

Mary Centre
20 years
CELEBRATING DEVELOPMENTAL CHALLENGES

NEWSLETTER

A Testament of an Integrated Senior

Linda has been a part of the Integrated Seniors Program with Mary Centre for three years now. She has come a long way and is a social butterfly who loves to get out and meet new people. When Linda walks into the crafters group at Flower City Senior Centre, she is greeted with smiles, energy, and hugs. Everyone is happy and excited to see her there. What is she knitting now? Has she finished her blanket? Who is she making that for? She is a delightful addition to the group!

Linda fits right in with the ladies in her knitting group. She has a contagious giggle that gets everyone in a better mood right from the start. Part of her role is to help new members with basic knitting stitches. She is gentle with new learners, and patient with the mistakes they have made. She is sensitive to other's needs and is always looking to encourage the ladies on their projects, just as they encourage her on her accomplishments. She has made many new friends and looks forward to seeing her "ladies" every week.

Linda's "go to project" is baby blankets, which she knits religiously. When she is not making one for her many friends and "worker ladies" she is making extras for the Brampton Life Centre, an organization for single mothers.

In addition to making friends, Linda has overcome obstacles through this program. When I first met Linda she was anxious and worried about making mistakes on her projects and would often cry at the slightest issue.

Now, Linda laughs at her mistakes and is excited to learn new things and to start new projects! Furthermore, Linda has problems reading and writing, but she has learned how to read a pattern and count her stitches to create new projects such as pillow cases and baby clothes. This has been a huge accomplishment for Linda and she shows great pride in the work she has done.

Seeing Linda's progress has been an inspiration throughout the years I have worked with her. She has been a true testament to how friendships and being a part of community helps to improve our quality of life!

By Elisha Kroeker



Somebody Up There Likes Us!

In the middle of the coldest wettest Spring in recent memory, there came one day of glorious sunshine and warmth. It was May 10th. The date set for the annual Mary Centre charity golf tournament.

To top a perfect day, the tournament raised a record amount of money -- \$36,000 – all of which will go directly to help our clients and their caregivers.

There were no losers on this day at the fabled Glen Abbey golf course. But some of the winners were luckier than others. The foursome of Frank Penny, Art Penny, Frank Pegalo and Tim Wheeldon won Stanley's Mug with a net score of 64. Well done!

Christopher Palumbo won the closest to the pin prize while Dana Oberman and Mike Klajerman won for longest drives. Brodie McKinney and Mark Pointet tied for best score in the putting contest.

Great weather, great golf course, great friends and a record amount of money raised – yes, somebody up there likes us. Thank you to all the participants, sponsors and volunteers who made this day a great success.



“Celebrating Developmental Challenges”

Integrated Seniors' Program

Please allow us to introduce ourselves and tell you about this great program that enriches the lives of seniors in our communities. We are the Integrated Seniors Program Coordinators for Toronto and Peel regions. Following our mission statement, we are dedicated to supporting seniors with a developmental disability to improve their quality of life. We have learned that the people we support are persons first. This is never more obvious than when they are integrated into activities they find meaningful and fun. We see their gifts and talents shine through when given the opportunity to participate and contribute the same way you and I do.

Think about integration and ask yourselves, what does it mean to be fully and completely integrated into community? Let's give you an example: one of our seniors joined a bowling league, paid and was enrolled, and then got to bowl in a separate lane alongside the other teams. They talked to her on break and she joined in on the contests and generally had a good time. The question to you all is - is this integration? We think not.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

May , 2012

Annual Golf Tournament Fundraiser
Glen

November 3 2011

Annual Fundraiser
Famous People Players Dinner Theatre

Integrated Seniors' Program *Continued*

We don't always get it right, but our goal is to support our seniors to participate in activities as similar in nature to that of other seniors in that community. This senior was never put on a team; an essential part of being a member of that community. We think integration includes: respecting the person's right to choose what activities they want to participate in, developing new friendships, reaching goals and learning new things, and being a valued member of their community just like everyone else.

The benefits are obvious and exciting for our seniors, but there are clear benefits to our communities as well. The most important is breaking down stereotypes and negative attitudes towards seniors with a developmental disability. With these barriers broken down, the participants learn much more from each other throughout the process. The support of the community is integral to the success of the program and we could not do it without the kind hearts and open minds of the seniors in their communities.

We could go on and on about the amazing stories of integration and the joy it has brought to our senior's lives. But we will leave you with this; until you have seen a smile from someone who is drinking Timmies for the first time, or someone who is laughing at a common joke with a new friend, or a person who is enjoying giving back to an agency that has meant so much to them, you really have not seen true community.

By Angela Pearce & Elisha Kroeker

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