



Continuity  
Care Inc.

**Support. Planning. Peace of Mind.**

**Annual Report  
2023 - 2024**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

President Message.....	3
Executive Director Message .....	4
Strategic Plan .....	5
<b>Financial Stability</b>	
Finance Committee Report.....	6/7
Donations .....	7
Mike Keane Classic .....	8/9
Innoweave Project .....	9
<b>People</b>	
2023 – 2024 Board of Directors.....	10
Welcome & Fairwell to Board Members.....	11/12
HR Committee .....	12/13
Family Advisory Committee .....	13
Membership.....	13/14
In Memory .....	14
<b>Advocacy</b>	
Advocacy Article .....	15
<b>Services &amp; Supports</b>	
Lifetime & Annual Member Outreach .....	16/17
Sharing Circle Report .....	17/18
Workshops.....	18
Groups .....	19
CBADM Project.....	19/20
Family & Friends Group .....	20/21
<b>Communications &amp; Marketing</b>	
Website, Social Media & Advertising.....	22



## A Message from Our Board President

Continuity Care has been busy this past year on many different levels; helping families and individuals who live with a disability; advocating on behalf of our members both on an individual and political level; connecting with community partners to stay up to date on available services, resources and issues that families may be facing, and of course our continuing support of the Mike Keane Hockey Classic. The work and commitment that the board and staff continue to demonstrate has made what Continuity Care is today - *an organization that has become well known and respected not only among our members but also our community partners and various levels of government.*

We are always happy to welcome new board members, so I want to welcome both Liz Allen and Tania Douglas to the Continuity Care family. I know it's only been a few short months since you've joined but we already see the love, commitment and devotion that you both have and look forward to working with both of you for many years.

When I was asked back in 2020 to consider becoming President, I remember thinking, "Who me?" I've always been someone who is most comfortable working "behind the scenes". I have to be honest, I was very anxious and nervous at the start, but with the support of the staff and my fellow board members, the past few years as President as been exciting, challenging, a definite learning curve but most of all, an honour. I believe change is good. So after several years, I have made the decision to resign as President of Continuity Care. I look forward to continuing working with this organization as Past-President and member of the Human Resource Committee.

I want to thank the staff, board members and all the volunteers for their continued support, passion and commitment they have shown over the past year.

Until we meet again, take care of yourself, your family and each other.

Sherry Desilets, Board President

*"Times and conditions change so rapidly that we must keep our aim constantly focused on the future."*

*Walt Disney*



# A Message from Our Executive Director

When I reflect on the past year, it has been one of many changes. These changes happen at various levels and impact us all in different ways. Some people respond to change better than others. I recall one parent describing her son with Autism, saying “he doesn’t do change” but this is true of so many people; not specific to those with disabilities.

At the provincial level, the election on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, resulted in a change in government. Many of the MLA’s also changed, including the Minister of Families and we worry and wonder how this will change our relationships, connections and allies within government, the priority of the disability sector, and the budget and funding for the services and supports which many of our members rely on.

There has also been change within the Department of Families and programs. One of these changes which has been particularly challenging is how CSW’s are assigned. This meant a change in worker for many of our members, which can be confusing and feels like you are starting from the beginning, again.

Within our organization, we have also experienced changes, at the board level with several board members stepping down and new people joining. We also had a change in staffing, with Jayda Taylor resigning from the MSOF position in April and the hiring of Jullie Nguyen in June.

As challenging as change is; it also helps us to grow and adapt and we learn that we are stronger and more resilient than we thought. It can also take us in new directions and places, which can be scary, but with that comes new opportunities we didn’t know about before and are usually worth it. Having people around you to lean on during these times of change is also helpful.

I would like to take this time to thank my team of supporters, which includes my family, friends, co-workers, colleagues at 120 Maryland, the board members and most importantly, the members of Continuity Care who continue to inspire and motivate me each and every day.

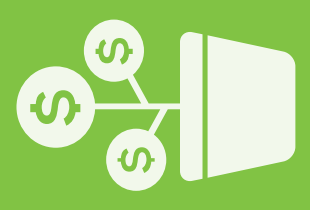
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Suzanne Swanton". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Suzanne Swanton  
Executive Director

*“Be the change you wish  
to see in the world”*

*Mahatma Gandhi*



## Financial Stability

Growth of existing and exploration of new financial resources is important to our continued success.

- Maintain strong financial management: **1**
  - Informative and accurate monthly reporting
  - Prudent investment management
  - Responsible stewardship
- Explore & clarify the relationship with True North Youth Foundation: **2**
  - Future of Mike Keane hockey tournament
  - Other opportunities
- Diversify revenue streams: **3**
  - Explore the hiring of a fundraising/fund development consultant to work with us on a 5 prong approach:
    - new fundraising ideas
    - leave a legacy
    - donor stewardship
    - fee for service/social enterprise
    - grant opportunities
- Grow our funds with The Winnipeg Foundation: **4**
  - The main endowment fund to cover our annual operating expenses
  - The new Justine Steinkopf Memorial sub-fund:
    - Phase 1 - to fund the Baby Boomer Café
    - Phase 2 - to provide grant opportunities for individuals in the community
- Explore new office space (before Sept 2025): **5**
  - Explore the financial implications of new office space, analysis of occupancy costs
  - Purchase our own building
  - Co-op model with other orgs at 120 Maryland
  - Start a capital campaign if purchasing
  - Create a sub-committee with reps from Finance, HR, FAC and E.D.



