



# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2013–2014



CENTRE FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING  
IN TORONTO

**T**HE GREATNESS OF CILT  
LIES NOT IN BEING STRONG,  
BUT IN THE RIGHT USE OF STRENGTH.

— Meenu Sikand, CILT President



# PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Meenu Sikand

*“To achieve the impossible, one must think the absurd; to look where everyone else has looked, but to see what no else has seen.” – UNKNOWN*

**T**HIRTY YEARS AGO, a group of like-minded individuals envisioned and then established an organization run by persons with disabilities, for persons with disabilities – an almost impossible dream that became a reality due to the perseverance and determination of a small group of people. Today, we call it the Centre for Independent Living in Toronto, which is proudly celebrating its 30th anniversary! I am pleased that you are joining me in marking this historic occasion.

Once again, it has been an honour to work with my fellow board members over the last year. This is now my third year as president, a role which I have diligently fulfilled to the best of my abilities by applying Independent Living (IL) principles to all decisions made at the board level.

Collaboratively, the board and staff worked together to ensure CILT continues to grow, mature and respond to our ever-changing economic and political climate. I am proud that we continue to look at challenges as opportunities and remain optimistic for the future. We continue to be invited by news media, government, other partners and even individuals from other countries, to speak about disability issues and educate about unique IL perspectives and successes.

For example, in March we hosted Malini Chib and Varsha Hooja, a well-known international advocate from ADAPT India. We shared our Canadian journey of IL, strategies and partnerships that worked in our country to get IL off the ground and the challenges we faced. Our peer support

model, and Parenting with a Disability Network definitely caught their attention. Hopefully this information exchange will lead to expansion of IL programs and models to benefit our sisters and brothers in India. On Sept. 8, we were invited to the Toronto International Film Festival world premiere of the movie Margarita, with a Straw, that was inspired by the story of Malini and promoted IL philosophy.

Just after last year's AGM CILT received news that there was to be a further 20 per cent increase to the Direct Funding program budget! This is the best example we can offer of the success of the IL model. Through that program we effectively demonstrate great benefits to both individuals with disabilities, their families and friends and also to the system.

We strive to continue to create meaningful alliances with others to avoid both duplicating services and to build capacity among like-minded groups to work on common areas of concern. We would like to fill this knowledge gap and continue to provide new perspectives on disability to sectors we haven't served before, such as seniors and people with Alzheimer's.

Most notably, we are turning our minds now to how we can best share with and learn from our brothers and sisters whose people were in this great land before the Europeans came here. We have started this work with the Re-imagining Parenting and Expanding the Circle projects.

The list of our board members includes me as chair, Helen Henderson as vice-chair, Cathy Samuelson as treasurer, Christine Stapleford as secretary, Chris Lytle, as member-at-large, Ken Conners, Harvinder Bajwa, Stacey Lintern, Ayshia Musleh, Meghan Hines, Warner Clarke and Victor Gascon. Please join me in thanking everyone for their time and expertise.

This year we say goodbye to four board members: Ken Conners, Harvinder Bajwa and

Christine Stapleford who have completed their term, as well as Stacey Lintern, who resigned for personal reasons (which is 'code' for saying she simply got too busy!) I certainly want to thank them for all their hard work, and dedication to our cause. Special mention should be made of Ken, who has guided us through the complex accounting maze and helped us out in more ways than we can count over the last six years.

I would also like to recognize Sandra Carpenter, our executive director, the most competent manager and the humblest person I have ever worked with, and all of the CILT staff. I am so proud that we continue to be such a strong information provider in our community.

It goes without saying that we continued our review and approval of all necessary reports, applications and proposals required by our various funders and as you can see from the treasurer's report, we were able to continue our work and come out with a balanced budget.

It has been my privilege to serve as your president over the last year. One of the first tasks of the new board will be to select from among its membership the president and chair for the coming year. It is a challenging position, holding a lot of responsibility, but has had meaningful rewards as well. Thank you for giving me your trust and giving me this opportunity to serve this great organization. The greatness of CILT lies not in being strong, but in the right use of strength.

In closing I would like to thank all the CILT members for making our work possible as we celebrate our 30th year!



MEENU SIKAND  
President and Chair



# REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Sandra Carpenter

**M**ANY YEARS AGO, when I was 11, I was sent away from my home to live at an institution for disabled children. Eight months later, my sister followed. She was just 7. That is what you did then if your family was poor and your disability was such that you needed daily support: you lived at a “residential school”.

There were two aboriginal guys there who were originally from reservations. One guy had his disability from birth, and the other was injured in a hunting accident. They were both young, in wheelchairs, but were otherwise self-sufficient. But I was struck even then that like my sister and me, they were not only apart from their communities, and the people who loved them, they were also apart from their culture: one I did not fully

understand then, knowing only what I picked up from movies and media.

This place was only for children, so, when you turned 18 you left. One guy went back to his home reserve, and the other took an apartment in the city and basically disappeared. And that remains my experience of aboriginal people with disabilities today: they are largely invisible in this urban setting, very hard to reach out to, and unless they actually tell you they are full or part aboriginal, First Nations or indigenous, you don't even know. You can't tell always by names. You can't tell by hair, eye, or skin colour.

Last fall I took a workshop called Aboriginal Competency Training, only to learn that there is no



such thing. My best lesson of the workshop was when our teacher showed us the wampum belt and explained what it meant. A wampum belt has rows of beads. It represented the treaty that was agreed to between the colonials and the First Nations who were here before them. It was a contract, one that is meant to be taken as seriously as any paper contract that colonials could come up with.

The belt she showed us had rows of light colored beads on each side with rows of darker colored beads going down the middle. The teacher said it symbolized the shores on either side of a river: they coexist, but do not try to change the other. Then, she asked how many of us were “treaty” people. Only the aboriginal people raised their hands. But then the teacher held up the belt again and explained that we were all treaty people. From that moment on I understood something I never understood before.

