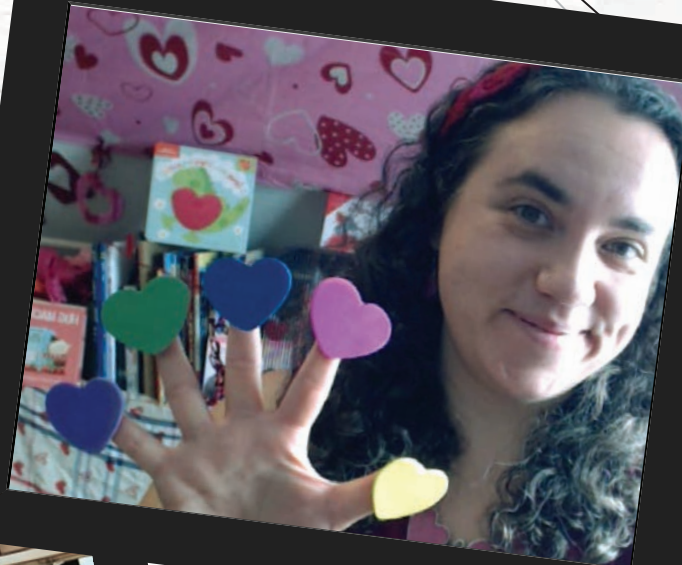


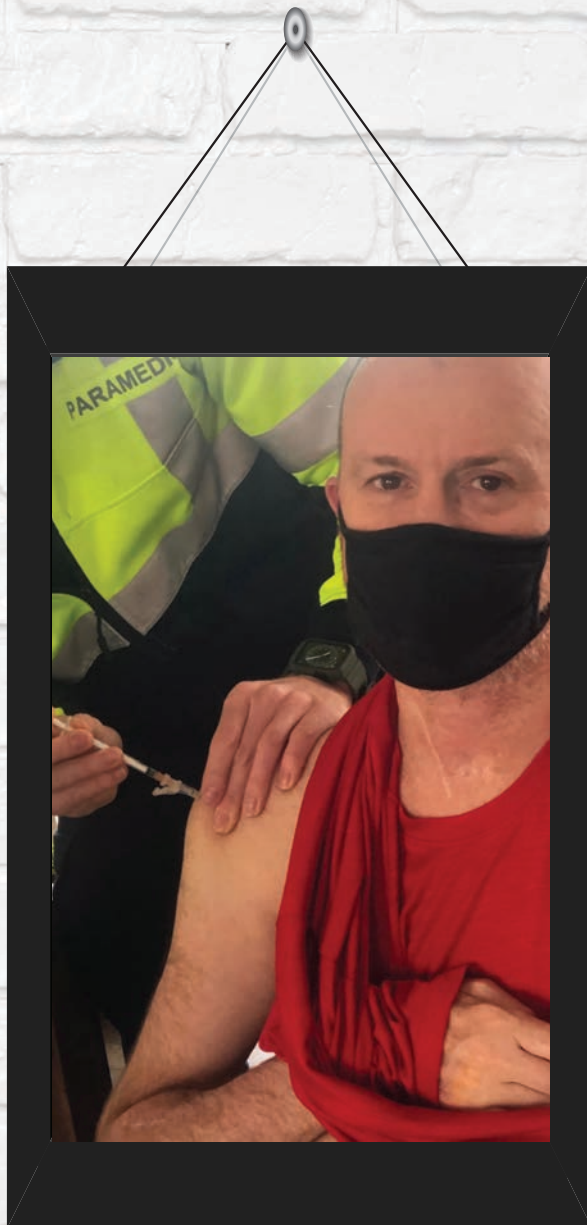
2020–2021

ANNUAL REPORT



Throughout the year...





... we stayed
connected.

Contents

President and Chair's Report.....	4
Executive Director's Report.....	6
Treasurer's Report.....	10
Condensed Financial Statements.....	12
Founders' Award Recipient	13
Statistical Highlights	14
Board Members.....	16
Staff	21
In Loving Memory.....	28
CILT in the News	31
Your Opinion Matters.....	32



“We
have
so much
to be proud
of.”

—JACQUES LEBLANC

President and Chair

Jacques LeBlanc

WHILE MUCH HAS CHANGED DURING the COVID-19 pandemic, what has remained constant is the positive impact CILT's programs have had on so many in our community. As CILT is entering its 37th year, we have so much to be proud of.

Since early 2018, I have had the honour and privilege to work with CILT's talented Board and staff, who have been committed to our issues and programs while diligently applying Independent Living principles to all decisions and programs. I have had the honour of completing my second year as president at CILT and it has been fondly memorable.

As you can see in our Financial Report, with the tremendous help of our staff and Board, we were able to continue our work and conclude the fiscal year with a balanced budget. My board colleagues and I cannot express our appreciation enough for the extraordinary work of our incredible staff, who has collaboratively worked to ensure that we continue to grow, mature, and respond to a rapidly changing economic and political climate. We couldn't do what we do without them. Please join me in thanking them for all their hard work!

This past year, our Board members included myself as chair, Buvani Sivagnanasunderam as Vice-Chair, Joshua Tayar as Secretary, Ken Connors as Treasurer, Cathy Samuelson, Darren Cooper, Jennifer Hines, Neil Mercer, Lisa Melo,

Vincenza Ronaldi, Deb Daniel, and Karen Denton. Please join us in thanking everyone for their time, expertise, and passion they brought to CILT. Regrettably, we will say goodbye to board members Lisa Melo and Joshua Tayar. We thank them for their dedication and commitment to the governing body of this organization and are truly grateful to them for volunteering their time to help guide CILT.

Special recognition also goes out to our undaunted Executive Director of the past three years, Wendy Porch. We are, indeed, fortunate to have Wendy's dedication and leadership, because of her long-term commitment to the viability of the community. Whether through her work as CILT's Executive Director, as a member of the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee (TAAC), or as Chair of Toronto's COVID-19 Accessibility Task Force, which provides support and access to the COVID-19 vaccine for people with disabilities, Wendy brings vast experience in so many fields and has been extremely effective at using her skills to lead her staff through these difficult times. The Board is extremely grateful for Wendy's thoughtful insights and vision for the future of CILT and our community.

I would also like to take a moment to once again recognize a sector who found the courage to move forward through this difficult time and, without whom, life would have been tougher for many of us. For those who have put their lives on the line to help maintain

our IL principles, the personal support workers and attendants who unselfishly work with the nearly 1,000 Self-Managers under the Direct Funding Program, we thank you.

And finally, the Board would like to acknowledge and thank our funders, without whose generous support we would not be able to address any community or member's needs. Our primary funders are Independent Living Canada, the City of Toronto, the United Way of Greater Toronto, and the Ministry of Health.

I personally look upon CILT as the pinnacle organization for Independent Living. Our aim is to develop and implement dignified social services that empower individuals to take control of their lives. We encourage people with disabilities to exercise their right to examine options, make choices, take risks, and yes, to even make mistakes. We hear time and again that our programs have life-changing impacts on the lives of our consumers. And for this I am extremely proud and eternally grateful.

Where to from here, one may ask? Let's be mindful that we have many challenges and great opportunities before us, and with your help, we will meet them and make next year the best year in our 37-year history!

So, on behalf of the CILT Board of Directors, it is our privilege to serve our membership throughout Ontario. Thank you! ❄️



“Resilience is the capacity of a person or thing to adapt and continue despite experiencing adversity.”