## People

Recognize the strength, dedication, and capacity of those who are currently involved and prepare to expand, enhance and diversify for the future.

- Staff: **1**
  - Policy development (getting our house in order)
  - Hire a HR consultant to review and update HR policies related to staff/employment
- Professional development
  - Ensure that wages and benefits are competitive with other non-profits and disability sector organizations
  - Volunteer policies and procedures
  - Be mindful and use a lens of EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion)
  - Internal communication (regular staff meetings, keeping everyone informed)
- Board: **2**
  - Hire a consultant to assist with:
    - Succession planning
    - Recruitment of new board members, with a focus on parents and siblings and EDI (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion), rural and northern
    - Governance and professional development
  - Recruitment of new members for Sub-committees
    - Form a nominating/governance committee
- Membership **3**
  - Plan to increase our membership base
  - Membership stewardship
  - Expand to rural and northern communities
  - Reflective of EDI (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion)
- Ensure that we are aware and compliant with the standards and requirements under the Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA) **4**
  - Increase our volunteer base: **5**
    - Explore the addition of a Volunteer Coordinator to our staff team to assist with recruitment and training of volunteers for:
      - Board members and subcommittees
      - Fundraising and community events
      - Sharing circle/support networks for isolated individuals and those without family involvement



## Advocacy

By actively seeking strategic alliances we will advocate on a micro-level for individuals and families as well as on a macro-level for system change.

- Advocating for people who fall through the cracks' focusing on young adults, adults who are not eligible for CLDS and their families: **1**
  - Continue to advocate for those individuals and their families who qualify for CLDS and other formal services on issues they are experiencing: **2**
    - Continue to build our strategic alliances with other disability groups and organizations across Manitoba, such as: **3**
      - Abilities MB
      - 120 Maryland Group
      - Children's Coalition
      - Jordan's Principle team
    - Indigenous organizations
    - VPA Task Force
    - Newcomer organizations
    - Schools
- Lobby the provincial and federal government on issues affecting the disability community - policy and legislation: **4**



## Services & Supports

We will continue to provide services and supports that are relevant to those we serve.

- Grow the number of Sharing Circles using a variety of approaches, including: **1**
  - Facilitator model
  - Tool kit – Do It Yourself model
  - Volunteer recruitment for circle members and community advocates
- Continue to provide support to families: **2**
  - On an individual basis
  - Peer support for parents through groups
  - Peer support for siblings, groups and the Baby Boomer Café
  - Helping to connect families on specific areas of interest/need
  - Family advocacy
- Provide opportunities to educate and inform families through our: **3**
  - Workshops
  - Launch into life
  - Planning tools / resources
  - Online learning opportunities (ex. Webinars)
- Expand and provide person centered planning to more members and individuals who are not connected to our organization: **4**
  - PATH & MAP facilitation
  - Fee for service – additional revenue
- Evaluate the kinds of services and supports we are offering and their effectiveness and impact for our members: **5**



## Communications & Marketing

Continuity Care will be known across Manitoba for being the "go to" resource for adults with disabilities and their families.

- Launch and promote our legacy/planned giving campaign – by Oct 2022 at our anniversary event: **1**
  - Launch and promote our new advisor to trust service – by October 2022 at our anniversary event: **1**
  - Expand our website to make it more user friendly and easy for people to find us, sign up, join, donate: **2**
    - Phase 1 - add more resources, online membership process
    - Phase 2 - member portal - access to more online learning, webinars
  - Expand our reach to more rural and northern communities: **3**
  - Networking, collaborating and information sharing: **4**
    - Share what we are doing and understand what other organizations are doing
    - Start with the organizations at 120 Maryland
  - Avoid duplication of services and resources
  - Connect with the education system, school divisions and schools
  - Advertise and promote who we are and what we do: **5**
    - Develop a branding and marketing plan
    - Expand our Social media presence
    - Explore new hardware & software to improve communications
      - Maximize Zoom as a all-in-one platform - add audio/phone option
    - Develop our hybrid approach to make it a quality experience for users

# **Financial Stability**

## **Finance Committee Report**

The members of the Finance Committee are Nick Paulley (Treasurer), Merv Gunter, Jeoff Chipman, Karen Leggat, Patti Makinson (Office Administrator) and Suzanne Swanton (Executive Director).

This committee reviews the monthly financial statements and as Treasurer, Nick provides quarterly reports to the Board. They also assist with the preparation of the annual budget and provide direction to the staff and board with regard to any financial matters which arise during the year.

The work of this committee over the past year included discussions around the appointment of Rawluk and Robert as our accountants to complete the annual review and financial statements. After some communication and clarification regarding time frames, we are pleased to report that we are continuing to engage their firm's professional services for 2023-2024.

