



DeafBlind
ONTARIO SERVICES

keeping [in touch]

DeafBlind Ontario Services | Fall 2023



DeafBlind
ONTARIO FOUNDATION

Deafblind Awareness Month 2023

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DeafBlind Ontario Services enthusiastically commemorated June 2023 as National Deafblind Awareness Month. We joined with colleagues, service organizations, advocacy groups and people who are deafblind across Canada to celebrate the contributions of Canadians who are deafblind. Awareness activities included lighting up landmarks in blue and requesting proclamations in cities and towns from coast to coast.

For the third year in a row, we additionally joined our international colleagues as part of Deafblind International's (DbI) awareness activities to "yarn bomb." Yarn bombing involves taking knitted, crocheted or loomed yarn creations or pompoms, joining them together and attaching them (even wrapping them) to objects or structures in a community.

These tactile art installations highlight the many talents and contributions of people who are deafblind as a symbol of people coming together in the field of deafblindness, drawing on a spirit of unity and fostering connections with the community. The yarn creations were created by people who are deafblind, friends, family members, employees, knitting and crochet groups, senior's groups and other members of the community. DeafBlind Ontario Services invited municipal leaders and media across Ontario to check out objects wrapped in yarn as part of tactile art displays.

These objects featured "yarn bombing" on fences, railings and pillars in eight locations (Valley East Public Library in Sudbury, Ottawa Public Library, Innisfil ideaLab & Library, Jackson's Point Parkette in Georgina, Fairy Lake bridge in Newmarket, Landon Public Library in London, the Ayr Library and the Peterborough Public Library. Our efforts were captured in the media across Canada!



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Welcome Home Maryse!

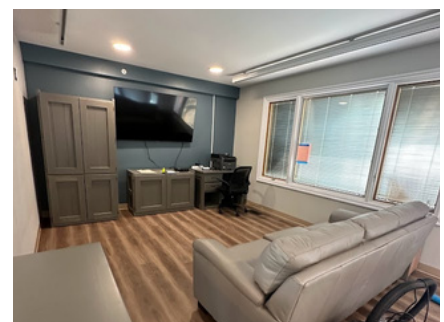
We are thrilled to welcome Maryse, who recently transitioned from our Tremplin program to a full-time supported living home at our Westmount North location in Greater Sudbury! This new chapter in her life brought her closer to her parents, sister, brother in-law and her nieces, allowing her to cherish more moments together. While she's still in the process of adjusting to this environment, Maryse's spirits are high as she embarks on an exciting journey of independence with two new roommates, who are quickly becoming friends.

One of the most exciting aspects of her new home is the increased accessibility to her community. There is an accessible park nearby, providing her with the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors and connect with nature. In addition, Maryse discovered a newfound joy in visiting her favorite spots – she has a fondness for the Chapters bookstore to indulge in her love of books, and then is treated to her favorite beverage at Starbucks, savoring the simple pleasures that bring her happiness.

Maryse planned a great housewarming party for her family and friends in late September. This gathering not only celebrated her new home but also the resilience and determination she has shown throughout her journey. It's a testament to the progress she's making with the support of DeafBlind Ontario Services by her side.

Maryse is contemplating upcoming trips to explore Ontario. The possibility of exploring new places is something she finds exciting, and because of your generous donations, we're here to help her make her travel dreams a reality. She recently enjoyed a stay in Toronto to attend "Six the Musical" with her intervenor as Maryse absolutely loves music.

None of this would be possible without the continued generosity of our donors, and their commitment to making a positive impact. Maryse's story is just one example of the lives that are touched and transformed through donor support. These donations are making a real difference in the lives of individuals like Maryse, helping them achieve their goals and dreams, and experience the joys of living life to the fullest.



Recognizing International Week of Deaf People

This September during International Week of Deaf People (September 18-24), we connected with Cathy and her Direct Support Professional to learn more about her interests. The International Week of Deaf People strives to promote the human rights of people who are Deaf and their right to sign anywhere.

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

As a person who is Deaf with a developmental disability, Cathy receives support from Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) who communicate with her using American Sign Language (ASL). ASL is a visual language consisting of manual signs and gestures, used by people who are Deaf. Thanks to the confidence she has in her knowledge of ASL, Cathy is proud to help teach new DeafBlind Ontario Services employees different signs in ASL so they can increase their ability to communicate with the people we support.