—WENDY PORCH

Executive Director

Wendy Porch

AT THE TIME OF WRITING THIS report, it has been almost 18 months of remote work for CILT. I continue to be impressed by the CILT's staff and Board for maintaining their commitment to Independent Living through these continuing tough times. While we are lucky to be able to support working remotely, it has been a challenging time for all CILT staff, who are used to being able to drop into each other's offices and catch up in the kitchen or the boardroom at lunch. I am grateful to CILT staff for maintaining your dedication to IL and for all your hard work. I know we all look forward to the day that we can be together to celebrate everything that we have accomplished during these trying times.

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to Jacques LeBlanc, CILT's President and Board Chair, for his continued leadership and guidance during the pandemic. Thank you also to CILT's committed and skilled Board members. Your continued steady guidance has been an anchor both for myself and for CILT, and for that I am deeply grateful.

In keeping with our commitment to providing a safe environment for CILT staff and consumers, all CILT programs have remained remote this year. It is a real testament to the ingenuity of CILT staff and consumers that we have maintained our connections, provided support and continued the much-needed conversation about what Independent Living looks like in this new COVID-19 world.

I am sorry to share that CILT is mourning the loss of two very important people this year. First, in January 2021, Sylvia Draper-Fernandez passed away suddenly. Sylvia was CILT's dedicated and skilled bookkeeper,

having started with the agency when the CILT first began. I usually spoke to Sylvia at least once a day. Sylvia was a force of nature. She supported the Direct Funding Program through all of the program's expansions, and watched it grow from a pilot program to supporting more than 1000 Self-Managers across Ontario. We remember Sylvia in a tribute in this report.

On April 15, 2021, the CILT community was again deeply saddened to learn that Ian Parker, long-time manager and co-founder of the Direct Funding Program, had passed away. Ian was one of the driving forces behind the Direct Funding Program and it was through his and others' continuous efforts advocating on behalf of consumers that the Direct Funding Program was established and grew to serve approximately 1000 consumers across Ontario. Ian's voice and his experience as a consumer was invaluable in developing the core policies and approaches in the program. When Ian retired in 2018, he was one of the longest serving staff members at CILT. In June of this year Leisa DeBono, CILT's manager of the Direct Funding Program, wrote the following about Ian:

"That Ian is no longer with us is incredibly sad for those who knew and loved him. He has left an enormous hole that is impossible to fill, as just his presence and the knowledge we could seek out his opinion or memory on day-to-day issues seemed to make things better and easier."

Ian was a powerful advocate for Independent Living and a true gentleman among men. There is a tribute to Ian included in this report.

Below please find an update on CILT's program activities for 2020–2021.

Operations:

CILT's Operations team was joined this year by Melissa Watanabe as Manager Operations/ Human Resources. Melissa has brought with her extensive experience and has already had a significant impact on operations and Human Resource management at CILT. Under her leadership, CILT's Operations team has continued to support CILT staff in meeting the challenges of remote work. A huge thank you to the Operations team for not only keeping us moving forward, but also for helping us modernize and improve CILT's operations and HR functions at a time when we are all more reliant on technology than ever before. Ops also supported the successful implementation of the PSW Training Fund again this year. It is always a challenge, but training supports for PSWs are needed now more than ever before.

Direct Funding Program:

In recognition of the value of the Direct Funding Program, managed by Leisa DeBono, DF was granted a funding expansion in November 2020. The expansion funds granted by Ontario's Ministry of Health will facilitate adding Self-Managers to the program. The Direct Funding team has consistently worked to support consumers with the uncertainties that accompany the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff have continued to support Self-Managers with questions and concerns regarding PPE, testing,

and more recently with accessing COVID-19 vaccines. The DF team has also supported Self-Managers with implementing additional funds for attendants as provided under a range of provincial wage enhancement programs for front line staff during the pandemic. It has been a time of tremendous importance and complex work. Under Leisa's leadership, the Direct Funding team continues to rise to the challenges imposed by the pandemic to offer Self-Managers stable support and guidance in the face of this uncertain time.

Core Programs:

CILT's Core programs, managed by David Meyers, have also worked very hard to pivot and continue to meet the needs of consumers during the COVID-19 pandemic. David and the Core team's focus on meeting the ongoing and emerging needs of consumers is evident in the work undertaken this year. Core activities this year included:

- *Developing and providing webinars and programs related to the needs of consumers during the pandemic, including:*
 - “Nothing About Us, Without Us: Disability, Advocacy, and COVID-19”
 - “ODSP and COVID-19” Zoom Webinar
 - E-Scooters Workshop
 - “Food Access and Insecurity in Adults with Mobility Disabilities” Webinar
 - “Mindfulness for Cross-Disability and D/deaf Adults”: 4-Week Session
 - “Self-Advocating for Accessible Mental Health Supports” Workshop
 - Multiple “Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) Webinars for Consumers”
 - Vaccines for Consumers Webinar
 - Holland Bloorview Youth Transitions Advocacy Fair

- Peer Connect Song Circles for Parents with Disabilities
- Peer Connect sessions and Movie Nights

- *The Core team also supported consumers in elevating their voices through:*
 - Hosting a Toronto Office of Rebuild and Recovery Survey and Disability Community Consultation
 - Leveraging our communication and social media platforms (website, Facebook, and Twitter pages) to elevate community awareness and engagement around the COVID-related needs of Ontarians with disabilities, including PPE and vaccine access
 - Participating in the Accessible Housing Network and coordinating the GTA Disability Coalition

The commitment of the Core team to IL remains unwavering, as does the ingenuity and perseverance of consumers. Thank you to each of you for your perseverance and passion for IL.

Attendant Service Application Centre:

The Attendant Service Application Centre, managed by Danielle Daoust, has continued to meet the needs of consumers applying for attendant outreach and supportive housing services in the GTA. The situation for consumers seeking supportive housing remains difficult. Although some new housing was developed recently, there remains an overwhelming mismatch between the needs of consumers and the housing opportunities available. CILT will continue to work with our supportive housing sector partners, as well as the Accessible Housing Network and other community-based collaboratives, to push for more accessible and affordable housing options for consumers in Toronto.

Thanks to the small but mighty ASAC team for consistently finding opportunities for consumers to access the services they need.

A big thank you, as well, to Chak Lee and Ye Wang at Envision Accounting and Business Services, our new accountants, for all of your sage advice and thoughtful and efficient support.

As the pandemic has progressed, we have seen the significant shift from working to prevent transmission to working to encourage vaccination. It is incredible that we are now able to enjoy the protections of COVID-19 vaccines. These vaccines have been developed through an extraordinary scientific collaboration, which has never been seen before. Unfortunately, as with other elements in the pandemic, we have had to fight as disabled people to be clearly seen in the vaccine outreach context.

In March 2021, CILT (in partnership with a range of grassroots organizations) was provided with the opportunity to undertake a targeted vaccine outreach project to disabled people. I was also approached to chair the City of Toronto's Accessibility Task Force on COVID-19 vaccines. The Task Force was formed to identify and break down barriers to vaccination for people with disabilities in the city. I feel honoured to work with task force members, as well as City of Toronto staff, on these important goals.

Despite all of the work being undertaken by both the vaccine outreach project and the task force, it is still apparent that disabled people must continue to have a seat at the table in terms of onward planning and implementation of COVID-19 related interventions. CILT will continue to fight for consumer representation and visibility in COVID-19 responses.

CILT is a member organization. We can't do what we do without you, the voting members. Your support for our work means so much to us. Thank you.

Thank you as well to all those who have donated to support CILT's work, including monthly and individual donors. We are deeply grateful for your ongoing support of CILT's vision and work.

CILT's main funders are the City of Toronto, the United Way Greater Toronto, and the Ontario Ministry of Health. CILT also receives a grant from Independent Living Canada. Thank you to our funders for their ongoing support for Independent Living. This year, CILT also received significant donations from the Odette Family Foundation and CIBC. CILT also received a one-time, emergency grant from the United Way that enabled us to undertake needed webinars on COVID-19 as it impacts disabled people and vaccinations. We would like to thank them for their support in these most difficult of times.