The Finance Committee also consulted with the HR Committee and Board with regard to this year's COLA increase and wages for staff.

With the establishment of the new Justine Steinkopf Memorial Sub-Fund at The Winnipeg Foundation in March 2022, we have created a new sub-committee including Merv Gunter, Jeoff Chipman, Max Steinkopf and Suzanne Swanton to begin work on developing Terms of Reference, policies and guidelines for how the revenue will be utilized. As of March 31, 2024, the balance of this sub-fund is \$21,024.85 and the spending policy set by The Winnipeg Foundation for this year is 5%, which will generate approximately \$1051 that can be paid out as quarterly payments or could remain in the fund to generate growth for future use.

The challenge for this fiscal year was the postponement of the Mike Keane Celebrity Hockey Classic, our annual fundraising event, which was initially scheduled for January 31 and February 1<sup>st</sup> and was postponed to April 10 and 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024. It resulted in an unanticipated shortfall in our revenue for 2023-2024. We are grateful for the continued partnership and support from The True North Youth Foundation and Mike Keane and are pleased to be a part of the 11<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Mike Keane Classic, in honor of Rick Rypien.

On the positive side, we were also able to transfer \$30,000 from our savings account into the Endowment Fund which helps to generate matching grants provided by The Winnipeg Foundation. Overall, the Endowment Fund has increased in value over the past year with a balance of \$3,944, 847 as of March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024. The spending policy set by the Winnipeg Foundation also increased from 4.8% to 5.0% for their 2024 fiscal year, which translates to higher quarterly payments towards our annual operating expenses.

With prudent financial management by the Finance Committee, the Board and staff of Continuity Care and The Winnipeg Foundation, we have been able to maintain a strong cash position and are feeling optimistic as we head into the 2024-2025 fiscal year.



## Donor Recognition

We would like to take this time to recognize the following individuals and families for their generous gifts to Continuity Care's Endowment Fund and the Justine Steinkopf Memorial Fund throughout the 2023-2024 year.

Linda & Brian Ormonde  
Jane & Brian Schledewitz  
Marcy Tschetter  
Rebecca Ehnes

John Van Houte  
Anonymous Donor  
Merv Gunter

We would like to recognize the people who have made donations directly towards Continuity Care's operating expenses and to the Family & Friends Group. This is another option for donors and is truly appreciated as it assists us in meeting our yearly budget and allows us to direct more funds towards our programs and services to families.

Thank you to the following individuals, families, organizations, and corporations for their generous gifts in 2023-2024:

Anna & Ross Stokke	Sid & Arvadell Egesz	Albert & Sharon Yanofsky
Maria Teresa Talla	Marnie Loewen	Gisela Runge
Dorothy Schumacher	Cecile Alaire-Skene	Nancy Felbel
Don Ward	Adeline Berg	Lillian & Art Tendies
Antionietta Lopez	Art & Wilma Hock	Elsie Hignell
Pat Reid	Merv Gunter	Brenda Lennon
Mel & Eileen Lomenda	Norbert & Sherry Desilets	Allison Lyall
Wanda Gorzen	Zlatica Stauder	Natalie Mulaire
Shelly Blanco	Tommy Grozny	RBC Foundation
Norm Troughton	Jim & Michele Boux	United Way Foundation
Mary & Hank Kamminga		

## The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Mike Keane Celebrity Hockey Classic



On April 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024, the 11th Annual Mike Keane Classic was held at the Hockey For All complex in Winnipeg. This year's event was in honor of Rick Rypien, #11 from the Manitoba Moose, whose life ended much too soon. This is who Project 11 is named for and is one of the valuable programs offered by the True North Youth Foundation and provides a mental health curriculum for children and youth in schools across Manitoba. The proceeds from the Mike Keane Classic help to fund programs, such as Project 11 and other initiatives under the TNYF, as well as Continuity Care.

Once again Continuity Care provided a team of 35 enthusiastic volunteers to assist with a variety of roles during the event, including player registration, coat check (which was a little slower this year, thanks to the lovely Spring weather), drivers for the NHL alumni, distributing prizes and swag to the players and security at the rink doors. Thanks to Patti Makinson for all of her hard work and time coordinating our volunteers and also assisting with other tasks as needed.

This year's event was smaller in scale with 8 participating teams. Congratulations to Richardson Pioneers who were the top fundraising team this year. Frontiers North (owned by Merv Gunter – board member of Continuity Care) co-sponsored a team with Cardinal Capital and John Gunter was their team captain. This team has been a part of the event for all 11 years and we would like to acknowledge their efforts and support.

There were 12 NHL alumni who were drafted by the participating teams, according to their fundraising totals. They played with the teams and shared some of their stories and experiences, on and off the ice. They are always entertaining to listen to and watch during the event.



We premiered our new video at draft night, which is an opportunity for the players and pros to learn more about the charities and where their fundraising dollars are going towards. Thanks to Joey Forte from Brannek Video Productions for working with us to create this new video and to our Continuity Care members who are featured in it.



