



ANNUAL REPORT

2017-18



President and Chair

Meghan Hines



Meghan Hines

Once again, I feel honoured to work with CILT board members and staff who have a keen commitment to our issues and programs. They have diligently applied Independent Living (IL) principles to all decisions and program operations. Collaboratively, the board and staff work together to ensure we continue to grow, mature and respond to the ever-changing economic and political climate.

As of this writing we have a new government in place for Ontario but we are very confident that the programs, services and activities of CILT will continue to be supported. We continue to be invited by news media, government, other partners and people from other countries to speak about disability issues and educate about our unique IL perspectives and successes.

We strive to continue to create new and meaningful alliances with others to avoid both duplicating services and to build capacity among like-minded groups to work on common areas of concern.

In memory

Vic Willi, former executive director of CILT, died in 2017. At a memorial for him last March we pledged to establish the Vic Willi Legacy Fund. Over the last year we have been working diligently to develop criteria and get board and family approvals for this fund. We would like to officially launch this fund at the 2018 AGM.



"Nobody in the world, nobody in history, has ever gotten their freedom by appealing to the moral sense of people who are oppressing them."

— Assata Shakur, *Assata: An Autobiography*

Vic was at CILT's helm from 1989 - 2006. He was a friend, colleague, mentor, leader, teacher, and IL sage to many. One highlight of his years at CILT was the administration of the first weekly television show in Canadian history. This show, originally known as The Disability Network (DNet), was a significant part of his legacy and promoted quality living with a disability. CILT is in the process of archiving and cataloging all 84 DNet shows. A link to these shows will be available on our website, www.cilt.ca

Vic's track record is enough to make anyone proud. The IL philosophy was front and centre at all times, making his work all the more valuable to the consumer community. The qualities he best exemplified were respect, dignity and support. He was a true leader in the IL movement and we hope the Legacy Fund will inspire younger disability leaders to continue in his footprints.

The fund has been kickstarted by raising more than \$3,000 to date. And now it is up to you, CILT members, associates and friends, to contribute to this fund so that in each of the coming 10 years it can be higher!

Helen Henderson was our board chair until 2016 when she died. To celebrate Helen's legacy and great work over the years, we created the Helen Henderson Literary Award. The winner of this year's award is announced elsewhere in this report. The Award is given to an outstanding piece of writing related to raising public awareness of a disability issue or barrier.

Award winner

I'd also like to announce Cathy Samuelson, our former treasurer, as recipient of this year's Founders' Award. More on Cathy can be found later in this report.

Goodbye

This year is bitter-sweet for CILT: we also say goodbye to our executive director and fearless leader Sandra Carpenter, since she has decided to enjoy a very well-deserved retirement. Sandra has been a pioneer of the IL movement since a very young age. She is a founder of CILT and was its first executive director when it gained independence from the then-Community Occupational Therapy Association in 1986. After roles within government and various Independent Living organizations between 1989 and 2000, Sandra returned to CILT and became executive director in 2006.

We want to sincerely thank Sandra for all she has done for CILT. Her leadership, insight and perspective have helped CILT achieve everything it has to date. As board member Warner Clarke has remarked on a number of occasions, CILT's original provincial subsidy was very small – less than \$30,000 for sure and possibly less than \$20,000. In an era when “directing your own services” was considered a new concept, CILT, under Sandra's leadership, was already demonstrating that having consumer-run services was going to be the model for the future. More recently,

Sandra's leadership has ensured that CILT's participation is sought at many planning tables and its perspective is wholly welcomed.

New Executive Director

No doubt we have big shoes to fill. However, after searching several months with the assistance of Boyden Executive Search firm, we are excited to announce the appointment of Wendy Porch as CILT's new executive director. Wendy brings more than 20 years of experience within the disability sector, most recently as Manager (of) Episodic Disabilities Initiatives at Realize. She is a member of municipal, provincial and federal accessibility committees and holds a Masters of Education in Counselling Psychology from OISE/UofT. Wendy has an impressive track record of scholarly publications, lectures and presentations on topics including disability and difference, assistive technology, universal design and disability, workplace accessibility and accommodation, women with disabilities, episodic disabilities and intersectionality and disability.

To help ensure a smooth transition, Sandra will assume the role of advisor to the executive director, effective October 15 until her retirement in early 2019.

Board members

The list of our Board members includes myself as chair, Don Barrie as vice chair, Victor Gascon as treasurer, Warner Clark as secretary, Rod loi, Julia Gonsalves, Jacques LeBlanc, Neil Mercer, Fady Shanouda, David Demchuk, Michele Gardner and Maayan Ziv. Please join us in thanking everyone for their time and expertise.

This year we regrettably say goodbye to board members Victor Gascon, who has completed

all three of his two-year terms; Michele Gardner and Ayesha Zubair who will be greatly missed (Ayesha was replaced by interim appointment Jacques LeBlanc). We thank them all for their dedication and commitment to the governing body of this organization.

Thank you

This is our opportunity to formally acknowledge and thank all our hard working staff and volunteers for all their contributions over the last year. We couldn't do what we do, without them. Please join me in thanking them for all their hard work over the past year or in some cases, years!

We also want to thank our funders, without whose generous support we would not be able to address any community and member needs. Our primary funders are Independent Living Canada, the City of Toronto, the United Way Greater Toronto, and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

A good report

It goes without saying that we continued to actively review and approve all necessary reports, applications and proposals as required by our various funders and, as you can see from the Treasurer's report, we were able to continue our work and come out with a balanced budget.

CILT is a member organization. We offer services and support to anyone with a disability in the Toronto area; in Ontario for DF. It is you, the voting members of CILT, who make this all possible and inform the work we do. Thanks once again, to all!

It has been our privilege to serve our membership over the last year.

Executive Director

Sandra Carpenter

Unless something completely unforeseen happens, this will be my last Annual Report. So, you will forgive me if I'm having a hard time looking forward while also looking back!

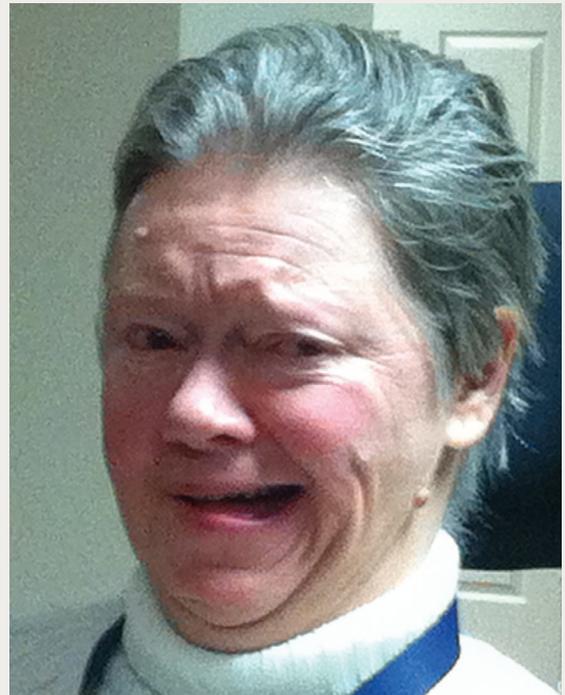
When I was born in Ottawa in the 1950s, children with disabilities were either kept at home with their parents or sent to live in a state or charitably-run "home."

Although I was born with my disability, I wasn't actually diagnosed until I was three years old, after being subjected to many, somewhat painful tests at a charitable hospital in Montreal, where I was able to receive diagnostic testing that my family could not otherwise afford. In the '50s Medicare did not yet exist. We now have Medicare or in Ontario, OHIP. In that way we have come pretty far.

I went to a "regular" school at first. My family had to fight to have them let me in. I remember Mom saying, "If you weren't 'crippled,' they would arrest us for not sending you to school!"

After experiencing ongoing difficulties at the "regular school" with getting supports I needed, such as accessible transportation and washroom assistance, I was sent to the "Crippled Children's School." After a couple of years of attending there, I was deemed ineligible for this "special program" because my disability didn't "improve with therapy."

So, there I was: the regular school wouldn't let me in, and neither would the segregated



Sandra Carpenter



"I was inspired by older kids with disabilities who were both going on to university and then acquiring jobs."

school. The only recourse was home teaching, which was paid for by the board of education. Today, that approach would be considered a violation under our human rights codes. We have come pretty far in that way, too.

My family was starting to panic about what was becoming an increasingly isolated and under-stimulated life. My younger sister had the same disability as me, and our parents worried about a future where neither of us would have the education to get into high school or university, which would prevent us from getting jobs.

