



## Housing Task Force update

### Recommended projects receive funding

Twelve creative housing projects, recommended by the Developmental Services Housing Task Force, have received the green light from the Ontario government.

The Task Force reviewed and assessed 80 proposals, submitted this past spring by developmental services agencies, family organizations, municipalities and health agencies, alongside other community partners. It recommended 12 two-year research and demonstration projects that encourage creative partnerships, help expand the range of housing options and promote individualized, inclusive housing solutions that could potentially be replicated in other areas of the province.

“We know there is no one-size-fits-all housing solution for adults with developmental disabilities.” says Dr. Helena Jaczek, Minister of Community and Social Services. “Thanks to the hard work of agencies, families, community partners and Housing Task Force members, we have an opportunity to expand our knowledge and learn how new partnerships can help us provide new housing support options.”



**At Community Living Campbellford / Brighton, Minister Jaczek (right) recently announced funding for two Housing Task Force projects. From left to right, MPP Lou Rinaldi with Lynne Simpson, Jane Wellard and Koni Perks from the agency.**

A variety of projects were recommended by the Housing Task Force, including one focused on teaching daily independent living skills to young adults, an affordable housing partnership with Habitat for Humanity, and a centralized hub model of service to support individuals in a rural area. A full list of the projects being funded can be found [here](#).

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"I sincerely thank members of the Housing Task Force for their hard work and thoughtful recommendations," said Minister Jaczek. "I'd also like to commend all the agencies, families and community partners who came together to submit proposals that support our principles of independence, inclusion and choice for adults with a developmental disability."

The government has committed up to \$3.47 million over the next two years for the 12 demonstration projects. The Task Force

is planning a second call for proposals later this year.

This funding is part of the government's three-year, \$810-million investment to improve developmental and community services.

### **Learn more about the Housing Task Force:**

- [Housing Task Force Facebook page](#)
- [Recommended projects](#)

## A few words from Ron Pruessen

### **Housing Task Force Chair**

The Housing Task Force has reached an important early milestone in its work – and we reach it with twinned feelings of achievement and renewed determination.

A sense of achievement emerges because the first round of our Expression of Interest process produced an outpouring of innovative ideas. It was difficult (very difficult) to review 80 proposals and select so few – but the 12 initiatives now approved by the Ministry of Community and Social Services nonetheless promise life-changing supports for adults with developmental disabilities who have been in need of residential opportunities.

Enthusiastic response to the Expression of Interest process has strongly reinforced the Housing Task Force's determination to forge ahead – not just with an important second round for proposal submission, but on other fronts, as well. Look for updates in upcoming issues of Spotlight. We are



committed to further innovation and advocacy – committed to working with a government ready to act and with individuals, families, agencies and community partners as anxious as we are to improve not only residential supports, but also the quality of life and citizenship of adults with developmental disabilities.

If the Housing Task Force has reached one milestone of achievement, that is, we want it to be the first of many.

# Mills Community Support

## Making Almonte a more inclusive town

Mills Community Support is helping promote inclusion for people with developmental disabilities in Almonte, a small town west of Ottawa.

Founded in 1975, Mills Community Support, or The Mills for short, supports more than 1,000 people. Their services assist people with developmental disabilities, seniors and those with lower incomes by providing them with housing, home support, assisted living and respite care programs and services.

Through its work over the years, The Mills realized that many of the people coming to the agency for support shared a common trait: they felt alone. Whether due to ability, age or financial status, people often felt isolated and excluded from the community.

“Loneliness is a real problem for a person’s wellbeing,” said Mike Coxon, The Mills’ Chief Executive Officer. “Loneliness also creates a challenge for the people who care for an individual. Even the most dedicated service provider can only do so much within the four walls of an agency to help a client out of isolation, to find friends and be accepted in a community.”

So The Mills started looking into ways it could change things outside of its agency to build and foster communities that would help individuals overcome loneliness and exclusion.



**Citizens of Almonte enjoy a concert at Augusta Street Park, which Mills Community Support helped rebuild. The project has helped make the community more inclusive for people with developmental disabilities.**

“We learned that bringing people together to work on a common cause was a great way to help individuals who feel isolated become engaged citizens in the community,” said Mike.

Getting involved in community projects, such as rebuilding the local Augusta Street Park, enabled the individuals that Mills Community Support assists to connect with people in the neighbourhood and community at large in a real and meaningful way.

The agency used its strong relationships with the municipality of Mississippi Mills and community partners like The Hub and the Almonte Civitan Club to start Friends of Augusta Street Park to support the work of redefining the park as a healthy, active and welcoming place.

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The Mills also provides person-directed services where needed, enabling many individuals, including people with developmental disabilities, to use their diverse talents and become fully engaged in the community through the park project.

“People from the neighbourhood, including individuals we support, were all working together,” said Mike. “They were raising money, creating accessible walkways, building a 6,000 square foot community garden, repairing the basketball court and installing the swing set and the rocket ship for the kids. Labels like age, ability and income level didn’t seem to matter anymore. Everyone was focused on the park.”

Keenan Wellar, Co-Leader of LiveWorkPlay – one of The Mills’ partners, praised The Mills for its “dedication to progress towards more inclusive thinking and practices, not only for the organization, but for the communities and citizens they impact every day.”

Today, members of the neighbourhood enjoy the renewed park space, but the work continues and the community spirit remains strong. Many continue to help with added improvements, such as installing a new footbridge, and others remain committed to the Friends of Augusta Street Park group and further developing the park as a safe, accessible community place for everyone.

