

The Self-Manager

CILT • Centre for Independent Living in Toronto • A publication for Direct Funding Program participants

Winter 2022



Gettin' crabby

David Dame, a Self-Manager in Waterloo, got up close and personal with an Alaskan crab during an Alaska cruise earlier this year. The encounter took place on a boat featured on the reality television show *Deadliest Catch*.



Congratulations!

Self-Manager **Meenu Sikand** was recently named Assistant Deputy Minister with Ontario's Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility. In October, Meenu also received the Founders' Award (pictured) from the Centre for Independent Living in Toronto. The award, presented annually, recognizes the significant contributions of individuals who both exemplify and have advanced the Independent Living philosophy.

For more **TRAVEL STORIES**, please see pp. 7–8



TELUS Tech for Good

TELUS Tech for Good is an educational program aiming to support people with disabilities to use or control their mobile devices independently. It provides customized training and support to improve an individual's quality of life and independence.

You do not need to be a TELUS customer to participate, but you must own a mobile device (e.g., iPhone, Android, iPad, Amazon Fire, Kindle, or Galaxy Tab). You may qualify for Tech for Good if you need training and support on how to use accessibility features on your mobility device, or if you want recommendations on assistive technology, including apps, software, and hardware.

Training is delivered by experts from March of Dimes Canada, who have specialized knowledge on accessibility barriers and assistive technology.

For more information, please visit the website: www.telus.com/en/social-impact/connecting-canada/tech-for-good



Keep in touch

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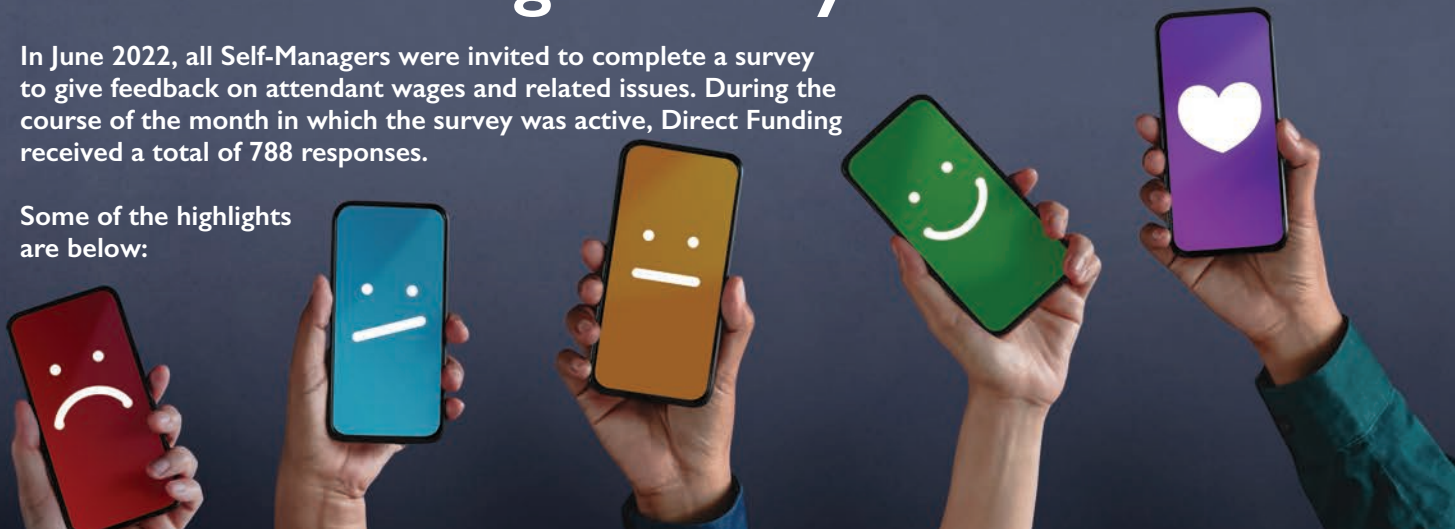
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Attendant Wage Survey Results

In June 2022, all Self-Managers were invited to complete a survey to give feedback on attendant wages and related issues. During the course of the month in which the survey was active, Direct Funding received a total of 788 responses.

