Continuity Care Inc.

Support. Planning. Peace of Mind.

Annual Report
2024 - 2025

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Message from Our Board President

I am pretty new to the Manitoba disability community so I would like to take the time to introduce myself. I was raised on a farm in Southern Manitoba but spent my adult life exploring other provinces. In Ontario, I received my master's degree in Applied Social Psychology from the University of Guelph and worked with Dr. Roland Chrisjohn on the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People's Residential School Report. In Alberta, I married a Blackfoot man, had three wonderful Blackfoot children, and worked in many capacities with First Nations across Alberta and Canada. In British Columbia, as a young adult, I volunteered with BC's Adult Guardianship Coalition in the early 1990s, and then, later in my career, worked as a Program Director for Victoria Community Living overseeing child and youth programming, autism programming and an adult day program. In the spring of 2021, I took the leap to move back to Morden, Manitoba with my youngest son, to be closer to my parents and extended family, and began working as a Children's Service Coordinator with Manitoba Possible.

My son has First Nations status (I do not), and has medical complexities, as well as having diagnoses of cerebral palsy, autism, and an intellectual disability, so the move across provinces during the tail end of COVID was complicated, to say the least. When I moved from British Columbia in 2021, I knew I had to learn about the Manitoba disability landscape in quick order. I also had to update my will and estate plan to reflect Manitoba's legislation, so I searched for an organization similar to BC's Plan Institute. That is how I discovered Continuity Care. Once I learned about the various programs Continuity Care offered, and the advocacy the organization was involved with, I quickly signed up as a Lifetime Member and participated in as many of their workshops as possible. Within a year, I joined the Board of Directors. When Sherry Desilets stepped down as President, I committed to being Board President, as long as she was there to guide me along the way. I am forever grateful for the guidance and patience I've received from my fellow Board Members, Suzanne and all the staff as I step into this new role.

In my four years in Manitoba, Continuity Care has had a great impact on my family. Continuity Care was there to assist with Age of Majority planning, as well as when I updated my will to include a Henson Trust. They were there to support us while my son was moving from Children's disAbility Services to Community Living Disability Services, and during my application to become his Substitute Decision Maker. I am confident that Continuity Care will be there to help me navigate the next steps when he graduates high school – which is now less than a year away, and eventually assist the Trustee to the Henson Trust that I have set up for him upon my death.

I am still learning so much about the resources available to Manitobans with disabilities. Like many others, I have benefited greatly from Suzanne's willingness to share her knowledge of all things

disability-related, her steadfast commitment to systemic and individual advocacy, and the meaningful connections with organizations across the disability sector.

Every day, I am also learning from the breadth of skills, experience and wisdom that my fellow Board Members bring to the table. While our Board Members are diverse, we come together with one purpose: to fulfill Continuity Care's mission of improving the quality of life of Manitobans with disabilities and their families.

I feel privileged to be the President of Continuity Care and look forward to building meaningful, lasting relationships with our membership and community partners in the years to come. I invite you to consider joining the Continuity Care team as a Board member or a member on one of our many sub-committees. I would also encourage you to share ideas around how we can expand our programming in ways that better meet your needs and the needs of your loved ones.

Sherri Water Chief
Board President

A Message from Our Executive Director

When I reflect on the past year, a common thread is the importance of collaboration when trying to reach our goals and make progress.

I feel that within our small but mighty team here at Continuity Care. We each bring our own skills, experience and perspectives to our roles and we each have our own job descriptions, but we don't work in isolation. Jullie and I share an office and Patti is a few steps away in her office. We can ask each other for feedback, help and support and it is that sharing of ideas and energy that helps to get the work done. We have a white board in our office with monthly tasks to keep us on track and get much satisfaction when we can check off things once they are completed. We also have created a Wall of Wins with post-it notes for our bigger accomplishments, to help motivate and inspire us when it feels like we are faced with challenges and progress is slow. I am proud of the team that we have created and how effectively we work together.

I see the importance of collaboration within our board and committees. Our board is comprised of family members, business owners, professionals and community members. Each bring their personal and professional experience, talents and skills which creates a rich, diverse and strong group/presence around the boardroom table. We have some long-standing board members and have recently added some new people, which also provides a blend of perspectives to our organization. This is true of our various committees as well. Each board and committee member have taken on tasks related to our strategic plan and have helped to move our little organization forward each year. It is the passion, dedication and belief in Continuity Care's Mission that unites and fuels these amazing volunteers and I appreciate their time and contributions so much.

