



# 2024/2025 Annual Report

A Year of Accomplishments.

APRIL 1, 2024 - MARCH 31, 2025

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### **Land Acknowledgement**

Community Living Durham North acknowledges that this organization lies under the Williams Treaties and the traditional territory of the Mississaugas, a branch of the greater Anishinaabeg Nation, including Algonquin, Ojibway, Odawa and Pottawatomi. We recognize that land acknowledgments are not enough. We need to pursue truth, reconciliation, decolonization and allyship in an ongoing effort to make right with all our relations.



## I - How We've Pursued Our 4-Point Strategic Plan

**We will provide services and supports that are second to none in their level of quality**

- In 2024-25 we improved our feedback loop by not sending out periodic Family Satisfaction Surveys by email. Instead, we now ask families for structured and anecdotal feedback when they are present for their family member's annual planning meeting. Based on the number of people who attend these meetings either in person or virtually, we expect that this kind of feedback on our performance will double. As each fiscal year comes to an end (on March 31), we will compile our results and share them with all people, and families, supported by CLDN.

Our truncated first report covers the eight-month period from implementation of the system in August 2024 until March 31/25. We received feedback from 32 families and 27 supported people. We asked everyone to answer 6 service quality questions and rate their feedback from highest to lowest on a scale of "strongly agree," "agree," "disagree" and/or "strongly disagree." Out of the 32 families who responded their feedback was 83% "strongly agree" and 17% "agree." Out of the 26 supported people who responded, their feedback was 72% "strongly agree," 26% "agree" and 2% "disagree."

- Quality services depend on appropriate levels of funding. In the DS sector, underfunding is chronic and, if judged by the growing waitlist, it's getting worse. On May 8, 2024, a delegation of supported people and staff attended the annual "Community Living Day at the Legislature" event. We were able to take advantage of the occasion to meet privately with MPP Todd McCarthy. Geoffrey Clayton, a parent with years of experience on the DS waitlist, participated along with CLDN Program Director Christine Robinson, and CEO Glenn Taylor. Our Leave-Behind document was entitled "A Sector in Crisis" (credit Community Living Ontario).

- And we reinforced this work by maintaining our profile in the community. In May 2024 we again celebrated May as Community Living Month at municipal flag raising ceremonies across North Durham.



- We continue to provide facilitation support to the A-TEAM, CLDN's group of self-advocates. The self-advocates had a long list of achievements between April 2024-March 2025:

- Attended the Day at the Legislature at Queen's Park in May 2024.
- Hosted an in-person/hybrid event in May 2024 on the topic of "Housing and Accessibility."
- Volunteered at Canada Day at Palmer Park.
- Attended the Community Living Ontario Conference in September.
- Created a PowerPoint presentation for use in connecting with local high schools on the topic "What Happens After High School."
- Updated the Statement of Rights which is a CLDN policy regularly reviewed with people who receive service and with those seeking to receive service.
- Hosted a general open meeting in February 2025 that focused on Person-Centered Language.

- In March 2025, the ATEAM self-advocates were invited to Region of Durham headquarters to discuss accessibility. Conversation topics included transit, user-friendly public communication, and job opportunity support through the Region for those who may require modifications to be successful in the interview process. The event was a great opportunity to connect with other self-advocate groups.



- Our Compliance Inspection occurred this year between January 6, 2025 and January 24, 2025. The MCCSS Advisor visited eight Supported Group Living Residences, two Intensive Support Residences, one Community Participation home base and one Caregiver Respite location. There was a total of four citations that were immediately addressed during the inspection.
- Our home in Cannington was equipped in 2024-25 with a brand new, fully accessible washroom that includes a wheel-in shower. This work will make it possible for some of the ladies to remain in their home. A Business Case was also prepared that secured MCCSS funding for a Feasibility Study with a view to upgrading the home to a B3 occupancy (in the parlance of the Ontario Building Code). This work, which will hopefully take place in 2025-26, would involve the installation of sprinklers and other life safety systems.