A week later I was invited to the annual general meeting for Expanding the Circle, a project to focus on the rights of aboriginals with disabilities.

That AGM was opened by an elder with a prayer — he said we should just think of it as a meditation if we were more comfortable — and a smudging ceremony. I thought, “What a good idea to take the time to start a meeting this way,” which is why we did it here.

This is my opportunity to formally acknowledge and thank all our hard working staff and volunteers for all their contributions over the last year. I won’t list them all here — there are profiles and pictures of them all in this report — but I do want to make special mention of a couple casual staff. Jayne Jalonikou, who not only helps out the Direct Funding team but pitches in wherever she is

needed, and George Gueorguieva, who helps with information technology and website maintenance tasks.

Over the past year, our office volunteers have included Taryn Allen, Denzil Barker, Crystal Bicknell, Miriam Chong, Susan DeLaurier, Haris Farid, Michael Francisco, Mary Henderson, Pablo Hernandez, Claire Hurst, Cathy Line, Luigi Lisciandro, Alnoor Nanji, Elaine Stewart, and Suzette Yearwood. Last but not least, we have Bobbi Moore who is our volunteer receptionist. We couldn’t do what we do without them. Please join me in thanking them for all their hard work over the past year or, in some cases, years!

I also want to thank the CILT Board for all its support to me over this last year.

Specifically I want to thank Meenu Sikand, our Board President.

I also want to thank our funders, without whose generous support we would not be able to address any community and member needs. Our primary funders are the City of Toronto, the United Way of Greater Toronto, and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the Trillium Foundation.

CILT is a member organization. We offer services and support to anyone with a disability in the Toronto area and, in the case of DF, across Ontario. It is you, the voting members of CILT, who make this all possible and inform the work we do. Thanks once again, to all!



SANDRA CARPENTER  
Executive Director



# REPORT FROM THE TREASURER



Cathy Samuelson

A CONDENSED VERSION, CILT's financial statements for the year ended March 31, 2014 is included in this annual report. A complete version is available upon request. The statements were audited by Berman, Lofchick & Lum, LLP Chartered Accountants. As usual, CILT received a "clean" report from its auditors.

The Statement of Financial Position (the top part of the condensed statement) shows CILT's assets and liabilities as of March 31, 2014. This statement is organized to report the funds belonging to the Personal Support Workers (PSW) Training project and the Community Care Information Management (CCIM) project separately from CILT's core operations and our Direct Funding program. The first two programs are "flow-through" or "paymaster" programs which CILT operates (for

an administrative fee) on behalf of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. CILT's net assets and reserves relate to our core operations and Direct Funding program only; the PSW and CCIM projects do not generate any net assets or reserves for CILT. The total net assets and reserves of \$438,514 are reduced since the end of the previous year by \$5,977.

The statements of operations (the lower part of the statement) also reports the PSW and CCIM projects in separate columns and goes one step further and reports the Direct Funding program separately from our core operations.

The PSW (fourth column) Training project was operated with a grant from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care of \$1,991,000. Under

the agreement with the Ministry, the \$58,000 administrative expense of this program was retained by CILT and became a revenue for our core operations. Unspent revenue of \$46,679 is being returned to the Ministry.

Similarly, the CCIM (third column) project was operated with a grant of \$1,201,100, of which \$91,000, according to the agreement, was retained by CILT as a recovery to our core operations and unspent funds of \$589,254 are being returned to the Ministry.

The second column shows the results of the Direct Funding program. Program revenues and expenses this year were over \$29 million, and CILT's core operations received a recovery of administration and expansion costs of \$220,636. The program revenue includes a part-year amount of approximately \$2,900,000 of an annual increase of a \$5,000,000 expansion granted to the program. More than 95 per cent of these program funds were disbursed to program participants and other Independent Living Centres. The balance of the funds were used to cover program salaries and operational costs.

The first column shows the results of CILT's core operations — networking, peer support, skills training, and other service programs. Revenues for these core activities came from the Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network (LHIN), the United Way of Greater Toronto, Independent Living Canada, the City of Toronto, Trillium Foundation and the administrative recoveries from CILT's

management of the PSW, CCIM and various City and Trillium projects and the Direct Funding program. Revenues and expenses totaled just over \$1 million last year. Most of the expenses (85 per cent) went to personnel, purchased services, and building occupancy.

The total expenses for the operation exceeded the income by \$5,977. Our funding agreement with the Toronto Central LHIN requires that CILT have an annual *balanced* budget in each fiscal year and does not permit CILT to run a surplus. Also it does not consider amortization as a legitimate expense, therefore the net deficit of \$5,977 is applied against capital reserves. The otherwise zero-result was achieved by deferring some of the self-generated income to cover costs in the upcoming funding year. This balanced budget requirement may effectively limit CILT's ability to increase its general and program reserves in future years beyond the \$438,514 reported above.

I would like to acknowledge the excellent work done by Sylvia Draper-Fernandez of Progressive Accounting Services in the day-to-day accounting and the preparation of CILT's financial statements and reports to funders and by Sandra Carpenter, Executive Director and Jamie Wong, Operations Manager, in their excellent management of CILT's financial resources.

