



BELLWOODS COMMUNITY NEWS

FALL EDITION 2024

IT'S TIME
TO HAVE OUR VOICES
HEARD



International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD)

On December 3rd, people and organizations around the world will recognize **International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD)**. This is a time to reflect on the achievements of persons with disabilities and a time to remind everyone of the urgent need for stronger government actions to fulfill their promises. Despite progress, significant gaps remain in ensuring access to quality healthcare, income, housing, and community services, among other things. True leadership and clear, actionable plans are essential to ensure dignity and equality for all.

Bellwoods Community Advisory Council (BCAC) is continuing its efforts to advocate for meaningful change at all levels of government. This past Spring, BCAC conducted a client advocacy survey to find out more about the types of issues Bellwoods should focus on as part of this work, and ideas on potential allies and partners.

The latest news,
updates and
announcements

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We are happy to share the survey findings as part of our recognition of IDPD. You can [click here](#) or visit Bellwoods website > About Us > BCAC > <https://bellwoodscentres.org/about-us/bellwoods-community-advisory-council/>

The **call to action** is powerful: by coming together as a community and continuing the push for stronger, more inclusive policies, we can help build a society that truly offers dignity, equality, and opportunity for all. We encourage everyone to engage with these efforts, whether by participating in local events, sharing experiences, or advocating for change at local, provincial, or national levels.

IDPD – Events of Interest

IDPD 2024: 2024 Disability Poverty report card launch

Join us as we launch our second annual Disability Report Card with excitement and optimism! In this special webinar, we'll spotlight the progress made and identify key areas for improvement as we await the new regulations for the Canada Disability Benefit.

When: Tuesday, December 3, 2024

Time: 12:00 - 1:00 P.M. (Online-Zoom)

Hosted by Rabia Khedr and Michelle Hewitt.

Please register: <https://plan-9.hubspotpagebuilder.com/registration-idpd-2024>

If you have any questions or require any additional accessibility accommodations, please connect with us [at events@disabilitywithoutpovetry.ca](mailto:events@disabilitywithoutpovetry.ca)



International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2024: Amplifying the leadership of Persons with Disabilities for inclusive and sustainable future

The Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT) and Community Partners are hosting a virtual celebration

When: Tuesday, December 3, 2024

Time: 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 P.M.

Advance registration is required:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZArd-GoqzktHd39Pb88CZaSHweYyTXhSjvQ>

If you need assistance with registering, contact robin.simmons@cilt.ca or call 416-599-2458 ext. 293.

Embracing Change for People with Disabilities

The Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians and Partners presents the 8th annual International day of Persons with Disabilities virtual Conference.

When: Saturday, December 7, 2024

Time: 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 P.M.

Register via Eventbrite:

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/embracing-change-for-people-with-disabilities-tickets-1070864918799?aff=oddtcreator>

Or contact via email or request accommodations by emailing idPWD.event@blindcanadians.ca

Adapted & Inclusive Recreation presents: Holiday Market

Featuring vendors that prioritize inclusion of people with disabilities and disability-focused organizations. Crocheted goods, soaps, jewelry, cards and so much more will be available!

When: Saturday, December 7, 2024

Time: 11:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.

This Holiday Market will take place at Edithvale Community Centre, Banquet Hall located at 131 Finch Avenue West, North York, ON. M2N 2H8

Free parking on site.

Organizational News

Community Support Month

We celebrated Ontario Community Support Month in October and took time to thank and recognize staff for their incredible contributions to supporting clients' independence. As part of the celebration, we held our annual Long Service Staff Awards Ceremony. This year, we recognized and celebrated the following staff:



5
YEARS

Raquel Argueta
Rebecca Chaston
Shawn Kronenberg
Neda Mihandoust
Cheryl Mulgrave
Maria Romeo
Sina Russom
Alysia Shim-Chim



10
YEARS

Pamela Brown
Sanjay Chatterjee
Elizabeth Christian
Gerda Dorsainvil
Mama Jawneh
Esther McDonald
Dianne McLean
Kereen Mowatt
Chita M. Pascual
Mary Jane Sabeniano
Mohinee Singh
Vedowtie Sookdeo