When the visiting nurse from Easter Seals came by for her regular visits with my mother, she suggested that sending us to a "residential school" in Toronto for disabled kids was a solution. It seemed like the best option for us and that was how it was presented to us. It was a "boarding school," and kids went away to boarding school all the time. And so by 1965, just shy of my 11th birthday, I went to live in Toronto at Bloorview, which was billed at the time as Bloorview Hospital Home and School.

(Ironically, I can look out my office window on Bloor Street East and see, 500 metres away, a condo that sits on the old on Bloorview site where we lived. But I digress.)

My father lived in Toronto then (my home was in Ottawa, remember) and so he came up to pick me up and drive me to the "big city." I still remember the four-hour ride to Toronto (it was usually more than five hours but Dad drove fast), Dad trying to get me to talk, me

with such a huge lump in my throat that I could not.

When we arrived, Dad carried me into the lobby of the old Victorian home and sat me down in a big green faux leather-upholstered chair. I looked up. Opposite me was a plaque that read, "Home for Incurable Children." I could not resolve the message on that plaque with the place where I thought I was going, which was to a boarding school. Something was not right. Some terrible mistake had been made.

Over the next few weeks as I absorbed (or in their words "adjusted to") my new reality, I realized that where I had come to live was not a boarding school at all. I did not automatically return home between terms, most notably for summer holidays. I was not allowed more than three weeks at home in the summer, one week at Christmas and one week at Easter. One weekend a month. No boarding school had rules like that.

Only about four hours a day were actually spent in school. The rest was spent in "therapy," organized recreation or communal dining. My parents weren't even supposed to come and see me for the first few months in case they undermined my so-called adjustment, but I remember Dad coming every week anyway and as soon as he could, he took me out on weekends.

Eight months later my younger sister arrived. The fact that she was there forced me to keep up appearances and make things at Bloorview

better for her. At some point I realized that the only way to make things better for her was to make things better for all the kids there. I credit this awareness for my lifelong – if at times somewhat disheartened – dedication to disability activism.

One day when I was about 17, a group of us went to a sheltered workshop in the city. Sheltered workshops are being phased out, but were places where people with disabilities went to work sorting nuts and bolts or performing other menial tasks on a piecework basis. They were careful, even then, never to let the workers make more than the allowed amount so their government disability allowance wouldn't be cut off.

The staff were pretty proud of the place, and in particular of the loom room. Working the looms was an advancement of sorts because there were so few spots and there was a long wait to get one. "This," some proud custodian said, "is where you will work one day." I actually couldn't believe that this was all they expected me to achieve. I resolved then that no matter what, I wouldn't end up in a sheltered workshop (sheltered from what, I wondered?), sorting nuts and bolts for a few dollars a month.

This made me determined to have a life in the community rather than to go to another institution when I was too old for Bloorview, which had an age limit of 18. I was inspired by older kids with disabilities who were both going on to university and then acquiring jobs. The fact that these kids were not like me, in that they did not need any help with ordinary activities of daily living, was irrelevant to me. After all, I reasoned, one didn't need a nursing degree to put on someone's socks. I saw that kind of help as an extension of the type that any parent gave to children until they learned how to do up their own buttons, zippers and laces – definitely not medical.

In 1982, CILT was born and, along with

Cheshire Homes, began its work to convince others that there are cost-efficient alternatives to institutional living.

Fast forward to 2018

Although there are growing examples of how the medical model is changing, one of the most challenging assumptions within institutions and society is the pervasive belief that disability is a pathology to be wiped out. Examples of this are numerous – genetic counselling, immigration policy, and most recently Medical Assistance in Dying.

People with disabilities aren't sick, deficient, dependent or an incredible burden to their loved ones or society. We don't necessarily require expensive care by health professionals who tend to work within authority-driven, risk-averse systems. For those of us who are disabled (not sick) and yet require assistance with routine activities of daily living (e.g. dressing, transferring, shopping, errands, meal preparation), such deficiency-based assumptions continue to present a problem.

The Independent Living (IL) movement has developed its own unique identity in response to the traditional rehabilitation or institutional models. The IL philosophy recognizes that the problem does not reside with the individual, but in barriers created by well-meaning systems. IL philosophy recognizes that people with disabilities can and do take action in our own lives and that we have the right to do so. IL is a self-empowerment, self-help model that leads to a new kind of social and political power. Supported by this philosophy, I am proud of who I am and not apologetic about my disability. That is the strength of IL, and so I'd like to say that we have come far in that way, but many problems remain for people with disabilities in our society.

In 2018, CILT's 35th year of operation, certain

social problems remain chronic, and in some cases have gotten worse:

Unemployment: This has long been a problem for people with disabilities and has now spread to youth, with dire consequences.

Student debt: Those graduating from university or colleges now have huge debt burdens.

Poverty: This has always been a problem for people with disabilities, intersecting with mental health difficulties and addiction, but the problem has intensified and spread to many of us in – as some would say – the 99%.

Transportation: A lack of access to public transportation persists for people with disabilities, and transportation costs have risen.

Food security: The increased cost of food means that people can't eat what they need to stay healthy.

Housing: Long a problem for people with disabilities, the scarcity of accessible, low-cost housing also impacts seniors, students, immigrant and refugee families. Low wage earners, including many workers who support seniors and people with disability to age in place with dignity are also facing this problem.

Social isolation and alienation: All of these chronic and growing issues give rise to social isolation and alienation, again with dire consequences.

Now what?

We don't have the whole answer yet, but it in part has to do with moral and ethical leadership; active listening; sound analysis of what our community needs are and how best to address them; thinking outside the box without jumping into someone else's.

CILT recently renewed its Strategic Plan for the next seven years. The plan, led by the CILT Board, is at a high-level and is focused on policy. Operational implementation will be left to the new ED, who is introduced on page 10 of this report. I should also note that this document will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis by the Board in recognition that things change mightily fast these days.

Acknowledgements

This is an opportunity to acknowledge and thank all our hard-working staff and volunteers for all their contributions over the last year. Staff and board profiles and pictures are included in this report.

I want to thank the CILT Board for all its support to me over this last year.

Specifically, I want to thank Meghan, our Board President, for her steadfast leadership and thoughtful advice over the last year; Ayesha, until recently our Vice Chair; and Warner Clarke, our Secretary, all of whom have been indispensable to me. Almost everyone deserves some kind of honorable mention. We have a very talented and hardworking board.

CILT programs have also been very busy over the year.

The backbone of CILT are what we call the Core Programs: these are programs you will find in every Independent Living Centre in Canada. Our core team, includes John Mossa, Andrea Rae, Denise Emile, Melanie Marsden and Robin Simmons. This team was recently joined by David Meyers.

Melanie unfortunately left our staff April 1st, 2018, but still works with our team and community in her role at Springtide. I would like to formally thank her for all her

contributions over the years, but recognize that this does not really do her justice.

David Meyers also oversees the Attendant Service Application Centre (ASAC). The second A in ASAC should actually stand for 'Action'. They are also responsible for co-ordinating the Student Attendant Service Fund, the Attendant Service Contingency Fund, participating in the development of a new collaborative approach to applying for Supportive Housing in Attendant Services, similar to what now exists on the Outreach Attendant Services side. They also supported the emergence of a new model for Attendant Services called Mobile Attendant Services.

The team, led by Rolita Siu as Manager, also includes Zdravka Gueorguieva, Kathleen Odell and was recently joined by Adina Ilina. Join me in thanking this extremely hardworking group.

I also want to formally acknowledge the Direct Funding (DF) team and its extraordinary dedication over the last year. Led by Leisa DeBono, Manager, the team includes Leanne Larmondin, Peter Judge, Abdullah Duranai, Katherine Janicki, Melissa Graham, Marisa Falzone, Hadeel Dajani, John Tam, Danielle Vinciguerra, Melissa Azore, Elisabeth Harrison and Samantha Walsh. Ian Parker also played a key leadership and policy role in this program until his retirement on April 1, 2018.

For the first time in more than three years, this program was not expanded for 2018/19, however it is well on its target for the active number of Self-Managers (just under 1,000).

DF is highly treasured by many program participants as the following testimonial exemplifies. Linda, a 56-year-old program participant who lives on an island near Smooth Rock Falls in northern Ontario, had a significant MS exacerbation in 2016; after spending several months in hospital and rehab, she returned home with Direct Funding. Her attendant snowmobiles across the ice to

her home in the winter and boats across in the summer. Linda wrote recently, "I am now able to stay in my own home and enjoy the pleasures of an island life ... This also has benefits for my husband, who had been my only helper. The Direct Funding assistance now allows him to leave the island and do many errands for him and me without the constant worry about me being alone."

