



Ontario is improving living spaces for people with developmental disabilities

On January 9th, the ministry announced that through the [Multi-Year Residential Planning \(MYRP\) strategy](#), the province is investing \$3 million in repairs, renovations and improved living spaces at residential properties across Ontario that serve adults with developmental disabilities.

The MYRP strategy was introduced as part of the government's 2014 Budget commitment to support 1,400 new individuals in residential settings over four years under the province's \$810 million investment strategy for developmental services. The strategy aims to provide greater flexibility and enable service providers to better plan and support individuals with developmental disabilities.

This year, 40 projects from across the province will receive funding that will help an additional 66 people with developmental disabilities. These projects will improve existing living spaces, create more capacity, and help reduce waitlists for residential services and supports.

As Deborah Everley, Chief Executive Officer of the Kenora Association for Community Living, says, the funding will make a difference to agencies like theirs that work to provide important services and

supports to some of the most vulnerable in the province.

To learn more about this announcement and the successful projects, visit the [news release](#). ■



The MYRP funding provided by MCSS will allow KACL to make necessary renovations in homes to enhance the safety and quality of life of people who are living there. We will also use the funds to mitigate the experience of young adults transitioning to adulthood who are without stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it. The funding will allow KACL to offer a variety of supports to these young adults, including a place to access showers, meals, training for employment and a safe space for gathering, as well as short and longer term storage for their belongings.”

— Deborah Everley, Chief Executive Officer,
Kenora Association for Community Living

Community Living Essex County launches new hub for developmental services sector




Community Living Essex County (CLEC) has launched a new collaborative tool for the developmental services (DS) sector – Real Xchange.

The Real Xchange is a hub for resources, knowledge and learning, where organizations can improve services and generate new ideas and partnerships. The site provides products, tools and services that can help developmental service agencies and workers in a variety of ways, such as sharing successful practices and facilitate conversations across the sector.

Real Xchange is divided into three key pillars:

- Knowledge exchange - provides organizations with learning modules, toolkits, videos and case studies
- Collaboration - participate in engaging forums and tech talks
- Mentoring - feedback from experienced leaders to help implement new initiatives and update existing programs

Real Xchange came out of CLEC's Real Change initiative, which worked with the Ministry of Community and Social Services, to develop ways to transform service delivery in the DS sector.

Those interested in the services and resources can easily create an account online.

For more information on Real Xchange, visit their [website](#) or email questions to realxchange@communitylivingessex.org. ■

“It is our aim to have the Real Xchange evolve over time and become a place where service providers come together to share successful practices and learn from each other.”

— Nancy Wallace-Gero, ED,
Community Living Essex County

Federal, Provincial Governments Host Symposium on Homelessness

Representatives from Service Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Housing hosted an innovative symposium on January 23rd to 24th at Toronto's Chelsea Hotel.

From Youth to Seniors: A Practitioners' Symposium On Homelessness brought together partners and stakeholders from across the sector, including staff from the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS), in addition to people with lived experience.

The two-day session was successful in strengthening networks, sharing innovative practices and building on the group's collective capacity towards preventing and ending homelessness. Topics included addressing homelessness among youth, Indigenous peoples and people in vulnerable situations.

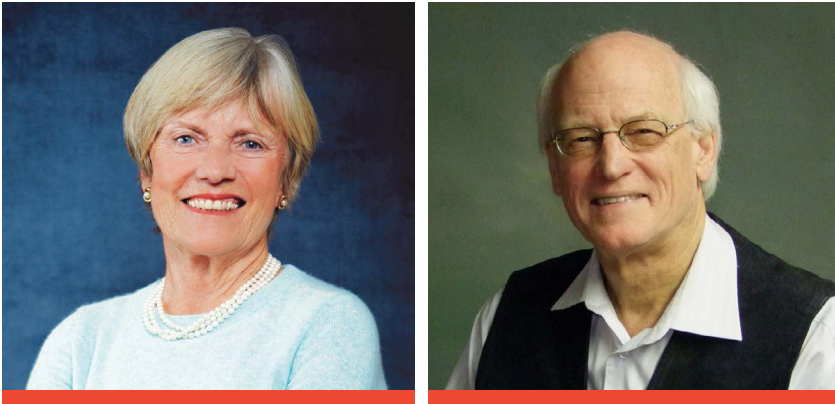
The ministry was on hand to participate in the ongoing dialogue surrounding residential solutions for adults with developmental disabilities, with similar themes to those heard at our [DS Housing Forum](#).

MCSS has been vocal about our support for inclusive, community-based housing options for housing the individuals we serve. The symposium provides the right environment to foster these discussions.

Community agencies provide different residential accommodations that help people with a developmental disability. This includes group homes and other supported living arrangements, specialized residences for people with a developmental disability who have additional needs, and family homes through the Host Family Program.

Visit our [website](#) to learn more about residential supports for adults with developmental disabilities. ■

Mary Pat Armstrong and Dr. John Lord appointed to the Order of Canada



Order of Canada recipients Mary Pat Armstrong and Dr. John Lord

Mary Pat Armstrong C.M. and Dr. John Lord C.M. have been appointed as members to the Order of Canada for their work to improve the lives of people with disabilities.

The Order of Canada was created in 1967 by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, to recognize the dedication and achievements of individual Canadians in their service to the nation.

Ms. Armstrong is the founder of LIGHTS, a community program that works in partnership with Community Living Toronto to help find independent and appropriate housing for people with intellectual disabilities.

The idea behind the program started with Armstrong's own personal experience and challenges in finding an independent living space for her daughter. After seeing the positive impact, the idea developed that there were likely many

other families in the same situation, who may be lacking the right supports or resources.

Today, LIGHTS helps individuals and families explore residential options, access person-directed planning, apply for funding, and connect to other families in search of housemates, providing families with the ability to address their unique needs.

Apart from LIGHTS, Armstrong also helped found Camp Oochigeas in 1982. Located in Muskoka, the camp allows children with cancer to continue their treatment and chemotherapy, while taking part in camp activities – all at no cost to their families.

Dr. Lord is a leader in the field of disability research. He has been committed to supporting Canadians with disabilities to achieve equality through research, public policy and advocacy.

In 1982, Lord founded the Centre for Community Based Research, a not-for-profit organization, with a group of advocates and academics. He then used this platform to explore issues that were central to the lives of vulnerable citizens in an effort to effect positive social change.

Congratulations to both Ms. Armstrong and Dr. Lord! ■



Ontario investing in Family Support Networks

The Ministry of Community and Social Services will be officially launching a call for applications for funding to support Family Support Networks (FSNs) and organizations supporting them.

Family Support Networks are critical networks that help connect families and caregivers to supports and services. Ontario is investing \$500,000 to enhance the capacity of existing FSNs, as well as encourage the creation of new ones across the province.

The funding will help to:

- support the engagement of FSN members,
- promote information-sharing,
- provide administrative support to the network or organization.

More information on applications and guidelines will be available online soon. ■

Ministry of Community and Social Services
Community Supports Policy Branch

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