I have learned about the strength, and also the challenges, of collaboration through our partnership in the 120 Maryland Group and the past three years of the Community Based Assisted Decision Making Pilot program. Learning how to work together as a group toward achieving the goals and outcomes of the project and going through the stages of group development that include, forming, storming and norming – not necessarily in that order and sometimes all at the same time! This project was a huge undertaking and could not have been accomplished by just one of our organizations. But together, with our combination of experience, expertise, skills, strengths, talents, perspectives, we have been able to complete the work and are so proud of what we have accomplished.

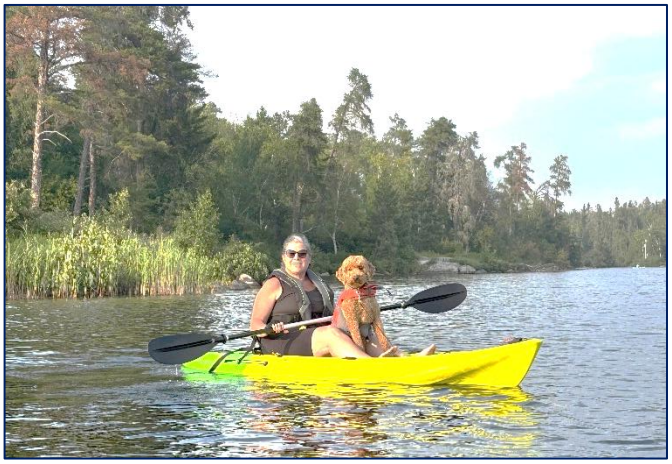
I also know that the families who are part of Continuity Care also benefit from collaborating and working together. They may feel isolated and alone on their journeys, but when they come out to one of our groups or workshops, they get to meet other families, hear their stories and learn from each

others' experiences. We are also here to assist and support them by providing resources, checking in and help to move them along in the planning process. We also work in collaboration with their CSW's, agency staff, other service providers, schools and whoever else is involved to help the person and their family identify and achieve their goals.

This past year, the advocacy efforts we have undertaken would not be possible without collaboration, with the families and their loved ones, advocates from other disability groups and organizations, networks like the Children's Coalition, Abilities Manitoba, Barrier Free Manitoba, The Autism Alliance of Canada and the IDIA Council to name a few.

Progress at times may feel slow, but if we keep taking steps in the right direction we will get there, together.

Suzanne Swanton
Executive Director



Continuity Care Staff

Suzanne Swanton, Patti Makinson, & Jullie Nguyen

Continuity Care Inc.

Strategic Plan: 2022–2025

FRANK GROWTH SOLUTIONS

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 leave a 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, Patti Makinson (Office Administrator) and Suzanne Swanton (Executive Director). Stepping down from this committee this year are Karen Leggat and Sherry Desilets. We would like to take this opportunity to thank both for their time and contributions over the past several years.

This committee reviews the monthly financial statements and as Treasurer, Nick provides a quarterly report to the Board. They also assist in 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 Finance Committee also consults with the Human Resource Committee and Board with respect to wage increments and COLA increases for staff.

Terms of Reference for this committee were developed this past year.

Our biggest challenge financially was the loss of our annual fundraising event, the Mike Keane Celebrity Hockey Classic. We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to Mike Keane and the board and staff at the True North Youth Foundation for their partnership with Continuity Care in this event for the past 11 years. We are truly grateful for your support.

As a result, we have formed a new fundraising committee to begin exploring other fundraising ideas.

Our Endowment Fund managed by The Winnipeg Foundation increased in value over the past year and has a balance of $4,101,302 as of March 31, 2025. The spending policy remains at 5% for their 2025 fiscal year, which is good news for the quarterly payments we receive and can direct towards our annual operating expenses.

The Justine Steinkopf Memorial Sub-Fund at The Winnipeg Foundation also increased in value this past year and has a balance of $21,996 as of March 31, 2025. The revenue received from this sub-fund this past year was directed to the Family and Friends Group. The JSMF sub-committee has created Terms of Reference and a vision for how this fund will be administered.

A new Justine Steinkopf Fund was established with The Jewish Foundation of Manitoba in April 2024. Thanks to the fundraising efforts of Max Steinkopf, it has a balance of $185,557 as of March 31, 2025 and we will be receiving our first payment from that fund in October 2025. The JSMF sub-committee will also oversee this fund and determine how the revenue will be utilized.

We would like to acknowledge the Kinsmen Club of Winnipeg for their support through a donation of $2500 and for the opportunity to be one of the partner charities for their Kinsmen Jackpot BINGO in April 2025.