This program is the realization of all Independent Living principles and as the preceding testimonial illustrates, makes a real and significant difference in many, many lives.

I also want to make special mention of the people who work in the office daily as support attendants. Margaret Githuku, Melissa Haigler, Joyce Leung, Louis George, and on occasion Heather Tzogas, Omega Ursais, Mary Belcourt and others. Without them, many of us, myself included, could not do our work.

Our amazing office volunteers have included Taryn Allen, Miriam Chong, Susan DeLaurier, Mary Henderson, Luigi Lisciandro, Alnoor Nanji, Suzette Yearwood, Leroy Ennis and Tara Nolan. Without them, we couldn't do what we do. Please join me in thanking them for all their hard work over the past year or in some cases, years!

I also want to thank our funders without whose generous support we would not be able to address any community and member needs. Our primary funders are the City of Toronto, the United Way of Toronto and York Region, and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. CILT also receives a grant from Independent Living Canada.

CILT is a member organization and yet we offer services and support to anyone with a disability in the Toronto area. It is you, the voting members of CILT which make this possible and inform the work we do. Thanks once again, to all!

Meet the New Executive Director



Wendy is thrilled to accept the role of Executive Director at CILT and feels lucky to be joining such a passionate and accomplished team!

Wendy 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, Wendy 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. Wendy also chaired the national Episodic Disabilities Forum, a partnership of more than 25 national episodic disability organizations and stakeholders.

Before joining Realize in 2011, Wendy was a Research Fellow in the Accessibility in Educational Media group at the Institute of Educational Technology at the Open University in the United Kingdom. Prior to this, she worked in research and development at the Adaptive Technology Resource Centre at the University of Toronto.

Wendy 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. Wendy has an M Ed. in Counselling Psychology from the University of Toronto.

Wendy is a member of the City of Toronto's Accessibility Advisory Committee and chairs its Employment Working Group. Wendy also volunteers with the AODA Alliance. In her spare time, Wendy is a Lego master builder alongside her 5-year-old son Jasper and her husband Alex.

Treasurer's Report

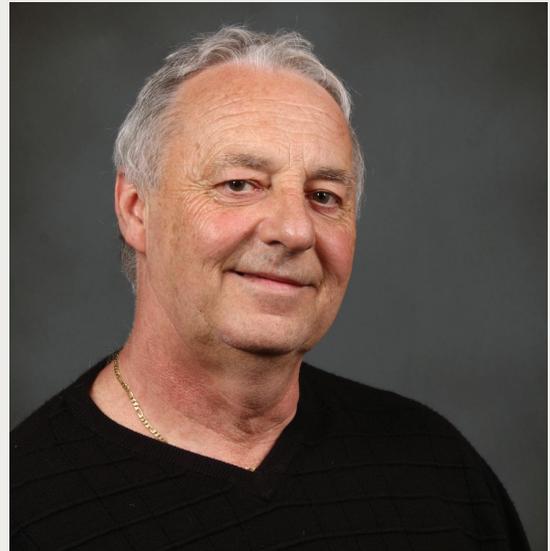
Victor Gascon

A condensed version of CILT's financial statements for the year ended March 31, 2018, is included in this annual report. A complete version is available on request. The statements were audited by Berman, Lofchick & Lum, LLP Chartered Accountants. As usual, CILT received a "clean" report from its auditors.

The Statement of Financial Position (the top part of the condensed statement) shows CILT's assets and liabilities as of March 31st. This statement is organized to report the funds belonging to the Personal Support Workers (PSW) Training project separately from CILT's core operations and our Direct Funding program. The PSW program is a "flow-through" or "paymaster" program which CILT operates (for an administrative fee) on behalf of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. CILT's net assets and reserves relate to our core operations and Direct Funding program only; the PSW and special projects do not generate any net assets or reserves for CILT. The total net assets and reserves of \$438,514 are unchanged since the end of fiscal year 2013-14.

The statements of operations (the lower part of the statement) also reports the PSW and special projects in separate columns and goes one step further and reports the Direct Funding program separately from our core operations.

The PSW Training project (4th column) was operated with a grant from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care of \$1,430,841.



Victor Gascon

Under the agreement with the Ministry, the \$82,000 administrative expense of this program was retained by CILT and became a revenue for our core operations. The amounts not spent by the participating agencies are being returned to the Ministry.

Similarly, the Special Projects (3rd column) were operated with 2 grants from Toronto Central LHIN totaling \$468,000 which were all expensed in purchased services during the fiscal year.

The 2nd column shows the results of the Direct Funding Program. Program revenues and expenses last year were over \$45 million. Most of the expenses were amounts paid to Self-Managers and other Independent Living Centres (\$44 million) The rest of the funds went to cover the DF operational costs and a recovery for administration salaries and expenses was transferred to CILT core operations (approx. \$240,000) The funds to be returned consist of various small surpluses on operational cost lines.

The 1st column shows the results of CILT's core operations – networking, peer support, skills training and other service programs.

Revenues for these core activities came from the Toronto Central LHIN, the United Way of Greater Toronto, Independent Living Canada, the City of Toronto and various self-generated and recovery amounts. Revenues and expenses totaled just over \$1.3 million last year, a small increase over the previous year. Most of the expenses (92%) went to personnel, administration and program-purchased services and building occupancy.

The total revenues and expenses for the Core operations matched exactly. Current funding agreements require CILT to have an annual balanced budget. So, any excess self-generated income is deferred for spending in future years. This balanced budget requirement may effectively limit CILT's ability to increase its reserves in future years beyond the \$438,514 reported above.

I would like to acknowledge the excellent work done by Sylvia Draper-Fernandez of PAS Accounting Services in the day-to-day accounting and the preparation of CILT's financial statements and by Executive Director Sandra Carpenter and Operations Manager Jamie Wong, in their management of CILT's financial resources.



*CILT received a "clean" report
from its auditors.*

CILT Condensed Financial Statements

CENTRE FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING IN TORONTO (C.I.L.T.) INC.

Condensed Version of Audited Financial Report – March 31, 2018

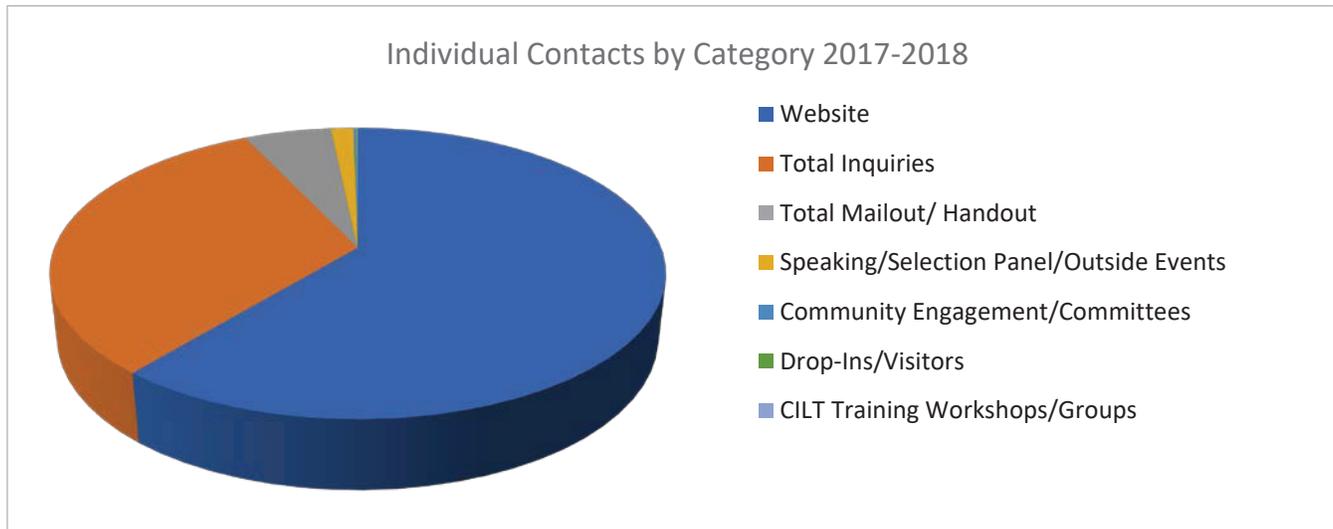
Statement of Financial Position

	Core & Direct Funding	PSW Funds	Total 2017-18	Total 2016-17
ASSETS:				
Current Assets	12,770,782	202,964	12,973,746	13,832,878
Capital Assets	142,292	-	142,292	136,746
Total Assets	12,913,074	202,964	13,116,038	13,969,624
LIABILITIES \ NET ASSETS:				
Current Liabilities	12,474,560	202,964	12,677,524	13,531,100
Net Assets \Reserves	438,514	-	438,514	438,514
Total Liabilities \Reserves	12,913,074	202,964	13,116,038	13,969,614

