



keeping [in touch]

DeafBlind Ontario Services | Fall 2021



**ENRICHING LIVES ONE
TOUCH AND SIGN AT A TIME**



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GIVINGTUESDAY™

Giving Tuesday, a movement for giving and volunteering following Black Friday and Cyber Monday each year, is on **November 30, 2021**. Join us in celebrating this global day of giving back. Watch for details on our social media for more information on how you can participate in this year's Giving Tuesday. Now more than ever, we are called upon to make a difference.

Fundraising Events



On October 23, guests will delight their senses and savour the flavours of fine chocolate, wine and “shine” (moonshine) at DeafBlind Ontario Foundation’s second virtual *Savour the Senses*.

In this intimate 90-minute tasting, a team of experts (chocolatier, sommelier and a whiskey maker) will guide guests virtually through an exploration of the senses and engage in lively discussions about the pairing and more.

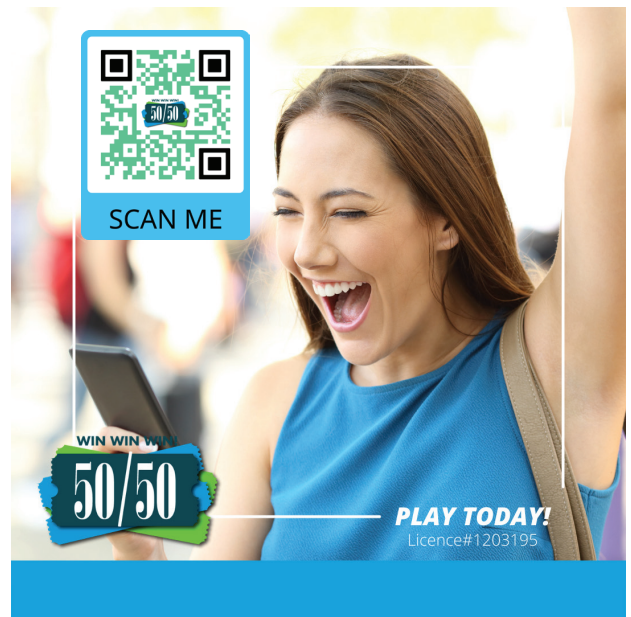
Although ticket sales have closed, new this year is an online auction open to all, not just event guests! The auction opens on October 8, visit deafblindontario.com for details!

WIN-WIN-WIN 50/50 Raffle

We have joined forces to launch our first ever, province-wide online 50/50 raffle, with our partners PHSS and Community Living Chatham-Kent!

By purchasing tickets for the draw, you are supporting three non-profits and enriching the lives of people with disabilities throughout Ontario. That’s what we call a WIN-WIN... WIN!

Visit winwinwin5050.ca to get your tickets!



You’re invited to engage your senses during our second *Come to Your Senses* Challenge, March 7 - 11, 2022.

Choose up to five inspiring sensory-related challenges over five days and fundraise for DeafBlind Ontario Foundation.

In the weeks leading up to the challenge, pledges will be collected on the CanadaHelps Peer-2-Peer platform. This makes it easy to set up your fundraising page and goals. It’s all based on the five senses, so join us as an individual or team for this exciting event.

Get your family, friends, and colleagues involved and choose from the wide selection of creative, sensory ideas provided or, better yet, create your own! Have you COME TO YOUR SENSES?

Details coming soon at deafblindontario.com.



SARA'S

Supported Living Homes

STORY

Sara talks about the importance of Deaf, hard of hearing, non-verbal and deafblind people connecting together.

Sara says there is an easy way to support people who are Deaf: learn American Sign Language (ASL).

"It's really important to learn the alphabet," said Sara through Amanda Manley, her Direct Support Professional (DSP) with DeafBlind Ontario Services.

Born profoundly Deaf – ASL is Sara's first language, although she does understand and write English.

ASL is a language of its own and has its own grammar and syntax.

It also uses body language and facial expressions to help people understand what a person who is Deaf is saying.

Sara recently created a book of signs to help those who want to learn ASL.

At first, the team of DSPs who work at the supported living home where Sara has lived since 2016, showed her how to go onto the computer, type in the word, download a picture of the sign and print it to include in her book.

Now, Sara works independently, adding signs to her sign book that is growing each day.

"I have now done over 50 signs."

