News Release

**Centre for Independent Living in Toronto welcomes new Executive Director**

The Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT) welcomes Wendy Porch to her new role as CILT’s Executive Director, effective Oct. 15, 2018.

Sandra Carpenter, CILT’s current Executive Director since 2006, will assume the role as Advisor to the Executive Director until her retirement in early 2019.

CILT’s board president, Meghan Hines, notes that although Ms. Porch may have “pretty big shoes to fill, the board has every confidence she can do that.”

Ms. Porch has been working in the field of accessibility, disability, human rights, and education for more than 20 years and is a life-long disability justice advocate. Most recently, Ms. Porch was the Manager of Episodic Disabilities Initiatives at Realize in Toronto, where she managed Realize's many initiatives related to supporting the employment and income security of people living with HIV and other episodic disabilities. She also chaired the national Episodic Disabilities Forum, a partnership of more than 25 national episodic disability organizations and stakeholders.

Before joining Realize in 2011, Ms. Porch was a research fellow in the Accessibility in Educational Media group at the Institute of Educational Technology at the Open University in the UK. Prior to this, she worked in Research and Development at the Adaptive Technology Resource Centre at the University of Toronto.

Ms. Porch began her career at ARCH Disability Law Centre and then at InfoAbility, an information and referral service for vulnerable adults in Ontario. She was also a community facilitator for the Building Bridges Project, part of the Body Image Project at Women's College Hospital, working primarily with women with disabilities and facial differences. She has an M.Ed. in Counselling Psychology from the University of Toronto; she is a member of the City of Toronto’s Accessibility Advisory Committee and chairs its Employment Working Group and she also volunteers with the AODA Alliance.

In her spare time, Ms. Porch reports she is “a Lego master builder alongside my 5-year-old son, Jasper, and my husband, Alex.” Ms. Hines observes, “We do believe that this skill will serve CILT particularly well! As our current ED has often said over the years, ‘My name is Carpenter, and I build things.’ CILT is all about building new attitudes, programs, approaches, collaborations and partnerships that best exemplify the principles of independent living.”

Ms. Porch adds she is thrilled to accept the role of Executive Director at CILT and she ‘feels lucky to be joining such a passionate and accomplished team!’

- 30 -

*Run for persons with a disability by persons with a disability, CILT is a consumer-controlled, community-based resource organization. Its mandate is to help people with disabilities to learn Independent Living skills and integrate into the community. (Please note: CILT is a resource agency and does not do any political, systemic or group advocacy!) The centre operates on the philosophy of the Independent Living movement, which was developed in response to traditional rehabilitation services models. CILT’s aim is to develop and implement dignified social services that empower individuals rather than create dependencies. CILT encourages people with disabilities to take control of their own lives by exercising their right to examine options, make choices, take risks and even make mistakes.*

*CILT is accredited by*[*Independent Living Canada.*](http://www.ilcanada.ca/)*CILT is one of 25 members of IL Canada and one of 12 members of the Ontario Network of Independent Living Centres.*

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