

A Special Gala to Celebrate 35 Years

By Karen Belyea, Executive Director

On October 23, 2015, over 360 people came together to celebrate TCE's first thirty five years and what a party it was! Almost all of the people receiving supports & services from TCE and their families were in attendance along with original founders Christine and Murray Wilson, Father Peter Monty, Stephan Mirsky and Maureen Reside. TCE's first employee and Director, Carol MacLauchlan-Gale and her husband and past Board member Watson Gale were there, along with Lorne and Lindy Abugov, the first tenants and emergency overnight staff at the Stewart Street Children's home.

Individuals and their families were joined by friends, employees and Board members, old and new, for a wonderful evening at the Centurion Center hosted by our Master of Ceremonies, Jeff Graham. Throughout the evening several videos produced by SDC Video Production were unveiled as part of our project '35 Years...35 Stories...'. These videos and written stories will be posted on our website in the New Year in commemoration of our Anniversary. Fantastic short videos from Colonnade DP Productions were also screened during the evening to thunderous applause.

See **GALA** on page 3



Janice Barclay and Candice Presley present a painting created collaboratively by TCE Artists to Christine and Murray Wilson



Gala dinner



Father Peter Monty, one of TCE's Founders

Greetings from TCE's Board Chairperson

By Candice Presley

It has been another amazing year at TCE, and it has been a pleasure serving as Chair of the Board of Directors. Employees, Administration and my fellow Board members continue to amaze me with their dedication and commitment to ensure TCE continues to run smoothly and meet its Mission.

Celebrating TCE's 35th anniversary with many of you at the Gala was a wonderful opportunity to look back over the years. TCE's commitment to "Making Connections for Life" was certainly evident that evening.

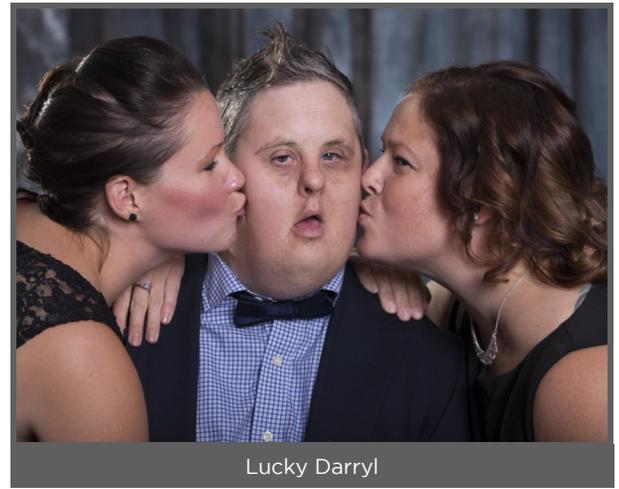
The newsletter this year focuses on our recent celebration. I hope you enjoy the pictures and reading the stories we collected as much as I have. Best wishes for this holiday season and may it bring more opportunities to reminisce and spend time with those you love. Happy holidays.



Guess who? The Kirkwood Krew



In disguise — the Eleanor Gang



Lucky Darryl

Celebrating 35 Years & Making New Memories!



Riverbend folks playing it cool



Anna-Marie and Katherine having their caricatures done

Gala photographs provided by Aaron Stewart

This photograph provided via Facebook

GALA From page 1

The table centerpieces were made by TCE Social Enterprise ‘Uncorked’. Entertainment was provided by photographer Aaron Stewart’s great photo booth and two wonderful caricature artists from ‘Caricature and Clowns’. Partiers enjoyed fun and enlivening music, courtesy of DJ Jazzy JP.

The entire cost of the Gala was covered by our incredible sponsors and donors and we can’t thank them enough for their support. A full list of sponsors can be found toward the end of the Newsletter.

It was an evening of celebration and appreciation for everyone who has contributed to TCE over the years including: the individuals who receive supports and services and their families, founding members, supporters, funders, employees, friends and board members. We have learned so much from each other over the years and what stands out most was reinforced at our Gala. The significance of relationships that have developed and have been sustained over many years ensures we are ‘Making Connections for Life’.

