

# Insights and Encounters

Catholic Charities' Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 2 ~ Issue 2

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June 20, 2024

COMMUNITY/FAMILY SERVICES • PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES • SENIORS • CHILDREN AND YOUTH • YOUNG PARENTS

# Canada Deaf Games 2024



[Silent Voice Canada](#), a Catholic Charities member agency by ShareLife, hosted the [Canada Deaf Games 2024](#) from May 7 to 11 and was so grateful to Catholic Charities and ShareLife for their Gold Sponsorship. Thank you. The Games were a huge success.

The Games welcomed hundreds of Deaf and Hard of Hearing athletes, coaches, families, students, and spectators from across the country to Toronto to our three venues: Toronto Metropolitan University, Scarborough Kennedy Bowl, and Downsview Team Canada Beach Volleyball training centre. Silent Voice clients and families, students in our partner Boards of Education, and stakeholders participated in the Games, volunteered, visited, and were inspired by both the world-class Deaf and Hard of Hearing athletes and the next-generation athletes. Hundreds were welcomed to Toronto in our Opening Ceremony and celebrated in our Closing Ceremony.

Athletes ranged from 14 to 87 years old. Six provinces were represented: BC, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, and Nova Scotia. All six provinces went home with medals. Athletes participated in six sport disciplines (pickleball, volleyball, basketball, badminton, bowling, and beach volleyball) with 48 medals at stake. Congratulations to the 11 young people aged 17 and under who took part in these Games.

We at Silent Voice know the skills that are developed through sport: leadership, teamwork, respect, communication, turn-taking, and interpersonal and social skills. These are not taught in a classroom; but they are developed naturally on playing fields. That is what our Children and Youth Program is all about and so much more.

Please view highlights from the Games with our thanks!

<https://vimeo.com/949696630/8ac5b7d84e?share=copy>



# MatureMinds – The Future is Old



June being Seniors' Month is an appropriate time to share news from the [MatureMinds](#) program at [CFS Counselling + Wellbeing](#). Empowering older adults across Simcoe County since 2021, MatureMinds is generously funded by Catholic Charities.

Emerging out of the Parish Outreach Program, MatureMinds is committed to creating a future where getting older is seen as full of possibilities so that we can age with a deep-rooted sense of our intrinsic value. Putting words into practice is MatureMinds Coordinator Jenna Wickens, also an award-winning Certified Professional Consultant on Ageing. Jenna has spoken to individuals and groups across the country as an anti-ageist advocate.

In addition to her advocacy work, Jenna recruits and trains older volunteers to support others in the community. The GrandPals program, for example, is a unique intergenerational initiative that connects through the power of storytelling. After 5 weeks of training, volunteers spend 8 weeks in an elementary school classroom sharing stories and building relationships with young students. Teachers reported that the program brought peace and calm to the classroom and saw children who had been struggling begin to thrive while interacting with their GrandPals. As a national affiliate to the program, CFS is planning to grow the program next year.

In a peer-to-peer program, trained volunteers sit in public spaces at The Friendship Bench with a sign that says: "If you want to talk, I want to listen." It turns out there is no shortage of people who want to be heard. "I feel so much better now," said one woman who stopped by. Through the past winter, The Friendship Bench was found at the Allandale Rec Centre in Barrie. With the weather warming up, it will once again move outdoors.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> volunteer opportunity MatureMinds is currently offering is The Scrabble Club, where trained volunteers play the game with local newcomers who are looking for community and a casual place to practice their English language skills. "It's a program that's simple to implement, but very powerful," according to Jenna, who prefers the term older adults to seniors, a word rife with stigma.

Throughout the community, MatureMinds is touching the lives of thousands. The smiles (and some happy tears as well) come as a result of the thousands of Valentine cards delivered to residents of local long-term care homes each year; and the cake, games and decorations served up to older adults at Everyone's Birthday parties that celebrate aging in partnership with Simcoe County Housing.

