



independent living
waterloo region

ANNUAL REPORT

2021-2022



Live Life. Your Way.



Our Vision

Independence, Choice and Participation.

Our Mission

Supporting independent living through service excellence and partnerships.

Ministry of Health Supervision

The agency underwent an Operational Review in the Fall of 2020, as engaged by the Waterloo-Wellington Local Health Integration Network (WWLHIN) and Board of Directors.

Effective March 25, 2021, the WWLHIN appointed **Ken Deane** as the Health Service provider's supervisor (Supervisor). He assumed control of the organization and began work in addressing the key findings set out in the independent Operational Review dated March 9, 2021.

Mr. Deane, along with Heather MacArthur, interim Executive Director, implemented many changes over the next nine months in response to the issues identified in the Operational Review plus four Key Results Areas (KRAs). Specific objectives and initiatives were established within each KRA that reflected issues from the Operational Review deemed to be high priority based on the potential risk involved. In addition to addressing the KRAs, management focused on day-to-day operations, and the challenges and issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic and health human resources.

Significant progress was made in addressing the recommendations and Key Result Areas from March through December.

One of the Supervisor's final and most important responsibilities was to recruit a new Board of Directors and Executive Director to ensure the proper oversight and management of the agency. With the assistance of a professional search firm, a formal recruitment process was completed to select individuals with the necessary skills, competencies and diversity to govern and lead Independent Living Waterloo Region.

Mr. Deane announced the new ILWR's new Board and Executive Director who assumed office in December 2021 as he completed his supervisory work:

2021-2022 Board of Directors

Greg Barratt

Board Chair, Executive

Michael Bournon

*Vice-Chair + Treasurer,
Performance and Quality Oversight*

Beryl Collingwood

Vice-Chair, Governance

Jenny Rajaballey

Vice-Chair, Stakeholder Relations

Preeti Malik

Raagula Sivayoganathan

Brian Swainson

Kelly Steiss

Vivian Zochowski

Senior Leadership

Janet Redman

Executive Director

Drew Peterson

Director Human Resources

Leanne Davidson

Senior Manager Attendant Services

Leanne Schade

Finance Manager

Dan Lajoie

*Manager Independent Living
Resources*

Connie Wallbank

Business Intelligence Analyst

Message from Board Chair and Executive Director



Greg Barratt
ILWR Board Chair

Independent Living Waterloo Region (ILWR) underwent significant change and growth over the past year. From organizational design including several new positions, to policy development, to improvements in communication, to a new name – all undertaken to move the organization forward while honouring its history and the philosophy of independent living for the individuals we serve.

As ILWR and the community start to see signs of a return to normalcy, the following aspects of “pandemic life” will continue to help us be more productive, balanced and successful:

TAKING RISKS: making decisions based on factual information and a variety of input ensures that risks taken are calculated. With the guidance of a facilitator, ILWR Board of Directors will be developing a strategic plan over the next year, and looks forward to hearing from consumers, employees and stakeholders as part of this process to determine where they see us in the future.

RESILIENCY: COVID has proven that we can cope with difficult, unexpected situations as they unfold. ILWR has found its way through much adversity this year and has come out stronger and more resilient; we will continue to build on this.

COMMUNICATION: whether in a crisis or just living day-to-day, transparent and regular communication with all stakeholders is key. ILWR is focused on continued improvements to communication, including the a bi-weekly employee newsletter, launch of a new website with user-friendly Board, Consumer and Staff portals, and ongoing Consumer newsletters and memos.



Janet Redman
Executive Director

Ongoing work includes launching the renewed Consumer & Family Advisory Council for improved consumer engagement, employee appreciation initiatives, continued focus on recruitment and retention, and monitoring organizational performance through Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

On behalf of ILWR, we want to say **THANK YOU** to our consumers for your understanding and flexibility during the constant flux in service delivery; to our front-line employees for your compassion, hard-work and dedication to consumer care; to our administration staff for your cooperation and willingness to do whatever was needed; and to our community partners who support our mission and commitment to service delivery and quality programs.

