

THE INCLUSION NEWS

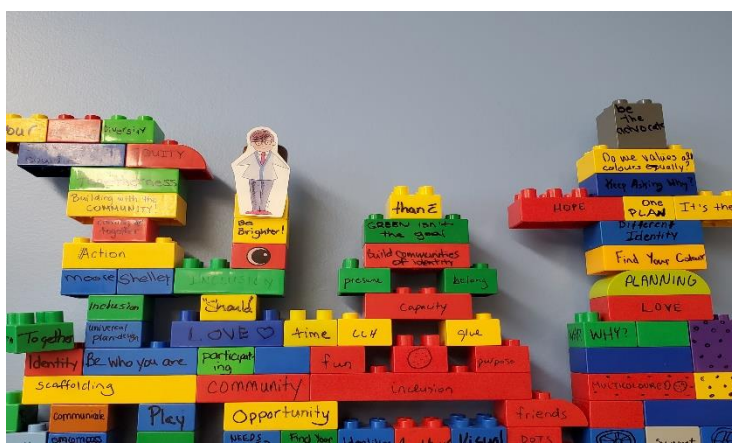
WINTER 2024



Welcome

Welcome back! We hope you enjoyed some time for a break over the holidays that included plenty of rest and relaxation. We have been busy onboarding new staff in the last few months and welcomed Olla, Daniella, Linh and Jessica in the resource consultant role; Kirsty, Kelly and Kennedy in the inclusion facilitator role; and a new Administrator for the program, Theresa Wylie. New as well is the arrival of school entry packages which will be shared with you through your resource consultant.

We are also pleased to share that service brochures are now available in French as well as a presentation on our services. The single day enhanced classroom support service – LINK, is still currently available. The flyer has been sent along with this newsletter. Ask your resource consultant for more information on how to access this service for a one day “boost” in classroom strategies regarding behaviour, confidence or transitions.



Sitting among the Children’s Services staff in the work area, is a recent addition to the block tower of inclusive language created at the Dr. Shelley Moore event in 2022. Paper Shelley Moore stands proud with the words most valuable to our community.

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Special Needs Resourcing is provided through funding from the City of Hamilton

THE CHEERING SECTION

The preschool classroom at St. Marguerite D'Youville shared a recent success in designing a strategy for one child that resulted in supporting the entire classroom. Working with the inclusion facilitator, educators built on a child's interest and created a "Bubble Pop" technique to support transitions. The activity quickly became accepted by everyone, and educators observed empathy, encouragement and support amongst the group.



The team at St. Marguerite D'Youville

From left: Franca Bollela (IF),
Maureen Howe, Brooke Morrison,
Amanda Bonoma and Nada
Khoshaba

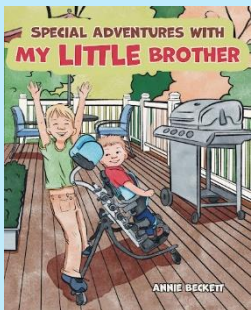
Local parent of a child with a disability becomes an author:

Facing challenge, then hope, Annie Beckett shares her struggles and relief in finding child care with us. Then she became an author, and shared her family's story of love, support and inclusion with the world. Her words are below. Click on the image to learn more. Her book can also be purchased on Amazon.

When deciding to write *Special Adventures With My Little Brother* I was motivated by two things. One, by my then three year old son Harrison, as the narrative of this book was inspired by his actual words and interactions with his brother Thomas. His unconditional love for his brother, his effortless inclusion and his wild imagination motivated me to capture our family's set of circumstances through his eyes.

My second motivation was my experience that most daycare programs are not inclusive. The agonizing truth, as I evidently learned quickly, was that Thomas was repeatedly denied access due to his physical and intellectual impairments. Often informed "*we don't think he is ready*" yet through all the din all I heard was "*they were not ready*".

I remember clearly the day I received a phone call from Lorraine at the Sir William Osler Y.M.C.A. Child Care Centre informing me that a spot had opened. Emotionally defeated, I explained that my son had both a cognitive and physical disability, was nonverbal, non-mobile (at the time), and required assistance with feeding. I waited to hear the inevitable "*sorry, we can't...*" but instead I heard "*bring him in!*" My experience, and more importantly, Thomas' experience at the daycare has been nothing short of amazing. My gratitude, respect and appreciation for the staff is immeasurable. Every child deserves to experience acceptance and inclusion and so I started writing my story. I strongly believe that with understanding comes empathy.



Dr. Shelley Moore Told Us Moore

On October 30th, Dr. Shelley Moore brought her wit and wisdom to our community in two sessions offered at the Marriott Courtyard. After presenting both virtually and in-person in the last few years, Dr. Shelley did an in-depth look at how you “do” inclusion offering strategies that were defined by attendees as both relatable and inspiring to our everyday work. In the months ahead we will collaborate to practice her suggested approach to inclusive planning. Congratulations to the Mountain YMCA Toddler Room 1 for embracing the concept of layers of support in their inclusive practices in the month leading up to the event and winning the Cake Challenge. Many thanks to our partners at ASCY and the City of Hamilton for supporting the journey in bringing Dr. Shelley to Hamilton and extending the welcome in a way that can only be done when we all work together.



Cultural Safety Training with Niwasa Kendaaswin Teg



Community Living Hamilton staff spent the fall participating in Cultural Safety Training as part of our commitment to reconciliation. We are grateful to Kristin Tyrer and Brooke Lavalley who guided us through an in-depth look at the impacts of trauma, decolonization and unpacking privilege. As this is just one step forward, we continue to work towards cultural safety with open hearts, ears and minds. Forever changed, we encourage you all to reach out to Niwasa to participate in this reflective learning journey.



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Important Dates

Children's Inclusion Services will be unavailable on the following dates:

- *Family Day – February 19, 2024*
- *Good Friday – March 29, 2024*
- *Easter Monday – April 1, 2024*
- *Victoria Day – May 20, 2024*

COMMUNITY LIVING HAMILTON is an accredited not-for-profit organization and registered charity that offers a full range of services to people with special needs. We are one of the largest not-for-profits in Hamilton; each year we provide service to approximately **1,400 children, teens, adults and families.**

In offering a full range of services to our community, we support individuals with special needs from childhood through to their senior years. At Community Living Hamilton, **we hope to create a lifelong partnership to support the individuals and community we serve.**



For more information on Community Living Hamilton, please visit our website at:
www.communitylivinghamilton.com