



**Wesway**  
Respite... Care your way



# Celebrating Community Support Month in Ontario

**October 2014**

# What is Respite?

Respite is a short break from the ongoing demands of providing care for a family member who has a disability or chronic health condition. Wesway offers respite options that give family caregivers a chance to renew their energy. Respite is a crucial part of the overall support many people need when caring for a family member at home.

Wesway is flexible in accomodating the strengths, needs and preferences of each family we serve. Respite can take place in the family home or at another location. Respite may also include support for individuals to participate more fully in the life of the community.



## Respite Care Benefits Everyone

### Families

The responsibilities of providing ongoing 24-hour care can be stressful and exhausting. Respite provides a short break for family caregivers to enjoy some personal time or simply get much needed rest. Periods of respite help sustain the strength of family caregivers so they can continue their vital role of caring for their family member at home.

### Participants

Respite helps people with a disability or chronic health condition to continue living at home with their families. For many participants – young children, teens, adults or seniors – respite offers opportunities to socialize, pursue interests, build confidence and participate in community activities.

### Community

Respite helps caregivers and their family members contribute to the life of the community. A flexible range of respite services helps build a stronger community with support networks that are inclusive and caring of all citizens.

### Who Is Eligible?

Wesway's services are available to eligible families in the City of Thunder Bay, as well as along the Highway 11/17 corridors from the Manitoba border, east to Manitouwadge, and north to communities such as Armstrong and Greenstone. Eligible families are responsible for the ongoing care of a family member, and the primary caregiver in the family must live in the home with the person

who is receiving the care.

The types of services Wesway can offer vary depending on geographical location, age and diagnosis of the participant and other factors. Contact Wesway for detailed information about our eligibility requirements in your community.



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# Wesway's Personalized Focus

## Service Planning

At Wesway, we listen. We tailor our services to meet the distinctive needs of each family we serve. We're proud of our reputation for flexibility, diversity and innovation. We work in partnership with families to create personalized service plans built on individual strengths, needs and preferences. Caregivers are encouraged to arrange their periods of respite directly with their workers or volunteers.

Since nobody can predict when an emergency might occur – a death, illness, or other extraordinary situation, Wesway strives to support families through some of life's most difficult respite care challenges, with crisis support.

## A Flexible Range of Respite Services



### In-Home Service

Wesway offers In Home respite to eligible family caregivers living within the city of Thunder Bay and immediate surrounding area. In Home service means that a trained Wesway Respite Worker will carry out the care routine normally provided by the family caregiver. This can happen in your home, or if you prefer, the worker can take your family member to activities outside of the home.

### Host Families

Wesway's Host Family service has been a Thunder Bay success story since 1981. After careful screening and matching, volunteer Host Families provide short term periods of respite for eligible families living within the City of Thunder Bay, by welcoming a child, adult or senior into their home. The hosts include the individual in their family activities for a few hours, or an occasional overnight or a weekend.

### Community Friends

Wesway's Community Friend service launched in 1987 and has been a crucial part of respite care for many caregivers. Eligible families living within the City of Thunder Bay are matched with carefully screened volunteers who share their time with a child, adult or senior participant every week or two – or perhaps monthly. Together they enjoy a few hours of social or recreational activities in the community.

### Respite Homes

In the City of Thunder Bay, Wesway has three Respite Homes where participants may stay when family caregivers need a bit of a longer break. All three locations offer a comfortable home like environment where the needs of participants are met by Wesway's trained Respite Workers. Our Respite Homes can support small groups of participants

at a given time. Each home is designed to cater to the needs of the population it serves. In addition to being fully accessible, there are recreation and entertainment options in the home, as well as opportunities to go on social outings with the Respite Home staff.

### Family Directed Respite Funding

Family Directed Respite Funding is available to eligible family caregivers who provide ongoing care to a child, adult or senior living in the City and District of Thunder Bay, as well as seniors living in the Districts of Rainy River and Kenora. Family caregivers decide how they would like to receive their respite and Wesway pays for the approved costs. Families are able to use the funding in a variety of ways.

Wesway gratefully acknowledges the funding we receive from the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Community and Social Services/Ministry of Child and Youth Services.

