

The Self-Manager

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

Summer 2022



Peter and Zachary Wood with Blue Jays pitcher, Julian Merryweather, and Blue Jays mascot, Ace.

Making a pitch for ALS awareness

Self-Manager Peter Wood and his son, Zachary, were invited to throw the first pitch at the Toronto Blue Jays game against the Chicago White Sox at the Rogers Centre on June 2, Lou Gehrig Day. (Gehrig was a star player for the New York Yankees who was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis in 1939. His name later became synonymous with ALS.)

“

It was great fun and a unique experience that we won't forget," said Peter. "I was overwhelmed by the support of the crowd at the Rogers Centre as we took the field."



Walk to End ALS



"Amanda's Posse" at the Walk to End ALS on May 28.

Amanda Song, a Self-Manager in Mississauga, participated in a recent Walk to End ALS. This was one of many events to mark ALS Awareness Month as the ALS Society of Canada returned in person with events throughout Ontario in May and June. "Amanda's Posse" was one of the top fundraising teams for the event, which took place at Port Credit Memorial Park in Mississauga. The team nearly doubled its fundraising goal of \$2,500 by raising \$4,937.

Along with in-person events in more than 20 locations across Ontario, participants could elect to "walk" in virtual events at a time and place which suited them, promoting inclusivity and choice. For more information, please visit www.WalkToEndALS.ca and www.ALS.ca



Keep in touch

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Media Corner

Nicole Hajar
Community Facilitator

Breaking Character (TV Docuseries)

Breaking Character is a candid documentary series following the journeys of six performers with disabilities as they hustle to make their mark on the stage, screen, and runway. You can watch *Breaking Character* on AMI TV – available through your cable service provider – or on the AMI-tv app for Apple and Android, or stream online at www.ami.ca/breaking-character.

The performers featured in the first season of *Breaking Character* include: Alexia Vassos, a stage and screen actor who is a little person; Dan Barra-Berger, a comedian who is legally blind; Caeden Lawrence, a TV and film actor who is

hard of hearing; Tai Young, a performer who is a wheelchair user; Catherine Joell McKinnon, an actor, filmmaker, and ASL coach who is Deaf; and, Rachel Romu, a model, musician, and activist who has Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome.

The Accessible Stall (Podcast)

Hosted by Emily Ladau and Kyle Khachadurian, both of whom have diverse levels of disability and mobility, *The Accessible Stall* dives deep to explore disability issues, their origins and why they affect us the way we do. There are more than 100 episodes to enjoy at www.TheAccessibleStall.com and on Apple Podcasts. Here is what they have to say about their podcast, and how it's different from other disability podcasts: "Having a podcast that talks about

“disability is actually pretty rare. That aside, we are not here to amplify the status quo opinions of the greater disability community. Instead, our disability podcast challenges views and expectations. We ask tough questions that try to dig deep into the why behind the issues. Of course, things like ableism and inspiration porn are bad, but why? The answers may not be so obvious to everyone – especially people who do not identify as disabled. So, instead of just echoing the notions of the disability community, we break them down and work on making sense of difficult topics. And, as it happens, some of our most interesting episodes are the results of us confronting our own personal beliefs and biases while recording.”

Back on the buses



Direct Funding has started promoting the program on Wheel-Trans buses again! If you are in the Greater Toronto Area, keep an eye out for the new ads, which feature Maayan Ziv, an entrepreneur, photographer and Self-Manager.

Signority signing software

Staff

The Direct Funding Program has recently begun using Signority, an online document signing software, to send documents to be signed electronically. We will be using Signority to send updated budgets as a result of the Temporary Wage Enhancement being made permanent. We will also begin emailing agreement renewals to current program participants whose Direct Funding Agreements have expired (these are the legal agreements Self-Managers sign when they start on the program). This means that, when it comes time for your agreement to be renewed, you will receive an email that will explain how to complete, sign, and return the documents online, instead of by regular mail. As long as you are connected to the Internet, Signority is straightforward to access using a computer, smartphone, or tablet. Signatures can be added by either typing, drawing, or uploading an existing electronic signature file.

If you are signing a DF Agreement through Signority, you will require a witness to be physically present to



verify with their own signature as well, the same as if you were signing a paper document. Once you have finished signing online, a copy of the completed and signed document will be sent to you by email for your records.

