



Links2Care

# Annual Report 2010 — 2011



# Links2Care 2010-2011 Board of Directors



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### Executive

Board Chair	Jeannie Collins-Ardern
Vice Chair	Bev Heim-Myers
Past Chair / Secretary	Rick Byers
Treasurer	Maureen McCallister
Board Secretary	Rick Byers

### Members

Director	Assumpta Michaels-Uzaka
Director	Linda Gordon
Director	Chris Brown
Director	Wendy Spence
Director	Andrea McCorkell
Director	Susan Wells
Director	Vic Bakowski

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## **Mission**

Supporting and linking people of all ages to community programs and services.

## **Vision**

Links2Care is a leader, providing high-quality support services to people of all ages. We are a dynamic, innovative organization responding to the needs of the community with professional, caring employees and volunteers.

## **Values**

**L**earning and Adapting

**I**mprovement Oriented

**N**urturing

**K**ind and Caring

**S**ervice Excellence

**2**-Way Communication

**C**ommunity Focused

**A**ccountable

**R**esponsive

**E**nergetic and Innovative

## Chair's Report



*Submitted by Jeannie Collins-Ardern, Chair*

Once again, this has been an exciting and challenging fiscal year for Links2Care. In terms of programs, it was a year of stability with all existing programs adequately funded and staffed. We were excited to add the Back Pack Program to Links2Care this past year. This new program supports low income families with their children's back to school needs of back packs and school supplies. We continue to experience service growth in most areas, and especially the seniors' programs, with demand outstripping our current funding and staff resources.

Since our amalgamation in 2006, Links2Care has grown to having staff of 135 people and an additional 200 plus volunteers, serving more than 8,400 clients. Links2Care is a strong, viable, well-run multi-service agency, visible in the communities it serves. All staff and volunteers share in the success of our continued growth and excellence in service – we are only as good as the people of the agency – and on behalf of the entire Board I would like to thank all staff members and volunteers for the contributions that they make to improve people's lives. I would also like to thank our funders – without them we could not serve our communities in this manner.

To recognize the outstanding contribution that Sandra Melhuish has made to the agency as the Executive Director over the last several years, the Board decided to promote Sandra to Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director. This position is more in line with the size and number of programs run by the agency, as well as Sandra's responsibilities and her visibility in the community and to the funders. Sandra continues to excite the Board, staff and funders with her proactive approach and her vision for the agency and the community. She has a unique combination of business acumen, compassion and common sense. Thanks to Sandra and her senior management team, any challenge put before them is handled with professionalism, humour and efficiency.

Again in reaction to the continued growth of the agency, the Board has been expanding each year from 4 members immediately post-amalgamation, to currently 12 members. In addition, the Board and senior staff now have eight standing committees to assist in the oversight of the agency.

A major accomplishment of the 2010-11 fiscal year was the completion of our second official three-year Strategic Plan, with updated goals, objectives and

action plans resulting from the exercise. With input from staff, funders, and the community and using a professional facilitator, a one-day retreat was held for senior staff and the Board. While the mission of Links2Care is unchanged, it has been reworded to better express the thought: "Supporting and linking people of all ages to community programs and services."

Our goal is to live that mission by providing the highest quality of service to as many clients as possible. To accomplish that, we aim to be the "provider of choice" to all our funders – that is, the agency that comes to mind first as the one that can and will deliver the required services to the community in a fiscally responsible manner. This also means that Links2Care is where the funders turn for opinions and ideas on the services required, and the delivery method best suited to the situation. By demonstrating our administrative and fiscal abilities to our funders and delivering services consistently on time and on budget, we have established Links2Care as such a pivotal agency in our community, and we intend to improve even further in this regard. Toward that end we continue to build strong relationships with all of our funders.

Due to the hard work of many

## Chair's Report cont'd

staff members under the direction of Allison Price, Director of Seniors Services at Links2Care, we continue to progress toward having the seniors programs accredited. This is a major undertaking, a requirement of the Mississauga Halton LHIN by September 2013. While there is still much to do we are aiming to be accredited a full year before the due date.

Another major accomplishment has been the completion by staff (with professional assistance) of a video on Links2Care. This video has proven to be very successful, highlighting all the programs of the agency, with both senior management discussing their programs and client testimo-

nials. The video has been shown on cable TV community channels, and at various events.

Turning to staff and board members, we were sorry to say goodbye to a few key individuals this year, including staff member Kathy Dorbeck and board members Barry Emerson and Wendy Spence. We wish Kathy and Barry continued success and happiness. Wendy has been able to rejoin our Board, effective fiscal 2011-2012. Welcome back, Wendy! In addition, we have welcomed new board members Andrea McCorkell, Susan Wells and Vic Bakowski. Each enhances the geographical and demographic composition of the Board,

as well as its total skills set.

Finally on a personal note, we have seen some key individuals on the staff and Board go through some particularly difficult personal situations over the last year. I would like to express my thanks to all staff, board members, volunteers and funders who have come together to assist on both a professional and personal level. It demonstrates that we are a family, and we live our mission not just to our clients, but to our Links2Care family as well. I could not be more proud to be associated with such an agency and its staff, volunteers, and funders. Thank you for this opportunity.

## CEO & Executive Director's Report



*Submitted by Sandra Melhuish*

During the past fiscal year, Links2Care continued to support and link people of all ages to community programs and services. The need for community support services continues to increase. With 135 staff and over 200 volunteers Links2Care served over 8,400 clients from April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2011 providing programs and services for children, youth, adults and seniors. Programs such as Home Help have experienced such a huge demand that wait list for service exceeds 240. The Mississauga Halton LHIN is reviewing funding allocations to assist clients with

high needs to ensure they may remain safely in their homes with the appropriate supports.

In the spring of 2010, the Board of Directors initiated a strategic planning process to update the strategic plan and set out goals and objectives for the next three years. An environmental scan was conducted to gain insights and advice from key stakeholders and from staff on how Links2Care is doing and issues and opportunities it should be aware of. Interviews were conducted with thirteen key stakeholders including funders from each of the five program streams, all with a strong

working knowledge and relationship with Links2Care.

A focus group was also held with a cross section of staff representing the various programs and services Links2Care provides. All staff were given an opportunity to provide input to this exercise by responding to an on-line survey. In June, 2010 the Board of Directors and Senior Management met for a one-day planning session to map out strategic directions for the next three years carefully considering advice given by stakeholders and staff, and an assessment of Links2Care's strengths, weaknesses, chal-

## CEO & Executive Director's Report cont'd

Challenges and opportunities that lay ahead.

At the direction of the Board, the Senior Management team took the detailed results of the day and filled in the pieces to develop a strategic plan with clear goals and objectives for the next three years with implementation plans for each of the goals to achieve the objectives set.

Senior Management and staff have been working very hard to prepare for accreditation. Much work remains to be done. A special thanks to Allison Price, Director of Seniors Services for leading

the team through the process. It is expected that the accreditation survey will be scheduled for mid 2012.

In October 2010 we said goodbye to Kathy Dorbeck, Director of Human Resources and Corporate Services. Julie Vail transferred from her role as Director of Employment Services and Community Engagement to fill this position. Carol Beaton was promoted to Manager, Employment Services and Community Engagement. The transition to these new roles was seamless thanks to the experience of both these individuals.

Links2Care is grateful to our funders and community partners whose support allows us to continue our mission. We are privileged to have exceptional board members, staff and volunteers who ensure we deliver the highest quality of service to the community.

This upcoming year will once again present challenges as we continue to serve the community with limited resources and growing service demands. As in previous years, we will continue to focus and allocate our resources to best meet the needs of the clients we serve.