Statement of Operations (Consolidated)

	Core	Direct Funding	Special Projects	PSW Funds	Total 2017-18	Total 2016-17
REVENUES:						
Min. Of Health Grants	552,860	45,467,015	468,000	1,430,841	47,918,716	46,553,065
Self-Generated Income \ Other	545,002	237,132	-	-	782,134	529,364
United Way - Membership Alloc	184,956	-	-	-	184,956	184,957
City of Toronto Grants	24,045	-	-	-	24,045	23,570
LHIN's (formally CCAC)	-	251,108	-	-	251,108	206,500
Total Revenues	1,306,863	45,955,255	468,000	1,430,841	49,160,959	47,497,456
EXPENSES						
Payments to Participants/other centres	-	44,139,410	-	1,145,877	45,285,287	40,921,380
Personnel	909,011	1,125,284	-	-	2,034,295	1,643,785
Purchased Services	214,902	103,736	468,000	-	786,638	880,182
Administrative Expenses	48,546	304,169	-	82,000	434,715	476,523
Program Expenses	27,534	53,762	-	-	81,296	347,232
Building Occupancy	83,642	170,394	-	-	254,036	239,247
Staff\ Board Expenses	17,998	27,192	-	-	45,190	35,579
Amortization of Capital Assets	5,230	-	-	-	5,230	-
Total Expenses	1,306,863	45,923,947	468,000	1,227,877	48,926,687	44,543,928
Unspent Funds to be Returned to the Ministry	-	(31,308)	-	(202,964)	(234,272)	(2,953,528)
Excess of Revenue over Expenses	-	-	-	-	-	-

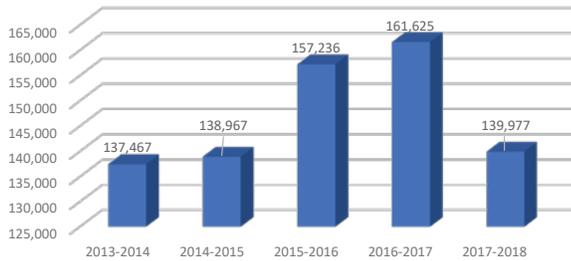
CILT Statistics April 1, 2017 – March 31, 2018



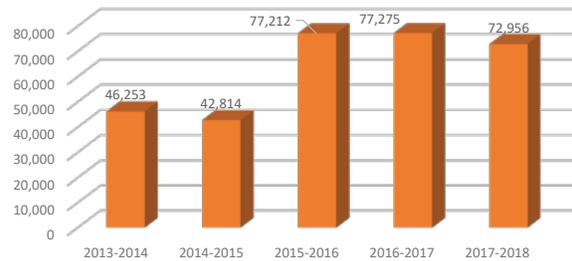
Category	Contacts	%	Units of Service	%
Website	139,977	61.05%	307,268	72.25%
Total Inquiries	72,956	31.82%	89,641	21.08%
Total Mailout/ Handout	12,425	5.42%	18,510	4.35%
Speaking/Selection Panel/Outside Events	3,202	1.40%	7,399	1.74%
Community Engagement/Committees	275	0.12%	908	0.21%
Drop-Ins/Visitors	168	0.07%	287	0.07%
CILT Training Workshops/Groups Total	151	0.07%	296	0.07%
Volunteers	82	0.04%	807	0.19%
Board Meetings/Committees	63	0.03%	191	0.04%
Total	229,299	100.00%	425,307	100.00%

CLIT Statistics April 1, 2017 – March 31, 2018

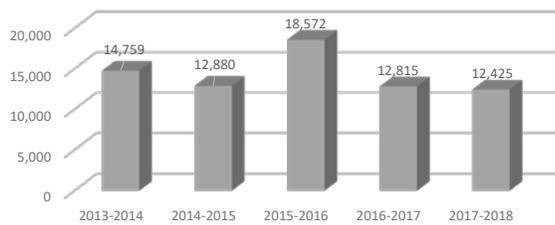
Website (# of homepage contacts)



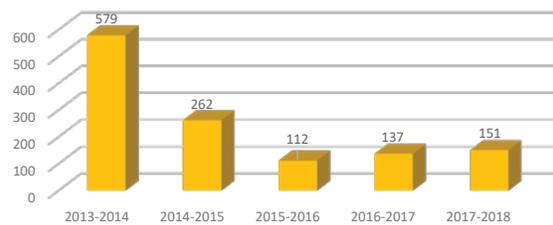
Total Inquiries (# of calls)



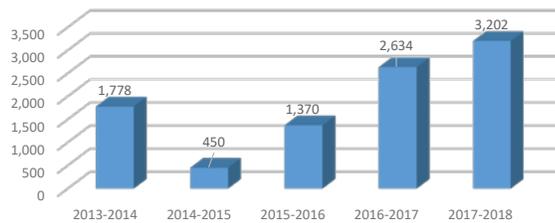
Total Mailout/ Handout (# of packages or mailings)



CLIT Training Workshops/ Groups (# of persons attending)



Speaking/ Selection Panel/ Outside Events (# of persons served)



Drop-Ins/Visitors



Operational Update

Jamie Wong, Operations Manager



Jamie Wong

Looking Forward

We continue to work within our means while consulting external expertise in human resources and information technology support. We will also embrace the latest technology in improving our efficiency and effectiveness in our day-to-day operations, specifically in maintaining members and program records and in communicating and sharing data securely with our members, community partners in Toronto and other independent living centres across Ontario.

Major Updates

2017-18 was a year of significant change in terms of operational structure. Two part-time staff positions were eliminated in early 2018 due to the launch of our new website and a cut in United Way funding. Tasks were reallocated to the rest of the team, and new positions were created to align with organization needs.

Adriana Gutierrez took the position of Operations Assistant to shadow HR and IT support for the expanding organization after her contract with CILT as receptionist ended. She also handles the PSW Training Fund and supports various online and social-media initiatives. Adriana always goes above and beyond what is expected of her, and she can always find a solution to all issues that she encounters.

Nadine Azore was hired as our new receptionist, and after probation she took the new position of customer service representative, which emphasizes customer service to both internal staff and external parties. Nadine is very dependable, accurate and thorough with her work. She always asks sensible questions and thinks two steps ahead.

Both Adriana and Nadine have become key pillars in Operations, and I am thrilled to have them on my team.

Two interns, Safia Fakim and Pascale Young, were hired in the summer of 2017. Safia



"...we have learned to prioritize, optimize and streamline processes..."

handled DF administrative matters, processed PSW Training Fund training proposals, and answered funding inquiries. Pascale was trained to work as the receptionist, provided administrative support and maintenance support on the IT infrastructure.

Because of the reduced resources, we have learned to prioritize, optimize and streamline processes to meet the expanding administrative and operational needs of the organization.

Other Operational Updates

- The CILT website was revamped and launched in December, 2017. Website accessibility was improved in compliance with the AODA communication standards. Google Analytics is used to capture web statistics.
- There was an expansion in the scope of the PSW Training Fund to two Local Health Integration Network areas in 2017-18. The fund was outreached to more than 80 agencies, resulting in a 41% increase in administrative recovery to \$82,000. We made use of Survey Monkey in efficiently obtaining and analyzing survey results from all participating agencies.
- 4 new fire wardens and 2 new Joint Health and Safety Committee members (JHSC) dedicated their time in these important roles in 2017-18. Office emergency supplies and persons requiring assistance listings were reviewed

and updated. SharePoint in Office 365 is utilized to share information amongst JHSC members.

- Office ergonomic training was conducted; ergonomics of all workstations were accessed and modified. Height-adjustable desks, chairs, and accessories were purchased to accommodate the accessibility and ergonomic needs of the staff.
- A will and estate planning training session was facilitated to all staff by RBC, our group RRSP banker, and a legal firm.
- HR policy was reviewed, pending legal input and board finalization, to align with the new Bill 148 Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act, 2017.