Supported by  
 **Ontario**  
 North West Local Health  
 Integration Network

# Message from the President of Wesway's Board of Directors



*Margaret Boone, President of Wesway's Board of Directors*

## Living Longer

I am both pleased and proud to serve another year as President of Wesway's Board of Directors. Through this publication, I'm delighted to extend greetings and best wishes to our friends and families throughout Thunder Bay and the region. Wesway is inspired by the dedication of family caregivers who are committed to caring for their loved ones at home.

In his report "Living Longer,

Living Well" Dr. Samir Sinha, Provincial Lead, Ontario's Seniors Strategy, writes, "Through our consultations, we learned that we need to do more to support caregivers across our province, especially when their presence is the reason why so many older Ontarians have been – and will remain – able to age in their places of choice for as long as possible." Daily the public is bombarded with warnings about aging baby boomers who will soon overwhelm our health care system. Creative solutions are essential. As the number of seniors in the province doubles over the next ten years, and warnings of an approaching health crisis tsunami catch the news headline, we can predict three things with assuredness. The vast majority of healthcare will continue to be provided by unpaid caregivers, seniors will continue to wish to age in place and for those individuals who require support to do so, it will be through the commitment of their caregivers which will allow them to remain in their own homes for as long as possible.

Dr. Sinha goes on to write, "Although caregiving can be personally rewarding, it can also be stressful and expensive and

can take an enormous toll on a caregiver's health and well-being. All Ontarians stand to benefit when caregivers can be supported with information and access to a range of supports which will allow them to continue assisting those they care about." Wesway strives to support the strength of family caregivers by providing personalized respite services. Our service enables families to take a break and renew their energy. These planned breaks ultimately assist the health care system by reducing visits to emergency departments, decreasing unnecessary admissions to hospitals and long-term care homes, and by reducing alternate level of care (ALC) pressures and length of hospital stays for seniors.

In Ontario we are fortunate to see a number of strategies supported by the Local Health Integration Network which directly assist caregivers to continue providing care in the home. Through its Health Services Blueprint, the North West LHIN is spearheading many initiatives which align closely with Dr. Sinha's report through mechanisms such as Integrated District Networks, Local Health Hubs and Health Links. Wesway is pleased to

support this work by participating in associated steering committees and working groups with other health service providers.

Providing support and assistance to caregivers to maintain their health will be a key ingredient in the provision of health care in Ontario through the 21st century.

This is true not only for caregivers of seniors but for those providing care to children and adults as well. During the course of this summer and fall the Ministry of Community and Social Services will unveil new funding for families of adults with a development disability. The Ministry of Children and Youth Services continues to roll out an ambitious strategy to enhance service to children with mental health challenges.

Wesway will continue its work to support caregivers. We believe the long term outcomes will be stronger families, the preservation of dignity and respect and improved quality of life. We are particularly grateful to Wesway's families, volunteers and staff for sharing their personal stories, and allowing us to raise awareness of what it means to be a family caregiver.

## Call for Volunteers to Serve on Wesway's Board of Directors

Collectively, the members of Wesway's volunteer Board of Directors encompass a wide range of skills, knowledge and life experiences. One third of the Board is comprised of families who are connected to our services, which helps the organization remain strategically focused on the changing needs of the people we serve. The remaining members represent the broader external environment, with representatives who have backgrounds in business, finance, education and other key sectors. This blend of abilities strengthens our Board's capacity to define the future of our organization. For information about becoming a member of Wesway's Board of Directors, please call Wesway at 623-2353, toll free 1-888-623-2353 or email [respite@wesway.com](mailto:respite@wesway.com)

# An Opportunity to Grow

Ida was born in Dorion, Ontario and raised in the town of Nipigon. The third eldest of nine children, Ida is a natural caregiver, having helped to care for her younger sibling when she was growing up.

Ida is a mother of four, grandmother to twelve and great grandmother to seven.

In her early adult life she thrived on dancing and rock & roll, teaching her children to dance before they could walk. She is an avid kayaker, hiker and climber. Her connection to nature helps her stay true to her inner self. Ida can often be found digging deep into the soil to plant seeds in the spring. With a smile on her face Ida expresses "I have passed on these wilderness skills to my grandchildren and great grandchildren. Many of them now enjoy the challenges of hiking, climbing and kayaking as well".

Ida says, "I think that patience, flexibility, and commitment are natural elements of my being. Empathy and compassion are



*Ida loves to spend time in the outdoors with the participants she works with.*

always at the forefront of my heart, keeping me in tune with the needs of others."

