



Sudbury Developmental Services

Annual Report 2025-2026



Our Mission, Vision, Value Statement

Empowering people to build a life that is true to them, evolving together with courage, respect, empathy, accountability, and a belief in everyone's potential.

Land Acknowledgement

We respectfully acknowledge that Sudbury Developmental Services (SDS) operates on the traditional and treaty territories of the Atikameksheng Anishnawbek, Sagamok Anishnawbek, and Wahnapiatae First Nations. We express our gratitude to the First Peoples for their stewardship of these lands and for the teachings and relationships that continue to enrich our communities.

In 1850, the Robinson-Huron Treaty was entered into between the Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) Chiefs and the Crown, establishing responsibilities and relationships that continue today. We recognize the teachings within many Indigenous traditions that emphasize the interconnectedness of individuals, communities, and the land. At SDS, we are inspired by these teachings as we strive to foster inclusion, interdependence, mutual respect, and shared support in all that we do.

We honour the resilience, cultures, and knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and recognize that truth and reconciliation require ongoing learning, meaningful relationships, and action. SDS remains committed to advancing these values through respect, collaboration, and accountability.

Chi-miigwetch



Message from the Board Chair

Members and colleagues,

This Annual Report for 2025/2026 highlights a year of continued progress in governance, strategic implementation, modernization, financial stewardship, community support, and risk management.

Over the past year, the Board of Directors focused on strengthening governance oversight and improving Board effectiveness. This included reviewing, updating, and approving several important governance policies, such as the Closed Sessions Policy, Decision-Making Framework, Emergency Preparedness Policy, Governance Accountability Policy, and Strategic Planning Policy, with additional policy work still underway.

A significant organizational advancement was the launch of ShareVision, a new client database and staff communication platform that replaced the previous AIMS system. ShareVision also introduced critical tools for the Board, including an Asset Management solution and a Board Portal. These applications will support better management of real estate assets and improve maintenance processes and provide a secure and accessible location for critical Board documentation.

The Board also supported the transition from strategic planning to implementation. Strategic plan implementation materials were shared with the Board to assist with oversight of key objectives. Project charters and plans are also being developed to support the remaining strategic objectives. The HR Strategic Priorities focused on operationalizing seven HR priorities and the Financial Strategic Priorities was initiated. The Board reviewed the financial assessment from a third party, which identified key issues and recommendations that are being implemented related to system use, accounting processes, finance delegation, and reporting accuracy.

The Board continued to support staff, learners, and the broader community through bursaries, retirement recognition gifts, and sponsorship of the Sudbury Annual Defeat Depression Walk. Labour relations and sector risks were also monitored, with bargaining dates set and contingency planning underway.

Overall, the implementation, and continued year reflected meaningful progress in governance renewal, information systems modernization, financial stabilization, and strategic commitment to service quality and sustainability.

All the best,

Luc Valade, Board Chair



Building a Strong Foundation for the Future Executive Director's Report

A Year of Purposeful Progress

As I reflect on the past year, I am struck by how much progress our organization has made—not simply in the initiatives we completed, but in the strong foundation we have built for the future. This has been a year of thoughtful change, organizational learning, and preparing Sudbury Developmental Services (SDS) for the opportunities ahead. While the work has not always been easy, it has been purposeful, and I am proud of what we have accomplished together.

This past year marked an important turning point for SDS. While our primary focus remained unchanged—supporting individuals with developmental disabilities to live meaningful lives in their communities—we also dedicated significant effort to strengthening the organization itself.

A Shared Vision for the Future

One of the year's defining accomplishments was the completion of our 2026–2031 Strategic Plan. Developed through meaningful engagement with individuals supported, families, employees, leadership, community partners, and the Board of Directors, the plan establishes a clear direction for the future. By year-end, implementation planning was already underway, ensuring the strategy becomes embedded in everyday decision-making rather than remaining a standalone document.

Strengthening Our Foundation

Throughout the year we invested significant effort in modernizing the organization behind the scenes. Financial systems and processes were reviewed and strengthened, Human Resources continued its modernization journey, technology platforms advanced through the implementation of ShareVision, and organizational processes were redesigned to improve accountability, communication, and long-term sustainability.

Evolving with the Sector

As Ontario's developmental services sector continues to evolve, SDS continued aligning programs with Journey to Belonging principles by expanding person-directed approaches, strengthening employment and community participation opportunities, exploring flexible service models, and supporting greater choice and inclusion for the people we support.

