

The Self-Manager

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

Spring 2025

30 Years of Direct Funding



Artistic Expressions

Wilson Libita, a Self-Manager living in North Bay, is a self-taught mouth painter who has had a lot of success with his artwork. Last fall, he had his first exhibition to showcase his work at an event supported by the Ontario Arts Council.

Wilson's journey as an artist began following a motor vehicle accident in 2015 that resulted in a C4, C5 spinal injury. Through his journey of living with quadriplegia, he discovered a

passion for painting and developed a unique technique that allows him to express himself artistically by holding a paintbrush in his mouth.

"I want my art to inspire others to see beyond limitations and find the beauty and strength within themselves," says Wilson. "This exhibition is not just a showcase of my work; it's a celebration of life, perseverance, and the endless possibilities of creativity."

"My work not only represents my journey as a quadriplegic mouth painter but also aims to inspire and bring vibrant energy to any space."

-Wilson Libita

For more information about Wilson and his work, please visit wilsonlibitaart.com/ or his YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@MouthArtistry>

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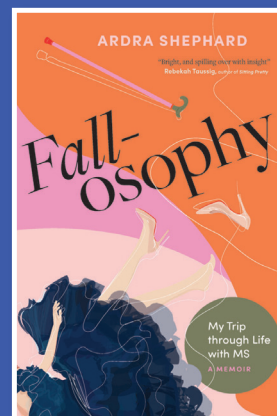
Media Corner

Desirée Walsh
Community Facilitator

Spring and summer are a good time for reading and a good time to celebrate new disabled authors.

Ardra Shephard, known for her podcast *Tripping on Air* and her work on AMI (Accessible Media Inc.) has penned a memoir about living with Multiple Sclerosis. She describes *Fall-osophy* as a book about falling and getting back up again, if not literally, then figuratively, at least.

For more information, visit
trippingonair.com.



Fall-osophy
My Trip Through Life with MS
by Ardra Shephard

Spring Cleaning

Marlene Benedicto
Intake and Resource Facilitator



As the weather starts to warm up and the snow begins to thaw, many of us take this opportunity to start doing a bit of spring cleaning. For Self-Managers looking for assistance in cleaning their homes that goes beyond the light housekeeping that Direct Funding can provide, we have put a list together of affordable options for you. (All of these services would be a personal cost for Direct Funding participants.)

Selectacare

Selectacare can assist seniors who live in the Greater Toronto Area and are looking for help with deep cleaning your home, basic housekeeping or need help with things like laundry, decluttering or organizing. For more information, contact 647-370-7771 or selectacare.ca.

TransCare

TransCare Community Support Services matches young people with seniors needing assistance with tasks such as snow removal, grass cutting, laundry or general housekeeping like vacuuming, floor cleaning, dusting and garbage removal. For more information, contact 416-750-9885 or tcare.ca.

VHA Home HealthCare – Restored Home: Extreme Cleaning

VHA Restored Home can help individuals looking to declutter their homes, ensuring they meet public health standards, improve safety for those returning home after a hospital stay and will do weekly maintenance, if necessary. VHA Restored Home provides services to individuals living in the Regions of Peel, Durham, Toronto, London and York. For more information or information about the program's eligibility criteria for each region, visit vha.ca/services/extreme-cleaning.

TaskRabbit, Handy.com, Jiffy

Websites like TaskRabbit, Handy.com or Jiffy provide listings for various home maintenance jobs from deep cleaning or junk removal to lawn maintenance and plumbing. These sites provide individuals with listings of professionals, including their rates and reviews, allowing you to decide who you want to hire.



Direct Funding Welcomes New Staff



Ernie Galloway

I'm super excited to be part of the Direct Funding Program team at CILT and to begin working with Self-Managers. My background is in administrative support, data analysis, and community organizing, with experience in both public and nonprofit sectors. Disability justice is a big part of my life, and I am very passionate about accessibility and the necessity of prioritizing disabled joy and rest. I love fostering spaces where people feel seen and heard, and I am hopeful that I'll be able to bring this same sentiment to the work I will do with Self-Managers.

Beyond my professional work, I am an (out of practice) athlete and sports fan, a member of a local Toronto choir, and I love crafting. I also have two degrees in Biology and Spanish, and I am very interested in the environmental sciences and how they intersect with social justice.

