



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Release November 15, 2021

Ontario Trillium Foundation Supporting Sunbeam through COVID-19

Kitchener, Ontario, in 2021, Sunbeam Community & Developmental Services received a \$125,000 (Resilient Communities Fund) grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation over a span of 9 months to rebuild and recover from the impacts of COVID-19 by adapting programs for in person or virtual delivery to allow people living with disabilities to fully participate.

Brian Swainson, Chief Executive Office of Sunbeam Community & Developmental Services said, “We have never been more proud of and thankful for our front-line staff members, and all our dedicated employees who continue to work passionately in support of all the individuals we serve during the COVID-19 pandemic.”

The impact of this Ontario Trillium Fund was directly felt by families in our community accessing our day-program. These grant dollars allowed Sunbeam to continue offering the high-quality service that local families have come to rely on.

Without access to day programming, many families would have little opportunity to take a much-needed break from caregiving for their loved ones living with developmental disabilities. During the pandemic, with so much prolonged isolation and missing out on usual daily activities, day program participants enjoyed the emotional, recreational, and learning supports needed to ensure their wellbeing.



This grant supported the delivery of Sunbeam’s day program through a virtual environment, providing resources for staffing, equipment, and supplies. iPads were purchased for use by community participants who may not have had the technology hardware needed to join the virtual program from home. Additionally, hundreds of “Fun boxes” were put together by our staff and provided to participants so they could join in on all the planned activities from home.

Over the 9-month period of this grant, Sunbeam’s virtual day program delivered over 3,800 attendance days to participants across the communities we service. Participants were still able to feel connected and engaged with one another despite being geographically in different locations. The Ontario Trillium Fund grant also provided the opportunity to purchase outdoor structures (gazebos) which made outdoor day program activities possible during periods when limited in-person attendance was enabled. These structures will serve our day programs for many years to come.

We have been fostering inclusive communities where people of all abilities are valued and provide innovative opportunities that enable the people, we support to reach their goals and achieve recognition of their value in the community.

This year Sunbeam celebrates 65 years of serving the community. Since 1956 when the Vos family welcomed their first child with developmental disabilities into their home, the Sunbeam family has grown exponentially! Each year, Sunbeam supports over 14,000 individuals and their families by offering access the vital services they need. <https://sunbeamcommunity.ca/>

Denis Zikovic, Manager of Communications & Community Engagement
Sunbeam Community & Developmental Services
519-584-5122
d.zikovic@sunbeamcommunity.ca



An agency of the Government of Ontario
Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario