



Pursuing Excellence

Seven recipients of the Anne Stafford 'Light Up the Future' Bursary pose for a photo. The bursary provides financial assistance for people who have an intellectual disability who want to pursue personal development opportunities. Back row left to right: Paul Railosvuo, Nathaniel Hewett, Jason Richardson. Front row left to right: Laura Challice, Christina Judd, Anne Stafford, Kaleena Dyk, Jennifer Grol.

Group Launches Website to Rally Against Picketing in Front of People's Homes

Respect Our Homes Coalition looking to gather community support

By Deron Hamel

A citizen group has launched a website to raise awareness of the effort to stop unionized support workers from picketing in front of people's homes during labour disputes.

The Respect Our Homes Coalition launched the website May 27 to explain the negative impact striking employees have on people living in supportive housing.

The group says it's hoping to garner community support through the website.

Members of the group emphasize they have no issue with support workers going on strike. However, a serious infringement of people's rights occurs when picket lines move from in front of agencies where the employees work to the homes of those supported through these agencies, the coalition says.

This has happened during strikes in 2007 and 2009.

"If they want to strike, they can strike at the associations — do not strike at people's houses," says Mike Cerna, a member of the coalition and president of People First Tillsonburg.

Cerna was one of four people leading a discussion on this issue during Community Living Ontario's 57th annual conference.

He recalls the effect a picket line set up outside a supportive living home in his region had on residents. Cerna says people living in the house felt like prisoners. Residents, he adds, were also concerned about possible backlash from their neighbours, as well as what might happen to them if they left their homes.

"People were scared to come out of their houses at night," he says. "People have to fight for their rights. That's why we're here."

The group says that in the past striking employees would cause commotion in front of people's homes.

Simply put, this type of behaviour is unacceptable, says Kory Earle, a coalition member and president of People First Lanark County.

Moreover, Earle notes that when support workers go on strike they are supposed to be striking against their employers, not against people who access their employer's services.

"A group home needs to be like any other home, and people living in supportive housing should be given the same rights and respect (as anyone else) in their homes," says Earle.

Visit www.respectourhomes.ca or the coalition's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/respectourhomes.

Tribunal Ruling Endorses Principle of Supported Decision-Making

Community Living Ontario adopts resolution enshrining legal capacity

By Lisa Bailey

A recent Ontario Human Rights Tribunal decision strongly endorses the principle of supported decision-making, says Orville Endicott, legal counsel for Community Living Ontario.

In his ruling issued April 12, acting tribunal chair David Wright stated a woman who has an intellectual disability is capable of participating in a discrimination case, under a new Ontario Human Rights Code provision. The woman, B.K., consented to a close friend bringing a complaint to the tribunal over a 2007 picket by legally striking workers in front of B.K.'s group home.

The workers' union raised the issue of B.K.'s capacity, suggesting the tribunal examine whether a

litigation guardian should be appointed for her.

Wright, however, concurred with B.K. and her lawyer, M. Kate Stephenson, that Section 34(5) was implemented to promote access and enables a supported approach so long as B.K. has the capacity to delegate the power to pursue the complaint and end it by withdrawal.

Section 34(5) states a person or organization may apply to the tribunal on another person's behalf if the person would've been entitled to bring an application and consents to it.

The interim ruling comes just one month after Canada ratified the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with

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Sarnia-Lambton Recognizes Mayor with Hero Award

Mike Bradley has 'changed the lives of many local residents'

By Natalie Hamilton

Community Living Sarnia-Lambton (CLSL) is saluting a local mayor touted as "a champion for people living with disabilities."

The association tipped its hat to Sarnia Mayor Mike Bradley by presenting him with a hero award recently. CLSL honoured Bradley "for his endless contribution and promotion of community inclusion and employment of persons with disabilities," says Bob Vansickle, supervisor of community employment options at CLSL.

"Bradley exemplifies what it means to be a hero," Vansickle says.

"He has changed the lives of many local residents with disabilities and is now changing those who live across the province."

Locally, several people

who have a disability work for the city of Sarnia and private businesses. Lambton County encompasses 126,000 people and 116 of the community's employers hire people who have a disability.

It all began about 10 years ago when the local Downtown Business Improvement Area was about to fold and Bradley went to bat for two men working to beautify the downtown core. The mayor ensured they kept their jobs and the city continues to build inclusive workplaces.

"Bradley has promoted the hiring of persons with disabilities in the community in many capacities. He has partnered with CLSL on various federally-funded projects, endorsed hiring of students with disabilities

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Note: The stories in this edition of Leaders are condensed. If you are reading this online, click on the article headline to read the full story.

Leaders articles are published three times a week and can be found at www.communitylivingontario.ca.



Remembering Karen Gledhill

It is with heavy hearts and deep sorrow that we announce the passing of our president Karen Gledhill after her courageous and relentless battle with breast cancer.