Thirty Five Years...Thirty Five Stories



In keeping with the theme of '35 Years...35 Stories...' this year's newsletter is filled with stories new and old, from families, board members and employees. We received many submissions which make up our Anniversary Project. Unfortunately we could not share all of them here so please check out our website in the New Year at www.tceottawa.org to view the full catalogue of videos and stories.

Christine and Murray Wilson

By Karen Belyea

To really understand TCE, how we began and what we're all about, you have to know Jamie's story. We are pleased to have been able to capture the story on videotape and it will be posted on our website in the New Year. We encourage you to visit www.tceottawa.org.

Jamie was a little boy lost in his own world when he and Christine met in the mid 1970's. Contacted by a concerned social worker who thought Jamie might be Deaf, Christine went to meet the little boy with whom no one knew what to do. Jamie was indeed Deaf, had Cerebral Palsy, Autism and other disabilities. He had been through many foster homes in his short life before Christine and Murray decided to be his final foster home. Jamie learned sign language from Christine and a whole world of communication opened up. Jamie made his home with Christine and Murray but as he aged and their family grew, there was a realization that Jamie would need more lifelong care and support than they could provide. After searching for the right place and finding none, a group of interested community members and professionals met in Christine and Murray's living room and decided to incorporate TCE. Funds were raised and received for the capital purchase of a home in Sandy Hill and the operating budget was provided by the Ontario Government. Today we call that little boy our 'happy old man' who lives in his own apartment with support close by.

Originally I knew Christine as my college sign language teacher so I was extremely intimidated and terrified during my interview that she would make me sign. Thankfully she didn't and I was hired! It was the summer of 1986 and Murray wrote the



Christine with a young Jamie



Teenage Jamie with younger brothers Adam and Christopher



Christine and Jamie



Christine, Jamie and Murray



Jamie and brother Christopher

paycheques, paid the bills and kept track of all the finances for the Children's and Adult Homes. He would balance the books, review the bank statements, prepare the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Service reports and budgets - he did it all with his unique sense of style and dry humour. This took a little getting used to when I was just starting out, never quite sure if Murray was joking or not!

Following the first year or so, the Adult Home Supervisor left and Christine asked me if I could fill in until they could find someone permanently. Reluctantly I agreed thinking "does she know I have no experience?" A year and a half later, as DJ and I were 'flying by the seat of our pants' opening a new home on Eleanor Drive, I was offered the brand new 'Executive Director' position. I remember turning to DJ as he accepted his own senior role, both of us in our mid-twenties and the eldest employees in the agency and saying "What are we doing?"

Those were exciting times in community development for supports and services for people with developmental disabilities in Ontario and at TCE. There was no road map, just the values and mission that had been established and modeled from the beginning by Christine and Murray and the other founders.

Murray served on the Board of Directors for quite a few years early on and our 35th Anniversary marks the year that Christine steps down from the Board of Directors and ends her 'formal' involvement with TCE. Christine has always provided her encouragement, guidance, and mentorship. She placed her trust in us to lead the organization and stay true to our mission. Over the years Christine never wavered in her advocacy and fierce loyalty to the people we support and their families. Similarly, she has always been our employees' greatest fan. Christine would often comment that "TCE is only as good as our direct service staff".

I know DJ and I will never be able to adequately express our thanks for the opportunity that Christine, Murray and the Board of Directors provided all those years ago. When I reflect on where we are today, the many individuals and families we have supported, as well as the people we have employed, it's hard to believe that it's all due to a little boy and a young couple who opened their hearts and home to him.



Christine receiving the Golden Jubilee Medal with son Nicholas, grandsons Simon and Andrew, daughter-in-law Rebecca and Murray

Stewart St. Home

By Janice Barclay, Past Employee, Board Member and Chairperson

My husband and I feel very fortunate to have had the opportunity to work together at the first TCE group home for children. Most of the early residents are still being supported by TCE today. We joke that we practiced being parents before we had our own children! We enjoyed learning to cook, clean and organize a home with other staff members and the children. I loved planning shopping trips for groceries and clothes for the residents. I also loved painting, decorating and making curtains for the beautiful home on Stewart Street. The children were very important to us and we felt like a family.