If we have always corresponded with you by mail or phone only, and you do not have an email address on file with us, then we will continue to print your documents on paper and mail them to you.

If you are having difficulty signing a document you received through Signority, please contact Sara Stonehouse at sara.stonehouse@cilt.ca or 416-599-2458 ext. 232.

Please Note

Temporary wage increase made permanent

As the program has noted in communications with Self-Managers, the \$3/hour temporary wage enhancement was recently made permanent, making the maximum wage \$22/hour that Direct Funding participants may pay their attendants.

Direct Funding Staff have been working hard to increase the nearly 1,000 budgets of every Direct Funding participant and Self-Managers should expect to receive copies of their new budgets sometime in July or August. Then you will be required to review, sign, and return your budgets digitally via Signority.



Please see the accompanying article on this page about this new method of sending program documents.



Self-Manager Kevin Shaw with his attendant, Kyle Moretton.

Attendant has deep roots with Direct Funding Program

Tammie Moretton, Ottawa

I have been a Self-Manager since 1995. My husband is also a Self-Manager. After adopting our eldest son, Kyle, we were provided with much-needed nurturing assistance through Direct Funding (DF) to help us with caring for a very busy toddler. Without the DF program we would not have been able to adopt our children who truly enrich our lives. Kyle, now 20, works as an attendant for another Self-Manager, Kevin Shaw. Kyle has grown to be a kind, caring, and helpful individual who knows the challenges we face as individuals with disabilities and the many possibilities we can achieve given the opportunity.



New Direct Funding Program staff



Joella Connaught

Community Facilitator
Toronto

I am so very excited to join the Centre for Independent Living

in Toronto (CILT) as one of the new Community Facilitators. I come to the Direct Funding Program with a total of 19 years' experience in the field of social work (I have a BSW degree). I have spent 14 of those years working in the area of disability, specifically in the developmental disabilities sector. I am also an active member at my children's school council, acting as co-chair and championing several learning and enrichment opportunities for the student body and their families, with the bulk of my work being focused on identity and the intersectionality of such areas as race and disability. I look forward to being a part of the Direct Funding team in supporting our wonderful consumers!



Kate Deacon

Policy Advisor
Toronto

I am pleased to introduce (and re-introduce) myself. Having spent the last three

years working for Direct Funding at Independent Living Centre Kingston, I am thrilled to join the team at CILT. I have worked in the disability sector for many years in a variety of roles, starting as an attendant. As a social worker, member of the disability community, and self-professed policy nerd, I am passionate about creating change by making space for all voices. Born and raised in Sudbury, I now call Kingston home. I love going to museums, seeing live theatre, reading sci-fi and fantasy,

and listening to far too many true crime podcasts. I'm excited to contribute to Direct Funding in a new way and look forward to working with you.



Nicole Hajjar

Community Facilitator
Toronto

I'm delighted to be joining CILT and the Direct Funding Program

as a Community Facilitator. I previously worked at Covenant House Toronto as a caseworker in the shelter program and then as a Youth in Transition Worker. I'm devoted to helping improve the outcomes and experiences for people who are traditionally marginalized by society. I wholeheartedly believe that with appropriate guidance anyone can live their best life. I've traveled to cities and countries on four continents and as a person living with a physical disability, I'm always looking for methods to improve the travel experience of those for whom travel seems a distant possibility. At home, I can usually be found with my nose in a book, at my sewing machine, or getting lost in YouTube's offerings of tiny house and MS Excel videos.



Nicola Kay

Bookkeeping Report Reviewer
Toronto

I am very excited to start my journey with the Direct Funding Program

as a Bookkeeping Report Reviewer at CILT! When I am not working, I am usually outdoors either hiking, gardening, or going for a walk in the beautiful parks around me. I also enjoy staying in and catching up on different TV shows and hanging out with my two cats, Ella and

Chloe. Every day I start work with a cup of tea and my personal motto is, "There is nothing a cup of tea cannot fix." My favorite movie of all time is Grease – nothing beats a good musical, in my opinion. Looking forward to connecting with you all!