Continuous Improvement

Important investments were also made in quality assurance, compliance, risk management, facilities, accessibility, policy modernization, and organizational infrastructure. While much of this work occurs behind the scenes, it provides the stable framework necessary to deliver safe, high-quality services today while preparing SDS for tomorrow.

“This year was not about reaching the finish line—it was about building the foundation for the future.”

Looking Ahead

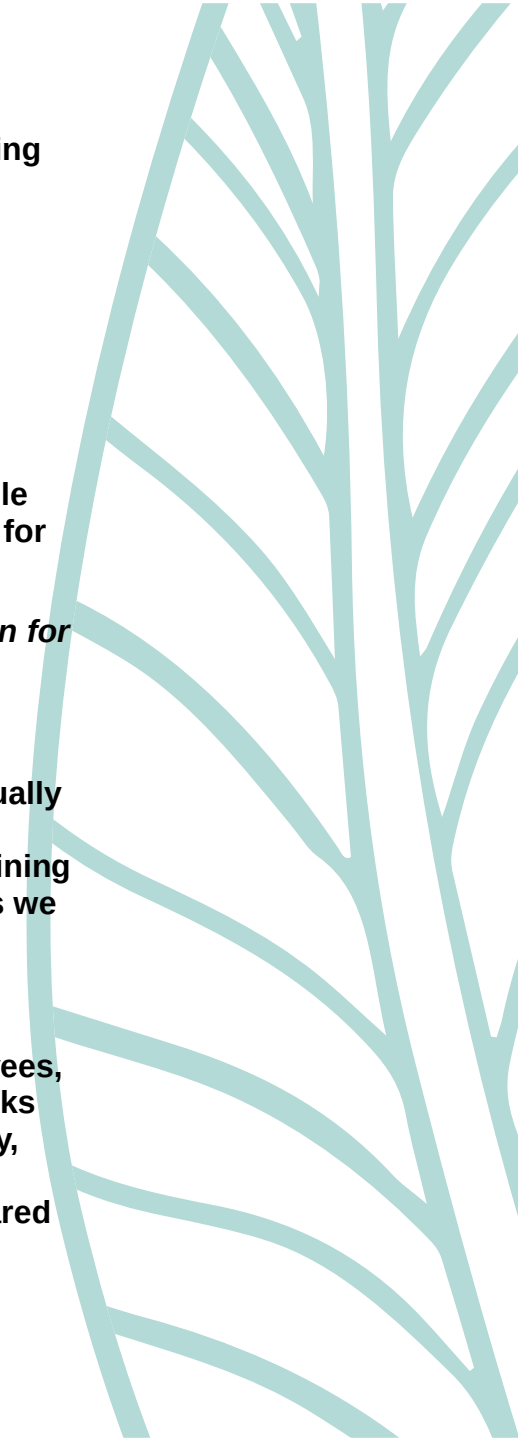
As we begin a new fiscal year, we remain committed to listening, learning, and continually improving. The work ahead will require collaboration, innovation, and thoughtful leadership, but I am confident SDS is well positioned to continue evolving while remaining steadfast in our commitment to the individuals, families, employees, and communities we serve.

With Gratitude

None of this progress would have been possible without the dedication of our employees, whose compassion and professionalism make a difference every day. My sincere thanks to our leadership team, Board of Directors, community partners, and, most importantly, the individuals and families who place their trust in Sudbury Developmental Services. Together, we are building an organization that is stronger today and even better prepared for tomorrow.

Thank you for your continued support.

Kim Daly, Executive Director



Treasurer's Report

The past fiscal year 2025-2026 saw much change within Sudbury Developmental Services (SDS) as we navigated through our first year under the Ontario Nonprofit Corporation Act (ONCA) framework and its impacts on financial reporting.

Separate bank accounts and financial reporting for Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) have been implemented for the WISE operations as required by ONCA. WISE Wood Products and WISE Thrift Shoppe both reported surpluses this past year. As more oversight costs are attributed to them in 2026-2027, we will be able to benefit from greater understanding of the finances for each enterprise and ensure the surpluses are applied to continued growth of the enterprise program. As these social enterprises play a key role in the mental health and personal development of our employees, we want to continue to provide this valuable service to our SDS community.