We are proud to lead the organization into the future and look forward to ensuring a great experience is had by our ILWR consumers, employees, and stakeholders.



2021–2022 A Year in Review

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Independent Living Resources Program

Community Resource Program

The Community Resource Program (CRP) helps people with disabilities in our community to live independently and develop stronger social connections. We do this through one-on-one support, peer-based recreational and social activities, and our Youth in Transition program.

Again in 2021, all our peer-based activities were provided virtually, primarily through the Zoom software. Our virtual program not only helps us to continue to support consumers during the pandemic, but also helps to remove many traditional barriers faced by individuals with disabilities like access to transportation and accessible locations.

Our Community Resource Program was generously funded through the Ontario Trillium Foundation and United Way Waterloo Region Communities.

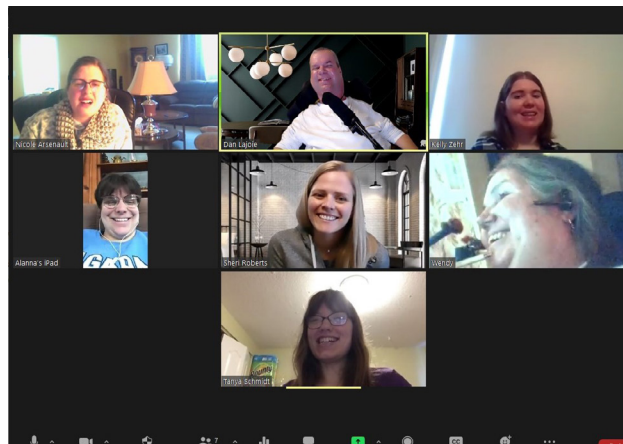
Virtual Activities and Resource Program (VARP)

Our virtual peer-based activities continued to be a great success! ILWR's Community Resource Coordinators work tirelessly to facilitate some amazing activities:

Stay Well Together

Every Wednesday, a group of folks met up virtually to cover many topics on the broad spectrum of "wellness". Alternating between physical and mental health, these sessions utilized community volunteers to help participants stay well. With topics ranging from adapted yoga, meditation, aerobics, or a dance party, there was something for everyone!

In This Together



'In this Together Thursday' is a peer support group which facilitated discussions surrounding various disability related topics. Topics were diverse and range from accessibility legislation, rights and responsibilities, programs and supports, and the complexities of everyday life with a disability. This group was an opportunity for our consumers to meet in a safe space to discuss topics with others who have lived experience and who really "get it".

Community Resource Program Annual Stats

Unique consumers served
(one-on-one support):

163

Contacts/interactions
with consumers
(one-on-one support):

1359

Peer activities/
events:

178

Event
participants:

1036

Youth in Transition (YIT)



This program brings young adults (aged 15-24) with disabilities together in a fun, supportive environment to help them prepare for independent living. Weekly meetings are a great opportunity for peers to get together, share experiences, learn new skills, and have fun.

Our group continued to meet virtually which was a great opportunity for a couple of our members who have moved out of the region to stay connected with their friends. We held a Fall and Winter session (10 weeks each) and were able to have some great conversations about transitioning into adulthood, as well as some fun-filled games and activities.

Spotlight on Alanna – YIT Volunteer

Alanna first got involved with ILWR in 2006. She was just an eager 14-year old who was hoping to join our Youth in Transition program; however, the age requirement was 15. Luckily, her birthday was coming up and the group organizers made an exception for her. At this time, Alanna was living in Kitchener and absolutely loved participating in the YIT program. She made many new friends and enjoyed spending time with them and the coordinators, Andrena, Dan and Sandy.

Alanna continued to participate in-person with YIT programs until she moved to Pembroke in 2014. Due to the distance barrier, she had a couple years where she

wasn't very involved with ILWR other than attending the annual YIT summer retreat. When the Virtual Program began in 2020, Andrena reached out to Alanna and invited her to attend. She has been an active participant ever since.