## **We will value our employees; recognize effort and achievement, and seek out and cultivate potential leaders**

- In early 2024 we held our annual training day for CLDN Team Leaders. The meeting is an opportunity for management to share information on updated processes, but it is also for Team Leaders themselves; a chance to network with colleagues and look for collaborative solutions to problems they're experiencing as individuals. We also welcomed Sharri-Ann Edmunds from Participation House as guest speaker. Sharri-Ann presented to us on "Equality, Diversity and Inclusion."
- In March 2025, Team Leader Day was mostly led by our Team Leaders. Senior Team Leaders presented topics to other team leaders in small groups. This gave the leaders an opportunity to network with each other on various topics including having difficult conversations, effective communication, delegation, positive advocacy and decision making through challenges and change. Our Director, Christine Robinson, also presented on person-centered planning from a practical lens to assist leaders in taking this information back to their teams to implement for people we support.

During Team Leader Day, employees who attended wore purple in support of Epilepsy Day.





• Our Leadership Program has continued to churn out skilled graduates. Pictured below is Maggie Laflamme at her CLDN graduation. Maggie went on to accept a contractual management assignment extending from July 2024 to August 2025.



Our Internal Leadership program was introduced in 2018; to date we have fifteen graduates. To enter the program, people must apply and be accepted. They are then matched to a manager who provides mentorship through (a) face to face discussion (b) the review of written materials and (c) by including the person as the mentor performs key elements of the managerial role. In this way the mentee might share on-call responsibilities over a weekend or look in on an annual meeting in which a program's fiscal budget is being developed. Typically, the participant will also be enrolled in external training when a specific need area is identified. With their permission, graduates are celebrated in the agency newsletter and there is a waitlist maintained of interested applicants.

More seasoned managers typically mentor people already in a Team Lead role, hopefully equipping them for a future promotion into management. Newer managers who have excelled as Team Leaders, mentor Direct Support staff who have their eyes on a Team Lead role.

In 2024-2025, six managers fueled the program. Two of them mentored would be managers and four worked with Team Lead aspirants. This year, we had two employees enrolled in Team Leader mentorship, one has completed the program and one is on their final step. We also had two employees enrolled in the Manager Mentorship program and both are near completion.

Six of our current managers and four Team Leads are graduates of the Leadership Program.

We are continuously reviewing the course content and updating information as necessary and making each person's experience individualized and geared towards the skills they would like to improve. We have added to the practical learning experiences as well. We have received positive accolades from all of our graduates about the course content, the amount they learned and the confidence they have in their leadership skills.

Promoting internally has always been one of CLDN's strong points. Of our eleven current Program Managers, nine of them were hired internally, having previously worked for CLDN in a direct care capacity (or, in one case, in Finance). Our Finance Manager, both of our HR Managers, the HR Director and both Program Directors were also "home grown."

- This year we rolled out a literal red carpet for thirty-four dedicated staff members who received their Years of Service Awards. Two people received 35-year awards! Four people received recognition for 25 years, and many more were recognized for their 20, 15, 10 and 5 years of service to CLDN.

Pictured below (centre-right) is Sheila Wotten who was recognized for 35 years of service.



- At the same event, held at the Piano Café in downtown Port Perry, we again recognized the winners of our monthly Big Believer – High Achiever Awards during 2024-25. The standout among these is selected each year by our Board of Directors. Pictured below is the presentation of CLDN's annual Jamie Ross Star of Excellence Award. The recipients were David Kelly, Jeanette Fulford, and Amber Atkinson for making David's dream trip a reality! We were thrilled to have Louise Renwick join us to make the presentation on behalf of her late partner.