For workshops and presentations, Jenna can be reached at [jwickens@cfssc.ca](mailto:jwickens@cfssc.ca)

# The Lively Loaf



What do you get when you mix a diversity of microbes, people, water, salt, and joy? You get THE LIVELY LOAF - a new venture of people with and without disabilities coming together to create bread in the [L'Arche Daybreak](#) community in Richmond Hill. The word "COMPANION" comes from the words "with bread". The Lively Loaf has become a place where we foster companionship between people of all walks of life while providing sustenance for our community and beyond.

Our experiment with sourdough bread began at a Daybreak home where Dave and I were preparing supper together during the COVID lockdowns. I mentioned in passing that I was learning to make sourdough bread from a friend via Zoom. Dave turned to me and announced that he would very much like to bake bread with me. It was that invitation that planted a seed.

From an online baking community where we learned to make bread, we transitioned into a weekly in-person program, baking bread for community members, friends, and volunteers through bread subscriptions. During the pandemic, we discovered that the time together of making bread was comforting and anchoring during uncertain times and we wanted to continue to foster connection through this basic food that has sustained humans for thousands of years.

Sourdough is made of wild yeast – the more diverse the community of yeast and microbes that make up our sourdough starter, the better the bread. At The Lively Loaf, we are bringing together the contributions of a diversity of people – creating the right conditions for all of us to grow, so that like sourdough, a transformation of simple ingredients becomes something nourishing and sustaining. Wild yeast is always available – it takes time to harness it and nurture it. Perhaps this is true of goodness and kindness – it can be found all over the place if we look for it.

Each stage of sourdough bread-making invites us to pause, notice and listen. The process of making bread together cultivates in us both patience and anticipation. It requires time, commitment, and perseverance. Not unlike building a community. Many hands go into making our Lively Loaves. It is a collaborative process with many little steps – each necessary and important. From Patrick weighing flour and salt, to Christine sifting flour into bannetons (where our breads are proofed), to Andy creating bread bag art and Wendy and Tanya delivering – there is no job that is too small. There's nothing like the smell of bread wafting out of the oven to the soundtrack of Mamma Mia while enjoying Ahmed's dance moves as he wipes down the counters.

We are deeply grateful to Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Toronto who has been a generous collaborator – a "companion" on the journey - believing in this simple act of real people making real bread. We are companions, perhaps, in the truest sense.

~ Clara Frascetti -Larche Daybreak



# ShareLife Golf Tournament



## Swinging for a Cause:

### Highlights from the 27th Annual ShareLife Corporate Golf Tournament

Despite a chill in the air, 130 golf enthusiasts gathered for the 27th Annual [ShareLife](#) Corporate Golf Tournament at the Royal Woodbine Golf Club. This annual event united compassionate hearts in support of ShareLife agencies' work in our community.

Following the rounds of golf, participants engaged in a silent auction, adding to the day's fundraising efforts. The entire event has thus far raised over \$115,000 (gross). The final total will be announced in the coming days, reflecting the generosity and commitment of all involved.

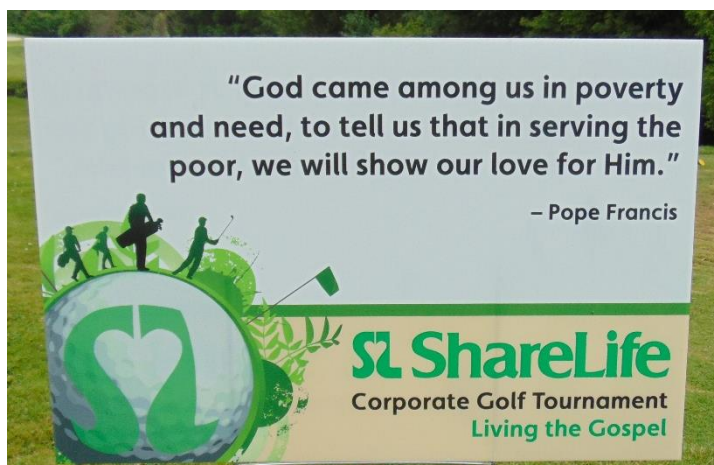
Sharon Mayne Devine, Chief Executive Officer of Catholic Family Services (CFS) Peel-Dufferin, delivered a heartfelt message about the impact of ShareLife supporters' generosity. She emphasized how contributions through ShareLife enable organizations like CFS Peel-Dufferin to lead transformative initiatives, citing the Safe Centre of Peel as a beacon of hope and progress for those in most need.

