

Awards Honour Christine Wilson A Lifetime of Giving

By Karen Belyea

We are thrilled that Christine Wilson, one of the founders of TCE, has recently been honoured for her life-long contribution to her community. Christine not only founded TCE, she has also volunteered much of her time to important causes and projects over the years which have directly improved the lives of her fellow citizens.

On October 18, 2012, Christine was presented with the Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship in recognition of her exceptional long-term contribution to her community. In a wonderful ceremony at Queen's Park, Christine received her award from the Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable David C.

Onley. The ceremony and the dinner following it was hosted by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, the Honourable Charles Sousa.

Just two days later, Christine received the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal, presented to her by MP Paul Dewar in honour of her significant contribution and commitment to her community.

Christine's early experiences as a child of Deaf parents laid the foundation for a life committed to assistance and support for those less fortunate; community engagement and development; and being a voice for those whose own is not heard.

Whether through interpreting for her parents at the grocery store, doctor's office, bank and school, or working out arguments with her two hearing siblings that a hearing parent might have arbitrated, Christine's skills of negotiation, advocacy, listening and delivering a message were mastered by the time she entered nursing school.



The Honourable David C. Onley, Christine Wilson
and Charles Sousa at Queen's Park

Christine's career began in nursing and she attended a student placement at the Rideau Regional Centre in Smith Falls, a large centre for children and adults with developmental disabilities. Following that experience and her graduation as an RN, Christine left nursing to work with people with developmental disabilities in what was one of the first-ever community services in Ottawa.

During the course of her work, she was asked by the Children's Aid Society to meet a little boy who they 'couldn't do anything with' and who had been in eight foster homes in eight years. Underneath his multiple challenges, including cerebral palsy, autism and medical issues, it turned

out he was Deaf. His inability to communicate or be understood had not been recognized as the fundamental problem.

Christine and Jamie started right away and by the end of that first meeting, Jamie was signing words. After several more meetings, Jamie came home to live with Christine and her husband Murray permanently. He remains part of their family 37 years later.

As the Wilson family continued to grow and expanded to three more sons, Jamie's needs also increased. However, there were no available community services which would meet Jamie's unique support requirements. The concern was that unless people in Jamie's environment were fluent in sign language and other augmentative forms of communication, he would revert back to the unhappy, sullen boy she had met many years ago.

Christine organized a meeting of interested community members—teachers, a chaplain for the Deaf, other families of

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Remembering Kadra Koulmiye

September 30, 1974 – March 17, 2012

By Moraine Williams

It was several years ago, after an asleep overnight shift, that I met Kadra. From the onset I knew her spirit was one of strength and determination. We worked alongside each other from time to time over the years. We had friends in common, so even though at times months would go by where we did not see each other, it would feel as if we had not missed a beat when we would eventually get together again.

We had things in common, like being single moms and being the sole providers for our families. Kadra was always fun to work with and a hard worker. When we worked together, I knew that leaving shift on time was really important to Kadra. Sometimes, something came up very close to the end of the shift. I still laugh when I remember her saying, "Mo, are you good with this? I need to get home to my boys."

If you knew Kadra, you would know that nothing meant more to her than her boys: Taib (20), Tyler (19) Jamal (13) and Bilal (7) Boyce, who were her pride and joy! Kadra always took great pride in making sure that they would be an asset to society, and she worked tirelessly, at times working three jobs, to ensure her sons would have a solid foundation for their future. She instilled in them strong family values and knowledge in order to take care of each other.

In Kadra's last months, she accomplished a lot, such as reconnecting with her faith, and making amends with her friends, family and co-workers. She was always pleasant and offered advice; ever so much the giver until the very end. Even though she was a busy mom, Kadra still found time to do what mattered most, which was making memories with her sons and building lasting friendships. My daughter and I, like so many others, have been blessed to be touched by such a beautiful soul.

Days before Kadra peacefully left us she asked to see my daughter again and



said that she wished that we had met earlier; indeed I too wish the same. Selfishly, I realize it is I who gained more meeting and spending time with such a special person through work; so thank you TCE, and thank you Kadra for enriching our lives with your kindness, sense of humor and your wisdom. You are missed!