As we grieve, we remember the gifts and contributions that Karen brought to her family, friends and colleagues; to her community; and to the Community Living federation. Along with her important contributions, we also reflect on who Karen was as a person — her character, her passions, her spirit — the ways about her that drew people to her and that leave us feeling, even in our sadness, so grateful we had the opportunity to know her. To read more about Karen's life and contributions, please visit www.communitylivingontario.ca.

Convention des Nations Unies relative aux droits des personnes handicapées

(Ottawa, le 12 mars 2010) – La Commission canadienne des droits de la personne félicite le gouvernement du Canada d'avoir ratifié la Convention des Nations Unies relative aux droits des personnes handicapées et est heureuse que ce geste ait reçu l'appui unanime des provinces et des territoires.

La ratification était nécessaire pour s'assurer que la société canadienne reconnaisse l'apport inestimable des personnes ayant une déficience et elle renforce le mouvement en

vue de faire reconnaître l'égalité de leurs droits », a déclaré Jennifer Lynch, c.r., présidente de la Commission.

Le Canada s'est distingué en contribuant à l'avancement des droits des personnes handicapées. Il convient de mentionner qu'il a été l'un des premiers pays à inscrire les droits des personnes handicapées dans sa constitution.

Pour lire la suite de ce communiqué de presse de la commission des droits de la personne, cliquez ici.

COMMUNITY LIVING
Ontario
Leaders
Inspiring Possibilities

Community Living Leaders is published by
Community Living Ontario

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Communities Must Play Role to Bring Full Citizenship for All: Condeluci

'Think from a community standpoint, not a disability standpoint'

By Deron Hamel

RICHMOND HILL, Ont. - Research shows the more friendships and social capital people have, the happier, healthier and longer they'll live. With this in mind, it's vital that communities work to enhance relationships for people who have a disability to ensure that everyone in society is afforded the same opportunities.

This was Dr. Al Condeluci's message during his keynote presentation to attendees at Community Living Ontario's 57th annual conference.

Condeluci, a Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania-based advocate for people who have a disability, says we all need to play a part "investing" in social capital to enhance inclusion.

This, he said, requires five steps:

- Focus our attention on community and stop thinking "clinically"

- Learn how communities operate
- Find ways to reverse the institutionalization/medical model
- Listen to people and make sure they're making their own decisions
- Help people build social capital.

"There are people out there willing to enhance communities, we just need to find them," Condeluci, an animated speaker who peppers his presentations with humour, told the packed ballroom at the Sheraton Parkway Toronto North in Richmond Hill.

"We all must work to create bridges in our communities to set in motion chains of events that enhance social capital and enhance inclusion in our society."

The good news, he added, is that we all have the power to create a change in our

communities that will help society become more inclusive for everyone.

Condeluci lists four elements that characterize inclusion for people: meaningful activities, independent living, the ability to obtain transportation, and friends and relationships, or "social capital."

Of these, he said, having social capital is most important because, in some cases, the other three characteristics of inclusion will be impossible to attain without relationships.

"Without social capital, we don't have inclusion," he said.

Changing people's perceptions, he said, will be the key.

"We have got to (get people to) think differently — think from a community standpoint, not a disability standpoint," he said.

The 57th annual Community Living conference was held May 26-28.

Supported Decision-Making Key to Social Inclusion: Endicott

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Disabilities, which recognizes for the first time in international law a right to legal capacity. In his ruling, Wright noted that the convention's principles support Section 34(5).

"Community Living Ontario and the Canadian Association for Community Living have been working for years to try to secure recognition for supported decision-making as a more respectful way for decisions to be made than by the traditional device of 'substitute' decision-making," says Endicott.

"If we believe in 'social inclusion' it doesn't make sense for people to be socially excluded from the decision-making process when the decision will affect them more than anyone else."

Stephenson sees the ruling as recognition that people who have intellectual disabilities should have their own voice.

"I see this as breaking down a barrier that the law created and sometimes those are the last ones to go," she says.

Endicott adds the ruling has established a solid foundation for future cases

to be guided by the basic human rights principle of accommodating the needs of persons who have intellectual disabilities. It could be a "model for other legislation where a new approach to decision-making could be adopted," Endicott states.

To that end, at Community Living Ontario's annual general meeting May 29, the organization adopted a resolution seeking government policy and legislative changes to ensure people who have intellectual disabilities can exercise their right to legal capacity.

Bradley Champions Inclusive Municipal Hiring Practices

Continued from front

and attended numerous events promoting disability issues," Vansickle explains.

At a provincial level, earlier this year Bradley extended a dare to all Ontario mayors to hire people who have a disability, lending his support behind an initiative organized by Vansickle, who is also co-chairperson

of the Ontario Disability Employment Network.

Since then, Bradley has spent many evenings volunteering his time by sharing advice with service providers on how to get their respective municipalities on board to hire.

Vansickle points out as a result of Bradley's challenge, more than a dozen cities have

started including people who have a disability as part of their workforces.

"When you hear (Bradley) discuss the commitment that's needed to see that persons with disabilities lead inclusive, fulfilled lives you can hear the passion in his voice," Vansickle says.

"Bradley is a champion for people living with disabilities."