CATHY SAMUELSON  
Treasurer



# FINANCIALS

## Condensed Version of Audited Financial Report – March 31, 2014

### Statement of Financial Position

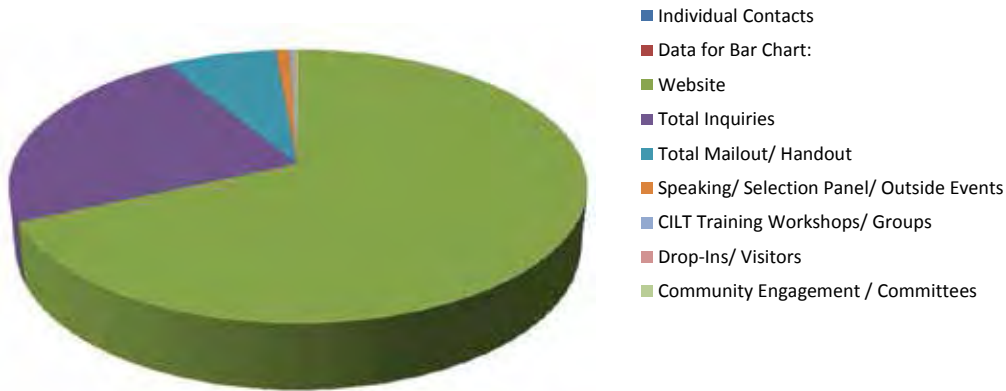
	Core & Direct Funding	CCIM Funds	PSW Funds	Total 2013-14	Total 2012-13
<b>ASSETS:</b>					
Current Assets	3,583,567	1,417,959	46,679	5,048,205	5,302,419
Capital assets	46,025	-	-	46,025	27,986
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>3,629,592</b>	<b>1,417,959</b>	<b>46,679</b>	<b>5,094,230</b>	<b>5,330,405</b>
<b>LIABILITIES \ NET ASSETS:</b>					
Current Liabilities	3,191,078	1,417,959	46,679	4,655,716	4,885,914
Net Assets \Reserves	438,514	-	-	438,514	444,491
<b>Total Liabilities \Reserves</b>	<b>3,629,592</b>	<b>1,417,959</b>	<b>46,679</b>	<b>5,094,230</b>	<b>5,330,405</b>

### Statement of Operations (Consolidated)

	Core	Direct Funding	CCIM Funds	PSW Funds	Total 2013-14	Total 2012-13
<b>REVENUES:</b>						
Min. Of Health Grants	302,860	29,062,635	611,846	1,944,321	31,921,662	33,901,641
United Way - Membership Alloc	189,957	-	-	-	189,957	184,957
City of Toronto Grants	89,087	-	-	-	89,087	63,938
Self-Generated Income \ Other	425,753	29,957	-	-	455,710	499,347
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>1,007,657</b>	<b>29,092,592</b>	<b>611,846</b>	<b>1,944,321</b>	<b>32,656,416</b>	<b>34,649,883</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>						
Personnel	716,983	514,058	-	-	1,231,041	1,228,295
Purchased Services	118,564	80,583	-	-	199,147	166,397
Building Occupancy	67,882	62,456	-	-	130,338	141,066
Administrative Expenses	40,316	192,142	91,000	58,000	381,458	360,152
Program Expenses	35,943	601,109	520,846	-	1,157,898	5,475,210
Staff\ Board Expenses	27,969	9,331	-	-	37,300	36,787
Subsidies to Participants	-	27,632,913	-	1,886,321	29,519,234	27,241,976
Amortization- Furniture\Equipment	5,977	-	-	-	5,977	14,775
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>1,013,634</b>	<b>29,092,592</b>	<b>611,846</b>	<b>1,944,321</b>	<b>32,662,393</b>	<b>34,664,658</b>
<b>Excess of Revenue over Expenses</b>	<b>(5,977)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(5,977)</b>	<b>(14,775)</b>

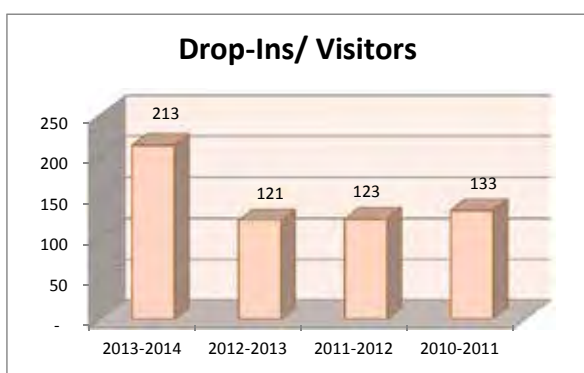
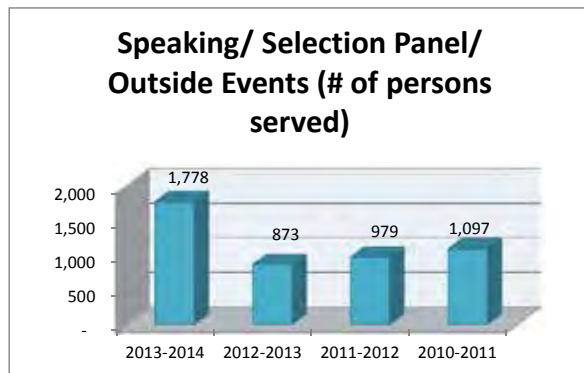
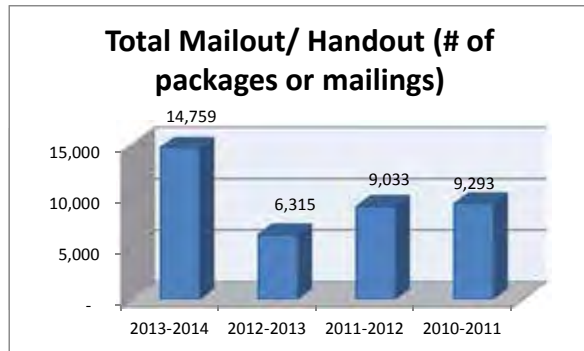
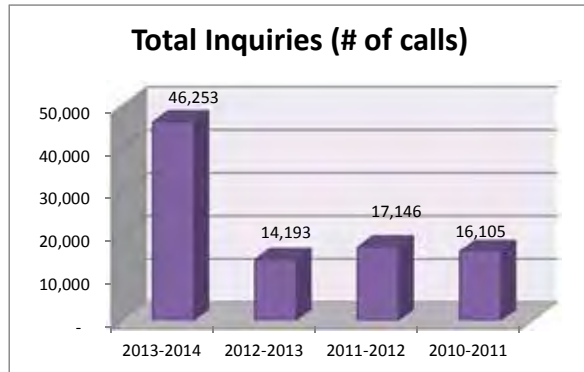
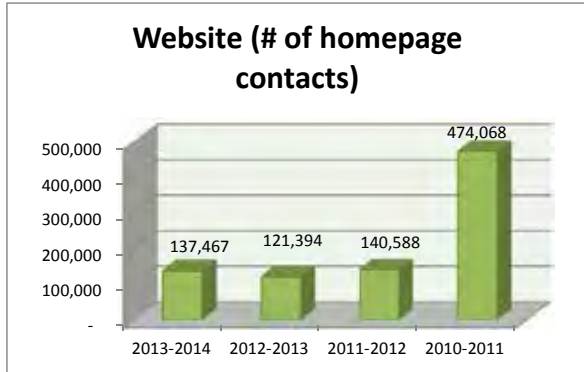
## CILT Statistics April 1, 2013 - March 31, 2014