CILT would also like to thank the Ontario Trillium Foundation for our seed grant that enabled the D-Next Project to continue to build the capacity of disabled consumers to tell their own stories using podcasts, videos, and social media.

Resilience is the capacity of a person or thing to adapt and continue despite experiencing adversity. Thank you to all of you, CILT staff, Board, and members for displaying grace and resilience in all you do. 🌸



**“As usual,
CILT received
a ‘clean’ report
from its auditors.”**

— KEN CONNERS

Treasurer's Report

Ken Connors

A CONDENSED VERSION OF CILT'S audited financial statements for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021, is included in this annual report. A complete version of the report is available on request.

CILT's finances were audited by Kriens-LaRose, LLP Chartered Professional Accountants. As usual, CILT received a “clean” report from its auditors.

Statement of Financial Position (the top part of the condensed statements) shows CILT's assets and liabilities as of March 31, 2021, for all CILT's programs. Comparative figures from the 2019-20 fiscal year are also shown.

At year end, our Net Assets/Reserves were \$449,339. This amount is what would be left over if all CILT's liabilities were paid out from its assets. This figure does not normally change from year to year because our funding agreements require CILT to operate on a breakeven basis – that is, we cannot generate an operating surplus to add to our Reserve Fund at the end of the year.

The bottom part of the report – Statement of Operations – shows revenues and expenses for the year for each of CILT's three main programs, a total for all three programs together, and comparative figures from 2019-20.

Core Funds

The first column shows the revenues and expenses for CILT's core programs and operations. Last year's income totalled \$1,057,986 from the various funders listed, donations and other self-generated income. The self-generated income included fees for administering the Direct Funding and PSW programs on behalf of the Ministry of Health. This year, CILT deferred some of these fees to ensure that our revenues did not exceed our expenses. The deferred income can (and must) be used in a future year in which programs may end up running a deficit. The Core expenses consisted of personnel, program, and overhead costs.

Direct Funding Program

Revenues and expenses are shown in the second column. This program had a total income of \$56,448,001 (up \$11 million from last year), almost all of which came from the Ministry of Health. The largest expense item (\$54,729,780) represented payments to Self-Managers (participants) as well as to other Independent Living Centres across the province that provide program and administrative support. Other Direct Funding expenses covered personnel and program

costs and a portion of CILT's overhead costs. The expenses also included an administrative fee for CILT's work in running the program, which became a revenue to the Core Funds. This program operates on a breakeven basis, so any unused funds are repayable to the Ministry of Health.

PSW Training Funds

The third column shows the Personal Support Workers (PSW) Education and Training program. Under this program, the Ministry of Health provides funding to CILT, which we distribute to various participating agencies that want to provide PSW training. The agencies report their training activities and account to CILT for the funds. Any unused funds are returned to the Ministry of Health. For these services, CILT received an administrative fee, which became revenue.

I regret to report that Sylvia Draper-Fernandez, CILT's accountant since the organization's founding, passed away last January. The day-to day accounting and preparation of CILT's budgets and reports have been taken over by Chak Lee under the direction of Wendy Porch. I would like to thank Chak and Wendy for their management of our financial resources. ❄️

CILT Condensed Financial Statements

Statement of Financial Position

	2020-21 \$	2019-20 \$
Assets		
Current Assets	11,206,044	11,028,783
Capital Assets	124,239	101,032
Total Assets	11,330,283	11,129,815
Liabilities/Net Assets:		
Current & Deferred Liabilities	10,880,944	10,680,476
Net Assets/Reserves	449,339	449,339
Total Liabilities/Reserves	11,330,283	11,129,815

Statement of Operations

	Core Funds \$	Direct Funding Program \$	PSW Training Fund \$	Total 2020-21 \$	Total 2019-20 \$
Revenues					
Min. of Health/Toronto Central LHIN	552,860	56,267,137	666,618	57,486,615	47,930,275
Self-Generated Income/Other	314,523	180,864	-	495,387	726,414
United Way - Program Funding	136,057	-	-	136,057	114,890
Ontario Trillium Foundation	28,936	-	-	28,936	52,664
City of Toronto Grants	25,610	-	-	25,610	37,963
LHINs (formally CCAC)	-	-	-	-	22,354
Total Revenues	1,057,986	56,448,001	666,618	58,172,605	48,884,560
Expenses					
Subsidies to Participants	-	54,729,780	558,908	55,288,688	45,771,694
Personnel	761,508	1,036,658	-	1,798,166	2,011,752
Purchased Services	147,617	88,098	-	235,715	306,559
Administrative Expenses	22,330	289,363	107,710	419,403	437,456
Program Expenses	51,745	80,466	-	132,211	55,636
Building Occupancy	58,946	214,727	-	273,673	270,231
Staff/ Board Expenses	6,443	8,909	-	15,352	20,772
Amortization of Capital Purchases	9,397	-	-	9,397	10,460
Total Expenses	1,057,986	56,448,001	666,618	58,172,605	48,884,560
Excess of Revenue over Expenses	-	-	-	-	-

Donald Barrie

2020–2021 Founders' Award Recipient

THE FOUNDERS' AWARD WAS established on CILT's 10th Anniversary in 1995 to recognize the significant contribution of individuals who both exemplify and have advanced Independent Living philosophy in the spirit of its founders.

CILT's Board of Directors is very pleased to award the 2020-2021 Founders' Award to Donald Barrie for his dedication and commitment to the IL movement. Donald is an accomplished writer, blogger, editor, web designer and aspiring podcaster. He has written articles for *Enables Me*, *Abilities*, *the Journal of Addiction and Mental Health*, *the Canadian Press*, *Ability Network*, *the Eyeopener*, *the Globe and Mail*, *the Ryersonian*, and *West Park Community Report*, as well as his own blog, "Unbreakable DB." He has contributed to many of CILT's projects, including most recently serving as an Advisory Group member with CILT's D-NEXT Media Project. Donald has interviewed Paralympians, artists, singers and politicians. He prides himself on asking the questions that no one else is asking. In 2013, Donald was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal. Donald is currently both a customer service representative for Sticker You and an editor for Carranza LLP.

Donald's involvement with CILT has been long-lasting and multi-dimensional. Don served on CILT's Board of Directors from 2014-2020, having fulfilled three two-year terms when he retired. During his most recent term on the CILT Board, Don served as CILT's Vice-Chair and supported the activities of the Executive Committee. Donald also heavily supported the development of CILT's newsletter *In the Stream*, utilizing his journalism background to support consumers



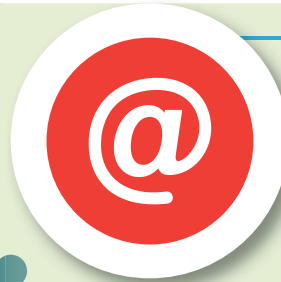
being fully knowledgeable about CILT activities and resources. Years before he joined the CILT Board of Directors, Donald worked at CILT as Resource Coordinator from 2001-2005. He is also a long-term Self-Manager on CILT's Direct Funding Program.

If you've ever come to any of CILT's in-person events, back in the time before the pandemic when such a thing was possible, you would likely have met Donald. He has an easy laugh, an ear for a good story and a way with words.

