



Inspiring  
Abilities.  
Enriching  
Lives.

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## **Our Vision**

A community where everyone belongs and participates

## **Our Mission**

Together with our community, KW Habilitation inspires abilities to enrich the lives of children, youth, adults and families.

## **Our Values**

### **Equality and Choices**

We treat each person with respect and recognize their rights, choices and contributions.

### **Inclusion and Community Participation**

We are committed to promoting inclusion through public awareness, community involvement and citizenship

### **Collaboration and Partnerships**

We value collaboration and promote effective partnerships that enable the community to share in the responsibility of ensuring participation for everyone.

### **Leadership and Excellence**

We believe that dynamic leadership, continuous learning and innovation are essential to achieving excellence.

### **Integrity and Accountability**

We embrace the values of fairness and honesty in all that we do to ensure our integrity and accountability.

# A Note from Ann

Trying to detail or define the last year, which seems a bit blurry, has proven to be quite difficult. KW Habilitation went through times of fear, anxiety, confusion, and sometimes even despair due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. But there were moments to celebrate, times to be proud, and many things that happened that make us look forward to the future. In perfect KW Hab style, I really think we've weathered this storm. We might be lightly bruised but we're getting through it and our resilience stands strong.



The Omicron wave of COVID-19 that affected so many across the world most certainly made itself known at KW Habilitation. Compared to the Delta wave where we had five programs in outbreak, the number of program locations that were affected doubled to 10. The good work our team did to prepare for this kept the people we support, along with our employees safe. Our accomplishments were applauded all over the province, which included:

- Partnering and distributing vaccinations to people supported, staff and family members
- Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) champion designation with Sunbeam for the entire MCCSS funded agencies in Waterloo Region
- Creation of rapid testing clinics including developing our own PCR testing mobile unit that is continuing to this day.

All the while, we committed to working by and building on our strategic priorities:

**STRENGTHEN**, **CREATE**, and **ALIGN**

There is much on the horizon at KW Habilitation as we work towards redesigning our organization to meet the future needs of people and to ensure we *align* with the legislated “Journey to Belonging”.

We are an organization that continues to evolve as our landscape changes, especially after the past two years. We have been described as “radical philanthropists” because our outside of the box ideas have inside community impact. And as we move to the future, we’re going to continue to leverage those ideas as we build in some “healing time” in hopes that people, families, and employees have the opportunity to reconnect and socialize again.

Let’s celebrate. We deserve it.

Cheers,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ann'.

Ann Bilodeau, Executive Director

# A Message from Jane

During 2021/22, COVID-19 continued to control a lot of the work we do. Staff at KW Habilitation have been amazing through this. Being front-line healthcare workers, dealing with COVID-19 outbreaks, they continued with smiles and hope - they were truly inspiring through all of this. As we come out the other side, the future looks brighter because of what KW Habilitation staff and the people we support had to endure.

The staff did amazing work, coming up with innovative ways to help the People we Support live as normal a life as possible during COVID lockdowns. Community supports had to pivot in a new way and staff found interesting ways to address this in homes.



Ann and the senior leadership team were incredible through this. They helped others in the community by opening doors to our facilities when it could help. They provided vaccination clinics for the people we support, and also provided rapid testing. They all worked without breaks and kept the organization running. One of the greatest outcomes was Ann's continued work provincially on pushing for the temporary \$3/hr increase to front-line developmental service workers pay to be permanent and that became a reality!

KW Habilitation worked with a variety of community and provincial partners this year thanks to Ann's great networking skills. We've embarked on a new project partnering with Project READ Literacy Network to provide LEG Up! To Retail, opening retail employment doors further for people with developmental disabilities. Partnerships allow us all to focus on our expertise instead of re-inventing the wheel....so exciting.

The Finance Committee and Fundraising Committee continued their work through the lockdowns. We've moved our reserve fund to CIBC Wood Gundy and the results have been very positive. The Fundraising Committee held Tequila School and 50/50 draws to continue bringing in funds and in 2021 we were able to hold our Annual Golf Tournament.