We also thank Frank Wade and the RBC Foundation for their generous donation of $2000 and continued support of Continuity Care.

As noted on the year end financial statement prepared by the team at Rawluk & Robert, we ended the 2024-2025 in a deficit position, primarily due to the lack of a fundraising event this year. Knowing this early on in the year, we were able to manage our expenses accordingly and the Finance Committee and Board are exploring new fundraisers and grants to assist in the year ahead.

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 2024-2025 year.

Linda & Brian Ormonde

Howard & Deborah Ashdown

Jane & Brian Schledewitz

Rebecca Ehnes

Rose Paulley

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 2024-2025:

Anna & Ross Stokke
Tricia Geurts
Dorothy Schumacher
Kaitlynne Flett
Paul & Pat Cloutier
Daniel McRuer
Sheldon Blank
Nick Paulley
Shelly Blanco
Corrine & Rob Read
Sid & Arvadell Egesz
Carla Kehler
Cecile Alaire-Skene
Brian Michalski
Art & Wilma Hock
Marcy Tschetter
Linda LeProhon
Marlene & Sid Naworynski
Roberta Hurtig
Grace & Cliff Patzer
Albert & Sharon Yanofsky
Gisela Runge
Max Steinkopf
Ray Hignell
Monique Chaput
Brian & Linda Ormonde
Gloria Woloshyn
Dongming Yang
RBC Foundation
The Kinsmen Club of Winnipeg

People

2024-2025 Board of Directors

OFFICERS:

President	**Sherri Water-Chief** – Parent (joined the board in June 2023)
Past President:	**Sherry Desilets -** Parent (joined the board in November 2014)
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)
Max Steinkopf	Sibling, Partner, Bond Capital Partners, UK (joined the board in June 2023)
Tania Douglas	Cousin, Friend, Executive Director – St. Amant Foundation (joined the board in January 2024)
Liz Allen	Sibling (joined the Board in January 2024)

A Fond Farewell to Karen

We would like to take this opportunity to recognize Karen Leggat for her many contributions to Continuity Care over the past 20 years. Karen stepped in as Executive Director in 2005, when Bob Manwaring's health declined and later passed away. This was a time of crisis, loss and uncertainty for the organization. Karen provided stability, care and compassion and hope that the organization would continue. When Suzanne was hired as the next Executive Director, Karen provided valuable support during this transition. In 2007, Karen joined as a board member and sat on several of our sub-committees. She contributed her perspectives as a sibling, a wealth of experience and expertise and she was a voice of reason, calm and humor around the boardroom table. She has a way of challenging others to think, question and advocate to make the lives of our members better. Her kindness, care and support to everyone in our organization is so greatly appreciated. Karen will be missed by many and in so many ways.

Our best wishes to Karen in her retirement and all the adventures to come.

Human Resources Committee

By Jo Verstraete, on behalf of the HR Committee

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

The members of the HR Committee include: Sherry Desilets (Past President), Liz Allen, Suzanne Swanton (Executive Director) and Sherri Water Chief (President), both who attend 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 our Executive Director for 19 years and who just started her now 20th year as of July 31, while Patti Makinson celebrated her 7th year anniversary in January 2025. Jullie Nguyen has been our Member Support & Outreach Facilitator since in June 8, 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 a cost-of-living increase for our staff. In addition, the wage scales have been reviewed and adjusted to be more in line with industry standards.

3rd The Committee Members have reviewed the HR policy and procedure manual in totality. It was an 18-month process, and we are happy to rejoice its completion. This was a huge undertaking, but it is important that we keep current with the changes & requirements of Employment Standards, both provincially & federally, as well as with best organizational practices. The Policy Manual is due for the next review starting January 2027, although intermittent changes are completed as required throughout the timeframe.

4th Another project that has been implemented is the process surrounding payroll. CC is now utilizing *Payworks* to increase efficiencies, thereby allowing staff to attend to the many other priorities.

New Objectives for 2026:

As far as the next year goes, along with the regular work of the Committee, CC has scheduled a Strategic Planning Workshop in October 2025. New HR goals for the upcoming year would reflect priorities set during that process.

We meet on a quarterly basis or more often as needed. If anyone has an interest, experience or expertise in the Human Resources and would like to join the HR committee, please feel free to talk to one of us after the AGM or contact Suzanne directly.

Family Advisory Committee

The Family Advisory Committee has taken a pause this past year but will resume in the Fall 2025.