Karen Belyea related that Kadra came to work at TCE in September 2007 and worked at multiple locations in a variety of roles. She will remember Kadra's smile, positive spirit and care and support for the residents. One of Karen's memories was running into Kadra out grocery shopping with a resident. She was wonderful, fully-focused on the individual and engaging him in the shopping. Karen and her daughter went over to say hello, thus distracting the resident and creating quite a joyful but energetic greeting. Kadra was able to get him back to the groceries in such a patient and kind way. Kadra was a lovely woman.

TCE Newsletter

Editor: Christine Wilson
Production: Louise Owens

You are reading the official newsletter of Total Communication Environment, a registered charitable organization dedicated to providing total communication programs for individuals with multiple disabilities and special communication needs. The TCE newsletter is distributed once a year to keep our supporters, families and friends informed of the activities of the Total Communication Environment households and programs.

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Total Communication Environment Homes and Programs

Baxter House 644 Golden Avenue Ottawa, ON K2A 2G2 613-722-4946	Wilson House 5 Eisenhower Crescent Nepean, ON K2J 3Z8 613-823-6552
Quinn 2785 Quinn Road Gloucester, ON K1T 3V4 613-822-6366	Eleanor 16 Eleanor Drive Nepean, ON K2E 7G1 613-224-5975
Kilbarron 12C & 12D Kilbarron Road Nepean, ON K2J 5A8 613-843-8038 (12C) 613-843-8039 (12D)	46 & 48 Clenning Street Nepean, ON K2J 5B2 613-843-0593 (46) 613-843-9497 (48)
Hillmount 24 Hillmount Crescent Nepean, ON K2G 3E3 613-224-4406	Kirkwood 575 Kirkwood Avenue Ottawa, ON K1Z 5X3 613-761-7468
Burma 164, 166, 168 Burma Road. Ottawa, ON K1K 4N2 613-742-6521	Anderson Place 42 Leeming Drive Nepean, ON K2H 5P7 613-828-2578
Riverbend 5 Riverbend Drive Nepean, ON K2H 5G9 613-721-5143	Rosebella 1838 Rosebella Avenue Ottawa, ON K1T 1G5 613-216-0529
Wyman 3554 Wyman Crescent Ottawa, ON K1V 0Z2 613-247-9294	Baxter Day Program 644 Golden Avenue Ottawa, ON K2A 2G2 613-722-4946
Albert Day Program 440 Albert Street, W026 Ottawa, ON K1R5B5 613-233-0129	Hillmount Day Program 24 Hillmount Crescent Nepean ON K2G 3E3 613-224-4406
Wilson House Day Program 5 Eisenhower Crescent Nepean, ON K2J 3Z8 613-843-7516	Riverbend Day Program 5 Riverbend Drive Nepean, ON K2H 5G9 613-721-5143

Executive Director's Blog

By Karen Belyea

As another busy year at TCE comes to an end and I reflect upon the past 12 months, I'm struck by the contributions and support of so many people to our organization: staff members who went way beyond the call of duty, family members who offered assistance along with volunteers, Board members and community partners.

In the spring, the Ontario budget was tabled and we learned that our funding would remain the same as it has for the previous two years despite inflation and other significant cost increases.

The result of the funding freeze means more belt tightening and trimming of non-essential costs. We were unable to support resident vacations outside of Ottawa, unless they were funded independently.

We continue to seek options and funding for needed capital renovations, repairs, and renewal of several of our homes.

A number of our residents experienced serious health issues requiring hospitalization and increased support.

Perhaps this sounds pretty dismal; however, the most difficult times often reveal the best in people, and I can certainly attest to that. I witnessed dedicated and compassionate staff members who were at the hospital every day caring for our residents; reviewed innovative proposals and ideas for 'staycations', holidays at home or day trips; and appreciated the flexibility and positive approach of our union to work together on shared interests. Time after time, people demonstrated their commitment to our residents and TCE.