Donald tells the story of IL through his stories. He tells the stories of consumers that other forums and news outlets, aren't telling. He not only writes about community, he is an active and important builder of community. Donald has consistently expanded the reach of IL, both by telling our stories and by demonstrating IL in his active engagement with the community. Thank you, Donald, for your dedication to IL and for helping us all to see, hear and value the stories of consumers and our movement. 🌟

2020-2021 Statistical Highlights

Social Media



12,421

homepage contacts
on **CILT.ca** website



232

Tweets /
1,354 retweets
@CIL_Toronto



599

Facebook followers



251

CILT's Peer
Support
Group
Members



90

age of oldest
DF participant

2020-2021 Statistical Highlights

1,277

people attended
training events &
groups



132,970

hours of service provided
by DF per month



120

completed
applications
received for DF



59

DF interviews
conducted



active participants
on DF
(as of March 31, 2021)

941



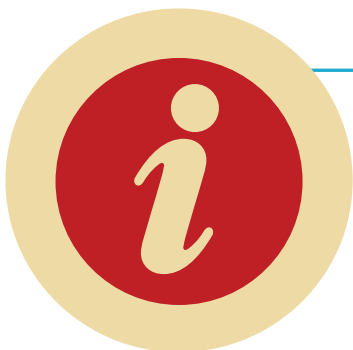
635

participants on DF
more than 5 years (67%
of total participants)



9,570

inquiries received
& answered



participants on DF more
than 15 years (34% of
total participants)

318



2020–2021 Board Members



**Buvani
Sivagnanasunderam**

Vice-Chair

Buvani is a Senior Health Policy Analyst with over seven years of experience in policy analysis and research,

health promotion, community development, and youth advocacy. Her work centers around advancing health equity and addressing barriers to inclusion and justice for diverse, vulnerable, and marginalized communities. Buvani has worked for various Canadian institutions and non-profit organizations in the areas of sexual health, LGBTQ+ health, and immigrant and refugee healthcare. She is passionate about promoting inclusivity and accessibility in our communities and serves on various boards and committees to advance this mission, including the City of Toronto's Accessibility Advisory Committee. Buvani holds a B.Sc. in Psychology and Health Studies from the University of Toronto and a master's degree in Global Health from McMaster University. When she's not working you can find her working on her next sewing project, discovering a new hiking trail, or off on a travel adventure.



Cathy Samuelson

Cathy Samuelson has worked in the community of supporting persons with physical disabilities for 30 years. She is currently the executive director of North

Yorkers for Disabled Persons, which provides supportive housing, attendant services, and augmentative communication facilitation.



Darren Cooper

Darren has over 15 years of experience as an accessibility professional, including his current position as the Manager, Accessibility with the Toronto

Public Library. Darren has also served as an Accessibility Consultant with the City of Toronto, the Accessibility Project Manager with the G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education at Ryerson University, an Accessibility Specialist for the City of Mississauga, and as the Accessibility Coordinator for the Town of Milton.

Darren holds an Honours B.A. in Communications from the University of Windsor, a certificate in Municipal Administration from the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks, and Treasurers of Ontario, and the Canadian Certified Inclusion Professional designation from the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion.

In addition to serving as a member of the CILT Board of Directors, Darren also serves as a member of the Board of Directors for Theatre Passe Muraille, a professional independent theatre company in Toronto.



Deb Daniel

Deb Daniel has been an allied health professional for over 15 years and has a master's degree in Health Administration, a Lean Green Belt, and a Project Management

Professional (PMP) designation. She has worked in multiple areas of healthcare, including hospital, community care, laboratory, and home care in both project and quality capacities. In addition, she has served on a social services board and volunteered for various charitable endeavors. Deb enjoys reading, running with her dog, travelling, and teaching fitness classes. She currently lives in Vaughan with her husband, son, and dog.



Jacques LeBlanc

Chair

Born in Moncton, N.B., in 1958, Jacques's family moved to Tarrytown, N.Y., along the Hudson River, 30 minutes north of New York City, the same

year. This is where he found a propensity for architecture and the fine arts. In 1976, the family moved back to Moncton and he designed houses for three families in the Moncton area. Two years later, he was accepted into the School of Architecture at Carleton University, Ottawa. A rare form of Spinal Muscular Atrophy known as Kugelberg-Wellander required his use of a wheelchair to navigate Carleton's campus. He graduated in 1982 with a degree in B.Sc. Urban Geography/Planning before pursuing post-graduate studies in Environmental Studies at York University.

After graduation, Jacques worked for a small company in Toronto called Direct Access Design. Its responsibility was barrier-free design projects throughout the city. With

the economic climate declining in 1987, he made a career change and joined the *Toronto Star's* editorial department, which allowed him to pursue a childhood passion: the world of sports. He remained with the *Star* until retirement December 18, 2009, his "greatest Christmas gift ever."

He also wrote for many publications focusing on travelling with a disability, including *Reader's Digest*, *Spyker* (Holland), *The Daily Observer* (Antigua & Barbuda), and *The Times Picayune* (New Orleans).

Since retirement, he has remained involved with real estate, consulting in barrier-free designs for local businesses, and even tried his hand in the stock market...not recommended. He felt an emptiness because he knew he could do more, not for himself, but for others. He approached CILT asking if there was anything he could do to help on a volunteer basis. He has served as a consumer panelist interviewing applicants for the Direct Funding program, and in 2018 he was asked to join CILT's Board. In 2018-2019 he served as Vice-Chair of CILT and the past two years proudly served as Chair.



Jennifer Hines

Jennifer has two daughters and, more recently, a grandson! Having retired after 23 years in a senior leadership role at a major financial institution, she

is interested in increasing her involvement in the not-for-profit realm, focusing on persons with disabilities and youth. As part of the CILT Board, she is excited to continue as an advocate and ally for individuals with disabilities by supporting CILT's work facilitating Independent Living.

Always active in the community, Jennifer's focus sharpened to the disabled community and activities to enable Independent Living because of experiences encountered early on

with her younger daughter, who lives with a physical disability.

Jennifer has been involved with a variety of community organizations supporting persons with disabilities, including working with Holland Bloorview Kids Rehab on programs both to support children with disabilities in the public school system and for teens and their families as they develop a path to transition to independent living; fostering 10 puppies as a part of the Lions Foundation's Dog Guides Foster Puppy program; establishing AccessBoom, a sailing program for kids with disabilities at a local yacht club; and supporting PowerHockey Toronto.

In the corporate environment, Jennifer actively searched for ways to contribute to strategies for persons with disabilities through diversity leadership councils, which focus on increasing hiring, accommodation, and retention of employees with disabilities.

Jennifer brings corporate experience to the board in strategic planning, change management, finance, operations, and regulatory advocacy and consultation, combined with an MBA (Rotman) and B.Comm (Queen's).

Jennifer looks forward to contributing to CILT and its community in support of CILT's vision of social and economic equity for people living with disabilities.



Joshua Tayar

Secretary

Joshua Tayar is a graduate of the University of Toronto's Faculty of Law. He is a lawyer in private practice. This year, Joshua completed his term as a

Board member and as Board Secretary of CILT. Joshua enjoyed the time he spent on CILT's Board but he has chosen not to seek another term.



Karen Denton

Karen has lived in an Independent Living situation for the past six years and works for the Toronto District School Board as an Educational Assistant. With her helping

nature, Karen likes to see the full potential in the people she surrounds herself with. She is a passionate disability advocate, both professionally and personally. She hopes that during her time on the board that she will be able to provide others with the opportunity and confidence to live independently like her. She is looking forward to growing and learning while she is a member of the board.



Ken Conners

Treasurer

Ken is starting the third year of his term and is CILT's Treasurer. He previously served on the Board from 2008 until 2014 and was Treasurer

during those years.

He has a wealth of experience with non-profit organizations and their boards and has served as treasurer for the Evangel Hall Mission, his condominium board, and the Mariposa Folk Foundation.