My husband went on vacation with some of the children which included camping with Jamie as well as a visit to Canada's Wonderland. Jamie was so happy and the trips were a wonderful experience for both he and my husband, Kevin. I remember taking John to the Rideau Centre and getting lost in there! No matter where we entered the mall, John could find his way and direct me to Baskin Robbins. This always amazed me. I remember driving the wheelchair van and taking alternate routes to the home in order to avoid going by the Fire Station because Steven was very upset that they had changed the fire trucks from red to yellow. He would sign, "NO yellow fire trucks!" (I tend to agree with him-they should be red!)

I was thrilled many years later to reacquaint myself with TCE as a Board member. The first time I saw Cory at the TCE BBQ after twenty years, he remembered my name sign! I was astounded. I am also very impressed with the staff who care for the residents. They are very dedicated and they make a huge difference in the lives of the people who live at TCE. I will always remember TCE with fond memories as an organization that cares deeply for people for life. Thanks TCE for making an impact on so many extraordinary lives!



Janice at her baby shower with Sylvaine and Kim



Janice accepting the Pamela Menchions Award for Outstanding Service as a Board member & Chairperson

The One That Got Away!

By Charlie McKeown, Program Supervisor

I have worked for TCE for twenty-two years in various capacities and am currently TCE's On Call Supervisor. I would like to share Rick's story.

After working with and getting to know Rick over ten years, he was becoming more and more a part of my family. Together with Rick, we made the decision to have Rick move out of the group home and into our home... I thought the move would be beneficial to Rick, our families and our small community but an event shortly after led me to

understand that I had underestimated the impact Rick would have on those around him.

About a month after the move, we were at Voyageur Provincial Park for an afternoon at the beach with Rick and my two boys, 5 and 8 at the time. Since Rick was never one for lake water I brought his fishing rod and set him up at the perfect spot on a pier 100 yards from where we were on the beach. The pier separated the sandy beach area from an eddy where the deeper river water circled into a weed bed creating the perfect spot to catch a trophy fish. Rick kept asking to fish off a branch of the pier that shot out into the sandy beach area. I explained to Rick that there was no point fishing in the two feet of sandy water in the hot sun on that side of the pier if he wanted to catch anything. Rick agreed and we were soon joined by several other anglers who also recognized the prime location. After a little while I left Rick to continue casting and went over to check in with my family playing in the sand. As soon as I had left Rick, determined as he is, left my spot for his sunny, shallow, weedless, sandy spot on the other side of the pier and started jigging off the end. I remember shaking my head and turning away. When I looked back, I saw Rick surrounded by all the other Fishermen who were also using Rick's jigging technique. I had to work my way back through everyone to get to Rick and I asked the fellow beside him what was going on. The man told me Rick had pulled the biggest fish they had ever seen in those waters out onto the pier but it got away and they were all trying to hook it again.

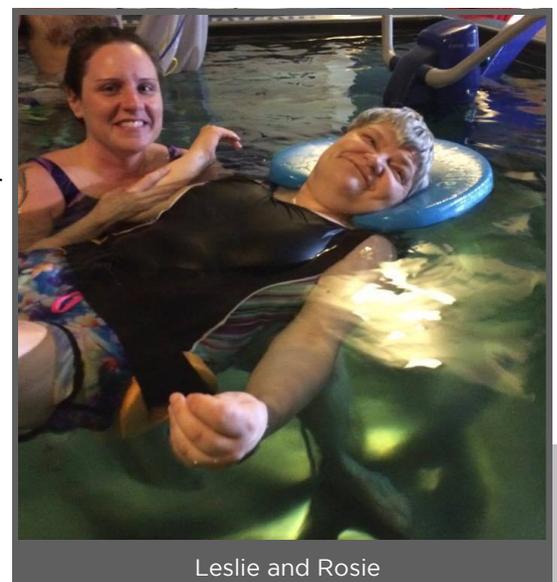
I realized at that moment that Rick had the capability to impact others more than I ever imagined. Thirteen years later I believe that everyone in our families as well as our community would attest to how much having Rick around has benefited us all.