Individual Contacts by Category 2013-2014



CATEGORY	Individual Contacts	%	Units of Service	%
Website	137,467	68.26%	391,821	80.25%
Total Inquiries	46,253	22.97%	59,148	12.11%
Total Mailout/ Handout	14,759	7.33%	27,715	5.68%
Speaking/ Selection Panel/ Outside Events	1,778	0.88%	4,053	0.83%
CILT Training Workshops/ Groups	579	0.29%	1,844	0.38%
Drop-Ins/ Visitors	213	0.11%	267	0.05%
Community Engagement / Committees	213	0.11%	794	0.16%
Total Volunteers	78	0.04%	351	0.07%
Board Meetings / Committees	52	0.03%	2,241	0.46%
<b>Total</b>	<b>201,392</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>488,234</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

# CILT Statistics April 1, 2013 - March 31, 2014



# HIGHLIGHTS 2013-2014





# STAFF



**CARLING BARRY**  
*Peer Support Assistant*

I like that every workday is different and that I get to be a part of helping create workshops and events with other staff. I also like that CILT is different than other disability organizations and that its focus

is on empowering individuals and supporting them with their choices.

Outside of work I enjoy reading, going to concerts, and spending time with family and friends.



**NANCY BARRY**  
*Peer Program Lead*

I started working at CILT as Peer Program Lead in February 1997. I created CILT's Volunteer Program, Gateways to Cancer Screening and the Aging with a Disability Initiative. I am also the Parenting with

a Disability Resource and Support Network coordinator. In my spare time I enjoy spending time with friends and family. I am currently on parental leave with my son, Justin.



**ARCHIE (BUNKER) CROMWELL**  
*In-Office and Special Events Attendant*

I'm a generally pretty quiet guy but when I'm not, I'm usually laughing at something that I find amusing. If others don't seem to see the humour in something

that I see, well I can't help them out there! But ask anyone and they'll tell you I certainly entertain myself. I work in a couple other places that have less-experienced disabled youth and really enjoy showing them how to stand up for themselves, take care of themselves and what they should expect from their other attendants.

My secret life is as a cartoonist. The most recent addition to my life is my new dog Micah, a Newfoundland Landseer, who thinks I am a chew toy and I am slowly but surely breaking her of that habit!



**LEISA DEBONO**  
*Direct Funding Program Manager*

I started working at CILT with the Direct Funding (DF) program in July 1994 and have been fortunate enough to stick around for the past 20 years. During my early years at CILT I worked as the DF

administrative coordinator until I was promoted to the DF Program Manager position in 2011. It has been very gratifying to watch the program grow from 75 participants in 1995 to almost 10 times that number currently. I never tire of hearing from



people whose lives have changed in a good way because of Direct Funding.

I am particularly excited about the most recent expansion to the Direct Funding Program of \$5 million made by the provincial government last September. From October 2013 to March 2014, the Direct Funding staff worked tirelessly to meet the goals placed before us and managed to bring on more than 40 new participants and increase the budgets of 33 existing Self-Managers. I am pleased and proud to work with such a dedicated group of people.

Personally my life has changed significantly in the past 20 years as well. I was a DINK (Double Income, No Kids) when I first started here but I have since learned the ups and downs of parenthood from both my 16-year-old son, who has autism, and my neuro-typical 14-year-old daughter (I will be taking bets on which one people think is harder to parent!) In addition to parenting, I am also learning about reverse-parenting as the main caregiver for my 89-year-old mother, who has Alzheimer's.

I am grateful to Ian Parker, Vic Willi and Lenka Petric who interviewed me all those years ago ... even though they blew it and offered the job to someone else before discovering I was the right choice!



ABOVE PHOTO: Deb Matthews, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, announces \$5 million expansion of the Direct Funding program in January 2014.



**ABDULLAH DURANAI**  
*Provincial Support Coordinator,  
Direct Funding Program*

I started working with the Direct Funding (DF) program three years ago. I work with program participants, called Self-Managers, from all over Ontario on various matters. The best part of my job is that I help new applicants become ready to start on DF. I know I made a difference in someone's life when we have a new Self-Manager starting on the program.

Outside work, I volunteer with a not-for-profit organization assisting newcomers to Canada. I also enjoy long walks with my wife and two children.



**MARISA FALZONE-BELL**  
*Regional Report Coordinator,  
Direct Funding*

I review the quarterly reports from Self-Managers. I have the privilege of working with Self-Managers in assisting them with independent living and making the most of their funding. I have a passion for art and like to dabble in mixed media and watercolors. I also enjoy gardening, event planning and most of all, spending time with my family.