Samantha Swinton

Intake Coordinator
Toronto

I joined the Direct Funding team as the Intake Coordinator in April, 2022. I worked in housing

and municipal government for many years. I'm excited to lead the DF Intake team at CILT and broaden my knowledge of the services available to people living with disabilities. In my personal time, I love crafting and spending time outside with my family.



Jada Wahabu

Program Coordinator and Direct Funding Facilitator
Ottawa

I am excited to join the Direct

Funding team! My pronouns are she/her and I live in Ottawa. Before joining the Direct Funding Program, I worked and volunteered as a research assistant with ASE Community Foundation for Black Canadians with Disabilities to identify resources for racialized people with disabilities. I am most passionate about intersectionality and the importance of increasing access to services that acknowledge each person's unique identity. When I'm not at work, I enjoy trying new foods and watching documentaries! I look forward to meeting and connecting with you all!

Get rolling on some summer fun



Joella Connaught
Community Facilitator

It is the season for warmth, sun, and fun. With so many activities and places to visit throughout Ontario, we have put together a list of fun, accessible, and family-friendly locations to check out this summer. So, get out there, keep active, and enjoy that fabulous summer season!

Be an Explorer



Awenda Provincial Park

This park is located in Tiny Township, Simcoe County, 2 hours from Toronto. The park is accessible for all visitors and includes wheelchair-accessible platforms to the lake, as well as a barrier-free trail called Beaver Pond Trail. All-terrain wheelchairs are also available to rent. www.ontarioparks.com/park/awenda

Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park

This park is 30 minutes from Thunder Bay and has the second-largest waterfall in Ontario! If that wasn't enough scenery for you, the park also has two accessible trails: the Boardwalk Trail, which surrounds the falls, and the Mountain Portage Scenic Trail: www.ontarioparks.com/park/kakabekafalls



Playgrounds for all Abilities

Nick's Dragonfly/South End Community Park

Located in Guelph at the South End Community Centre, 200 Clair Road, this playground has a dinosaur theme and is loaded with fun.

The playground features play areas for both younger and older children, equipped with an accessible play structure, swings, and other activities at ground level that are rubber surfaced. Additionally, the older children's play area has a ramped accessible structure with a dinosaur sand dig area as well as a sensory garden with sensory and tactile elements built into many of the play areas. Lastly, the play structure also has a Sway Fun and Thunderhead Climber and has ramped access to many deck levels.



Infinity Playplace

Located in St. Catharines (Niagara Street Frontage at Lester B. Pearson Park), Infinity Playplace boasts three unique themes that cover a range of age groups. The first theme includes a historic train theme for toddlers, the second theme serves the younger ages with a nautical theme, and the last theme – futuristic spaceship – is geared toward older age groups. Variety is a key feature of this park! As a bonus, the park also has a splash pad, which is open from June to September.

Camping Fun!

Windy Lake Provincial Park

This park is located northwest of Sudbury. It has a barrier-free yurt and is located near a comfort station: www.ontarioparks.com/park/windylake

Pinery Provincial Park

For more options in terms of space, Pinery Provincial Park offers both a barrier-free yurt and cabin: www.ontarioparks.com/park/pinery

Fun at the Beach

Pancake Bay

Pancake Bay is located off the shores of Lake Superior, near Batchawana Bay, about 75 km west of Sault Ste. Marie. To get a glimpse of its beauty and all it has to offer, visit: www.ontarioparks.com/park/pancakebay

Pancake Bay has purchased two new all-terrain wheelchairs to help park visitors access the water and to make their way through the sand, allowing visitors to get to the water's edge. Additionally, a MobiChair – a floating beach wheelchair – is available to visitors should they wish to take a dip in the water with the assistance of a helper. Bonus: the chairs are available free of charge, and park staff will bring the chair to wherever you need!



Testimonials

Jennifer Viklen
Self-Manager, Thunder Bay

I heard about the Direct Funding Program after I was in a life-changing car accident. I went from being a busy working wife and mother to a person with a disability and wasn't sure how to navigate life. After I was found eligible at my interview, I was very happy that I was able to handpick and hire the attendants who were best suited to my needs. I'm so thankful that I was able to regain most of my independence back. I'm now able to clean my house and cook for my family, have assistance at some of my appointments and have all of my personal care needs met, all with the help of my attendants, because to me these were now the important things in life.