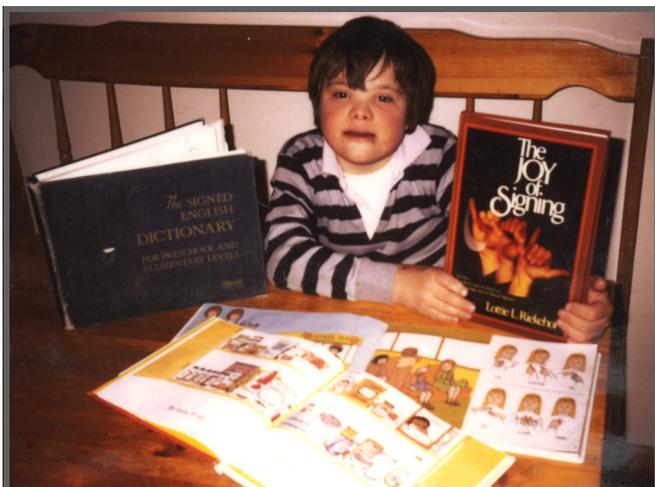


Rosie Shines

By Leslie Clarke, Residential Counsellor

One of my most recent and favourite memories is accompanying Rosie, a woman who lives at Wilson House, to hydro therapy which is paid for through the Special Fund. Rosie needs assistance for her mobility through use of a wheelchair and a mechanical lift. She started hydro therapy to improve her range of motion and because she loves the water and spending time out of her chair. Rosie has worked her way up to being able to stand in the pool hanging onto the side. It was amazing to see her in an upright position, knowing how great she felt by the light in her eyes. Rosie's pride in herself and her achievements brought tears to my eyes. Her hard work has paid off and she is able to stand for short periods of time on land during physiotherapy as well. I'm so happy that we were able to support Rosie in her goals by developing a proposal and plan to the Special Fund.





A young Steven with signing book



Lynda, Larry and Steven Jackson

By Lynda and Larry Jackson, Family Members

When our son Steven was born and diagnosed with Down Syndrome we were told by our Paediatrician to just take him home and love him which we did.

At the age of two he was enrolled in a pre-school where he began to respond to sign language. He eventually went to Crystal Bay School where this mode of communication was stressed. We, ourselves, enrolled in sign language classes run by Christine Wilson.

Several years later when the first TCE home was opened on Stewart Street, Steve was accepted as one of the first residents.

It was a difficult milestone and decision in our lives but one that has proven to be the best we could have made for Steve. We have been part of and watched the growth of TCE for all of these years and have been so blessed and owe many thanks to the founder Christine Wilson for all her dedication and hard work. Throughout the years the staff have been so dedicated to improve the quality of life for the residents.

There are so many memorable moments we cherish, too many to share but here are a few:

We have always picked Steve up and taken him to Church with us and one of our happiest moments was the first time we dropped him back at Stewart Street and he wasn't crying as we pulled away. He was content to go back.

In the early years we attended Christmas parties hosted by the deaf and hard of hearing. Steve became enamoured with Santa Claus so much that it is still important to him.

When The Governor General's wife Lily Schreyer officially opened Stewart Street we were so proud to see a picture in the newspaper of Steve greeting her on the front steps.

Steve has had to have major surgeries and has been hospitalized on numerous occasions and we are so grateful for the help and support we have received from TCE.

TCE have a wonderful caring staff that see all of Steve's needs are met and through their dedication and discipline Steve has become as independent as we could ever have imagined.

Fond Memories

By Jackie Power, Program Supervisor

I would like to share a fond memory of the year 2000. I was a newly appointed Program Supervisor at the Golden Avenue home, today known as Baxter, after the wonderful contributions of Mr. Russ Baxter and other members of the Family Support Network.

We were fortunate to have a project with Home Depot in which they sent out a work crew and built an awesome deck...a venture covered by CJOH.