Alanna is one of our most dedicated Virtual Activities and Resource Program (VARP) participants. She regularly attends every VARP program and especially loves our 'Staying Well Together' Wednesday group. Even though she now lives outside of Waterloo Region, the virtual programs have allowed her to stay connected to the agency and her peers.

Through the many relationships she has developed in the VARP sessions, she has learned about other people's experiences with

disabilities. She appreciates the virtual wellness programs as it removes many barriers and allows for more access for all people.

Alanna believes that many of the discussions she has had in our various programs have helped her gain increased confidence and independence. She is currently looking for an apartment closer to her new workplace to live independently. Also, Alanna has been volunteering with VARP for over six (6) months and has learned many skills which will benefit her as she transitions into a full-time store manager job.

Alanna has had many great experiences with ILWR. She is a valuable volunteer and continues as an active participant in our VARP program!

National AccessAbility Week 2021

National AccessAbility Week (NAAW) held May 31 to June 4, 2021 promoted accessibility and inclusion across communities and workplaces, and celebrated the contributions of Canadians with disabilities. It was an opportunity to recognize the efforts of Canadians who actively remove barriers to ensure persons with disabilities have an equal chance to participate in all aspects of Canadian society.

ILWR worked with other community organizations and the City of Kitchener, City of Waterloo, and City of Cambridge to organize a webinar series called 'Life Made Accessible – Accessing the Future'. Over the span of the week, five webinars were held featuring expert panelists living with disability to explore a variety of topics.

ILWR staff played a key role in organizing the event and were instrumental in facilitating the webinar logistics. The event series was viewed by approximately 250 participants.

Kids on the Block

Thanks to a grant from the City of Kitchener, the Kids on the Block program continued to educate and entertain young children despite the restrictions and uncertainties of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic was especially difficult for students and teachers who had to regularly pivot between virtual platforms and in class groups. Thankfully, our Kids on the Block program coordinator and puppeteers were able to deliver the performances virtually to classrooms in 2021.

Scripts were modified and adapted for the virtual platform which served as a good opportunity to revitalize the material to be more in line with current trends in inclusion and accessibility. Our performance topics: *"accessibility and inclusion"*, *"how to deal with emotional stress"*, and *"bullying"* were very successful and meaningful in the world of children today.

We extend our thanks and appreciation to our talented puppeteers, Arlene Thomas and Nike Abbott, who had to adapt during this interesting time. Over the course of a few months, they delivered performances to seven schools and reached approximately 280 students.



Direct Funding

Direct Funding experienced a great year from April 2021 to March 2022, including the addition of three (3) new team members: a Resource Coordinator and Program Manager in June 2021, and a new Report Reviewer in July 2021.

The 2021-22 year presented some COVID-19 related hurdles, including the public availability of Rapid Antigen Testing kits. In partnership with the local United Way, we were able to provide testing kits to Self-Managers for their staff. This initiative was well-received, providing additional resources to the program participants.

Finally, Direct Funding augmented participants' budgets with the temporary personal support service wage enhancement of \$3/hour, with a hope towards the end of the fiscal year that this enhancement would be made permanent. All in all, we had a great year and have developed a strong team to work towards our department goals for 2022-23.

Direct Funding is an innovative program that allows adults with physical disabilities to become Self-Managers; managing their attendants, including recruitment, hiring/firing, and scheduling to meet their own specific daily needs.

The program is available throughout the province of Ontario and is funded through the Centre for Independent Living Toronto (CILT).

Direct Funding

(CWSW – Central West, South West)

New Self-Managers
to the program:

8

Contacts/interactions
with Self Managers:

2469

Applications
received:

11

Self-Managers
in the program:

270

Access Fund

The Independent Living Waterloo Region (ILWR) Access Fund helps individuals with disabilities in our local community purchase assistive devices, adapted technology, and medical equipment to help them live more independent lives.

To date, the Access Fund has helped 287 people purchase equipment totaling more than \$625,000. The annual Tournament of Hope Golf Classic was the initial funder of the Access Fund. It remains the largest funding source for the program to this day.

