



Introducing the new Minister of Community and Social Services: Michael Coteau

On 26th February 2018, following a cabinet shuffle, The Honourable Michael Coteau was appointed as the new Minister of Community and Social Services, taking over from The Honourable Dr. Helena Jaczek as she moves on to her new role as Minister of Health and Long-term Care.

In addition to his role as Minister of Community and Social Services, Minister Coteau will be maintaining his role as Minister of Children and Youth Services,

as well as Minister Responsible for the Anti-Racism Directorate.

Minister Coteau has already been quite busy. On March 1st in Toronto, the minister, along with his colleagues Harinder Malhi, Minister of Status of Women, and Yasir Naqvi, Attorney General, announced [It's Never Okay: Ontario's Gender-Based Violence Strategy](#). On March 2nd, the Minister visited Community Living Toronto's Gooderham Centre, in addition to meeting with staff at the Golden Mile ODSP and OW office in Scarborough.

Prior to entering government, Minister Coteau served as a school board trustee for almost eight years and was the Vice-Chair of the Toronto District School Board. He has since served as Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Tourism and Culture, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, as well as Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan/Parapan American Games.

Best wishes to Minister Coteau in his new role! ■



Major investments evolving Developmental Services in Ontario

Ontario is renewing its commitment to adults with developmental disabilities in the province with major investments outlined in Budget 2018, tabled on March 28, 2018.

Budget 2018 is proposing to invest \$1.8 billion over three years in developmental services – the largest one-time investment in the province’s history.

The proposed three-year plan will include:

- More than 42,000 people getting new supports through direct funding – At 18 years old, all eligible people with a developmental disability will automatically receive at least \$5,000 a year of direct funding through the Passport program. In addition, individuals who are currently receiving less than \$5,000 a year will be topped up.
- Ensuring that hundreds of people living in places like hospitals, shelters and long term care homes find new, more appropriate, safe homes in their community – where they would receive the right supports for their particular needs.
- Providing extra support to aging caregivers as well as making much needed capital investments in creating new residential spaces. We are committed to the

goal of making sure that no adult with a developmental disability is living where they are not appropriately supported.

- The government values the important work that community and developmental services agencies across the province do, day in and day out. Which is why, as part of this investment, we would continue to support agencies with an investment of approximately \$300M over three years so that agencies can continue to provide high-quality services to individuals and their families.

These improvements are being made because they will really make a difference in the day-to-day lives of people relying on our programs. This significant investment will help people with developmental disabilities connect with services in their communities, provide respite for caregivers and support the developmental services sector. We know how important our programs are to individuals and families who rely on them and we are committed to continuing to look for ways to make our programs and supports better.

We will continue to listen to the individuals and families who rely on our programs as well as our agencies. ■



Call for applications for funding for Family Support Networks now open

The Ministry of Community and Social Services has launched a call for applications for \$500,000 in funding towards new and existing Family Support Networks (FSN), and the organizations supporting them.

First announced in June 2017, this new annual funding will work to strengthen and expand the significant role of the networks of families, unpaid caregivers and supporting organizations that exist across Ontario that provide support to people with developmental disabilities and their families.

Initiatives such as this, aim to make it easier for people with developmental disabilities and their families to find peer to peer supports in their communities that will better support people to live as independently as possible.

The province is seeking applications that will provide much needed supports to help foster the creation of new FSNs, and to enhance the work of existing ones.

Completed application forms must be submitted no later than 11:59pm on Monday, April 16, 2018.

To download the application and guidelines and to learn more, including eligibility requirements, please visit the [webpage](#). For any questions about completing the application, please email MCSS.FSN@ontario.ca or call 416-325-4197. ■

Colin Sanders completes row across the Atlantic, raising funds for Developmental Service Agencies

Colin Sanders, proud father and business person, can now count himself as one of 30 people who have successfully completed a solo row across the Atlantic Ocean. He arrived safely in Antigua's English Harbour on March 2, after spending 83 days rowing across the ocean.

This harrowing trek was dedicated to raising awareness and funding for Community Living member organizations across the province. Over the course of his 4000 kilometre journey, he raised over \$145,000.

After training for two years, Mr. Sanders launched a campaign called "[A Million Possibilities: Solo Ocean Row 2017](#)" in December 2017, departing from the Canary Islands in a 21-foot ocean row boat. Mr. Sanders' adult son, Jeff, is supported

by Community Living Campbellford/Brighton in Cobourg, Ontario.

Mr. Sanders faced several challenges in his three months at sea, including food poisoning and a capsizing, chronicling the difficult trip in regular blog posts, featured on the campaign's website.

"Our family has been fortunate enough to receive support over the years from our local Community Living association and we have been grateful for the support we have received," said Sanders.

"That being said, people who have similar disabilities across Ontario are often not so fortunate as to lead as full and inclusive a life as my son, and may not have access to the right supports or have someone advocating for their needs."

Visit www.soloatlanticrow2017.com for more

information about Colin Sanders' journey.

Please join us in congratulating Mr. Sanders on his incredible achievement! ■



Colin Sanders

“Take a Chance, Make a Change” – Middlesex Community Living’s move away from Sheltered Workshops



L-R - Sonia K., Nette T., Maureen H., Daniel B., Cecil K., Nelly V., Julie T, and customers at Mercantile Restaurant before its closing

In July of 2016, Middlesex Community Living closed the doors of its sheltered workshop, the Mercantile Restaurant.

The restaurant had been in operation for 20 years, established as a place where people could develop hospitality skills, which could then be used to gain employment in the community.

When former Minister of Community and Social Services Minister Helena Jaczek made a commitment to shift Ontario away from sheltered workshops, and towards meaningful community participation, the agency took this as an opportunity to review Mercantile Restaurant, creating the “Take a Chance, Make a Change” initiative with the help of outside consultants.

What they found was that although many people working as trainees had the skills to move forward, they rarely made the transition to real jobs in the community. As Executive Director Sherri Kroll describes, “They had kind of built their life, like many of us do, around what many people saw as their place of employment and when that closed, they felt a sense of loss.”

The agency made a conscious effort to invest in people, and find out what each person wanted by meeting with each person affected by the closure to discuss their goals, what they envisioned and how they could move forward.

The transition wasn’t smooth sailing for everyone, with challenges arising with the families and

workers alike. However the organization worked with people to help them become more independent and continues to provide the supports they need to be included in the community. With this new approach, Middlesex Community Living and the people they support found success, using the skills they'd acquired to live more independently and be self-sufficient. For instance, some people who were previously in group homes are now living in apartments in their communities. Closing the sheltered workshop opened up possibilities for people supported by the agency.

For more on their transition away from sheltered workshops, watch MCL's featured videos, including a [profile on a person impacted by the closing](#), and the [perspective of the staff](#), or visit the [Middlesex Community Living website](#). ■

“When MCL closed its sheltered workshop (the Mercantile Restaurant), we committed to supporting those impacted by the closure in a different way. People and their families were actively involved in creating a new future and defining what a meaningful day meant to them. The agency avoided the temptation to create a new “program” for people and opted instead for a pilot project to support the transition from a life in service to a life in community. The pilot has proven to be very successful as people have found their rightful place in community.”

– Sherri Kroll, Executive Director, Middlesex
Community Living

Ministry of Community and Social Services Community Supports Policy Branch

Tel: 416-327-4954 ■ Fax: 416-325-5554 ■ Toll-free tel: 1-866-340-8881 ■ Toll-free fax: 1-866-340-9112

Email: DStransformation.css@ontario.ca ■ Read more about developmental services at ontario.ca/community

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