



**DeafBlind**  
ONTARIO SERVICES

# keeping [in touch]

DeafBlind Ontario Services | Fall 2024



**DeafBlind**  
ONTARIO FOUNDATION

# National Deafblind Awareness Month 2024

Did you spot any colorful creations around the province in June? For the fourth year running, as part of Deafblind International's global awareness initiative, vibrant knit and crochet squares popped up across community spaces and businesses as part of Yarn Bombing – a form of street art bringing attention to National Deafblind Awareness Month.

This year, we were excited to expand to new locations while returning to favorites like the local libraries in London, Innisfil, Peterborough, Ottawa, and Sudbury! We also teamed up with senior living homes where crafting groups thrived, including a 12-hour knit-a-thon and a pom-pom making station for residents and staff. Their enthusiasm is contagious, and plans for 2025 are already in motion!

Local businesses and community spaces added their own creative twists. Bay Used Books in Sudbury showcased a stunning flower garden, while Unwind Yarn House in Newmarket invited guests to “Bee Seated” on a cozy, yarn-covered bench.

Contributors from all over Ontario sent in squares, many trying new stitches or using leftover yarn from previous projects. Some even picked up crochet for the first time, following our Yarn Bombing Guide to create pieces with homemade looms.

A huge thank you to everyone who made this our biggest Yarn Bombing event yet! As we gear up for our 5th celebration next summer, we need your help. Whether you want to craft pieces, assist with setup, or suggest new locations to Yarn Bomb, we'd love to hear from you!

**Join the Yarn Bombing Crew to stay updated on how you can participate in 2025.**

Visit our [website](#) or scan the QR code to learn more!