## Volunteer Report

*Submitted by Patty Colautti*

The generosity of people never fails to amaze me. During this past year, many wonderful things have happened within programs, and just meeting people whose wish is to do what they can to make their community a better place, is inspiring.

Our yearly Volunteer Appreciation was another great success with our theme "Our Volunteers Take the Cake". We have been fortunate enough to partner with the Georgetown District High School and their cooking program to not only offer amazing food for our Congregate Dining, but they also baked and decorated 120 cupcakes so that every volunteer who came really did get to 'take the cake'.

We recognized many volunteers with years of service awards. There were 13 volunteers receiving

a 5 year, two getting a 10 year, two with 15 years, one for 25 years and one more completing 35 years! The milestone award of 25 years was given to Helen Near from Acton and our 35 year was presented to Edith MacPhail from Georgetown. Both of these long time volunteers have delivered Meals on Wheels in their communities. Special awards by Volunteer Halton saw two of our Acton Volunteers receive a 'Cheers to Volunteers' Award. Congratulations Rena Arbic and Real Tetreault for accepting this on behalf of all Links2Care Volunteers. A special note needs to be made on behalf of Dorothy Rognvaldson who was chosen as the Acton Citizen of the Year for her

***"You make a living  
by what you get,  
but you make a life  
by what you give"***

dedication to her community. Dorothy has been a Links2Care volunteer for 16 years helping with our Wheels to Meals program and the Planning and Education Committee. Congratulations to all volunteers who give so freely of their time.

The youth who attend our Youth Centres have been treated to some wonderful Healthy Snacks courtesy of our volunteers and funding from Food for Thought. This program could not run without them, and the youth are quite enjoying trying new healthy foods.

Our newly developed Backpack Program assists low income families in Halton Hills who struggle to afford new backpacks and school supplies for their school children.

## Volunteer Report cont'd

High School students get their service hours by volunteering to raise money in order for us to buy the necessary supplies that a child needs to start the school year off prepared. Events that students participated in are; selling food at school events, a Community BBQ, Garage Sales and Community Raffle as well as getting corporate donations. Student volunteers along with mentors helped us to pack 170 backpacks

for children in Halton Hills. We could not have done this without their assistance and they are looking forward to doing it all again next year.

A few times a year volunteer information sessions and workshops are organized to assist our volunteers with knowledge they could use with the people they help us to serve or for personal development. This past year we

have had First Aid and computer training. Looking forward we are planning a session on emergency preparedness, hoarding and safe food handling.

Our Links2Care volunteers number close to 250 and still growing. I am honoured to work with such tremendous people. I also look forward to meeting our future volunteers.

## Human Resources & Corporate Services Report



*Submitted by Julie Vail*

In October, 2010, I assumed the role of Director, Human Resources & Corporate Services for Links2Care and have had the pleasure of becoming more directly involved on a day to day basis with all of the people who work so diligently behind the scenes at our program site locations and out in the communities we serve. Whether performing administrative tasks, or working directly with clients, their combined skills, knowledge and experience, as well as their genuine care and compassion for people is continuously demonstrated as they perform the many facets of their work. Our employees truly are the backbone of the success of Links2Care.

Our employees provided front line support to clients in our Children, Youth, Adult and Seniors programs and performed office administrative support and supervisory and managerial functions for the agency. All programs experienced some transition of staffing during the year. 27 employees

were hired during this period, including our new Personal Support Worker team for our Supportive Housing program in Acton, in November, 2010. 22 employees terminated employment during 2010/2011. The employee turnover rate for the year was 17.9%, with the majority of staff turnover occurring in the Home Support program. The closure of the Links2Kids Daycare in June, 2010 also increased the turnover rate. 4 employee positions were eliminated as a result of the closure. The remaining Links2Kids staff were able to retain employment with the Links2Kids Before & After School program and the Ontario Early Years program.

Links2Care's Health and Safety program continues to promote healthy and safe workplace environments for employees, volunteers, clients and visitors, and the reduction of risks and hazards in the workplace. Links2Care Risk management reports indicated a noticeable decrease in workplace accidents and injuries in

2010/2011 with no accidents or injuries taking place in the second half of the year! This was directly related to an increase in the sharing of information with employees, regular employee evaluations, workplace inspections to identify and eliminate potential hazards and risks, and ongoing continuous improvements made to the health and safety program.

Our Human Resources strategy for the end of 2010/2011 continuing into 2011/2012 is focused on achieving HR, Health & Safety and Accessibility standards for accreditation, employee engagement and efficiency, and performance management that is linked to organizational values and strategic direction. Like all organizations across Ontario providing goods and services to the public, Links2Care will be required to meet the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) standards for Customer Service by January 1, 2012. Accessible Customer Service training commenced in 2010 and is well

**Human Resources & Corporate Services Report cont'd**

underway to have all employees fully trained by the fall of 2011.

**Finance Report**



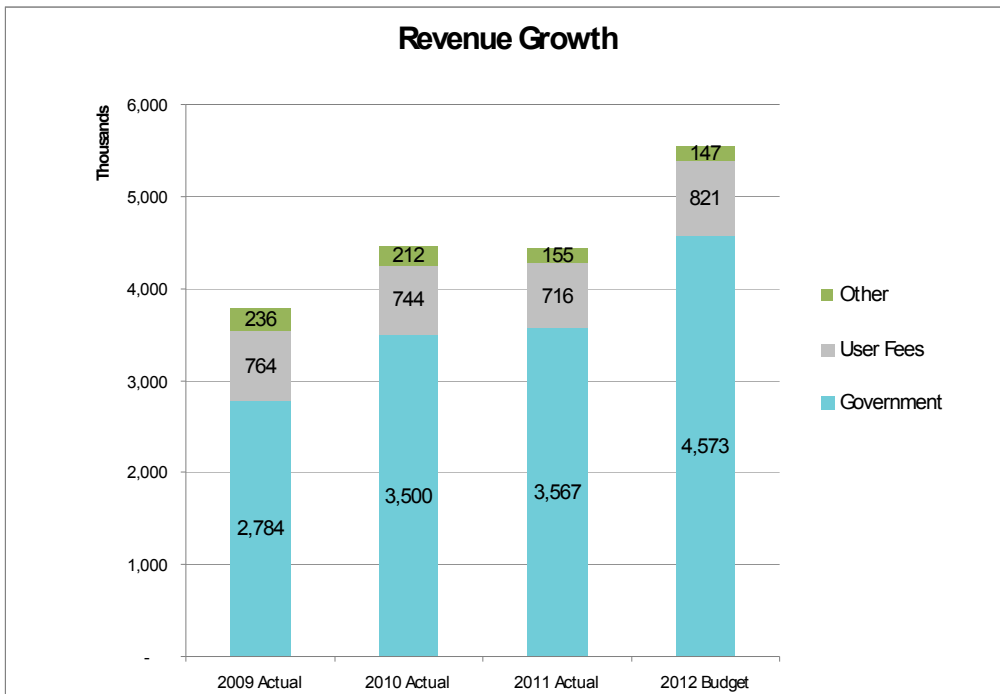
*Submitted by Mark Spence*

Links2Care has a strong balance sheet. The majority of agency net assets are held in cash and term deposits. Working capital is \$391,726 (2010 \$350,881) and the quick ratio (cash+term deposits ÷ current liabilities) is 1.19 (2010 1.28). The net assets of the organization represent the excess of accumulated revenues and contributions over expenses at the balance sheet date. In total these funds provide liquidity and also a reserve from which to

draw when unforeseen expenses arise. For greater transparency, the organization has subdivided net assets into three funds: the Lottery Fund, the Development Fund, and the General Operating Fund. The Lottery Fund consists of profits from Nevada lottery ticket sales and is to be used to support new or existing community programs. The Development Fund is to be used to provide for the establishment of new programs, the acquisition of capital

assets, or such other purposes as the Board decides are in the best interests of the organization. The General Operating Fund holds the remainder of net assets