It was a great day, great memories with many people taking part, including the late Russ Baxter, late Ron Fahey, Herb Westman, Christine, Karen, DJ, and various members of TCE. It meant so much to the residents and it was very typical of the type of project that these families came together to support and participate in: TCE and the community coming together to improve the lives of the residents in our care. One moment of the day stands out. And in true TCE fashion these types of days always included a lot of fun and laughter and often ...OMG moments.

There were various activities assigned to all of the helpers such as clearing brush and branches and picking up pieces of wood after it was cut; everyone was doing their part.

One individual who was responsible for clearing a branch decided the best option was to stand on a tilted ladder on uneven landscape, in flip flops and gently throw a plugged in chain saw at the branch out of reach. The intent being that once said chainsaw was in mid air it would come down on the branch, cutting it off and he would hold onto the cord and pull it back.

Yep, none of that really happened the way he thought, instead we held that uneven ladder, then took cover as the chain saw came crashing down onto the lawn with the branch still intact and Mr. Fahey, hearing the sound of the power tool, shouting out.... "What the heck is he doing?"

TCE has come a long way in our respect and adherence to Health and Safety measures and we guarantee you that individual is no longer a danger to anyone. He is however occupying the office of the Director of Operations.

That small idea for a project led those three men, Mr. Westman, Mr. Baxter and Mr. Fahey, to spearhead the redevelopment of what we now call Baxter House.

TCE continues to grow and flourish and most of what we see today, started with one small idea that grew a long time ago and we are here because of it. It is the small ideas, worked on together that enrich the lives of those we make a lifelong connection and commitment to.

So much has changed since that day, Mr. Fahey and Mr. Baxter are no longer with us, but most definitely are here in spirit. Christine has stepped down from the Board of Directors. Yet as we eclipse our 35th year, Terry Fahey has become a board member as has Nicholas Wilson. Gail Stinson (Baxter) remains active in her brother Terry's life at the Baxter residence. With this hopeful and continued evolution, we are confident that over the coming years, TCE will continue to strive for excellence in providing supports and services to the individuals who live at TCE.



D.J. at Golden's deck building, before the chainsaw appeared!

A Family Reunion



Tom with his mother Roxanne

By Roxanne Montgomery, Family Member

My son Tom has been living in TCE's home on Quinn Rd for many years and I'm very pleased with the great care that he receives.

In 1994 I moved to British Columbia and for 14 years I hadn't seen my son Tom and son George who resides at Ottawa Carleton Life Skills. Thanks to Andrea Gendron, Tom's Primary Counsellor, the staff at Quinn and the Special Fund, I was able to visit in 2014. Not only was I provided with a return plane ticket, I was able to reconnect with my children and family.

While in Ottawa I enjoyed a barbeque, a movie and Tom's brother George, was included too. I was also able to participate in the development of a plan beneficial for Tom. Thank you to all the staff at Quinn and TCE for making my visit an experience that I will treasure forever. Keep up the great work!

Family Support Network

The Family Support Network (FSN) is a group of family members and friends of individuals who receive supports and services from TCE. The FSN meets several times a year with the Executive Director to receive information and discuss issues. Over the years the FSN has provided advice, assisted with fundraising, undertaken advocacy and worked in partnership with TCE to enhance the lives of their family members and friends living at TCE. The FSN provides a contribution at Christmas toward the purchase of gifts and participates in the Annual Douglas Joseph Fahey Memorial BBQ.

For more information about the Family Support Network and how you can join, please contact the TCE office at (613) 228-0999 or tceadmin@tceottawa.org. You may also read all about us on the TCE website at www.tceottawa.org.

Ron Fahey – An Inspiring Man

Ron Fahey was an iconic and inspirational figure at TCE. He and his late wife Leona became part of TCE's family in 1991 when their son Doug moved into Golden (now Baxter House). Ron was one of the original founders of the Family Support Network (FSN). The FSN has been a driving force in fundraising, maintenance and support to TCE. Ron was patriarch to a family of eight children, four boys and four girls. When Doug moved in the whole Fahey clan followed and we have been overwhelmed with their kindness, generosity and commitment ever since. The values instilled in the Fahey children; their love and commitment to their brother Doug were modeled everyday by their parents. Mr. Fahey was of Irish descent and he had the gift of the Irish.

