



**DeafBlind**  
ONTARIO SERVICES

# ANNUAL REPORT

2020-2021

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# VALUE STATEMENTS

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## WE ARE PASSIONATE

*We are driven to empower the people we support and to celebrate their uniqueness.*

We demonstrate being passionate by:

- Embracing challenges and opportunities with energy and enthusiasm;
- Extending the reach of the people we support into the community, where they can achieve their goals, dreams and aspirations;
- Creating and providing unique opportunities to learn and grow; and
- Motivating and encouraging our co-workers, as well as the people we support, to challenge themselves every day.

## WE ARE COLLABORATIVE

*Engaging others makes us better. Each of us has something to learn and something to teach.*

We demonstrate being collaborative by:

- Fostering partnerships with the people we support, their families, other community resources, government, funders and organizations with similar goals—locally, nationally and around the world;
- Committing to open communication and transparency when working with each other and our partners; and
- Supporting each other and seeking input from others for solutions that benefit all.

## WE ARE LEADERS

*We set the standard and promote excellence in our field.*

We demonstrate being leaders by:

- Constantly evolving and striving for excellence in every thing we do;
- Mentoring, educating and encouraging ourselves and others;
- Generating and being receptive to new ideas;
- Advocating for people's rights, beliefs and dreams; and
- Holding ourselves accountable to the people we support, families, employees, funders and other stakeholders.

## WE ARE RESILIENT

*When faced with challenges, we adapt and grow—becoming stronger together.*

We demonstrate being resilient by:

- Providing holistic services that are responsive to the ever-changing needs of individuals supported;
- Being proactive in identifying and addressing circumstances that may present challenges; and
- Learning from setbacks and being persistent and flexible in our efforts to find creative, workable solutions.

## WE ARE LIMITLESS

*We believe in endless possibilities.*

We demonstrate being limitless by:

- Being courageous, open-minded and creative; and
- Empowering each other to go outside the box and achieve goals and dreams.

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SPECIAL MENTION

## MISSION & VISION

AS OF APRIL 1, 2021, OUR NEW MISSION AND VISION IS:

**Mission:** DeafBlind Ontario Services supports individuals who are Deaf, hard of hearing, non-verbal and deafblind with an array of services so they can live and thrive within the community.

**Vision:** Enriching lives one *touch* and *sign* at a time.

## STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2022

**Our Vision to 2022 - *Together We Thrive***

### EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE

Providing Exceptional Service inspired our foundation and will continue to guide our growth. We strive to be the Intervenor Services provider of choice in Ontario and ensure people with deafblindness receive Exceptional Service.

We will also explore providing services to populations of Ontarians with deafblindness that currently lack support.

As leaders, we will steer the development of an accreditation process for agencies in the field to promote a standard of service excellence.

### ENGAGED EMPLOYEES

Our employees are our strength! We strive to build a culture of Engaged Employees and empower all levels of our dynamic team through the implementation of a Communication and Engagement Strategy.

### ENRICHED COLLABORATION

We will maintain our current partnerships and build new relationships at the provincial, national, and international level to foster Enriched Collaboration.

We value collaborations and recognize that external partnerships and meaningful exchange help us to learn and grow. Fostering Enriched Collaboration will ensure we continue to provide the best support possible.

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# MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR & CEO

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2020 will be a year none of us will soon forget. We continue to monitor the COVID-19 pandemic. As the situation changes and continues to change, we make decisions that are in line with our mission, vision and values, along with public health authorities. With that being said, it really has been our team of intervenors who are to be commended. As an essential service, our intervenors displayed their passion for the people we support and they continue to show their resilience during these challenging times. The word 'limitless' has new meaning for DeafBlind Ontario Services, as we continue to work to keep those we support safe and healthy.

**Limitless: being or seeming to be without limits. Without end, limit, or boundary.**

In late 2018, Transfer Payment Agencies (TPAs) were being asked by their Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) Program Supervisors to create efficiencies. A 2020 report by Ernst Young and a third party review by KPMG Canada brought forth the message to expect significant transformation.

In 2019, Array Services and DeafBlind Ontario Services came together to investigate the possibility of partnering to enhance specialized services for persons who are Deaf, hard-of-hearing, non-verbal and deafblind. Nine working groups worked collectively and collaboratively during 2020 and made recommendations on the partnership. Effective April 1, 2021, DeafBlind Ontario Services and Array Services amalgamated, and continue as one corporation under the name DeafBlind Ontario Services. The two organizations will be able to increase capacity, serve more people and use resources more effectively. Our combined expertise in serving these specialized populations is a natural fit and will protect our specialized services, especially with the message from the Ministry on efficiencies.