For Cathy, including accessibility features in her home enables her to safely navigate her environment as independently as possible to accommodate her leg braces. These features include rails and ramps that make her space easier to move around as she participates with her DSP in activities she loves like cooking, knitting and gardening. Cathy likes to try new recipes using ingredients from different cultures and shares them with the people in her home.

Cathy also enjoys going out with the help of a Direct Support Professional (DSP) to visit with her friends, grab a cup of coffee, and shop in her neighbourhood. Her favourite trips are the ones made with a DSP who is also Deaf. Not only does this DSP help to facilitate communication, but they also share a bond that helps Cathy build confidence in her own communication.

Accessible forms of communication, like ASL, are essential for creating an inclusive culture. The theme for this year's International Week of Deaf People is 'A World Where Deaf People Everywhere Can Sign Anywhere'. To learn more, visit <https://wfdeaf.org/iwdeaf2023/>



Deafblind International World Conference

July 22 - July 28, 2023

The Deafblind International World Conference offered rich learning and networking opportunities for participants from around the world, including 65 employees from DeafBlind Ontario Services. Conference sessions offered a variety of professional development experiences with presentations from researchers, people who are deafblind, service organizations and other international experts. It also featured a notable update from University of Montreal researcher Dr. Walter Wittich. Dr. Wittich collaborates with DeafBlind Ontario Services on various research initiatives - most recently the Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) Core Sets. Conference participants were also treated to a presentation from Canada's first Accessibility Commissioner and renown human rights lawyer, Mr. Michael Gottheil.

Through the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services Intervenor Services Training for Developmental Services Agencies Initiative, DeafBlind Ontario Services was able to support Intervenor from 13 different developmental services organizations to attend the DeafBlind International World Conference in Ottawa in July.

DeafBlind Ontario Services appreciates MCCSS' ongoing commitment to strengthening and enhancing the services received by people who are deafblind supported by Developmental Services organizations.



GIVING TUESDAY

Giving Tuesday, an annual movement for giving and volunteering following Black Friday and Cyber Monday, is on **November 28, 2023**. Will you 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.



DeafBlind
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Aging and Sensory Loss Workshops



If you are interested in the Aging and Sensory Loss workshops, please ensure you have completed the Introduction to Sensory Loss workshop first.

Contact us for more information

 mcs@deafblindontario.com

 1-855-340-3267 ext. 273

 www.deafblindontario.com

Upcoming Workshops

Sensory Loss and Aging
December 11, 2023

Aging in Place with Sensory Loss
January 18, 2024

To register for a workshop, visit deafblindontario.com/foundation/events

Sensory Loss and Aging

1.5 Hours - Virtual

Prerequisite: Introduction to Sensory Loss



Change is an inevitable part of the aging process. In this workshop, we will delve into the aging process by exploring the senses and recognizing the impact of aging for a person who has existing sensory loss. We will share ways to identify barriers and adapt support to address these changing needs.

Aging in Place with Sensory Loss

1.5 Hours - Virtual

Prerequisite: Sensory Loss and Aging



“Aging in place” is a term used to describe a person living in the home of their choice, for as long as they are able, as they age. In this workshop, we will identify these changing needs of the person and the supports they may require while they age in place. We will take their sensory loss into consideration and share tools and resources teams can use to evaluate and build on that are specific to the individual.

Research Spotlight:

Development of the Global Framework of Deafblindness

DeafBlind Ontario Services is honoured to continue our collaboration on the global framework of deafblindness project, International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) Core Sets.

This project brought together Principal Investigators: Dr. Walter Wittich (University of Montreal); Dr. Sarah Granberg, Orebro University, Sweden; Dr. Atul Jaiswal, University of Montreal; and Dr. Mahadeo Sukhai (CNIB Deafblind Community Services). It also included the following stakeholder groups: Deafblind International; Ricard Lopez, Parent, Founder and Board Member of European DeafBlind Network; Barcelona, Spain; the Centre de réadaptation Lethbridge-Layton Mackay du CIUSSS du Centre-Ouest-de l'Île-de-Montréal; Institut Nazareth et Louis-Braille du CISSS de la Montérégie-Centre; Canadian Hearing Society; Canadian Helen Keller Center along with DeafBlind Ontario Services.

Phase one of the framework is now complete along with three significant studies.

Study 1 is a paper published in the European Journal of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine captures the researcher's perspective, The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health Core Set for deafblindness, Part 1: a systematic review of outcome measures.

Study 2 is a paper (currently under publication review) that will capture the professional's perspective.