"You are our heart. Your care for this community is a show of compassion to people who need it more than they ever needed it before," expressed Ms. Mayne Devine. "Your ShareLife dollars enable social change and enables CFS Peel-Dufferin to be a leader in the community and come together to live the gospel and make a difference in the lives of so many people."

Reflecting on the broader impact of the event, ShareLife Executive Director Arthur Peters highlighted its significance.

"Today wasn't just about golf; it was about working together as a community of faith to help our brothers and sisters in need," he said afterwards. "Every swing and every contribution count in providing a beacon of hope for those who need it most and have nowhere to turn."

Through golf and shared dedication, participants not only raised funds but also strengthened the mission of ShareLife agencies in aiding vulnerable individuals and families. This tradition of solidarity highlights the enduring impact of collective action and love within our community.





## In Our Own Words



**Alan**  
Client of Mary  
Centre

### Alan's Return to His Faith Community

One of Alan's most significant life goals was to return to Mass at "his church." As a child and young adult, Alan attended a Presbyterian Church with his parents. He and his family were active members of their faith community, and the congregation was very welcoming of Alan and his family.

After the passing of his parents, Alan moved into a temporary respite program, and lost touch with his faith community. In 2017, Alan made another move to a [Mary Centre](#) Community Group Living Home. It was at this time that Mary Centre Direct Support Professionals discovered Alan's long-time connection to a church located in the same neighbourhood as his new home! We immediately contacted the church to arrange for Alan's return.

Unfortunately, once the COVID-19 Pandemic began, in person church services were halted, and Alan was not interested in attending a virtual service. Alan expressed his disappointment in not being able to physically attend service. He missed his friends, shaking hands, and sharing hugs with other members of the congregation.

In 2023 Alan facilitated his Individual Support Plan meeting. When the subject of returning to in-person services at church was raised, Alan enthusiastically proclaimed "yes, I want to go back to my church. I want to see my friends!" This became Alan's number one focus for the year.

Despite many changes in the congregation and leadership, Alan's old friends were there to greet him and welcome him back with open arms and warm smiles. Alan has reconnected with his friends and made new ones. If Alan does not attend service one week or misses the monthly potluck meal, the congregation immediately notices his absence and takes the time to check in with him to ensure he is in good health.

Alan looks forward to attending church and church-related functions regularly. Throughout the week, Alan will inquire which of us will accompany him to church on Sunday. He is always sure to schedule time to attend the monthly potluck and plan his contribution. Alan has made a connection with a family group that has welcomed him with open arms. They are sure to save Alan and his guest a seat at their table each month.

When an individual joins us at Mary Centre, we identify what is most important for that person. We respect their right to make their own choices and assist them in participating in their community to lead a meaningful and fulfilling life.

Returning to *his* church has enriched Alan's life in many ways beyond the spiritual aspect. His social connections continue to grow with the many new people that have joined the congregation in recent years. Alan loves his church, his church family, and the fond memories they have built and share.

# PAUSE AND REFLECT

## ~A Short Reflection on Spring Gatherings ~ Agnes Thomas

### **Learning and Planning Together for the Greater Good!**

Most of May and the early part of June were filled with meetings of various sorts, including conferences, workshops, an Executive Directors' retreat, and an annual meeting. As a lifelong learner and a collaborator, I find these spaces and meetings to have special meaning for my work as they always invigorate new ideas, ways of doing things, or, sometimes, a renewed sense of purpose and collective mission. All these make me incredibly grateful and aware of the privilege we hold to influence and impact positive change in our daily lives. I want to share a few highlights from four events that resonated with what we at CCAT are trying to accomplish in the coming years.