It's been an interesting 2 years for the Board. We've been meeting mostly on Zoom and that makes the camaraderie harder, but our directors persevered. They were supportive and attended staff recognition events wherever they could. You couldn't ask for a better group of people to work with.

We are still focused on developing and providing affordable housing in Kitchener-Waterloo. Unfortunately, it's a struggle and it shouldn't be. From our building on Sydney we've learned so much and are obviously a proven entity. I know that government grants are trying to grow the capacity of more organizations, but it's important to just provide good housing opportunities to everyone. However, we have not let that hold us down – staff continue to look for alternate ways to fund our next affordable housing project.... we will succeed.

The future for KW Habilitation looks bright and positive. It will be exciting to see what will change and grow as we leave the pandemic behind. The one thing that won't change though is our dedication to the people and families we serve.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Tuer". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Jane Tuer, Board President

# Board of Directors

The Board of Directors acts within a policy governance model and is responsible for overseeing the execution of our mission and mandate. Elected by the members of the organizations, Board Members meet 10 times during the fiscal year. The board provides leadership within the organization in advocacy supporting our mission to better the lives of the people we support, providing financial accountability and overseeing the planning and implementation of our Strategic Pathways.

Jane Tuer, President  
Corey Bechtel, Vice-President  
Ian Labelle, Secretary  
Bill Strachan, Treasurer  
Satish Mistry  
Dr. Pierre Fortin

Mary Cathryn Lorentz  
Ryan Snider  
Rick Willaert  
Lori Trumper  
Patricia Moore

## Finance Committee

The Finance Committee's main responsibility is to provide financial oversight for KW Habilitation. These tasks include the review of financial information concerning their annual budget, monitoring adherence to the budget, monitoring COVID-19 financial risks, and setting long term financial goals. The Finance Committee reports and recommends actions concerning the financial position and risk management to the Board of Directors and gives direction to where fundraising activities should be applied. During our 50th year, all fundraising went toward our affordable housing initiatives.

Bill Strachan (Treasurer)  
Corey Bechtel  
Jane Tuer  
Mike Staub  
Frank Thompson

Pat Carson  
Mark Sauve  
Jeff Collins  
Tara Payne  
Ann Bilodeau

# COVID-19 at KW HAB

Over the past two years, KW Habilitation has been taking a proactive approach when dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. We have continued being active participants in Waterloo Wellington Infection Prevention and Control (WW IPAC) working groups and educational events. A Health and Safety IPAC sub-committee was established to help support the creation of internal strategy including consistent IPAC visits at all Inclusive Living sites to ensure MCCSS compliance. Alongside Sunbeam, we were named Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services (MCCSS) IPAC Champions, allowing us to promote a strong IPAC program for Developmental Services agencies that will benefit all MCCSS funded organizations across Ontario. Together, we created the Waterloo Region IPAC Library for MCCSS Funded Organizations, a user friendly, digital notice board that features images, links, videos, and documents, in a simple-to-navigate format. This library allows us to share and update a wide variety of IPAC resources and references broadly across all MCCSS funded organizations.

During the Omicron spike, we created a clear path of action for Inclusive Living locations in outbreak. Life for the people we support looked different, as we battled the risk of infection. Proactive safety measures were utilized, such as full Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) usage, isolation when exposed, daily Rapid Antigen Testing for staff, and RN support for assessments and testing of people living in the home. To keep a sense of normalcy and uplift our people, we continued to find safe and fun ways to engage with one another including the use of technology to attend music sessions, and as a method of communication with friends and family.

## Internal Safety Measures

Our rapid testing clinics took place twice a week beginning in March 2021—we were one of the first organizations to offer free testing clinics to our staff. With the help of our phenomenal Rapid Antigen Testing crew (AKA the RAT Pack), we were able to test a total of 3620 people over a span of 52 weeks. These clinics helped us stop potential spreading of the virus, keeping the people we support, and our staff, safe. We also started offering mobile PCR testing services to staff, allowing us to continue monitoring potential spreads of infection.