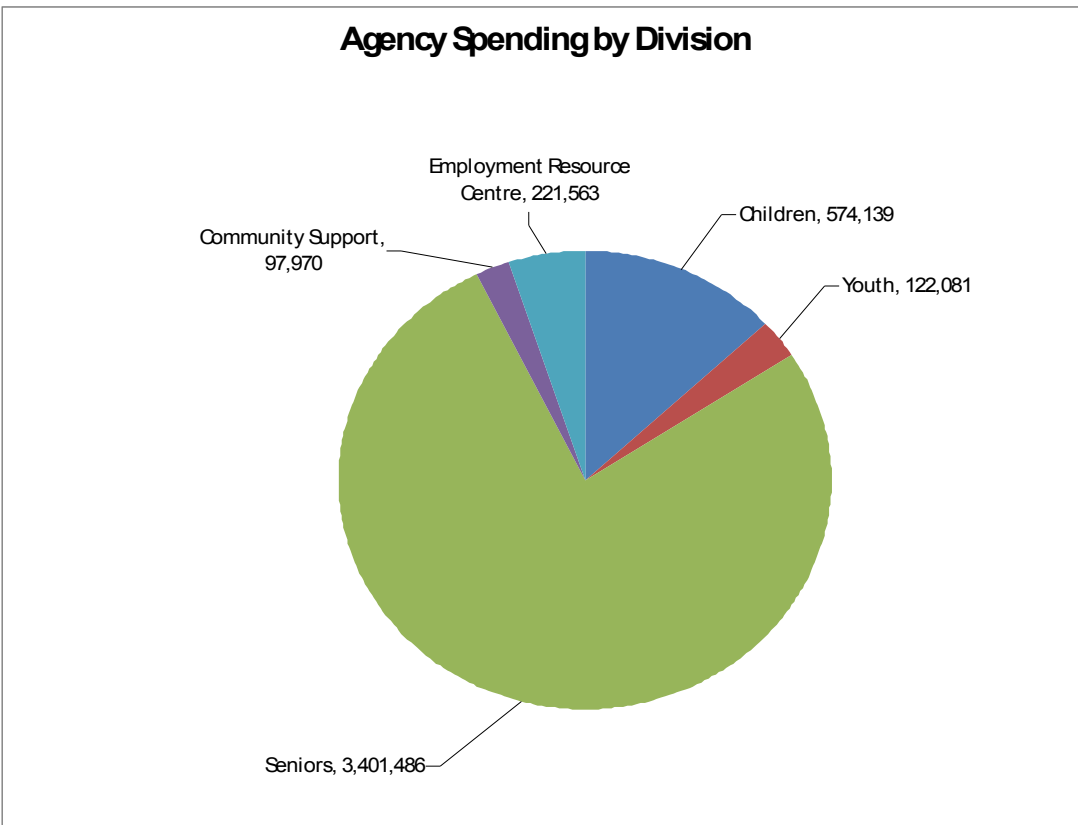
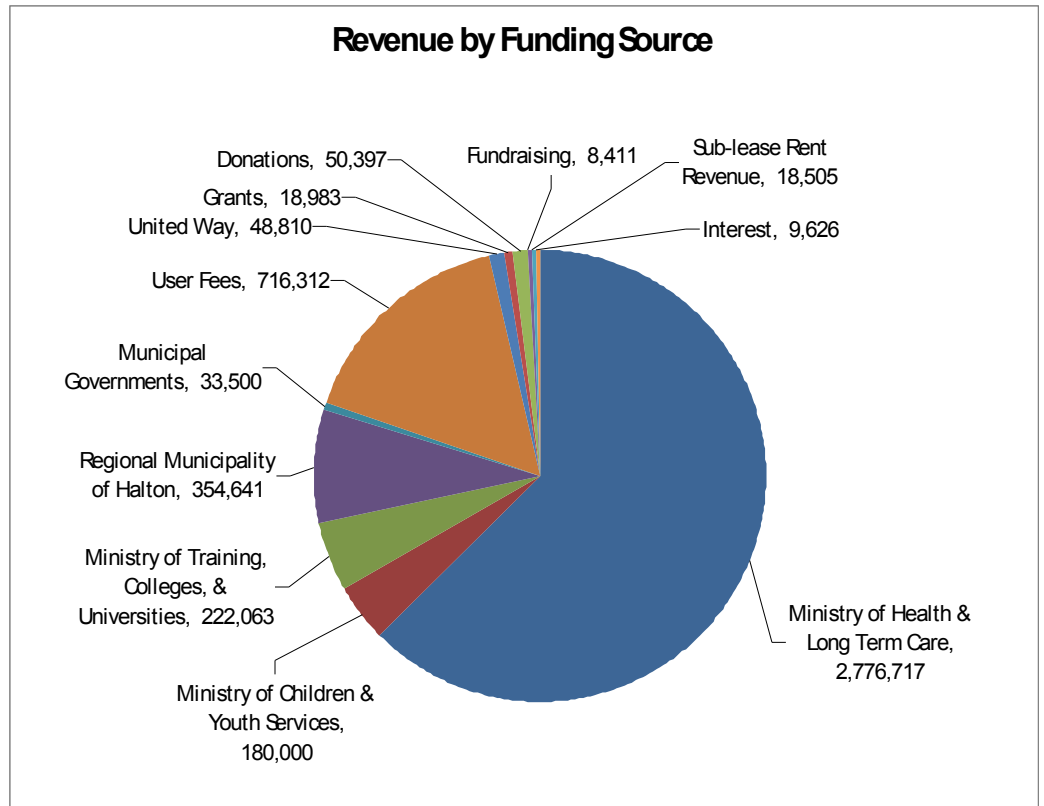
Revenue for the year totalled \$4,437,965 (2010 \$4,455,910) which was a decrease of \$17,945 compared to 2010. Revenues for Links2Kids declined by \$255,571 with the closure of the day care in June 2010 but revenues for the Mississauga seniors programs increased by \$317,009.



**Revenue Growth Chart:** 2009, 2010, and 2011 data are from our audited financial statements. The 2012 budget data is from the approved operating budget for 2011-2012. The further growth in revenue in 2012 arises due to anticipated further utilization of the PSW Training Fund and more

**Finance Report cont'd**

The segment 'Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care' at \$2,776,717 includes funds disbursed through the Mississauga-Halton Local Health Integration Network. User Fees of \$716,312 are derived from certain programs. Some user fees are at market rates and others are based on an ability to pay.



Expenses for the year totaled \$4,417,239 (2010 \$4,533,845) which was a decrease of \$116,606 over 2010. The decrease resulted mainly from decreased utilization of the PSW Training Fund partly offset by an increase in expenses for the Home Help and the Assisted Bathing programs in Mississauga.

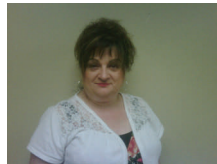
## Finance Report cont'd

In September 2009, Links2Care completed an amalgamation with Moore Place Day Care which consisted of a full-time child care centre and two school-age programs. These three programs were re-branded as Links2Kids. At the end of June 2010 the full-time child care centre was closed. Links2Care still operates the two school-age programs.

The outlook for Links2Care continues to be good. The agency is on a solid financial footing. The agency has sufficient size that economies of scale are established in the areas of senior management, human resources, and finance and accounting. The agency has the support of the community at large evidenced in particular by the size of our volun-

teer roster at over 200. Also, the agency is well positioned to participate in some of the important changes that the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is advancing in regards to reducing wait times in emergency rooms, improving access to primary health care, and improving management of chronic diseases.