The Museum Kitchener



London Public Library, Beacock Branch



Greater Sudbury Public Library



Dorchester Terrace Retirement Residence



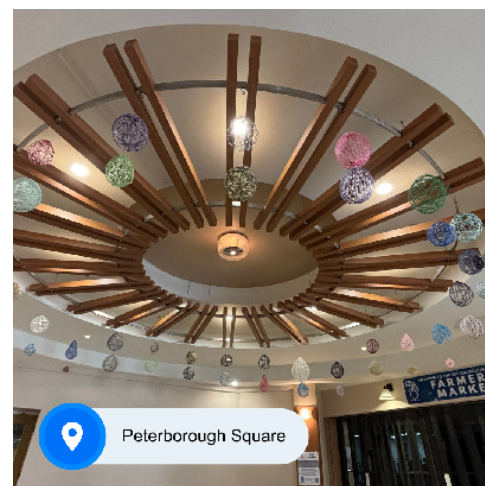
Innisfil ideaLab



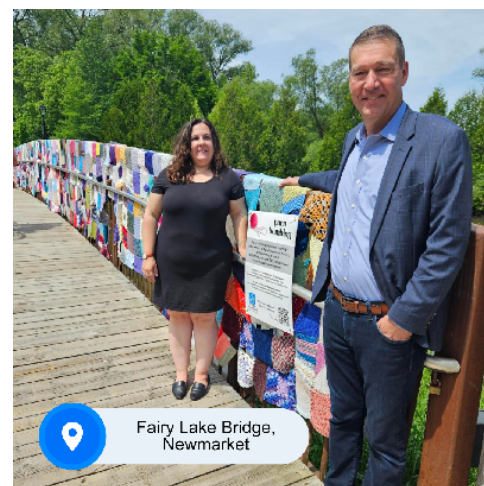
Ottawa Public Library



Valley East Lions Club, Sudbury



Peterborough Square



Fairy Lake Bridge, Newmarket

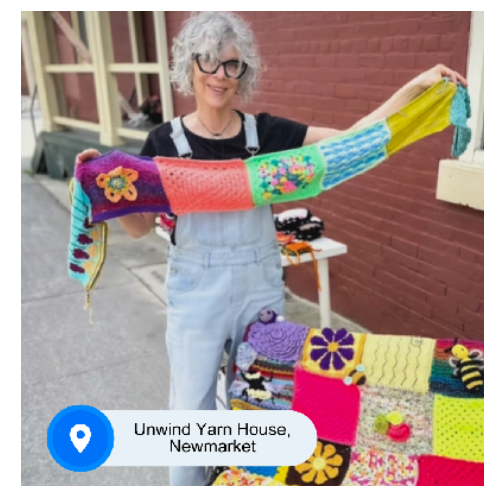
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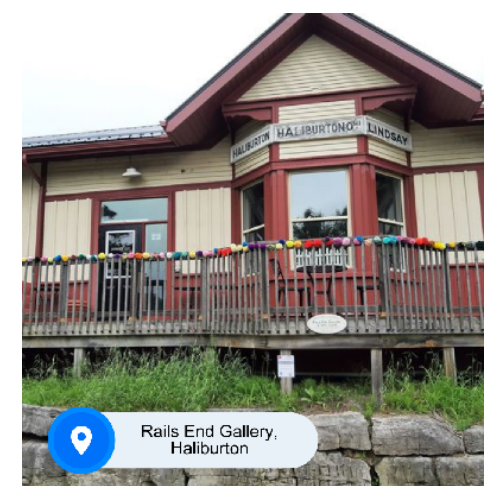
Vars IDA Pharmacy



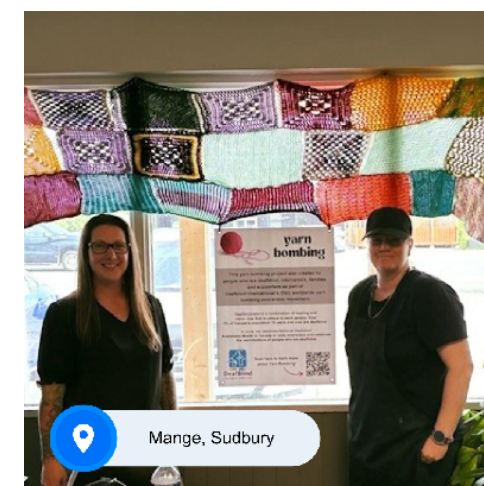
Bay Used Books, Sudbury



Unwind Yarn House, Newmarket



Rails End Gallery, Haliburton



Mange, Sudbury

## Celebrating Deaf Culture: Raising the Deaf Flag at the Peterborough Square

We were honored to raise the Deaf Flag at Peterborough Square on Monday, September 23, 2024, in celebration of the International Day of Sign Languages and the International Week of Deaf People.

The Deaf Flag, newly approved by the World Federation of the Deaf during its 20th General Assembly in July 2023, stands as a powerful symbol of unity for sign language communities worldwide.

The day's events included a flag-raising ceremony, a presentation on the rich history behind the flag, t-shirt painting, good food, and great company!



## Building Community Partnerships

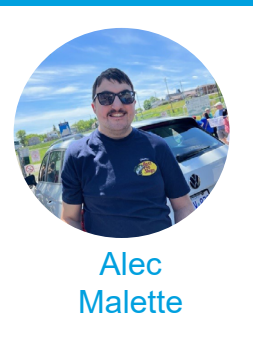
Across the province, service clubs, small businesses, and corporations dedicate countless volunteer hours to better their communities, and we're incredibly grateful for opportunities to partner with them in these efforts.

For the second year, the Kinsmen Club of Sudbury invited us to be part of their Showcase Sweepstakes and 50/50 draw, with proceeds supporting local charities like ours. Over the past two years, they've generously donated \$16,000 to DeafBlind Ontario Foundation, helping fund vital Intervenor Services that empower the individuals we support to live full, active lives.

A highlight of this partnership was seeing Alec, one of the people we support from Sudbury, volunteer at the showcase home. His enthusiasm captured the true spirit of community service!

Partnerships like this not only benefit DeafBlind Ontario Foundation but also provide our partners with meaningful way to support causes they care about. We invite businesses, community groups, and organizations to join us in making a lasting impact. Whether through fundraising events or creative initiatives, together we can build a stronger, more connected community.

To learn more about partnering with us, reach out to Marlene at [m.quinton@deafblindontario.com](mailto:m.quinton@deafblindontario.com). We look forward to making a difference together!