Now retired, his professional experience included providing accounting, financial management, and day-to-day bookkeeping services to a variety of not-for-profit organizations in Toronto.

For many years, Ken served as the 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. More recently, he provided payroll and

bookkeeping services to people with physical disabilities on the Direct Funding Program. His background includes work in the Northwest Territories for the Fort McPherson Incorporated Band Ltd. and for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation and international work in South Africa and Ukraine.

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

As a volunteer, Ken continues to provide annual income tax preparation for seniors and people with low incomes at West Neighbourhood House (formerly St. Christopher House) and at Ukrainian Canadian Social Services.



Lisa Melo

As Vice President, Reimagine HR at RBC, Lisa has a program mandate to invest in the organization's people, processes, and platforms, and differentiate RBC as

a digitally-enabled relationship bank while relentlessly improving the human experience at work. Lisa has been with RBC since 1987, most recently in the role of VP Human Resources, Functions. Previously, she was VP & Head of Human Resources for RBC Investor & Treasury Services, leading a global HR team for a business servicing clients from 17 countries. Lisa brings a unique perspective to Human Resources, having held both business and functional roles, beginning her career in retail banking before assuming progressively senior roles. An advocate for continuing education, Lisa earned her Master of Business Administration from Dalhousie University in 2001. Lisa has also attended the Emerging Leaders Program for Women in Business at the Rotman School of Management (University of Toronto).



Neil Mercer

Neil Mercer is a freelance graphic designer who most recently produced artwork for Muscular Dystrophy Canada's 2021 Dr. David Green Recognition Program

Award. Some of Neil's notable projects have been for Tobias House Attendant Care Inc.; AYAAA, a Youth Aids organization in Africa; and Spectra Talent Showcase.

Besides his artistic talents, Neil has served many years as a board member for various organizations, including CILT, Tobias House Attendant Care Inc., and Spectra / Rainbow Association of Canadian Artists. He is also a successful event organizer with projects such as DreamsAway, Tobias House Attendant Care Inc., and the Sean Ross Memorial Summer Classic.

Neil has dabbled in public speaking over the past few years, discussing his educational experiences as a disabled student to students in the Teaching program at Queen's University. Neil has also lent his support to Tecla, a hands-free assistive device giving people with upper-body mobility impairments the ability to fully access smart devices and technology; he assists by actively testing and appearing in promotional videos.

In his spare time, Neil is a goaltender in the Toronto Power Wheelchair Hockey League, as well as a founding member of Equal Grounds, a social enterprise dedicated to creating opportunities for people of different abilities.



Vincenza Ronaldi

Vincenza Ronaldi resides in Pickering with her husband and two sons. She is an experienced senior executive with the Ontario Public Service with a demonstrated

history of policy analysis and program development and delivery. After graduating from the University of Toronto in 1991, Vincenza began her career with CILT as the Peer Advocate, where she embraced the principles of the Independent Living

philosophy and has been actively promoting the rights, freedoms, and responsibilities of persons with disabilities ever since. Currently, she is the Vice President of Corporate Services and Operation for Destination Ontario, a provincial agency responsible for marketing Ontario as a travel destination in partnership with the tourism industry and other levels of government. As the Chief Financial Officer and Controller, Vincenza provides strategic direction and leadership in the planning and delivery of all corporate services including the areas of finance, human resources, information technology, and facilities management.



CILT staff Samantha Walsh (far left), Melissa Graham and Wendy Porch (far right) at a Town Hall by CBC's The National, on changes to Canada's Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) program (PLEASE SEE LINK TO VIDEO ON PAGE 31)

2020–2021 Staff



Abdullah Duranai

Acting Financial Assurance
Manager

Direct Funding Program

I started working with CILT in October of 2011. I work with Self-Managers from all over the province

on various matters. The best part of my job is starting new Self-Managers (Direct Funding program participants) on the program. Outside work, I volunteer with a community not-for-profit organization assisting newcomers to Canada. I enjoy long walks with my wife. I also enjoy watching Bollywood movies and dramas.



Andrea Rae

Service Engagement
Coordinator

I have been working at CILT since 2005. I have a Bachelor of Music degree from Queen's University and a Master of Arts

degree in Canadian Studies from Carleton University. I coordinate the volunteer program, which unfortunately is on hold while we work remotely. Along with Robin Simmons, I help folks navigate services available to them, responding to inquiries and providing information regarding Independent Living and disability services. I do a regular media scan for articles of interest to the disability community and perform community outreach to ensure that CILT maintains a coordinating role regarding disability-related services in the city. I am looking forward to that

mysterious future date when we and our volunteers, who help program staff with a variety of administrative tasks, can return to the office. In this strange year of remote work (plus my son's online learning), I've not had as much spare time, but what I enjoy doing is being in nature with my family, swimming in lakes when I can, and playing with our new puppy, Martian.




Brittany Hudson

Community Facilitator
Direct Funding Program

I joined the Direct Funding team in March of 2021 during the middle of the pandemic when

the vaccine was rolled out across Ontario. I had the fantastic opportunity to assist Self-Managers and their attendants to access the vaccine. As a Community Facilitator, I'm responsible for supporting new starters before they become participants of the program and helping Self-Managers with various needs related to the program. I enjoy hearing success stories from Self-Managers and being a part of giving them the resources they need to succeed.

 *If I could have dinner with a famous person I would choose Nina Simone because I find her music and life story encouraging. At the dinner table, I'd ask her questions about the meaning behind her songs and soak up all the wisdom she has to offer.*



Danielle Daoust

ASAC Program Manager

I'm relatively new to CILT after joining the organization in February 2021 as the Program Manager of ASAC. Prior to my role here, I worked in

the disability sector for 30 years, dating back to high school. It has been an interesting transition to a new agency, not only because my last role lasted 15 years, but starting through a pandemic, working remotely, and having never physically met any of my co-workers. Regardless, I am excited to join the CILT team and to have the opportunity to lend some experience and continue to advocate for Independent Living and inclusivity for all.



If I could have dinner with someone famous dead or alive, I would choose Amelia Earhart. Not only would I be able to solve one of our generation's greatest mysteries by uncovering if she is dead or alive, but I would also have the privilege of speaking with one of the great, strong women in history, who had the courage to follow a dream despite gender barriers.



Danielle Vinciguerra

Financial Assurance Coordinator
Direct Funding Program

I have been a member of Team CILT since early 2015. As Financial Assurance Coordinator,

I enjoy working with Self-Managers and bookkeepers to ensure everyone has a seamless transition to Direct Funding. Outside of the office, I love exploring locally and abroad and eating lots of (typically) unhealthy food.

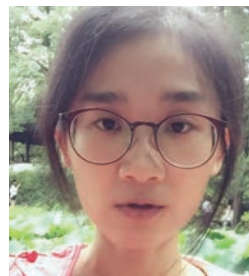


David Meyers

Senior Program Manager
Independent Living Programs

I identify as a Black disabled man and use he/him pronouns. I've been with CILT since April of 2018. As the Senior

Manager of Independent Living Programs, I get to work every day with a great team and partners advancing Independent Living. I began my social service career as a child welfare worker after graduating with a B.A. from the University of Waterloo. My career highlights include working with adults with developmental disabilities, and leading community development and disability inclusion programming at Birchmount Bluffs Neighbourhood Centre in Toronto's east end. While there, I partnered with CILT on several projects advancing disability inclusion and served on the Board of Directors. I also had a great two-year stint as lead staff of Ethno-racial People with Disabilities Coalition (ERDCO). I'm a civic activism nerd and love community organizing, storytelling, amateur photography, and doodling during long meetings.