Community members provided lots of fun and support this year too! A second very successful Spring Fling was held on June 1, hosted by teacher Barbara Troutman, sister of Doug, a resident of Baxter House, and her students at Longfields-Davidson Heights Secondary School. The culinary arts students and chef provided the refreshments while everyone enjoyed the music of Arlene Quinn. The highlights of the evening were the cotton candy machine, provided by Ferzana Qadri, cousin of Program Supervisor Jessica Martineau and the photo booth. It was a great opportunity for individuals to have their picture taken with their family or each other, and was possible through the generosity of Stephen Taylor and his partner Karen Walker, Program Supervisor. I'm always amazed at how connected our program supervisors are—they seem to either be related to or know someone who can provide just about anything to throw a successful party!

Speaking of parties, we love a good celebration, and November 16 was an opportunity to express our gratitude at a Staff Appreciation Party at the Kichesippi Brewery who generously donated their space and servers. We enjoyed the music of two bands, the Reverb Syndicate and Loon Choir with Nicole Yates, one of our own TCE staff. Long-term service awards were given to employees who will have reached five, ten, fifteen and twenty years by the



Residents at Kirkwood were thrilled with their two new vans made possible through donations!

end of December 2012. We congratulate all long-service employees highlighted in the box below.

Halloween is always a high point of the year at TCE as the folks in day services get ready to pack the Prime Minister's loot bags. It's always fun to watch the truck pull up and off-load the tons of candy at the office. Our annual tradition at the office is for each of us to taste test at least one piece of candy for the Prime Minister, to ensure quality and safety for the children, of course.

The annual Halloween Party, is an absolute blast and awaited with much anticipation at the first whiff of fall. This year was no exception and another great ghoulish party was held. Planning for creative costumes for next year is already underway.

This past year we have renewed our fundraising efforts, broadening our approach to raising funds which will support our organization. We need your assistance and ask you to look carefully at the insert in the newsletter outlining fundraising ideas.

TWENTY YEARS:	Wendy Moore Lori Lawrence	Kelly Roper Don Lewis	Stefan Skulski Robin Hubert	Jennifer Lee Mary Ellen McKenna
FIFTEEN YEARS:	Karen Walker Rhonda McCann	Sharon Skerritt Beverly Gregory-Rinne	Yvonne Wilson Paul Schwemler	Loraine Downey
TEN YEARS:	David Walker Shelly Bongard Norman Durocher	Deanna Lindsay Jodi Partridge Michael Schonfeldt	Jessica Martineau David Bickle Martine Robichaud	Kathaleen Kerr Mark Gray Mark Bennett
FIVE YEARS:	Ellen Suykens Karolina Przytocka Julie Laporte James Cowan	Kristina Galletta Leslie Clarke Andrea Toll Trisha Pitura	Janet Saunders Keril Hyacinth Angela Rudow Vasso Rappos	Wendy Norton Shelly Matthie Michele Lemay Greg Perrin

Pamela Menchions: An Amazing Friend

By Carol Ann Banks and Christine Wilson

TCE was shocked to hear the sad news that Pamela Menchions, a very valued and admired member of our TCE family had passed away on October 10th. The large number of people who attended Pam's memorial service shared a similar sense of loss at the passing of a quiet, passionate, extremely knowledgeable, empathetic and wickedly funny friend.

The following is an excerpt from the eulogy given by Carol Ann Banks, TCE's treasurer:

Pam joined the TCE Board of Directors in 2001. Although she didn't have a direct connection to TCE or the community with multiple disabilities and special communications needs, she found a meaningful way to give back to the community, enjoy the fellowship of a group of people who shared similar values and create an opportunity to learn and grow outside of her everyday world.