Alec  
Malette

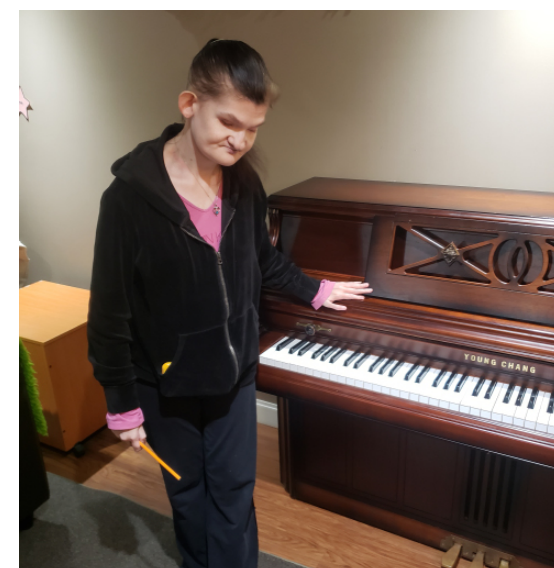
## Katie's Living My Best Life Musical Journey

Katie's love for music has been a lifelong journey. From an early age, she found joy and expression in playing the piano, a passion that has only deepened over time. Despite facing both hearing and visual impairments, music has remained a constant and vital part of her life. Since 2016, DeafBlind Ontario Services has been supporting Katie, and she continues to push the boundaries of what's possible for herself.

Katie's intervenors play a crucial role in supporting her journey, ensuring that she has ample opportunities to explore, experiment and practice music on her own terms. Intervenors are professionally trained to act as the "eyes" and "ears" of the person who is deafblind through the sense of touch. DeafBlind Ontario Services' professional intervenors foster independence through a holistic and person-centered approach of "do with, not for". They support people who are deafblind to gain independence, build their life skills, and take an active role in all areas of their lives.

Recently, Katie took a major step forward in her musical journey. As part of her Living My Best Life goals, she upgraded from an electric keyboard to a full-sized piano. This upgrade is more than just a new instrument—it's a stepping stone towards her goal of performing in public. The move to a full-sized piano gives Katie the space to further develop her skills, enhance her playing, and explore new musical possibilities.

Katie's love for music goes beyond playing the piano. She also enjoys writing her own music, a process that allows her to express herself and explore her creativity. Every week, she works with a music therapist to learn new songs and techniques, honing her craft and expanding her repertoire. Katie often records herself on her phone, listening back to perfect her playing. Katie's musical journey is a testament to her determination and passion. With the unwavering support of her intervenors at DeafBlind Ontario Services, she continues to master her craft and live her best life!



## Recognizing International Week of Deaf People

According to the World Health Organization's 2021 World Report on Hearing, by 2050 approximately 2.5 billion people globally will be living with some degree of hearing loss, of whom at least 700 million will require rehabilitation services. As we mark International Week of Deaf People from September 23 to 29, 2024, we connected with Keith, who has been a part of DeafBlind Ontario Services' Supported Independent Living (SIL) Program for over 14 years.

Keith receives personalized support from Communication Support Professionals (CSPs) at DeafBlind Ontario Services. The role of a CSP is to empower individuals like Keith by helping them to facilitate the exchange of information to assist with communication, develop communication skills, understand new concepts, gather information, and build meaningful relationships. CSPs play an active role in fostering independence and participation in all aspects of the person's life.

With the support of his CSPs, Keith is able to enjoy being an active participant in his community. He enjoys attending social events, visiting historical sites and museums throughout Ontario, and spending quality time with friends and family. He's also an artist—he loves painting, working on creative projects, and decorating his apartment with festive, seasonal themes.

For Keith, communication is a crucial part of his everyday life. His preferred language is American Sign Language (ASL), and he's a passionate advocate for the Deaf community. He encourages those around him to learn ASL and often offers to teach it himself. "I wish more people knew ASL," Keith shares. "Especially when I'm at the store, so I could chat with more people."

As we geared up for International Week of Deaf People, Keith was excited to celebrate Deaf culture with his friends in the community. "I will be making art to celebrate Deaf culture and spending time with friends in the Deaf community".

This year's theme, 'Sign Up for Sign Language Rights,' emphasizes the importance of unity through sign languages and the rights of Deaf individuals to communicate in their language of choice. Want to learn more? Visit <https://wfdeaf.org/iwdeaf2024/>.