Some of the highlights are below:



Numbers

- Most commonly recommended maximum wage increase proposals:
 - \$3/hour (\$25/hour total)
 - \$5/hour (\$27/hour total)
 - Other (write-ins ranged from various dollar amounts, to “no change,” to “competitive” or suggestions to add benefits)
- 571 (72%) stated that their attendants also work elsewhere
- 382 (48%) considered themselves fully staffed at the time of the survey
- 371 (47%) stated that they were currently looking to hire attendants at the time of the survey

At the end of the survey, we invited Self-Managers to share additional comments, challenges, and successes relating to wages and DF in general.

Popular issues raised include

- High travel costs (both gas prices and public transit)
- A need to be competitive with other employers
- Shift lengths; longer shifts could be more attractive to potential hires
- Modernization of systems to include more online options and direct deposit to pay staff
- More information and resources for new Self-Managers

We also had several respondents inquire about ways to connect directly with other Self-Managers. We would like to remind everyone about the Self-Managers' Network, which was set up for exactly this purpose.

In addition to constructive feedback, we received many positive messages about how Direct Funding has directly impacted the quality of life of program participants, which was great to hear.

The Direct Funding Program will be forwarding the results of the attendant wage survey to the program's funders at the provincial Ministry of Health for its consideration in the ongoing discussion about attendant wages.

If you would like more information about the Self-Managers' Network, please see page 5.



Election Spotlight

Chantal Huinink was recently elected to serve as Regional Councillor in the City of Waterloo. “I have been a Direct Funding Self-Manager for approximately 20 years. The flexibility offered

by this program has enabled me to pursue many valuable opportunities,” said Chantal. She sees this position as an opportunity to apply her personal experience, as well as her expertise in social work and holistic care, for the benefit of many. Chantal was one of

two councillors elected from a pool of 10 candidates. “I am pleased that I am not only seen as a woman [or] as a person with disabilities, but as a capable leader.”

Memos

Timesheets

A reminder that Self-Managers are still being asked to submit timesheets along with each quarterly report. Sample timesheets can be found on the DF website at <https://www.dfontario.ca/self-managers/employing/tracking-hours.html>

Did you know?

It is possible to get free or low-fee banking if you have the Disability Tax Credit or are the beneficiary of a registered disability savings plan (RDSP). We checked at CIBC, BMO, RBC, and TD, and they all offer rebates. The terms and conditions vary. Speak to someone from your bank about how to access free or reduced banking fees.

What has DF helped you do?

Thank you to all the Self-Managers who have sent us pictures! Please continue to send us your photos and stories so we can include you in a future newsletter, too!

Contact Sara at sara.stonehouse@cilt.ca or 416-599-2458 ext. 232.

DIY Hot/Cold Packs



Nicole Hajjar *Community Facilitator*

These simple DIY hot and cold packs will work to soothe a variety of aches, pains, and complaints. Throw one in your freezer to have a cold pack at the ready, or pop one in the microwave for a quick heat pad.

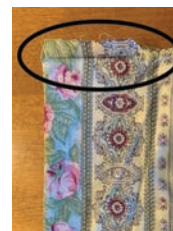
www.hoosierhomemade.com/homemade-heat-packs

What You'll Need

- Fabric; cotton ideally, microwave safe
- Thread
- Scissors
- Sewing machine, or hand-sewing know-how
- Long grain rice (not instant!)
- Funnel (optional)
- Tube sock (if you don't sew)

Directions

1. Cut the fabric – any size will do. Figure out what you want the finished size to be, then double the length and add 1/2 – 1 inch seam allowance.
2. Fold the fabric in half with "right sides" together (the side of the fabric you want to show on the outside).
3. Pin around the edges to stop the fabric from sliding around. Clearly mark a 2-inch-long space around the edge which you will not sew.
4. Sew around the open sides. REMEMBER to leave the 2-inch opening. Remove the pins as you go.
5. Pull the fabric through the hole so the "right side" of the fabric is now on the outside.
6. Use the funnel to fill the heat pack with rice, no more than 3/4 full, or it will be difficult to sew it closed.
7. Pin the opening closed and tuck extra fabric into the hole so it neatly matches the seams.
8. Stitch the remaining hole closed.