Following an analysis of the Finance Department by Freedland Caldwell Reilly, LLP (FCR) which identified opportunities for improvement, a plan was put in place that set a path forward. Recommendations were quickly implemented, and work continues streamlining our work processes with the assistance of our Finance partner at FCR. The agency has seen efficiencies from the improved processes that were implemented during 2025-2026. The leveraging of our financial software SAGE was carried out with the assistance of the SAGE specialist and system configuration resulted in the modernization of the bank reconciliation process. System software training for all Finance department staff occurred and increased delegation of work saw improved timeliness. This work will continue as all policies and processes are being reviewed and improvements are realized.

This past year, SDS welcomed new individuals to the agency, supported by an additional \$913,391 in funding from Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS)- a 6% increase. The investment strengthened our ability to deliver high-quality services and supports that enhance the lives of the people we support. MCCSS also provided \$508,600 in minor capital funding, enabling significant improvements across our properties and creating safer, more accessible, and welcoming environments for everyone.

The 5-Way Carnival was successful again this year in helping to raise funds. We expanded our fundraising activities to include charity bingo at Delta Bingo. This undertaking has enhanced our ability to provide funds to help those individuals limited by financial constraints.

This past year saw a positive return on our investments. SDS was able to successfully payout a mortgage on one of our properties. We formally reviewed our investment portfolio, and further analysis is being undertaken to put forward recommendations regarding our investment plan. An Investment Policy Statement will be integrated into the Finance Governance policy.

While the Finance department undertook significant change this past year, it speaks to the dedication of the Finance team as everyone at SDS benefited from their hard work. The Board of Directors are thankful for their fiscal diligence in helping ensure the viability of our agency.

Christine Hurst, Treasurer

Building a Sustainable Foundation Property Management

Property Management transitioned from reactive maintenance to a proactive asset management model, significantly reducing the maintenance backlog and improving long-term stewardship.

2025–2026 marked a transformational year for Property Management at Sudbury Developmental Services (SDS). The department shifted from a largely reactive maintenance model to a proactive approach focused on asset management, preventative maintenance, operational efficiency, and long-term stewardship. These improvements strengthened organizational accountability while creating safer, more sustainable homes and workplaces for the people we support and the employees who support them.

Year at a Glance

 Built	 Strengthened	 Invested	 Prepared
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Asset Management System• Centralized Work Orders• Quarterly Inspections	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preventative Maintenance• Contractor Oversight• Fleet Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 16 Ministry-funded Capital Projects• Accessibility Improvements• Infrastructure Renewal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lifecycle Planning• Capital Forecasting• Strategic Asset Stewardship

Key Achievements

Asset Management

Implemented SDS's first formal Asset Management System, reduced the historical maintenance backlog, introduced preventative maintenance schedules, and improved visibility of asset condition to support long-term planning.



Operational Excellence

Standardized inspections, streamlined purchasing and contractor management, strengthened approval processes, and improved accountability for maintenance expenditures while achieving operational efficiencies.

Fleet & Risk Management

Enhanced fleet oversight through improved maintenance processes, vehicle safety technology, standardized collision response procedures, and strengthened risk management practices.

Capital Improvements

Advanced 16 Ministry-funded capital projects that will improve accessibility, preserve infrastructure, and enhance living environments across SDS properties.

Looking Ahead

In 2026–2027, Property Management will continue implementing SDS's Strategic Plan by expanding preventative maintenance, completing Ministry-funded capital projects, advancing lifecycle planning, optimizing procurement and contractor performance, and ensuring safe, accessible, and sustainable facilities for the individuals and families we serve.

Our Commitment

We are committed to providing safe, accessible, and well-maintained environments that enable the people we support to thrive. Through responsible stewardship of public resources, proactive asset management, and continuous investment in our facilities and infrastructure, we will continue building sustainable spaces that support quality services today while preparing SDS for the future.

Wayne Pilotte, Property Manager



Driving Quality Through Continuous Improvement Quality Assurance & Operational Excellence

☆ One Defining Achievement

ShareVision became the central platform for documentation, communication, and organizational data, laying the foundation for a more connected, accountable, and data-informed Sudbury Developmental Services.

Building Systems that Support Exceptional Lives

Throughout 2025–2026, the Quality Assurance & Operational Excellence portfolio focused on strengthening the systems, processes, and culture that enable high-quality, person-directed services. Guided by SDS's Strategic Plan, the department advanced technology, quality assurance, health and safety, medication management, and continuous improvement initiatives while keeping the people we support at the center of every decision.