Each page is laminated and the book is available to her team of DSPs and friends and family helping them to better communicate with Sara and others who are Deaf.

In addition to ASL, Sara also uses fingerspelling, where users spell out each letter of a word.

"(Sara) also enjoys going out and having new experiences. She is always willing to try new things," said Amanda.

Sara said she loves playing basketball, using the basketball net at her house, bouncing on the trampoline ("jumping is fun"), going swimming, participating in bowling and playing baseball on the Peterborough Challenger team.

She also loves doing crafts, including Parlor beads, creating Disney characters such as Minnie and Pluto, and drawing with sidewalk chalk.

This year, Sara is growing peppers, zucchini, pumpkins (she has three so far) and basil in her garden.

She is learning to cook healthy meals, using the "yummy" food she has grown in her garden as well as store bought, although she said baking is better, and plays card and board games, with Skip-Bo and Sorry being some of her favourites.

Sara has one thing to add: "I want people to know that Deaf, hard of hearing, non-verbal and deafblind persons can all be friends."

**"I want people to know
that hearing, hard of
hearing and Deaf persons
can all be friends."**

Sara Quick

Research Spotlight



Professor Susan Clement



Dr. Scott Veenliet

Fanshawe College's Gerontology Interprofessional Practice Program and the Research and Evaluation Program's Program Advisory Committee (PAC) offers ways for the College to gather feedback on their curriculum, ensuring it remains relevant to help graduates meet the needs of employers. DeafBlind Ontario Services is pleased to participate on these Committees to offer insight on the needs of the populations it serves.

Gerontology Interprofessional Practice Program - Prof. Susan Clement

This Graduate Certificate program is designed to offer students the knowledge and skills needed to enhance their professional practice in the care of aging adults. Students with previous experience in social work, recreation and leisure, developmental disabilities and allied health (those interested in acute and chronic diseases and disorders) develop expertise in collaborative person-centred care.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) person-centred care empowers "people to take charge of their own health rather than being passive recipients of services."

DeafBlind Ontario Services has been collaborating with the program since 2017.

Prof. Susan Clement, Field Placement Coordinator for the program, said collaborations with organizations such as DeafBlind Ontario Services offer amazing student experiences. "Many of the students in the program come from a mix of educational experiences and training, including nursing, social services, recreation (and) even political science, and are interested in augmenting their previous educational and professional training."

For DeafBlind Ontario Services, this collaboration provides an opportunity to offer field placements to students interested in gaining real-life perspectives by working on research projects that gather evidence to support the needs of individuals with deafblindness and enhance the organization's supports and services.

The first project focused on helping promote awareness about age-related dual sensory loss - loss of both vision and hearing - and share their expertise with McCormick Homes, a long-term care home, in London, Ont.

Through this collaboration, students were able to link knowledge and experiences from DeafBlind Ontario Services employees with the unique needs of those who receive services from McCormick Homes.

A second project tasked students with the research question: "What are the best practices for educating intervenors on recognizing signs of dementia in individuals living with dual sensory loss/deafblindness".

The research team prepared three resources, which included an Alzheimer Society virtual reality simulation workshop, an educational video module, and a resource document.

DeafBlind Ontario Services can use these resources during onboarding as well as ongoing training. This is important as the organization works

to continuously support growth and development of their employees so individuals with deafblindness have access to high-quality services.

Research and Evaluation Program – Dr. Scott Veenliet, Faculty Lead

Since 2019, DeafBlind Ontario Services has collaborated with the Research and Evaluation Program, which focuses on students learning research design, or how researchers choose the method and techniques of study, data analysis and the professional issues involved in measuring the performance of projects, policies and programs. For DeafBlind Ontario Services, evaluation measures the effectiveness of a program, ensuring it meets the ongoing needs of people supported.

"This collaboration benefits both the College and the organization," said Dr. Scott Veenliet, the faculty lead for the program. "It offers students an opportunity to work on impactful projects and apply research to real-life situations/examples."

The first collaboration focused on evaluating DeafBlind Ontario Services' On Call System, based on data collected over several years.

The On Call System provides support for intervenors who work outside of regular working hours. The system provides an advisory role (usually by telephone) to intervenors who have questions or provides help during emergencies.

The review of the On Call System included examining the structure of the system and looking for ways to improve. Students also reviewed existing research about on call systems and best practices through a literature review.