## Seniors Services Report



Submitted by Allison Price

In the year 2012, thousands across the country will be turning 65. Demand for services will increase experientially as each year goes by. The year 2010/2011 will be the last year of stable demographics before the wave begins and needs for service pick up. While many of today's baby boomers are not looking at 65 as the catalyst to declare themselves a "senior", there will still be many who will be able to participate in seniors based programs meeting the eligibility criteria of 65 and over. For Links2Care's senior services, it will be a slow and steady increase of service capacity to meet the needs of an aging society. Working closely with the LHIN's, Links2Care continues to work towards planning to meet the increasing demand for service.

This past year over 6,000 clients received one or more services and was helped over 97,000 times in their home and community. We are all collectively amazed when we see those kinds

of numbers at the end of the year and are extremely proud of the work that we do. One wonders, how many seniors did not have to leave their home because of the services that we offer?

It is the hard work and dedication of the senior's team that makes it all possible. Below, they speak about their programs from the past year.

*"The Home Help service provides me with the help which I need to be able to live independently in my home. Without this assistance, I would not be functioning as well as I do."*

### Home Help

The Home Help program is the largest program in the basket of senior's services. Last year, over 1,400 clients were served in Halton and Mississauga. A wait list for the program is new for this year as the need has surpassed what the program budget will allow. We are working with the

LHIN's to lessen the waiting list.

### Meals on Wheels Halton Hills

Our Meals on Wheels program continues to be more than just a meal. It can provide reassurance for families and caregivers that their loved ones are safe and doing well in their own home. The volunteers may be the only person our clients see for the day, and this service may be essential for their well-being. One of our clients tells the volunteers on a daily basis that they are "Angels from Heaven". Our volunteers delivered 14,933 meals to 168 clients in Halton Hills.

### Congregate Dining/ Wheels to Meals

The Congregate Dining program continues to provide seniors with a meal and some social interaction with their peers twice a month at the four seniors' apartment buildings in Halton Hills, and also provides a lunch once a month at Georgetown Seniors Centre. The new partnership with

## Seniors Services cont'd

the Food Program at Georgetown District High School is working extremely well. The food is all cooked fresh by the students under the supervision of the teacher who was a chef for 12 years.

The two Wheels to Meals groups are still extremely popular. The groups frequent local restaurants or churches and get together once a year in December for a wonderful Christmas dinner cooked by the ladies at Ebenezer Church in Campbellsville. Last year approximately 70 seniors were in attendance. The seniors also enjoyed a Strawberry Tea in June and a Garden Party in July. A lady, who lives just outside Acton, opens her garden for us every year, and we enjoy a light lunch and saunter around her beautiful garden. Transportation by volunteers is provided for seniors who are unable to drive. We provided 244 clients with 2,540 meals.

### Meals on Wheels/ Meals on Ice

Mrs. S. has been a Meals on Wheels client for 5 years. She is legally blind and in a wheelchair and relies on her daily hot meal. She enjoys her daily visit and chat with her volunteers that deliver her meals. She has just one rule; don't let the cats out when they open the door!

Mr. C. has now been receiving Meals on Ice for 5 months. We received a phone call from Mr. C.'s sister-in-law inquiring about our frozen meals. Her concern for Mr. C. was that he is diabetic, as well as legally blind. His health was deteriorating because of his diabetes and he required a

nutritional, balanced diet rather than what he was currently eating. Mr. C.'s brother lives and cares for him and was preparing meals which were not always suitable for his medical condition. Mr. C.'s sister-in-law recently informed Links2Care that Mr. C.'s diabetes is more stable since he started receiving and enjoying Meals On Ice. His brother microwaves them for him, no fuss, no muss and Mr. C. is enjoying his meals daily.

*"I look forward to receiving the meals after all the years of making meals for my husband and children, it's nice to have someone prepare them for me and it's appreciated"*

### Home Maintenance & Repair Halton Hills

Last fall a client called requesting her regular provider give her a call. I passed the message on. The female client has been living in the same home with her husband for the last 45 years. Unfortunately, the husband suffers from dementia and has had his driver's license taken away. The client struggles to keep up with regular household chores and look after her husband. She refuses to place him in Long Term Care. They have had a regular provider for a few years who does the lawn and yard maintenance and many inside odd jobs as well. The last odd job was installing a new garage door opener with the programmable keypad on the outside of the garage. The client's

husband would not stop playing with the keypad and kept reprogramming the code to open the door but could never recall the new pass code. The client was too embarrassed to tell me that she needed our Home Maintenance provider to stop in and demonstrate again to her how to reprogram the keypad so she could get into the garage. A few days later the client called to tell me how grateful she was to the provider who had returned several times to reprogram the garage door. She told me not once did the provider laugh at her and he even came up with a solution by attaching a latch to fasten the flap so her husband could no longer access the keypad. She stated that the provider is a hard worker, does a good job and always takes the time to speak with her husband which she appreciates most of all.

### Home Maintenance & Repair South Halton

Mike G. was one of my first service providers I hired in January 2007 when I started at Links2Care. Mike has assisted and helped over 100 clients with outside services (his passion). Clients always have a kind word to say about Mike and were devastated when he told them he had terminal cancer. He was given 7 weeks. He fought back and survived for 8 months. He never complained, he never felt sorry for himself, and continued to service his clients until his body could no longer. Mike passed away July 2011. Mike's clients will never forget his skill and passion for their lawns, along with his

## Seniors Services cont'd

kind heart. He will be missed but never forgotten.

### Friendly Visiting South Halton

For the 2010/2011 fiscal year, the program was busy across Burlington, Oakville and Milton. As well as visiting isolated seniors who live alone, volunteers have been offering visits to lonely residents at some senior's assisted living residences, and facilitating a monthly movie night. Volunteers were recognized at the spring celebration in appreciation for their dedicated contributions. This program continues to receive referrals and be regarded in the community as a significant contributor to the well-being of isolated seniors.

### Friendly Visiting North Halton

2010/2011 was a successful year for the Friendly Visiting program in Georgetown and Acton. The clients enjoy a regular visit from their volunteer. A visit can be in the client's home for a chat, on an outing to the mall for some shopping or out for a walk and some fresh air. An example of one of the Georgetown Friendly Visiting volunteers has been assisting a client to learn how to use her computer, email and the internet. The client is thrilled to be able to keep in touch with her grandchildren at university and her relatives overseas.

*"The coordinator of the CIA program has been the most helpful and caring person I have ever met. With her help and advice I am now hopeful that all my specific needs will be met and I am able to be more optimistic about my future."*

### Client Intervention and Assistance

The CIA program continues to grow in demand and complexity of situations. In order to meet the increased number of referrals, in April 2011, another ½ time staff person was added so that CIA now has 1.5 staff.

Here is an example of a current situation. The situation is real but the names have been changed.

A referral was received from the Seniors Investigator with the Halton Regional Police for a mother and daughter in serious crisis. The initial referral to the police was received from the family physician who suspected elder abuse. The daughter, Nancy, is 45 years old and suffers from some mental health issues. She had broken up with her boyfriend, stopped taking her medication and ended up at the casino gambling away all her mother's income and savings to the tune of over \$80,000. On top of spending all her money, Nancy had not paid any of the utilities in months

and subsequently all services were cut off. Currently, Nancy and her mom, Barbara, are living by candlelight, eating ready made meals out of cooler or can and play cards at night to keep entertained. Due to the stress, Barbara has not been sleeping or eating and is suffering from some memory loss and anxiety. Luckily, Barbara and Nancy have some amazing friends who have been helping to cook for them a few times a week and offer support as needed. Because Nancy is in the process of applying for disability and her mother is a senior, both of them are considered clients of the CIA program and coordination of services needs to be done for each of them. We are working closely with the Geriatric Mental Health Outreach Program, Community Mental Health and bank to try and reconnect the utilities, access income for the daughter and stabilize their situation. This case is just one of many examples of the seriousness and complexity of the situations that CIA Coordinators are dealing with on a daily basis.