Note

When heating, place a cup of water in the microwave along with it and heat it at short intervals of 15-20 seconds at a time. This will keep the rice from scorching or getting too hot to handle. If you get the rice wet by mistake, make sure to empty the pack and refill it. Wet rice left in the pack will grow mouldy.

You can also make an even faster pack by filling a tube sock with rice and tying a knot in the end. Same outcome, less labour.

Calling All the Foodies and Chefs!



Joella Connaught
Community Facilitator

With the holiday season upon us, this is the spot where foodies and chefs of their households need to be. We will explore a variety of tools to help you show off your skills in the kitchen and even share a recipe that will be sure to impress!

Easier-to-Use Utensils and Kitchen Tools

Tongs can be used with one hand and come in a variety of shapes, sizes, and materials. Some bonus marks for tongs are that they can help with strengthening fine motor skills while also helping to flip foods such as pancakes. Some tongs that may be worth trying out are turning tongs and silicone locking tongs. For those dishes that require a lot of cutting, plastic lettuce knives are a good choice. They have no sharp blade, can cut most vegetables and fruits, and come in many styles. Lastly, to help with peeling fruits and vegetables, a palm peeler is a great alternative.

Non-Slip Cooking Supplies

There are several cooking supplies available with non-slip surfaces that secure them from sliding while you are cooking. For example, silicone potholders/trivets and non-slip shelf liners (available at dollar stores) are a good way to have grip surface for bowls and pots.

Functional Kitchen Tools

These are the kitchen tools that typically serve specific tasks in the kitchen. These include items such as jar openers, which can be helpful to those with limited hand strength or coordination. Another helpful tool is a can drainer, which can be used for easy draining of canned products. They are available with large or silicone handles and at different angles to promote ease of use. Lastly, a scoop with a flexible silicone back can also be a useful tool for portioning sticky foods such as cookie dough.

<https://accessiblechef.com/project/adaptive-cooking-tools/>

Try This Recipe

Jam Tarts

Ingredients:

- 1 cup flour
- 2/3 cup butter
- 3-4 tbsp water
- Strawberry jam (or your favourite)



Steps:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees
Grease muffin tin
2. Sieve flour into a bowl
Cube and add butter
Rub flour and butter together
3. Add water, gently knead, roll out dough, cut into circles, and place dough in muffin tin
4. Add 1 tbsp of jam. Cut decorative shapes out of remaining dough and place shapes on top of jam
5. Bake 15-18 minutes in preheated oven.

Let cool before eating

Yields 6 servings

Want to Connect with Other Self-Managers?

If you are not yet a member of the *Ontario-Wide Self-Managers' Network* but would like to connect with other program participants from across the province, then the Network might be for you. Through the *Self-Managers' Network* you can share tips and ideas, learn about attendants seeking employment, ask questions of experienced Self-Managers in your area, and much more. For more information, please contact Sara at sara.stonehouse@cilt.ca or 416-599-2458 ext. 232.





Media Corner

Nicole Hajjar *Community Facilitator*

Tripping On Air: Ardra Shephard brings her monthly confessional/informational blog *Tripping On Air* to the podcast airways where she spills the tea on what it's really like to live with Multiple Sclerosis (MS). Joining Ardra is co-host Alex Hajjar ('Social Animals' podcast), an MS expert by marriage. Tune in as they explore the dynamics between patients and partners, share chronic illness life-hacks, and everything from symptoms to stigma. Available wherever you listen to your podcasts, and videos of each episode are available on YouTube on the *Tripping On Air* channel, or at www.TrippingOnAir.com

Nina Tame is a blogger and social media superstar, who speaks honestly about being a disabled person, wife, and mother living with Spina Bifida. She describes herself as "*The Wheel Housewife of Essex, sometimes swears and the Disabled Step-Mum you never knew you needed*". You can find her on Instagram [@nina_tame](https://www.instagram.com/nina_tame) or on her blog at www.ninatame.wordpress.com