Ida is always open to learning and taking on a challenge. She decided to further her education, and between the ages of forty three and fifty, received three college diplomas.

In the role of a Respite Worker at Wesway, Ida has had many

opportunities to utilize the skills she has learned. Providing support to seniors has always been especially near and dear to her heart. "I knew I had found my niche in life and thrive in the company of seniors. I felt like a little seed waiting for an opportunity to grow. Seniors were the rain and sun that I needed to blossom." With joy in her voice Ida speaks of the relationship she had

as a child with her grandfather. "I would sit for many hours and listen to him tell stories of his immigration to Canada from Norway.

Ida describes herself as a bit of an introvert. With the support, honesty and encouragement from Wesway, she reflects on her growth and development. "I'm more comfortable in social settings and recognize areas of my life that I would like to continue to strengthen," Ida shares. During the past sixteen years working as a Respite Worker, Ida has provided care for children, adults and seniors.

Although Ida is heading into what many would consider their retirement years, she says the word is not in her vocabulary. She has developed great working relationships and friendships with her co-workers and families they have become her Thunder Bay family. "Wesway has been a big part of my life for sixteen years".

## More Than A Job



## Use your own life experience to help families in our community

Wesway's respite services give family caregivers some time to renew their energy. We offer opportunities for personal and professional growth within a flexible work schedule. As a Respite Worker, you can engage in quality training, learn new skills and provide supportive care for someone with a disability or chronic health condition.



**Wesway**  
Respite... Care your way

For more information call 623-2353  
or visit [wesway.com](http://wesway.com)

# What Would We Do Without It?

"There was no crying... no screaming," says Cindy Harasen. "When we were told that Kaleigh had Down syndrome, my husband Steven and I just wanted to know she was healthy."

The Harasen's were already home schooling siblings Max and Kyra. They wondered if that was the best decision for Kaleigh. "We'd miss her" said her siblings and her parents decided that there really wasn't any reason not to teach her at home.

Along with her brother and sister, Kaleigh became immersed in play group, Lego club, Youth club, Brownies and their church community. She is a recreational bowler, a cheerleader on the Dreamers special needs cheerleading team and an award winning swimmer with Special Olympics. "Kaleigh would do everything I signed her up for" explains Cindy, and that eventually would be why they became involved with Wesway.

The Harasen's have been involved with the Early Intervention Program at



*Kaleigh takes a moment from playing to hang out with Max and Kyra*

Children's Centre Thunder Bay since Kaleigh's birth and it was here that they first learned of Wesway. Cindy explains, "Now we talk to young parents and when they ask about Wesway, Steven and I say 'Well sit down and let us tell you. Just get it ... get it and use it!'"

"Ten years ago we would not have

foreseen that respite would be so important – but it is. We never imagined that we'd let a worker take her out; even Max and Kyra were against it initially." When Cindy and Steven were first told about the Respite Home service, they were reluctant.

"Kaleigh wakes up every morning and asks 'Go?' She's intense and wants to know the plans for the day," explains Cindy. "Kaleigh becomes the center of the universe on a daily basis. That's who she is, and we now recognize that we need regular

respite".

First with Kristen and now Tara, Chelsea and Lorena, Cindy can't say enough about their Respite Workers. "Wesway should warn families about the emotional attachments," teases Cindy. "You trust your child's care to them and share with them and you become so close."

Recently, the respite home came up again. Max and Kyra said "Yes" ... Steve and I thought "It's time". Kaleigh goes for one night each visit and although her siblings miss her, Cindy thinks it might be nice to have two nights of respite at a time. Kaleigh doesn't sleep and the Harasen's recognize it is important to have valuable time with their older children.

Kaleigh, Kyra and Cindy recently attended the National Girl Guides Rally. With Wesway's creative help, Cindy went as the Brownie Leader and not just as Mom.

"My biggest Wesway flag came two years ago when I was diagnosed with a chronic health condition and had endless medical appointments. Steven and I had already seen the value of the service. When then this happened we realized "What would we do without Wesway?"



ST. JOSEPH'S CARE GROUP

## Manor House Adult Day Program

The Manor House, 63 Carrie St.  
Thunder Bay, ON, P7A 4J2



The Manor House Adult Day Program is a social and recreational day program for older adults who have Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia. The program helps participants maintain an optimal level of independent functioning in the community for as long as possible, while providing respite for caregivers.

