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# May 2025 Newsletter



## A note from our Executive Director, Becky Huffman

Spring is finally here — a season of new beginnings, fresh energy, and plenty of reasons to feel hopeful. It's also a great time to reflect on everything that's been happening at Community Living St. Marys and Area over the past few months.

On a personal note, I'm excited to share that I'm expecting my second child and will be heading off on maternity leave in September 2025. While this does mean another transition for our organization, I want to reassure you that I've been working closely with our Board of Directors to plan ahead. We're fortunate to have such a strong team and a solid foundation in place, and I know things will continue to run smoothly while I'm away. Stay tuned for more updates!

There's been a lot to celebrate lately! We've welcomed many new employees to our team, as well as new people and families supported by CLSMA. It's been wonderful to see our community grow, and to continue building connections that strengthen our work.

A recent highlight was our All Staff Meeting, where we came together to reflect on how we're working toward achieving our strategic goal of service excellence. The feedback we received was incredibly thoughtful and helpful — full of ideas and insight that we'll carry forward. One thing that really stood out is that people are looking for more chances to come together and connect.

With that in mind, and in the spirit of spring and renewal, we're inviting everyone to join us for our **Annual General Meeting on June 16, 2025**. This year's AGM will be a little different — more of an outdoor celebration, with food, fun, and laughter. It's a chance to reconnect, learn more about the organization and one another, and enjoy time together. We'd love to see you there!

Thanks, as always, for your ongoing support and commitment. Here's to a season of connection, celebration, and new beginnings.

### Upcoming Events



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#### Create a Smile Walk-a-thon

Sunday, June 1, 2025  
10:30 am  
(see more on page 5)

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#### CLSMA Annual General Meeting

Mon, June 16, 2025

Business mtg at  
4:30pm

Food and Fun at  
5:00 pm.

(see more on page 6)

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#### All Staff Meeting

Wed Sept 10, 2025  
Save the date!

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#### Technology Session

June 25, 2025  
2 pm  
(see more on page 6)

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## 2025 Employee Survey Highlights

**68%**  
**Of Employees**

The question with the most comments was #4 "What gives you the most pride in your work?"

56 people

53% of employees have worked for CLSMA for **FIVE** years or less.

17% of employees have worked for over 15 years.

Some of the main themes for improvement were; Staffing Levels, Team Development, Training and Learning and Support for Quality Service.

**There were 220 separate feedback comments!**  
The next step is to thoroughly review the feedback and develop an action plan with goals.  
***Stay tuned – more information is coming soon!***

## MEET THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



CLSMA currently has nine Directors on the Board. They are volunteers and bring a wide range of experiences and skills. The Board's role is governance which includes; oversight and strategic direction of the organization, developing mission, strategic plans and policy as well as working with the Executive Director and maintaining fiscal responsibility. They meet on a monthly basis (except for July, August and December)

(left to right) Alice Mainland, Bud Carter, Lynn Hainer, Lynette Geddes, Nicole Carradine, Brenda Holland, Becky Huffman, Linda Howgego and Emma Blackler



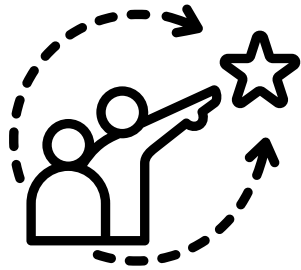
Thank you Max, from Honey Bee Good for your recent and generous donation!!



### DO YOU KNOW YOUR EAP PROGRAM?

CLSMA employees can access Employee Assistance Program (EAP)/Employee Family Assistance Program through GreenShield+. Benefits include:

- Confidential Counselling Services
- Couples therapy
- Unlimited financial and legal consultation
- Consultation with a registered nurse, dietician, career coach and more.
- Online resources on a variety of wellness topics.



### Did you know that CLSMA has a mentorship program?

Having a mentor is a great resource for newer employees! It's a short term opportunity to access the expertise and knowledge of a seasoned staff, in a comfortable, informal way. Mentors have a wealth of information and often have tricks and tips about providing support and or information about the agency in general. Plus mentors enjoy giving back and easing the transition for everyone!

If you are interested in knowing more about having a mentor or becoming one email Laura - lcannon@clstmarys.ca



### Gift Corner

*The purpose of life is to discover your gift.*

*The work of life is to develop it.*

*The meaning of life is to give your gift away.*

David Viscott

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# Committee Updates



## Joint Health and Safety

The Joint Health & Safety committee is mandated by law under the OHSA Act overseen by the Ministry of Labour. It is an opportunity for employees to have a formal voice and vote on questions of health and safety concerns. The committee oversees reports on a variety of safety inspections and data. If you have any concerns or questions, contact Co-chair Paul Williams at [pwilliams@clstmarys.ca](mailto:pwilliams@clstmarys.ca) or Co-chair Becky Huffman at [rhuffman@clstmarys.ca](mailto:rhuffman@clstmarys.ca)



## Quality Assurance

The Quality Assurance committee provides the Board with advice and guidance respecting quality and performance of services by the association. Quality is articulated in the mission, vision and principle statements of the organization and there is an understanding that quality of life must include all citizens within the community including people supported, families, employees, neighbourhoods and groups. This committee is currently working on having conversations with people who use our services as a means of collecting feedback to ensure we are living up to our vision and mission by providing quality services to people in all aspects of their lives. Committee members include; Alice Mainland, Elia Forte, Ruth Lamond, Jennifer Leslie, Becky Huffman and Kim Monden.