NeuroSask: Active and Connected is a virtual program by the University of Saskatchewan's School of Rehabilitative Science. The program is tailored for people with neurological conditions, providing physiotherapy guided movement, expert information on health and wellness, and social connection during the pandemic. They offer a 30-minute 'Active' portion every Tuesday and Thursday but also offer stretching classes to focus on range of motion and spasticity management. For more information, please see www.rehabscience.usask.ca/neurosask

New Staff

Megan Harrison

Bookkeeping Report Reviewer
Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT)



I am excited to be joining CILT and the Direct Funding program as a Bookkeeping Report Reviewer. I previously worked at the Community

Support Centre in Caledonia, Ont., as its Financial Administrator. I have more than 10 years of bookkeeping experience and look forward to applying that to my new role. Outside of work I can usually be found looking for my coffee (which is probably cold) while I chase my two boys in the backyard as they attempt to herd our chickens.

Bhavya Mehta

Bookkeeping Report Reviewer
CILT

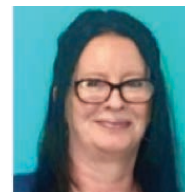


I am very excited to join the Direct Funding Program as a Bookkeeping Report Reviewer at CILT! My main role is reviewing Kingston Self

Managers' reports. I recently graduated from the University of Guelph-Humber with a Bachelor of Business Administration. In my spare time, I enjoy watching movies, dancing, and trying different cuisines. I also love traveling. I eventually want to travel across the world and learn about different cultures. I look forward to meeting and connecting with you all!

Dannielle Tessier

Direct Funding Administrative Coordinator
Disability Resource Centre for Independent Living, Kapuskasing

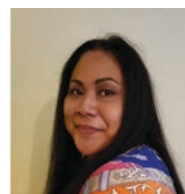


I have many years of experience in administration and my passion is to help anyone I can with a smile. I am very proud to be a part

of such a wonderful caring team who go out of their way to help everyone. Thank you for having me aboard and look forward to working with you all!

Marlene Ursabia

Intake Administrator
CILT



In over 20 years of work experience, I have worked in finance in the retail industry, in food supply and service, and for the court

system in various progressive roles. I am an authorized transcriptionist and hold an Entry Certificate in Business Analysis certification from the International Institute of Business Analysis. I was a caregiver throughout, so, I am extremely grateful to be among such amazing people at Direct Funding and CILT who make a big impact in the community. I am passionate about volunteer work and was awarded Big Sister of the year for group programs in 2009 for the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Toronto. I enjoy working with and helping people and enjoy finding solutions for challenging situations. In my spare time, I enjoy playing with my two cats, Lady and Mini, learning calligraphy and enjoying the landscapes while riding on train trips with my partner.

Traveling with Mobility Aids

Marlene Benedicto

Intake and Resource Facilitator

In recent years, air travel companies have come under fire for improperly handling, damaging, and even losing passengers' assistive devices. Many people are calling for reform and demanding that airlines stop treating mobility aids like luggage.

Carla Qualtrough, Canada's Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, recently said, "We have to figure out a way to end this once and for all."

Even though there is no guarantee that your mobility device will not get lost or damaged during a flight, these tips can help make your trip go smoother:

- If traveling with a wheelchair, let the airline know the weight and dimensions
- Give the airline written instructions on how to assemble or disassemble your mobility device
- Ask the airline if there are restrictions on things like batteries for mobility aids
- Ask when you will need to transfer out of your mobility aid
- Ask if your mobility aid can be stored on board or if it needs to be stored in cargo
- Let the airline know if you need assistance transporting your mobility aid
- Take photos of your mobility aid
- Attach a tracking device like an AirTag to your wheelchair so that you can locate it if it gets lost in transit
- Put a "fragile" label on your wheelchair
- When you arrive at the gate, it is recommended that passengers with mobility aids use the priority boarding services, ensuring they board the plane first
- When disembarking from the airplane, the airline should assist you to the area baggage claim to retrieve your mobility aid
- If your mobility aid is damaged during your flight, take photos of the damage
- If your mobility aid is damaged or lost on an international flight, ask about completing a special declaration of interest, which protects the value of the mobility aid. You will need to state the monetary value and description of your mobility aid
- Keep all records and documents if problems arise
- Contact the airline and Canadian Transport Agency if your mobility aid is damaged or lost
- For those who are not travelling with their own mobility aid, all airlines offer "Special Assistance." They will provide a wheelchair (and someone to push the chair, if necessary) to travel through the airport terminals. Most airlines include a checkbox during the booking process that indicates you or someone in your party requires assistance

Self-Managers, Did You Know?