**We will pay close attention to helping people and families who are on the margins of the service system, who want to manage their supports independently, or who are “waitlisted”**

- We held a Planning for Life after High School session on October 23, 2024, to connect with “new” families. The topics covered included eligibility and how to apply to the DSO, when to apply to ODSP, what information will ODSP require, our fee for service programs v. our funded programs, etc.
- In January 2025 we sent a survey to families via the high schools in Scugog, Brock and Uxbridge to gather statistical and other information on the next generation of service users, and especially to better understand their priorities.
- Team Leaders of our two Community Supports programs, in Uxbridge and Port Perry, attend transition meetings at the request of Port Perry, Uxbridge and Brock high schools. At these meetings, the Team Leaders educate families and share resources on how to access adult developmental services. They also talk about service navigation and when the student should apply for services.



- The managers of our Respite and Community Access programs attempted to visit all three high schools in north Durham and met five families at Port Perry High School, and one family at the Brock High School, to discuss the process of transitioning out of high school. The two Team Leaders from the Community Supports have completed transition meetings at the Uxbridge High School with nine families, and with two families at the Brock High School. For many people, this means transitioning out of a mandated educational service into a waitlisted DS service.

- We have assisted many families to access the DSO and to provide a caregiver update.

To elaborate, we encounter many families through word of mouth or our website. We try to facilitate their outreach to the DSO and if appropriate we share with them fee-for-service options that exist at CLDN or at other nearby agencies. The Community Supports team may arrange a time to support the family to call the DSO to update their file, request a further assessment or to advocate for crisis support, if required. We also perform a kind of case management assisting the family to submit paperwork or to fill out online applications. Community Living Durham North feels this is a vital resource and support for families even though we are not funded for case management services within our catchment area.

- Community Living Durham North collaborated with Community Living Ajax Pickering and Whitby, Developmental Services Ontario, Participation House Durham Region, The Abilities Centre and Durham Association for Family Resources and Support to host a successful Family Forum on June 19, 2024. The forum featured insightful presentations from family groups such as Achieve, Our Daughter's Home, Shared Dreams and the Haliburton Smith Family. In addition to the presentations, the forum showcased information booths from numerous partners with whom attendees could engage.



## **We will improve and modernize our business and administrative processes/tools so as to operate more economically and professionally**

- We're getting closer to being completely paperless in our Finance and Human Resources departments.

Although some paper forms are still in use, every document is promptly scanned and stored electronically. Our vision is to transition fully to a paperless environment, where all records are securely stored and easily available in electronic format. This shift will not only eliminate the need for physical storage space but also improve accessibility, allowing staff and auditors to quickly locate the information they need. As a result, from day-to-day admin to the annual audit and compliance process, we will be faster and more efficient, with supporting documents easily accessible through our digital system rather than through time-consuming manual searches.

- We are in the process of upgrading our accounting software.

Our current system is outdated and no longer receives updates. We are actively reviewing new accounting software options that will support a fully paperless process, improve efficiency, cut down on scanning time, and reduce double data entry. This upgrade will help us operate more economically and professionally by streamlining workflows, reducing manual work, and improving accuracy. We hope to have a better reporting tool to help with budget development and monitoring.



- We are moving.

Our administrative flagship building was built with fund-raised dollars in 1979. In 2024 we sold that building and purchased new office space. When the transaction completes in November 2025, we will begin our move out of an industrial zone on the edge of town, where we have inadequate parking, and into a stylish and iconic building, formerly the home of the Port Perry Star, that is situated in the very heart of downtown Port Perry. The building has its own parking lot and a large public parking lot directly across the street. We will double our square footage, and for the first time since the 1990's have all our administrative and management teams in the same building, facilitating enhanced levels of collaboration, teamwork and effective communication.

The vastly improved storefront will enhance the profile of the agency and that of the population we serve. We will save precious resources that we've been spending on rent and re-direct them into service delivery and improved admin systems.



- We have updated our interview practices

Our Human Resources department now begins the hiring process with an on-line pre- screening session that includes a written assignment. This is followed by the more traditional in-person interview, and an on-site visit. The new pre-screening element has enabled us to put more focus on strong candidates and to hire more of them, more quickly.