From the very beginning Pam fit right in. She sat on the Executive Board, serving several terms as President, and was willing to participate in TCE events with her usual sense of fun and good humour. She helped raise money at the Cedarview School Walkathons and BBQs in all kinds of weather. She shopped all year for her special contribution to the TCE Annual Christmas party—the toonie table—and loved it. For a toonie you could pick a colour, spin the large wheel and take a chance on what you would receive—gold was always the best. She was so pleased that not only was she raising funds for the organization but that everyone enjoyed the fun, especially the TCE residents who loved it and looked for it every year. Her friendly competitive nature was evident at the Staff Appreciation bowling night where she ended up on the winning team.

As for the Board work of TCE she was invaluable. Pam had an overall interest in others' well being and always took time to enquire how a particular resident or



Pam and Karen sharing a laugh at the 2003 staff appreciation event

employee was doing. She was an amazing resource and fount of knowledge for the administrative workings of the Board and we counted on her guidance, judgment and advice to make sure we "got it right" on many occasions. She educated us all in governance issues as she shared her knowledge of bureaucratic procedures and helped us work through the Board's policies and procedures. We valued her ability to astutely and wisely analyze issues and get to the heart of the matter and, in the same breath, add a lighthearted respectful comment which could ease the tension, relax a situation and bring people together.

Pam was a lifelong, dedicated public servant who had a direct role in navigating historic changes to the Old Age Security program and the Canada Pension Plan. It is ironic that she will not get to benefit from her own work, although, upon learning of her own serious illness, she optimistically related that she had well over two years' worth of sick leave to see her through to when she could collect her pension.

Pam had a tremendous impact on the board of the Humane Society where she served for many years and where her dream was realized in 2011 with the opening of their new home on West Hunt Club Road.

Pam's sister, Jessica, related that Pam was the youngest in the family and always had a mind of her own and wanted to be the leader. One day, her older brother and sister were teasing Pam mercilessly—she had curly hair and freckles which her siblings did not. Being older and "smarter" they always knew better. Finally, one day, Pam had had enough and to her siblings' surprise she jumped on her sister, punching out her two (loose) front teeth and, from then on, Pam was given the respect she had demanded and deserved.

In an email at the end of August, Pam wrote of her new insights:

"My challenge is that I had complications during the first chemo and spent most of July in the hospital. That has left me with very weak legs and I need a walker and cannot do stairs. I am already bored, but physically limited. No one will commit to me that I will be able to walk normally or when, so I have to take things day by day. I do three stairs each day as part of my exercise, but it is very frustrating. New insights for me into the challenges people face."

I suspect that in Pam's quiet yet determined way she was working very hard at regaining her strength and equally hard at challenging, and likely amusing, the medical professionals.

Carol Ann's eulogy ended with the following words:

We appreciated Pam's involvement with TCE over the past 10 years and we cherished her as a friend. She offered to resign from the Board in June due to her illness but we were so optimistic she would be back we just asked her to wait.

The TCE Board are deeply saddened at Pam's passing and share in her family's grief and feeling of loss. We offer our deepest sympathy to them and want them to know she will be missed very much.



Christine, Jamie and Murray—Our Founding Family

Deaf children with disabilities—and the concept of Total Communication Environment was born that day in Christine and Murray's living room.

Through Christine's tenacity and hard work, countless phone calls, meetings, letters, proposals and advocacy with the Ministry and service groups, TCE was incorporated in 1979 and the first children's home opened in 1980 with Jamie as its first resident. It did not take long for the home to fill, and in 1986 the first adult home opened. TCE has grown steadily over the past 33 years and today our organization supports 95 people throughout the Ottawa area. Christine's mentorship, involvement and oversight have provided a constant, positive presence over these many years. She has evolved with the organization and has continued to serve in different capacities both on and off the Board of Directors.

The founding of TCE is only part of Christine's story and how she has affected and enhanced the lives of people from different walks of life.

Many families have approached Christine over the years for help, often when they are in desperate situations. Christine is very knowledgeable and compassionate and not the type of person to look the other way. She has met with many families and listened to their stories; provided advice and guidance, and advocacy when it was required. Christine can be quite tenacious and inevitably the person's situation improved or even resolved due to her assistance.