I'm looking forward to learning from all of you, sharing my skills, and contributing to the program's success.

30 Years of Direct Funding

Memories from the Original Self-Managers

Chris Portelli

Mississauga

The early days of Direct Funding were a bit overwhelming as I had no idea how to run the payroll, track my hours and be my own boss, but as time went on it became easier. DF not only gave me independence but also confidence. When you are the main character in hiring your staff, it gives you a feeling of gratitude and appreciation for your decision making because it keeps getting better. I've learned to read people very well, especially when it comes to your own care: you want to make sure you have the right individuals. The hourly rate back then was \$10 an hour in the beginning. I hired an individual who was looking for more hours. We both made the transition to DF together. My parents were thrilled that I became independent through DF. I live a life of freedom: I can go out when I choose and go to sleep and do anything else when I choose. DF allowed me to keep my parents at home and stay with them until they passed away, which meant the world



to me as they did the same when I needed them during my hospital stays. DF should be expanded because it will give the many individuals who are disabled in Ontario the freedom to be a full part of our society! Many years ago, DF came along and broke the chains that held me back! Here's to another 30 years of amazing DF!



Deb Willows

Huntsville

When DF started in 1994, I was one of the 102 Self-Managers picked to be part of the pilot program. It was exciting to be a part of the process, as I had been on the committee that started the program. It was a great feeling to have the freedom to book my own staff as needed. One big “Yes!” moment was when I was in a situation where I needed help right away. I realized I could call for help immediately and not have to wait for hours. My parents were very happy knowing I had a new freedom and would have the help I needed when they could no longer help me. They also liked the fact that they knew the staff who were coming in. DF is work, but it’s well worth it.

Jacques Quesnel

Ottawa

Prior to joining the Direct Funding Program, I participated for nearly 20 years in a similar initiative in Montreal called Allocation Direct. In 1997, I relocated to Ottawa for employment. At that time, I was required to live in Ontario for at least a year before being eligible to apply for DF. During that transitional period, I lived at an independent living residence, where life presented numerous challenges, especially in balancing my new job. I was also in a partnership with an incredible non-disabled woman, an arrangement unfamiliar to the residence staff, which complicated my stay. As I approached the one-year mark, I began preparing to apply for DF, securing a home environment where I could have greater autonomy. A few days after my DF interview, I received verbal confirmation of my acceptance into the program—an incredibly significant “Yes!” moment for me. This approval meant I could fulfill my professional responsibilities more easily, establish a more balanced life with my partner, and become the proud owner of a bungalow in Ottawa.



Time Keeping Apps

A Digital Approach to Scheduling and Tracking Attendant Hours

Joella Connaught Kinga
Community & Resource Facilitator

Are you looking for new and efficient ways to keep organized, and to schedule and track your attendants' shifts and hours? If the answer is ✓, then check out these apps that have been tested by some of our Self-Managers. Who knows, maybe one of them will work well for you, too!



TimeTree

TimeTree is a communication app that helps with coordinating and sharing schedules. For example, when new events are created or existing ones are changed in the schedule, TimeTree will notify your attendants quickly of the update. With TimeTree, communication is streamlined all in one place and it offers both paid and free plans. For more information, visit:

timetreeapp.com/intl/en

TimeStation

TimeStation is a time and attendance system that runs on smartphones and tablets. With this app, attendants can punch in and out quickly, and because TimeStation runs in the cloud, there are no software or servers to maintain. Self-Managers can see who's working and run time and attendance reports at anytime. TimeStation works with devices running Google Android or Apple iOS. TimeStation offers a free plan if you are using the app for 10 or less attendants. For more information visit: mytimestation.com/

Homebase

Homebase has many features, including some assistance with recruitment. For example, you can create job ads which automatically post to popular platforms and it can track the individuals applying to the postings. Additionally, you can review applicants' information if they submit a resume. With your current attendants, the app can send alerts to staff 30 minutes, 45 minutes and 1 hour before their shifts via text, email or app. The app can also allow employees to trade shifts based on the grouping of the individuals. There is a free basic plan option available. Overall, the app's features help to simplify scheduling, time clocks and payroll all within the app. For more information, visit: joinhomebase.com/app