Elaine Chu

Bookkeeping Report Reviewer
Direct Funding Program

I started working at CILT in May 2019 with the Direct Funding Program, where my role is to review quarterly reports from

Self-Managers and to assist them in utilizing their funding. I feel privileged and honoured to be a part of DF and working with amazing people who care about the work they do every day. I am a shy and quiet person, but I love to share experience and knowledge with

others and help people in any way I can. In my spare time, I like to read books and practice meditation.

 *I would like to have dinner with Albert Einstein and start a conversation with him about time travel.*




Gold Olatifede

Intake Administrator
Direct Funding Program

I joined the CILT family on a contract in September 2020, and resumed full-time as the intake administrator of the

Direct Funding Program in February 2021. I completed my Master's Degree in Global Management at Royal Roads University and have years of experience working in administrative, human resources, and customer service roles. My job includes responding to inquiries, assisting with applications, and receiving, reviewing, and inputting Direct Funding applications into the database. I feel fortunate to work for an organization that changes lives and exposes me to interesting people in our community. I also enjoy travelling, painting, and watching movies.

 *If I could have dinner with any famous person, it would be the Afrobeats music legend and political activist, Fela Anikulapo Kuti. His music has spanned across decades and he was unapologetic about his stance against unjust authority and topics that are still relevant today.*



Hadeel Dajani

Review & Audit Advisor
Direct Funding Program

I am fortunate to have joined the CILT team in June 2018. I have been working with Self-

Managers, reviewing some quarterly reports and auditing some Self-Managers' accounts. In addition, I take care of wrapping up the

accounts for the exiting Self-Managers. In my spare time, I love to travel, try new restaurants and play with my babies.




John Mossa

Independent Living Skills
Coordinator

For the last 21 years, I have been working at CILT 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 to consumers and service providers. I have led and/or supervised several participatory action research projects on disability issues within Toronto. I am a member of the GTA Disability Coalition. I enjoy movies, music, sports, and online games.

 *I would love to have dinner with Jesus because it would be humbling and loving experience.*




John Tam

Database Administrator
Direct Funding Program

I've been a member of the CILT team for 8 years. Initially, as a Direct Funding report auditor, and currently as the

website and database administrator. When not working, I volunteer with Toronto Trailblazers Tandem Cycling Club (blind tandem cycling). To relax, I enjoy exploring summer outdoor street festivals in the city and watching movies at the cinema.

 *I would love to have dinner with Robin Williams to get an abs workout belly laughing and to see if he would make me laugh mid-chew and spray food all over.*



Katherine Janicki

Intake Coordinator

Direct Funding Program

I have been with CILT and the Direct Funding program since 2011. As DF Intake Coordinator, I enjoy working with people

who are preparing to become Self-Managers. I'm passionate about the Independent Living philosophy and promoting equity and choice. Outside the office, I am studying psychotherapy and several languages, go to live music shows as much as humanly possible, and I foster cats for adoption.




Leanne Larmondin

Provincial Program Coordinator

Direct Funding Program

I interview program applicants anywhere in Ontario, help participants problem solve, liaise with program staff across

the province, consult on legal issues, review payments to participants, and coordinate and write promotional materials. When I'm not at work, I row (competitively), run (for fun), and read.

 *If I could have dinner with anyone, I would choose Anthony Bourdain, because I love food, travel, and storytelling in equal measure.*



Leisa DeBono


Program Manager

Direct Funding Program

I started working at CILT with the Direct Funding Program in July 1994 and have been fortunate

enough to stick around for the past 26 years. Originally hired as the DF Administrative Coordinator, I became the Program Manager in 2011. One of the greatest privileges of my career was to work beside my friend and

mentor, Ian Parker, who passed away in April of this year. Ian and I watched the program grow from 75 Self-Managers in the pilot project to almost 1,000 people when the program is at full capacity.

 *The famous (and fictional) person I would like to have dinner with is Ted Lasso (GREAT show if you have not seen it), since he is one of the most positive, resourceful, funny and optimistic characters I've had the pleasure to watch!*



Marisa Falzone

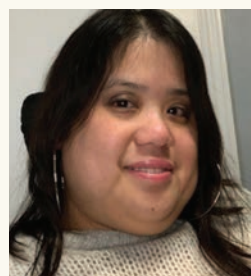
Senior Report Coordinator & Advisor

Direct Funding Program

I have been with CILT and the Direct Funding program since 2012.

One of my roles is to

review the quarterly reports from program participants, which gives me the privilege to assist and witness Self-Managers on their journey to living independently. I also provide support to bookkeepers, new DF staff, and other ILRCs across the province on various matters. In addition, I'm responsible for generating the bank direct deposits for the program participants in the Kingston area. When I am not working, I consider myself to be a fun and dedicated Nonna, who enjoys traveling, gardening, art, life, kayaking etc.



Marlene Benedicto


Intake & Resource Facilitator

Direct Funding Program

I recently joined the CILT team as the Intake and Resource Facilitator for the Direct Funding Program. I am a graduate

of the Journalism program at Humber College, and prior to joining CILT I spent several years working as an administrator for a distribution company. Outside of CILT, I enjoy writing, working on my podcast, "The Ling Podcast," checking out Toronto's food and restaurant

scene, and going to concerts (whenever that is safe to do again).

 *If I could have dinner with a famous person, it would probably be John Lennon. His life has always intrigued me and I think he would have some amazing stories to tell.*



Melissa Graham

Community Facilitator
Direct Funding Program
I have been the Community Facilitator for the Direct Funding program at CILT for

over nine years. I work primarily with Self-Managers in the Toronto area, supporting them as they come on to the program and as their needs change.


 *If I could meet any famous person, I would love to have dinner with Octavia Butler.*



Melissa Watanabe

HR/Operations Manager
Prior to joining CILT in August 2020, I managed HR and Operations functions in various not for profits and charities, but onboarding

during a pandemic while all staff are working remotely has been a unique experience! Thanks to the dedicated team at CILT, it has been a fantastic transition. When not at work, I can be found puttering in my garden, on my bike, in a yoga pose, cooking up a new recipe, or with my family (usually on the soccer pitch).

 *I'd love to have dinner with Amy Tan, my favourite author.*




Nadine Azore

Operations Assistant

I have been a member of the CILT team since 2017. I completed my Bachelor of Arts at Trent University in English Literature and Cultural Studies and my

Social Service Worker Diploma at Fleming College. Prior to joining CILT, I worked as an English teacher in South Korea for three years. I enjoy travel, food, and movies.

 *If I could have dinner with any famous person, it would be Freddie Mercury, because it's Freddie Mercury.*




Patrick Tang

Bookkeeping Report Reviewer
Direct Funding Program

I joined the Direct Funding finance team as a report reviewer two years ago after I completed my bachelor's degree in

International Accounting and Finance. I was profoundly inspired by the perseverance, dedication, and kindness of the Self-Managers in this program. It inspired me to try my best in practicing the virtues of life and in searching higher knowledge. I completed my Chartered Professional Accountant (payroll) certification while working full-time. I will continue pursuing my goal as a chartered accountant so that I can keep my professionalism and competency up-to-date.

 *If I could have dinner with someone famous from the past, I would pick Bertrand Russell. I would love to discuss philosophy and mathematics with him while searching for the meaning of life.*



Peter Judge

Financial Assurance Manager
(on leave)

Direct Funding Program

I have more than 20 years of experience in the Independent Living community at Three

Trilliums (3Ts), a community-based attendant service provider in Toronto, working with both supportive housing as well as Outreach attendant services. Beginning as a front-line attendant, I worked at several positions in the organization, most recently as a senior manager overseeing some 50 staff. I have extensive management experience, including human resources (interviewing, hiring, firing, and scheduling), consumer Independent Living and attendant service issues, as well as a strong interest in financial matters. I began at CILT in the role of Assistant to the Executive Director on a contract basis, and later joined the Direct Funding Program as the provincial Financial Assurance Manager.