## Empower Lives and Build a Brighter Future

Have you ever thought about the lasting impact you could make, not just once, but every single month? When you join our Friends with Vision monthly donor program, you're doing more than just giving – you're becoming a vital part of a community that empowers the individuals we support to flourish, grow, and reach their full potential.

Your monthly gift does more than offer financial support; it represents a lasting commitment to building a brighter, more inclusive future. With your help, we can plan ahead and provide the essential services and resources that truly make a difference in the lives of the incredible people we serve.

It's not just about donations, it's about creating endless possibilities together. You can be the change. Will you join us and become a monthly donor? Signing up is easy! Visit our website at [www.deafblindontario.com](http://www.deafblindontario.com), or reach out to Marlene directly by email at [m.quinton@deafblindontario.com](mailto:m.quinton@deafblindontario.com) or by phone at (855) 340-3267 ext. 289.

Together, we can make a difference every day.



## Gaming for Good: Powered by our Amazing Volunteers

Charitable gaming is not only fun - it's powered by the dedication of our incredible volunteers, who help enrich the lives of the people we support in truly meaningful ways. But how does it all come together?

At the heart of it all are our amazing volunteers, who take turns hosting guests at Bingo World Richmond Hill and Delta Bingo & Gaming in Peterborough. Among them is a participant in our Supported Independent Living Program in Peterborough, for whom charitable gaming has opened up a rewarding vocational opportunity.

We are incredibly grateful to these dedicated volunteers. Their passion and hard work shine through in everything they do - whether greeting guests, celebrating game winners, or making sure the venue feels welcoming. Collectively, they contribute an impressive 216 hours each year! Their energy, commitment, and heart are truly the foundation of our success, and we cannot thank them enough for the invaluable role they play in supporting our mission.

The funds raised through charitable gaming go directly toward services like support programs, community initiatives, interpreting services, assistive devices, transportation, house maintenance, and staff training - all of which enhance the quality of life for the people we serve.

A heartfelt thank you to Delta Bingo and Bingo World for their continued partnership. With their support, and the dedication of our incredible volunteers, we're able to accomplish so much more together.

Contact Marlene at [m.quinton@deafblindontario.com](mailto:m.quinton@deafblindontario.com) to learn how you can get involved.

# Building a Legacy: A Journey of Giving with Jocelyn Willoughby

Jocelyn Willoughby, a board member of DeafBlind Ontario Foundation, has always supported causes close to her heart. Her journey with the Foundation began when she sought to support a local charity in her community of Innisfil. A firefighter friend, familiar with the Foundation through one of the people we support who volunteered at the fire hall, recommended that Jocelyn connect with us.

After meeting with a member of the Foundation team, and inspired to take action, Jocelyn organized a golf tournament fundraiser for DeafBlind Ontario Foundation. The experience showed her the tangible impact of the Foundation’s work, and she was deeply moved by our commitment to empower the people we serve. “The vulnerability of people with sensory loss resonated deeply with me,” she reflects. “It’s all about helping them gain independence, which is so important for everyone.”

### A Strategic and Heartfelt Decision

As a Senior Investment Advisor, Jocelyn understands the value of long-term planning. When considering her legacy, she knew she could make a significant impact through planned giving. “I don’t have dependents, and while I want my family cared for, I also wanted to consider the bigger picture,” she explains. “There are tax benefits to planned giving, and it ensures my money is used for good and not paying unnecessary tax.”



For Jocelyn, leaving a legacy gift to DeafBlind Ontario Foundation is both an emotional and rational choice. “It’s an emotional return for me,” she shares. “Even though I won’t see the impact, I know my gift will make a difference.” She appreciates that her contribution will help provide necessary support for those served by the Foundation.

### Planning for the Future with Purpose

Jocelyn believes in balancing immediate and long-term impact. “It’s important to think beyond just the immediate beneficiaries of your legacy planning,” she advises. “What if I no longer have beneficiaries? That’s where thinking about a charity comes in.” She also suggests considering donor-advised funds to create a family legacy of giving.