We would like to thank Mike Keane, Dwayne Green, Sydney Parker and their team from the True North Youth Foundation, Erin Bauldic from Spark and all the team sponsors, players and people who made donations in support of this event. We are sincerely grateful and appreciative to be a part of this event for the past 11 years. It is such a fun-filled event, and we look forward to it every year, as do our members and volunteers. Cheers to another successful event!





*“Volunteering for Continuity Care at the Mike Keane Hockey tournament was an incredibly fun and fulfilling experience. I met so many wonderful people, all coming together with a shared goal of having fun, raising funds and making a positive impact on the community. I can't wait to be a part of it again next year!”*

*As a relatively new member of Continuity Care, I have already witnessed firsthand the dedication and compassion that this organization and staff bring to our family and the community. The support and resources provided by Continuity Care have been invaluable to my family as we transition our daughter into the adult system. Through their workshops, we have learned so much about employment and income assistance (EIA), disability trusts and registered disability savings plans, estate planning, and learning about support networks and what is involved in transitioning to adulthood, giving us confidence to navigate the complexities of the system.”*

*Trish Guimond*

## **Innoweave Project**

One of our strategic planning goals is to diversify our revenue streams by exploring fee for service/social enterprise opportunities. To accomplish this goal, we applied for a grant provided by Innoweave and The McConnell Foundation and our proposal was selected and approved. In May 2023, we engaged the services of Frank Atnikov, with Frank Growth Solutions, as our coach and began to explore the possibilities of earning additional revenue through the delivery of 4 distinct services areas, which include: the advisor to the trustee, facilitation of PATH'S and MAP's, workshops and training to other agencies, and check in's on the child or family members for members. Our work included research on similar services, a feasibility study and determining the costs and a fee structure for these services.

One of the outcomes of our work on this project was understanding the value of our knowledge and expertise; not just financially but also the social impact and being able to monetize that and feel confident in offering fee for services options; not just to our members, but to others in the community.

The project was completed in January 2024 with the final report submitted in February 2024, which included recommendations and outlined next steps for our organization to move forward in this new social enterprise endeavor. We have chosen to focus our efforts on completing and launching the new advisor to the trustee service.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Frank Atnikov for his expertise and continued support for our organization and the McConnell Foundation for their funding for this important project.

# People

## **CONTINUITY CARE INC. 2023-2024 Board of Directors**

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### **OFFICERS:**

- President**                      **Sherry Desilets** - Parent (*joined the board in November 2014*)
- Past President:**              **Karen Leggat** - Sibling and business owner - Cropo Funeral Chapel (*joined the Board in 2007*)
- Secretary:**                      **Jo Verstraete** – Community Member - Retired (CSP - St. Amant) (*joined the Board in June 2001*)
- Treasurer:**                      **Nick Paulley** - Cousin and Finance Business Partner – Global Logistics (*joined the board in November 2021*)

### **Directors:**

- Merv Gunter**                      Sibling and business owner – Frontiers North (*joined the Board in June 1995*)
- Jeoff Chipman**                      Community Member - Vice - President – Megill-Stephenson Company Limited and former Vice Chair of Continuity Care’s Capital Campaign (*joined the Board in 2007*)
- Krista Clendenning**              Community Member – Partner at Tradition Law (*joined the board in November 2018*)
- Tania Douglas**                      Cousin, Friend, Executive Director – St. Amant Foundation (*joined the board in January 2024*)
- Liz Allen**                              Sibling, and Financial Coordinator, Innovative LIFE Options Inc. (*joined the Board in January 2024*)



## Welcome New Board Members

### Tania Douglas – Cousin, Community Member, Board Director



Tania Douglas brings nearly 20 years of fundraising experience in the charitable sector, working with organizations such as the Children’s Hospital Foundation, Inclusion Winnipeg, Mentoring Artists for Women’s Art (MAWA) and Continuity Care.

Tania is currently the Director of Development at Manitoba Opera and past-president of the Association for Fundraising Professionals, Manitoba (AFP) Chapter and a session instructor for AFP’s

Fundamentals of Fundraising course.

An unofficial cheerleader for cultural events in our province, Tania is a volunteer, patron and supporter for many of Manitoba’s year-round festivals and volunteers for “The Tree Huggers”, West End Cultural Centre, and a unit leader with the Embers (age 7 & 8) branch of Girl Guides.

### Liz Allen – Sibling, Community Member, Board Director



Liz Allen was born in Toronto but has lived in Winnipeg for the last 42 years. Liz is the oldest of three girls and her youngest sister was born with Down Syndrome. Liz’s parents were both extraordinary strong community advocates. Liz’s Father, Bob Manwaring was a founding member and the first Executive Director of Continuity Care until his passing in 2005.

Liz has a financial and administrative background and has worked in the disability sector for the past 20 years. This includes working for Continuity Care from 2007 – 2012 as the Office Administrator and has continued to volunteer at the hockey tournaments and bingo events.