*"The staff are always helpful, pleasant and willing to do the small things I need. They arrive at the same time every day, which makes it easiest for me to know what is happening when"*

## Seniors' Services cont'd

### Supportive Housing, Acton

The Supportive Housing Program offers more than assistance to clients in need of the service. It is a very fine web of security that often touches on every part of a person's psyche. It can encompass relief from insecurities to

caring for a pet in times of need. It is delivered through genuine care for this type of work from excellent PSW staff and received in genuine gratitude for all that is done, by the client, their family and professionals involved in their circle of care.

*Links2Care is a valuable community partner with Halton Region's Service for Seniors community programs. Meeting the individual needs of seniors in our community can't be done by just one agency.*

*Working collaboratively with Links2Care helps ensure that our clients and caregivers are able to access the services they require to continue living in their own home. Whether it's a referral to the Home Help program, working with the Coordinator of the Client Intervention & Assistance program to assist someone at risk or working with the volunteer program to develop programs for the senior tenants in a Supportive Housing building Links2Care is there. Links2Care provides support and resources, often thinking 'outside the box', to meet the needs of our community. We truly value our relationship with Links2Care!"*

Karen Aikman, Manager of Community Support Services  
Halton Region Services for Seniors

## Children and Youth Services Report



Submitted by Lisa Hoekstra

### Children's Programs

During the 2010/2011 year the Ontario Early Years Centre – North Halton continued to offer families and care providers who care for children 0-6 years of age, a range of core services. While programs and services remained our key priority one of our major challenges this year was to find a new location for our Georgetown Satellite. However, we are now happy to announce that we offer-

ing programs and services out of our new home which is located at 8 James Street in Georgetown.

The Ontario Early Years Centres offers vital programs and services to families in the community. During the 2010/2011 year we served approximately 2,167 individuals, with a total of approximately 21,000 visits between both our Georgetown and Acton sites.

Over the last your the OEYC sup-

ported families and caregivers in their parenting/caregiving role as well as provided a safe environment where children were exposed to a variety of learning activities and practiced newfound skills. The activities provided for the children included creative experiences, circle time, activities that promote literacy, and a large playroom filled with age appropriate toys and play equipment.

The Ontario Early Years Centre

offered informal drop-in programs for families and caregivers of children ages 0 – 6 in the communities of Georgetown and Acton. The centres served as a gateway for parents and caregivers to get answers to questions they may have had as well as information on available programs for services for all children from birth to 6 years of age. For parents and care providers, the centre offered information and referrals, a parenting resource library, a toy lending library, a variety of workshops and registered programs, qualified staff and a friendly atmosphere that fostered networking among parents/care providers. All programs provided at our Ontario Early Years Centres are free of charge and funded by The Ministry of Children and Youth Services and the Region of Halton.

*“This is an awesome place for both me and my children to meet new people, play and learn”*

The Ontario Years Centres continued to offer the Adult and Child Time Together, Networking and our Caregivers Connect in both Georgetown and Acton. Our Mother Goose program was also provided at both our Georgetown and Acton locations. Due to the downsizing of our space our Georgetown Mother Goose had

the opportunity to partner with the Georgetown Senior’s Centre and offer an Inter-Generational Mother Goose Program. This program provided an opportunity for our local seniors to engage in music and nursery rhymes with children between the ages of 0-12 months of age. We continued to deliver our Discover French program in Georgetown. Our French facilitator implemented creative activities, stories and songs in the French language during our afternoon drop-in program. In partnership with Our Kid’s Network we once again offered Stay and Play at the Acton Hub located in McKenzie-Smith Bennett School. Stay and Play gave families in the Acton community the opportunity to drop-in and play while accessing information from our community partners.

During the summer months our Ontario Early Years Centres once again hosted our Annual Picnic in the Park along with offering our successful Summer Fun Mini Camp sessions to preschool children.

We have been offering programs to families, caregivers and children in Halton Hills for the last nine years and take great pride in the excellent programs and services we provide in the community. We are pleased to have moved to our new location at 8 James Street in Georgetown and

excited to have the opportunity to serve the many families and children in Halton Hills.

*“I don’t know what I would do without the Early Years Centre. Thank you so much!”*

### **Links2Kids School Age Program**

Links2Kids School Age Program operates out of Park Public School and Joseph Gibbons Public School both located in Georgetown. Park offers Before and After School Programs while Joseph Gibbons currently operates an After School Program. The hours of operation at Park Before School 7:30am- 9:00am and After School 3:30pm- 6:00pm and Joseph Gibbons 3:30pm- 6:00pm. Links2Kids also provides a Transportation Service to and from the School Age Programs both mornings and afternoons to and from local community schools.

*“We love the staff, everyone is so helpful, happy and friendly”*

The 2010-2011 enrollment saw numbers growing throughout the year with an average of 13 children in the morning at Park, 14 in the afternoon at Park and 17 children in the afternoon at Jo-

## Children & Youth cont'd

seph Gibbons. The children range in ages of 4 yrs to 12 yrs old. Some activities that the children participate in are arts and crafts, science activities and experiments, board games, active/co-operative games such as basketball, hockey and scooters. There is a homework table available for children who wish to do their homework during program time, a quiet reading area and floor toys for the children to play with. A Healthy Snack is also

*Over the years, I have partnered with the staff at the OEYC (Georgetown and Acton Satellite) to help deliver programming to families in the community. We meet several times throughout the year to discuss what the needs are of the families in the community. Some of these programs I deliver at the OEYC include parenting programs, presentations, 'Lunch and Learn' sessions, as well as monthly "drop in" visits to the OEYC. This past year, I had the opportunity to partner with the Parent Educator (Brigid Poyner) to co-facilitate a Nobody's Perfect parenting program. I find the staff are well connected to many community agencies, and often link families to appropriate services. The staff at the OEYC provide a warm welcoming environment, not only to the families in the community, but to the community partners that visit the OEYC sites.*

Maureen Harris, Public Health Nurse

provided for both the morning and afternoon programs.

During the 2010-2011 School year, Links2Kids successfully completed Level One of Three Levels of Quality First. Quality First is an initiative providing all licensed child care programs in Halton Region with the opportunity to participate in a developmental model for quality improvement. Quality First uses evaluation tools such as the School Age Environmental Rating Scale, the Caregiver Interaction Scale and the Inclusion Quality Scale to achieve certification. Training and support is available for staff to develop new skills and knowledge. Links2Kids will continue on Level Two Certification during the 2011-2012 school year.



### Youth Program

Links2Care operates two youth centres in the Halton Hills community, Open Door Youth Centre is located in Georgetown beside Georgetown District High School and Off The Wall Youth Centre is located in on the main street of Acton. Both of these centres offer essential daytime and evening programs and services for youth aged 12 to 19 in our community. Open Door is a day time drop-in

program for youth ages 12 to 19; Off the Wall Youth centre offers evening programs for youth age 12-19. Both Youth Centres are equipped with, games and activities. Our purpose is to support youth in the community in a caring, non-judgmental, safe and friendly environment. Our Youth Workers supervise programs in the Youth Centres and provide a listening ear, guidance, support and resources for a variety of parent and youth issues. This year the Youth Program continued to offer the Parent and Youth Support program. This program assisted parents in forming positive relationships with their children through developing strategies for positive communication, dealing with behaviours, and coping with external influences.

