

The Self-Manager

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

Spring 2023



“I loved hitting the trails with friends and family. That was something I really wanted to be able to do again.”

– Jake Thomas

Living the Dream

Jake Thomas (pictured right) merges his passion for mountain biking with his love of filmmaking in his documentary, *Adaptation*. Photos courtesy of Niall Pinder.



How a Self-Manager Turned His Love for Adaptive Mountain Biking into a Documentary

Marlene Benedicto
Intake and Resource Facilitator

After Jake Thomas' spinal cord injury in 2017, he struggled to find a sport that fit his interests. Prior to his injury, Jake was an action sport enthusiast with a love for mountain biking.

After some research, Jake came across an adaptive bike in Poland. "When the bike arrived a few months

later, I was reunited with a world that was taken away from me. Out of all the adaptive sports I had tried, adaptive mountain biking was the closest sport to an able-bodied experience I could get."

Once Jake reclaimed his love for mountain biking, he decided to merge it with his other love: filmmaking. *Adaptation* follows three friends with

spinal cord injuries as they travel to British Columbia to compete in the world's first bike race series for disabled mountain bikers.

"The idea behind *Adaptation* was simple. Promote adaptive mountain biking so that other disabled individuals could experience the same level of

For more **ADAPTATION**, please see p. 8



T4s, Liability Insurance, and Timesheets

A reminder to submit the following to your Direct Funding Regional Reporting Centre (Kapusksing, Waterloo, or Toronto) by March 31, 2023:

- Copies of the individual T4 slips and T4 summary for your attendants for the **2022** tax year.
- *If you have not already done so*, a copy of your most recent personal liability insurance (tenant's or homeowner's insurance policy) confirming you have \$2 million coverage.

Self-Managers must also submit timesheets with their quarterly Self-Manager Reports. Timesheets should include start and stop times for each shift. Please contact your local DF support person for more information. ■



Keep in touch

CILT Direct Funding staff can be reached by telephone at:

416-599-2458/1-800-354-9950,
fax at 416-599-3555 or by e-mail.

MARLENE BENEDICTO

Intake and Resource Facilitator Ext. 270
marlene.benedicto@cilt.ca

ELAINE CHU

Regional Report Advisor Ext. 292
elaine.chu@cilt.ca

JOELLA CONNAUGHT

Community Facilitator Ext. 245
joella.connaught@cilt.ca

HADEEL DAJANI

Review and Audit Advisor Ext. 222
hadeel.dajani@cilt.ca

KATE DEACON

Policy Advisor Ext. 288
kate.deacon@cilt.ca

LEISA DEBONO

Senior Program Manager Ext. 233
leisa.debono@cilt.ca

ABDULLAH DURANAI

Financial Controller Ext. 273
abdullah.duranai@cilt.ca

MARISA FALZONE

Senior Report Coordinator and Advisor
Ext. 231
marisa.falzone@cilt.ca

NICOLE HAJJAR

Community Facilitator Ext. 244
nicole.hajjar@cilt.ca

MEGAN HARRISON

Bookkeeping Report Reviewer
Ext. 275
megan.harrison@cilt.ca

NICOLA KAY

Bookkeeping Report Reviewer Ext. 230
nicola.kay@cilt.ca

LEANNE LARMONDIN

Communications and Resources Manager
Ext. 240
leanne.larmondin@cilt.ca

BHAVYA MEHTA

Bookkeeping Report Reviewer Ext. 274
bhavya.mehta@cilt.ca

GOLD OLATIFEDE (on leave)

Intake Administrator Ext. 227
gold.olatifeде@cilt.ca

ELIZABETH RODRIGUEZ

Bookkeeping Report Reviewer Ext. 272
elizabeth.rodriguez@cilt.ca

SARA STONEHOUSE

Agreement and Resource Administrator
Ext. 232
sara.stonehouse@cilt.ca

JOHN TAM

Database Administrator Ext. 234
john.tam@cilt.ca

MARLENE URSABIA

Intake Administrator Ext. 227
marlene.ursabia@cilt.ca

DANIELLE VINCIGUERRA

Financial Assurance Coordinator
Ext. 236
danielle.vinciguerra@cilt.ca



Veggie Lovers: Don't Scrap Your Scraps!

Nicole Hajjar
Community Facilitator

Did you know you can grow some fruits and vegetables from their scraps? Green onions are the fastest and easiest to regrow. Submerge the root end in a glass of water and set it by the window, changing the water every day or two. Within a week, you will see new onions grow from the tops. This will also work with romaine lettuce, leeks, celery, and most herbs and produce.