**To cover costs of meals and special activities, a daily fee is charged.**

**If you or someone you know would benefit from our service, contact:**

**Lisa Petersen, Coordinator at 768-4454 or  
Howard Nistico, Family/Client Support Facilitator at 768-4415**



**Joyce Jalocha – Caregiver**

Wesway is the Best! They're like our family and I trust them. My son and I have been using Wesway for over 20 years. Come to Wesway if you need help with caregiving!



**HaGi**

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*Wesway also gratefully acknowledges the donations received in memory of the following individuals:*

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## Gift Idea

Are you struggling to find unique gift ideas? Why not give your special someone a donation to Wesway in his or her name? Your one-of-a kind gift will certainly make a difference. The recipient will appreciate knowing your gift has directly benefited families. A “win-win” situation for all involved!

# The Right Place to Live

In the late 1990's, Heather and Leo Vanniewenburg realized that it was becoming too costly to live on their disability income in the community of New Westminster British Columbia. They knew that they had to make a change and that it should be sooner rather than later. While attending a wedding for a good friend, they met a gentleman from Ontario. He gave them brochures for Mirror Lake and invited them to stop by on their way through.

After making the tough decision to leave New Westminster, they packed their small vehicle and utility trailer and hit the road. Not wanting to rush, they made leisurely stops along the way and before long it was September and becoming cold very quickly. They encountered snow in Sioux Lookout and subsequently decided to stop for a while at the Mirror Lake campground. After a short stay, the couple was able to find a

house to rent in Pass Lake. Heather shares, "We decided to rent throughout the winter as it was one of the worst in years and I didn't want to risk moving Leo during the cold months." It was during this time that they realized there were a lot of benefits to residing in Ontario for a person living with a disability.

After much discussion and thought, the couple decided that they loved the area and found a home. Their feelings about the area were further strengthened upon discovering Pass Lake's Danish heritage. Leo was originally from Denmark and meeting locals who shared the same heritage made life great. "It has always been my belief that there is a reason for everything and our trip here and our lives since being here have proved over and over that we chose the right place to live."

In May of 2009, Leo suffered a serious stroke, and as a result lost



*Leo and Heather*

much of his mobility. Heather was told about Wesway's Family Directed Respite Funding and found out she was eligible for the service. Heather was able to find a worker to spend time with Leo. She has since been

able to resume some of her passions, such as researching and writing articles and books on history. "I love doing research both for myself and for others. Sometimes I concentrate so much I forget anyone else is around much less needs me." Heather says. She intends to research at the Thunder Bay Public Library and takes comfort in knowing that someone will be at home with Leo.

Heather expresses her gratitude with Wesway, and the freedom to shape her respite to their unique respite needs. "Wesway funds have allowed me some much needed breaks as well as breaks for my husband. No one can ever know the comfort of those funds. Thank you Wesway for being there for those who need you and for allowing families much needed breaks for both caregiver and the ones we care for."

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**Marie Klassen – Director, Wesway Board of Directors**

What a privilege it is to be a Director of such a forward-thinking, vibrant and growing organization. The work of Wesway has positively impacted the lives of so many people not only in our community but those living in Northwestern Ontario.



**Paula Donylyk – Senior Director, North West Community Care Access Centre**

Whenever I think about Wesway, I automatically think about words like “understanding, caring, and supportive”. Wesway is an invaluable organization and clients and caregivers are always at the heart of everything they do. Their approach of “how can we help” reflects their commitment to everyone they work with, from those who receive their care to those who work with them every day and plan for our communities in Northwestern Ontario.

# Services from Wes

## West of Thunder Bay

Wesway serves eligible caregivers of seniors through its Family Directed Respite Funding model of service. The individuals served include seniors with a chronic health condition, physical disability, Alzheimer Disease and/or frail health condition.