Year at a Glance

Innovated	Strengthened	Enhanced	Prepared
ShareVision Data-informed decisions	Personal Outcomes Quality Assurance	Medication Safety Health & Safety	Strategic Plan Continuous Improvement

Digital Transformation

ShareVision continued to evolve into SDS's central information platform, strengthening documentation, communication, reporting, and access to meaningful data while supporting better decision-making and accountability.



Embedding a Culture of Quality

The Personal Outcomes, Quality Assurance, Medication, and Health & Safety Committees advanced education, accountability, person-centered practice, medication safety, and continuous improvement across the organization.

Working Better Together

Cross-department collaboration between Operations, Human Resources, and Finance strengthened organizational alignment, communication, and shared accountability for implementing the SDS Strategic Plan.

Preparing for the Future

Continued investment in onboarding, education, technology, and quality systems positions SDS to embed Personal Outcome Measures, strengthen quality assurance, and sustain innovation.

Committee Recognition

The accomplishments of this year were made possible through the dedication of the Personal Outcomes, Medication, Health & Safety, and Quality Assurance Committees, together with the Management Team, Scheduling Coordinators, and Data & Technology Enablement Specialist. Their commitment continues to strengthen SDS and improve outcomes.

Looking Ahead

In 2026–2027, Quality Assurance & Operational Excellence will continue advancing ShareVision, embedding Personal Outcome Measures, strengthening quality assurance education, enhancing health and safety practices, and supporting data-informed decision-making across SDS.

Our Commitment

We are committed to embedding quality, innovation, and continuous improvement into everything we do. By strengthening our systems, embracing technology, using data to guide decision-making, and measuring success through meaningful outcomes, we will continue building an organization where excellence is reflected in every experience of the people we support, our employees, and our community.

Trish Pomykala,

Director of Quality Assurance and Operational Excellence

Empowering Meaningful Lives

Inclusive Supports

★ One Defining Achievement

One individual successfully achieved their behavioural goals and no longer required a Behaviour Support Plan. This milestone reflects the power of person-centered, evidence-informed supports and the collaborative efforts of the individual, their support network, direct support professionals, managers, and clinical staff.

Building Lives Through Choice, Inclusion and Opportunity

Throughout 2025–2026, Inclusive Supports continued to evolve beyond traditional service delivery toward a more person-directed approach that reflects the aspirations, strengths, and choices of the people we support. Guided by SDS's Strategic Plan and Ontario's Journey to Belonging vision, we focused on strengthening individualized supports, expanding opportunities for community participation, and working alongside families and community partners to help people build lives that are true to them.

Year at a Glance

Supporting	Strengthening	Connecting	Preparing
Person-centered Behaviour Supports Individualized Planning	Family Partnerships Responsive Intake	Staff Wellness Community Inclusion	Journey to Belonging Strategic Service Evolution

Behavioural Excellence

Behavioural services achieved meaningful outcomes by reducing the use of intrusive interventions, transitioning all Behaviour Support Plans to a new person-centered format, and successfully completing the annual Third Party Rights Review with no recommendations. These accomplishments reinforce SDS's commitment to evidence-informed practice, human rights, and supporting individuals to achieve greater independence and quality of life.

Supporting Individuals and Families

Managers and Directors continued working collaboratively with individuals, families, caregivers, and community partners to ensure supports remain responsive, individualized, and focused on each person's goals. As demand for services continues to grow, the team remained committed to maximizing available resources while exploring opportunities to expand access to supports.

Building Belonging

The DSW Day celebration, Mental Health Week, monthly wellness walks, and Pride Month activities strengthened employee engagement, wellness, inclusion, and connection across the organization, reinforcing SDS's commitment to a culture where everyone feels valued and respected.

Preparing for the Future

Inclusive Supports has begun laying the groundwork for expanded housing options, more flexible Community Participation Supports, innovative service models, and enhanced behavioural expertise to better meet the evolving needs of the people and families we support.

Looking Ahead

In 2026–2027, Inclusive Supports will continue implementing the SDS Strategic Plan by strengthening person-directed planning, expanding individualized housing and community support options, evolving Community Participation Supports, and increasing opportunities for inclusion, independence, and meaningful participation.

Our Commitment

We are committed to empowering every individual to build a life that is true to them. By listening to the voices of the people we support and their families, expanding person-directed opportunities, and embracing innovation, we will continue creating flexible, inclusive supports that promote choice, independence, belonging, and meaningful participation in community life.