We partnered with Region of Waterloo Public Health, Sunbeam Community and Developmental Services, and Community Living Cambridge to offer the COVID-19 vaccine. With the help of 37 Habbers, the vaccination pop-up clinic became a reality. The KW Hab team stepped up to provide 820 first shot vaccinations to the people we support, caregivers, families, and essential staff. Our second shot vaccination clinic took place in June, with another 659 shots being administered. Later that year in December, we held our final vaccination clinic of 2021, administering 224 booster shots. The vaccine clinics at KW Hab were a safe and familiar environment for the people we support to receive their shots and see familiar faces. We are so proud of the teamwork and dedication that allowed us to provide these opportunities to the community!

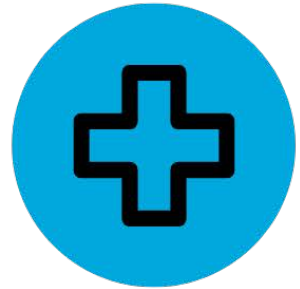




**820 first shots  
659 second shots  
224 booster shots**



**3620 Rapid tests  
administered  
Average of 35 tests  
per week**



**1 person  
hospitalized**



**10 Outbreaks during  
the Omicron wave**



**2460 Internal PPE  
orders were filled**







# Volunteering at KW Hab

During the pandemic, volunteer and student placement opportunities were either put on hiatus or substantially reduced. We had to be creative if we were going to continue working with the fantastic volunteers who have been such great supporters of KW Habilitation.

Some volunteers started making weekly phone calls to people supported which really helped to reduce the isolation many felt. One individual we support was able to write his life story with the support of volunteers and we had a Kinesiology student leading a virtual fitness program.

With our largest community participation programs closing, some of our student and volunteer positions were lost. Again, being creative, we have begun providing some one on one matching, pairing a volunteer with a person supported.

One person supported in Supported Independent Living has a volunteer who has been calling weekly. This has provided emotional and social support, and a true friendship has emerged. We were also able to pair them with an in-person volunteer where they meet weekly, and engage in fun activities.

We first re-engaged our welcome centre volunteers. These folks provide a great support to our admin team and act as ambassadors of KW Hab to anyone who visits our main office, providing a welcoming and friendly atmosphere. Our Farm volunteers continued to provide their time, talents and labour and volunteers, in collaboration with our farming team have helped us increase our harvest every year.

During the closures of the COVID-19 Pandemic, some things worked well, while others really didn't. Virtual student placements for Resource Consultant students in our Early Learning program proved to be very challenging. We have now been able to return to in-person student placements, and have 3 RC student currently doing their placements with Early Learning. These placements provide fantastic learning-rich experiences for students, helping them gain knowledge and practical experience in the field. In Early Learning we have not been able to place volunteers in child care classrooms for two years and we're so grateful that that is now changing!

As we move forward, volunteers and students will continue to play an important role in our organization as we move beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic and we continue to engage in creative ways to align our work with the needs of the people we support.



**30**  
Volunteers

**21**  
Student  
Placements

# Inclusive Living

Over the past 50 years, we've seen major changes not only at KW Habilitation, but in the Developmental Services industry as a whole. People have switched from provincially run institutions to community services and supports. We've seen a shift to Passport Funding from the traditional service funding method. In-agency, we have moved to better align with our changing priorities and Strategic Pathways. This includes improving our Quality Assurance Management to keep the people we support and staff safe, shifting to a person-centered philosophy, and building Complex Care Supports which include Behavioural Supports (Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) & Behaviour Therapist Positions). We are continually finding new ways to improve the lives of the people we support and are looking to continue building a community where everyone belongs and participates.

## Navigating the Pandemic

Throughout the pandemic, our staff have shown resiliency in levels we've never seen before. Through every roadblock, Habbers in Inclusive Living persevered to guarantee that our person-centered focus continued to be our main emphasis and that all personalized needs/goals were met. Individuals learned how to safely interact within their community by wearing masks and social distancing. They continued their chosen community involvement in activities such as music and/or art via ZOOM or outdoor spaces and family and friend connections continued to be fostered through the use of technology when in-person connections were not possible.

