

# LIGHTS



A LIGHT in your community

## February 2018

Our February newsletter is always our favourite because, in it, you hear about the people at the heart of LIGHTS - the adults who have found a new level of independence. And in this newsletter the adult is telling you in her own words!

You are going to hear from Jenna, a young woman who has been active in the community for a long time. But it still took her a few years before making the HUGE step to move out of her family home.

LIGHTS is pushing the boundaries of what is possible for young men and women like Jenna, who have an intellectual disability - a new frontier made possible by a new level of family involvement. More and more families are actively planning, networking, creating, and self-managing living situations with guidance and support from the staff at LIGHTS. Our innovative approach has given families hope for and excitement about a new and better future for their sons and daughters—and all without sacrificing individualized supports.

Here is Jenna's story.

"Growing up, I always thought I would have my own place. As I got older that seemed kind of hard, but four years ago the real journey to living on my own began.

I had achieved many milestones, such as graduating from Humber College, getting a job and volunteering at a recreation centre. All these jobs gave me confidence, while teaching me to be patient, flexible, and a better communicator. This led to my family and me talking about my potential, and what could happen next in my life.

I wanted to live on my own, but I was worried. My family told me that I was always welcome in their home, so that made me feel better. But it wasn't really what I wanted. As a grown woman of 28 years, I wanted to move out. Thankfully, we took some time to plan and research what it actually meant to "move out." I attended all sorts of workshops, and lived in my parents' basement in my own apartment for a while. I learned a lot about taking care of myself and my own place. I also learned how to spend free time by myself. At first it was kind of weird, and sometimes lonely, but with my parents upstairs, I felt pretty safe and after a while, my life started to feel good. Then, surprise! My parents told me that they had sold the house and were looking at places to move! I thought to myself, 'I'm going to lose my apartment. I like my independence, and don't want to move back in with them!'

I connected with Zoe, the Senior LIGHTS Facilitator, who helped me find roommates. It was a little scary, because I had been living by myself with my parents really close by. Once I had roommates, we started looking for a place to live, with help from our mums and a Baker realtor. We looked really hard, and eventually found an apartment in a neighborhood we liked, and that felt safe. It's very close to the subway so that I can travel to work and see my other friends and family, and there are lots of stores nearby. I was really happy with the place, and knew it well - I grew up down the street!

When I signed my name on the lease, I felt both happy and super nervous. Moving out was scary! But it was new and exciting as well, and made me feel even more confident and independent. Zoe and all of the LIGHTS support were really great. I was even able to apply for a start-up grant, which meant we could buy some things for the apartment that made it feel like home. OUR home.

Our apartment looks beautiful because we all work hard to keep it clean and organized. Every day we are learning how to do things ourselves, but also what we need help to handle.



*Jenna took her time planning for her new home*

### Advisory Board

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In partnership with:



Where choices change the lives  
of people with an intellectual disability

**LIGHTS**

**c/o Community Living Toronto**

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# LIGHTS

A LIGHT in your community



I miss my parents a lot. And I know that's okay. I have them over for visits and I visit them too. But I really like living in my own space. I feel very proud of what I am able to do. I don't think I would have been able to move out so soon without the support of LIGHTS--for not only me, but my roommates too. Thank you."

One of the keys to Jenna's success story is the role played by Kim Morris, one of Baker Real Estate's realtors. Kim donates her time to help families find homes for their sons and daughters. Kim has used her vast community housing knowledge to help seven families thus far.

All these developments take hard work and steady vigilance, of course, especially on the funding side. Long-term residential funding continues to be our biggest challenge. LIGHTS has demonstrated its viability for more than six years. We have created a model from scratch, and it's working – in Toronto and beyond. Momentum for this type of program is gathering speed, and even the federal government is recognizing the importance of affordable housing for people living with an intellectual disability. In late November Ottawa announced its National Housing Strategy, with "a target of 2400 new affordable housing units that enable community-based independent living for people with developmental disabilities."

There is lots of work ahead, but the many communities involved in LIGHTS' work have demonstrated repeatedly that they have the motivation, flexibility and partnerships necessary to make this happen. In the meantime, the LIGHTS Advisory Board and Community Living Toronto continue to work with the Ministry of Community and Social Services and Developmental Services Ontario to support families who are graduating beyond their five years of LIGHTS funding. A number of these LIGHTS families have been able to access long-term stable funding. Furthermore, a process has been agreed upon to ensure that individuals on the Developmental Services Ontario waitlist will be prioritized for future funding that may become available.

We are sticking to the course we have always followed. Our strategy has always been to set goals with families, identify ways to achieve those goals, and, with the help of our donors and partners, allocate the necessary resources until such time as stable funding is in place.

But we couldn't do any of this without you, our friends and donors and partners and supporters. Thank you, all of you, for helping families push the boundaries of what is possible for their sons and daughters who have intellectual disabilities. Together we are showing our government the way!



**Dawn Mader, LIGHTS Board Member and Skate the Six Chair, with her daughter Emma and husband Dale**

## Skate the Six!

On January 7th we gave the Boys in Blue the night off and took over the ACC for Skate the Six!

It was an incredible fundraiser that gave people supported by LIGHTS the opportunity to skate on the Maple Leafs' very own ice as well as raise money for the LIGHTS program.

170 people attended and more than \$40,000 was raised through sponsorships, ticket sales, and an amazing silent auction. Many thanks to Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment for the use of the ACC. Thank you Behaviour Inc. and Scotiabank for coming on board as sponsors, and SDImktg for donating their time to develop our brand and marketing creative. As well, a special thank you to Pizza Pizza and Coca Cola for their donation of food and beverages for this event. We'd also like to thank our amazing silent auction donors and all of our event participants - it was an amazing day!