The members who are continuing on this committee are: Linda Ormonde, Monique Chaput and Rachel Smith (representative of FAN) and Suzanne Swanton. We would like to extend a welcome to two new members, Scott Spence and Wendy Preteau.

We would like to thank the following volunteers who are stepping down from this committee and acknowledge their many contributions: Sherry Desilets, Karen Leggat and Debra Roach.

In Memory of…

Maria Isabel Vieira Sebastiao

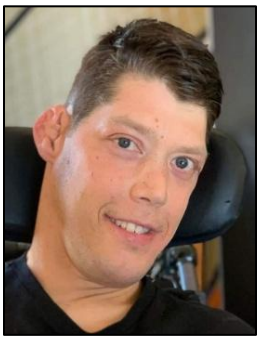
Maria passed away peacefully on September 24, 2024 at the age of 86. She is remembered for her warmth, kindness, and the unconditional love she gave to all around her. Maria and her husband, Herminio, are lifetime members of Continuity Care and longtime members of the Senior Parent to Parent support group. Within the group they made many friends and became each other's support network. Her family and friends will remember her warmth, kindness & unconditional love.

Esther Arzu

Esther passed away peacefully on December 4, 2024 at the age of 84 years. Esther had a love of gardening flowers and was an active member in her church community. She was a strong advocate for her daughter, Eileen, and others in the disability community. She was a lifetime member of Continuity Care and took part in many of the workshops and groups over the years. She was a good friend to several parents. She will be missed by her family and friends.

Dorothy Elizabeth Brach

Dorothy gently passed away on January 20, 2025 at the age of 68 years. She was full of life, wanting to be apart of everything. She loved being on the Special Olympics Bowling team, working at ImagineAbility, attending faith led camps, and Continuity Care's Family & Friends Group. She has left her family and friends with many happy memories.



Paul Michael Redmond

In the early hours of February 9, 2025, Paul peacefully passed away at the age of 41 years. He volunteered his time at Sports MB, SSCY, CMHR and Dakota CC just to name a few but his love was for dance and his fellow dancers in MB Possible All Abilities Dance group. He even performed Salsa dance at the 2015 World Latin Dance Competition – from a wheelchair. His family and friends will remember him smiling, free and dancing.

Walter George Gunnar Dinsdale

Gunnar passed away peacefully on March 21, 2025 at the age of 76 years. He grew up in a house full of music. He was a special education teacher and creatively found ways to make learning fun! This earned him much love and respect by his students. In faith, he was head of the Sunday School and lent his rich baritone voice in the choir. He was an inspiration to many and will be missed by his family and friends.

Advocacy

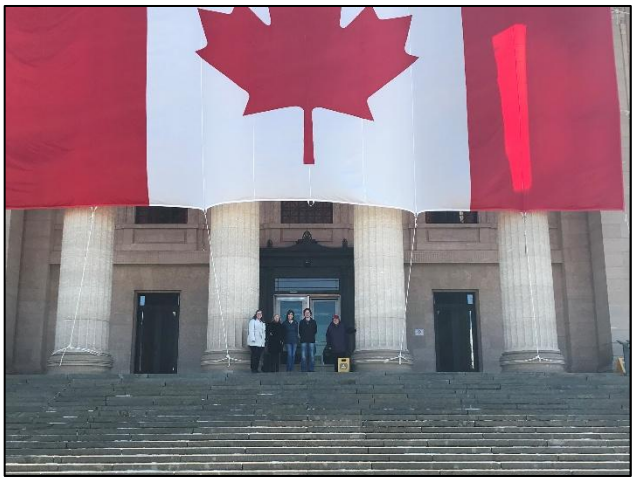
Continuity Care provides advocacy in a variety of ways for our members on an individual basis and at a systemic level to address issues, gaps, barriers on behalf of people with disabilities, their families and caregivers.

For our members, Jullie and I get to know them, listen to their stories and from there determine what is needed and how we can help. Each person and their situation is different and our approach needs to be individualized. We provide them with information, tools and resources, as knowledge is power. We can help them to write an email or letter or script to make a phone call. We can attend a meeting with them, to be a support, take notes or help with asking questions. In some cases, we take the action steps on their behalf, when they are not feeling comfortable to do so themselves. We help to strengthen their capacity to become their own advocates, by taking one step or task at a time.