**LOUIS GEORGE**  
*In-Office and Special Events  
Attendant*

I'm known as the resident joker — although I know I can be one joke over the line sometimes, most of the time people appreciate the humour — and otherwise known as the “cat rescuer” but that is a long story. Ask Leanne.

I like working at CILT because of the variety of the work; most workshops I've helped out at are also of personal interest to me. In my other life I do a lot of work with on poverty issues and working at CILT has provided several opportunities for mutual learning in that area, too. For example, the Civic Literacy Project built on my work and research in the area so I am proud that I was able to influence this work.

I like riding my bike, writing my family history, camping and getting into deep discussions on the Web. My last camping trip got me a 'too-close encounter' with black bears. But that, too, is another story.



**MARGARET GITHUKU**  
*In-Office and Special Events  
Attendant*

I'm now in my sixth year working at CILT and boy, have I ever learned a lot! In addition to the in-office work, I've been to more workshops and meetings than I can count. I love being part of the staff team at CILT and knowing how valued and essential my services are to many staff. I am also a member of the Health and Safety Committee along with Jamie Wong and Abdullah Duranai.

I am regularly called upon to 'counsel' other staff, in fact I have been told I am the 'resident mom' of the office. In my spare time I love reading, going for long walks and helping others in my and the attendant community. One of the highlights of the last year was going home to Kenya for 6 weeks, where I travelled, went on safari, attended a wedding and reunited with my family, whom I hadn't seen in a long time.



**MELISSA GRAHAM**  
*Community Facilitator, Direct  
Funding*

I have been working at CILT for the past two years. My favourite part of working for Direct Funding and CILT is the sense of community that comes from people with disabilities working together to help other people with disabilities; I also enjoy spreading the word about programs and events in the community. I am also the founder and one of the key organizers for the Toronto Disability Pride March, which is going into its fourth year on October 4, 2014.



**ZDRAVKA  
GUEORGUIEVA**  
*Project Information Centre  
Assistant*

I am a chemist holding several degrees. In my spare time I enjoy reading books, watching movies, swimming and participating in outdoor activities, especially in the summer. I also provide peer support to friends who are going through a difficult time.



**MELISSA HAIGLER**  
*In-Office and Special Event  
Attendant*

I've been working at CILT for around six years and yes time sure does fly! This is only one of my jobs; another is at a dog groomer's. I regularly groom Sandra Carpenter's cat (the one Louis and Leanne rescued) and have groomed other CILT staff pets, too. People find me pretty quiet in general but I do love to help in any way I can. I also recently became a Canadian citizen (I'd like to say it was in honour of CILT celebrating 30

years, but it just worked out that way.), just in time to vote for the next Mayor of Toronto! I love to take road trips to see family in the United States and travel in general.



**KATHERINE JANICKI**  
*Intake Coordinator, Direct Funding*

I have been with CILT for three years. As intake coordinator, I receive program inquiries and applications and I support applicants in preparing for their Direct Funding interviews.

Outside of work, I am passionate about politics and electoral reform.



**LEANNE LARMONDIN**  
*Provincial Program Coordinator, Direct Funding*

On any given day, I interview Direct Funding program applicants anywhere in the province, help participants problem solve, liaise with program staff across the

province, consult on legal issues, review payments and write promotional materials. In the last year, I enjoyed coordinating several marketing projects for the Direct Funding program; our ads ran in two magazines (one national and one local) and more than 1,300 accessible buses across the province. Outside work, I'm a runner, rower, reader and chauffeur/mother to two teenagers.



**JUDY LU**  
*Operations Assistant*

I have a degree in Accounting and Information Technology. Currently I am raising two children and I enjoy spending time with my friends and family. In the future I plan to take Zumba (a mix of aerobics and dancing) and Tai chi classes.



**MELANIE MOORE**  
*Community Engagement Specialist*

Community engagement is just a fancy way of saying we want to involve as many people from as many areas in as many CILT activities as possible! At CILT I enjoy networking with other organizations, as well as providing education and awareness to others through a cross-disability lens.

Currently, I serve on two community boards; Toronto chapter president for Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians, and secretary for Ethno-Racial People with Disabilities Coalition of Ontario.

I have a Bachelor of Social Work degree and hope to complete my Masters in Social Work, studying aboriginal elder teachings.

In my spare time I enjoy spending time with family and friends, listening to music, playing the piano, singing, cycling and traveling.



**JOHN MOSSA**  
*Independent Living Skills  
Coordinator*

I have been working with CILT for the last 14 years. I work with consumers with disabilities on developing their skills to self-advocate for their rights and responsibilities on a wide

range of issues from attendant services to Wheel-Trans. Also, I provide short-term crisis peer support, facilitate skills development workshops and make CILT presentations for consumers and service providers.

I recently led two participatory action research projects on disability and safety issues within Toronto: Safe Engaged Environments Disability (SEED) and Safe Toronto Action Now Disability (STAND). I'm also leading the Civic Literacy – Disability Project. The project focuses on how people with disabilities can become fully engaged with the citizenship process on the municipal level in Toronto.

I enjoy movies, music, sports, and online games and love to read social justice articles and books.



**IAN PARKER**  
*Senior Advisor, Direct Funding*

I am a co-founder of the Direct Funding Program and was the program's manager for many years. I have lived with a spinal cord injury and used attendant services for almost 40 years; I appreciate

promoting the needs and IL perspective of attendant service consumers. I am also a recipient of the 2012 CILT Founders Award. In my personal life, I am married to a gifted writer and am the proud dad of a wonderful teenage daughter.