“
Direct Funding
has helped
me feel more
confident...”

Being able to control when I have my attendants instead of relying on an agency's schedule has been such a blessing. I currently have three attendants, and I'm able to choose the right one based on my needs for each day. I didn't have that choice with an agency. After building trust with my attendants, I'm more comfortable with personal care. It is not easy to be that vulnerable but being able to build that relationship with my attendant was easier, because I was able to handpick them myself and work on the relationship over time.

Direct Funding has also helped me feel more confident by being in a leadership role and being able to manage all the responsibilities related

to being a Self-Manager. There is definitely a learning curve involved, but knowing that I'm not alone and have help from my local Independent Living Resource Centre office as well as the Centre for Independent Living in Toronto office, I feel comfortable and I believe their goal is for me to be successful as a Self-Manager.

Being a Self-Manager is such a blessing. It's both rewarding and challenging. Over these past few years, I've learned that being a person with a disability with all of its challenges can be manageable, and independence is possible. I'm so thankful I was approved to be a Self-Manager because now that I have the right team of attendants, I'm more independent and live a more fulfilling life.

“
Direct Funding
gave me back
my dignity and
freedom.”

necessities a couple of days a week. So, my husband took on role of caregiver, housekeeper, and cook. He did it without complaint, but our relationship was no longer as partners, but as a patient and carer. Since Direct Funding came into our lives, my husband is once again my partner and best friend. We laugh together, support each other, and do things we had stopped doing when he was busy taking care of me and everything else by himself. Direct Funding gave me back my dignity and freedom.

My life happens on my terms now. I have my support workers who have become dear friends helping me, and life has once again become joyful and exciting, not something that is just passing me by.

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



Della Gauthier,
Self-Manager, Capreol

How can I best explain the profound impact the Direct Funding Program has had on my life? I guess it's the little things that most people take for granted, like getting out of bed when you want to, having a refreshing morning shower, and going out looking your best because your hair and makeup are done with two healthy, steady hands. It's having the people you choose to help you with your most intimate self care – the little things that mean so much to someone who can't manage these things themselves.

Direct Funding gave me back my husband, too. The community care nurses were fabulous, but only had time to help with the absolute



Campaigning

Drew Cumpson ran as the NDP candidate for the riding of Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston in the recent provincial election.



Drew Cumpson

“Even though we didn't win, we were still able to bring together over 9,000 people in the riding during this campaign,” said Drew, a Self-Manager living in Loyalist. He credits having “an amazing support system” in helping him throughout his campaign. “My amazing caregivers (PSWs and nurses) and my dedicated campaign team and all the volunteers that helped out in one way or another. I also would not have been able to do this without the amazing support of my family and friends.” He said he plans to run for local council in his township.

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?



All of the pictures you see in this newsletter are of or 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.

Testimonials



**Amy Adair,
Self-Manager, Sudbury**

I met the local Direct Funding Program coordinator at Value Village, who told me how I could become more independent by applying and studying for the eligibility interview for the program. I joined the Independent Living Sudbury Manitoulin centre and spent a summer working for them before getting my current job as an activities coordinator at a long-term care home.

I have now been a Self-Manager since June, 2021, and Direct Funding

has given me the independence and freedom to schedule my own care and decide who is going to provide that assistance; it works great for my work schedule, as I work days and afternoons. Recently, because of Direct Funding, I was able to move into my own space and set it up exactly the way I want.

Direct Funding has changed my life, and I encourage anyone who has a permanent physical disability to access this program. It will give you more independence, freedom to choose, and control over your life!

“
Direct Funding has given me independence and freedom.”



**Jayme Lunt
Self-Manager, Innisfil**

Jayme Lunt has a tower garden in her house that allows her to enjoy accessible gardening. She used to love gardening outdoors when she was able to, but now the tower garden, a gift from her husband, has allowed her to enjoy gardening in a way that is accessible to her.

Being a Direct Funding Program participant allows her the freedom to cultivate wellness in a way that works for her. Jayme gets to garden safely and even enjoy the fruits of her labour, literally!

“
Jayme has the freedom to cultivate wellness that works for her.”



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