We also can advocate at a higher level, by coming together with others in groups, coalitions, committees and public forums. Some examples of this type of advocacy that we have been involved in this past year include:

- An active member of the Children's Coalition and this past year were a part of a larger conversation about respite.
- An active member of Abilities Manitoba.
- Suzanne completed a two-year term as a member of the Intellectual Disabilities Issues Advisory (IDIA) Council.
- Continuity Care is an endorser of Barrier Free Manitoba.
- Over the past several years, we have supported the efforts which led to the closure of the Manitoba Developmental Centre on December 10th, 2024.
- Our Finding Hope Within the Cracks Group wrote letters to the Minister of Families and Health and received responses with invitations to meet.
- Continuity Care is a member of the Autism Alliance of Canada.
- We have shared information about the National Autism Strategy with our members.
- We participated in the public consultation for the Canada Disability Benefit, provided feedback about draft regulations and have kept our members informed about the launch and how to apply.
- We advocated at the provincial level for the Canada Disability Benefit to be exempted as an asset for those receiving EIA and Manitoba Supports for Persons with Disabilities.
- Provided feedback from our members about the Manitoba Supports for Persons with Disabilities program to the Department of Families.
- We shared information with our members about the new Disability Services Feedback form.
- We have been invited to be a part of various meetings with the Department of Families.
- We have shared information about the new Canadian Dental Care plan and have responded to questions from members about applying and the interplay with EIA benefits.

- Through the Community Based Assisted Decision Making pilot project, we have been involved in consultations and the development of recommendations for an assisted decision-making framework in Manitoba.



"As a school social worker with the Winnipeg School Division, it is important to me to advocate for students and families. It is also my role to find services and resources to families within the community. Personally, I also have a family member who is navigating a complex situation and has an intellectual disability. While trying to help my family find resources, my colleague recommended that I have a conversation with Suzanne at Continuity Care. I had not heard of this agency and after looking at the website, I decided to give Suzanne a call to consult. She listened to me, asked questions about my situation, and offered great knowledge and insight into our situation. I felt calm immediately when talking to Suzanne and knew that my family did not have to navigate this situation on our own. I invited my family into a meeting with Continuity Care, and it was invaluable to us. We left with ideas of how to proceed and feeling equipped to support our family member. After this extremely positive personal experience, I decided to consult with Continuity Care again about a student and their family that I have been supporting through my work. I was becoming disillusioned with the resources available to them because this student has a complex intellectual profile and did not meet the criteria for many other services and programming. Once I connected the student and her mother with the staff at Continuity Care, they immediately became familiar with the situation and put services into place to support this student as they transitioned into adult services. I am so thankful to know about this organization and would recommend to anyone who needs an advocate, knowledgeable listening ear, or support and connection, to contact Continuity Care!"

Kathi van Gunten Wiebe *(She/Her) RSW*
School Social Worker

Services and Supports

Lifetime and Annual Member Outreach

By Jullie Nguyen

It's been just over a year since I began my role with Continuity Care, and I have been so warmly welcomed by both long-standing and new members that it seems you're now officially stuck with me. In all seriousness, this past year has shown me just how incredible this organization is, and it is truly both a privilege and honour to serve as the Member Support & Outreach Facilitator. While I have heard time and time again what Continuity Care has meant to past, present, and new families that connect with, I also want to take this opportunity to remind you how deeply admirable it is to recognize the courage it takes to advocate for yourself and your loved ones. Without you, there is no us, because it is about what we can do together. In this report, I'd like to reflect on what the past year has looked like through my lens and offer a glimpse into how I'll continue in my role in the year ahead.

In a society that often praises independence as a measure of success, it is easy to forget that no one truly thrives in isolation. It takes connection, compassion, and the willingness to lean on others to create lasting change. Every time a member reaches out to us or takes our hand when we reach out – whether it is to share a challenge, celebrate a success, or simply to talk, it reaffirms that Continuity Care is more than an organization. It is a community. Here, we are reminded daily that it takes a village to move mountains. And this village? It's built on shared experiences, mutual understanding, and the simple but powerful truth that we are better together.

Our current membership sits at 78 annual members and 114 lifetime members. This includes individuals, siblings, and families who are each in a different place on their journey. A large part of my role is to ensure that our members are being reached out to on a regular basis. Outreach is not a list of tasks. It is a way to build long-term relationships with individuals and families who are doing their best to care for someone they love. It is about showing up with consistency, kindness, and a willingness to listen.