### A Call to Action: “Don’t Procrastinate”

Jocelyn’s advice is straightforward — “Get it done. Don’t be afraid to make the decision. It provides clarity and peace of mind for you and your loved ones.” She emphasizes that even a small investment, just 1%, can have a big impact and she recommends seeking professional advice to ensure your wishes are honored. Through her thoughtful planning, Jocelyn’s legacy will continue to support people who are deafblind, as well as those living with a developmental disability who are Deaf, hard of hearing or use non-traditional forms of communication for years to come. Her story is about more than giving—it’s about leaving a legacy that reflects her values. By including DeafBlind Ontario Foundation in her Will, she is helping create a future where people receive the care and independence they deserve.

If Jocelyn’s story inspires you to consider a gift in your Will, contact us at [Development@deafblindontario.com](mailto:Development@deafblindontario.com) to learn more.

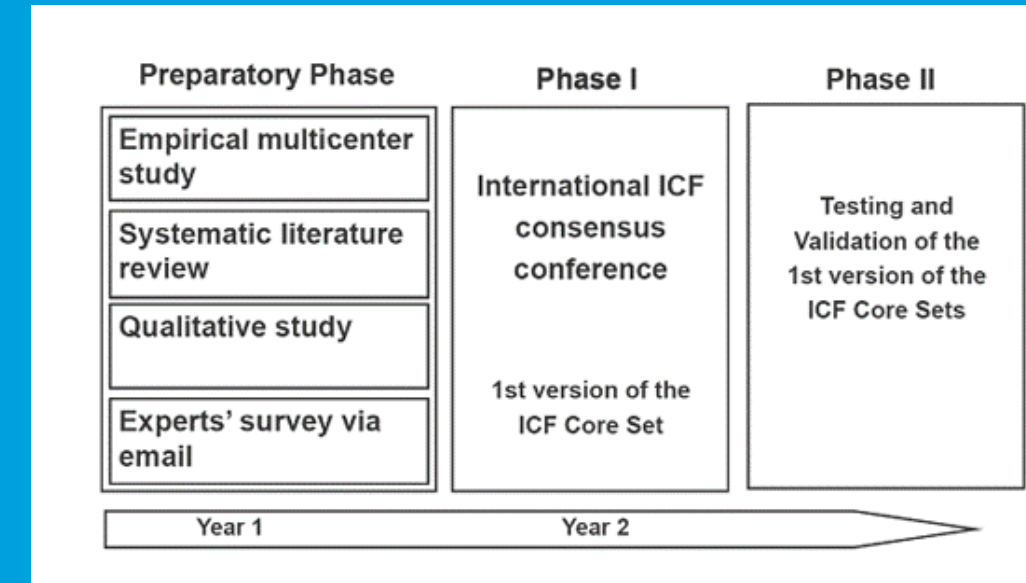
# Research Spotlight

## Development of Global Framework on Deafblindness

The International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF) is a comprehensive framework used to describe and organize information related to functioning and disability. It provides a scientific foundation for understanding and studying health conditions, outcomes, determinants, and changes in health status and functioning.

Since the project’s inception in 2020 during the preparatory phase, DeafBlind Ontario Services has played an integral role. We collaborated with academic researchers, recruited and facilitated the participation of individuals with lived experience, provided expert input, and contributed to the development of reports for publication.

Next steps include finalizing the first phase in October 2024 and developing the second phase in 2025.



## United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) Monitoring

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is an international human rights law that protects and promotes the rights and freedoms of persons with disabilities. Canada signed an agreement confirming its commitment to uphold the Convention in 2010.

Each country that agrees to uphold the CRPD needs to report on their progress every four years. Disability groups and human rights commissions also submit reports reflecting the lived experience of people with disabilities. After reviewing these reports and meeting with government representatives as well as disability groups, the UN Committee subsequently makes recommendations to the government about steps for improvement.

DeafBlind Ontario Services, in collaboration with Canadian disability organizations, contributed to the creation of a report for the UN Committee. Recently, we provided feedback on several UNCRPD articles (8, 9, 19, 21, and 31). Through our input, we emphasized the importance of ensuring that the individuals we support have access to information in their preferred communication methods. We also advocated for their inclusion in consultations, stressing the need to value their contributions by offering appropriate communication supports to help break down societal barriers.

Under the leadership of ARCH Disability Law Centre, the input from Canadian disability groups will be finalized in January 2025. The UN Committee is scheduled to review Canada’s report in March 2025. Stay tuned for the final report in January 2025.