Laura Chartier,

Director of Inclusive Supports

2025–2026 At a Glance

Building a Strong Foundation for the Future

This Year We...

COMPLETED

2026–2031 Strategic Plan
Independent Financial Review
ShareVision implementation
Governance policy modernization
Strategic implementation framework

PREPARED FOR

Strategic Plan implementation
Finance transformation
HR systems modernization
Journey to Belonging priorities
Future growth and innovation

Our Focus Moving Forward

2025–2026 was a year of strengthening the organization from the inside out. By investing in our people, systems, governance, and financial sustainability, Sudbury Developmental Services has established a strong foundation to successfully implement its 2026–2031 Strategic Plan while continuing to provide high-quality, person-directed supports for the individuals and families we serve.

STRENGTHENED

Financial controls and reporting
Human Resources modernization
Risk management practices
Quality assurance and compliance
Organizational communication

SUPPORTED

400+ individuals receiving services
250+ dedicated employees
Families across Greater Sudbury
Community partnerships
Inclusive, person-directed support

INVESTED

\$508, 600 in Ministry Minor Capital funding
Technology modernization
Facility improvements
Employee development
Long-term organizational sustainability



This is Wyatt- Wyatt's story began about 2 years ago.



When Wyatt joined Sudbury Developmental Services more than 2 years ago, he faced significant challenges that made it difficult for him to connect with others and participate fully in daily life. Through dedicated support, patience, and his own determination, Wyatt has experienced an incredible transformation.

Today, Wyatt is a confident, intelligent, and engaging young man with a wonderful sense of humour. He has developed meaningful connections, welcomes others into his space, and continues to embrace new experiences and learning opportunities with enthusiasm.

Watching Wyatt's confidence grow has been one of the most rewarding journeys for all of us to witness. His story reminds us that meaningful relationships, unwavering support, and believing in a person's potential can create extraordinary change. Wyatt didn't simply learn new skills-he found a place where he feels safe, valued, and able to be himself. His growth has been remarkable, and he has become a true favourite among staff and peers alike.

Wyatt's journey is a powerful reminder of what is possible when individuals are provided with the right support, encouragement, and opportunities to thrive. We are immensely proud of all that he has accomplished and look forward to watching him continue to grow and succeed!





My Story

My name is Darce, and I have been receiving supports through Sudbury Developmental Services for many years, throughout most of my adult life. I currently live at Treeview Care Home, where I have my own apartment. I am supported as an independent individual and receive 1:1 staffing support during the day to help me achieve my personal goals and maintain my independence.

This year, I celebrated my 30th birthday, which has been an exciting milestone. Over the years, and especially this past year, I have been able to accomplish many meaningful goals with the support of my home and dedicated staff. Their encouragement and guidance have helped me build my independence, develop new skills, and create opportunities that have enriched my life. I am proud of how far I have come and look forward to continuing to achieve new goals in the future.

I am fortunate to have my brother supported by the same agency, which has given us the opportunity to reconnect and strengthen our relationship. Since he moved back to the Sudbury area, we have always hoped to live together again. With the support of my Manager and /SDS's E.D, I was able to make this a personal goal, and together we have made it a reality.

My current apartment will be renovated to create a space that we can comfortably share. This renovation will provide us with a beautiful new home where we can support one another, spend quality time together, and enjoy being a family. I am excited for this new chapter and grateful for the opportunity to live with my brother the way family should.

My sister welcomed a baby boy in May and lives in Vancouver. In June, I accomplished something I never thought I could do—I faced my fear of flying so I could travel to meet my brand-new nephew. It was one of the best experiences of my life.

Family is very important to me, so being able to meet my nephew was a very special milestone. He is adorable and gives the best snuggles! During my visit, I also had the opportunity to explore some of the local sights with my staff and family, making the trip even more memorable. I am proud that I overcame my fear and created wonderful memories that I will always cherish.

I have worked very hard to better myself and develop healthy coping skills. With the support of my staff, I have become much more responsive to both verbal and non-verbal cues. I have also learned to recognize when I am starting to feel upset or angry and can identify these feelings on my own.

Another area I have worked on is my communication. I am now better able to talk about my emotions in a calm and respectful way, rather than responding in a confrontational manner. These improvements have helped me build stronger relationships and better manage challenging situations.