Key Figures

- Statistical highlights for 2017-2018 (pp. 14-15 in this report):
 - The CILT website had a total of 307,268 page hits;
 - 72,956 inquiries were received and answered;
 - 18,510 pieces of information were mailed/handed out;
 - 3,202 individuals were served in our speaking/selection panels/events;
 - Our volunteers provided 807 hours of service; and
 - 168 drop-ins/visits to the CILT office were made. The number is slightly reduced compared to previous year due to the renovation of the common area in the last quarter of 2017-18.

Helen Henderson Literary Award



Connie Economopoulos

The Helen Henderson Award is presented annually. Helen was a writer and journalist; after being diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in the 1970s, she began writing a pioneering column in the Toronto Star—a mixture of information and advocacy—that brought issues faced by disabled people into mainstream conversation. Helen passed away in April of 2015, in a year when she was president of the Board of CILT.

For more information, please see www.cilt.ca/about-us/helen-henderson-award/

The recipient of the 2018 Helen Henderson Literary Award is Connie Economopoulos, for her article, “Learning about the Ontario Direct Funding Program for People with Disabilities.” The article was published on the website www.enables.me, which describes itself as a source for accessibility stories, experiences and news.

The award is presented to a CILT member, or an ally recommended by a CILT member, who produced an outstanding piece of writing related to raising public awareness of a disability issue or barrier. Award recipients receive a Lifetime Membership at CILT and a cash prize.

In her award submission, Connie wrote that while the article was written a few years ago, it is “still very relevant to consumers of attendant services and people with disabilities wishing to live independently. Direct Funding and the self-management philosophy of personal care emphasizes control and flexibility over one’s personal care which is vital to people with disabilities like myself. You have control over who works for you and how their duties are performed as well as daily flexibility of what needs to be done, when and how.”

“Being such an experienced self-manager for so many years I can confidently speak of the benefits of Direct Funding and how they outweigh the risks. Furthermore, having a significant disability myself, one which requires the use of additional adaptive equipment and attendant skill and knowledge I am further confident this article can be addressed to any person with a disability.”

2017–2018 Founders’ Award Recipient: Cathy Samuelson

by Sandra Carpenter



Cathy Samuelson

The Founders’ Award was established on CILT’s 10th Anniversary in 1995 to recognize the significant contribution of individuals who both exemplify and have advanced Independent Living (IL) philosophy in the spirit of its founders.

The 2018 Founders’ Award goes to Cathy Samuelson, currently the Executive Director of North Yorkers for Disabled Persons (NYDPs) and former board member including as Treasurer of CILT.

Cathy started work in attendant services in 1983 in London, Ont. She was an attendant at Cheshire London for a few years, while she attended the University of Western Ontario. She moved to Toronto in 1987 to start graduate studies at the University of Toronto and by October of that same year, started work at North Yorkers for Disabled Persons. North Yorkers is a supportive housing provider that assists non-speaking individuals to live independently. Through her work there, she developed a passion to support augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) users through facilitation support to access the services and supports they require. She worked in a number of roles, eventually becoming the executive director of North Yorkers in 2007.

In her role as ED, she has worked effectively to incorporate and bring focus to issues that impact AAC users. She has worked as co-chair

of the Abuse Prevention working group, Strive and Communication Support Working group, and is also on the Board of Directors of the Ontario Association of Independent Living Service Providers. She is also proud to have sat on the CILT Board as both a director and treasurer for six years.

North Yorkers strives to assist non-speaking people – whether they reside at North Yorkers or elsewhere – to participate in the community of their choice and access the supports they need to foster a sense of inclusion and independence, which is the epitome of the IL philosophy.

Although I can’t quite remember when I first met Cathy, she has always been an advocate and ally for the non-speaking consumers she works for and is consistent with her gentle reminders to us about how best to include the “voice” of this group. The views of this group are not “heard” unless you make a special effort to acquire them.

I have learned so much from this woman over the years. Even things as simple as the most appropriate language to use when referring to non-speaking people. She has also been highly effective in training and supporting North Yorkers staff, avoiding labour strife since her tenure as ED. Additionally she is a key player on the Personal Support Worker Training Fund Committee and the Provincial Advisory Committee to the Direct Funding Program. The CILT Board unanimously decided she was the best candidate for the award this year!

Vic Willi Legacy Fund



Vic Willi

You may contribute to the Vic Willi Legacy Fund via the “Donate Now” button at

www.cilt.ca

or by mail to:

**Centre for Independent Living in Toronto
365 Bloor Street East, Suite 902
Toronto, Ontario, M4W 3L4.**

Please specify that your donation is directed to the Vic Willi Legacy Fund. Charitable receipts will be issued for all donations.

Vic Willi was the executive director for the Centre for Independent Living in Toronto from 1989 to 2006. During this time, his leadership has resulted in significant initiatives, such as the Self-Managed, Direct Funding attendant service program in Ontario. He, along with other disability leaders and allies, created and advocated with the government to establish this unique program that puts people with disabilities in control of their own services and their own lives. The Direct Funding Program challenges and counters the assumptions that disabled people are passive recipients of service and lack agency over their lives. Another important issue for Vic was bringing the younger generation into the disability community.

The Vic Willi Legacy Award is intended to honour Vic’s leadership and commitment to equity, diversity and social justice for people with disabilities. This award emphasizes these qualities of Vic and is for developing young adult disability leaders in Canada. People with disabilities and their allies have developed this award for the next generation of disability leaders.

2017–2018 Board Members



David Demchuk is the manager of employee communications for CBC, responsible for sharing the Corporation's strategies, successes, and challenges with some 4,000 English

Services employees. He has been with CBC's employee communications unit for 17 years, and with the public broadcaster for nearly 25 years. In addition, David is an award-winning playwright as well as screenwriter/filmmaker, fiction writer, critic and journalist. His work has been published in numerous anthologies and textbooks. He has been a staff writer for the online magazine *Torontoist*, and past contributor to the *Toronto Star*, *Toronto Life*, *Xtra!*, *What Magazine* and *Prairie Fire*, among others. His first novel, *The Bone Mother*, was published in 2017.

David has a relatively rare genetic disorder (1 in 100,000 people, most of them Asian) called Hypokalemic Periodic Paralysis, which disrupts the electrolytes, breaking the electrical contact between the nerves and the muscles. Triggered by diet, exercise or sleep/lack of sleep (and sometimes by nothing discernible), the condition itself is permanent but the effects are occasional and vary in degrees; he has been told to expect gradual irreversible myopathy throughout his 50s, 60s and onward. His disability is invisible until it's not, and he lives life prepared for the possibility that he will be disabled in the short-term – and the likelihood that he will be disabled in the long-term.



Donald Barrie, who has served on CILT's board since late 2014, was promoted to Vice-President in early 2018.

Donald has a background in journalism, web design and social media. He is a

graduate of Carleton University and Ryerson University's journalism school. Donald received his web design certification from Selkirk College.

Donald is a former resource co-ordinator at CILT who is an active member of the disability community. In 2013, Donald received a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal, in recognition of his contributions to LCA.

An active volunteer; he maintains a large network of contacts in the community. He also has memberships with CILT and the United States-based Osteogenesis Imperfecta Foundation.

Outside of CILT, Donald is a customer service representative for an online store called StickerYou. He also continues to do freelance writing. Donald Barrie's personal blog is at unbreakabledb.blogspot.ca.



Fady Shanouda Fady Shanouda is a PhD candidate at the University of Toronto at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health, in the Social and Behavioural Health Sciences division. His award-

winning research explores the consequences and benefits of disclosure in higher education for disabled students, including students with

multiple non-visible identities. He has worked on various national and local disability-specific projects, including projects focused on capturing the experiences and life narratives of Canadian polio survivors; exploring the complexities of aging with a disability; and, building leadership and engagement among youth in Toronto's disability community. In addition to his student and activist work, Fady is also committed to teaching. He is a course instructor at Ryerson University and the University of Toronto teaching Disability Studies and Mad Studies, respectively.



Jacques LeBlanc Born in Moncton, N.B. in 1958, I was raised in New York from 1958-1976. I moved back to Moncton in 1976, designed and sold three houses in area. I moved to Ottawa in 1978, entering the School of

Architecture at Carleton University.

A rare form of Spinal Muscular Atrophy known as Kugelberg-Wellander required me to use a wheelchair to maneuver around campus; I graduated in 1982 with a BSc in Urban Geography/Planning. Afterwards, I moved to Toronto to pursue post graduate studies at York University in Environmental Studies.

I worked in planning departments for all three levels of governments from 1983-86. I also joined forces with Larry Hodgson operating Direct Access Design, which transformed non-accessible public and private buildings.

Times became hard with monumental layoffs throughout the government.