Connecteam

With this app there is a fee depending on the plan selected. However, one bonus is that if you are registering fewer than 10 employees, the service is free! Connecteam has features such as a time clock which has smart time tracking with automated time sheets, task management with real time task delegation and progress tracking, scheduling with efficient

staff scheduling, from planning to distribution; there is also a feature to upload documents such as your agreements for staff to access if they need to sign them, or TD1/TD1ON forms for staff to fill if they need to, making accessing all information easy on one platform. Lastly, there are update boards, chats and a phonebook feature if you need to contact anyone, and an area for event/celebration page. For more information, visit: connecteam.com/pricing/

Teams Shifts

Shifts is available through Microsoft Teams software. With this feature, you can create, edit and organize team schedules. You can create and edit shifts, and there is an option for open shifts that any staff can request. There is a time clock feature that allows your team to clock in and out with a mobile device. You can also review requests for time off and shift swaps or offers from your team. Once your schedule is built, you can share the schedule with everyone on your team. For more information, visit: tinyurl.com/ym3w9xfs



Good News: DF Waitlist Shortened

Changes have come to the Direct Funding Program to help more people with disabilities live independently in their homes. The program, which is administered by the Centre for Independent Living in Toronto in conjunction with 10 other Independent Living Centres across Ontario, has mobilized its resources to shorten the waitlist for eligibility interviews. Eligible applicants who are eager to start hiring their own attendants can start preparing almost immediately after submitting their application.

The program's senior manager, Leisa DeBono, noted that staff have increased their advertising efforts, but she adds, Self-Managers themselves are often the best suited to promote Direct Funding as a solution for people who want more choice, control and flexibility in their attendant services.

"Who better to talk about the benefits of Direct Funding than the people who have been managing their own attendants for years?" said Ms. DeBono. If Self-Managers know of groups and organizations that would be interested in a presentation from DF staff, please contact your local Independent Living Centre.



CHANTAL HUININK

Chantal Huinink is a speaker, author, and social justice advocate. Holding a Masters of Divinity and Social Work, she uses her expertise to drive positive change across our community - serving as a chaplain, Pastoral Elder, and most recently a Regional Councillor.

Huinink continues to advocate for affordable housing, sustainable and accessible public transit, and most recently led a nationwide push to improve the Canada Disability Benefit so that all people with disabilities can be lifted out of poverty and live with independence and dignity.



Chantal Huinink

Kitchener

Chantal Huinink, a Kitchener Self-Manager, received the King Charles III Coronation Medal in a recent ceremony in Waterloo. The Canadian medal was created to commemorate the king's coronation and recognize outstanding individuals who have made a difference in their communities. A councillor for the Region of Waterloo, Chantal was one of 20 recipients at the recent ceremony; she was recognized for her community service, philanthropy and advocacy for people with disabilities.

**Award
winner**

For Your Information

Support for New and Prospective Self-Managers

Are you interested in offering one-on-one peer support to new and prospective Self-Managers? If so, please contact Desiree Walsh at desiree.walsh@cilt.ca or 416-599-2458 ext. 243.

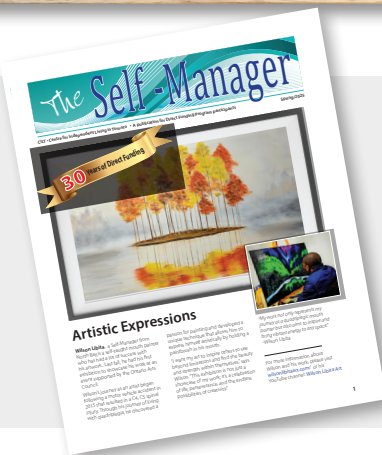
Consumer Panelists for DF Interviews

Direct Funding staff are looking for Self-Managers who would like to be consumer panelists for upcoming program eligibility interviews. Each Direct Funding interview is led by a three-person panel, including one consumer of attendant services, typically a local Self-Manager. Please contact Marlene Benedicto at marlene.benedicto@cilt.ca or 416-599-2458 ext. 270 for more information.

In the News



Dinah Cotter, right, a Kingston Self-Manager, discussed the new Canada Disability Benefit recently with Kamal Khera, former Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities.



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