As a result of the progress I have made, my Behavior Support Plan (BSP) was removed in May 2025. This was a major milestone for me and something I am incredibly proud of. I will continue to work on my personal growth and demonstrate that I can successfully maintain these positive changes. Reaching this achievement has given me confidence in myself and motivates me to keep striving toward my goals.



Looking ahead, I am excited about a lifelong dream that will come true in October 2026. I will be travelling to Memphis, Tennessee, with staff to visit Graceland, the home of my idol, Elvis Presley. I have been a huge Elvis fan for many years, and this trip is something I have always hoped to experience.

Performing as an Elvis impersonator has become one of my greatest passions. Over the years, I have performed for the agency as well as for various community groups throughout the City of Sudbury. I love entertaining people through my singing and showing off my dance moves. Music has given me confidence, joy, and the opportunity to share something I truly enjoy with others. For more than five years, I have attended biweekly music lessons with Phil Morris. Together, we have worked hard to improve my singing and performance skills, and I look forward to continuing my musical journey. One of my future goals is to host my own concert for more than 100 people. One of my biggest personal challenges has been managing my diabetes. I was diagnosed in October 2023, and because I enjoy food—especially going out for coffee, eating fast food, and enjoying snacks—it has taken commitment to make healthier choices. With the support of my staff, I have worked hard to manage my diabetes by taking my medication and making better decisions about what I eat. In March, my family doctor told me that my diabetes was considered well controlled. This was something I was very proud to hear. I know I still need to become more physically active and continue making healthy food choices, but I am doing my best, and it feels good to know that I am making steady progress.

Overall, the past year has been a very positive one for me. I have accomplished goals that once seemed out of reach, strengthened my relationships with my family, developed new skills, and become more independent and confident. I am proud of everything I have achieved and look forward to continuing to grow, challenge myself, and see what the future has in store.

Darce



Me with my brother Travis on the plane to British Columbia to meet our nephew for the first time.

Me with my new little nephew.



THANK YOU

for Your Years of Service



Milan Hally
Omo Adebayo
Olivier Belanger
Chantal Coyne
Faith Ijdale
Varinder Kaur
Kayla Ledgerwood
Adebimpe Olopade
Temitope Osuntokun
Tomin Philip
Sourav Sibi
Parker Stack
Albin Sunil
Robin Wilson



Megan Arlt
Susan Bourre
Michelle Landry



Alitsha Coolman
Jennifer Leduc
Kirstyn Lorenz- St-Jean
Ashley Martin
Genevieve Smith
Farrah St- Georges



Laura Chartier
Lory Anne Hughes
Shaylla Virtanen



Helene Van Dyk



Valerie Desormeaux
Amanda Gallagher
Stephanie Malik
Christiane Paradis



Susan Jaglall



Diane Bisier
Debra Collin
Jennifer Laporte
Karen Makinen
Jennifer Stone
Danielle Venedam

Thank you to our Supporters and Members

5 Way Carnival Committee

Adam Moise – Scouts Sudbury

Adel Zaher

Angela Mirabelli

Angi Wong Lamore

Anthony Niro

Aura, Maria and Paula Begona

Berthe Last

Bonnie Depencier

**Chad Deschenes – Pinehill
Lumber**

**Chantal Gladu-Depatie– Face
Painter**

**Charitable Gaming Association
of Sudbury**

Christine and Carl Hurst

Claudette Last-Janveau

Club Richelieu de Sudbury

Daniel Grotolli

Dominic Fragomeni

Doriane and Leslie Jones

**Douglas, Constance and Adam
Reynolds**

Elizabeth Storie

Florida Henri

Gary & Dorothy Groulx

Gordon Whitmell

Ila Leigh Cook

Jacinte Martin

Jean, Lucille & Chantal Poirier

Jeanne & Jean-Paul Cormier

Joanne Courchesne

Jolene Felsbourg-Linton

Joseph Guido

Julia Ritchie

June and Vaughn Blacklock

Lois Clement

Laurie Gerrard

Lois Shaver

Luc and Mariette Valade

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Luigia Ingriselli

Lynne Houle

Marilyn and Robert Fitzsimmons

Mary and Matti Mottonen

Pacey Ventures

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Salena Grover

Serge F. Treherne

Shirley Heikkila

Stephanie Valentini

Stephen Birkas

Steve, Cecile and Tasha Payne

Terttu Rinta

United Way Centraide

Virginia Beaudin Makela





Personal Outcomes Committee: Amanda Peachey, Rhandey Houston, Melissa McLeod, Dawson Reid, Sophi Henri, Karen Makinen and Trish Pomykala