**ANDREA RAE**  
*Inquiries Generalist*

I've been working at CILT doing Information and Referral (with a brief secondment to Direct Funding) since 2005. I enjoy hearing individual stories from consumers, and helping them find services. I've also

been assisting with locating wheelchair-accessible housing for consumers and helping CILT find out more about potential grants they can apply for. For the last year I've also been involved with the Civic Literacy and Safe Inclusive Toronto Streets projects. I have a Bachelor of Music degree from Queen's University and a Master of Arts degree in Canadian Studies from Carleton University. In my spare time I enjoy spending time with family (and chasing my energetic, almost-three-year-old son around), playing the flute, and knitting.



**ROLITA SIU**  
*Project Information Centre  
Manager*

I have worked at CILT for 10 years overseeing the overall operation of the Project Information Centre and its database system and coordinating the advisory

group for service providers in Toronto. I like my work because it is meaningful. I can utilize my educational background and work experience in psychology, social work, counseling, lecturing, computer programming, and web design. I also like the professional attitude and the supportive work environment. I like travelling and photography and enjoy collecting teddy bears.



**JOHN TAM**

*Audit and Information  
Coordinator, Direct Funding*

What I like most about my position is that my work aligns with my volunteer goals of being able to personally enhance the lives of people with disabilities.

When not at work I like to volunteer with Toronto Trailblazers Tandem Cycling Club, the Toronto Tool Library, and March of Dimes — DesignAbility program. I also enjoy attending outdoor street events in the city.



**JAMIE WONG**

*Operations Manager*

This year marks my 20th year with CILT. In 20 years I've seen CILT go through many changes, ups and downs. I like my job because working for a charitable organization makes me feel good. As

Operations Manager, I am involved in overseeing various operational functions including finance, human resources, payroll, office administration, and information technology. My role keeps me busy with different kinds of challenges at different times of the year.

In addition, my work at CILT gives me the opportunity to explore, procure, and deploy new technology, which I find fascinating and exciting. I enjoy rolling out new and innovative tools and equipment that can help the staff work more efficiently and effectively, which in turn helps provide better services to the disability community.

In my spare time, I like housekeeping, watching television dramas and travelling. Oh yes, and I like small or miniature objects!





## HAZEL SELF 2014 FOUNDERS' AWARD RECIPIENT

**E**ACH YEAR CILT presents its Founders' Award in recognition of the significant contribution of a person who both exemplifies and has advanced the Independent Living philosophy (IL). This year, CILT is delighted to present the Founders' Award to Hazel Self. Hazel has achieved and taught so much regarding the independent living philosophy and movement. She has been such an incredible inspiration to so many people - likely to the point of truly saving people's lives by showing what is possible. She is well loved and cherished.

Hazel is Coordinator of Community Services at the Gage Transition to Independent Living (GTIL), a community-based program of West Park Healthcare Centre in Toronto. The Gage offers a community setting for adults with physical disabilities to learn and practice independent living skills.

Hazel has been instrumental in the evolution of the Gage since starting in the mid 1980s. She has ensured that the independent living philosophy is central to all aspects of the Gage. This is not always easy in a program run through a hospital with all the rules and regulations laid out by the province as to how hospitals must run. When conflicts arise Hazel has a way of facilitating discussions that get at the core of people's feelings about an issue which allows for real resolution and often allows common sense to prevail. By sharing her wealth of knowledge about health care, attendant services, and the possibilities for individuals living with disabilities in the community, she has mentored and inspired others to dream and live their lives to the fullest in the community. Hazel has worked creatively and diplomatically to bridge the gap between institutions and the community and between

childhood to adulthood. Her compassion, caring, faith, determination and patience have touched the lives of many, assisting them to uncover their gifts, build self-confidence and transform their lives.

Hazel has always looked out for the most vulnerable individuals and has sought out ways of empowering them by advocating for living arrangements that respect each person's autonomy and right to make choices. There are many, many examples of her doing this but none is more pivotal, perhaps, than the role she played in creating a group home for individuals with speech impairments and physical disabilities who were previously institutionalized in less than ideal circumstances. Hazel was a founding member of North Yorkers for Disabled Persons (1984), an organization that provides supportive housing with attendant services and communication assistance at "2880 Bayview". She and a colleague sought out adults with a communication disability and inspired them to spread their wings beyond family and institution. Two clients still reference her in their devices in a pre-programmed message about moving because of her. She is very influential in the AAC (augmentative and adaptive communication) community and well respected for her insight and compassion.

Growing out of this involvement, Hazel was a founding member in 2001 of the organization now called Communication Disabilities Access Canada (CDAC) and she remains on its board of directors. CDAC is a national non-profit organization dedicated to promoting accessibility and human rights for people who have significant speech and language disabilities.

For the past 13 years, Hazel has guided every aspect of CDAC's work with compassion, wisdom and unwavering values. She has met with provincial and federal ministers, and government groups to advocate for increased communication accessibility. She has lobbied for communication assistants to help people communicate in essential services and she has educated justice groups about the need for effective communication in legal and justice situations. CDAC would not exist without her

efforts and dedication.

Hazel is a mentor. She is a role model. She has influenced a great many people, including students of physio and occupational therapy at the University of Toronto, raising their awareness of IL and the range of possibilities available for individuals with a disability. Colleagues who have worked alongside her during her lectures at U of T have watched her facilitate groups with grace and expertise, gently raising ideas about life with a disability that these young students had never considered before.

Besides CDAC, several other boards of directors have been enriched with Hazel's membership, including the Cheshire Homes Foundation, Clarendon Foundation, the Hugh MacMillan Centre and, with her leadership as president, the Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT)(1995-2001).

CILT's Direct Funding program is dear to Hazel's heart, embodying IL philosophy through consumers self-managing their attendant services for themselves. From its early planning on weekends in coffee shops and lobbying at conferences, Hazel has been inextricably at the centre of this program. She co-authored *Power Shift*, documenting the early development of Direct Funding. She continues to contribute her wisdom, experience and insight in the selection of program participants and other matters.