Lock downs and restricted guidelines on movement continued to affect the way we connected with friends, families, and the community. Person directed/centered goals had to be approached in innovative ways to achieve our mission. This included shifting to ZOOM activities, introducing Stay-at-Home Idol, drive-by birthday celebrations and focusing on outdoor activities (such as horseback riding, skiing, and BBQs). As restrictions eased, we slowly opened up to include small cohorts of in-person Leg UP! classes, and group dinners! We are looking forward to a near future where we can cautiously begin connecting and fostering relationships in-person.

## Person-centered care

As always, we've been making person-centered care our biggest priority. Our vision, mission and values encapsulate why the work we do matters and the positive impact for the people we support are why it is so important. We are also shifting our processes to better fit with our new Strategic Pathways:

- We are using new technologies to connect with family, friends and staff, and set reminders for activities and appointments. iPads are being utilized to access FaceTime and are leveraged as a tool for activities, as well as door alarms that alert staff, achieving more independence for those supported.
- We are supporting individuals who are aging, and to do so safely, comfortably, and with dignity within their own home or within an existing KWH setting.
- We are continuing to update and improve our internal systems. We updated our Records Management System so there is continuity from early years to adulthood. We recognized it needs to be easier and time efficient so that we can continue our focus of seeking out new possibilities and connections with those we support as well as meet MCCSS Compliance expectations
- We streamlined communication, allowing all staff to receive the same information from one central internal agency location by utilizing internal communication methods.

## John and Thirsty's Bar & Grill

John, over time, had become a regular at Thirsty's Bar and Grill. He had built relationships and connections with many of the others that frequented the bar as well as with the staff there. It was a second family to him, something he truly valued. Years ago someone had even completed a painting of John which continues to hang in the bar today. It was a place of refuge for him.

When the pandemic hit, John was unable to continue with his visits to see his friends, which was frustrating to all. The folks at Thirsty's attempted to keep the connection going by leaving a table outside for John to use, even if he just sat and drank his own drink from home. In 2021 as restrictions slowly began to lift and patios opened, John's friends wanted to make sure he knew that they wanted to continue to foster that relationship and reached out to John to explore what their options were. With support from staff, John was able to share information regarding what he felt he needed to do to keep himself safe in the community and in return they shared what regulations they were required to follow to have John back at the restaurant/bar. As patios opened, John was able to return to Thirsty's, and a table was regularly reserved just for him to ensure he had a place to sit; a place he felt he belonged.

## The Dino Joe Show

Joe is someone who is very creative and has an amazingly active imagination. He even planted the idea and worked to help assemble a "Stay At Home Idol" event for folks at KW Habilitation, where participants performed on the ZOOM stage.

Joe is deeply knowledgeable on a number of topics, including dinosaurs and decided he wanted to host his own ZOOM show, and thus the Dino Joe Show was created. Joe, with support from staff, selected the days and times he preferred to host, decided on the topics he would cover, and came up with the name "The Dino Joe Show", naming himself "Dino Joe". He selected a work space in the basement of his home and enlisted staff to help make a backdrop to host in front of. Joe's creativity was endless and the show was co-hosted by Remy, a dinosaur puppet with great jokes.



On April 25th, the first episode of the "Dino Joe Show" was presented to an enthusiastic group of viewers. Joe prepared for each episode by putting together information on the Dinosaur he planned to speak about and passing it on to his helpers. A lot of creative improv was incorporated into the show to keep things interesting including interactions with Joe's housemates and others. After a successful month and a half, Joe decided it was a good time to end The Dino Joe Show but continues to have many ideas for the future.

# Complex Care

Resilience. The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged developmental services in a way not seen since the field emerged in the 1960's and 1970's. The pressure placed on direct support staffing has been unprecedented. This pressure at Complex Care supports has been further complicated due to the elevated training required of our team members. A team including Clinical supports, Management and Complex Care Professionals, that already had displayed resilience since its launch, was placed under heightened pressure during the pandemic. This team has shown amazing resilience and continues to provide highly effective supports to the persons in service. We are so incredibly proud of our team's accomplishments and perseverance this past year and we are looking forward to the next year in hopes that we can find a sense of normalcy again and continue building on 2021's successes.