Study 3 is a qualitative research study capturing the perspective of those with lived experience. This study featured facilitated participation of five people from DeafBlind Ontario Services supported by intervenors, parents or a family member to share their lived experiences in semi-structured interviews. The publication emerging out of this study is in the works.

DeafBlind Ontario Services also hosted an informational booth in partnership with Deafblind International and the Global Research team at the Deafblind International World Conference held in Ottawa, July 2023. This booth sparked many conversations with conference participants about the ICF international research work. Several volunteers/organizations signed up to receive updates and get involved in the future implementation of the global framework on deafblindness.



Shreya Budhiraja, Atul Jaiswal, Praveena Santhakumaran, and Renu Minhas

Making a Difference in a Second Career

What does a child and youth worker and an office manager have in common? In their current roles as intervenors, Laiha and Deanna help break down barriers to communication for people who are deafblind. They note that they are able to use their transferable skills such as interpersonal skills, organization and experience in advocating to their work as intervenors.

Both Laiha and Deanna say that in choosing this second career, they were strongly influenced by watching their loved ones experience quality support in different health care settings. They saw how specially trained professionals were able to deliver quality care to vulnerable people.

For them, these experiences sparked a desire to seek out a career where they could combine their previous work experiences with their education as a developmental services worker (DSW) or as a personal support worker (PSW).

Deanna adds, “I wanted to do things differently and use a more holistic approach to support.”

Laiha shares: “I was motivated to choose a career as an intervenor because it offers an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of others.”

Laiha and Deanna share that they find it rewarding to work together as a team to plan activities that open up new opportunities for the people they support so that they can engage more meaningfully in their communities.

As part of the variety of new experiences in her second career, Deanna explains that her role gave her the chance to learn American Sign Language (ASL) as well as other methods of communication so that she can connect with the people she supports.

Laiha shares that having a positive impact on the lives of the people she supports has been deeply satisfying: “It’s so rewarding to hear from the family and friends of the people we support about how important these services are to their loved ones—it really makes a difference in their lives!”



A Movement is Building



A movement is building! Over 3 million Canadians have left a gift in their Will to charity. These are ordinary people who are using the power of their Wills to make a big difference in this world.

It's pretty amazing what even 1% of your estate can do. Don't underestimate your power to change lives. You can make a difference!

Choose DeafBlind Ontario Foundation,
<https://www.willpower.ca/charities/deafblind-ontario-foundation/>

WILL POWER™

Our Donors: April - October 2023

Bingo World & Gaming Richmond Hill, BNI Saskatchewan, Borden Ladner Gervais, Canada Gives (Stait Family Fund), Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Delta Bingo & Gaming, East Peterborough Lions Club, Innisfil Lions Club, Kinsmen Club of Sudbury, Minnow Lake Lions, Mississauga's of Scugog Island First Nation, Needham Promotions, Ontario Power Generation, Rotary Club of Barrie-Kempfenfelt, Robert Campeau Foundation, United Way Waterloo Region, University of Western Ontario Sign Language Club, Valley East Lions Club, Victor & Rhoda Shields Charitable Foundation, Weed Man Peterborough.

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.



Friends with Vision Monthly Giving Program

Meet my son, Caleb. Caleb is deafblind. Together we've navigated life's journey filled with challenges and triumphs. Through all his complex medical issues and educational challenges, we've always tried to think outside the box when searching for solutions or options that would give him the best chance of success for his future.

Our journey led us to DeafBlind Ontario Services, a lifeline for Caleb where he could receive the unique support he needed. DeafBlind Ontario Services has been an invaluable part of Caleb's life. Caleb is part of the apartment program at Earlwood house in Peterborough. He often tells us, "I have fun at my house."

My husband Dennis and I have chosen to give back through the Friends with Vision monthly giving program. Our journey with Caleb has inspired us to help others, just as we have been blessed.

Today I encourage you to become a monthly donor too. Monthly giving requires less administration and processing costs. This means that more of your gift can be used to fulfill the organization's mission, and plan for the future.

Monthly donations help provide all the resources each person supported needs. Giving always feels good, but it feels even better when you commit to a cause that is important to you. We feel that monthly giving is an affordable way to make a big impact.

To become a Friends with Vision monthly donor, visit www.deafblindontario.com/donate, or connect by phone at 1-855-340-3267 ext. 289.

Join me in supporting people like Caleb on their journey to a brighter future.

Janet