15
YEARS

Bultu Abasanbi
Ruchelle Bailey
Phurbu Dolma
Annette Malcolm-Chambers
Martina Ogbonna
Marie Josee Placide
Marie Thomas



25
YEARS

Hildred Martin
Basmatee Ragobeer
Marietta Walter



30
YEARS

Rukmini Persaud
Wojciech Skowierzak



35
YEARS

Desta Tirfe
Steven Yip

Staff Announcements

Changes in the Communications Team

Anna Yip, Communications & Development Associate, is leaving Bellwoods to pursue a new career in the hospital sector. Over her 16 years with Bellwoods, Anna has held many positions, made significant contributions to the organization and built meaningful connections with clients and staff. We are going to miss her!

Beverley Nickoloff, Communications & Special Projects Consultant, will be leaving Bellwoods on December 10th. Since 2018, Bev has played a key role in supporting the Executive Team, Board of Directors, and shaping Bellwoods' communication strategy. Her commitment and contributions have been invaluable.

The HR Team has posted the communications vacancy and is working with Anna and Bev to ensure a smooth transition through a detailed handover plan. Thank you for your continued support during this time of change.



In Loving Memory of Keswarlall (Kes) Thani

It is with deep sadness that we share the sudden passing of our colleague, **Keswarlall (Kes) Thani**, on October 28th. Kes was a beloved PSW and a dedicated member of the Outreach Team for 27 years. His kindness, dedication to his clients, and professionalism in his career were exceptional. He touched the lives of many with his compassion and was a valued friend and colleague to all who had the privilege of working with him. Our hearts go out to his family during this incredibly difficult time, and we also extend our deepest condolences to his colleagues here at Bellwoods. His loss is deeply felt by our Bellwoods community.

Meet Transitions Team

Over the past few months, new staff have joined the Transitions Team. If you're at the 300 Shaw Site and have questions about the Transitions Program, don't hesitate to stop by and connect with Ajit and his team.



Ajit Prahbu
Director,
Transitions and
Community
Partnerships



Sidonia Hyde
Centralized
Referral
Management
Coordinator



Mary Callan
Community
Transitions
Coordinator



Habiba Majeed
Housing Access
Worker (HAW)



Eva Chang
MScOT, OT Reg.
(Ont.),
Independent
Living Facilitator
(ILF)



**Mikayla
Hjørngaard**
OT Reg. (Ont.),
Independent
Living Facilitator
(ILF)



**Masomeh
Toraby**
RPN, Independent
Living Facilitator
(ILF)



**Erica
Mothersole**
Community
Integration
Worker (CIW)



Stanley Sekagya
Community
Integration
Worker (CIW)

Legend:

- Housing with Layered Supports (partnership with the City of Toronto)
- Bellwoods' Independent Living Facilitation Program

Transition Programs are time-limited, goal-oriented programs that support individuals who are returning to the community from hospital or other settings. In keeping with the philosophy of Independent Living (IL), clients direct their own services with staff on-site for pre-scheduled services.

Independent Living Facilitation Program (ILFP)

The ILFP Team is made up of Independent Living Facilitators (ILFs) and Community Integration Workers (CIWs). They collaborate with clients to identify equipment needs and provide skills training to support their independence, safety and well-being in the community. Examples of areas of support provided by the ILFP Team include:

- Improved home safety
- Community orientation
- Mobility and seating
- Improved self-care skills
- Household management skills
- Improved health and wellness
- Housing, income security and linkages to community resources

For further information to access these supports:

- All clients can contact the CIW Team at ciw@bcclsp.org
- Reintegration Care Unit (RCU) clients can contact the ILF team at ilf@bcclsp.org

Update on Bellwoods' IDEA Initiative

We have concluded the documentation review, discussions with focus groups and interviews related to our **Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA)** initiative. Thank you to everyone who gave their time to share insights, experiences, and perspectives. This has been an intentional and important phase of our journey to assess how Bellwoods can better champion inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility as values within our organization.

We are now awaiting the consultant's report that will provide us with recommendations arising from this phase of work. The next phase will focus on integrating what we have learned into the culture of the organization, helping all members of Bellwoods understand how IDEA is part of both the day-to-day experience and the long-term vision of the organization.