Access Fund Recipient – Abigail

This year, we were pleased to be able to help three-year-old Abigail as one of our Access Fund recipients:



"The bath chair is so helpful for us to give her a proper bath safely. We were able to give Abigail her first bath in the tub with this chair. It has helped us to normalize life more and to safely do something that we all do daily with ease."

Our family is thankful for all donors and people who make the Access Fund possible. With the many costs of a medically fragile child, getting a piece of equipment to help in her daily life is so very helpful. We are so grateful for the Access Fund to help us and others in a very big way."

2021 Tournament of Hope Golf Classic

Unfortunately, this annual tournament was cancelled in 2021 for a second year in a row due to restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic. We remain hopeful that conditions will be favourable in 2022 for ILWR to celebrate our 25th Annual Tournament of Hope.

Despite this year's cancellation, generous donations from individuals in our community and the Deer Ridge Charity Golf Tournament provided us with funds to support 10 individuals with approximately \$30,000 in support!

We are pleased to be associated with so many amazing individuals who help people with disabilities live more independently in our community! Thank you for your continued support.

Volunteer Spotlight: Gerard Carmichael

Gerard Carmichael has been helping to run ILWR's annual Tournament of Hope Golf Classic for the past 24 years. The tournament began in 1997 when his step-son, Randy, was involved in an accident and as a result, now lives with quadriplegia. Gerard and his family quickly discovered there were few financial supports to make their home accessible, and reached out to United Way Waterloo Region Communities for help. Since the organization did not fund individuals directly; chairperson, John Thompson, proposed running a golf tournament to raise funds to support modifications to the Carmichael's home and to acquire a wheelchair accessible van for Randy.

The first Tournament of Hope was a huge success with 178 golfers raising \$15,000; surpassing their fundraising goal. Gerard realized the tournament could help other individuals in the community. *"We planned a one-year*

event, but soon realized that in the community were many individuals who fell through the cracks for government funding for things such as wheelchairs and home renovations. We couldn't just stop!" says Gerard.

After ten years of being run independently, Gerard and his fellow committee members joined up with ILWR to help run the tournament and merge the funding portion with the Access Fund. Many individuals that the tournament had helped over the previous decade were ILWR consumers. *"We get a lot of applications for support and we try to assist as many individuals as we can,"* he says.

24 years later, the tournament is still going strong and has raised more than \$600,000 to help fund equipment for individuals with disabilities in Waterloo Region.



This would not be possible without the immense support from corporate sponsors, community partnerships, donations, and the golfing community. *"As long as the golfers keep coming out and we continue our great relationship with Grand Valley Golf & Country Club, we'll keep coming back!"*

In 2009, Gerard was honoured by his employer with a national award for community service, recognizing his incredible contributions to the community. *"It blows my mind when I look at how far we've come from our humble beginnings. We're looking forward to our 25th anniversary!"* he remarks.

He notes that the planning committee is always recruiting new members to volunteer and golfers to participate. *"I see the benefit that people get from it, knowing the need is so great."*

Consumer Services

Attendant Services 2021-2022

The past year was one of change and transition.

The acceptance of new referrals was placed on hold in order to focus on providing services to current consumers. Scheduling of consumer visits was consolidated with the introduction of the Consumer Service Coordinator (CSC) team. This team approach consisted of CSC staff working from 6 am to 11 pm every day to arrange consumer visits across the entire service area (Waterloo Region). This model replaced the previous practice of one person scheduling each geography. Once this model was completed, the position of Area Lead was eliminated, removing one level of supervisory staff from the Attendant Services program. These staff were offered positions as Attendants with the organization.

In October 2021, a new Senior Manager Attendant Services was hired to oversee the operations of the Attendant Services program.

And just when we began to think we were coming out of scheduling difficulties related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Omicron wave hit the region in January 2022. Many front-line employees were unfortunately affected by this, which resulted in cancelling of consumer calls. Many thanks to all of the staff who stepped up during this difficult time and picked up extra shifts to help ILWR and to ensure consumers continued to receive the care they deserve.