Our Youth Centres are focused on increasing youth's knowledge to make better choices around the variety of issues that face youth in their lives and in our communities. When youth have access to the support that is often needed in making difficult decisions then there is a higher probability that they will make appropriate choices. Youth that are supported in making better choices will then become more proactive in being involved with community activities and programs. In the long term, our goal is to support positive youth relationships through partnerships

## Children & Youth cont'd

with parent and community organizations. Our aim is to advocate and recognize youth assets and the ways that youth can live positively, and contribute to this community. Our goal is to create more youth activities and opportunities so that youth can grow, aspire and achieve in a youth friendly community.

During the 2010/2011 fiscal year, Open Door operated from Monday to Friday 11:00 am to 2:00 pm. The centre served high school aged youth from both Georgetown District High School and Christ the King Secondary School. Open Door had 521 individual youth and 233 new youth, with a total of 18,895 visits. Off

The Wall youth Centre in Acton continued to offer programs Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings. The centre is open 3:30 – 8:30 these three evenings. The program had 252 individual youth and 127 new youth, with a total of 3,482 visits. At year end, Links2Care Youth Centres had a total of 773 individual youth and 360 new youth, with a total of 22,377 youth visits.

During the 2010/2011 year one of our program highlights included being involved in the Town of Halton Hills Youth Needs Study. Links2Care's Youth Program has been involved in the Town's Think Bowl, Advisory Committee and Needs Survey. We look for-

ward to continuing our work with the Town of Halton Hills to better understand and implement programs and services for youth in the future.

Links2Care is pleased to report that our fundraising efforts raised a total of \$6,800.00 for our youth programs. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Alberto Gregori and Halton Homes for hosting a golf tournament with the proceeds going towards our youth programs. This event raised approximately \$6,000.00. Our own Youth Golf Tournament was hosted in August with it raising \$3,000.00 for both Open Door and Off the Wall Youth Centres.

*As a youth in Georgetown, homelessness can be a daunting experience. Living in a smaller, predominately middle class, community- the poverty rate per capita is obviously a considerable amount lower than neighbouring cities of Brampton or Toronto. As such, we do not have the necessary facilities to support and to assist the underprivileged youth. Thankfully, we do have Open Door.*

*Amanda Kostjuk at Open Door has helped me in more ways than I can remember. From basic things like helping to write a resume or help finding employment to providing myself and many others with emergency food and toiletry supplies-there would have been a lot of days where a lot of youth wouldn't have eaten if it wasn't for her.*

*It wasn't primarily about simply giving us what we needed, we were also taught valuable lessons about life, responsibility, safe sex, drugs/ alcohol and many other important issues.*

*Amanda was always there to provide guidance as well as positive reinforcement- she became a lot more than just a Youth Worker, she became a peer as well as a mentor. She helped me set goals and realistic expectations for myself and did not ever give up on me when I failed. And believe me; I didn't always get things right on the first try.*

*In short, Open Door is about more than just a place to go, it's about the caring people inside who are willing to sacrifice their time and effort to make sure that everybody passing through their doorway is treated fairly, equally and given the help they need to mature into healthy, well-adjusted members of the community.*

RJ Hagen, Youth program participant

## Children & Youth cont'd

At Links2Care our aim is to advocate and recognize youth assets and the ways that youth can live positively, and contribute to this community. Our goal is to create

more youth activities and opportunities so that youth can grow, aspire and achieve in a youth friendly community.



*“The Our Kids Network – Acton Community Hub has been working in partnership with Links2Care for the past 4 years. Since the Hub’s mandate is all the children, youth and their families in Acton, it makes sense to work with Links2Care since they’re such a central resource to this community. The Hub is also an important community resource but often I find myself referring people to Links2Care’s programs, such as, the Backpack Program, the Community Support Program and Off The Wall. I trust the staff to show the utmost respect to those who have the courage to ask for help, and I trust Links2Care to meet their needs”.*

*Alison Hillborn, Our Kids Network – Acton Community Hub*

## Employment Resource Centre (ERC) Report

*Submitted by Carol Beaton*

In August 2010, Employment Ontario introduced a new and enhanced ‘Employment Service Delivery Model’. The new model made it easier for job seekers to find and access employment training and services, based on their interests and needs, all at one location. In addition to better accessibility, the new model is customer centered and is an integrated employment service delivery for job seekers.

Throughout this transition to the new Employment Service model, Links2Care staff remained dedicated to providing our clients with the best possible service. The new model ensures that all Employment Ontario Service providers work more collaboratively to better serve our communities. The Centre For Skills is mandated to partner and perform itinerant services in the Acton com-

munity and arrangements were made to have one of their staff members come to Acton twice per month to meet with clients interested in employment assisted services such as career assessments, upgrading and/or retraining and job development. Providing these services in the Acton office quickly proved to be in great demand; The Centre now meets with clients every week.

*I’ve been working all my life. So when I got laid off I really didn’t know where to turn. This place helped me with my confidence and to get started looking for work again. Thank you.*

One disadvantage of operating in a small community is that clients often personally know other clients. The ERC is small in size and lacks private meeting room

space for facilitating large group workshops. The staff realized some clients were reluctant to participate in workshops and/or make contributions to discussions in group settings because they did not wish to be observed or overhead. The staff revamped workshops into “mini-workshop” sessions on every job search strategy topic and these are offered on an as-needed, on-demand basis. This practice has greatly increased the ERC’s workshop participant numbers.

The Links2Care Employment Resource Centre exceeded all established targets for identified categories and milestone periods for the contract period April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010 to March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2011. Links2Care has received a renewed one year contract for the period covering April 1<sup>st</sup> 2011 to March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2012, aligning our program

## ERC Report cont'd

with all other employment services agency contracts across Ontario. In the 2010-2011 fiscal year, the ERC had 2,256 client visits with over half of these requiring one-to-one assistance.

The success and value of our ERC to the community is reflected in our strong statistics for repeat client visits, word of mouth advertising, and in the comments provided in client satisfaction surveys. ERC staff takes pride in their ability to continue offering "small town" service to its clients and take the time to get to know and build a level of trust and rapport with every client. Client confidence in Links2Care ERC support is so strong that clients often return to use our ERC for employment support even after they have been referred to other employment service providers.

Future goals of the ERC staff are to diligently pursue and make

available locally specialized employment programs for targeted groups such as experienced workers - those over 50 years of age, youth - unemployed between the ages of 15 and 29 and Persons With Disabilities – individuals struggling with accessing employment services in the Acton area.

The ERC has developed a strong reputation for being able to provide knowledgeable, professional and personable customer service and employment support and for being a collaborative community partner in both the employment and community networks. This combined with our ability to provide on-site wrap around community support service has made the Links2Care Employment Resource Centre a unique employment service provider with unique client support capabilities.