The Governance working group was one of the 9 working groups established to guide the partnership between Array Services and DeafBlind Ontario Services. From October 2020 to January 2021, the Governance Working Group met to formulate recommendations to the Boards of Array Services and DeafBlind Ontario Services on the key governance structure of the amalgamated entity and jointly develop governance documents. Thanks and appreciation are extended to the members of the Governance Working group: Don Spink, Lise Gagnon, and Tiffany Barker.

Provincially, we continue our work towards a new certification process for intervenors in collaboration with CNIB Deafblind Community Services under the Academy for Certification of Visual Rehabilitation & Education Professionals (ACVREP). We are more than thrilled with our progress together in achieving this initiative, allowing us to be one step closer in recognizing the professional field of Intervenor Services. Stay tuned for more news on this as it unfolds later in 2021.

Our integrative partnership with PHSS and Community Living Chatham-Kent continues. The focus of the integrative partnership is on strengthening the collective abilities of the three organizations. Our goal is to share knowledge and explore efficiencies, ensuring that the people we serve who have unique, specialized, and complex needs are the number one priority. A joint recruitment media campaign and online 50/50 raffle are just two of the outcomes of this partnership over the past year.

Our value of collaboration was displayed through connections provincially, nationally and internationally. Internationally, our CEO continues her work on the Deafblind International board of directors. The organization has representatives on the several working groups to plan the 2023 World Conference. Nationally, we co-chair the National Deafblind Awareness Month Working Group's efforts to "make a wave" from coast to coast this June - this time focusing on the global yarn bombing initiative. Follow us on social media in June for how DeafBlind Ontario Services is participating in this initiative across Ontario!

DeafBlind Ontario Services' FOCUS Accreditation onsite validation was originally scheduled to occur in April 2020, but had to be paused due to the COVID-19 pandemic. When DeafBlind Ontario Services proposed that the validation take place virtually, FOCUS agreed – and we quickly shifted gears to put that plan into action. We are happy to report that DeafBlind Ontario Services is the first deafblind organization to successfully achieve its third 4-year accreditation, the first to receive a rating of 100% in meeting all applicable standards, and the first to pioneer virtual onsite validation! DeafBlind Ontario Services is also the first deafblind organization to receive the Seal of Sustainability Award, an elite level recognition awarded to organizations who demonstrate and meet the FOCUS standards for three accreditation cycles or more.

**DeafBlind Ontario Services provides an array of services to people who are Deaf, hard of hearing, non-verbal and deafblind that are customized to each individual's unique needs, method of communication, and goals to enrich their life.**

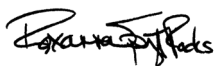
Virtual connection has changed the way the world does business. Training of our employees has gone completely virtual, as has connecting the people we support with their families and friends and an employee wellness challenge focusing on mental health. Accreditation and our amalgamation with Array Services were also done virtually.

We hope that you and your families are staying safe.

Respectfully submitted,



Lise Gagnon  
Board Chair



Roxanna Spruyt-Rocks  
Chief Executive Director

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# UPDATES FROM BOARD COMMITTEES

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One of the strategic objectives within the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan, “Together We Thrive”, was to charge the Governance Committee with reviewing the organization’s governance framework, including the structure, mandates and composition of the board and its committees in light of DeafBlind Ontario Services’ evolution to date. Following this review, in May 2020 the board of directors approved a revised and re-focused committee structure, including new mandates for the board and committees.

To support alignment with the new governance framework, the Client Services and Government Relations committees were disbanded effective June 2020. Thanks are extended to members of those committees for their service and dedication. (Client Services Committee: Emma LeBlanc, Tiffany Barker, Danielle Brouillet, Barbara Hooton, Diane Gabay, Lise Gagnon. Government Relations Committee: Brian Watkinson, Gail Beggs, Diane Gabay, Lise Gagnon, Marnie McDermott, Maurice Voisin).

From the start of the 2020-2021 Board year and until December 2020, the Finance and Governance committees met and functioned as usual. Effective January 2021, the revised committee structure took effect, with two committees reporting to the board – the Finance & Risk Committee, and the Governance & Human Resources Committee.