Growing up in the Deaf community and with sign language as her first language, the Deaf community continues to play a significant role in Christine's life. She has volunteered countless hours on many different projects for both young and old. Christine's 'third career' is as a sign language interpreter and for a number of years she interpreted

Question Period from the House of Commons on CBC. She is also involved with the Deaf community in many different ways. Over the past five years, she was one of three volunteer organizers, along with Elaine Campbell and Susan McKinley, and supporters who worked tirelessly to establish a designated long-term care unit for Deaf seniors at the Glebe Centre. The working group spent many hours on this project with research, presentations, proposals to the LHIN, CCAC, grant applications to service groups, etc.

Christine was also a volunteer with Children's International Summer Villages (CISV), an international non-profit organization, with gatherings each summer for young people from over 200 countries in different host countries. The goal is to promote awareness of other cultures, and foster world peace and understanding. Christine helped organize the very first CISV camp for Deaf young people in

Ottawa in 1990. It was the second time that Deaf children from around the world were able to come together in one place for such an experience. At the first such camp in 1985 in Sweden, Christine had recruited and readied the Canadian delegation of Deaf 11-year-olds and their Deaf leader, and in 1992 Christine was the volunteer Director of the third Deaf CISV Camp in France.

During the years that Christine's sons were young, she was very involved as a volunteer with a variety of committees with their nursery school, the Glebe Community Association and within the Ottawa-Carleton School Board, particularly at First Avenue School and Glebe Collegiate.

These are some of the major contributions Christine Wilson has made over the years to her community and the Deaf community locally and world-wide. There are many, many other instances of selfless acts Christine does on a daily basis which no one ever hears about except by accident: being in an emergency department for a family emergency and noticing a Deaf person by himself and volunteering to interpret; spearheading a clothing drive for a family in need, etc. Christine is a modest person who does not sing her own praises. She lives her life doing what she does without question nor would she view any of this as out of the ordinary. We do. We think it is extraordinary and so do the many people whose lives she has enriched and touched.



Son Nicholas and daughter-in-law Rebecca, Christine and Murray with grandsons Simon and Andrew at the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal ceremony

A Busy Week for Meaghan

Meaghan, a deaf woman with multiple disabilities, moved to TCE in November 2008 and lives at a group home on Quinn Road. The young woman described in the accompanying two articles has overcome some daunting obstacles in her life and continues to impress all those who know her. With the support of TCE's job coach through our community integration program, Meaghan has successfully become a member of Laundry Matters Co-op. Congratulations Meaghan, we are very proud of you!

By Laura Laundry

On Thursday September 27, 2012, Meaghan and I attended a Murder Mystery Fundraiser Dinner for Laundry Matters Co-op at the Lac Leamy Casino. Meaghan was a guest of honor and was asked to speak about her employment at Laundry Matters Co-op.

Using sign language, Meaghan talked about who she is, where she works, and her connection to Laundry Matter Co-op through TCE. She described what her job entails at the co-op through St. Vincent Hospital that is located in downtown Ottawa, close to Albert Street Day Program. Everyone applauded Meaghan; she was happy and very excited to be there.

Afterwards, Meaghan enjoyed a nice five course meal, especially the dessert and watched the Murder Mystery unfold.



Guest of honour Meaghan introduced by TCE staff Laura at the Families Matter Murder Mystery Dinner

I am sure it was an experience she will never forget. We had a wonderful night and lots of fun.

*By Rainuka Oberoi,
Families Matter Co-op*

Laundry Matters presented Meaghan Smith with an employee of the month certificate on November 5, 2012. Meaghan has been part of the Laundry Matters crew since we started doing laundry for the patients at St. Vincent



Meaghan with her Employee of the Month certificate

Hospital in July. She shows up promptly every Monday and gets right to work. Along with her wonderful job coaches, Meaghan collects laundry from patients' rooms and then washes, dries and folds their clothes with care. She is an absolute delight to work with. Her work has even caught the eye of staff members at St. Vincent Hospital, leading one to call me and tell me how impressed she was with Meaghan's dedication to her job.