Findings included a recommendation to review employee schedules to ensure there is a collaborative approach for on call schedules. The recommendations ensure the services the organization provides are developed professionally and evaluated to confirm what works and what doesn't, based on evidence.

At DeafBlind Ontario Services, we are coordinating research into deafblindness, ensuring the evidence is used to enhance services for the people we support and develop partnerships with other community services organizations. Learn more at deafblindontario.com.

BRIDGE

Community Services

TRAINING

Bridge provides customized training opportunities for organizations that support individuals with a sensory loss and/or communication challenges. A flexible and adaptive approach to learning is cornerstone to this program, which is designed to augment and strengthen your organization's services while focusing on the unique needs of the individuals you support.

In addition to hearing and vision loss, there are many factors that can impact traditional communication and wellbeing. Our expertise in working with individuals that require alternative approaches to communication led to the development of this program.

Upcoming Workshops

Communication 101: Bridging the Gap

This unique workshop provides learning opportunities for organizations or individuals who are looking to expand their knowledge and understanding of individuals with a sensory loss and communication need.

This interactive workshop will address: Sensory Loss – Characteristics and Implications, Total Communication Approach, Intro to Sign Language – Signed Exact English and Communication Systems.

Upcoming workshops: October 18, 2021 and January 17, 2022

Sensory Integration: Making Sensory Engagement Meaningful

This workshop is for organizations, support staff, and family members who are interested in learning about the senses and how the brain processes and organizes information from the body and environment.

The focus of this workshop is to deepen your understanding of sensory integration, sensory integration disorder, and the impact of someone with sensory loss.

Upcoming workshop: November 15, 2021

Learn more at deafblindontario.com or call 1-855-340-3267 ext. 237.





National Deafblind Awareness Month 2021

In June, large trees and fronts of buildings, fences and lampposts were covered with colourful yarn displays – known as yarn bombing – a form of street art where yarn that is knit, crocheted, or wrapped, adorns an object in a public space.

Every year, during National Deafblind Awareness Month in June, DeafBlind Ontario Services 'Makes a Wave from Coast to Coast' in collaboration with people with deafblindness, service providers, and supporters across the country to celebrate and raise awareness about deafblindness.

This year, organizations and individuals in Canada participated in Deafblind International's (DbI) yarn bombing movement, coming together one stitch at a time with people with deafblindness, service and advocacy groups,

Deafblind International members and partners, along with the wider public, to raise awareness on a global scale.

DeafBlind Ontario Services yarn bombed community objects and spaces in many of our service regions across the province.

In addition, a four-foot tall maple leaf went on a virtual tour of Ontario, photo bombing itself at familiar landmarks such as Parliament Hill, the Big Apple in Colborne, the Brockville Railway Tunnel, and a dock in Muskoka.

A BIG thank you to everyone who donated squares to our yarn bombing movement - we couldn't have created these beautiful tactile art installations without you.

Exciting yarn bombing plans for June 2022 are already in the works. Stay tuned!

Fundraising Events

The Finer Senses - A Virtual Wine Tasting Experience

On Friday, June 11th, DeafBlind Ontario Foundation hosted our second virtual fundraising event, *The Finer Senses*.

Throughout the evening, guests from 166 households across the province experienced a unique blind wine tasting experience hosted by Trayvino Wine Company.

A panel of wine experts - including a surprise guest from Argentina - guided guests through tasting three wines. Providing them with details about pairings, varietals, regions, and more.

New this year, was the addition of an online auction open to anyone two weeks prior to the event.

With social distancing in mind, DeafBlind Ontario Foundation continues to make the most of challenging circumstances, bringing people together during National Deafblind Awareness Month.

A warm thank you to our guests, volunteers, and generous sponsors for making this a memorable evening, raising \$29,202.

The poster features a dark background with a large, stylized red wine drop graphic on the left containing the text 'THE FINER SENSES'. On the right, the text reads: 'A Virtual Wine Tasting Experience', 'June 11, 2021', 'Experience world class wines from the comfort of your own home.', and 'Presented by:'. Below this are logos for 'Resident Care Pharmacy' and 'SILVER LININGS HEALTHCARE'. The hashtag '#TheFinerSenses' is displayed. At the bottom, a row of logos includes 'accessibil-IT', 'MAGNA', 'VILLAGE media', 'metrolandmedia', 'ROCK 95', '107.5KODFM', and '107.5KODFM'. Social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn are shown, along with the website 'deafblindontario.com'. The DeafBlind Ontario Foundation logo is in the top right corner.