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## GOVERNANCE & HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE REPORT 2020-21

Chair: Tiffany Barker

Members: Rick Boychuk, Linda Littell, Ray Coutu, and Lise Gagnon (Board Chair/ex-officio)

Following the formal review of the governance structure - completed by the Governance Review Sub-Committee and approved by the board in June 2020 – DeafBlind Ontario Services’ committee structure was refreshed and revised to be aligned with the new governance framework.

The Governance and Human Resources Committee develops and oversees the approach DeafBlind Ontario Services takes on matters of corporate governance and human resource policy, and makes recommendations to the Board with respect to such matters. This includes the following responsibilities: director nominations/appointments, board and committee effectiveness and good governance, governance reporting and documentation, as well as leadership and HR oversight.

Operating in accordance with the post-amalgamation by-laws (effective April 1, 2021), the Governance & Human Resources Committee will support the development of refreshed governance policies, and will continue to support the orientation process for board and committee members.

Sincere thanks are extended to the volunteers who served on the Governance Committee until December 2020: Lesley Banner, Jim Dadson, Barb Hooton and Judy Porteous.



## FINANCE & RISK COMMITTEE REPORT 2020-21

Chair: Greg Paget

Members: John Halman, Emma LeBlanc, Brian Watkinson, Lise Gagnon (Board Chair/ex-officio)

Following the formal review of the governance structure - completed by the Governance Review Sub-Committee and approved by the board in June 2020 – DeafBlind Ontario Services' committee structure was refreshed and revised to be aligned with the new governance framework.

The Finance and Risk Committee assists the Board of Directors in meeting its fiduciary oversight and obligations in relation to financial management and reporting, risk identification and oversight to ensure DeafBlind Ontario Services is led and managed in the best interest of its mission. Committee responsibilities include regular reviews of financial reporting, oversight of an effective risk management framework, and the review of internal and external audit processes and relationships.

Sincere thanks are extended to the following volunteers who served on the Finance Committee until December 2020: Steve Fenster, Daniel Gabay, Rob Crawford, Gwen Elling, and Raymond Coutu.

**We set the standard  
and promote  
excellence in our field.**

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# COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR OF THE FINANCE AND RISK COMMITTEE

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It is my pleasure as Chair of the Finance and Risk Committee of DeafBlind Ontario Services to update the financial results for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2021 to people supported, volunteers, funders, donors and employees.

In the 2020-21 fiscal year, we continued our efforts to provide the highest standards of service to existing and new people supported. DeafBlind Ontario Services operated in an environment impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the organization received temporary wage enhancement and COVID-19 Residential Relief Funds from the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. DeafBlind Ontario Services also applied for the Federal Temporary Wage Subsidy reducing tax remittances and for the pandemic pay to our eligible employees.

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) continued to invest funds through Partner Facility Renewal (PFR) funding for infrastructure improvements including accessibility, electrical, plumbing and mechanical systems, fire safety and other improvements of our residential locations. A total of \$273,969 was funded by the Ministry during the fiscal year.

Funds raised through gaming (bingo) continue to be part of the DeafBlind Ontario Services revenue.

On behalf of the Finance and Risk Committee, we are very grateful to all of our funding partners, donors, volunteers and employees whose continued support and commitment to our Organization has provided us with a solid financial position.

Greg Paget, Chair

**When faced with challenges,  
we adapt and grow - becoming  
stronger together.**



# SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Statement of Financial Position Year Ended March 31,	2021	2020
	\$	\$
<b>Assets</b>		
Cash	511,186	145,953
Accounts receivable and prepaid expenses	625,027	838,337
Community Donation Fund Net assets designated for projects	59,366	672,699
Capital assets	10,745,520	11,819,473
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>11,941,099</b>	<b>13,476,462</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	1,350,616	1,439,826
Mortgage loans	691,212	1,530,415
Forgivable loans	4,824,539	4,429,539
Unamortized restricted transfers	1,867,702	2,129,788
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>8,734,069</b>	<b>9,529,568</b>
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>3,207,030</b>	<b>3,946,894</b>
<b>Total liabilities and net assets</b>	<b>11,941,099</b>	<b>13,476,462</b>