Medication Committee: Lory Anne Hughes, Kristy Landry, Aswin Johnney, Muskan Vohra, Ashley Martin, Wendy Giroux-Grenon, Val Desormeaux and Trish Pomykala

Health and Safety Committee: Deb Collin, Bobbie Joe Oakes, Kim Russel, Alisha Martin, Jennifer Labrosse, Wayne Pilotte, Natalie Poulin, Anita Gratton and Trish Pomykala

Quality Assurance Committee: Courtney Viljanmaa, Marie Schwenzer, Sylvie Reid, Chris Paradis, Val Desormeaux and Trish Pomykala

Events Committee Members: Laura Chartier, Helene Berthiaume Winning, Natalie Tiller, Samantha Reilly, Tamara Girourd

Bingo Fundraising Volunteers: Laura Chartier, Wendy Giroux Grenon, Brenda Verreault, Melissa McLeod, Alison Hurley, Joe-Anne Vanhorn, Kim Daly, Christiane Paradis, Trish Pomykala

IPAC committee: Wendy Giroux Grenon, Melissa McLeod, Anita Gratton, Karen Makinen, Lory Anne Hughes, Lise St. Jean, Kristy Landry and Jeff Sullivan

5 Way Carnival Committee: Jacinte Martin, Karen Makinen

Management Team: Ashley Martin, Anita Graton, Alison Hurley, Chris Paradis, Helene Berthiaume Winning, Karen Makinen, Natalie Poulin, Melissa McLeod, Valerie Desormeaux, Wayne Pilotte and Wendy Giroux Grenon

Scheduling Coordinators: Jagvir Bajwa, Jennifer Labrosse (on leave) and Dawson Reid

Data and Technology Enablement Specialist: Rhandey Houston

Human Resource Team: Areeba Kamsi, Aline Muzzi and Jennifer Adebajo

Finance Team: Aaron Babin, Kim Scagnetti and Brenda Verreault

Board of Directors: Luc Valade, Serge Treherne, Julia Ritchie, Christine Hurst, Lynne Houle, Jolene Felsbourg-Linton, Virginia Makela, and Stephanie Valentini

Senior Leadership Team: Kim Daly, Joe-Anne Vanhorn, Laura Chartier, Nathan Smith and Trish Pomykala

In Memory



Melvin Ojala

At 82 years of age, Melvin had lived a life full of experiences, relationships, challenges, joys, and memories. There is so much that could be said about him and about the life he lived.

Anyone who knew Melvin was likely told a story by him, and I'm sure many of those stories are still remembered today. He had a way of sharing pieces of his life that stayed with people.

He also enjoyed the simple, familiar things that became part of his routine. Melvin loved going out for coffee, was a member of the Finnish church, and enjoyed Finnish bread. He also enjoyed sitting in his room and watching the old Westerns on TV, and he loved phone calls and visits with his niece, Penny, and his friend, George.

One memory that has always stayed with me came from a trip Rhandey took with Melvin to Thunder Bay.

While they were there, they drove out to Nolalu, a small rural community southwest of Thunder Bay. They drove along the old dirt road and eventually came to a crossroads.

Melvin asked Rhandey to stop the car. They both got out, and Melvin walked toward a house on the corner. He pointed to it, and almost immediately, his voice came alive as he began talking about a time when he was younger.

He explained that he would sometimes be sent to the store by his parents, and on the way home, the people who lived in that house would invite him inside. They would give him a sandwich and some juice, and then he would continue his walk home.

You could tell how much the memory meant to him. The neighbours, their kindness, and that familiar walk had stayed with him all those years.

They continued driving in the direction of where Melvin had once lived on a farm in Nolalu.

A little farther along, Melvin asked Rhandey to pull over again.

"This is the road to the farm," he said. Melvin got out of the car and began walking down the dirt road. He lowered his head and simply stood there.

There wasn't really anything that needed to be said. It was the road home. The same road that had once taken a younger Melvin toward the farm where he grew up with his mother and father was beneath his feet again.

Melvin, you remain in our thoughts and in our hearts, and we will always be grateful for the memories you gave us.

And perhaps that is how we can remember you best: walking once more toward home, carrying with you the stories and memories and joys that you gave to everyone you met along the way.