*For many adults, lack of basic computer knowledge can be a barrier to accessing new employment opportunities for further training. This past year, the Adult Learning Centre continued our four year partnership with the Acton Employment Resource Centre allowing adults in the Acton community to gain essential skills training for the workplace. The ten week volunteer-led program assists clients to improve their employability and job search skills by teaching computer basics in a personalized and supportive environment on a site at the ERC.*

Alyson Findlay, Adult Learning Centre

*In August 2010, the Acton Employment Resource Centre (ERC) and The Centre for Skills Development & Training embarked on a new formal service partnership. This Employment Ontario-funded partnership has involved The Centre bringing case-managed employment services to Acton ERC clients one day biweekly between October 2010 to March 2011, and one day a week since March 2011. As a result, Acton clients now have local access to the following:*

- *Job development services*
- *Career assessments*
- *Second Career retraining information sessions and application process*
- *Self Employment Benefits Program application process*
- *IMPRESS Customer Service Certification training*

*Through this partnership the Acton ERC and The Centre have jointly provided high-quality employment services to 35 clients. The Centre looks forward to continuing to work together with Acton ERC staff to provide excellent customer service.*

Jenna Northover, Site Coordinator/ Employment Advisor

The Centre for Skills, Georgetown

## Community Support Program Report

Submitted by Cathy Gerrow

The Community Support Program provides general support, assistance and advocacy services to people in Halton Hills. The majority of the clients who access our services are lower income individuals and families, and our objective is to provide them with the support and assistance that they require in order to access services independently. Some of our clients need ongoing support in order to access services, due to mental health, substance use issues, and literacy barriers. Most of our requests for services are related to financial and housing needs.

Over the past year, 166 clients have received help through the Links2Care General Support and Assistance Program for a total of 158.50 hours of client service. In addition, 67 unique seniors and adults with disabilities, for a total of 357 contacts, were assisted in Acton and Georgetown, with those statistics counted in the Client Intervention and Assistance (CIA) Program.

Free income tax services were provided to lower income individuals and couples through the Canada Revenue Agency Community Volunteer Income Tax Program. The volunteers who provided this service received training from CRA and generously donated their time to complete tax returns for people who do not have the financial means to pay for this service. This is an essential program as many income tested programs and services, including subsidized housing, Guaranteed Income Supplement for seniors, Ontario Works, and Trillium Drug Benefits require

up to date tax returns in order for people to be eligible for assistance. During this fiscal year, a total of 303 tax returns were completed by 4 volunteers.

Our Needs Coordination Program matches those with household items to donate, with those in need of items. Links2Care Community Support staff keep a list of items that people would like to donate and a list of household goods that clients need, and make matches as we are able. In the Acton office, a "help yourself" cupboard is available with items like toiletries, books, dishes and food. People come in to check out the cupboard to see if there is anything they need, and it is a great opportunity for recycling items that people no longer need or want. Donated grocery gift cards that are given to clients are also counted in this program. Last year 139 matches were made in the Needs Coordination Program.

During the 2010 holiday season, 191 families, with a total of 420 children, received hampers of new clothing and toys through our Holiday Hamper Program. Businesses, churches, individuals, schools, and community groups support this program by purchasing the needs listed on a family profile and by donating funds to help purchase items. We had an increase in the number of applicants this year, but also had an increase in the number of sponsors who generously donated their time and money to support this needed program in our community.

In September 2010 we offered a brand new program for lower in-

come families in order to meet an identified need in the community. The Backpack Program was created in order to ensure that children from lower income families have backpacks and school supplies when they started their new school year. This program was also designed to include high school students in all aspects of the program in order to encourage youth volunteerism and to give students an opportunity to earn their 40 hours of community service at Links2Care. The students have learned to successfully create a program with the help of adult mentors and gave many hours of their time to raise funds for this program. In its first year of program delivery, we provided backpacks and school supplies to 170 students in Halton Hills.

*Halton Region has partnered with Links2Care since 2004 by providing financial support for the Transitional Housing Program in Halton Hills. The three units for families provide a medium term stay for homeless households with support services to help them get back on their feet and to secure permanent affordable units. Halton Region is proud to support this important housing program.*

*Michelle Campbell, Halton Region*

Our Transitional Housing Program meets a real need in our community for short term, affordable, temporary housing. In August, 2010 another unit was found to replace the Georgetown

## Community Support cont'd

apartment that was no longer available in February. We now have three two-bedroom apartment units in Acton that are available for homeless families for temporary housing while they search for permanent places to live. These units are part of the Rent Supplement Program at Halton Region and they are subsidized so that the tenant pays 30% of their income for rent. The Community Support Coordinator provides support and assistance to these families while they are staying in the units. From April 2010 to March 2011, 7 adults and 6 children were housed in these apartments.

The Winter Warmth Program provides assistance with Union Gas arrears to eligible applicants. This program is delivered by Links2Care in conjunction with the United Way of Halton Hills and

Union Gas. A payment of up to \$500.00 can be made to Union Gas if an applicant is in jeopardy of having their gas service disconnected due to arrears. A total of 19 applications were processed during the fiscal year and \$7,203.38 was paid out to Union Gas.

The Community Support Coordinator is a member of the Halton Hills Canadian Tire Jumpstart Chapter and is responsible for verifying the Jumpstart applications from clients. If families are financially eligible, Jumpstart will pay up to \$200.00 per child twice per year to assist with the cost of recreation and sports. Children between the ages of 4 to 18 are eligible. During the past year 102 applications were processed.

The Acton Links2Care location is a drop site for the Halton Fresh Food Box Program. Each month,

community members pay a fee for a box of fresh fruit and vegetables. This program allows people to have an easy way to get high quality, healthy foods for a good price. Each week we also receive a delivery from Food for Life, a food recovery program that accepts donations from food companies and redistributes the food to locations throughout Halton. We have this food available at our Acton office for clients with limited incomes.

The Community Support Program provides a comprehensive wrap-around service to individuals and families in the Halton Hills community. In addition to the services listed in the report, we also direct clients to other services within Links2Care and to those offered by other community agencies.

*The Halton Hills Chapter of Jumpstart (HHJS), a collaborative of community agencies, businesses and volunteers, has helped over 400 children of low income families participate in the recreation and sporting activity of their choice since 2005. Links2Care and in particular Cathy Gerrow, has provided a key role in ensuring those children in greatest need are participating and reaping the benefits of physical activity and social engagement. . Specifically, Cathy verifies eligibility of the family and works cooperatively with community sport and recreation organizations to ensure a dignified and confidential process. Families can't say enough of the compassion and professionalism Cathy provides to ensure a successful experience. HHJS is grateful for Links2Care's contribution of time and expertise to a most worthy community cause. Thanks Cathy, thanks Links2Care, we couldn't do it without you!*

