

MEDIA RELEASE



Finding Meaning in Every Day: CLA Celebrates 60 Years During Community Living Month

Lanark County's community living movement marks six decades of inclusion, driven by families, staff, and everyday champions.

May 12, 2025 (Almonte, ON) — This May, Community Living Association – Lanark County (CLA) quietly marks a major milestone: 60 years of walking alongside people with intellectual disabilities. Rather than celebrating with a big event, CLA is choosing a path that reflects its core values—being present, building relationships, and finding meaning in the every day.

“For us, Community Living Month isn’t about balloons or banners,” says CLA CEO Robert Eves. “It’s about honouring the relationships that define us and continuing the work of inclusion, one day at a time.”

Rooted in Family. Sustained by Community.

Founded by local families in 1965, Community Living began as a powerful act of advocacy—a call for a better life for their children with disabilities. Sixty years later, that same spirit drives CLA forward. Families are still at the heart of the movement, working alongside staff and community partners to build a future grounded in equity, belonging, and voice.

As CLA turns 60, it proudly renews its promise: to stand with families and advocate for a developmental services sector that sees the full worth of every person—and supports them to thrive.

Inclusion, Every Day

Inclusion isn’t a program—it’s a way of being, lived out daily through meaningful connections, purposeful support, and shared successes. It’s seen in the lives of the people CLA supports as they work toward personal goals, build careers, and pursue passions with confidence and purpose.

- **Heather H.**, supported by CLA to follow her love of horses, has grown from doing barn chores to taking part in therapeutic riding and training foals. She now dreams of owning a horse of her own. “I love my time at the barn,” she writes. “Horses have added a deep love to my whole being.”

- In downtown Carleton Place, **Foundry Books & Novelties** is redefining what a bookstore can be. Operated by people supported by CLA, this social enterprise offers employment, skill-building, and a sense of purpose through meaningful work. One of its most beloved ambassadors is **Peterh**, whose weekly video series, Peterh's Pick, introduces customers to gently used books—promoting literacy, creativity, and community connection.
- **Chris**, who is supported by CLA in his career journey, recently marked **29 years of employment** at Canadian Tire in Carleton Place—a remarkable achievement that speaks to the power of inclusive, long-term job support and the value of meaningful work.

The People Behind the Promise

CLA's staff are the heart of this work. They support dreams, build relationships, and help people live with dignity and pride. Whether they're helping someone move into their first apartment, organizing an inclusive event, or simply showing up on a hard day, their care and commitment shine through.

"Our staff find meaning in small, everyday moments," says Amanda Matheson, CLA's Chief Administrative Officer. "That's where real inclusion lives—in genuine, respectful human connection."

A Shared Commitment

As a proud member of the **Lanark Community Alliance**, CLA warmly congratulates **Carebridge Community Support** on its 50th anniversary. For five decades, Carebridge has been a vital force in the community—creating opportunities for connection, care, housing, and inclusion. CLA is proud to work alongside organizations like Carebridge to help build a stronger, more inclusive Lanark County.

A Commitment That Endures

After six decades, one thing is clear: inclusion isn't a trend or a one-time achievement. It's a promise renewed each day—in homes, workplaces, barns, bookstores, and quiet everyday moments.

"This month, and every month, we stand with the people we support and their families," says Eves. "We'll keep building together. We're just getting started."

Community Living Association (Lanark County) is a charity supporting individuals with intellectual disabilities to enable and assist them to live a quality life in their community with dignity and respect.

CONTACT

Kaitlyn Nault | Executive Assistant & Board Relations

Carebridge Community Support, Community Living Association Lanark County & Clayton Seniors Housing Corporation

613.256.1031 ext. 264 | knault@lcalliance.ca