Liz is honoured to join the Continuity Care Board of Directors and looks forward to contributing to the progression of this incredibly beneficial organization for families.

## Fairwell & Acknowledgement of Board Members

### Terry Williams



We said a sad farewell to one of our board members and friend, Terry Williams, who passed away suddenly on September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Terry joined the board in 2011 and contributed his time and talents in a variety of different ways. He was the Chair of our Human Resources Committee and provided our staff and fellow committee members with direction and

support. Terry was also the lead driver for the Mike Keane Celebrity Classic for several years and enjoyed transporting the NHL pros and special guests (including the Stanley Cup and handler) during this event. Terry graciously offered to help with various events, including our recent anniversary and family fun nights too.

Terry will be fondly remembered for his warm and friendly smile, his funny stories, his musical talents and his genuine care and compassion for others.

Our sincere condolences to Terry's wife, Janet, his children, grandchildren and his many friends and colleagues.

He is missed by so many.



Stanley Cup in the Box



## **Human Resources Committee**

By Jo Verstraete, on behalf of the HR Committee

Overall, this has been very busy past year for the HR Committee.

The members of this sub-committee included: Sherry Desilets, also our Board President/Chair), Liz Allen, Suzanne, our busy ED, who attends as needed, and myself, Jo Verstraete.

There are 4 areas I will highlight:

1st, in terms of staffing: I would like to recognize Suzanne Swanton who has been in the role of Executive Director for 18 years as of this September, while Patti Makinson celebrated her 6<sup>th</sup> year anniversary in January 2024. Jayda left her role as Member Support & Outreach Facilitator in April of 2024. In the meantime, Julie Nguyen replaced Jayda in that role as of June 2024.

We thank all our staff for their hard work, conscientiousness, and dedication to the work of the organization.

2nd, The HR Committee is responsible for reviewing salaries & wage scales for all staff positions and making recommendations to the Finance Committee and Board regarding wage

increases, including cost of living allowance (COLA). This year was indeed a challenge given the economic situation of today, but we did come to an agreement as a Board to provide an increase, along with extra days off during the Xmas break for this fiscal year. In addition, the wage scales in general are pending review within the next few months.

3rd, The Committee Members are reviewing the HR policy and procedure manual, and updates are near completion. This has been a huge undertaking, but it is important that we keep current with the changes & requirements of Employment Standards, both provincially & federally. One of the recent changes is the recognition of September 30<sup>th</sup>, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, as that is now a provincially legislated statutory holiday.

We are hoping to finalize our work on the HR Manual by the end of October, in order to focus on other priorities.

If you have an interest in Human Resources activities, we are looking for volunteers to join this sub-committee. Please contact Sherry, Suzanne or Jo for more information.

## **Family Advisory Committee**

The members of the Family Advisory Committee are: Sherry Desilets, Karen Leggat, Monique Chaput, Deb Roach, Rachel Smith, Becky Conia and Suzanne Swanton (acting chair). Patti Makinson takes minutes.

This sub-committee was not as active this past year, as Suzanne and a smaller sub-group were focused on finishing the work on the new Advisor to the Trustee service documents. We had hoped to have this work completed by September however, it will require some additional time to finalize the last few steps before it's ready to launch. Thank you for your patience and stay tuned in the coming months.

Suzanne and the 120 Maryland Group partners have also been busy with work on the Community Based Assisted Decision Making Pilot Project, which has been another area of focus this past year.

The Family Advisory Committee members is a valuable sounding board for Suzanne and provide useful feedback on issues we are hearing about from our members, changes in the government programs and areas which require advocacy.

We currently need someone to take on the role of Chair for the Family Advisory Committee. If you have an interest in joining this sub-committee, please contact Suzanne for more information.

## **Continuity Care Members**

As of March 31, 2024, we have 103 Lifetime Members; 5 new lifetime members joined this year. We have 56 Annual Members with 14 new annual members added to our membership

list. We would like to thank all our members for their support and for being a part of the Continuity Care family.

*“My husband Jim and I first learned about Continuity Care about six years ago, at a workshop that was provided by the Children’s Rehabilitation Centre for parents of children with special needs. The focus of the workshop was on how parents can access services for their children once they reach adulthood. These services included those provide by CLdS and Continuity Care.*

*I chose to become a member of Continuity Care in 2024, after I contacted the office to get some guidance on how to get funding for our daughter for her adult program, since she had “aged out” of high school at age 21. Jayda met with my family and provided not only guidance but a feeling of how this organization genuinely cared for people with special needs. Jayda played a very important role in helping to get my daughter’s funding in place. My family will always be grateful to Jayda.*

*Jim and I have been to several workshops presented by Continuity Care. The most recent one was in June 2024 on the topic of Residential Placements for People with Special Needs. The information that we received from the workshops has helped us to plan for our daughter’s future.*

*Jim and I would like to send out a heartfelt “Thank you” to Jayda, Suzanne and the rest of the Continuity Care team for making the unknowns of having a child with special needs a little less scary.”*

*Pat Pawluk*

## **In Memory of...**



### **Katherine (Kathie) Diane Walters**

She went to be with her Lord on Monday, December 4, 2023. Hers was a life well lived. She participated in many Baby Boomer Café (now known as Family & Friends Group) events. She will be cheering us on from Heaven.