Read more about the UNCRPD:



## Empowering Lives Through Connection: The Impact of an Intervenor at DeafBlind Ontario Services

Have you ever wondered if your work truly makes an impact? For Soshannah, an intervenor at DeafBlind Ontario Services, there's no question. "I think the most satisfying thing is knowing that everything I do is for the betterment of someone else."

When speaking of her career and its impact, Soshannah says, "I know that every day I attend work it is meaningful in some way. With everything happening in the world, going to work and putting a smile on someone's face makes everything feel a little bit better!"

Intervenors like Soshannah are professionally trained to act as the "eyes" and "ears" of the person who is deafblind through the sense of touch. By facilitating the exchange of information and assisting with communication methods, intervenors empower people who are deafblind to thrive.

DeafBlind Ontario Services' professional intervenors foster independence through a holistic and person-centered approach of "do with, not for". They support people who are deafblind to gain independence, build their life skills, and take an active role in all areas of their lives.

When reflecting on how her work at DeafBlind Ontario Services has impacted her, Soshannah says, "I've been able to use my knowledge of American Sign Language and my social service background to change the lives of others which has always been the goal for me. It's allowed me to see how witty, intelligent, and personable an individual can be regardless of any disability or barriers they may face."

"With the support from the intervenors, the sky's the limit for this community." says Soshannah.



## Updates from DeafBlind Ontario Foundation

### November is *Make a Will Month*



November is *Make a Will Month*—a meaningful opportunity to reflect on the legacy you want to leave behind.

By including a gift to DeafBlind Ontario Foundation in your Will, you can make a lasting difference, providing essential support today and ensuring continued impact for years to come. Even a commitment of just 1% of your estate can bring about significant change in the lives of those we support. Your thoughtful planning today has the power to shape a brighter future for those in need.

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

## GIVING TUESDAY

### Join Us for Giving Tuesday, December 3, 2024!

Giving Tuesday Canada is a global movement dedicated to giving back! Following Black Friday and Cyber Monday, Giving Tuesday focuses on generosity and community support. It's a day when people across the country come together to make a difference by supporting organizations they care about – like DeafBlind Ontario Foundation!

**Why Participate?** Your support on this day can have a significant impact to help secure specialized equipment, wheelchair accessible vans, accessible home renovations and assistive devices, as well as recreational and social programs for the people we serve. Every donation, big or small, contributes to positive change.

**How Can You Help?** Mark your calendar for December 3rd and make a gift, share our mission with your friends and family, or start a personal fundraiser. Together, we can turn generosity into lasting change.

### Our Donors: April - October 2024

|                                  |  |   |
|----------------------------------|--|---|
| 100 Women Who Care Ottawa        | Innisfil Lions Club                      | Needham Promotions Inc.                                       |
| Aviva Canada                     | Joel R. Fortune Professional Corporation | The Oakville Foundation for Intellectually Handicapped People |
| Canada Gives                     | Kinsmen Club of Sudbury                  | The Robert Campeau Family Foundation                          |
| Crate Designs Furniture          | Lambeth Lions Club                       | Thorndale Lions Club.   |
| Dorchester & District Lions Club | London Central Lions Club                |   |
| Export Development Canada        | London East Lions Club                   |   |
| Hodgson Family Foundation        | Magna International                      |   |
| Hyde Park & District Lions Club  | Mountain Township & District Lions Club  |   |

# Community Training Workshops

## **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.

In person or virtual training is interactive and involves activities simulating sensory loss. The Community Services team can also provide ongoing mentorship and coaching to ensure skills learned are part of daily practice.

## **Bridge** can enhance the services of:


- Developmental Services Agencies
- Long Term Care Facilities
- In Home Support Services
- Other Community Organizations

Visit our website for more details and to view all upcoming workshops



Contact us for more information about our workshops and training opportunities

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 905-853-2862

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Contact us for more information

 [mcs@deafblindontario.com](mailto:mcs@deafblindontario.com)

 (905) 853-2862



Check out our new workshop!

To register for a workshop, visit [deafblindontario.com/foundation/events](http://deafblindontario.com/foundation/events)



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