Equality important for people who are Deaf and hard of hearing



When Barb Downey went on a cruise for people who are Deaf, she was surrounded by 4,000 people who communicated in sign languages from around the world. While there were interpreters on board, Downey said each person figured out a way to communicate with one another.

And it is a lesson that Downey, a Facilitator of Community Services at DeafBlind Ontario Services, wants more people to understand.

Communication, she said, is key and people who are Deaf want – and deserve – equity in every aspect of day-to-day living.

“My goal has always been to see equity for everyone,” said Downey through an interpreter. “Everybody should be able to communicate.”

Downey was born Deaf to hearing parents and grew up in Downeyville – a community named after her family. She has an older sister who is Deaf and a younger sister who has hearing.

“When I was young, I wanted to be a police officer, but was told I couldn’t do that. When I was in high school, it was a similar narrative, we were told we couldn’t do a lot of things.”

Fast forward to about 10 years ago and with technology, things have opened up for people who are Deaf, Downey said. Things that weren’t possible for Downey when she was young are now possible for kids who are Deaf today.

Today, Downey works at DeafBlind Ontario Services as a Facilitator of Community Services.

Downey has had a number of roles during her time with DeafBlind Ontario Services – she particularly enjoys teaching people the organization supports to become their own advocates.

“I encourage them to advocate for their rights.”

In 2019, the Accessible Canada Act, which removes barriers for people with disabilities, received royal ascent, meaning it officially became an act in Canada. The act acknowledges ASL, Langue des signes québécoise (LSQ) and Indigenous sign languages as the primary languages for communication by people who are Deaf in Canada.

Downey encourages people to learn more about people who are Deaf and Deaf culture – people who use a sign language and appreciate their history, literature and culture.

This is important, Downey said, so Deaf people have equity with their hearing counterparts. “We are the same as each other except our ability to hear. We expect and demand equality.”

Downey said she struggled with her Deaf identity until she was in her 20s when she became involved in the Deaf culture.

“As a Deaf woman, I feel proud of what I have...a beautiful visual language.”



Friends with Vision: Monthly Giving Program

“
Being a Friend
with Vision
ensures that I
can support a
charity that I am
passionate
about.”

Friends with Vision is a monthly giving program that offers supporters an easy, convenient way to support programs and services of their choice.

Donors receive annual tax receipts and are kept up-to-date on the priority needs funded each year through their consistent generosity.

Having a regular monthly revenue allows DeafBlind Ontario Foundation to plan for the future and quickly respond to urgent priority needs.

This is one of the reasons Jocelyn Willoughby is a Friends with Vision donor. A financial planner, Willoughby said being a monthly donor is easy and ensures the charity that is meaningful to her receives scheduled donations month after month, helping the organization continue to provide life-changing services.

"The one common theme I see with everyone is that no matter their differences...they want independence. If you're nine months old or 90 years old...you want to be as independent as possible. DeafBlind Ontario Services helps people to achieve that independence, while also providing them with the resources to support them in areas where they need more help. Being a Friend with Vision ensures that I can support a charity that I am passionate about."

Join today! Learn more at <https://deafblindontario.com/foundation/ways-to-give/> or email development@deafblindontario.com.



**THANK YOU FOR
MAKING A
DIFFERENCE**

The Finer Senses Sponsors



Savour the Senses Sponsors



TheReview

Our Donors: April - October 2021

Thank you to the following individuals and organizations for helping us enrich lives one touch and sign at a time.

Albert and Joan Webster, Anjac Construction, Andrew Van Pelt Electric Limited, BlueSky Communications, Crate Designs Furniture, Electrical Elite, Gary's Service & Towing, H.S.P. Consultants Inc., Jocelyn Willoughby, Ken and Susan Molnar, MacEwen Petroleum Inc., Magna for Community, Morrison CPA Professional Corporation, Natalie and Steve Brogan, North York Heating and Electrical Supplies, Open Plan Architects, Pam Bechard Royal LePage RCR Realty, Provix Inc., Covidcamera.com, Snyder Construction, TD Bank, The Printing House, The Robert Campeau Family Foundation, Town of Georgina, Trayvino Wine Company Limited, United Canada, Voll's Contract Flooring Ltd.

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