I first attended The Canadian Catholic Health Sponsors Conference which was filled with many excellent sessions. A key running theme throughout was the person-centered approach to care. The concept of compassion and its theoretical framework (<https://www.drshanesinclair.com>) illuminated what it means to be compassionate and be on the receiving end of compassionate care. The potential for a ministry of presence in health, service, and everyday human interaction was presented by real-life experts like 'Patient Lee' (<https://leetomlinson.com/>) and Disability Consultant, Calvin Kristjansson. The loneliness project data presented by Dr. Hawkey revealed both a gap and the need for human connection. The key learning from the various sessions at this conference was our need to be sincere, and intentional in showing humanity in all circumstances, especially when you are in a position of giving, caring, and restoring health and wellness for the person who needs your presence.

The second conference, The International Interfaith Palliative Care Symposium, highlighted the importance of a strategic approach and collaboration between various denominations and leaders working across the field to address an essential aspect of life: death and dying. The symposium asserted that palliative care, as a community and person-centered approach to caring for the elderly and the ill in our midst, is vital. The need for sound policy and investment in healthcare that addresses the gap in funding for programs to support older people and people with critical health challenges was discussed. My key takeaway was that human dignity and human life as precious in all its phases are fundamental values. When we value the sanctity of human life as crucial to our humanity and shared human experience, our choices as a society will follow with the right actions and adequate support.

The Ontario Not-for-Profit Network conference also had many excellent sessions with topics like digital savviness in the age of artificial intelligence and work, and the advantages to untangling the intergenerational divide in many aspects of communities, work, and programs. There were so many hope-filled discussions on partnership, grassroots organizing, as well as an invitation to dream together to respond to the deep and complex issues of our times. It is always wonderful to be with people who have similar goals and wish to explore ways to increase our impact through collaboration.

Perhaps the greatest accomplishment over these past several weeks came out of the executive directors' council retreat, where many of the leaders from our member organizations gathered together to learn, break bread, plan, and envision a collective impact and leadership. Once again, we had several trainings ranging from dealing with difficult people to Innovation and Change. It was fun, and hard work, but much enthusiasm was shared among the fellow leaders and friends.

Suffice to say, there is much to reflect upon, and address as we work to build and expand our collective presence to serve those who need our support, service, and advocacy the most. However, I believe all things are possible with love and faith.

# in memoriam

It was with great sadness that we received the news of the death of Fr. Paul Lennon, on Wednesday, May 8, 2024. Fr. Paul was a priest of the Archdiocese of Toronto, who retired to the Houses of Providence. He spent many years in parish work before completing his studies for his Masters in Social Work from the National Catholic School of Social Service in Washington, DC. He then brought his many gifts to Catholic Charities where he would stay for seventeen years, four of those as our Executive Director. He was then assigned to Serra House in Toronto for men who considering the priesthood, before returning to parish work and eventually retiring in 2007.



**Fr. Paul Lennon**

**April 5, 1931-  
May 8, 2024**

When he learned that Catholic Charities would be establishing a Social Work scholarship in his honour, Fr. Paul said, "The name doesn't matter but I'm delighted to hear that there is such a thing. Our leader Jesus Christ spent a good deal of His life seeking out and helping the poor, the disabled, and the distressed. So right from the start, we had it in our heads that the poor were important." This epitomized his humble approach to his work and his innate ability to connect with those he strived to support.

Even in retirement, Fr. Paul remained active and engaged within the Catholic Community, including participating in a panel discussion on "Aging & Spirituality" for the Canadian Catholic Bioethics Institute in 2015.

Last month, Michael Fullan, our former Executive Director, visited Fr. Paul a few days after his 93rd birthday. Michael found him to be strong in spirit, although his physical and mental state was diminishing. He knew his death was imminent and said he had been blessed with a long life and the joy he had experienced serving the people of God, as a priest for 66 years.