As I return to more outreach in the coming months, I'll be reconnecting with members again. I primarily reach out through email, and occasionally by phone. My goal is not to pressure anyone. I just want to check in, see how things are going, and offer support if it's needed. Many families are already carrying so much, and I hope my approach meets people where they are. Not where the system says they should be. We may not talk every day, and that is okay. But on the hard days where you might just need a shoulder to lean on, I hope you know that I'd be more than happy to share my umbrella with you through your storms.

Sharing Circles
The importance of relationships, connections and community

All types of relationships exist in our lives, and each brings its own value. Paid supports often play a vital role in ensuring someone's needs are met, and their dedication can be deeply meaningful. But when natural relationships are present, decision-making often feels different: less about process, more about genuine connection. It can feel like a conversation among people who have shared history, mutual understanding, and a personal commitment that extends beyond formal roles.

So, what is a natural relationship? I used to say that it was a relationship in your life that is not paid to be there. But now I say: it's a relationship where you are as valued as you value them. Because many paid relationships can turn into a natural relationship. These connections often grow from shared experiences, mutual respect, and the willingness to be present simply because you both care. They offer perspectives shaped by lived experiences and memories, helping decisions align more closely with a person's values, preferences, and vision for their life.

The true spirit of Sharing Circles is collaboration. It's about bringing together both natural and paid supports to create intentional spaces where the focus is not only on planning or problem-solving, but also on celebrating strengths, fostering independence, and ensuring that the person at the centre feels heard, understood, and supported.

As of now, I am actively facilitating seven circles and I am in the early stages of starting two more with Continuity Care members. I am also proud to include that I have been assisting on the Community Based Assisted Decision Making Pilot Project and have begun the groundwork to starting 7 additional Sharing Circles. These circles represent more than just numbers. They are opportunities to bring people together, strengthen networks of trust, and ensure that individuals have a strong foundation of both natural and paid supports in their lives. As these circles grow, so does the potential for lasting connection, shared celebration, and collaborative decision-making that truly reflects the person at the centre.

Workshops

This past year we offered 10 workshops on a variety of topics including Launch into Life, PATH and MAP's, Leaving the Nest – Planning for the Big Move, Will and Estate Planning, EIA Disability Trusts, Caring for the Caregiver, Support Networks, an overview of Continuity Care, and Getting to Know Me Better.

We offer both virtual (by Zoom) and in person options for people to attend. Overall, 131 people participated in our workshops this past year, with an average of 13 per workshop. The highest attendance was 28 and the lowest was 3.

Evaluations are sent out following each workshop to gather feedback and suggestions for new workshop topics, which are helpful in developing content that meets the needs of our members.

Some of the comments from this past year's workshops include:

"The information provided will definitely help me to proceed with my future plans."

"Vincent presented the info well but more importantly he did a great job answering questions. In his answers, he was able to help people understand / interpret the EIA rules. Vincent was the difference."

"I really love that both Suzanne and Justin were there. I could tell that Suzanne has put in a lot of work to give us information in PDF form and is so knowledgeable herself. I did learn some new things that always makes coming to these workshops so valuable."

"Suzanne has a way of putting things clearly and understandably and has a wealth of knowledge. I also appreciate being with other families in a similar situation."

"Krista's thorough knowledge of the topics, and the organized way she presented complex information. I appreciate her compassionate way of relating to participants. I also appreciated being with people who share a similar challenge. The organizers were really friendly and helpful."

"Having the slides as a handout was super helpful as I could concentrate on writing the notes I needed, not the slide material as well. The presenter was very clear and the level of detail was appropriate - easy to follow but delved into the topics a bit. Very glad I attended."

"To be with others who are in similar situations and sharing of stories. To be accepted and understood is wonderful and am grateful to have been able to be part of the Zoom."

"Hearing the individual stories of how families are coping with their loved ones. It was inspirational to see their devotion and strength, and it greatly encouraged me."

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the following people for taking time out of their busy schedules and sharing their experiences and expertise at our workshops:

- Jayda Taylor – MSOF – Continuity Care and home share provider
- Cheryl Bogdan – Continuity Care member
- Barb Shay – Continuity Care member
- Marnie Loewen – Continuity Care member
- Barb Collerman-Elias – Innovative LIFE Options
- Val Surbey – Continuity Care member

- Krista Clendenning – Lawyer and Partner – Tradition Law
- Vincent Villanueva – Department of Families (EIA)
- Justin McMahon – Assiniboine Credit Union
- Amy Shawcross – Inclusion Winnipeg (previously Community Living Manitoba)
- Megan Scott – Inclusion Winnipeg
- Betina Roberts – Innovative LIFE Options
- Jullie Nguyen – MSOF – Continuity Care
- Suzanne Swanton – Executive Director – Continuity Care

Groups

3 C's for Caregivers – Connections, Conversations and Coffee

This peer support group is for caregivers who are parents, siblings and extended family members of young adults (16+) and adults with intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities 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.