In 1987, I made a career change and joined the *Toronto Star* sports department, which allowed me to be involved with a passion I had since childhood. I stayed with the Star until retirement.

I've also written for other publications reflecting travelling with a disability; i.e. *Readers Digest*, *Spyker* (Holland), *The Daily Observer* (Antigua and Barbuda), *The Times-Picayune* (New Orleans).

Now that I'm retired with time on my side, I would like to give back by helping CILT and its community moving forward. Last year I did a piece for CITY-TV on real estate and the disabled community and I was recently interviewed by a reporter for CTV National on the benefits of direct funding.



Julia Gonsalves is a Director of Operations at a multi-service neighbourhood centre in Toronto's west end. In their career so far, they have spent significant periods of time overseeing child and youth programs, LGBTQ programs

and homeless services. They recently completed a certificate in Fundraising Management at Ryerson. They are passionate about accessibility, especially where public spaces and community services are concerned. In their personal life, they are an enthusiastic parent and the proud owner of a new ukulele.



Maayan Ziv Maayan Ziv is an activist, photographer and entrepreneur. She is the founder of the app, Access Now, which is an interactive map that uses crowdsourcing to share accessibility information. Maayan is a

graduate of the masters of digital media program at Ryerson University and her goal is to bring awareness to disability matters. Maayan's work has been recognized with the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal.

Vision: To contribute to the achievement, social, and economic equity for people with disabilities.



Meghan Hines Meghan is entering the second year of her third term as a CILT board member and fifth year as chair. Upon graduating from the Honours Bachelor of Commerce program at McMaster University in 2014,

Meghan joined RBC's Talent Management COE as part of its Executive Recruitment team. She then moved on to work with the Thought Leadership team where part of her role was helping to manage the #RBCDisruptors speaker series. Meghan is currently a Human Resources Initiatives Manager.

While working with RBC, Meghan has been actively seeking ways to become involved in RBC's strategies for Persons with Disabilities, as well as other community initiatives. Meghan has been actively involved with various employee resource groups, including co-chair of REACH, which is aimed at supporting employees with disabilities and their allies. She has also had the opportunity to work with the Human Resources Diversity Leadership Council (DLC) as well as the National Office DLC, where she co-chairs the Persons with Disabilities work stream.

Meghan has been involved in the community from a very young age, beginning with the Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides, which has provided her with her three service dogs. She has also been active within her wheelchair hockey association. In 2012, Meghan's commitment to the community was recognized when she was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal.

Meghan has been a participant of the Direct Funding (DF) program since November 2011. DF has had such a significant positive impact on her independence and freedom that Meghan is eager to give back to CILT in any way she can. Her key objective is to work with CILT to ensure DF and other programs and services offered can continue to improve the lives of other individuals with disabilities.



Michele Gardner Michele received her Social Service Worker Diploma at Humber College in 1991 and a Bachelor of Social Work degree at Ryerson in 1998. Michele is a Registered Social Worker and works full

time as a Mental Health Case Manager in a non-profit organization that provides housing and support services for adults with mental health disabilities. In addition, she has been involved in social activism for disability rights and other marginalized communities for 29 years. Michele founded a support group called Single Parents with Disabilities on Facebook which has almost 300 members. Michele who was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy (Spastic) acquired at birth, had a son in 2003 and is a member of CILT's Parenting with a Disability Network and is on the Direct Funding program as a Self-Manager of her own attendant services. Michele is also a public speaker, actor and writer and has had numerous stories, poems, scripts and articles published and has been a guest in documentaries about disability and parenting with a disability. Michele currently serves on the Board of Directors of New Hibret Co-op and is president for Citizens with Disabilities Ontario, a union steward at her workplace and is a member of the Worker's with Disabilities Committee with CUPE Ontario.



Neil Mercer Neil is a graphic designer who works on a freelance / voluntary basis; some of his notable projects have been for Tobias House Attendant Care Inc., AYAAA a youth AIDS organization in Africa,

Spectra Talent Showcase and Action Sports Coalition, a youth sports organization.

Besides his artistic talents, Neil served nine years as a board member of Tobias House and three years on the board of Spectra / Rainbow

Association of Canadian Artists. He is also a successful event organizer with projects such as DreamsAway, in which a group of friends raised \$8,000 to provide attendant care while on a Caribbean cruise, a fundraiser for Tobias House, and the Sean Ross Memorial Summer Classic, an outdoor power wheelchair hockey game in memory of a friend.

Neil has dabbled in public speaking over the past few years, discussing his educational experiences as a disabled student to students in the teaching program at Queen's University. Recently Neil has been lending his support to Tecla, a hands-free assistive device giving people with upper-body mobility impairments the ability to access smart devices and technology; he assists by actively testing and appearing in promotional videos.

In what spare time he has, Neil is a goaltender in the Toronto Power Wheelchair Hockey League, as well a founding member of Equal Grounds, a social enterprise dedicated to creating opportunities for people of different abilities.

Rod Ioi Since Rod's retirement, most of his free time is centered around three activities: 1) visiting a friend who now lives in a long-term care facility; 2) spending time with "sponsees" who, like him, are members of the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous; and, 3) practising tai chi. He also spends time with his teenaged son Dexter, whom he home schools in two languages, Cantonese and Persian.

His latest (and longest) term of work was with the Ontario Human Rights Commission, where his most recent responsibilities involved mediating human rights complaints.



Victor Gascon is an experienced consultant on disability issues and has been an advocate for people with disabilities for more than 30 years. He is currently president of the board of directors for the Ontario Federation for Cerebral Palsy. Victor's experience includes being a personal support

worker, a literacy practitioner, executive director of a provincial native organization and teaching.

More than three decades years ago, Victor and his partner adopted a young boy with cerebral palsy (CP), who was living in a group home for children with CP. His son has been the driving force in his quest to inspire front-line workers to do their best with the hope of better services for all.



Warner Clarke's early work experience included serving as a Grade 2 teacher, working in a group home for youth and as a singer/guitarist. He attended the University of Toronto, then worked in the field of children's mental

health as a residential counselor. In 1982, after completing a Master of Social Work degree, he accepted a three-month contract with the Ministry of Community and Social Services as a vocational rehabilitation counselor. He later supervised some seniors' programs in Toronto and eventually took on a portfolio focusing on services for adults with physical disabilities in 1987.

Warner was working for the provincial government when it embarked on a review of the attendant service system that resulted in a significant research paper; that document provided direction to organizations providing services to persons with physical disabilities, but also laid groundwork for the establishment of the Direct Funding pilot project. Warner was a member of the implementation team.

Later, after serving in the corporate policy branch of the Ministry of Health, Warner worked from 2007 until his retirement in 2010, managing a small portfolio of provincially funded services, including the Direct Funding program.

Lately, he has been spending much of his time working with his musical projects; The Deloraines, the Wild Walker Band, The Lost Boys, and most recently, Willin' & Abel.

2017–2018 Staff



Abdullah Duranai

Provincial Support Co-ordinator
Direct Funding Program

I started working with the Direct Funding Program in October of 2011. I work with Self-Managers from all over the province on various

matters. The best part of my job is starting new applicants on the DF Program. Outside of work, I volunteer with a community not-for-profit organization assisting newcomers to Canada. I enjoy long walks with my wife and two teenage children. I also enjoy watching Bollywood movies. If I could be an animal, I would be a giraffe because they are tall, well groomed and handsome. They are graceful and move with confidence and elegance.



Adina Ilina

Program Support
Attendant Service Application Centre (ASAC)

Adina's background in clinical practice and human resources makes her a natural fit for the Program Support position with the Attendant

Service Application Centre (ASAC). Adina's main responsibilities include conducting orientations and screenings with new and existing applicants and responding to various inquiries related to attendant services. This inspires her. Through her past experience, Adina developed an understanding of various situations and needs in order to help people. Add to that an amazing work ethic, excellent customer service skills, and a deep understanding of attendant services, Adina has become a key member of the ASAC team.

Adina enjoys knitting, gardening, and organizing events as the Chair of the Professional Development Committee of the Toronto Chapter, Human Resources Professionals Association. As a passionate knitter, if Adina could be an animal, she would be an alpaca. Alpaca wool is really soft and versatile. It's not just warm, it's cozy, breathable, and sustainable. Alpacas are gentle, learn very quickly, and have long memories. They seldom forget something they have learnt, either! They are intensely curious animals and take a lot of interest in the actions of other animals and people.