## II - Our Housing and Homelessness Support Program (HHSP)

Community Living Durham North operates a Housing and Homelessness Support Program (HHSP) that is funded by the Region of Durham. Our small team of Outreach Workers provides housing stability support to people in the Scugog, Brock and Uxbridge Townships. This includes varying levels of assistance concerning RGI housing applications, dealing with landlords, accessing ODSP/Ontario Works and ID replacement. They help to connect people to food security programs, employment supports, mental health supports and crisis management. They can provide harm reduction supplies and related training, or warming solutions in winter, or attend at Landlord & Tenant Board hearings. A priority of the program is to utilize a “Housing First” approach to ensure people are connected within their community and are safe.

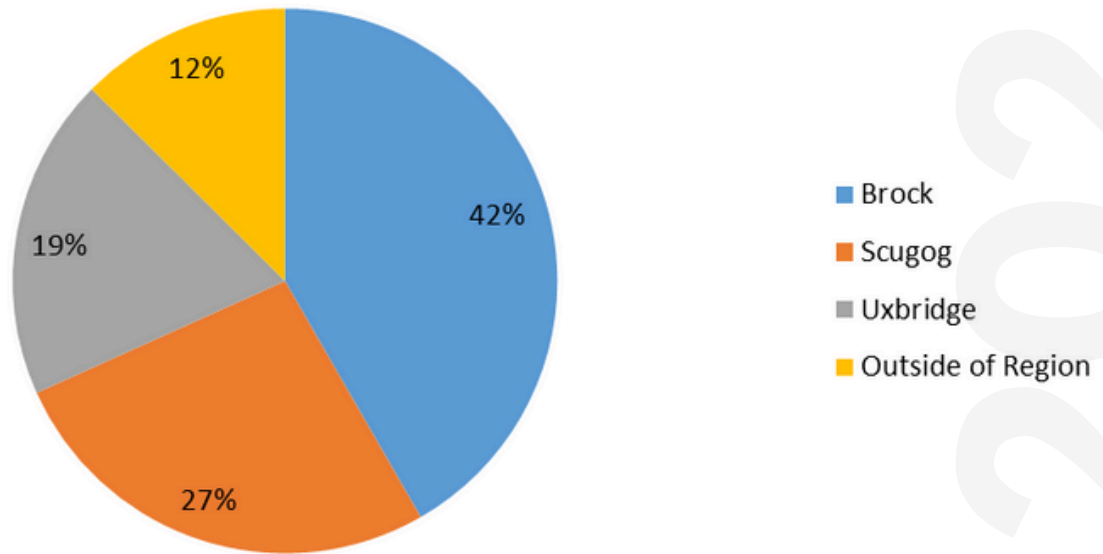
During this fiscal, we were able to connect with the GAP Committee of Durham Region. This is a grassroots organization that is led by people with lived experience. We partnered with them at events designed to inform people who are experiencing homelessness in the north of Durham Region.

We also had the opportunity to be involved in the opening of Beaverton Heights, which is a 47-unit complex in Beaverton, ON. This is a transitional housing program that can be accessed for up to 4 years. Goals are developed with people for treatment and to explore suitable, long term housing options. Some of our Housing clients moved into Beaverton Heights and we assisted them with this transition.

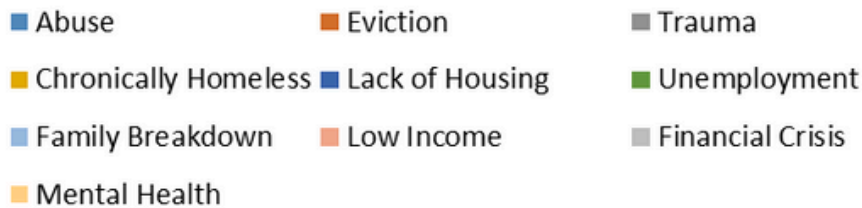
Below is some historical data concerning the occurrence and mitigation of homelessness in north Durham, along with some demographic data pertaining to fiscal 2024-25:

Year	People Housed
2019	36
2020	45
2021	41
2022	57
April 2023-March 2024	81
March 2024-April 2025	66 housing placements – 33 housing retention

## Client Demographics by Township



## Contributing Factors to Homelessness or At Risk of Homelessness April 2024-March 2025



Our winter warming program ran from December 1, 2024, through March 31, 2025. The winter of 2024 was especially harsh and it was difficult for people to access shelters even when space for them was available. Transportation to these spaces in the North is a huge barrier.

