



DeafBlind
ONTARIO SERVICES

keeping [in touch]

DeafBlind Ontario Services | Spring 2022

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DeafBlind
ONTARIO FOUNDATION

We need you! Volunteer with DeafBlind Ontario Services!

Bingo Volunteers - Peterborough

We are seeking two volunteers to represent us in a customer service role at Delta Bingo in Peterborough. Shifts are two to two and a half hours long and begin in May 2022.

Bingo Volunteers - Richmond Hill

We are seeking two volunteers to represent us in a customer service role at Bingo World in Richmond Hill. Shifts are two to two and a half hours long on Saturdays and begin ASAP.

Details

Through our partnerships with Delta Bingo in Peterborough and Bingo World in Richmond Hill along with the help of Bingo Volunteers, we raise awareness and funds that benefit the people we support.

Volunteers must be over 18 years old. We offer a \$50 honorarium for each shift attended and online and in-person training is provided.

General responsibilities and duties include: providing excellent customer service to patrons of Bingo World, welcoming and thanking guests as they arrive and depart on behalf of the organization, ability to stand or walk for 2.5 hours, general cleaning and tidying of tables and areas where patrons sit, and other duties as assigned.

Contact Laura Parsons for more details by email at l.parsons@deablintontario.com or call 905-853-2862 ext. 233.

National Volunteer Week

National Volunteer Week, April 24-30, 2022, is a time to celebrate, recognize and thank volunteers; creating awareness for the important work millions do across Canada! We commend our volunteers for their dedication and ongoing commitment to the people we support!

This National Volunteer Week, we would like to extend our congratulations to Greg Paget and Linda Littell on 5 years of service, Janet Hollies and Jim Dadson on 10 years, and Brian Watkinson and Lise Gagnon on 15 years of service!

**VOLUNTEERING IS
EMPATHY IN ACTION**

**NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK
APRIL 24-30, 2022**



Nonprofit Employer of Choice '21



DeafBlind Ontario Services is a four-time winner of the Canadian Nonprofit Employer of Choice (NEOC) award!

This year, 12 organizations from across Canada, including DeafBlind Ontario Services, fulfilled program requirements to be named a NEOC award winner for 2021.

Canada's nonprofit and voluntary sector is among the largest in the world. Over 2 million Canadians work in an estimated 170,000 charitable and nonprofit sector organizations (85,000 registered charities) that generate about 8.1% of Canada's total GDP.

The NEOC Awards recognize organizations whose people

leadership and vision has translated into exemplary talent management practices.

Further, the NEOC Award is a tool that measures a nonprofit's leadership attributes, HR practices and employee perceptions, all while helping to build a preferred employer brand.

True to our vision of being a leader in the field, DeafBlind Ontario Services was a NEOC award winner in 2019, 2016, and 2015 as well!



Join our team! Visit deafblindontario.com/careers for new opportunities.

Do you have what it takes to become one of our *Friends with Vision*?

Our *Friends with Vision* monthly donors help the people we support who are Deaf, hard of hearing, non-verbal, and deafblind live lives of dignity and purpose.

Making a regular monthly gift allows DeafBlind Ontario Foundation to address the priority needs of those we support and plan for the future.

It's an easy, convenient, and secure way to provide regular revenue and lower admin costs to increase impact.

You receive an annual tax receipt and regular updates on the impact of your consistent generosity.

Become one of our Friends with Vision today! Learn more at deafblindontario.com/foundation/ways-to-give.

Community Training

Bridge - Sensory Loss Communication Training, offered by DeafBlind Ontario Services, provides customized training opportunities for organizations that support individuals with a sensory loss and/or communication challenges.

Adapted Environments – Virtual

Increase awareness of accessibility needs and barriers in the home and community. Learn more about adapting environments to meet the unique needs of people with sensory loss.

Communication 101: Bridging the Gap – Virtual

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

Experience Tools: Expand your Communication Toolbox – In-Person

Recommended Prerequisite - Communication 101: Bridging the Gap

Experience Tools are used to initiate conversation, enhance concepts, promote expressive and receptive language, encourage anticipation, reinforce choices or reflect on memories.

Introduction to Sensory Loss – Virtual

Understand the differing needs of individuals with sensory loss and how you can improve your work practices to support and empower them. Learn about the eye and ear and maximizing residual vision and residual hearing.

Personality Dimensions® – Virtual or In-Person

This interactive workshop of self-discovery will help you to develop a better understanding and appreciation for yourself and others. Build stronger teams and optimize performance.

Sensory Integration: Making Sensory Engagement Meaningful – Virtual

Deepen your understanding of sensory integration, sensory integration disorder, and the impact on someone with sensory loss in this virtual training.

Our expertise led to the development of interactive workshops/customized training available by request. Contact us for details about customized training: mcs@deafblindontario.com or 1-855-340-3267 X 273.

May is Leave a Legacy Month

Our donors make a difference in the lives of the people we support who are Deaf, hard of hearing, non-verbal, and deafblind. With each gift, you make an impact on those who depend on the programs and services we offer. Leave your personal legacy while making a gift in



your will, trust, or through a gift of life insurance.