If you aren't re-growing your veggies, you can use the scraps to make a flavourful soup stock. Most commonly used are onion ends and peels (including leeks), garlic skins, carrot and celery ends, and mushroom stems. Avoid broccoli, cabbage, and cauliflower as these can make your stock bitter. Starchy vegetables like turnips and potatoes will give your stock an unpleasant texture.

Start by cleaning the scraps well and saving them in a freezer-safe container or bag.

1. When you have enough to fill a large pot, add them with enough water to make the veggies float. Add a couple bay leaves if you have them.
2. Bring the contents to a boil, then simmer on medium-low heat for a couple hours to extract as much flavour as possible.
3. Strain the broth through a fine-mesh strainer into airtight containers.
4. Store in the fridge for approximately five days or let cool completely and freeze. If freezing in jars, remember to leave at least one inch of room at the top for expansion.

Remember, you will need to season with salt and pepper when cooking with the stock. Your homemade stock doesn't have added sodium like store-bought stock cubes or broth. ■

Reuse for Your Garden

There are plenty of opportunities for gardeners to reuse and repurpose. Egg cartons are the perfect size to start seeds and are usually biodegradable. Cleaned eggshells also work well and are a good source of calcium and nutrients for your seeds and the soil. If you use bottled water, cut the bottle in half, and use either end as a mini greenhouse to start seeds. ■



Ready to Spring Forward? Get March Break Ready!

Joella Connaught, *Community Facilitator*

Looking ahead to brighter and warmer days to come, many of us are looking forward to jumping into spring! To help us all get spring ready, we thought it would be neat to explore some fun, accessible things to do during March Break.

Fun for Animal and Nature Lovers

If nature and animal wildlife pique your interest, check out the **Wolf Centre: An Ontario Signature Educational Experience**. The Wolf Centre is an indoor facility that houses self-guided museum-style exhibits, a cinema, and a souvenir shop. There is also a large indoor observatory where the wolves are viewed through a one-way glass from inside, offering the chance to get a look at the Haliburton Forest's wolf pack. The event is held at the accessible Haliburton Forest & Wildlife Reserve Ltd. and runs until April 30, 2023.

Fun for Winter Sport Lovers

If you are the type who lives for winter sports, March may still offer opportunities for one last chance to enjoy some snow before the temperatures begin to shift. If this sounds like you, then check out the **Snow Valley Resort** in Barrie. The venue offers a variety of winter sport activities as well as accessible and inclusive activities for all, including a ski and snowboard program with the Canadian Association of Disabled Skiers. Snow Valley Resort is open until March 31, 2023.

Fun for All Ages with Disney

If you have interest in movies and animation, the **Disney Animation: Immersive Experience** will certainly be an event for you. Fun for both young and the young at heart, this event takes you inside an immersive experience of classic and more recent Walt Disney animation movies. The event is held at the Lighthouse ArtSpace Toronto and is on until March 19, 2023. ■

Source

<https://todoontario.com/events/tag/march-break-events/>



Beauty Made Accessible

Lancôme — a well-known company in the beauty industry — is making its mark and changing the way that the industry can be inclusive. Blending technology and beauty together, Lancôme released its HAPTA motorized makeup application device in early January 2023.

The AI-powered motor-stabilizing device is designed to help those with limited arm and hand mobility to assist with independently applying their own makeup. The device's features include ergonomic easy grip and self-levelling technology which helps to keep the device level as you move to help with ease of makeup application. The device is also lightweight, weighing 115g, and helps with the application of lipstick, mascara, and other makeup products.

There is no doubt that steps towards inclusivity with application tools like this are certainly a step in the right direction. However, the cost of this handy device is not yet known, leaving

a question of affordability. Other smaller and affordable makeup brands like Guide Beauty, with their soft and flexible eye liner, and Kohl Kreatives, with their specialized manual makeup applicator tools, are showing a much-welcomed shift towards beauty, accessibility, and inclusivity within the beauty industry. ■

Source

<https://www.cosmopolitan.com/uk/beauty-hair/makeup/a42415614/lancome-hapta-motorised-makeup-application-device/>



A Learning Experience in Planning

Mark Hardes
Self-Manager, Thornhill

Travelling to Halifax recently, it was the first time for me to go since I have been in a wheelchair. The trip was a learning experience in terms of planning and accessibility.