Thanks to the Region of Durham, we were also able to assist financially, as seen below:

Items	Amount Given
Transportation Passes	7
Grocery Cards	45
Gas Cards	56
Phone Cards	4
Dining Cards	33

### III - Our Social Media Activities

Our social media platforms again exceeded their reach over the previous year and are proving to be a vital tool for advancing our agency’s vision: a community where everyone is valued. Through regular posts and engagement, we have increased public awareness, educated our community about developmental services and, most importantly, highlighted the incredible people we support. Social media has strengthened our connections with families, staff and the community, while also aiding in recruitment and volunteer engagement. It has also provided an accessible platform for self-advocacy, allowing advocates to share their expertise and lived experience.

Our reach on Facebook has increased by 75% and the number of visits has increased by 28%.

Our most watched video was viewed for a total of 9 hours and 8 minutes. It showcased supported people attending the iFly indoor skydiving experience.





Our top posts in 2024-2025:

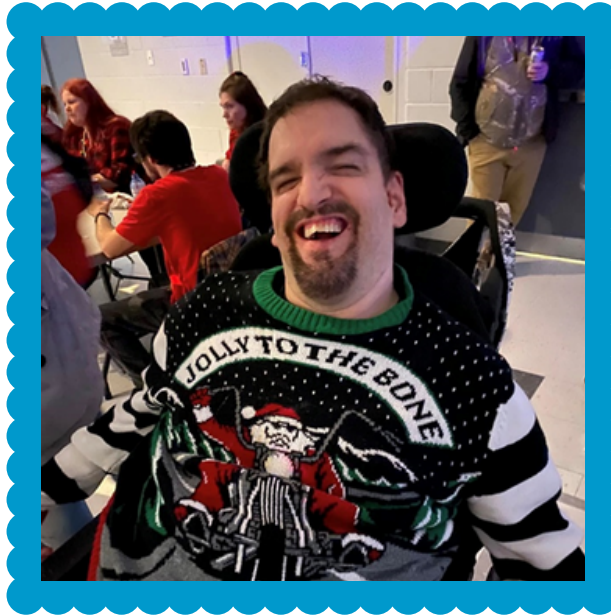
**#1 Volunteer Pride** - Our top post with 5,883 views that reached 2,765 people and had 253 reactions. A post that truly encompasses a community where everyone is valued.



**#2 We Are Hiring** - This post had 3,362 views, reached 1,480 people and showcases the reach that social media has in our recruitment efforts



**#3 Holiday Dance** -This post did not have the same reach as the first post but did have 2256 views and the most likes out of any of our posts and showcased our CLDN Holiday Spirit! Post such as these strengthen connection with family, and the incredible people we support.



## **IV - Employee Health and Safety**

Our 2024-25 Joint Health and Safety Committee was, and is, comprised equally of Employee and Employer representatives. Four of the eight reps are Health and Safety certified. This year, we welcomed new employee and employer members. The committee meets every other month to review all employee injuries. It is dedicated to looking for patterns and trends that will inform its recommendations to management.

Some highlights of health and safety improvements in 24/25 were:

- Updated Terms of Reference Handbook.
- Porta count Fit Testing – A professional company came in to provide high quality N-95 fit testing for 200 employees.
- New Generator training provided to all front-line staff.
- New documents created to assist with developing exceptional risk assessments.
- A focus on shovelling safety- reminders about how to shovel safely, making sure all locations had access to ergonomic shovels and shoe cleats.
- Increased education re: slips trips and falls throughout the year.
- More consistent monthly newsletters from the committee providing education and support.
- Updated the in-house health and safety rep training on our Surge Learning Platform.