Or, make your donation of stocks, bonds, and mutual funds where you

receive substantial tax benefits. Our donors are our partners. Through your investments, we are working together to build independence and confidence for the people we serve.



Make a lasting gift, one that will have benefit for years to come.

Please contact a member of the Fund Development team by email at development@deafblindontario.com or call 1-855-340-3267. You may also make your donation of securities and mutual funds directly to us by visiting Canada Helps: canadahelps.org/en/donate/donate-securities/.

Research Spotlight

Development of Global Framework on Deafblindness

The World Health Organization has developed a global framework to describe disability, health and functioning, known as the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF).

This framework helps to provide a consistent definition for disabilities that can be used to develop eligibility criteria for disability pensions, accessibility and accommodation policies, or in creating regulations for assistive devices. The ICF Core sets are instrumental in improving clinical practice, research, and service delivery for persons with disabilities.

The ICF Core Sets have been developed for over thirty health conditions like neurological, respiratory and cardiovascular conditions, mental health, and hearing loss. To date, there has been no ICF Core Set developed for deafblindness.

DeafBlind Ontario Services partnered with researchers from the School of Optometry, University

of Montreal, to develop a research protocol for developing the ICF Core Sets on Deafblindness. The final step is an international consensus conference, which will be held as a pre-conference event before the 18th Deafblind International World Conference in Ottawa in July 2023.

Subject matter experts from the WHO world regions will finalize the core set at that time.

The ICF Core Sets for deafblindness will be important in creating scientific evidence in the field of deafblindness and improving the lives of those who are deafblind. The Core Set will form a common language and understanding of the effect the disability has on individuals. Also, ICF Core Set can raise awareness of deafblindness, which can help health care professionals to ensure accessibility to health services for the deafblind population.

To read the full study protocol, visit journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0261413.

Take the Opportunity to Grow

It's never too late to learn something new, gain new experiences and grow as an individual. For Val Huffman, this idea motivated her to choose a second career as an intervenor.

After years of running her own business, Val was ready for a career change and enrolled at a local college in their Social Services Worker (SSW) program. However, after her first semester, she soon realized that she needed to explore the right career path for her. After speaking with a friend over lunch, she connected with her friend's neighbour who worked as an intervenor. This conversation led to Val seeking out and completing a placement at DeafBlind Ontario Services in her third semester before graduating from her SSW program and later being hired.

"I wanted to work for an organization that celebrates the uniqueness of the individuals we support and I enjoy seeing them thrive as they learn new skills. At DeafBlind Ontario Services, every person is treated as an individual, they are unique and have the capacity to learn and grow," says Val.

She adds that, "although I was a bit overwhelmed, just like anyone who is starting a new job, learning about the company and the responsibilities of the position, I also felt supported by my co-workers. They helped me as I met the challenge of learning a new language - Signing Exact

English (SEE) - so that I could communicate with the individuals we support."



SEE is one of a number of methods of communications that individuals who experience both hearing and vision loss combined may use in working with an intervenor to gain independence, build their life skills and actively participate in all areas of their lives. Val additionally communicates with other individuals she supports using Adaptive Interactive Tactile Sign Language (AITSL) where the individual supported uses a hand over hand method to sign with an intervenor.

Her advice for anyone seeking a new career is, "take the opportunity to grow –don't be afraid to challenge yourself and learn new skills."

Val overcame her fears as she continued to receive on the job training, including specialized training opportunities to build and strengthen her skillset. Because every person with deafblindness experiences a varying degree of sensory loss, each person will use their own unique and individual way to communicate. An intervenor draws on their specialized training to build trust and create a connection with the individual(s) they support.

"There are many different paths that can lead to a career as an intervenor," she reflects. She also notes that the intervenors she works with use their transferable skills from a wide range of educational backgrounds to support the variety of people they support including, Personal Support Worker (PSW), Developmental Services Worker (DSW) or other related health, social services and disability programs.

Make a difference in the life of someone who is Deaf, hard of hearing, non-verbal or deafblind. Discover the difference it will make in you. Start your career with DeafBlind Ontario Services today. Apply online: deafblindontario.com/careers.

Certified Deafblind Intervenor Specialists

A new certification, Certified Deafblind Intervenor Specialists (CDBIS), encompasses several years of work from CNIB Deafblind Community Services, DeafBlind Ontario Services, and the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation (ACVREP).

CDBIS are trained professionals who work with individuals with deafblindness and those identified as having dual sensory loss. CDBIS's are highly skilled in providing auditory, visual, and tactile information to someone who is deafblind. In doing so, they provide access to information and opportunities for inclusion, skill development, empowerment, and independence.

CDBIS are committed to the Intervenor Organization of Ontario's Intervenor Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Ethical Conduct. They demonstrate quality care, knowledge, and ethical practice in their field. This establishes credibility and a high level of trust to employers, as well as people that receive services from the CDBIS.

CDBIS is based on foundational quality standards developed in the Province of Ontario, Canada. However, the certification is open to any intervenor that meets one of the four Eligibility categories and passes the certification exam. Learn more: <https://www.acvrep.org/certifications/cdbis-landing>



CDBIS's are highly skilled in providing auditory, visual, and tactile information to someone who is deafblind.