Fr. Paul wanted to talk about Pope Francis's book, where he spoke about the 'Church as a field hospital', a place to reach out to the most vulnerable and to heal the wounds of the world'. "The poor were always the priority with Paul," said Michael, "and he saw them as a gift to embrace and not to be rejected. He remained hopeful right until the end of his life. I'll miss our talks."

Fr. Paul Lennon was a good man, a good friend, and a good, holy priest. He was a consummate friend to Catholic Charities, and he will be missed.

# in memoriam

## **A Tribute to Sonia Seaton ~ by Reshawn Jeffers Hunter**

(Note that this version has been abridged. Click [here](#) for the full tribute)

Sonia was a gifted leader who devoted her career to the care of others. We pay tribute and reflect on Sonia's rich life and long-standing service to work that was deeply rooted in her faith.

Sonia held many things close: her faith, her family, her friends. Once you met her and got to know her, she treated you like family, and that included Sancta Maria House (SMH). Her work at SMH, a children's mental health and Catholic Charities member agency focused on live-in treatment for vulnerable young women, was Sonia's passion, which she shared with all of those who worked with her. Sonia was warm and friendly, with an amazing smile. Sonia was more than just a colleague; she was a beacon of light at SMH, a source of strength, and a dear friend. With her passing, we mourn not only the loss of a talented professional but also the absence of a kindred spirit who touched our lives in countless ways.



**Sonia Seaton**  
**January 23, 1958-**  
**May 8, 2024**

Sonia was an integral part of SMH and Quinn House (QH) for over 30 years. She started her career there right after completing her studies at George Brown College. Sonia began at SMH as a college placement student, then moved into the role of front-line staff. For over half of her career there, she held leadership positions, first as Assistant Director, and then Executive Director, until her retirement. Even during retirement, Sonia continued her work in children's mental health by serving on the Board of Directors at [Rosalie Hall](#), another Catholic Charities member organization supporting pregnant and parenting youth and their families.

In the time Sonia spent with us, she left an indelible mark on our hearts and minds. Her unwavering dedication to her work was matched only by her kindness and compassion towards everyone she encountered. She had a remarkable ability to lighten spirits with her cheerful presence, a kind word, or a thoughtful gesture, even in the face of adversity.

Sonia was not only a valuable member of the SMH team but also a mentor and a confidant. She possessed a wealth of knowledge and wisdom that she generously shared with those around her. Her guidance and support have helped shape not only our professional lives but also our personal growth.

During this time, we are filled with both sorrow and gratitude. We are sad to be without Sonia, but she loved us all so well—her family, her friends, her colleagues, the cats, and especially the young women she walked with on their journey. For that we are grateful, and she has left us all with that legacy: LOVE. Her love and faith were the driving force of her career and reaching the heights that she achieved.

The impact of Sonia's legacy extends far beyond the confines of SMH and QH. She touched the lives of everyone she encountered, leaving a lasting impression with her kindness, generosity, and unwavering compassion. Her spirit of empathy and understanding serves as a reminder to us all of the power of human connection and the importance of treating others with dignity and respect.

Sonia often reflected on her many blessings, but we are all truly blessed to have known her, worked with her, and loved her. We will carry forward the lessons she taught us, the memories we shared, and the values she embodied.

# *On the Horizon...*

## Catholic Charities Week - 2024

Catholic Charities will celebrate its 111<sup>th</sup> year anniversary on September 27, 2024. We will mark the occasion with a speaker series, a Blanket Exercise, our volunteer appreciation Mass, and the awarding of our Scholarships and Awards. Look for more details in our September issue!

## Insights & Encounters-the Podcast

If you haven't had a chance to listen to Insights & Encounters -our podcast, now is the time! Our podcast features the voices and stories of the member agencies that make us who we are. In this series of podcasts, you will hear their origin stories, the challenges and opportunities that have inspired their growth and how each agency is looking into the future.

Link to podcast: [Insights and Encounters](#)



Scan me!



Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Toronto provides leadership, supports social services, and facilitates advocacy for its member agencies and the people they serve. At its core is Catholic Social Teaching that focuses on the poor and marginalized, urging us all to build a just society and safeguard the dignity of every person.

# Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Toronto

How you can contact member agencies of Catholic Charities

## MEMBER AGENCIES

### COMMUNITY/FAMILY SERVICES

Catholic Community Services of York Region  
1-800-263-2075  
[www.ccsyr.org](http://www.ccsyr.org)

Catholic Crosscultural Services  
416-757-7010  
[www.cathcrosscultural.org](http://www.cathcrosscultural.org)

Catholic Family Services of Durham  
1-877-282-8932  
[www.cfsdurham.com](http://www.cfsdurham.com)

Catholic Family Services Peel-Dufferin  
905-450-1608  
[www.cfspd.com](http://www.cfspd.com)

Catholic Family Services of Simcoe County  
1-800-726-2503  
[www.cfssc.ca](http://www.cfssc.ca)

Catholic Family Services of Toronto  
416-921-1163  
[www.cfstoronto.com](http://www.cfstoronto.com)

### PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Mary Centre  
416-630-5533  
[www.marycentre.com](http://www.marycentre.com)

Saint Elizabeth Health Care  
905-940-9655  
[www.sehc.com](http://www.sehc.com)

St. Bernadette's Family Resource Centre  
416-654-9810  
[www.stbernadettesfrc.org](http://www.stbernadettesfrc.org)

St. Michael's Homes  
Our Place Community of Hope  
416-926-8267  
[www.stmichaelshomes.org](http://www.stmichaelshomes.org)

Silent Voice Canada  
416-463-1104 TTY  
416-463-3928  
[www.silentvoice.ca](http://www.silentvoice.ca)

### SENIORS

Centres d'Accueil Héritage (CAH)  
416-365-3350  
[www.caheritage.org](http://www.caheritage.org)

LA Centre for Active Seniors  
416-452-4875  
[www.lacentreforseniors.ca](http://www.lacentreforseniors.ca)

Houses of Providence  
(Unity Health Toronto)  
416-285-3666  
[www.providence.on.ca](http://www.providence.on.ca)

Society of Sharing  
416-413-0380  
[www.societyofsharing.org](http://www.societyofsharing.org)

### CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto  
416-395-1500  
[www.torontoccas.ca](http://www.torontoccas.ca)

Covenant House of Toronto  
1-800-435-7308  
[www.covenanhousetoronto.com](http://www.covenanhousetoronto.com)

### YOUNG PARENTS

Rosalie Hall  
416-438-6880  
[www.rosaliehall.com](http://www.rosaliehall.com)

Rose of Durham  
(Young Parents Division of CFS Durham)  
905-432-3622  
[www.roseofdurham.com](http://www.roseofdurham.com)

Rose of Sharon  
905-853-5514  
[www.roseofsharon.com](http://www.roseofsharon.com)

Vita Centre  
905-502-7933  
[www.vitacentre.org](http://www.vitacentre.org)

## AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS

Camp Ozanam  
(Society of St. Vincent de Paul)  
416-364-5577  
[info@ssvptoronto.ca](mailto:info@ssvptoronto.ca)

Good Shepherd Ministries  
416-869-3619  
[www.goodshepherd.ca](http://www.goodshepherd.ca)

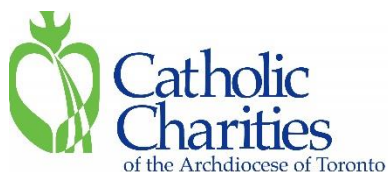
Birthright International  
1-800-550-4900  
[www.birthright.org](http://www.birthright.org)

St. Marguerite Bourgeoys  
FertilityCare Toronto  
416-465-2868  
[www.fertilitycare.ca](http://www.fertilitycare.ca)

Natural Family Planning Association  
437-600-9333  
[www.toronto.naturalfamilyplanning.ca](http://www.toronto.naturalfamilyplanning.ca)

To learn more about  
Catholic Charities go to:

[www.ccat.ca](http://www.ccat.ca)



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