Joy Thompson, Chair HHJS

## **LINKS2CARE FUNDERS**

**Alcoa Foundation**

**Halton Food for Thought**

**Ministry of Children and Youth Services**

**Ministry of Health and Long Term Care**

**Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities**

**Mississauga Halton Local Health Integration Network**

**Region of Halton**

**Region of Halton Community Investment Fund**

**Town of Halton Hills**

**Town of Milton**

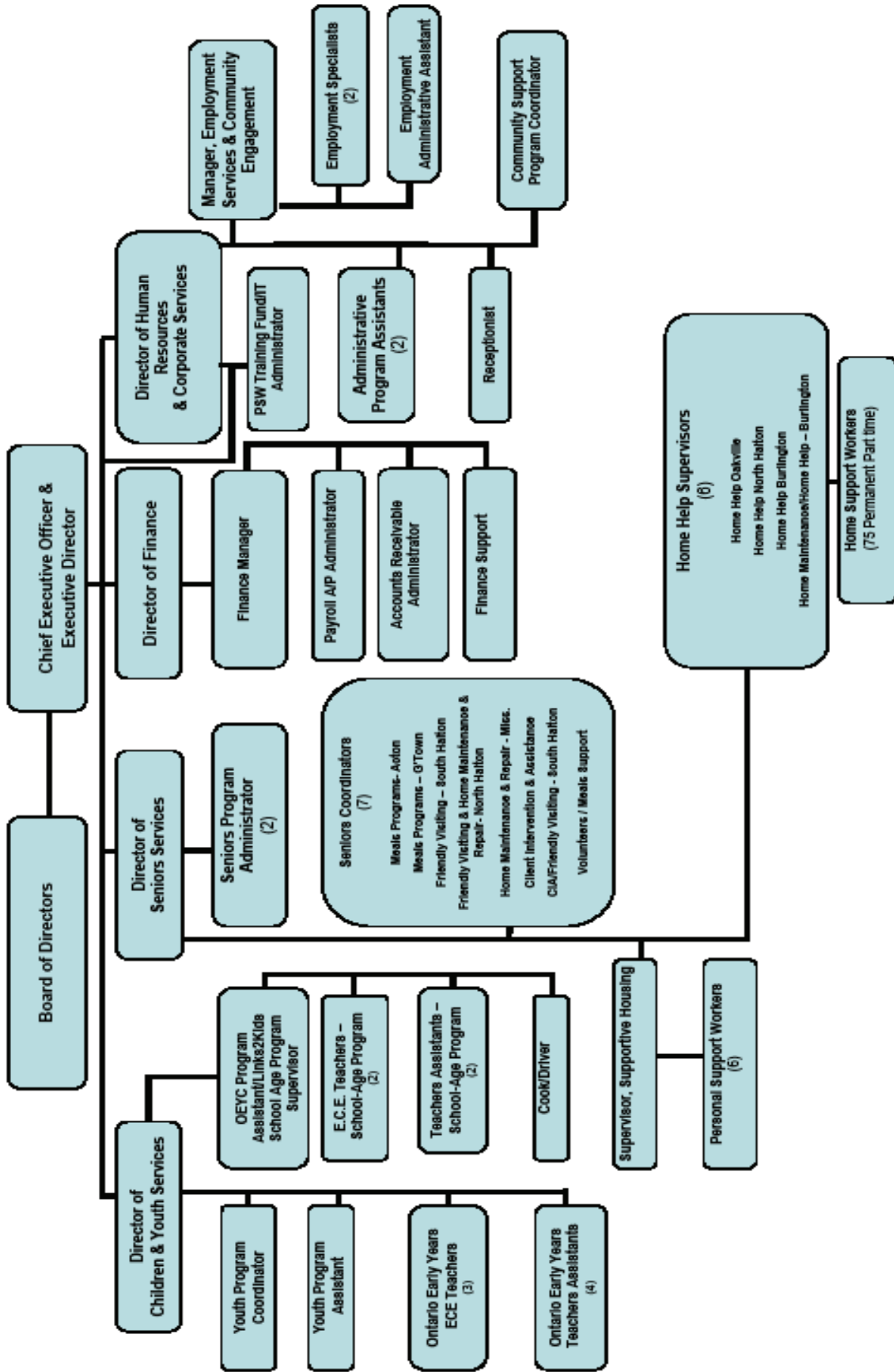
**Town of Oakville**

**United Way of Halton Hills**

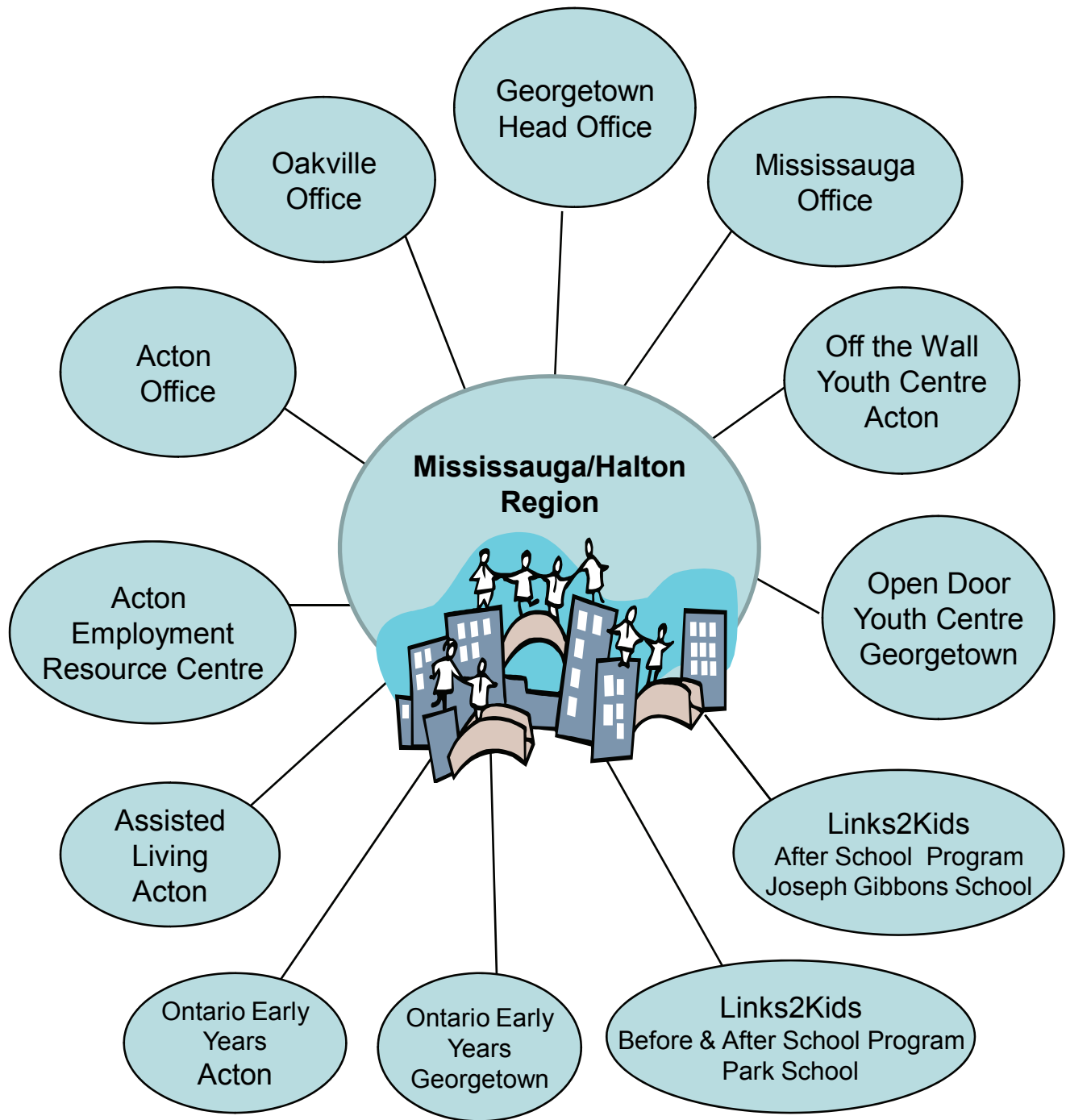
**United Way of Burlington and Greater Hamilton**

*Links2Care is sincerely appreciative of our funders, our community partners and the many donors who make it possible for us to live our mission.*

# Links2Care Organization Chart



# LINK2CARE SITES





[www. links2care.ca](http://www.links2care.ca)

## **Administration Offices**

### **Georgetown**

36A Armstrong Ave, Georgetown ON, L7G 4R9  
905-873-6502

### **Acton**

47 Mill St, Acton ON, L7J 1H1  
519-853-3310

### **Oakville**

250 Wyecroft Rd. Unit 2, Oakville ON, L6K 3T7  
905-844-0252  
905-878-6403

### **Mississauga**

1117A Clarkson Rd. North, Mississauga ON, L5J 2W1  
905-822-3500

## **Program Contact Numbers**

### **Georgetown Ontario Early Years Satellite**

905-873-2960

### **Acton Ontario Early Years Satellite**

519-853-2574

### **Acton Employment Resource Centre**

519-853-5014