We offered this group from April 2024 to March 2025, with low attendance. Some months there was only 1 or 2 registered. In consultation with the board, we decided to put this group on pause for the remainder of the year and focus our time on other areas of need. We directed parents and caregivers to other existing groups offered through the Family Advocacy Network of Manitoba, SCCY and other organizations. We also connected families with similar interests on an individual basis for support.

We will resume this group in the coming year if there is growing interest from our members.

Finding Hope Within the Cracks

This peer support 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 Community Living Disability Services and Community Mental Health and are falling through the cracks of the systems. The interest in this group has increased since we started back in April 2022 and we now have 33 members. The group meets monthly virtually, which has been the preference of the attendees, but our last meeting in June was in person and we hope to do that more often in the coming year.

The goals of this group were to first provide a safe space for parents and caregivers to connect with each other, who are in similar situations and realize they are not alone. We have also shared resources that are available in the province which may be of assistance to their loved ones and to them as caregivers. We also wanted to define some action steps to address the gaps and barriers in the system.

This year, we learned about the National Autism Strategy and what is happening on a national level for people with Autism and their families. Some of the group members, together with Continuity Care, wrote letters to the Ministers of Families and Health to inform them about this group, the lack of adult services and support and the impact on their loved ones and their families. We first received a response from the Minister Fontaine and an offer to meet on March 24, 2025. We formed a small delegation with three parents, one son, along with Jullie and Suzanne and attended this meeting with the Minister Fontaine, a Deputy Minister, an Assistant Deputy Minister and a few staffers. The meeting went very well and ended with an offer by the Minister to meet again, as she wanted more time to hear from other members of the group. We scheduled a follow up meeting for June 3rd at 120 Maryland, which was attended by 21 members from the group, along with their sons and daughters, Minister Fontaine and ADM Heidi Wurmann. This was a very impactful meeting with a sharing of lived experience and a genuine interest expressed by the Minister. We are very grateful to the members for their courage to share their stories and to both Minister Fontaine and Heidi Wurmann for giving us the opportunity to meet, listen and positive response.

We also received a response from the Minister of Health in June with an invitation to meet on July 3rd. Unfortunately, Minister Asagwara was called away on the date but we were able to meet with an ADM and two representatives from Program and Policy. We are thankful for their time and listening ear and providing a briefing of our meeting to the Minister. As our concerns about the lack of mental health services and supports now fall under the Department of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness, we will be following up with them in the coming weeks.

This group resumes in September and we look forward to what the coming year brings.

“Over the past few years, my son and I were feeling very discouraged trying to find help with life's struggles with his aspergers/autism. In April 2025, I found out about Continuity Care through a friend. I reached out and connected with Suzanne and Jullie in "Finding Hope Within the Cracks".

We now are feeling more positive and are grateful for their assistance in connecting with sources for future planning. We have now met other families with similar struggles of falling between the cracks for mental health and living assistance. Michael and I greatly appreciate everything they are doing for us.”

Linda Bryant

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

The Community Based Assisted Decision Making (CBADM) pilot project started back in August 2022 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 networks for parents and family caregivers, increasing capacity for the use of support networks for people with disabilities, motivating the use of community based assisted decision makers and assisted decision making and reducing reliance on the Public Guardian and Trustee.

The project time frame was first extended to March 31, 2025 to complete our consultation and work on developing recommendations for a framework for assisted decision making in Manitoba. The report with our recommendations has been submitted to the Department of Families.

There were surplus funds available to continue work in all three areas of the project until September 30th, 2025. Continuity Care has been working with the individuals referred during the project who are lacking in natural supports and would benefit from having a support network and would like to explore other decision-making options, as an alternative to having the PGT appointed as their SDM (Substitute Decision Maker). Jullie, our Member Support & Outreach Facilitator, is currently getting to know these individuals, learn who is currently involved in their life and how decisions are currently being made. This work takes time and will continue after the project is completed. Continuity Care is committed to supporting these individuals, as well as the families who have come to us during the project.

We are proud of the partnerships we have strengthened within the 120 Maryland Group, the journey we have been on and the outcomes we have achieved. Please visit the project's website at https://120marylandgroup.org/ for more information and to view the collection of resources we have created and compiled.