**We know that prioritizing personalized support leads to increased opportunity for safe and meaningful community engagement.**

Our vision statement, "A community where everyone belongs and participates", is one that is easy to support and align with. However, the 2016 Ombudsman Office investigation in the developmental services sector and resulting report "Nowhere to Turn" painted a different reality in Ontario, one where people with complex behaviour support needs are not adequately supported by the Developmental Services Sector resulting in over-representation in the justice system, inappropriate placements in hospitals and long-term care facilities, and family breakdown. KW Habilitation's Complex Care has been developed to meet this issue head-on and we have seen tremendous success to date. We are motivated to continue to grow to further increase our capacity to assist those in need.

Team commitment to the quality of life of the people we support has had the biggest impact on our success in 2021. At Complex Care, the behavioral issues of the people we support have historically compromised their capacity to engage in their community in a safe and meaningful way. The Complex Care team, including Management, clinicians and Complex Care Professionals are committed to the persons we support and have worked tirelessly during the pandemic to decrease risk of problematic behaviours and increase opportunities for safe and meaningful community engagement. This past year the success stories are endless including increased family visits, and recreation and leisure events including trips to Niagara Falls, Ripley's Aquarium and African Lion Safari. We are looking forward to continuing building on these successes in 2022 and beyond.

The work at Complex Care also works towards sustainability and larger agency capacity to support people with complex behaviours. Beginning in 2019, clinical support at Complex Care has intentionally worked to improve KWH practice specific to Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) understanding as it applies to the Behaviour Support Plans utilized by the agency. This work began in 2019 with evaluating agency practices and identifying both strengths and areas of development. This was followed in 2020 and 2021 by developing and implementing training that was applied to 16 agency Behaviour Support Protocols and that promoted the strengths and improved upon areas of development highlighted in the 2019 evaluation. This past year we concluded these efforts and are partnering with Durham College to research the result of our efforts since 2019. We look forward to these results which are anticipated to be shared at the end of June 2022.

We initiated and developed a provincial networking group of DS Agencies providing specialized accommodations. Complex Care supports are highly specialized and can run the risk of practicing in isolation. This networking group will connect agencies across the province providing similar support. Launching in the Fall of 2022 there will be initially 8 agencies from across the province participating in this KW Habilitation led initiative.







# Community and Employment Supports

When looking at the impact on our success this past year, it is undoubtedly due to the ongoing resilience and optimism of people, staff, and participants a-like! Every time we needed to change direction due to required COVID-19 safety restrictions (this happened many, many times), Community and Employment supports staff embraced the “How Can We” approach. With their golden attitudes, they were innovative, sometimes stretching beyond their own comfort zones to create and deliver innovative, enjoyable, and quality options based on people’s feedback and using technology. People supported were troopers, they in-turn were supportive of our efforts, embraced technology and tuned in, joining in on programming in record numbers throughout 2021.

## **Weathering the storm: Creating success in a difficult time.**

People who have developmental disabilities were disproportionately negatively impacted during the pandemic. LEG Up! was able to help people to stay connected and have meaningful opportunities with innovative and creative virtual and hybrid models of service and as a result, people supported gained confidence and skills in their use of technology.

Despite the crushing effects of COVID-19, Community and Employment Supports has set our sights on setting a strong foundation for post-pandemic life. Following our Strategic Pathway and using the three pillars to Strengthen, Create and Align services and supports, we have created and adopted a multi-year work plan which includes program restructuring and setting outcomes towards more individualized and person-directed supports. To this end, several new positions have been established and hired for.

We have participated in staff training focusing on Asset Based Community Development (ABCD), creating, and delivering quality virtual and hybrid supports, business specific employment support strategies, and we have several staff who will be participating in facilitation skills training this spring with Partners 4 Planning (P4P).

