agency-wide Summer BBQ, and quarterly birthday celebrations. Peer Connections is always looking for additional members. If you'd like to be a part of something special and to have your voice heard, this group is for you!

Don't just take my word for it. 😊

“Has food! I like the staff that are apart of this group. I like getting to meet all of the other clients. I like to plan the parties. I get to share my opinions. Fun Group!” – **Sadie N.**



“I like to come here and see my friends.

I like to eat with my friends. I like coming here because I get some treats and plan for my future activities. I like Peer Connections because I can share my suggestions.” – **Alan R.**

“This is a good place. The best team of people. I like to volunteer. I get to help out and come up with lots of ideas. – **Ryley K.**

“It's a friendship group. I like the people. – **Joe S.**

Join us on the first Thursday of every month from 1:30 pm to 2:30 pm at 95 N Cumberland St. office. Snacks and refreshments are always provided!

~ Brandon Madore, CRT Clinician

Plant Pals

Introducing our new club here at OPTIONS NORTHWEST:

Something new and exciting has begun here at the **office!** Employees have joined OPTIONS participants in creating a fun and engaging **club** for everyone interested in growing plants! All learning levels are welcome! Let's learn to grow together! Did you know playing in dirt has great benefits to the *human brain!*?

Come by and visit our new outdoor planters and see what the **PLANT PALS** have to offer!

Sign up to receive emails of upcoming plant events here: michelle.lavoie-pintar@optionsnorthwest.com

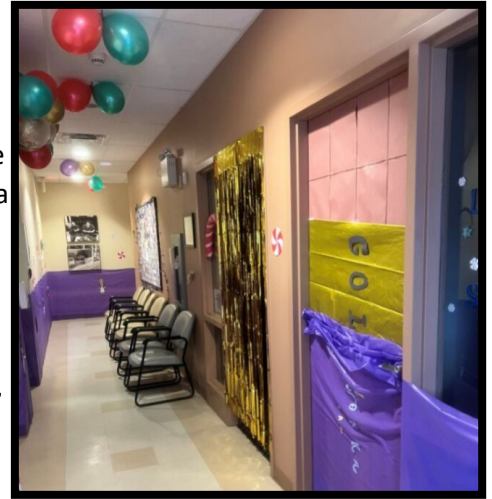




A Visit to Wonka Village!

This past holiday season, The Community Resource Team (CRT) embarked on a chocolaty and sugary adventure. What started out as a door decorating contest grew into so much more. CRT fully decorated the 3rd floor of the 95N Cumberland office in a Wonka themed wonderland. Purple lined hallways, coloured balloons, candy and chocolate decorations, Oompa Loompa Clinicians, and even Lisa “Willy Wonka” Maki, the candymaker herself, handing out golden tickets, provided a one-of-a-kind experience too good not to share. On the night of December 20, 2023, we opened our doors to our agency and their families and all the people we support. The night provided great excitement with music and dancing, sensory activities, movies, games, puzzles, drawing and colouring, treats, baking and candy, snacks, homemade apple cider and hot chocolate. An amazing turnout of Wonka enthusiasts came to celebrate the holiday season and have some fun. A wonderful time was had by all! CRT is hoping to make an annual tradition out of this experience and are already looking forward to next year with an all-new theme!

~ Brandon Madore, CRT Clinician



Creativity In Supporting People

Lilly Gifkins, Health Care Consultant with CRT, always puts the people we support first. Lilly received a referral to assist with injections, but she knew that would cause a lot of anxiety for Jenna who disliked needles. Lilly brainstormed ideas with CRT discussing strengths, interests, and how Jenna liked to dress up. Lilly decided to meet the person where they were at. Lilly brought costumes to Jenna so she could dress up and feel at ease. Jenna now looks forward to seeing Lilly for the injection and wonders what next costume experience they can share together. This shows the creativity and dedication of how Lilly went the extra mile, while adding some fun to the work.

Great job Jenna and Lilly!



Get to know ONW CRT

Ian

Ian's favourite thing about OPTIONS is having Sherry Glena as a clinician as she does all kinds of stuff to help him and his family. He likes to spend his free time playing videogames. One of Ian's greatest accomplishments is placing on the Honour Roll in College! One of his best memories is going to a Doobie Brothers concert with his mom and dad. His favourite holiday is Halloween because he gets to dress up and go out. He loves dogs, especially his dog, Lindy as she does funny, silly, quirky things. If Ian could possess any superpower, he would want the ability to fast forward time so that he does not have to wait for anything.



Rochelle

Rochelle's favourite thing about OPTIONS is coming to visit Suzanne Posthumus! Her favourite places to visit in Thunder Bay are Marina Park and Wackys. She would love to travel to New York or Jamaica one day. Her favourite song is Girl on Fire by Alicia Keys. Rochelle enjoys cooking and baking, especially cultural recipes!