### **Norma Hanley**

Norma passed away peacefully on July 2, 2024 at the age of 99. She raised four children, two were born with Down Syndrome. With the help of many in the caregiving community, she set an inspiring example for anyone looking to enhance the lives of persons with a disability. Norma was caring, giving, generous and she always seemed to recognize the greatness of others.

# Advocacy

Advocacy is an important aspect of our organization, and we were actively involved in many advocacy efforts this past year and at different levels.

We assist our members on an individual basis by making phone calls, sending emails and helping them with system navigation, getting answers to their questions and helping to access the services and supports they require.

Continuity Care is an active member of Abilities Manitoba and the Children's Coalition which are both opportunities to network with other disability organizations and work together on issues facing adults and children with disabilities and their families.

Here are some of the advocacy efforts we were involved with this past year:

- Assisting families whose child has been determined to be not eligible for Community Living disABILITY Services by helping them in exploring other options for services and understanding their right to appeal to the Social Services Appeal Board. Suzanne represented two families at their appeal hearings, in the role of advocate and helped them to prepare their case.
- As a representative of an advocacy organization, Suzanne is an active member of the Intellectual Disabilities Issues Advisory (IDIA) Council which meets regularly throughout the year. Suzanne also joined a sub-committee focused on the development of a provincial training strategy.
- Suzanne and other disability advocates met with representatives from the Department of Families and Employment and Income Assistance regarding the new Manitoba Supports for Person with Disabilities program to address issues related to its rollout and issues that recipients and their families were experiencing.
- Continuity Care co-hosted information sessions about the Disability and Health Supports Unit and provided feedback from our members to program representatives.
- Suzanne and the partners from the 120 Maryland Group met with Keri Ranson from the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee as part of the CBADM project.
- Suzanne and other representatives from Manitoba Autism groups met with provincial government staff to address gaps and barriers that adults with Autism and their families experience.
- We shared information with our members about the new Canada Disability Benefit and Suzanne participated in public consultations to address questions and provide feedback. Suzanne participated in a public forum for the 5-year review of the Accessibility for Manitobans Act.
- Staff, board members and members participated in the Disability Matter Vote campaign leading up to the October 2023 provincial election.

***Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.***  
***Margaret Mead***

# Services and Supports

## **Lifetime and Annual Member Outreach**

By Jullie Nguyen



Continuity Care has been aiding and supporting families for over 25 years. We are dedicated to helping individuals and families across Manitoba plan for a better quality of life for their loved ones. Today, we serve 103 lifetime members and 56 annual members and look forward to extending our services to even more individuals and families across the province.

As I step into my role as the new Member Support and Outreach Facilitator, I reflect on the experiences that have shaped my journey. Growing up as the eldest of three children in a first-generation immigrant family from Vietnam, I lived in an environment where disability was not openly acknowledged, even though it deeply impacted our lives. Sparring you the details – it boiled down to this: without a streamlined system to support individuals with disabilities, my brother and mother – and by extension, our entire family – fell through the cracks. It was a period of uncertainty and loss. While I cannot change the past, I can look forward and focus on what can be done. My work in this field, from direct support worker to residential supervisor, has deepened my commitment to making a difference, no matter how small.

Through my connections and conversations with various members, I've come to realize what a privilege it is to be in this role. Hearing your stories and understanding the impact Continuity Care has had on your lives and the lives of your loved ones has been invaluable. These insights reinforce the irreplaceable value of services like ours. While the field of disability is ever-changing and full of uncertainties, one thing remains certain: by working together, we can achieve more and go farther than we ever could alone.

Every day, I am learning something new in this role. To hear first-hand the gaps and inconsistencies that exist between some services through family testimonies and stories, yet equally inspiring to hear what works and could benefit others. Through groups like Three C's and Finding Hope Within the Cracks; people are helping to build each other up on foundations that are sturdier and more reliable for our community. I'm eager to share these insights with other members, offering support that is both informed and empathetic.

I've heard that the most helpful aspects of our support have been the personalized care and understanding we offer, especially when addressing the unique needs of adults with neurodivergent diagnoses. Common themes seem to arise as these individuals face with every day when not fitting neatly into established categories of disability support, leaving them feeling isolated or overlooked. The recurring theme is the need for more flexible, inclusive services that recognize and adapt to the diverse ways in which neurodivergence manifests. By continuing to listen and learn from these experiences, we can better support those who fall outside traditional service models, ensuring they receive the understanding and care they deserve.



Now, in this new chapter with Continuity Care, I am honored to work alongside you. Every story you share with me is a reminder of the resilience and strength within our community. It is a privilege to be part of your journey, and I hope that together, we can continue to find hope, healing, and a brighter future.