For example, at one hotel I could witness firsthand what was understood of accessibility.

- For washrooms, after I could barely enter through the door, the interior was not suitable.
- The toilet was placed so awkwardly that I wondered what the architect was thinking.

During the trip, I came up with some solutions to keep comfortable the best I could and enjoyed visiting with my son for dinner together with the rest of our family when we arrived in Halifax. I also got to enjoy a visit to Peggy's Cove, explored the Halifax boardwalk, and saw cruise ships and other big ships in the port. My family and I also drove to see Lunenburg and Mahone Bay. What a stunning country scape!

This trip was a great experience, and next time we know what to expect and will prepare accordingly. For example,

- A foldable commode chair on wheels is a must for me.

- Riding in the passenger seat was more comfortable and safer than in a wheelchair.
- The lifting equipment (which does not require any changes to the vehicle) from Access Unlimited was of great help.

I am very grateful to my family and caregiver for going on this trip with me. I like to think of myself as not disabled but infinitely abled! There is virtually nothing we can't do. Although it might take longer, I gratefully accept a helpful hand or two. ■



Media Corner

Nicole Hajjar
Community Facilitator

Mary Fashik is the founder of **Upgrade Accessibility**, a movement designed to challenge today's accessibility standards. In 2020, she created Camp Access, a virtual camp experience for the disabled and chronically ill community. Learn more about Mary's activism, writing, and presence in our community at www.upgradeaccessibility.com

The **AT Banter Podcast** is hosted by Steven Barclay, Rob Mineault, Ryan Fleury, and Lis Malone and provides news about Assistive Technology (AT). Focused on Canadians, they speak with advocates and members of the community to educate and inspire better conversations about disability. Find the AT Banter Podcast wherever you get your podcasts.

Imani Barbarin is a public speaker, content creator, disability advocate, and blogger writing from the perspective of a black woman with cerebral palsy. Find her across social media by searching her name or her blog, *Crutches and Spice*. www.crutchesandspice.com ■

Share your recommendations with nicole.hajjar@cilt.ca

New Staff

Véronique Hardy
Direct Funding Coordinator
Disability Resource Centre for Independent Living (KapusKasing)



I possess a degree in psychology and a law clerk diploma. I hope to add another certification soon. Stay tuned. I believe in continuous learning

but also in a balanced lifestyle. I love to relax with my family, friends, and being at our cottage.

I began working with people at the age of 18 at a treatment facility for teenagers. My work experience over the last 20 years ranges from working in child welfare to legal, administration and Independent Living coordinator. My heart will always belong with serving others. As an individual with a chronic illness, I have grown over the last few years by becoming an avid researcher in wellbeing methods. I love sharing my findings with others while lending an open heart. I am grateful to be able to help individuals find their voice and feel privileged to accompany them on their self-exploration journey.

Amanda Fitzhenry
Direct Funding Coordinator
Independent Living Sudbury Manitoulin (ILSM)



I feel very fortunate to have joined an incredible organization such as ILSM in 2022, where I had the privilege of

working as their Volunteer Coordinator and first learning about the Direct Funding Program. Before joining ILSM, I graduated from Cambrian College with a diploma in Social Services — Indigenous Specialization where I was rejuvenated with my love of helping others and my

Anishnabek culture. Since transitioning to ILSM's Direct Funding Coordinator, I have had the fantastic opportunity to learn more about this unique program and to meet and provide support to the incredible Self-Managers in and around the Sudbury area. Outside of work, I keep busy by writing short stories and painting, as well as with my duties as a mother of 1 human son and 2 fur babies.

Nadine Wight
Direct Funding Administrative Assistant
Disability Resource Centre for Independent Living (KapusKasing)



Originally from Brantford, Ont., I bring experience

working within the administrative field and the disability sector to my role at the Disability Resource Centre for Independent Living. I have dedicated my life to providing support to people living with disabilities within my community through disability sector programming. I recently moved to Northern Ontario and knew I wanted to utilize my skills to continue to provide support in this sector in my new community. I take pride in my work and have a passion for giving back to community. In my spare time, I volunteer on The Engagement Committee, a program supporting autism and mental health, providing peer support and opportunities to families to access resources. I also enjoy the beach with my puppy and going on many impromptu adventures with my partner. I am excited to work as the Administrative Assistant with the Direct Funding Program here in Kapuskasing. I will be instrumental in providing support, administration and outreach for the Direct Funding Program in the Northern Ontario region. ■



Smart Home Devices Can Enhance Independence

Nicole Hajjar
Community Facilitator

Technology has advanced to offer independence to people with disabilities to control their environments. You can find gadgets that work with Google, Apple or Amazon devices (among others) to allow you to control your home with touch or voice commands. For example:

- **Smart speakers**, like Amazon's Alexa, are web-connected speakers controlled using voice commands to access entertainment, or other connected smart devices.
- **Smart lighting**, like bulbs and switches, can be put on schedules, triggered by movement or other smart devices, or simply turn lights on and off.