Adriana Gutierrez

Operations Assistant

I have been at CILT for about two years. As an Operations Assistant, I'm involved in the PSW Training fund program, human resources

administration work, website maintenance, social media, and some information technology troubleshooting. In my spare time I enjoy reading, watching soccer, dancing tango, studying Russian and learning instruments. If I were an animal I would be a jellyfish: they go with the flow, have a simple life, and sting anyone who messes around with them. Something nobody knows (or knew) about me is that I'm madly in love with the fictional character Salvatore Conte, a mafia boss in the show Gomorrah.



Andrea Rae

Service Engagement Coordinator

I have been working at CILT since 2005. I coordinate the volunteer program and I do service navigation. We currently have eight

volunteers helping us with a variety of administrative tasks. I respond to inquiries from consumers and provide information regarding Independent Living and disability services. I perform community outreach on a regular basis to ensure that CILT maintains a coordinating role regarding disability-related services in the city. I've also been assisting with locating wheelchair-accessible housing and helping CILT find out more about potential grants for which the organization can apply. I have a Bachelor of Music degree from Queen's University and a Master of Arts degree in Canadian Studies from Carleton University.



Danielle Vinciguerra

Review and Audit Administrator
Direct Funding Program

I have been a member of Team CILT since early 2015. Prior to CILT, and moving to Canada, I completed graduate school at the University of Pittsburgh focusing on Human Security and acted as a refugee resettlement employment case manager for three years. In my spare time I love to travel, try new restaurants, and am an extremely dedicated aunt. If I were an animal, I would be a walrus. Walrus have an excellent sense of smell, are quite sensitive, love swimming, and eat roughly 5% of their body weight each day. Basically, I'm already a walrus.



David Meyers

Senior Manager

I joined CILT in the role of Senior Manager in April of 2018, and oversee its Independent Living programs and ASAC. Having managed community development and disability

inclusive programs since 2007, I'm thrilled to be supporting CILT's vital work fostering independent living for people with disabilities. I have an acquired physical disability and have long enjoyed advancing disability issues in partnership with disability stakeholders and diverse coalitions.

I'm a civic activism nerd and enjoy amateur photography and doodling during too-long meetings. If I were an animal, it would be a blue whale. I love being near the water, and most whales gracefully swim about all day and look like they have 'chilling out' down pat. I value that in a mammal. Something no one knows about me: I sometimes daydream of spending my retirement winters in a tropical ashram. Ooom.



Elisabeth Harrison

Administration and Agreements Facilitator,
Direct Funding Program

I started working at CILT in April 2018, with the Direct Funding Program, where my role is to update Self-

Managers' Direct Funding agreements and provide administrative support. I have an invisible, episodic disability and I am a proud member of the disability community. I hold a Master of Arts in Women and Gender Studies from the University of Toronto and I am working toward completing my PhD in Critical Disability Studies at York University, where my dissertation research focusses on the implications for health and social policy of trans, genderqueer and non-binary people's experiences with mental health care. My other research projects seek to advance the inclusion of people with episodic disabilities in education and employment, and to foster body equity and diversity. I have lived in Toronto for almost 10 years, but I am originally from Brockville, Ontario. I am a devoted fan of questionable '80s pop music, a trivia nerd, an aqua fitness enthusiast, and have been a full-on cat lady since early childhood. My secret dreams are to write mystery/thriller novels and/or become an eyebrow technician.



Hadeel Dajani

Bookkeeping Review Coordinator,
Direct Funding

I recently started working at CILT with the Direct Funding (DF) program, and I'm already excited about how the program is making a huge difference in people's lives. With my accounting and bookkeeping experience, I will be reviewing financial reports; I will also be contacting Self-Managers and others as approved to gather and review audit-related information. If I could be an animal, I would be a dolphin. Dolphins are known for their love for helping others. They will stay with injured or ill pod mates, even helping them to breathe by bringing them to the surface if needed. They are also smart, caring and cute!



Jamie Wong

Operations Manager

I have been working at CILT for more than 20 years. My current job as operations manager involves overseeing various back office functions such as finance, information technology, human resources, office admin, and project management. My role keeps me busy with different kinds of challenges at different times of the year. It also gives me the opportunity to explore, procure, and deploy new technology which helps the staff work more efficiently and effectively. This in turn helps provide better services to the disability community. If I were an animal, I would be an owl. Owls are wise and their heads allow them to see things from many perspectives.



John Mossa

Independent Living Skills Coordinator

I have been working at CILT for the last 18 years. I work with consumers with disabilities on developing their skills to self-advocate for their rights and responsibilities on a wide range of issues,

from attendant services to Wheel-Trans. Also, I provide short-term crisis peer support, facilitate skills development workshops and make CILT presentations to consumers and service providers. I have led and/or supervised several participatory action research projects on disability and safety issues within Toronto: Safe Engaged Environments Disability (SEED), Safe Toronto Action Now Disability (STAND), Disability and Rights for Citizens (DRC) and Civic Literacy – Disability Project. I am a member of the Aging with Disability working group. I enjoy movies, music, sports, online games and love to read social justice articles and books. If I could be an animal, I would be a lion. The lion is a very diverse symbol. Its most common traits are: majesty, strength, courage, justice, and excellence, as well as resilience in the face of challenges.



John Tam

Database Administrator, Direct Funding

I maintain and update our Direct Funding database and website and provide technical assistance when required. I enjoy that my work and volunteer goals of being able to enhance the lives of people with disabilities can both be met at CILT. I volunteer with Toronto Trailblazers Tandem Cycling Club (blind cycling) and Bike Sauce. Any further free time is spent enjoying summer outdoor street events in the city. If I could be an animal I would be a panda, because when I'm old and lose all my teeth, I will become an adorable gummy bear.



Joyce Leung

In-Office and Special Events Attendant

I'm happy to be part of the attendant team at the Centre for Independent Living in Toronto. I really enjoy the clients and consumers I get to work with as an attendant on a daily basis, and I enjoy meeting new people in general. This job gives me a lot of freedom and every

day is a totally different day. It really keeps me on my toes! When I'm not working an event or at a workshop. I'm either reading, training for a marathon or wondering if I'm hungry or just thirsty.



Katherine Janicki

Intake Coordinator, Direct Funding Program

Katherine Janicki has been with CILT and the Direct Funding program since 2011. As DF Intake Coordinator, Katherine enjoys working

with people who are preparing to become Self-Managers. Outside the office, Katherine is studying psychotherapy and goes to live music shows as much as humanly possible, and harbours a bit of an obsession with celebrity Instagram accounts... for dogs.

Kathleen Odell

Application Assistant, Attendant Services Application Centre

Kathleen's interest in Independent Living began as a child while watching her mother navigate parenting with a disability, nurturing assistance and various attendant care services (including supportive housing and Direct Funding). Kathleen graduated from York University in October 2016 from the Children's Studies Program, which uses a social model to view different experiences of childhood. She focused her degree and much of her research on children who live with disabilities. Her role as an Application Assistant at the Attendant Services Application Centre is to answer inquiries, direct people to attendant services, as well as to process and follow up on applications. If she were an animal, she would be a dog.



Leanne Larmondin

Provincial Program Coordinator
Direct Funding Program

There are truly no two days alike when you're working for Direct Funding. On any given day, I interview program applicants anywhere in the

province, help participants problem solve, liaise

with program staff across the province, consult on legal issues, review payments to participants and coordinate and write promotional materials. When I'm not at work, I run (for fun), row (competitively) and read; I am the mother of two daughters, both of whom are in post-secondary education (please send money). I love to read obituaries and if I were an animal, I'd be a tortoise: an old, (hopefully) wise, chill creature who has an excuse to retreat into its shell every now and then.



Leisa DeBono

Program Manager, Direct Funding Program

I started working at CILT with the Direct Funding Program in July 1994 and have been fortunate enough to stick around for the past 24 years.

During my early years at CILT, I worked as the DF Administrative Coordinator until I was promoted to the DF Program Manager position in 2011. It has been very gratifying to watch the program grow from 75 participants in 1995 to nearly 1,000 currently. I never tire of hearing from people whose lives have changed in a good way because of Direct Funding. In 1990, after graduating from university and working three jobs, I decided to see if my boyfriend was husband material by travelling the world with him on a working holiday. Our main destination was Australia, where we worked and travelled for 6 months, but on the way there we stopped in California, Fiji & New Zealand and we visited England, France, Germany and Amsterdam on the way home before touching down in Nova Scotia (to visit family) before finally arriving back home in Ontario. Turns out he was husband material!