We look forward to sharing the key insights from this work that will form part of a roadmap of actionable changes. Thank you again for your collaboration and dedication to this important work.

We look forward to continuing this journey together.

Health Updates

Stay Protected This Season!

Flu shots and COVID-19 vaccines are available at participating pharmacies, public health units, and primary care providers. It's safe and convenient to receive both vaccines at the same time. Ontarians aged six-months and older can receive their next COVID-19 dose if it has been six-months since their last dose or confirmed infection. Speak with a healthcare professional to determine your vaccination schedule.

The Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) immunization is also available:

- Beyfortus® for infants and high-risk children up to 24 months, free for over 200,000 families.
- Abrysvo® for pregnant women to protect their infants from birth to six months.

The province has expanded RSV prevention for high-risk older adults, with doses already available for those 60+ in long-term care, Elder Care Lodges, and retirement homes. Ontario's routine immunization schedule offers free vaccines for those who meet the eligibility criteria. If you're unsure which immunizations you or your family need, consult your healthcare provider or public health unit.

Remember: To reduce the spread of illness, practice good hygiene: wash hands often, cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing, clean surfaces regularly, and stay home when sick.

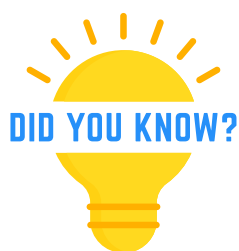


For health advice anytime, visit [Health811 online](#) or call 811 (TTY: 1-866-797-0007).

November is Diabetes Awareness Month - Let's Make Time to Learn More

This November, Diabetes Canada invites everyone to "***Make Time for Diabetes***" by learning about the condition and sharing knowledge within their communities. The Let's Make Time campaign aims to foster understanding, empathy, and awareness for people living with diabetes, tackling stigma and changing the conversation.

A recent Diabetes Canada report revealed that nearly 90% of individuals with Type 1 diabetes and 70% with Type 2 diabetes experience shame and blame for their condition. Throughout November, Diabetes Canada encourages everyone to "spill the tea" on what it's like to live with diabetes by sharing facts and personal stories on social media using #SpillTheDiabetea.



- Every three minutes, someone in Canada is diagnosed with diabetes.
- Managing diabetes requires constant time, energy, and attention.
- People with diabetes are two to three times more likely to live with depression.

Let's commit to supporting and understanding those who live with diabetes. Learn more at diabetes.ca/letsmaketime

APPLY

NOW

BRIDGING THE GAP FUND (BTGF)

This fund is available to all clients who may need some support during periods of greater financial hardship and/or help with emergency situations that cannot be funded through any other process.

Contact: Bridging the Gap Fund (BTGF) Coordinator
Email: ciw@bcclsp.org
Phone #: 416-970-6773

AFTER-HOURS REMINDER

The after-hours support number is 416-696-8397 and is available -
Monday to Friday: 6:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. to 12:00 midnight
Saturday to Sunday: 6:00 a.m. to 12:00 midnight

Please note - Between the hours of 12:00 a.m. - 6:00 a.m. you will reach an automated answering service where you will be prompted to -

- PRESS "1" to leave a message for the After-Hours Service Coordinator or
- PRESS "2" in the event of an urgent matter (i.e., fire, death, etc.) to reach After-Hours Supervisor immediately.

UPCOMING EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

December 2024

December 3 – International Day of Persons with Disabilities & Giving Tuesday
December 24 – Christmas Eve
*December 25 – Christmas – **Head Office Closed***
*December 26 – Boxing Day – **Head Office Closed***

January 2025

*January 1 - New Years - **Head Office Closed***
January 24 - Bell Let's Talk Day



BELLWOODS
INNOVATING INDEPENDENCE

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Charity Registration

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This newsletter is produced by Bellwoods a charitable, not-for-profit organization headquartered in Toronto. Bellwoods provides housing, personal support and reintegration services to individuals with a broad range of disabilities and also provides transition programs and supports for clients transitioning from hospital and/or those at-risk of homelessness.

Electronic copies of this newsletter are available on our website <https://bellwoodscentres.org/about-us/publications/>
See Publications > Newsletters.

For a printed copy and/or suggestion on content for future topics contact Bellwoods Head Office.