Statement of Revenue and Expenses Year Ended March 31,	2021	2020
	\$	\$
<b>Revenue</b>		
Province of Ontario subsidy	16,464,642	14,786,730
Amortization of restricted transfers and other	776,419	744,062
Accommodation and care service fees	746,692	718,074
Fundraising, donations and miscellaneous	388,990	383,445
	<b>18,376,743</b>	<b>16,632,311</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Salaries, benefits, training and recruitment	12,453,435	11,933,367
Amortization of capital assets	1,126,031	1,114,929
Programming, supplies and vehicles	759,864	616,964
Professional fees	1,297,251	1,373,965
Accommodation	827,129	690,703
Advertising, travel and other	362,858	532,153
Contribution to DeafBlind Ontario Foundation	2,289,443	-
Fundraising activities	596	344,635
	<b>19,116,607</b>	<b>16,606,716</b>
<b>Excess/(Deficiency) of revenue over expenses</b>	<b>(739,864)</b>	<b>25,595</b>

The above was summarized from the draft audited financial statements for the year ended March 31, 2021. The complete audited financial statements are available on our website at [www.deafblindontario.com](http://www.deafblindontario.com).

# BY THE NUMBERS

**32**

years of service

**85**

individuals served in Supported Living Homes

Individuals supported through

**11**

Partnerships program

**10**

Supported Independent Living

**2**

Long Term Care



**38**

Community meetings (planning tables, Chambers, local government officials, etc.)

Numbers are lower due to the pandemic

**9**

Community presentations

Numbers are lower due to the pandemic

**9**

Work Groups over 12 months = 1 Amalgamation

**246**

active employees as of March 31, 2021

## Specialized Training

All training was conducted virtually this past year, due to the pandemic, both internally and externally.

TOUCH™ = Training Ongoing Unique Committed Holistic

**29**

trained intervenors TOUCH™ 1

**22**

trained intervenors TOUCH™ 2



Community Services Developmental Services Training Initiative

**16**

TOUCH™ 1

**5**

TOUCH™ 2

## Community Services Workshops

**26**

Introduction to Sensory Loss

**24**

Communication 101 Bridging the Gap

**14**

Sensory Integration

**11**

Agencies

**2020-21**

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# FRIENDS OF DEAFBLIND ONTARIO SERVICES

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Our 'Friends of DeafBlind Ontario Services' award recognizes individuals, groups or organizations who, over time, did one or more of the following:

- contributed considerable personal time, effort and/or resources to support the mission of DeafBlind Ontario Services and/or people supported;
- demonstrated excellence in leadership and initiative as a volunteer to DeafBlind Ontario Services;  
or
- extensively promoted DeafBlind Ontario Services and people supported within their community.

Past recipients include donors, supporters, community partners and volunteers. This prestigious award was established in 2008.

## FRIENDS OF DEAFBLIND ONTARIO SERVICES 2020-2021:

Gail Beggs, Volunteer

Billy Cashman, Volunteer

CNIB Deafblind Community Services, Community Partner

Joe Passaretti, Community Partner

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# SPECIAL MENTION

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## EMPLOYEE SERVICE AWARDS

### 5 YEARS

Ravin Bursey  
Nicole Capalbo  
Sarah Fullick  
Nadia Gour  
Kirsten Harbottle  
Sarah Harris  
Jacqueline Lamont  
Rebecca McFadden  
Jessica McKnight  
Nadine Middleton  
Anna-Belle Modeste

### 10 YEARS

Amanda Albrecht  
Julie Banks  
Tonya Byers  
James Chidley  
Ashley Fowler  
Terry Jakeman  
Jennifer Luckhardt  
Annick Lalonde

### 15 YEARS

Judith Campbell-Childerhose  
Lillian Dawe  
Linda Fiumarella  
Elizabeth Makura  
Susie Naelgas  
Nicole Nelson  
Annette Piggott  
Josie Quinn

### 20 YEARS

Ian White

## VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARDS

5 Years – Gail Beggs  
10 Years – Gwen Elling  
15 Years – Doug Downer

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2020-21

Lise Gagnon, Chair  
John Halman, Vice Chair  
Danielle Brouillet  
Raymond Coutu  
Rob Crawford  
Diane Gabay  
Emma LeBlanc  
Linda Littell  
Marnie McDermott  
Greg Paget

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**We believe  
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**DeafBlind**  
ONTARIO SERVICES

# **Enriching lives one *touch* and *sign* at a time**

17665 Leslie Street, Unit 15  
Newmarket, ON L3Y3E3  
1.855.340.DBOS (3267)  
[deafblindontario.com](http://deafblindontario.com)