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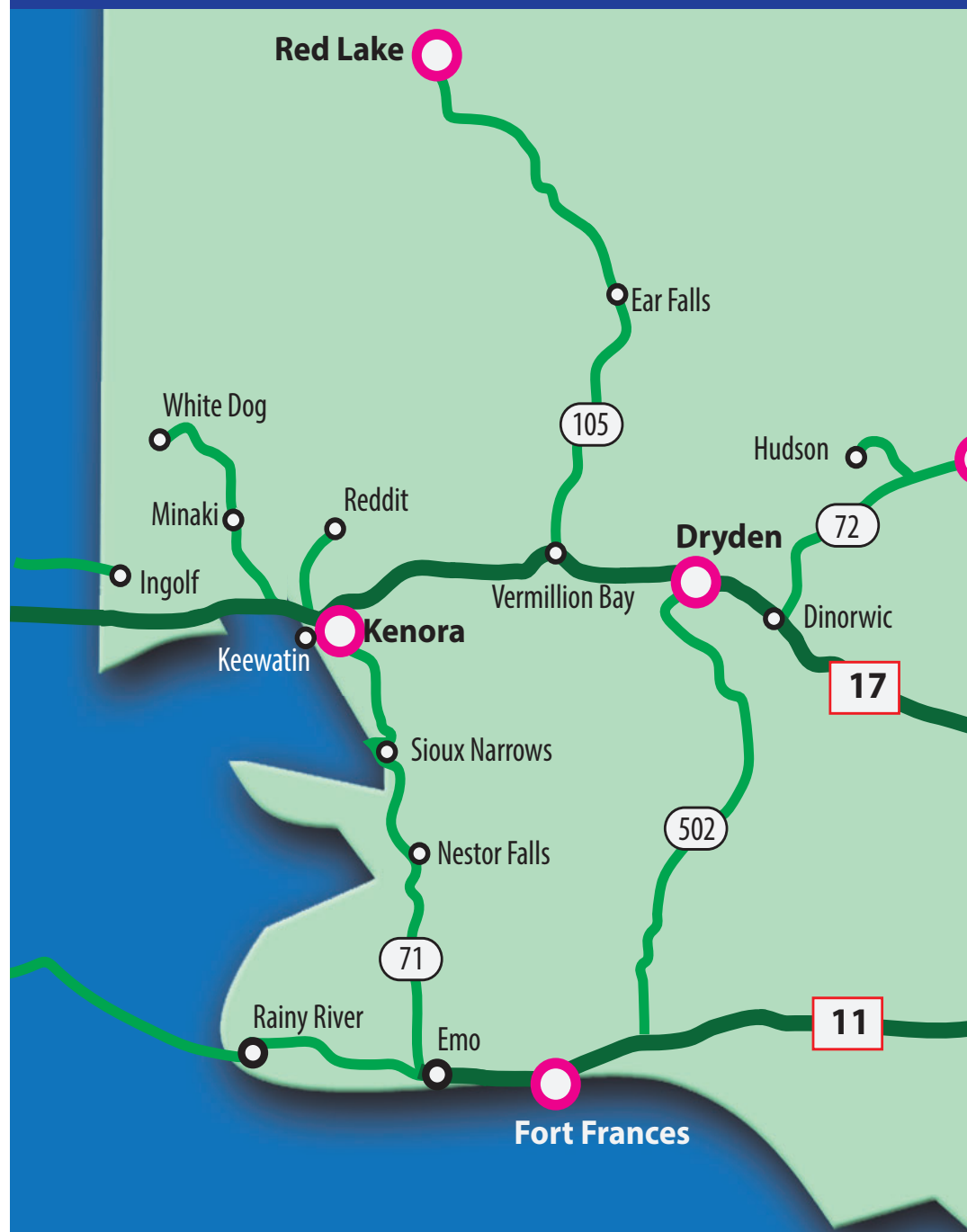
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# West to East

## Thunder Bay and Immediate Area

There are a range of services available to eligible families of all ages in Thunder Bay. Services include In Home, Respite Home, Family Directed Respite Funding, Host Families, and Community Friends.

## East of Thunder Bay

Wesway serves eligible families through Family Directed Respite Funding. Individuals served include; children with a developmental disability or autism spectrum disorder, adults with a developmental disability, aeniors with a chronic health condition, Alzheimer Disease and/or frail health condition.



# Enhancing Care... Your Way

When you step through the front door of the Court Street Respite Home, it's a lot like walking into someone's house. With its wood grain floors, bright and spacious living room, and comfortable bedrooms, it truly could be anyone's home.

There is much more to "Court Street" than what you see at first glance. The home has many accessibility features and special amenities built in, such as lifts, tracking, railings, grab bars and signage to assist participants in going about their daily activities. The home is perfectly suited for short visits by senior participants while their caregivers take a needed break.

Due to pressures on the regional health care system, the North West Local Health Integration Network (North West LHIN) has provided Wesway an opportunity to operate five short stay beds until March 31, 2015. The North West LHIN had previously asked



*Families are raving about the Enhanced Respite Service*

Wesway to take on the role of providing an Enhanced Respite Service for a short duration in 2013 and it was very

successful.