ASSISTED LIVING PROGRAM

Individuals Served	Resident Days
70	24,990

ATTENDANT OUTREACH PROGRAM

Individuals Served	Hours of Service
71	35,273

HCCSS-CONTRACTED SERVICES PROGRAM

Individuals Served	Visits
29	11,755

Supported by
203 Employees



Assisted Living provides 24-hour attendant services to adults with physical disabilities within integrated, accessible apartment buildings located in Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo. The consumers have access to scheduled and on-call services.

Attendant Outreach provides prescheduled attendant services to adults with physical disabilities living in their own homes throughout Waterloo Region. This program also supports the Home and Community Care Support Services (HCCSS) contracted consumers.



Our Employees

It was an unprecedented year for ILWR and our employees providing services throughout Waterloo Region, as we continued to manage through the COVID-19 pandemic. As we review 2021-2022, it is clear it was a year of transformation for Independent Living Waterloo Region. The following highlights some of the changes that have helped ILWR stabilize its work in our community.

Leadership Changes

ILWR welcomed new members to its Senior Leadership Team, including the successful transition of Executive Directors.

In April 2021, Heather MacArthur was appointed as interim Executive Director. Heather helped guide ILWR through the stages of supervision, and we are thankful for her support during this key juncture in our history. We were pleased to announce Janet Redman's appointment as the permanent Executive Director, joining ILWR on December 6, 2021. Janet brings an in-depth understanding of, and commitment to, Independent Living and provides strong leadership focused on staff engagement and consumer service.

Dan Lajoie moved into the role of Manager of Independent Living Resources. Dan's past experiences at ILWR made him the ideal choice to lead the Direct Funding and Community Resource Programs. Also in June, Connie Wallbank was appointed as the new Business Intelligence Analyst; an integral position to ensure ILWR maintains all agency information safety and securely.

Then in October 2021, we welcomed Leanne Davidson as Senior Manager, Attendant Services. Leanne's experience with quality improvement initiatives, change management, and residential assessment has been a valuable addition to the Senior Leadership team.

Human Resource Initiatives

- ▶ A refreshed training and onboarding program including in-person orientation, job shadowing, and online training using a new Learning Management System (HR Downloads).
- ▶ Work with the Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) and Public Health to ensure the COVID-19 vaccine was available to employees as a priority group.
- ▶ Provision of Personal Protective Equipment to reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection and spread; specifically, surgical masks, face shields, gowns, gloves, and an ample supply of N95 respirators.
- ▶ Access to Rapid Antigen Tests for employees to help ensure they are free from COVID-19 infection before arriving at work.
- ▶ Employment forms redesigned to gather information about the diverse backgrounds, experiences and identities of our staffing complement; creating the foundation for future Diversity, Equity and Inclusion strategies.
- ▶ Roll-out of a Whistleblower system to ensure all employees have a confidential way to report any wrongdoing that may adversely impact ILWR, its consumers, or stakeholders without fear of retaliation or impact on their employment.

Human Resource Initiatives cont'd.

- ▶ Employee satisfaction survey to review areas of compensation, teamwork, mental health support, turnover, leadership, communication, safety, and diversity/inclusion.
- ▶ Organizational restructuring including the elimination of the Area Lead position and introduction of Consumer Service Coordinators.
- ▶ Re-implementation of ILWR's Service Award program to recognize employee commitment and dedication to the organization.

In closing, Human Resources recognizes the support and assistance of our management, administration and front-line employees, whose valuable work helps ILWR to successfully carry out our mission. We also appreciate support received from the ILWR's new Board of Directors and look forward to working together to ongoing success in the upcoming fiscal year.

Information Technology

The Business Intelligence Analyst (BIA) role is a new position at ILWR, created in July 2021 as part of the operational change. This role oversees the Consumer Service Coordinators (CSC); Information Technology (IT) and everything technology related; maintains and improves our use of AlayaCare, our Client Record Management system; and privacy policies.

In the last year, we have created the Consumer Service Coordinators position (replacing Area Leads), upgraded cell phones for over half of our employees, switched to a more stable and user-friendly phone system, implemented new security measures to keep agency and consumer data safe, and replaced the antiquated servers to a more secure cloud-based system.