And Hazel champions attendant services against possible harm from all sides including health professions' lack of knowledge. For example, she has been a watch dog and stood up in the face of the Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA) at its inception (1992), through co-presenting with Attendant Consumer Action Coalition regarding regulation of PSWs (2006), to vigilance on changes to regulation of chiropodists (2014). Hazel stays for the long run in causes she cares deeply about...you can count on Hazel steadfastly to be there. Hazel has even had a promising film debut starring in an attendant training film (1992ish) featuring scenes in her apartment and elsewhere, all in support of the greater good.

One colleague notes that on a personal level Hazel is just delightful — her e-mail account at work is always at capacity with pictures of cute puppies/kittens/deer/baby ducks/et cetera, she is oh so devoted to her dog, Shadow, she's a gutsy downtown driver and always up for an adventure (local or international).

Another colleague remembers most especially the trips she corralled us into! That day at Eaglewood Art festival one summer and even more especially, a trip to Independence '92 in Vancouver, an international conference organized by Rick Hansen Foundation.... Where a group went a few days early so as to go to Vancouver Island... staying at B & B's; and the campfire on Wickaninnish or Long Beach on the Pacific Rim, where it was freezing cold but the campfire smoked the rubber

off the bottom of shoes! The colleague continues, "...what stands out about Hazel, it would be her indomitably determined sense of adventure and how good she was at roping us all into it with her!!!"

Hazel's love of art and painting and her generosity of spirit are large parts of this extraordinary person. Many of us treasure her watercolours; one of these she donated to CILT's United Way auction and it raised the largest bid of all! Many count her as one of the saints among us.

As a champion of social justice, Hazel exemplifies the IL philosophy through her committed efforts to increase awareness, change policy and open doors for the future. Hazel is most deserving of the Founders' Award. We never stop learning and being inspired by her...she is amazing!





# STAFF EVENTS



# BOARD MEMBERS



## MEENU SIKAND

*President*

Meenu holds a graduate degree in Critical Disability Studies from York University and currently works as Regional Accessibility Planning Specialist and instructor at the Queen's University's International

Centre for the Advancement of Community Based Rehabilitation Program. She also serves as co-chair of the Region of Peel United.

Since 1990, Meenu has been involved in Canada's Independent Living movement in various capacities. She has served in various executive positions on the national board of Independent Living Canada and chair of its International Committee. In 1995, she participated in the United Nations Conference on Women in Beijing and "Loud, Proud and Passionate", a project which gathered women with disabilities from around the world to discuss issues of leadership. That year, she also founded the Canadian South-Asians Supporting Independent Living.

In April 2013, Meenu was invited by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities as an expert witness for a federal study exploring employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

She worked recently in Bangladesh on a project aimed at improving access to health and education for youth with disabilities.

She has been recognized for her volunteerism and humanitarian work with the Queen's Diamond Jubilee medal, the Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce Humanitarian Award and the New Pioneers Award from the Region of Peel.

Meenu lives with her husband, Jai, her mother, Amrit, and her son Manav in Woodbridge, Ont. Living with independent living principles at the core of her being, Meenu believes that there is nothing she would change about her life if given the chance.



## HELEN HENDERSON

*Vice President*

Helen Henderson is a freelance journalist and a student in Disability Studies at Ryerson University. Her column, Direct Access, appeared Saturdays in the *Toronto Star* for more than 20 years. Born in Scotland,

Helen came to Canada at age 9 and grew up in Montreal. She began her newspaper career as a business reporter, covering oil and gas for the *Toronto Star*. She later switched to the newspaper's Living section, contributing features in addition to her column on disability issues.





**CATHY SAMUELSON**

*Treasurer*

Cathy Samuelson has worked in the community of supporting persons with physical disabilities for the past 24 years. She is currently the executive director of North Yorkers for Disabled Persons, which

provides supportive housing, attendant services and augmentative communication facilitation.



**CHRISTINE STAPLEFORD**

*Secretary*

Christine has worked for many years in the field of social services. A social worker by profession, she has a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology and a Master's

degree in social work. Christine has experience working in the field of mental health and cognitive rehabilitation with adults, and has extensive experience working with young adults living with disabilities and their families.

Christine's particular area of interest has centered on the multi-faceted aspects of living with a disability, including invisible disabilities, and issues across the lifespan (increased risk of abuse, sexuality issues, aging, secondary conditions, substance abuse, social isolation and depression). She has also co-authored research articles relating to disability issues, including the experiences of fathers, social support, and self-esteem. Christine has spoken in the community on a variety of topics relating to disabilities, including self-esteem issues, facilitating independence in youth with disabilities, sexuality, and ethics.

Currently, Christine is the Professional Leader for Social Work at Toronto Rehabilitation Institute, University Health Network, where she also works as

a social worker for the LIFEspan Program, a service aimed at bridging the gap between the pediatric and adult healthcare system for young adults living with cerebral palsy or acquired brain injury.



**CHRISTOPHER LYTLE**

*Member-at-Large*

Christopher Lytle holds a Bachelor of Arts in Social Anthropology and a Master's degree in Critical Disability Studies. He participated in consultations held by the Council of Canadians with

Disabilities (CCD) during the drafting of the United Nations text of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and he was part of CCD International Human Rights Committee from 2004 to 2006. He held a seat on the board of directors for the Canadian Council of International Cooperation (CCIC) from 2007 to 2008 and he has worked extensively building capacity for human rights monitoring of persons with disabilities in Asia, Africa and Europe. Christopher has worked within the Independent Living movement at the national and local level since 2007 in various roles including policy analysis, community development and researcher.