Louis George

In-Office and Special Events Attendant

I'm known as the resident joker – although I know I can be one joke over the line sometimes, most of the time

people appreciate the humour. I like working at CILT because of the variety of the work; most workshops I've helped out at are also of

personal interest to me. In my other life I do a lot of work with on poverty issues and working at CILT has provided several opportunities for mutual learning in that area, too. I like riding my bike, writing my family history, camping and getting into deep discussions on the Web. If I could be an animal, I would be a great blue heron, because they can fly, they're monogamous, and they're big. They're my favourite bird to observe and photograph in Killarney Provincial Park.



Margaret Githuku

In-Office and Special Events Attendant, CILT

I'm now in my tenth year working at CILT. In addition to the in-office work, I've been to more workshops and meetings than I can count. I love being

part of the staff team at CILT and knowing how valued and essential my services are to many staff.

I am regularly called upon to "counsel" other staff, in fact I have been told I am the "resident mom" of the office. In my spare time I love reading, going for long walks and helping others in my and the attendant community.



Marisa Falzone

Regional Report Coordinator and Advisor
Direct Funding Program

I review the quarterly reports from Self-Managers, participants on the Direct Funding program. I have

the privilege of working with Self-Managers to assist them with independent living and making the most of their funding. I train bookkeepers and support other Independent Living Resource Centres throughout the province on compiling Self-Managers' quarterly reports, the Employment Standards Act, and other issues. Additionally, I am responsible for generating the deposits for program participants in the Toronto area. When I'm not at work, I enjoy gardening, event planning and share my passion for art with family and friends. If I could be an animal, I would be a pink flamingo. Flamingos are very

social, they live by tropical waters and they can fly, swim and eat shrimp all day. The best part? They get to do all that for free! Who wouldn't want to be a flamingo?



Melissa Azore

Program Facilitator, Direct Funding Program

Melissa Azore identifies as an ally and passionate supporter of the Independent Living movement. Professionally, she has worked in the private,

education and government sectors, holding positions at: TELUS Mobility, Seneca College and the Ministry of Health. It is in these roles she was able to hone her administrative and record keeping skills. In addition to this, Melissa taught English abroad for a semester, traveling to Brazil. She is currently completing a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology at York University. Further to this, she also holds a Liberal Arts diploma from Seneca College. When Melissa is not at work she likes to sing. She is a professionally trained vocalist and performer. Melissa could not be more pleased to now be working with Direct Funding. If she could be any animal, it would be a dragon.



Melissa Graham

Community Facilitator, Direct Funding

For the last six years, I've been the Community Facilitator for the Direct Funding program at CILT, which means I get to spend my day working with

people who are on Direct Funding or just about to get started. I'm fortunate to work for a program that has such an impact on people's lives, and work with amazing people who really care about the work that they do. Outside of the office, I'm still one of the organizers for the Toronto Disability Pride March, an event I founded back in 2011. We just held our eighth march this year. I spend most of my spare time in community organizing, but I also like to travel when I can and I'm a very proud aunt. If I could be an animal, I'd be a dragon. Who wouldn't want to be a dragon?



Melissa Haigler

In-Office and Special Event Attendant

I've been working at CILT for around I've been working at CILT for around nine years! This is only one of my jobs; another is at a dog groomers.

I regularly groom Sandra Carpenter's cat and have groomed other CILT staff pets, too. People find me pretty quiet in general but I do love to help in any way I can. I love to take road trips to see family in the United States and travel in general. If I could be any animal I think I would be a dolphin because they always seem so happy and full of energy.



Nadine Azore

Customer Service Representative

I have been a member of the CILT team since 2017. I completed my Bachelor of Arts at Trent University in English Literature and Cultural Studies and my Social Service Worker Diploma at Fleming College.

Prior to joining CILT I worked as an English teacher in South Korea for three years. I enjoy travel, food and movies. If I were an animal I would be a sloth. They sleep a lot and like to eat and those are two of my favourite things.



Peter Judge

Financial Assurance Manager Direct Funding Program

Peter has 22 years of experience in the Independent Living community at Three Trilliums (3Ts), a community-

based attendant service provider in Toronto working with both supportive housing as well as Outreach attendant services. Beginning as a front-line attendant, he worked at several positions in the organization, most recently as a senior manager overseeing some 50 staff. Some of Peter's strengths include extensive management experience, including human resources, consumer independent living and attendant service issues, as well as a strong

interest in financial matters. He began at the CILT in the role of Assistant to the Executive Director on a contract basis, and Peter joined the Direct Funding Program in January, 2018, as the provincial Financial Assurance Manager. If he were to be an animal, he would be an eagle (and would no longer be afraid of heights).



Robin Simmons

Inquiries Generalist

I am passionate about sharing from one's lived experience and peer support. I have lived experience with the mental health and disability communities.

Professionally, I have worked as a group facilitator at the Mood Disorders Association of Ontario and the Self-Help Resource Centre and in these roles I have learned many new resources that will be an asset in my new role at CILT as an Inquiries Generalist. If I were an animal, I would be a dolphin because I love to swim. Something people don't know about me is, I recently flew an adapted plane with Freedom Wings.



Rolita Siu

Manager, Attendant Service Application Centre

I have been working at CILT since May 2004. I oversee the overall operation of the Attendant Service Application

Centre, ASAC (formerly the Project Information Centre, or PIC) and its database system and I co-ordinate the advisory group for attendant service providers in Toronto and York Region. Being part of the team at CILT, which promotes the independent living of persons with disabilities, I feel the work I do every day is meaningful. My position provides me the opportunity to utilize my educational background and work experience in psychology, social work, counseling, lecturing, computer programming, and web design. I also like the professional attitude and the supportive work environment here. I like travelling and photography and enjoy collecting teddy bears.

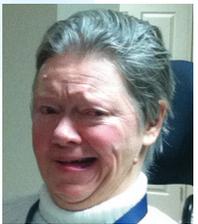


Samantha Walsh

Intake and Resource Facilitator
Direct Funding Program

Samantha Walsh proudly identifies as disabled. She is a scholar and a disability rights activist.

She is currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Toronto-OISE in the department of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Social Justice Education, formerly Sociology and Equity Studies. Her doctoral research is in interpretive sociology with a focus on disability and social inclusion. She holds a master’s degree in Critical Disability Studies from York University (Toronto). The focus of her master’s research was disability and beauty (body image). Samantha completed her undergraduate degree in Sociology at the University of Guelph. She is passionate about inclusion and access for all. If Sam were an animal she would be a koala because she likes koalas. Also, much like a koala, she too is likely to fall out of a tree on occasion. Sam is also an identical twin, but she is not “the funny one.”



Sandra Carpenter

Executive Director

Sandra Carpenter is currently the Executive Director of CILT. As a person with a physical disability from birth she knows first hand how community

supports have grown in Ontario.

Sandra graduated from Ryerson in 1978 with a degree in Social Work and took several courses toward a master’s degree in the Critical Disability Studies Program at York University from 2006 to 2008. Her first job was with the Ministry of Community and Social Services as a Family Benefits Worker. She is considered a founder of the Centre for Independent Living in Toronto and was its first Executive Director when CILT gained independence from COTA in 1986. By 1989 she decided to go back to the Ontario government, this time for the Ministry of Labour as manager of the Centre for Disability and Work. After a brief leave

of absence, during which she worked as the research director for the Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres in Ottawa, she returned to government as senior policy analyst, disability issues and eventually as the senior manager, disability issues at the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation.

Sandra left the Ontario government in 1999, then worked for the Foundation on Independent Living, but returned to CILT in November 2000. During this time her proudest achievement is the role she played in the phenomenal growth of CILT’s Direct Funding program. She is also extremely proud of the role played in helping to establish CILT in the first place.

A little known fact about her is her “guilty secret” passion for country music. Real country, not country pop. Like Gram Parsons, Wilco, Hank Williams ...you catch her drift!



Zdravka Gueorguieva

Program Assistant ,Attendant Services
Application Centre (ASAC)

As program assistant since 2010, my role is to provide administrative support with the Attendant Service

Application Centre (ASAC) since 2010, my role is to provide administrative support and keep the ASAC database updated, according to the applications and requests we receive. Responding to program enquiries, I support applicants getting ready for an assessment and receiving supportive housing, outreach and transitional program services. I hold a Master’s of Science degree in Chemistry from Sofia University, Bulgaria. I feel proud and happy that my life as a member of ASAC has been dedicated to assist members of the disability community. It is a great emotional reward when you receive phone calls expressing gratitude from the people you helped. I would love to travel around the world, meet different people and share different ideas. I have almost 5000 virtual friends on social media which helps me promote awareness of Independent Living ideas all over the world.



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