We are piloting and evaluating new individualized fee structures, have successfully applied for funding opportunities via Canada Summer Jobs, Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development, and we are seeking other funding options for innovative new projects. We have established collaborating partnerships with other community organizations such as, St. Mary’s General Hospital and the Waterloo Catholic School Board for Project SEARCH, Project Read, and The Literacy Group for LEG Up! to Retail. Our new strategic priorities are systematically being implemented every day.





## Looking beyond the pandemic.

We are now setting our sights to a future where we can safely connect in-person and continue providing exciting initiatives that benefit the people we support and our community. Out and About Waterloo Region (WR) is one of KW Habilitation's post-covid, next steps following our Strategic Pathways. Out and About WR will further strengthen what helps people to explore possibilities, to belong and be connected in meaningful ways. It aligns with the transformational framework of Journey to Belonging: Choice and Inclusion and creates opportunities for collaboration and partnerships that will enable next generation solutions that are more equitable and sustainable. This person-directed service will connect people to the community and help to facilitate a network of resources within it.

Collaborating with other community services is a significant ingredient in this endeavor. Out and About WR staff are known as “Local Community Connectors” (LCC). The LCC is a relationship-builder and a connector, who assists people to identify and articulate their individual interests, aspirations, and desired outcomes by providing 1:1 personalized and person-directed support using a range of tools and techniques for goal setting and action planning. The setting of goals is important, but more important to this process is the journey; rich experiences that support the person's involvement and engagement in the local community. The LCC will promote a community first philosophy and will work directly with community organizations, services and activities in neighbourhoods assisting and supporting people to be connected. Additionally, the LCC will facilitate and deliver small group activities by co-designing options, being responsive to feedback and input from people supported and their families. We are looking forward to launching this exciting new program in the near future!





# Early Learning, Child Care and Family Resources

During the 2021 – 2022 calendar year our Early Learning department anticipated the growth of our service throughout the region as we made changes to our program in supporting children up to 12-years old, in licensed care. Following the initial launch of this program, and just prior to the pandemic, much of our work in this area was drastically reduced due to closures. Moving into the calendar year 2021, our service model allowed us to move from part-time Resource Consultant positions, offering support in licensed after-school programs only, to a cluster model of neighbourhoods that allowed our Resource Consultants to take on the responsibility of supporting children from entry to the childcare setting, up to 12 years old. This was an exciting opportunity allowing us to increase our staff complement and ensure consistency was provided in each cluster for all children benefiting from supports. In addition, families were provided the support of the Resource Consultant to navigate through the system. Looking forward, we anticipate additional growth now that the Province of Ontario has signed onto the Canada Wide National Child Care Plan.

Waterloo Region is a rapidly growing area, and the economic development and opportunity we benefit from will require our service to expand as the population increases, more schools are built with licensed child care programs at the center of the development, and the needs to support families increases. As we expand and grow, the needs for our children continue to move forward. With growth comes great opportunity, but it also leaves a community vulnerable to challenges. In particular, children and children with needs remain at risk. The healthy development of children is crucial to the future well-being of any community. Children in the developmental stage are especially vulnerable to poor living conditions, poverty, inadequate health care, nutrition, inadequate housing, and environmental concerns. Focusing on the healthy development of all children is our goal. The work we do remains imperative to the healthy development of our community.

## Aligning with our new Strategic Priorities

In the initial days of the pandemic our Early Learning team was well positioned to move into the virtual world of supports due to the nature of the work they had been doing, and the technology they were encouraged to embrace. Working with children means that working with technology allows them to be included, engaged, and provides choices in participation. As the pandemic impacted our work in 2021, we realized that many of the routine things that we did each year needed to align with the use of our technology. Our technology, and its use, provided us with the opportunity to further strengthen, create and align our needs through team meetings with our collaborative partners at KidsAbility, and our routine work with our community partners within the District School Boards. A very important part of this work each year is Transition to School for children that will leave full time child care, and move into a full time placement within the District School Board. A great deal of effort went into the structure and process of how this could continue online to ensure the success of each child that may leave our supports on a full-time basis and be introduced to the primary years of their education.