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“The town is truly grateful to residents who transformed this park into a vibrant and welcoming place.”

- Shaun McLaughlin  
Mayor of Mississippi Mills

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“The town is truly grateful to residents who transformed this park into a vibrant and welcoming place,” said Shaun McLaughlin, Mayor of Mississippi Mills. “The Friends of Augusta Street Park have created a model of public participation that I would encourage others to emulate in their local parks to add richness to their community.”

To learn more about how The Mills helps to create and foster inclusive communities:

- [visit their website](#) and check out their stories and video clips
- contact Jeff Mills, Coordinator of Community Development, at 613 256-1031 ext 63 or [jmills@themills.on.ca](mailto:jmills@themills.on.ca)



# Ministry taking action on inquest recommendations

A Coroner's inquest into the death of 38-year old Guy Mitchell concluded in July with the jury determining the death was accidental and making recommendations related to the safety and security of adults with developmental disabilities to prevent deaths in similar circumstances.

The Ancaster man was found dead in April 2012 after falling into a cistern on the property of the Host Family home where he had been living.

In a statement following the July inquest, Dr. Helena Jaczek, the Minister of Community and Social Services, expressed her heartfelt sympathy for Guy Mitchell's family and friends:

"I take the safety and security of individuals with developmental disabilities very seriously, which is why I am grateful to the jury for their extensive work and appreciate their thoughtful recommendations. My ministry will carefully consider each of them," said Minister Jaczek.

## Ministry taking immediate action

In response to the jury's recommendations the ministry is beginning consultations with stakeholders and establishing the recommended working groups by inviting representatives from key developmental services organizations to participate. Expected to start work this fall, the working groups will develop ways to improve the safety, wellbeing and quality of life of adults with developmental disabilities.

Also this September, the ministry will release new Policy Directives created over the past year for the Host Family program.

"The Policy Directives for the Host Family program will be mandatory," said Minister Jaczek. "These new Policy Directives will require agencies to conduct regular and unannounced visits to host families and enhance requirements for our agencies in their selection of host families. We will work diligently together to develop solutions that respect the dignity and autonomy of those we serve and support greater awareness and advocacy."

By January 2016, we will provide a method for complaints to be registered directly with the ministry about the care being provided to vulnerable individuals. We will consult the working groups on the best way to achieve a direct complaints process with the ministry and the most effective means of making people aware of these mechanisms.

The ministry will provide updates on developments resulting from the activities of the working groups and the release of the Policy Directives.

The Host Family program partners people who would like to share their lives and homes with adults with developmental disabilities. The program enables individuals to live in supportive family environments, which helps individuals feel more included in their communities. More than 1,700 adults with developmental disabilities in Ontario live in a Host Family home with care, support and supervision provided by the Host Family provider.

# Helping more people plan for the future

Ontario has launched a project that will give 1,100 adults with a developmental disability the opportunity to work with an independent facilitator to develop their own person-directed plans over the next two years.

By using a person-directed planning and facilitation process, the **Independent Facilitation**

**Demonstration Project** will help people with developmental disabilities and their families:

- plan for the future
- plan for major life transitions, and
- connect with broader community supports.

Through education, outreach and training, the project also hopes to raise awareness and increase the availability of independent facilitation in under-served parts of the province, including northern Ontario.

The Ontario Independent Facilitation Network and members of seven partner organizations will deliver the services in the following areas of Ontario:



[Learn how person-directed planning helped Mark Miller](#)

| Partner organizations                         | Communities served                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Citizen Advocacy Ottawa                       | Ottawa, Prescott-Russell, Renfrew, Stormont/Dundas/Glengarry counties                                         |
| Independent Facilitation Perth                | Perth, Huron, Grey, and Bruce counties                                                                        |
| Waterloo                                      | Region of Waterloo, including Kitchener, Cambridge, Waterloo, Wellesley, Woolwich, Wilmot, and North Dumfries |
| Families for a Secure Future                  | Guelph-Wellington, Mississauga, Brampton, Toronto, and Durham Region                                          |
| Facilitation Wellington Dufferin              | Wellington and Dufferin counties                                                                              |
| Partners for Planning                         | Toronto                                                                                                       |
| Windsor-Essex Brokerage for Personal Supports | Windsor and Essex counties                                                                                    |

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Individuals who live in the communities served by the project and who have requested person-directed planning services through their local Developmental Services Ontario (DSO) office will be invited to participate in the project over the next two years. Due to limited space, not everyone who has asked for person-directed planning through DSO will be invited to participate in the project. People will be invited in the order that they registered at DSO.

As the project progresses, the ministry will ask participants for feedback on the services they have received. This will help the ministry better understand how independent facilitation helps people with developmental disabilities.

This new project follows another provincial initiative that helped more than 300 people get person-directed planning services through both developmental services agencies and independent facilitators. Many individuals and families who participated in this initiative provided positive feedback on their experience planning for the future.

Check out the [ministry's website](#) and the [Person-directed Planning and Facilitation Guide](#) for more information on person-directed planning and independent facilitation.

## Common question

### **Can I use Passport funding to pay for person-directed planning?**

Yes! People with Passport funding can use up to \$2,500 of their funding to pay for a person-directed plan through service agencies or an independent facilitator.

Learn more about [Passport funding](#) on the ministry's website.

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