The Finer Senses **June 10, 2022**

Join DeafBlind Ontario Foundation on June 10 for our third virtual event experience *The Finer Senses*, Tour and Tasting. Journey with us to discover the sights and sounds of three wine producing countries – Portugal, Spain, and Italy.

With a travel expert, guests will explore points of interest, learn about the people and their culture, and visit regions known for their wine making. The tour includes rest stops to enjoy wine tastings led by a wine sommelier.

An online auction will begin two weeks before the start of the event. The price for this event is per package and includes a 90 minute tour, tasting, three bottles of wine, and delivery. Tickets are now on sale, visit deafblindontario.com/events for yours!



Savour the Senses **October 21, 2022**

Save the Date! Join us for our 3rd virtual *Savour the Senses* experience, Friday, October 21, 2022 from 7:30-9:00 p.m.

Be prepared to have your taste buds tempted in a fun and informative virtual format!

Details coming soon to deafblindontario.com/events.

Ben's Journey to Independence

Ben's journey to independence started with setting a goal, developing the skills and building the confidence to move into his own apartment.

Working with a Direct Support Professional (DSP) helps Ben to express himself in his preferred method of communication, American Sign Language (ASL), so that he can develop more meaningful social connections.

Over 1.3 million or 5% of Canadians aged 15 years and over have a hearing disability. In Ontario, 563,350 or 4.19% people aged 15 years and over have hearing disabilities.

Individuals who are Deaf, hard of hearing, or non-verbal, may use a visual language like ASL to help facilitate communication with the world around them using visual

images in place of words.

For Ben, this means he was able to pursue his interest in learning how to make candles out of beeswax and start his own business selling candles at local farmers markets.



It also meant that with his increased ASL skills, he could

build the confidence needed to move from his family's farm to Peterborough and adapt to living on his own.

With this increased independence, Ben was also able to pursue his interests in going to the movies, exercising at the local YMCA and learning more about history, one of his favourite hobbies.

According to Ben, learning about how people lived in the past and the kinds of challenges they faced, helps to teach ways of dealing with problems today.

Now that Ben has become more comfortable living on his own and feels a sense of connection with his community, he hopes to combine his love of history with his interest in travel to learn more and explore significant historical locations.





From Sap to Syrup



Stephen, one of the people supported by DeafBlind Ontario Services' Supported Independent Living (SIL), championed making maple syrup late this winter. With 13 bucks on 10 different trees at Earlwood in Peterborough, the group was surprised at how quickly they filled with sap. This was a great learning experience and everyone enjoyed a celebratory lunch with their final product - delicious maple syrup!

SIL was developed for those individuals who are Deaf, hard of hearing, non-verbal, or deafblind and able to live semi-independently in the community with minimal support.

Thanks for Playing!

From April 2021 to March 2022, DeafBlind Ontario Foundation, Community Living Chatham-Kent, and PHSS held monthly online 50/50 raffles. Ticket holders had the opportunity to win BIG each month and support people with diverse abilities across the province... a win-win...WIN! Thank you to everyone that purchased tickets and congratulations to all of our winners!



In 2019, PHSS, DeafBlind Ontario Services, and Community Living Chatham-Kent formed an integrative partnership to focus on strengthening the collective abilities of all three organizations and share specialized expertise to benefit the people receiving support

Come to Your Senses March 7-11, 2022

DeafBlind Ontario Foundation's second province-wide *Come to Your Senses* Challenge was a great success! Participants engaged their senses in a fun and creative way, by choosing 5 sensory-related challenges over 5 days, and fundraising online.



During each of the 5 days, participants posted their daily challenge on social media along with the hashtags #ComeToYourSenses and #CTYSChallenge.

Creativity and imagination ran wild! The results were innovative and extraordinary, raising a grand total of \$27,101! To all of our sponsors, teams, and supporters, thank you for your support, enthusiasm, and generosity.

Sponsors



Our Donors: November - March 2022

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Thank
You

keeping [in touch] is published twice annually. Help us save printing costs and the environment! If you would like to receive future newsletters electronically or be removed from our mailing list, please contact us at 1-855-340-3267 or by email at communications@deafblindontario.com.



Yarn Bombing for Deafblind Awareness

DeafBlind Ontario Services is coming together one stitch at a time with a global community of individuals, service providers and advocacy groups, along with organizations in the field of deafblindness to yarn bomb community objects and spaces around the world in June in celebration of National Deafblind Awareness Month!

Yarn bombing is a form of street art where yarn that is knit, crochet, or wrapped adorns an object in a public space. The connection of each knit or crochet square symbolizes the coming together of people in the field of deafblindness, with the goal of raising awareness on a large scale.

June, the birth month of Helen Keller, was proclaimed by the Senate of Canada in 2015 as National Deafblind Awareness Month.

Join DeafBlind Ontario Services' yarn bombing project. Submit your 20x20 CM squares to our Admin Office (Unit 15, 17665 Leslie Street Newmarket, ON) by May 13.

Check out our yarn bombing installations across Ontario in June. Learn more at deafblindontario.com/events.