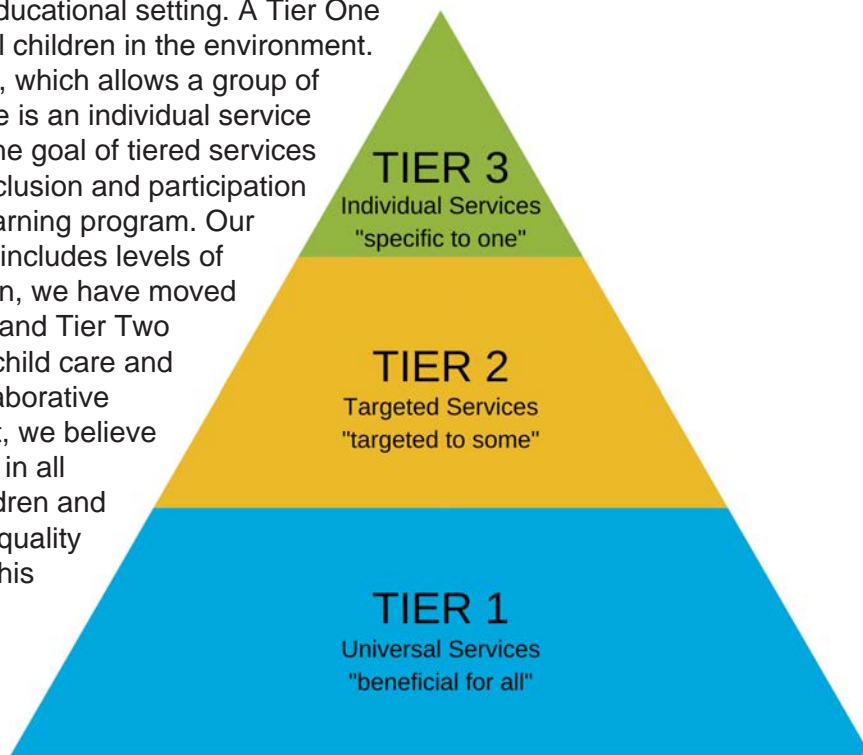
Transition to School protocol has become a collaborative approach with all our partners, and as the lead agency and chair for Transition to School, our technology has lent to this success as we align the needs to strengthen the work we do.

## Moving forward

It is said that in education it takes a generation to change things. It is also a commonly held belief that in education, a generation is ten years. Since the inception and introduction of Bill 82 by the Ministry of Education for Ontario, Special Education and children living with additional needs have been on a journey of imagining what might be, since the early eighties. Prior to this, special education and care was an opportunity for segregation only, congregated classrooms and specialized programs where children were not included in the regular stream of supports or learning. With the introduction of Bill 82 the concept of mainstreaming was created for the education sector, and as a concept for child care. This allowed for children to participate in some regular program opportunities, but was limited to budgets, expertise, and the local opportunities that might be available. As time passed and education and care became more regulated, we moved into a model of integration. This allowed for children to be exposed to typical classroom structures and care programs that allowed for some transition to mainstream placements. Based on needs, not all children were able to participate. It was during the early years of the new millennium, that the idea of inclusion was conceived for all children in Early Learning Programs through high school graduation. This was transformational for our Early Years program as we were able to be directed by the Ontario Ministry of Education's guideline document on *How Does Learning Happen?* with direct funding coming from education, allowing for seamless supports during the educational years. Inclusion captures an all-embracing societal ideology. This allows all children to secure opportunities to learn alongside each other in a general education program, which is now part of the Early Learning sector.

We have come a long way in fifty years and as we move forward, we build on our collaboration and multidisciplinary team approach to ensure the best in practice. Over the last year we have moved to increase and adapt our tiered service model. Offering a three-tiered model of service provides every opportunity to support all children, and professionals in the educational setting. A Tier One level of service is universal and beneficial to all children in the environment.