Undeniably, the Enhanced Respite Service is designed to help avoid unnecessary hospitalizations, prevent premature admissions to long term care homes and reduce the pressures in the health system. When people are cared for in a home like environment, it

increases the likelihood that they can remain in their home, and out of a medical facility.

The Respite Home service model has been a mainstay at Wesway for decades. The longer periods of respite offered at the Respite Homes give caregivers a chance to do things they might not be able to with a shorter break, such as take short trips, do some work around the house or even to get a good night's rest.

The results so far have been very positive. One caregiver shared, "My mom had a fantastic time at Wesway. The home style atmosphere was wonderful and comforting. The unstructured meal times suited her as well."

Another caregiver says, "We really couldn't ask for more. My husband really enjoys the Court Street Respite Home. While I miss him, it gives me a chance to do things I can't normally do."

Wesway is grateful to the North West LHIN for recognizing the vital role played by family caregivers.



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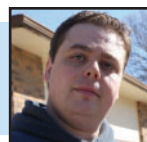
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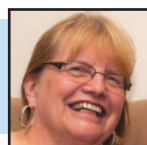
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#### Sean Murphy – Respite Worker

I feel honoured to be welcomed into the homes of our participants. These families have opened their lives to me, more than just as a Respite Worker, but as a friend.



#### Mary DeGrazia – Caregiver

Thanks to my reliable Respite Worker, I am able to get out to camp again, and my husband is able to participate in recreational activities! I can't say enough good things!

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# Hearty Thanks to Wesway's Fabulous Volunteers

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Valarie Luck  
Andre Korstanje

## Host Families

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Carol & Brent Cline  
Roz & Allan Cox  
Lisa Ellacott  
Barb & Gerry Erb  
Shelley Neff & Dan Fotheringham  
Lois Gagnon  
Theresa Hendrickson  
Kelly & Kevin Horne  
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Katrena Windum

## Community Friends

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Devin Bembem  
Sharon Campbell  
Jesse Christiansen  
Ashley Cripps  
Molly Dasch  
Robyn Douglas  
Jessica Eckensweiler  
Kaitlyn Makkinga-Fox  
Katherine & Justin Frape  
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Arlene Myers  
Amanda Orr  
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Natali Surkic  
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## Bingo Volunteers

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June Enger  
Tarja Heinimaki  
Daniel McGoey  
Sharon Johnston  
Nils Ronquist  
Judy Ross  
Cathy Sochackey  
Nancy Taylor  
Maria Walser  
Katie Zuber

## Our Mission

Wesway provides personalized respite services.

Wesway builds community partnerships and promotes inclusion through community development.

Wesway envisions a model of respite support services to meet the needs of community with respect and dignity.

## Privacy

Wesway values the trust placed in us by the families we serve. Wesway respects the personal privacy of families, and safeguards the confidentiality and security of all personal information.

For more information about our Privacy Policy and Procedures, call the Wesway office at 623-2353 or toll free at 1-888-623-2353

## Brett McDonald - Student

My placement at Wesway was extremely fulfilling. The staff was very welcoming and flexible which allowed me the space I needed to explore my personal style. The opportunities at Wesway are endless, whatever your interests may be.

## Discover the Rewards!



## Looking for a volunteer experience to fit your lifestyle?

There are countless reasons why volunteering with Wesway is a remarkable experience. Expand your life skills, build new friendships and make a real difference in the lives of families in our community. Enrich your life in ways you never imagined!



For more information call 623-2353 or visit [wesway.com](http://wesway.com)

# Wesway Word Search

Complete this word search for a chance to win a special surprise from Wesway.

Send your completed word search to Wesway by

October 28, 2014, along with your name, address and phone number. Mail to Wesway, 210-1703 E. Victoria Avenue, Thunder Bay ON P7C 1C8.