**HARVINDER BAJWA**

*Director*

Harvinder Bajwa immigrated to Canada from India in 1990. She faced many challenges during her settlement process in terms of accessibility, resources and employment. She says her experiences as an immigrant

woman with a disability were the drive to make a difference in others' lives. Harvinder is executive director of Canadian South Asians Supporting Independent Living. She has also served on various boards and committees, including the accessibility advisory committee (City of Brampton), the

Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee (Region of Peel), Ethno-Racial People with Disabilities Coalition of Ontario and event leader of the Brampton Rick Hansen Wheels in Motion.

She strongly believes in independent living and would like to see persons with disabilities live their lives with dignity and make a positive contribution in society.



### **WARNER CLARKE**

*Director*

Warner describes his working life as a series of fortuitous accidents and opportunities that lead him to the best job in the world. His early work experience included serving as a Grade 2 teacher; working

in a group home for youth in conflict with the law and a singer/guitarist. He attended the University of Toronto, then worked in the field of children's mental health as a residential counselor before returning to school to complete a Master of Social Work degree.

In 1982, Warner accepted a three-month contract with the Ministry of Community and Social Services as a vocational rehabilitation counselor. This was his first real encounter and development of awareness with working with people with disabilities. He later supervised some seniors programs in Toronto and eventually took on a portfolio focusing on services for adults with physical disabilities in 1987.

Warner was working for the provincial government when it embarked on a review of the attendant service system that resulted in a significant research paper; that document provided some direction to organizations providing services to persons with physical disabilities, but also laid groundwork for the establishment of the Direct Funding pilot project. Warner was a member of the implementation team.

Later, after serving in the corporate policy branch of the Ministry of Health, Warner worked from 2007 until his retirement in 2010, managing a small portfolio of provincially funded services, including the Direct Funding program.

Since retirement, Warner spent time as primary caregiver for his wife Beth, who passed away in 2011, and his mother Nancy, who passed away in November of 2012. Lately, he has been spending much of his time working with his musical projects; The Deloraines, the Wild Walker Band, The Lost Boys, and most recently, Willin' & Abel.



### **KEN CONNORS**

*Director*

Ken joined the CILT Board in January 2008 as an interim appointment to the Treasurer position. He has a wealth of experience with non-profit boards and with treasurer responsibilities, including

the Evangel Hall Mission and the Mariposa Folk Foundation. He is treasurer of the condominium board where he lives and he also volunteers at Christopher House in the annual income tax preparation program for seniors and people with low incomes.

Now largely retired, his professional experience has included providing accounting, financial management and day-to-day bookkeeping services to a variety of not-for-profit organizations in Toronto, including participants of the Self-Managed Attendant Services — Direct Funding Program, administered by CILT.

In the past, he served as executive director of Three Trilliums Community Place, a non-profit organization providing attendant services to adults with physical disabilities who wish to live independently in the community and direct their own care. He has also worked in the Northwest Territories for the Fort McPherson Incorporated

Band Ltd. and for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

His international work has taken him to South Africa and the Ukraine.

His education includes a Master of Public Administration degree, a Master of Arts (Russian Literature), and a Bachelor of Arts (Political Studies).



**VICTOR GASCON**  
*Director*

Victor is an experienced consultant on disability issues and has been an advocate for people with disabilities for more than 30 years. He is currently president of the board of directors for the

Ontario Federation for Cerebral Palsy and past president of Blissymbolics Canada.

Victor's experience includes being a personal support worker, a literacy practitioner, executive director of a provincial native organization and teaching.

Twenty-four years ago, Victor and his partner adopted a young boy with cerebral palsy (CP) who was living in a group home for children with CP. His son has been the driving force in his quest to inspire front-line workers to do their best with the hope of better services for all.



**MEGHAN HINES**  
*Director*

Meghan is entering her second year of her first term as a CILT Board member. She is from Toronto and a recent graduate from the Honours Bachelor of Commerce program at McMaster University. In

addition to studying full time at McMaster, for the past three and a half years Meghan worked part time and during the summer as an external recruitment screener with TD Canada Trust. She recently obtained full-time employment at RBC as coordinator for its executive recruitment team.

She has been involved in the community from a very young age, beginning with the Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides, which has provided her with her service dogs, including her current dog guide, Target. Meghan has also been active in her wheelchair hockey association and in Girl Guides of Canada where she achieved the Canada Cord, the highest honour in Guiding. In 2012, Meghan's commitment to the community was recognized when she was awarded the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal.

While working at TD Canada Trust Meghan helped plan and implement a national strategy for TD employees with disabilities; this work helped TD better meet the needs of employees with disabilities and provide them the opportunities, support and resources they require to reach their full potential. Meghan has been actively seeking ways to become involved in RBC's strategies for persons with disabilities, as well as other community initiatives.

Meghan has been a participant of the Direct Funding (DF) program since November 2011. DF has had such a significant positive impact on her independence and freedom that Meghan is eager to give back to CILT in any way she can to ensure DF and other programs and services offered can continue to improve the lives of other individuals with disabilities.



### STACEY LINTERN

*Director*

Stacey Lintern is currently Executive Director for Ontario/Nunavut for Muscular Dystrophy Canada, past Senior Manager of Attendant Services for the Canadian Paraplegic Association Ontario and past

Operations Regional Independent Living Manager for the Ontario March of Dimes. She is committed to visionary leadership and has a profound understanding of Independent Living and its philosophy of consumer control. She volunteers for the Accessibility Advisory Committee of the Whitby Accessibility Centre.



### AYSHIA MUSLEH

*Director*

Ayshia Musleh currently works as an accessibility specialist in Human Rights and Equity Services at McMaster University. Previously, she was project coordinator at the Ethno-Racial People with

Disabilities Coalition of Ontario (ERDCO). Ayshia is a disability rights advocate, with a strong history of advocacy work at a number of community-based agencies in Toronto. She has worked both at the frontlines of the mental health service sector and at the policy levels, advocating for access and inclusion for all. She obtained her Masters of Arts in Critical Disability Studies from York University in 2006.



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