For our CSCs and consumer scheduling, the biggest change was moving from a one person, one geography approach to having all CSCs responsible for the entire region and working as a team. This model continues to be a work-in-progress, improving with time, assisting them to use AlayaCare more efficiently. Upgraded cell phones allows Attendants to use AlayaCare more efficiently, clocking in and out of visits/shifts and completing documentation.

We look forward to continued growth and development in the upcoming year.



Employee Service Awards

2021 Years of Service



35 YEARS
Jalea McPherson

35 YEARS

Jalea McPherson
Shawn Stranberg

30 YEARS

Cathy Doerbecker

25 YEARS

Deborah McMaster
Darlene Shyhinskyj

20 YEARS

Annette Adams
Priscilla Byfield-Moulton

15 YEARS

Monika McKenzie
Nancy Acheson

10 YEARS

Anna Swieton
Maureen Martin

5 YEARS

Kimberley Osmond
Noemi Corso
Larissa Oliveira
Arlene Stone
Stacey Read
Robin Eagle
Jenna Casselman
Erin Leroux



30 YEARS
Cathy Doerbecker

2022 Years of Service



15 YEARS
James Ducharme

35 YEARS

Gabriele Dantzer

30 YEARS

Allan Russell

15 YEARS

James Ducharme
Julie Gamboa

10 YEARS

Mayra Guerrero De Marroquin
Liliana Vilcea
Carrie Faulkner
Akberet Tekie
Marichel Balasabas
Carole Pearson
Trish Singh
Tammy Ferguson
Barbara Johnson

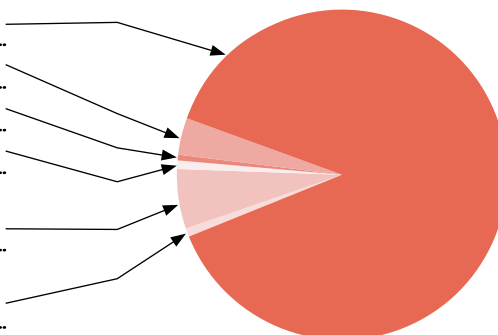
5 YEARS

Jacqueline Peters
Mary Beth Kerr
Dorothy Cameron
Rachel Bennett
Andrea Botero
Jacqueline Sciberras

Audited Financials 2021-2022

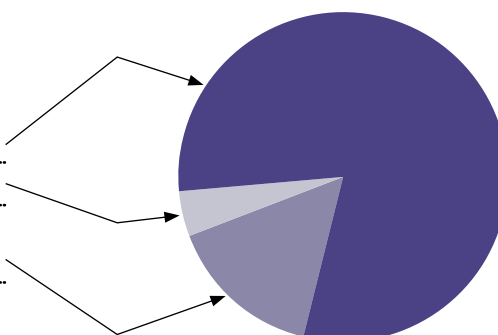
Revenue

Ontario Health	7,457,612	88.48%
CILT	311,257	3.69%
IL Canada	38,871	0.46%
Ontario Trillium Foundation	78,008	0.93%
Fees For Service – HCCSS & Individual Contract	494,894	5.87%
Donations, Interest, Miscellaneous & Other Grants	47,795	0.57%
Total Revenue	8,428,437	



Expenditures

Attendant Services	6,625,080	80.41%
IL Programs	360,687	4.38%
Admin, Capital Expenditures & Depreciation	1,253,617	15.21%
Total Expenditures	8,239,384	100.00%



Surplus (repayable to Ontario Health)	189,053
Employees	203

We Have a New Name

In 2021 we were delighted to announce that our organization's name was changing from Independent Living Centre of Waterloo Region to Independent Living Waterloo Region (ILWR).

This name change reflects our desire to present ourselves more clearly for what we do to serve our consumers. ILWR is a community support service agency that supports individuals with disabilities in their homes and communities throughout Waterloo Region.

This re-branding continues to demonstrate our commitment to the Independent Living philosophy and our consumers living life their way.



Funders and Partners



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SUPPORT SERVICES**
Waterloo Wellington



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