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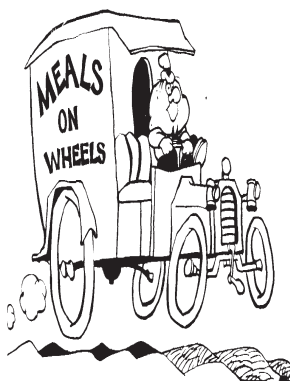
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# Above and Beyond

For Lisa Ellacott, Wesway is more than a job. In addition to working as a Family Resource Facilitator, she is also a volunteer. Lisa has been helping the parents of Ryan and Branden for approximately two years through the Host Family program, and has been supporting them through the Special Services At Home (SSAH) program for several years. Lisa met their mother nearly a decade ago and they became friends. Lisa learned that she was receiving respite service through Wesway and was looking for someone to help her with taking short breaks. She shares, "I jumped at the chance to help!"

Lisa says, "Supporting the boys as a Host Family was an easy choice considering they enjoy spending time here, and I look forward to their visits. I wanted to give the parents a more regular break, and hosting seemed natural as the boys like



*Ryan and Branden enjoy spending time at Lisa's*

visiting."

When the three of them are

together it's like a big slumber party!

They often take the dog for walks in

the afternoon, have dinner and watch some television in the evening. Going out for dinner is a special treat. "The boys get to choose where they'd like to go, and pizza is often on the menu!" Lisa says.

Lisa tries to plan the sleepovers when the outdoor movies are playing at the Marina in the summer time. When they attend the "Movies in the park", they always bring their favorite snacks, chairs and blankets for a fun and cozy evening! In the winter they often rent movies or watch television together.

When Lisa has the boys she sometimes invites family and friends over. Ryan and Branden enjoy the extra company, and Lisa loves to include them in her day, saying "The boys are a big part of my life!"

## Work for a Family



### Are you interested in flexible, meaningful work?

Family caregivers who use Wesway's Family Directed Respite Funding need to find someone to help them take a needed break. Independent respite providers can offer active living opportunities for a child, adult or senior with an eligible disability or chronic health condition, by spending time with them in the family home or out in their community.

**For more information about becoming an independent respite provider call 623-2353, toll free 1-888-623-2353 or visit [wesway.com](http://wesway.com)**

## We're a Team

Don, his wife Deanna and his father Ivan share their story of becoming a Wesway family from their comfortable living room overlooking a scenic yard. The sound of the neighbouring river really adds to the tranquility of the area.

"I was hesitant to ask for help, because caring for my dad is my responsibility," Don explains while seated next to his father Ivan. "I think I was in denial about the idea of needing someone to give me a hand. We've been a team since I could walk. He's been not only my father, but my best friend too... we used to go fishing for a month at a time."

Don cared for Ivan by himself for the first four years, and now does so with the help of his wife Deanna. Ivan, who has Alzheimer Disease and needs support for mobility, has had an increasing need for assistance with day to day activities. "In those first years I couldn't leave



*Don says having Wesway has been a big help*

the house without him."

As Don explains, "I've also been having my own share of health issues that have made caring for dad tough to manage. I think as a caregiver, I was burning out. I literally had to be near my dad 24/7."

About a year ago, Don's contact at the Community Care Access

Centre suggested that they contact Wesway to see if they were eligible for respite care. They did, and about a year ago he and Deanna were able to access some crisis respite service through Wesway while dealing with Don's own health concerns. Later they were able to access Family Directed Respite Funding through Wesway.

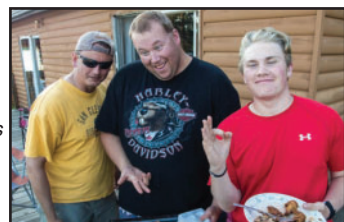
"We were fortunate to be able to find a family friend to help us take some time off," Don says. "We know we can take regularly scheduled time off, and that helps us get things like shopping and other errands done. Sometimes I can take an evening to go for dinner with my wife, or sometimes take the grandkids fishing. "Because of where we live, everything is about timing. It takes an hour to get from our place to town, so we have to plan everything. We wouldn't be able to do as much as we do without Wesway."

This summer with help from the CCAC, they were able to use Wesway's Enhanced Respite Home Service, which gave Ivan the opportunity to have a short stay at Wesway's Court Street Home. This gave Don and Deanna a chance to do some things around the house and spend time with the rest of the family. Don puts it simply. "Wesway has been a huge help for us!"



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*Keith Hobbs*

Mayor Keith Hobbs

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# A Perfect Fit

In 2003 Barbara and John Maruk travelled nervously to meet the newest addition to their family. Nathan was born in Yellowknife, and had been moved through several different foster homes. The Maruk's weren't sure how he would feel about his new parents. Having been in a similar situation before, they knew that with each adoption comes with different challenges.