Darcia

Darcia's favourite thing about ONW is Sherry Glena as she makes work/training fun and easy to understand! In her spare time Darcia is learning to speak French! She also loves jigsaw puzzles, crafts, and crocheting. She enjoys visiting Fort William Historical Park as she loves Canadian history. Darcia's greatest accomplishments include graduating from college and finally becoming a Grandmother! Her favourite animal is a cat because they like to cuddle and snuggle. She loves her little fur baby. If Darcia could have a superpower, she would like to read people's minds and have a magic wand to do the dishes and dusting for her.





Human Resources

This past year has been bustling for the Human Resources department. We conducted three General Orientations throughout the year and onboarded 62 new employees. Collaborating with Confederation College, we facilitated placement for 13 Developmental Service Worker Students, 2 Social Service Worker Students, and 1 Rec Therapy Student. Following their placement, we happily extended job offers to 11 students interested in continuing with OPTIONS NORTHWEST. Additionally, we maintained our presence at career fairs within the community, including the Confederation College Career Fair and the Opportunities Northwest Job Fair.

In our efforts to prioritize Health & Safety, we celebrated Mental Health Week under the theme "A Call to Be Kind. Because Compassion Connects Us All". We shared four informative emails highlighting the benefits of kindness and compassion, accompanied by a tracking sheet for employees. We encouraged staff to nominate colleagues who demonstrated kindness and compassion in the workplace, receiving a remarkable 78 nominations! Prize draws were conducted, and both the nominated staff and their nominators received prize packages.



Left to Right: Madison Bamford, Morgan Clark, Anita Storeshaw, Chris Cringle, Bryanna Lund, Suzanne Fiorito

Throughout the year, the HR Department underwent significant changes. Last winter, Bryanna Lund, Manager of Human Resources, pursued another opportunity. In January, I assumed the role of Manager of Human Resources. Consequently, the Human Resources Coordinator position became vacant,

which Madison Bamford successfully filled, leaving her previous position as the Human Resources and Training Advisor open. We welcomed Stephen Kilborn into the Human Resources and Training Advisor role earlier this year. As a department, we are enthusiastic about embracing our new roles and eagerly anticipate the opportunities the coming year holds for the Human Resources Department.

~ Morgan Clark, Manager of Human Resources



Finance & Technology

On April 1, 2023, OPTIONS NORTHWEST officially went live with UKG Pro to manage our HR records and process Payroll. On May 13, 2023, the time and attendance module, UKG Pro Workforce Management, was launched.

The transition to UKG will allow us to share information with employees across the agency in a timelier fashion.

Employees now have access to their HR, Payroll and

Schedule through the UKG portal on our website or through UKG's mobile app. Work has also started on the Advanced Scheduling module for UKG Pro Workforce Management which will further integrate UKG and improve adoption across the agency to improve the experience for all staff.



In September 2023, OPTIONS NORTHWEST adopted Multi-factor Authentication (MFA) on all user accounts in a further step secure access to the agency's financial data, and the records of our employees and individuals supported. With increased reliance on IT within the organization, this was a necessary step.

The finance team went through some changes this year. The 86S Cumberland Street staff transitioned to our main location, 95N Cumberland, in the fall. Happy to be under one roof and see the office staff daily. The team wished Anja Erwin a big congratulations on her retirement at the end of December. Not after downloading all the information, we could extract from her memory. Well wishes in your retirement Anja! Finance and Human Resources shared an intern for majority of the year, and they moved on to another field. Best wishes with their future endeavors. Vacant positions were filled, and our team was excited to introduce new coworkers to the organization.

I would like to thank everyone who was a part of the team this past year for all their contributions and dedication in providing services to the people supported to live life their way.

~ Sharon Morrison, Director of Finance



OPTIONS NORTHWEST Personal Support Services
Schedule of Receipts and Expenditures
For the year ended March 31, 2024

	<i>2024</i>	<i>2023</i>
	<i>(unaudited)</i>	<i>(unaudited)</i>
Receipts		
Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services	19,402,703	19,634,798
Individual rent and recoveries	1,033,310	964,656
Interest earned	120,268	80,936
Other recoveries	826,226	803,579
	21,382,507	21,483,969
Expenditures		
Salaries and benefits	17,586,598	15,900,875
Salaries and benefits - wage enhancement	128,572	1,314,937
Staff training	55,569	66,681
Building occupancy	1,119,586	943,714
Travel and communication	275,042	258,085
Supplies and equipment	679,789	1,123,574
Other program service expenditures	1,383,160	1,448,394
	21,228,316	21,056,260
	154,191	427,709

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