Laundry Matters is a social enterprise, created by Families Matter Co-op. Laundry Matters employs people with special needs and provides them with an opportunity to develop skills, earn an income and engage in the community. Meaghan embodies the spirit of Laundry Matters and we are proud to have her on our crew.

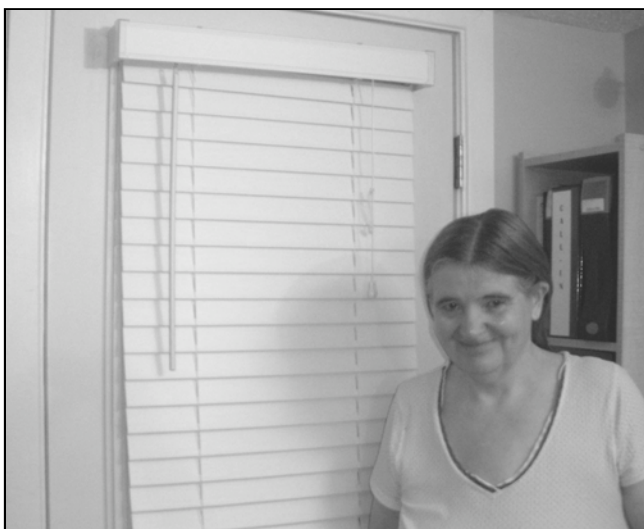
Meaghan, thank you for putting a fresh spin on community!

New Window Blinds at TCE Burma

By Patricia Parent

Recently, Burma was the recipient of Home Depot's very generous donation of window blinds for all three apartments. These new blinds replaced the original blinds that were installed in 1992 (according to Jane)! We can't thank Home Depot enough for giving Burma a more cozy and updated look! We also want to give a special thank you and recognition to Dave and Alex, who volunteered their time and expertise to install all of the blinds.

Jane with the new window blinds at Burma



Family Support Network BBQ

The annual Family Support Network BBQ was held on August 25th at Andrew Haydon Park and had a great turnout. We enjoyed the music of Mike Fahey and the wonderful meal generously provided by Terry Fahey, brother of Doug at Baxter House, assisted by multiple generations of Faheys! What a great way to celebrate the last days of summer.

For more information about the Family Support Network 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.



The Fahey clan out in force for the BBQ

Christmas Parties



Katherine and Santa

Christmas party planning is well underway and families can look forward to receiving an invitation to join their family member and friends at a festive celebration of the season. We will once again be gathering in smaller venues for our Christmas get-togethers to enjoy refreshments, catching up with old friends and a visit from a special fellow in red! As always, we look forward to seeing you then. The Family Support Network (FSN) will once again provide gifts for all of TCE's residents. Families should contact the Program Supervisor of your family member's home if, for some reason, you do not receive your invitation or a call with details about their Christmas Party.

Sally Blois

Sally Blois was a loving mother and wife, and the backbone of her family. Whenever she was calling "officially" she would use her given name, Alice; however, she much preferred her nickname, Sally.

Her daughter Ruth came to live at TCE in 2003 and settled into her home on Rosebella Avenue in 2008 with her two roommates. Over the years we witnessed the true meaning of a mother's love. Her commitment, dedication and advocacy for her daughter never wavered. Sadly, Mrs. Blois passed away suddenly after a brief illness on March 12, 2012. We know that she continues to keep watch over Ruth ensuring that we take good care of her beloved daughter.



Fun Throughout the Year

Spring Fling Pictures were taken by volunteer Stephen Taylor and were a huge hit with families!



- 1: Sylvaine with staff member Kathaleen and baby Arianna
- 2: Jessica (front left) Tammy and John having a great time at the TCE 2012 Halloween party
- 3: John and Peggy Mercier with their son Joey
- 4: Photographer's assistant and TCE Program Supervisor Karen with Joe
- 5: Jimmy, his mother Cindy and sister Sherisse really enjoyed the party!
- 6: Raggedy Ann made an appearance at the Halloween party
- 7: Claire's 50th birthday was a joyous celebration!
- 8: Shawn, Andy and Kristi loving the jam session with Tom and Chris