Anxious and unsure of what to expect, Barbara shares, "we were thrilled when Nathan immediately jumped into our arms. We fell in love that instant!" Having previously adopted four

other special needs children, the family was the perfect fit for young Nathan who has a developmental delay, FAS and Cerebral Palsy.

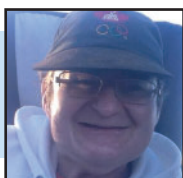
Upon arriving home to Marathon, Nathan was excited to find out that he now had 3 older brothers Robert, Brandon, Allan and a sister Deanna. From the very beginning, Nathan was an exceptionally loving child and he got along great with his siblings.

"As you can imagine, caring full time for five children with special needs takes a lot of energy. We were introduced to Wesway through Lutheran Community Care Access Centre's office in

Greenstone." They were able to access Family Directed Respite Funding, and now John and Barbara express very warm sentiments towards Wesway. "We have always loved our service. We are able to hire workers who are great role models to Nathan, and we rely on them to give us a much needed break." said Barbara. "If it weren't for Wesway I don't know what we would do".

These days Nathan is overcoming many obstacles that few thought would be possible. They were told he would never be able to use proper speech, but now he speaks perfectly. His

parents were also told he'd never be able to walk, but after several surgeries to straighten his legs, they find they can't stop him from running around and playing with his friends. As Nathan has gotten a little older, his interests have become that of your typical young teenager. "He loves whichever hockey team is winning, watching monster trucks and race cars... His favorite drivers are Dale Earnhardt and Jimmy Johnson." Nathan also has a fondness for camping and for the outdoors. Barbara shares, "He's a perfect fit for our family!"



## Angela Cacciatore – Participant

My Respite Worker joins me at the gym for aerobic and fitness classes weekly. Having Wesway service helps me to stay fit and healthy. We have a great time together!



## Kathy Pechiwa – Respite Worker

Working for Wesway has been a very rewarding experience. I enjoy getting to know new families and helping to make positive changes in their lives. Whether I work out in the community or in home it is great to make new friends.



## Erin Clarke – Community Friend

What I enjoy about volunteering is being able to help out a family while forming new friendships at the same time. My favorite part is that not only seeing my new friend have fun, but also having fun myself

## Our Thanks ...

Wesway gratefully acknowledges all the families, volunteers, donors and staff who have so graciously agreed to share their very personal stories and images in this publication. The truths expressed by these ordinary people bring some decidedly extraordinary issues to life. The sharing of these personal challenges, joys and tribulations is a compelling way to increase knowledge and understanding in our community.

## We Care About Our Neighbourhood

At Tbaytel, we applaud the organizations that make a difference in the communities we serve. From accessible recreation to just plain old help, we know how hard staff and volunteers work to support and enrich lives.

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Dear Friend of Wesway,

Roy, Pia and I have lived in Nipigon all our lives. Roy is a member of the Knights of Columbus and I am a member of the local Catholic Women’s League. I have been involved for many years with the local community living association. Our daughter has multiple special needs.

Roy and I are retired now and getting older. We’re finding it harder to participate in our daughter Pia’s activities. She’s very active and loves to go camping!

When Pia was much younger, there were almost no supports for families caring for someone with a disability. Everything Pia needed was “out of pocket”. A new wheelchair can cost as much as a small car; and we’re thankful that services for families like ours have come so far since those days.

Becoming a part of the “Wesway Family” has enabled Pia to continue enjoying life; whether it’s socializing with friends, going camping, attending concerts, or just spending some time shopping. The respite helps us to take a bit of a break as well. Anybody who has been a caregiver knows what an hour or two of free time can mean. The relief that break provides can make all the difference to a caregiver.

We have the utmost confidence in our respite providers. They give us peace of mind and allow us to relax and rest ... to take some quiet time. We sometimes find ourselves feeling a bit guilty because we know there are other people out there who need Wesway’s service as well, even though we know that the service is important to Pia and to us.

That’s a part of why we donate to Wesway, and why a donation from you will help families like ours. We feel we benefit from Wesway’s service; every bit makes a difference. Donations given to Wesway enable them to continue with their various programs and supports, and help more families. Every dollar helps!

Sincerely,

*Maria Ray*

Maria Ray

**YES!** I want to support Wesway’s service to families and help build a stronger, more caring community. I would like to make a financial contribution of:

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