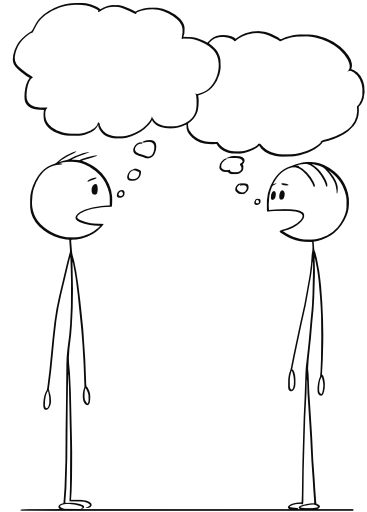
## Employee Management and Relations (EMRC)

The Employee Management Relations committee convenes quarterly. We are currently seeking an additional full-time or part-time support worker to represent the employee perspective and be a voice for employees wants, needs, concerns and ideas. As a group we share ideas and strategize about various topics to build, maintain and strengthen our rapport and build relationships. Come brainstorm with us! More information is available on the CLSMA All Staff google Drive. If you are interested in this committee email [emrc@clstmarys.ca](mailto:emrc@clstmarys.ca) and Beverley Belcher-Besenyodi (Co-chair) or Carly Geiger (Co-chair) will respond.



## Diversity, Inclusion and Wellness

This committee meets every two months and works to promote a shared culture of inclusion, wellness, and respect for all staff and the people we support. It is a great opportunity to contribute to meaningful, ongoing conversations about equity and wellness at CLSMA.. Current members are Tabitha Leifso, Don Dingwall, Gwen Carter, Jennifer Lamondin and Jennifer Leslie



## NEW to Community Living St. Marys and Area

What is CLSMA's Debriefing Working Group?

It is a group of trained facilitators whose goal is to help transform experience into reflection and learning.

The purpose of a debriefing session is to enable participants to reflect on what happened during an incident and why it happened. Debriefing goes beyond simply addressing emotional concerns, it also promotes resilience and adaptation among those affected. This is a voluntary, non-judgmental and confidential process to benefit all participants.

There are currently six trained facilitators at CLSMA to assist you.

For more information about the Debriefing Working Group, please contact Kim Monden, Planning Services Manager - [kmonden@clstmarys.ca](mailto:kmonden@clstmarys.ca) or 519-284-1400 ext.222



## CREATE A SMILE WALK

DATE:  
Sunday, June 1, 2025

TIME:  
10:30 AM - 12:30 PM

WHERE:  
Milt Dunnell Park  
(The Flats)



SCAN TO DONATE

### Create-A-Smile Walk-a-thon Get ready, get set, go!

We are gearing up for the annual Create-A-Smile walk at the Milt Dunnell Fields (the Flats), St. Marys on Sunday, June 1, 2025 beginning at 10:30am sharp!

Pick up your pledge sheet or donate online to help raise money for a great cause!

Monies raised are used to support various community projects that enhance the lives of people with disabilities, their families and the communities they live in.



Last year was the 20<sup>th</sup>  
celebration for the Create A  
Smile walk!



This beautiful quilt reflects the last 10 years of walks and will join the first quilt hanging at JPC. A big thank-you goes to Quilter, Tammy Monette for her amazing art!!



### Transition Fair at St. Michael's High School

Kelly Boudreau and Kim Monden recently attended a transition fair on April 12th at St Mike's High School Stratford, along with many participating organizations from the area including; DSO, other service providers, Conestoga College, Lambton College, family networks and ODSP to name a few.

Together we welcomed students and families to learn more about the services offered in the surrounding community.



### Do you have questions about technology ??

**CLSMA will be hosting regular tech sessions on a variety of topics including:**

- AIMS
- Inclusion
- Google drives and e-mails
- Apps and more

First session is "All About AIMS"

Wednesday June 25 2025

2-3 pm

In person at JPC

*If you have any questions contact Jenn Costello at [jcostello@clstmarys.ca](mailto:jcostello@clstmarys.ca)*



## You're Invited to Our Annual General Meeting & Community Fun Fair!

Community Living St. Marys and Area is excited to invite you to our Annual General Meeting and Community Fun Fair on **Monday, June 16, 2025** at our office (300 Elgin St. E, St. Marys). The **business meeting will begin at 4:30 p.m.**, followed by a **fun fair and picnic from 5:00–7:00 p.m.**

This event is a wonderful opportunity for people supported, families, and employees to come together, connect, and celebrate our community. Enjoy food, activities, and fun while learning more about the services we offer and meeting the incredible people who make our organization thrive.

**Everyone is welcome!**

Please RSVP to [centraladmin@clstmarys.ca](mailto:centraladmin@clstmarys.ca) by **June 9, 2025**.

We can't wait to see you there!