## Our Mission

*Through partnership with families, philanthropists, government, and established agencies, LIGHTS will make supportive housing a reality for individuals with an intellectual disability. As a result, these citizens and their families will have a greater quality of life.*

**67** 

People have moved into independent living after LIGHTS facilitation.

**20** 

Families have moved on from LIGHTS.

**47** 

Families have chosen LIGHTS funding.

**274** 

Families have received advisory services.

**150+**

Presentations to date, reaching more than 2,500 attendees.

LIGHTS was founded in 2011 by a group of concerned community members and families.

2011

### Partnerships

- Government of Ontario (Ministry of Community and Social Services)
- Community Living Toronto
- Community donors (foundations, corporations, individuals)
- Families

Funds Raised To Date **\$5.7M**

- Over **5 million** pledged to date
- Funding from the Ministry of Community and Social Services for Facilitators

Funding to Families **\$20,000/yr**

Variable of approximately **\$20K annually per family** funded. Some families do not need funding but still benefit from LIGHTS facilitation.

Operating Costs **\$5,000**

Our only salaried positions are paid for by the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the majority of other costs are a gift-in-kind partnership with Community Living Toronto. Printing, some communications materials and brokerage fees are less than \$5,000 per year.

Result **98%**

A cost effective program that enables about **98%** of our private donations to leverage our government funding for the staff who create the opportunity for person-directed living arrangements that would not otherwise exist.

Through LIGHTS, there has been increased parental job productivity and a broad increase in quality of life for both individuals with an intellectual disability and members of their family. In addition there has been an opportunity for developmental services staff to learn and build an innovative program while providing person-directed supports to individuals with an intellectual disability. Because of LIGHTS, long term societal opportunities for inclusion and a more fulfilling life are increasing for these individuals, and costs to society are decreasing.

### Our Vision

*Enabling citizens with an intellectual disability to live in a home of their own, thereby enriching our communities.*

# Thank You!

**Part of the magic of LIGHTS is the perfect partnership between donors, volunteers, families, agencies and government. It ensures that the money you help us raise goes to support individuals who have an intellectual disability, and their pursuit of a home.**

**\$1,000,000 +** Robert and Mary Pat Armstrong, Li Ka Shing (Canada) Foundation

**\$250,000 - \$499,000** The Harold E. Ballard Foundation

**\$100,000—\$249,999** Anonymous, CIBC, John Clark, The Cochrane Family Foundation, George and Katherine Dembroski, Harry E. Foster Foundation, The John C. and Sally Horsfall Eaton Foundation, The Henry White Kinnear Foundation, The Minto Group, TD Bank, R. Howard Webster Foundation

**\$50,000 - \$99,999** Patsy and Jamie Anderson, Bank of Montreal, Rick and Priscilla Brooks-Hill, E.W. Bickle Foundation, W. Robert and Gail Farquharson, Roger Greenberg, LIGHTS Golf Gathering, The McLean Foundation, RBC Foundation, Scotiabank

**\$25,000 - \$49,999** Donald Brown, CIBC Mellon, Henry and Victoria Eaton, An Evening with Arthur Fleishman, Robert Grundleger, Robert Kerr Foundation, Tom and Catharina MacMillan, The Honourable Margaret McCain, Catherine and Maxwell Meighen Foundation, Skate the Six, Daniel F. Sullivan, The Ward Family Foundation

**\$10,000 - \$24,999** Marilyn and Charlie Baillie, Don and Sheila Bayne, Judy and Doug Biggar, Ted Conrod and Sally Armstrong, Susan and Thomas D'Aquino, David and Ann Doritty, Peter Goring, The Greey-Lennox Charitable Foundation, Dale and Dawn Hooper, John Hunkin, Jackman Foundation, David Knight, Chris and Joanne Lang, LeVan Family Foundation (a fund held within the Oakville Community Foundation), Hugh Mackenzie, Carol June McLean, The Million Dollar Roundtable, Ontario Real Estate Association Foundation, Roger and Maureen Parkinson, A. Britton Smith Foundation, Richard Stoneman, Torys LLP, Geoffrey Wilson, Shelagh and David Wilson Fund at Toronto Foundation.

**\$5,000 - \$9,999** The Ralph M. Barford Foundation, Capital Group, Janet Charlton, Robert Comish, Barry Cooper, Jordan and Lynne Elliott, Empire Life, Bruce and Karen Etherington, David and Judy Galloway, Robert and Karen Glass, Carol Gray, Chris and Diane Keating, Kiwanis Club of Toronto Foundation, Robert W. Korthals, F.K. Morrow Foundation, George E. Nutter, Robert Ogilvie, Barbara Payne, Tim and Francis Price, Duff and Patricia Scott, David and Jan Stewart, Robert and Joan Wright

*We have many donors who have generously given up to \$5,000 who are not listed.*

*Information correct at time of printing. We apologize for any errors or omissions.*

**Donations are what makes LIGHTS possible. Use the enclosed envelope to make a new gift and share this newsletter with someone you know and help create awareness about the housing crisis in Toronto**

**Together we can help even more young men and women, like Jenna, pursue their dream of living independently in their communities.**

**All cheques are payable to Community Living Toronto or donate online at [LIGHTS.to](http://LIGHTS.to)**

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**Attention: Angela Bradley**

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