Family and Friends Group

The Family and Friends Group has had a busy and fun year in 2024-2025. Our group offered a variety of special events throughout the year.

- Family and Friends Group visited the Assiniboine Zoo on May 26th and June 2nd. Thanks to Johnston Group and Assiniboine Park Conservancy for providing zoo passes to our group. Aside from seeing a special exhibit which had a sloth, a blue-tongued skunk, some snakes and other things, the zoo had many amazing animals such as bison, eagles, polar bears, zebras, kangaroos, and much more. We stopped for a snack during our walk around the zoo, to re-energize.

- On July 6th, we had a picnic at St. Vital Park where we had a lovely meal and many tasty side dishes. Everyone attending brought something special to eat and after our meal, we enjoyed a number of lawn games, including bean bag toss. We acknowledged a few members who had milestone birthdays.

- Family and Friends Group attended Winnipeg Goldeyes games in July and August. Attendance was about 20 at each game. There were spectacular fireworks at the end of the August game. Complimentary tickets were provided by Goldeyes sponsors.

- August 15 was very special for our group with 23 people attending “Mary Poppins” production. Wow, it was simply “supercalifragalisticexpalidocious”.

- For our fall outing, we met at Kildonan Park on September 14th. The weather was mild and wonderful. It was our largest event with 53 people attending. As always, plenty of food was had by all. Games of bean bag toss and bolo were played, with everyone being a winner. A sing-a-long with Bob leading, and a lot of dancing took place. A bonfire completed the atmosphere as we visited and chatted with each other.

- Our final event for 2024 was held at Billy Mozienko 5 pin bowling lanes. A lively game of bingo bowling was had. Afterwards snacks and a special cake were enjoyed by all. We had in attendance 12 bowlers and a few cheerleaders.

- We brought in the new year 2025 with a potluck dinner at Kildonan Community Church on January 18th. We had 45 people attend, even though it was a cold day. But inside there was a warmth as we enjoyed sharing our stories and meal. We celebrated Bob’s birthday with a special cake, and sang happy birthday to him, twice!

Although there was no further event until April, a quick mention of the April 27 Spaghetti and Bingo Party is needed to complete this report. It was something new that we were planning to hold in March but moved to April. We had a fantastic turnout of about 45 people, a special Bingo caller, Liz Allen, who ran the bingo with lots of energy, and of course, a spaghetti meal, with some sweet

desserts and fruit to finish the meal. Thank you to all participants for making this a successful event, and hoping to hold this again next year!

Our vision of expanding our group and offering more events are taking place. Each year our committee of 5 (Ray, Max, Albert, Nancy and Gisela), work on offering as many events that we can. We often have groups of about 40+ and up to 53 this past year. Our goal of raising donations to add to our budget has gone well. In the last year, donations amounted to $970.00, exceeding our goal of $600.00.

Thank you to Continuity Care for ongoing and continued support to help make these events possible. The communication between Family and Friends Group and Continuity Care has grown. With Max being on the Board, and Patti joining in on many of our events, this has allowed the Board to keep in the loop of what we are doing and are able to appreciate the importance and benefit the FFG provides members of Continuity Care. Our goal, as always, is to bring people with disabilities together in a safe and caring environment, and through opportunities that are created with support of CC, allow many CC members to attend functions such as our potlucks, Goldeyes games, spaghetti and bingo or bowling, etc. A huge thank you to the Board and Continuity Care staff.

COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

Continuity Care's website

This past year, we completed the upgrades 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, register for workshops and make an online payment. There have been a few hiccups as we have moved forward, but we are able to work them out.

If you are not comfortable with making online payments, it is still possible to pay by e-transfer, cheque, cash or credit card by phone.

A special thank you to Justin and his team at Dynamite Design for their support and excellent customer service throughout the year.

Fun Facts about our website:

- 1000-2000 visits per month, depending on the month
- 56 transactions (online payments) were received with a total of $1775

DYNAMITEDESIGN
DIGITAL MARKETING

Continuity Care's mailing list:

We have 738 on our mailing list. 598 are subscribed on Mailchimp which is how we send out our communications electronically. 140 prefer to receive their newsletters by regular mail.

Continuity Care's Facebook page

We currently have 758 followers on our Facebook page.

Continuity Care Brochure

We updated our brochure this past year and had new ones printed for distribution. We received requests for brochures from SSCY Centre, St Amant, Tradition Law and a few of the Family Service office locations. We appreciate their support in helping to spread the word about Continuity Care.