Raihan Hussain

Operations Assistant

My responsibilities are in reception desk duties, IT support, office services, and assisting with special projects. If

you have contacted CILT or plan to come to CILT, you are most likely going to speak with me. I graduated from Ryerson University's inaugural Sport Media program in 2019, and so I'm a diehard sports fan but also regret to inform you that I'm a sad Toronto Maple Leafs fan. I'm also an avid gamer and love following the genre. Some of my favourite video games include: the Final Fantasy series, the Soulsborne series, Super Smash Bros., the Witcher, and Japanese RPGs.



Rebecca Wood

Peer and Parenting Program
Coordinator

As a member of the Core team, I coordinate programs for the CILT community. I hold master's degrees in Women and

Gender Studies from the University of Toronto and Early Childhood Studies from Ryerson University. Disability and inclusive education have always been at the heart of my academic work. When I am not at work, I like to create through ceramics, knitting, crochet, and needle felting. I have an episodic disability (which is often invisible), which creates unexpected challenges on a regular basis. I navigate challenges moving through the world while often having access to able-bodied privilege. I strive to acknowledge this privilege and recognize the ways in which it can be used to amplify the voices of others as we collectively work to break down barriers faced by people with disabilities.



I would want to have dinner with Anthony Bourdain, because the food would be good and the conversation would be deep.



Robin Simmons

Inquiries Generalist

I have been working at CILT since 2017. I have a background in Social Services from Humber College. In my role as an Inquiries Generalist,

I respond to inquiries from consumers and provide information about Independent Living and disability services. I also support my colleagues with administrative and peer support tasks when needed.



If I could have dinner with a famous person (dead or alive), I would choose Princess Diana, because growing up I considered her to be a role model.




Sara Stonehouse

Agreement & Resource
Administrator

Direct Funding Program

I am a recent addition to the CILT team, having joined Direct Funding in February 2021. I bounced

around between fields for a while beforehand, completing a Bachelor of Science at McMaster University, a Bachelor of Education at Queen's University, and a Master of Information at the University of Toronto. I appreciate how my role at CILT allows me to engage with a wide variety of projects and people. Outside of work, I enjoy travel, reading, music, and cross stitching.

 *If I could have dinner with any famous person, I would choose Tamora Pierce, my favourite childhood author, so I could ask her all about some of my favourite stories.*



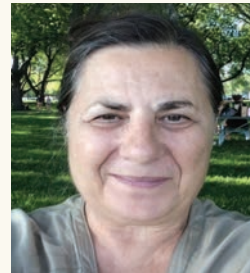
Wendy Porch

Executive Director

I was born with my disability and know first-hand of the need to advocate for inclusion. I started my work life at ARCH Disability Law

Centre responding to the needs of people with disabilities across Ontario. I moved on from ARCH to working at the Adaptive Technology Resource Centre at the University of Toronto, where I led several initiatives related to education, accessibility, and technology. I moved to the United Kingdom in 2005 and was a research fellow in Accessibility in Educational Media at the Open University UK where I contributed to European Union funded research on accessible, life-long learning. Before joining CILT, I was the Manager of Episodic Disability Initiatives at Realize, a national organization supporting people living with HIV and/or other episodic disabilities. I have a M.Ed. in Counselling Psychology from

the University of Toronto and worked with the Body Image Project at Women's College Hospital on mental health initiatives for women living with disabilities and facial differences. I am a member of the City of Toronto's Accessibility Advisory Committee, and I am the current Chair of the City of Toronto's Accessibility Task Force on COVID-19 Vaccines. I am also a proud mom to my eight-year-old son, Jasper.




Zdravka Gueorguieva

ASAC Program Administrator

My role as a Program Administrator is to provide administrative support and update the ASAC database, according to the intake

of ASAC applications. Responding to program enquiries, I support applicants, preparing them for a centralized assessment and receiving supportive housing, outreach, and transitional program services. I feel proud that my life as a member of the ASAC team is dedicated to helping people from the disability community. Supporting and encouraging people with disabilities to participate in all aspects of economic, cultural, and social life in Canada is a goal that CILT staff works hard to achieve daily. It is a great emotional reward, receiving a phone call or an email filled with gratitude from the person I was just assisting. Getting services and housing through ASAC is an opportunity for our applicants to live their lives independently. I also enjoy traveling around the world, meeting different people, and sharing different ideas.

 *I would like to have dinner with Bill Gates to ask him how he succeeded in predicting the Coronavirus pandemic and why the rest of the world did not pay attention.*



in loving memory **Ian Parker**

IF YOU MENTION the name Ian Parker to almost any advocate of Independent Living in Toronto, they are sure to have either met him or know of him. Seriously. He'd been around the community for that long, working to improve the lives of people with disabilities.

Ian died on April 15, 2021, but he left an indelible mark and will be remembered forever for his efforts to improve the lives of people with disabilities.

Ian was among the first people to come out of Lyndhurst (Toronto Rehabilitation Centre) and live in supportive housing around 1975 – but it wasn't really supportive housing back then, it was a pilot that would later become supportive housing, where he lived until he moved into his own home 20 years later. In between earning his Bachelor's degree in music, consulting with multiple government ministries and working with the Ontario government on the International Year of Persons with Disabilities in 1981, Ian used to teach piano to children! Although Ian was involved in many worthwhile causes over the 40+ years he was a quadriplegic, he channeled most of his time and energy into bringing a unique idea to fruition that has increased autonomy for more than 1,800 disabled Ontarians over the past 26 years.

The Self-Managed Attendant Services - Direct Funding Program epitomizes the Independent Living philosophy of choice, flexibility and control by providing funds to adults with



physical disabilities, allowing them to recruit, hire, train and schedule their own attendants. The program provided a much different model of attendant services for assistance with activities of daily living, since it put control in the hands of the person with the disability. Participants themselves could decide who would come into their home and when; this control had previously rested with

agencies.

Getting a project like Direct Funding off the ground was not fast or easy. Starting in 1989, Ian worked with other individuals with disabilities who used attendant services, along with government representatives, to develop policy and legislation that would pave the way for the program, including an important exemption under the Regulated Health Professions Act. A staunch advocate of the concept of self-management and author of the original policy guidelines, once funding was secured in 1994, Ian took on managing the pilot project while also being one of the first participants on the program. He led Direct Funding through the all-important formative years including the original program evaluation in 1997, which was so overwhelmingly positive that the "pilot project" received ongoing "program" status, and the ability to take on hundreds more Self-Managers, as program participants are called.

Ian served as the manager of the Direct Funding Program from 1994 until 2011, when he became the Senior Policy Advisor. He

helped navigate Direct Funding through its critical formative years; his analytical mind saw the program through all the legal issues it faced in the early days and his compassion and humanity helped shape the program to where it is today, meeting the needs of individuals outside the boundaries of what was originally anticipated.

Even after his retirement in late 2018, Ian was generous with his time and would answer any questions put to him. Over the years he was seldom stumped for an answer about why we did – and why we do – things the way we do on the program. The Independent Living philosophy and his years of lived experience of his own disability informed everything that underpins the program to this day.

There are few programs that embody the Independent Living philosophy better than the Direct Funding Program, so it feels fitting that Ian recently posthumously received the David C. Onley Award for Leadership in Accessibility for his work within the community: <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1000222/ontario-recognizes-exceptional-individuals-and-champions-of-accessibility>

It is indescribably sad that Ian is no longer with us and that he could not have received his award in person, but it is comforting to know that his many contributions, including the Direct Funding Program, have earned him a place in

the history books and that future generations will always know and benefit from his legacy.