*"Một cây làm chẳng nên non, ba cây chụm lại nên hòn núi cao."*

*"One tree cannot make a mountain; three trees together can create a high mountain."*

This is a Vietnamese proverb which talks about the power of collaboration and unity: when people come together, they can achieve great things—much more than they could alone.

## **Sharing Circles**

### **The importance of relationships, connections and community**

A sharing circle is Continuity Care's term for a support network. They are known by other names, such as a Circle of Friends, a Circle of Support, support circles, etc. The common thread through all of these is relationships. Our focus is building natural, unpaid relationships for people with intellectual disabilities, who are often lacking in real friendships, struggle with meeting people and making connections in the community and may also experience isolation and loneliness.

We also assist parents, adult siblings and family caregivers to connect with others in similar roles and situations so that they have support and feel that they are not alone.

Our approach in developing sharing circles varies according to the person, family and their situation. We start by getting to know the person and listening to their story and learning about what their interests, gifts, strengths and goals are. We then assess who is currently in their life, past relationships, how they are connected to their community and who/what might be missing when it comes to support (formal and informal). Some people have naturally occurring support networks and are well connected to family, friends and their communities. For others, this may not be their experience, and they need someone to facilitate this for them. We are here to assist in whatever way is needed; providing resources and coaching, to a more hands-on approach of facilitating. Building a strong support network takes time, patience and persistence. We like to say it is "hard work and heart work".

If you are interested in learning more about sharing circles and support networks for you or your loved one, please contact Suzanne or Jullie.



## Workshops

This past year, we hosted 9 workshops on topics including: Manitoba Supports for Persons with Disabilities, Will & Estate Planning, Let's Talk About Support Networks, The Sibling Experience: Let's Talk About Their Important Role, The Fair Practices Office, the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth, Juggling Multiple Hats: "Inheriting" the roles of Trustee, Executor and SDM, Introduction to Adults Living with an Intellectual Disability Act (ALIDA), and Let's Talk About Support Networks and Assisted Decision Making

Thanks to our presenters for sharing their time, expertise and information with our members.

- Krista Clendenning – Partner with Tradition Law
- Vincent Villanueva & Emily Scott with Employment and Income Assistance
- Cheryl Roby - Fair Practices Officer and co-hosted by organizations at 120 Maryland
- Tanis Shaffer, Senior Program Specialist & Jacques Lafournaise, Commissioner for the Office of Adults Living with an Intellectual Disability
- Sarah Benson and Sonia Babyak - Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth – co-hosted by the organizations at 120 Maryland
- The partners of the 120 Maryland Group
- Our own Jayda Taylor and Suzanne Swanton
- And to the many Continuity Care members who volunteered their time to share their stories & experiences.

The workshops that we offer are valuable opportunities to obtain information and resources on a variety of topics related to planning. We learn so much from the presenters and from the questions asked by those in attendance. These are also opportunities for families to connect with each other and we appreciate seeing the conversations happening after the workshops are over. It is those parking lot conversations that remind us of how Continuity Care began.

## **Groups**

This past year, we tried a new format for our peer support groups, as we were experiencing a lack of responses and low attendance. We merged both the daytime and evening groups and the adult sibling conversation evenings into the new 3C's for Caregivers: Connection, Conversation and Coffee. This peer support group is for caregivers who are parents, siblings and extended family members of young adults (16+) and adults with an intellectual, developmental disability or Autism who are receiving services through Children's disABILITY Services or Community Living disABILITY Services. It is an opportunity to connect with other families, share experiences, learn about resources and most importantly take time for you as caregivers.

Last year we also started a parent group, called Finding Hope Within the Cracks (name chosen by the group members). This group is for parents of young adults and adult children with Autism who are experiencing challenges with accessing adult services and supports. They are not eligible for programs such as CLDS and Community Mental Health and are falling through the cracks of the systems. This group has grown in numbers and continues to meet on a monthly basis. The three aspects that this group offers are the opportunity for parents in similar situations to connect, to share resources which may be helpful for their child and family and to explore ways to advocate for systemic changes to address their children's unmet needs.

Both groups warmly welcome new members and those who are interested can join in person or virtually by Zoom.

## **The 120 Maryland group & the Community Based Assisted Decision Making Pilot Project**

The Community Based Assisted-Decision Making (CBADM) Pilot Project is a two-year project funded by the Government of Manitoba (Department of Families) and is delivered by the 120 Maryland group. The 120 Maryland group is a collaboration of community-based organizations which include, Community Living Manitoba, the Family Advocacy Network of Manitoba, Innovative LIFE Options, Inclusion Winnipeg and Continuity Care.

The project objectives include developing peer support networks for families, increasing capacity for the use of support networks, motivating the use of community based assisted decision makers and assisted decision making and reducing reliance on the Public Guardian and Trustee.

Year two has been very busy with a continuation of the in-person peer support events for parents and caregivers across the province. The first round of events and tour around the province was completed in July 2023 and this year we added the sharing of resources which

have been created and discussions on the topics of support networks and assisted decision making.

Two larger family gathering events took place in Dauphin on April 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024 and in Brandon on May 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>.