With a twinkle in his eye he could charm you one minute and the next have you laughing. He commanded great respect with his natural leadership skills, wisdom, and dignified manner. Ron Fahey was a man who loved his family above all else and was fiercely proud of all of them, including Doug. Sadly, Doug passed away approximately a year before Ron. With his deep faith to comfort him, Ron knew that he would be reunited with Doug and Leona and this brought him great peace. We miss him very much.



Ron with his daughters Sheila, Barb and Maureen and son Doug

Passings

Sadly, this year marked the passing of some very special people dear to all of us at TCE. Guy Samson was a very kind gentleman who enjoyed music, massage therapy, spending time in the Snoezelen room and looked forward to his daily visits from his TCE long-term care outreach worker. Guy lived for many years at the Rideau Regional Centre (RRC) before moving to Forest Hill long term care home in 2007 as RRC was closing. He is sadly missed by TCE's Outreach team.

When Bob Russell moved to TCE's Wilson House during the closure of Rideau Regional Centre we had the pleasure of also welcoming his lovely mother Loreen Russell. With a strong and loving bond between mother and son, we were privileged to have the time we did with both of them. Predeceased by Bob, Mrs. Russell continued her contact with the residents and staff at Wilson House as they were all family to her. Over time, the visits back and forth became fewer and we were deeply saddened to hear of her passing. She was a wonderful mother, grandmother and friend to TCE and we will cherish our memories of her.



Loreen and Bob

Mr. James Austin Blois was a devoted father to his daughter Ruth, an individual supported by TCE in her home on Rosebella. Known for his warm and gentle manner and passion for hockey, Mr. Blois, a proud father and grandfather, spent a lot of time in local hockey rinks. Ruth, the only girl of four children, was doted on and dearly loved by her father and later mother, Alice Blois.

Social Enterprises

PRESS THAT!

Do you have a team, occasion or group who requires t-shirts, sweatshirts, or bags? For all your silk screening needs, contact *Press That!* a TCE Social Enterprise at TCEColonnadedp@tceottawa.org. They already have a list of satisfied customers including baseball teams, summer camps and of course, TCE!

CREW CUTS

Through the leadership of Doug Watt, individuals supported by TCE came together this year to form 'Crew Cuts', a small group of workers who are greening our homes with vegetable gardens, clothes lines, building better garbage storage containers, providing lawn maintenance and other much needed repairs. They are in high demand and there is a waiting list for their services. The pilot for this social enterprise began in September 2015 when the team acquired their own truck, trailer and equipment. All necessary health & safety training has been completed and over time the workers will continue to develop new skills while taking on more jobs. Thanks to the Special Fund for supporting the purchase of much needed equipment.

TCE is grateful for the many donors and supporters who made our 35th Anniversary Gala possible!

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TCE Newsletter

You are reading the official newsletter of Total Communication Environment (TCE), a registered charitable organization dedicated to supporting individuals with multiple disabilities and special communication needs.

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Web site: www.tceottawa.org  

Total Communication Environment Homes and Programs

Wilson House
5 Eisenhower Cres.
Nepean, Ontario
K2J 3Z8
(613) 843-7516

Hillmount
24 Hillmount Cres.
Nepean, Ontario
K2G 3E3
613-224-4406

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Baxter Community Program
644 Golden Ave.
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Kilbarron
12C & 12D Kilbarron Rd.
Nepean, Ontario
K2J 5A8
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5 Riverbend Dr.
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613-721-5143

Wilson House Community Program
5 Eisenhower Cres.
Nepean, Ontario
K2J 3Z8
(613) 843-7516

Eleanor
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Nepean, Ontario
K2E 7G1
613-224-5975

46 Clenning St.
Nepean, Ontario
K2J 5B2
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Rosebella
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K1T 1G5
613-216-0529

Riverbend Community Program
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Nepean, Ontario
K2H 5G9
613-721-5143

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Gloucester, Ontario
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613-822-6366

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Starwood
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Nepean, Ontario
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Kirkwood
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Wyman
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Colonnade Community Program
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