A Tier Two level of service is targeted to some, which allows a group of children to benefit. A Tier Three level of service is an individual service delivered for a child with exceptional needs. The goal of tiered services is to build capacity in educators, to promote inclusion and participation to support all children within licensed Early Learning program. Our Early Learning Service for children aged 0 – 4 includes levels of support in all tiers. For our school aged children, we have moved to providing levels of support at both Tier One and Tier Two levels. This promotes high quality in inclusive child care and allows us to expand our supports with our collaborative partners. Promoting healthy child development, we believe that parents and guardians should be involved in all decisions regarding the well-being of their children and ultimately their family. Everyone benefits from quality inclusive child care and our goal is to provide this throughout the entire Waterloo Region.



# Facilities

In early 2021 we partnered with Women's Crisis Services of Waterloo Region to offer a one-bedroom unit to a young woman transitioning from their services. To us, that's another example of our **Neighbour Helping Neighbour** philosophy coming to life. We include our tenants from our affordable housing building in initiatives all across KW Habilitation including sharing the Our Farm harvest and even offering COVID-19 vaccines to the tenants at 108 Sydney Street.

We were able to complete 23 Partner Facility Renewal Projects which included updating bathrooms, replacing air conditioning units, improving accessibility at homes, completing basement and kitchen renovations, and more.

Looking forward to the near future, we are setting our sights on the construction of our second affordable housing building. Finding quality and affordable housing is a problem all across the province and that won't be going away any time soon. KW Habilitation is invested in working with partners on a solution and we are looking forward to helping our community, one building at a time.

Plans are drawn and the project is shovel ready as we await funding.



**Partner Facility  
Renewal Projects  
were completed**



**Partner Facility  
Renewal Project  
budget**







# Human Resources

As we reflect on the past year in Human Resources, we can confidently say that change has been one of the biggest trends we've seen. We are in a transitional time as we learn to navigate living with COVID-19. Beyond the pandemic, we are also reevaluating our internal systems so that we can better connect with our new Strategic Pathways. As we move past our 50th year in service, we are setting our sights to the future as we grow to better support our people and community.

We've been strengthening our workforce by expanding teams throughout the agency. Around 197 people were hired between April 1st 2021 – March 31st 2022, with 63 people leaving during that time frame. Throughout the pandemic, isolation time due to COVID-19 has been one of our biggest struggles. By expanding our teams, we became better equipped to deal with staffing shortages. Looking to the future, we are hoping to continue our strategic hiring campaigns so we can find new talent and connect folks to meaningful careers in our sector.

Aligning our practices to our organizational priorities has also been a main goal this past year. We understand that our employees can only best serve the People we Support if they are well supported themselves. We know the past few years have been trying on our team, in fact, we have been told this multiple times through internal surveys. We are listening and finding new ways to best support each other, and that means trying new things until we find a system that works to support our staff teams.

New employee wellness options were launched to ensure Habbers always had access to a wide variety of mental health and wellness services. Outside our Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP), we worked with the Cultivating Community Wellness initiative to offer monthly wellness webinars. A new app called Beyond Silence was brought on board so that our people could access personalized mental health supports at any time. We have also worked with our leadership teams to find ways to create a healthier work/life balance.

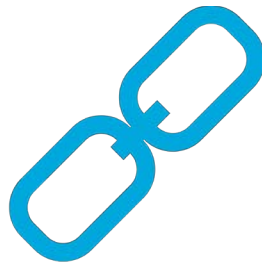
Partnerships have allowed us to expand the supports we provide to our teams, leading to new and exciting initiatives within the agency. This past year we collaborated with McMaster University to bring our staff the Beyond Silence app. We also worked with the Developmental Services Workforce Initiative Sub-Committee to help revamp and facilitate Operational Leader Training across the province. This training is especially vital, as we believe that well trained leaders will be able to lead teams to success.

We know that the work we do for people in our community can't be done without the amazing staff teams we have on board at KW Hab. That's why our investments in mental health and wellness initiatives are so vitally important, and that is why we're so committed to ensuring that our team knows they're valued, appreciated, and that the work they do every day is meaningful.

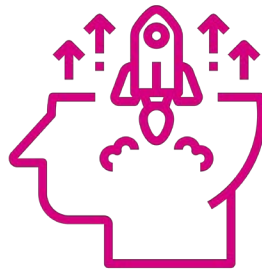








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