- **Smart thermostats** can be helpful for those with mobility, dexterity, or vision issues to control the temperature in their environment. Most are controlled remotely, and some work with voice commands.
- **Smart locks** can allow you to lock or unlock doors using a PIN code on raised buttons, by voice command or even a fingerprint. There are no keys to lose, no locks to change, and it is helpful to allow access for family, attendants, and other service providers. Some will even let you program different codes for family members and attendants.

There are plenty more options to consider; for more ideas, please see: www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/best-assistive-smart-home-technology-for-disabled/ ■



Helping to Make the Medicine Go Down

Marlene Benedicto
Intake and Resource Facilitator

Remembering to take your medication can be challenging, especially if you take multiple medications at different times each day. Luckily, there are simple, innovative ways to assist you.

Spencer (www.myspencer.ca) is an at-home medication dispenser. The user loads the medication refill boxes into the machine, and it will dispense at the time you need it. There is no programming involved. "It is so cool, he dispenses the exact medication you need at the exact time you need it, and there's no mix-up. It's mainly designed for people to make sure they don't forget their medication, or for me where I can't get my medication out of the cupboard or out of the old container," says Nic Paterson, a Toronto Self-Manager and Spencer devotee. "I can still get my medication and tear the packet open with my teeth."

Another useful tool is **Round Health**, an app that notifies users when it's time to take their medication. The app allows you to schedule the day and time you need to take your medications, and you will receive reminder notifications on your cellphone. Each medication is organized by its name, dosage, and how often you need to take it.

Whether you are looking for something simple, like a dosette, an app, or something even more high-tech, like Spencer, there are many options to help you stay on top of your medication schedule. ■



Adaptation

Continued from p. 1

freedom. To celebrate disabled sport with a film that rivals able-bodied films of the same genre. To educate the uneducated about daily living with a disability. To inspire anyone in any capacity to enjoy life to the fullest. If one person draws inspiration from the film, then its mission was accomplished," says Jake.

Even though adaptive mountain biking is still in its infancy, Jake is noticing an increase in interest in the sport, and able-bodied bikers have been welcoming. "Year over year the numbers increase. Initially, my regular riding group was only four guys. Now there are close to 10 of us," he says. "Able-bodied riders are stoked to see adaptive bikes on the trails as much the people riding them. As more trail builders, clubs, and organizations understand adaptive bikes, the more

the trail networks will be modified to accommodate them. Across Canada more and more organizations are accommodating the bikes' wider footprint." Organizations such as Kootenay Adaptive are helping to pave the way for adaptive sports across Canada with event organization and instructor training.

Though there is no official release date for *Adaptation*, the documentary was submitted to various film festivals in Canada, the United States, and Europe, and Jake is hopeful that a broadcast or streaming partner will pick it up. "My fingers are crossed someone picks it up," says Jake. "You don't have to be disabled to appreciate *Adaptation*. It truly is a film anyone can enjoy." ■

For more information and to watch the trailer, visit <http://adaptationfilm.ca>

Going paper-free

If you would like to go paper-free and receive all your Direct Funding documents by email only, please contact a member of CILT's Direct Funding team to update your file (see staff directory, page 2). ■

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. ■

What has DF helped you do?

Most of the photos in this newsletter are of or taken by Self-Managers — please send us your photos and stories so we can include you, too! Contact Sara at sara.stonehouse@cilt.ca or 416-599-2458 ext. 232. ■

The Self-Manager Newsletter editorial team:

Marlene Benedicto, Joella Connaught, Nicole Hajjar, Leanne Larmondin, Sara Stonehouse



Direct Funding Program

Centre for Independent Living in Toronto Inc.

365 Bloor Street East, Suite 902, Toronto, ON M4W 3L4

Tel: 416.599.2458 OR 1.800.354.9950

www.dfontario.ca



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