Training on the topics of support networks and assisted decision making were also delivered to three service provider organizations. There have also been two sessions for self advocates delivered as well.

A video series is being created which profiles stories and perspectives of individuals, families and agencies which will be used as resources to help inspire and teach others about the importance of relationships and support networks and how these help to support individuals decision making and self determination. Thanks to Joey Forte from Brannek Video Productions for his amazing talents of capturing these impactful stories.

The project has been extended to March 31, 2025 to complete the work on developing recommendations for a framework for assisted decision making in Manitoba. A final report will be provided to the Department of Families and we look forward to sharing our findings and what we have learned at that time.



Please visit the project's website at <https://120marylandgroup.org/>

## **Family and Friends Group**

Albert Yanofsky for the Family and Friends Group Organizing Committee

The Family and Friends Group (formerly the Baby Boomer Café) has had a busy, exciting and fun year! After much discussion within our group and consultation from Continuity Care we have officially rebranded our name to be more relevant and inclusive. We are now known as the new and contemporary, “Family and Friends Group”!

Our group continued to offer a variety of special and enjoyable events throughout this year. On July 11, 2023, close to 40 people had a fabulous potluck picnic at St. Vital Park, with lots of fresh air, food, music, games, friendship, scavenger hunt, singing and dancing etc. July 5<sup>th</sup> resulted in 20 folks having a thrilling time at Rainbow Stage enjoying the musical “Rent”. Then on July 12<sup>th</sup> and July 31<sup>st</sup>, about 25 members fancied getting together to cheer on the Winnipeg Goldeyes baseball team. Sept. 10, 2023, brought out a crowd of 44 people (spanning the vast age spectrum of 1 to 93) at our Kildonan Park potluck picnic café, again with lots of yummys, bonfire, music, fellowship, sharing circle, sports games etc.. The Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023, bingo bowl at Mosienko Lanes involved 14 enthusiastic bowlers, right Max? Finally on Jan. 27, 2024, 38 members flocked to the Kildonan Community Church for a thrilling potluck New Years celebration with gobs of food, music activities, companionship, games, singing, and special friendship bracelets from Leslie.

Our organizing committee consists of : Max Steinkopf, Albert Yanofsky, Gisela Runge, Ray Hignell and a very special welcome to Nancy Felbel, our newest member. Special recognition goes out to Gisela Runge, who continues to provide our committee with outstanding leadership, enthusiasm, and bookkeeping skills! We would also like to recognize the great support that the FFG receives from Patti and Suzanne. Thank you Suzanne for all your guidance and assistance with our group planning, goal setting, and visioning sessions etc. Patti, we appreciate all your time and help with our event planning and communication, in addition to coming out and lending your hands at our larger Café events.

The FFG remembers the following people, who recently passed away: Norma Hanley, Gilbert Hecht, Willie Carleton, Deborah Stoffman. May their memory be a blessing.

Since April 2024, we have held several well attended events. Come join us at our upcoming Kildonan Park Picnic Café on Sept. 14<sup>th</sup>!

Our 2 visioning and goal setting sessions, facilitated by Suzanne on May 31<sup>st</sup> and June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023 were very successful. We are well on our way of meeting and continuing to meet many of our goals this term such as:

- 1) branding the “Family and Friends Group” as our new name.
- 2) adding 1 more committee member.
- 3) presenting our vision to the Continuity Care Board.
- 4) purchasing a corn hole game and instituting a corn hole tournament at each Café event.
- 5) strengthening our relationship and increasing our communication with the Continuity Care Board since we now have a direct liaison through Max, who has recently joined the Continuity Care Board.

We continue to focus on working closely and collaboratively with Continuity Care as well as keep on working to expand to four formal events yearly, increase our membership up to 50 at each Café and strive to reach our fundraising goals of \$200.00 per term.



# **COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING**

## **Continuity Care's website**

This past year, we have been working with Justin Vandenberg from Dynamite Design on improvements to our website including a Member account feature and an online payment option. Visitors to our website can now sign up as a new member and register for workshops and make an online payment. Once the member account has been set up, you will receive reminders when your membership is due for renewal and can pay for that online. There have been a few hiccups which we are working through and thank you for your patience. If you are not comfortable with online payments, then it is still possible to pay by cheque, e-transfer or credit card by phone.

A special thank you to Justin and his team at Dynamite Design for their advice, support and excellent customer service throughout this process.



We would also like to acknowledge Charle Jenson from Uptime Networks for providing our website hosting and technical support services over the past year.



## **Continuity Care's New Video**

We are proud to share that a new promotional video was created this past year and was premiered at draft night at the Mike Keane Celebrity Hockey Classic. We would like to thank Joey Forte from Brannek Video Production for working with us to create this video. Joey is truly gifted in this field and has a way of making those in front of the camera feel at ease and captures the stories in such a beautiful and impactful way. We would also like to take this opportunity to say a special thanks to our Continuity Care members for being a part of this video project: Cathy Laver-Wright, Gisela Runge and Laura Schnellert.

If you would like to view the video, please use this link <https://youtu.be/iXH-F5fhK3c>