—LEISA DEBONO, Manager, Direct Funding Program

MY FONDEST MEMORY OF IAN happened on Vancouver Island a few days before the big international conference in Vancouver, “Independence 92.” Ian, Hazel Self and I had come early to explore the island. We were on the edge of Wickaninnish Beach enjoying the roar of the Pacific Ocean and fast-moving sky. It got dark and very cold, and Ian suggested we gather ‘round the logs and get a campfire going. We all huddled in closer and I had my feet up on the logs to get some warmth and feeling back. Ian cautioned me in his usual gentle way. “Don’t worry,” I said. “I’ve got full sensation. Just need some heat.” Ten minutes later, there was a smell of melting rubber soles and a few ribbons of smoke. Ian just smiled at the souvenir I’d be taking home.

—AUDREY KING

AFOND MEMORY ILLUSTRATING Ian’s tenacity. It was winter. Snow was blowing, and it was dark and cold. Ian called me, ‘You’re coming to the meeting aren’t you?’ Refusal obviously wasn’t an option. I remember trailing behind as we headed for Bay Street, slipping and sliding in Ian’s wheel tracks, conscious that we were on a very important mission. Over his shoulder he shouted (or rather commanded) encouragement. “Come on. If we don’t get there, they’ll make decisions without us.” Those words became embedded in my mind forever.

—HAZEL SELF





in loving memory **Sylvia Draper-Fernandez**

SYLVIA DRAPER-Fernandez, CILT's adept and dedicated accountant, passed away unexpectedly on January 23rd, 2021. Sylvia served as CILT's primary financial adviser since the very earliest days of the organization. If Sylvia had been hired internally by CILT, rather than as a consultant, she would have been CILT's longest serving employee by many years.



daughter, Brigitte, her son-in-law, and her grandsons. We often discussed how her "boys" (as she referred to her grandsons) were doing. She was never happier than when she was expecting to see her family. I remember the holidays as an especially joyous time for her.

Despite her importance to operations, Sylvia preferred to remain in the background. In 2016, to recognize her importance,

I personally started working with Sylvia when I started as Executive Director at CILT in 2018. Sylvia was no-nonsense about her pledge to social good. She was deeply and sincerely committed to supporting CILT's work, often working well into the early hours of the morning for us and her many non-profit clients.

I recall reluctantly phoning Sylvia while she was on holiday with her partner, Rick, in Florida years ago, hesitantly explaining that we had been extended a time-limited opportunity to expand the DF program – could she help? Sylvia laughed and immediately got to work. She joked at the time, "Well, at least I still get to have cocktails on the beach later!"

Sylvia had a wonderful sense of humour, a deep laugh, and a very kind heart. She loved to talk about her family, and she was very proud of the accomplishments of her

CILT presented her with a special award, pictured above. The award is inscribed and reads: "Meritorious Service Award, Sylvia Draper-Fernandez, in recognition of over 30 years of outstanding contribution to the financial well-being of CILT and embodying the values of the Independent Living Movement."

We again want to recognize Sylvia's incredible importance to the development of CILT as a financially stable, fiscally responsible organization supporting consumers across Ontario.

We thank you, Sylvia, for the planning meetings too numerous to count, for the long nights, and for the outspoken support you provided to CILT since our very inception. CILT will continue to build upon the steady foundations you helped to build. We will remember you always.

—WENDY PORCH

CILT in the news



“Demanding Disability Rights Amid COVID-19”

The Agenda with Steve Paikin, May 8, 2020

<https://www.tvo.org/video/demanding-disability-rights-amid-covid-19>

“Medical Assistance in Dying in Canada” *CBC News: The National*, March 5, 2020 (attended by Wendy and David)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_2EDiuzr58

“Caring in a Crisis | Melissa Graham” – July 28, 2020

<https://youtu.be/jv2tMSavqbQ>

“CILT’s Wendy Porch deputes at Toronto Council Exec. Committee on City’s COVID-19 plan, October 21”

<https://youtu.be/yUSQ-TYHAKM>

“Breaking Expectations: Mobility Aids Spark Joy” – November 12, 2020

https://youtu.be/3Q_-wizjYqE

“Self-Advocating for Accessible Mental Health Supports for People with Disabilities During COVID-19” – December 11, 2020

https://youtu.be/ZdIIPhY_plY

“A Safe Space for IBPOC | We Can’t Tackle It” – December 22, 2020

<https://youtu.be/trPm4q4IIBC>

“Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee – February 25, 2021” – Meeting about E-Scooters, where John Mossa speaks at 56:31

<https://youtu.be/e5MyaFPPo7M>

E-Scooter meeting minutes can here found here:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewPublishedReport.do?function=getMinutesReport&meetingId=20132>

“The Second Wave: Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) for COVID-19 and People with Disabilities” – March 2, 2021

<https://youtu.be/TgH0iwBfs4I>

“Toronto’s Accessibility Task Force on COVID-19 Vaccines” – Wendy was appointed to chair the task force established in March 2021

<https://www.toronto.ca/news/torontos-accessibility-task-force-on-covid-19-vaccines/>

More information about the task force:

<https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2021/05/01/people-with-disabilities-face-confusion-and-other-barriers-to-getting-covid-19-vaccines-a-task-force-is-working-to-change-that.html>



Despite not being able to see each other in person this year,
we were able to stay connected through Zoom!

Here's what some community members
had to say about remote workshops
and Peer Connect sessions.

Mindfulness for Cross-Disability and D/deaf Adults:

“I liked everything! I really appreciated that there were so many options to choose from with regards to different techniques. I also really appreciated that it was ok to notice that one day, something is working for you and then the next day, it may not, so changing your technique is totally cool.”

“I liked how Sue and Rebecca tailored the program to be so **inclusive of so many special needs and their interaction**. I was very impressed with how impactful this relatively short course was and it focused on the key elements of Mindfulness Meditation so well.”

“Sue and Rebecca did a tremendous job accommodating so many special needs and the person signing demonstrated how committed they were to this program.”

“I have experienced a lot of stress and also devastating news which caused me to feel depressed. **With Sue’s loving kindness and guidance, I was able to continue attending the Zoom classes and feel a bit more grounded and supported.** And not feel so empty and confused about the world around me.”

“I really enjoyed and appreciated all of the work and assistance provided by Rebecca. **She helped keep things under control and flowing, all the while making everyone feel welcomed and valued.** This was my first time attending a program with live ASL interpretation. I thought that was really cool! Lastly, I also appreciated the notes that were taken during the sessions and then shared the next day. I’ve saved them all in my little Mindfulness folder to help me remember everything I just learned! It’s also nice to be able to refer back to them.”

Note from a parent: “Thanks for allowing my son to sign up and accommodating his several caregivers who alternated assisting him each Wednesday. **The material provided was incredibly helpful** in educating each of these caregivers in practicing Meditation with him and we are grateful for your help!”

Peer Connect:

“The sessions help me feel less isolated. COVID isn’t helping, but I found it hard even before to find a space where other people could understand some of the struggles I face as a disabled person. I find the guest speakers very relatable and I leave with something to think about which is great.”

“I really appreciate the chance to feel less isolated. Thanks.”

“It was great to be able to discuss such a personal topic with everyone and share personal experiences in a supportive environment. **I felt my experiences were validated through listening to others.**”

“I really enjoyed hearing from people having a variety of backgrounds. Some people live on their own, some in group homes, and someone I think lived in a nursing home. I don’t very often have a chance to hear from people first-hand who are not in the same socio-economic space as me. The session reinforced for me how much we all have in common because of our experiences with ableism.”



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