If you're traveling outside the province:

- You are permitted to use Direct Funding outside Ontario for up to 21 days per calendar year
- It is a good idea to let program staff know any time you are traveling (even if you are not bringing an attendant), in the event we are trying to contact you
- You are required to advise the program one month prior to your leaving the province
- Please provide dates of departure and expected date of return.
- If you plan on bringing your attendant, you should have a signed agreement for the trip stating how many days and the rate you will be paying. Of course, Direct Funding does not cover the cost of travel, meals or accommodation for attendants.
- If you plan to hire an attendant outside Ontario you must let Direct Funding staff know in advance
- If you bring your own attendant, remember the ESA rules apply, even if outside Ontario



Penny Goldberg
Self-Manager, Toronto

Testimonial

My son's wedding was wonderful and very emotional. I was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis when Eitan was 1 year old and my older son, Alon, was 4. I did not think I would live long enough to see Eitan get married. Thanks to Direct Funding and my family and friends I am still here and hope to enjoy many more memorable moments with both of my sons and their family.

Memories Last a Lifetime



Linda Clarke,
Self-Manager, Toronto



Melissa Webster
Self-Manager, Peterborough

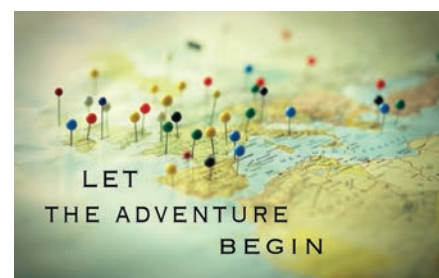


Mike Tkachuk
Self-Manager, Barrie

“ Participating in the Mobility Cup 2022 Cape Breton, a sailing competition, I did pretty well coming in fifth in the Silver Fleet and getting a trophy (I didn't know they gave trophies beyond third place!). The week got off to a rocky start. I requested a ride from Wheel-Trans (Toronto's para-transit system) to drive me to the airport at 6 a.m., but they gave me an alternative time of 4:40 a.m. pick-up – so that meant getting out of bed at 3:40 a.m. Linsey, my attendant for the trip, arrived at my place at midnight after going to a show downtown, so I don't think she got much sleep! We did get to the airport in plenty of time. Because the event was small – only 19 competitors (in Hamilton in 2011 there were 50) – I got to know most people. **The whole event was very well organized, with more than 100 volunteers.** I couldn't have gone without Linsey dragging me out of bed at an ungodly hour and caring for me.

“ **I am so thankful I was able to travel this summer to Edmonton and then Haida Gwaii.** I spent three days visiting people in the Edmonton area. We had originally planned on going to the Yukon, but there was a washout on the road. So, we decided to continue west and drove through Niska territory. The landscape was incredibly powerful and beautiful. The mountains hung over us like mothering angels, and the air was fresh and enlivening. We drove down Highway 16, part of which is known as the Highway of Tears (many Indigenous women have disappeared or were murdered along the sad route). We arrived off the ferry and instantly felt the healing energy of the islands. We met wonderful people, ate incredible food, and allowed the stunning landscape to quietly heal our hearts. The trip was very therapeutic, and I hope to return to the sacred territories of the Haida again soon.

“ Mike Tkachuk recently took a trip to Disney Animal Kingdom and a cruise around the eastern Caribbean islands with his daughter and wife. **He reports that his experience was very positive and Direct Funding gave him the freedom to be able to travel.** “Being disabled, the only thing that stops you from having a great life is your mind – look at these pictures,” said Mike, a Self-Manager living in Barrie. “I flew down to the eastern Caribbean and stayed on a ship in a room for a week and enjoyed myself.” He also said the hotel was extremely accessible.



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