Fall & Winter 2026/27

www.sunbeamcommunity.ca



Celebrating 70 Years of Community, Compassion, and Connection

On November 9, 2026, Sunbeam Community & Developmental Services proudly celebrated 70 years of making a difference in the lives of individuals and families. What began in 1956 when Pieter and Johanna Vos opened their home to a child with a developmental disability has grown into an organization that supports people across Waterloo Region and beyond through a wide range of innovative programs and services.

Over the past seven decades, Sunbeam has continually evolved to meet the changing needs of the community while remaining true to its founding belief that every person deserves to be valued, included, and supported. From inclusive services and community supports to family resources, clinical services, system/service navigation, advocacy and so much more, generations of individuals, families, employees, volunteers, and partners have helped shape our journey.

As we celebrate this significant milestone, we honour the people who have been part of our story and look forward with excitement to the future. Guided by our new Strategic Plan, we remain committed to building stronger communities, creating new opportunities, and ensuring individuals of all abilities can thrive.

Thank you for being part of our 70-year journey of building this community and helping lay the groundwork for our next chapter.

Celebrating 70 years of Belonging

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Season's Greetings from the Sunbeam Community

As 2026 comes to a close, we reflect with gratitude on a year of growth, connection, and meaningful progress.

This year, Sunbeam proudly celebrated 70 years of serving people of all abilities and their families. We also marked important milestones, including the opening of our new Fairmount inclusive living home, the expansion of our Clinical Services to meet the needs of the community, and the launch of our 2026-2031 Strategic Plan. These achievements strengthen our ability to build inclusive communities where everyone is valued.

As we look ahead to 2027, we are excited about the opportunities before us. Guided by our new Strategic Plan, we will continue advancing inclusion, innovation, sustainability, and belonging while creating meaningful opportunities for the people and communities we serve.

We are deeply grateful to our employees, volunteers, donors, partners, and the individuals and families who place their trust in Sunbeam. Your support makes our work possible and inspires us every day.

On behalf of our Board of Directors, leadership team, employees, and volunteers, we wish you a joyful holiday season and a happy, healthy New Year.

Stacey Jayne

Stacey Jayne
Board President

Brian Swainson

Brian Swainson
Chief Executive Officer

Memories from 2025







Launch and Expansion of Clinical Services (formerly Brightside)

sunbeam
COMMUNITY & DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES
CLINICAL SERVICES

Sunbeam is pleased to announce the launch of Sunbeam Clinical Services, offering a broad range of interdisciplinary clinical services for children, youth, adults and families across Waterloo Region.

The name change reflects the program's evolution into a full-service clinical hub model, one that will meet a wider range of needs under one roof.

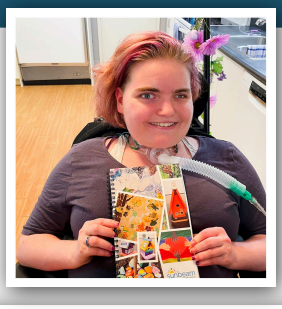
Sunbeam Clinical Services includes both funded clinical services (Speech and Language Consultation, Social Work Consultation, Behaviour Consultation) and direct-pay clinical services (Applied Behaviour Analysis/ABA, Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy), along with a Children's Psychiatry Clinic. These offerings share a common purpose of providing high-quality, evidence-based services to help individuals and families achieve meaningful outcomes.

"This isn't just a new name. It's a more complete service model for individuals navigating autism and developmental needs, and for the families and caregivers supporting them every day. We're proud to bring these multidisciplinary services together under a consolidated hub service model for ease of access and system navigation, while meeting the growing demand for clinical services across Waterloo Region."

Brian Swainson, Chief Executive Officer

Last year, Brightside Services delivered almost 3,400 hours of service to over 220 individuals and families, emphasizing the program's role as a trusted resource for families navigating autism and developmental care in Waterloo Region.

The History of Sunbeam - Aiyana Hackbusch



Sunbeam Community & Developmental Services was founded on November 9, 1956, by the Vos family in Kitchener, Ontario. The family began their work in an old home near Willow Street, where they cared for children with complex medical and developmental needs.

This early effort became known as the Sunbeam Home and eventually grew to include many service locations across Waterloo Region. In 1966, Sunbeam was incorporated as a stand-alone charitable, not-for-profit organization to help ensure that the organization could continue providing quality care and support to the community.

Over the years, Sunbeam evolved into a thriving community-based organization, developing inclusive living homes and programs that foster independence, belonging and choice. Today, Sunbeam is a trusted and growing community service organization with deep roots across Waterloo Region and a longstanding commitment to supporting people and communities beyond our region.



The Sunbeam building (c.1971) and early logos.

Read Aiyana's full article:
https://sunbeamcommunity.ca/aiyana

Aiyana receives programs and services from Sunbeam and we applaud her initiative in writing this brief historical snapshot of Sunbeam.

Remembering Dr. John Whaley

A legacy of caring at Sunbeam

Charter Member of Sunbeam Home, Director of Sunbeam Home / Centre 1966-1990, Board President 1981 -1984, Medical Director 1966-1992.



Dr. John Whaley passed away August 21, 2026 at the age of 96.

John had a long history in this region, attending local schools (Suddaby, Victorial Park School and Kitchener Collegiate). He graduated from Queen's University and pursued pediatric internship in Montreal. It was there he met his wife, Diana (62-year marriage). They would move to Toronto, where John would receive additional training at Sick Kids hospital.

In the 1950's and 60's John developed a special interest and commitment to children with developmental and physical disabilities. For many years he served as Medical Director for the Children's Rotary Centre (now Kidsability) and the Sunbeam Home.



At Margaret Ave. Clinic



In 1966, John became Sunbeam's house doctor/Medical Director after Dr. Koegler departed for a position in London.

His dedication to Sunbeam and those in the community led to the naming of a new Sunbeam home in his honour. In 2004, Whaley House was opened.

We recognize and appreciate just how instrumental and influential John was in those early days of Sunbeam's development. He was and will forever be remembered as a caring and well-respected member of OUR community.



Whaley Family 1992

Thank you, John for your time with Sunbeam and congratulations on a life well-lived.

Fall / Winter 2026

Fairmount Home Grand Opening

On May 27, 2026, Sunbeam officially celebrated the opening of its newest specialized inclusive living home in Kitchener. Supported through a $1.72 million capital investment from Ontario's Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS), the new Fairmount Home provides tailored inclusive living with wrap-around supports for up to five individuals living with developmental disabilities. This increased local capacity helps Sunbeam to continue enabling and supporting the discharge of individuals from extended hospital stays into permanent, supportive, community-based home environments.





"The impact of inclusive living homes like these, extends beyond what it means for the immediate residents - benefiting their families, caregivers, and the broader community by reducing the demand on emergency and crisis services and promoting a more inclusive society," said ***Kitchener Mayor Berry Vrbanovic****. "We are excited about this opportunity for Sunbeam to provide much-needed community supports to some of our most vulnerable residents. This initiative has the potential to create meaningful change, including providing relief to our over-burdened hospitals."*

"Sunbeam Community & Developmental Services has long been a pillar of support for individuals with developmental disabilities in our community," said ***Jess Dixon, MPP for Kitchener South-Hespeler****. "This new home, made possible through an investment by the Ontario Government, will make a meaningful difference by ensuring individuals have access to the supports they need to live safely, independently, and with dignity."*

Recreation and Wellness Spotlight

Earlier this fall, the Rec & wellness team hosted a BBQ at Shade' Mill in Cambridge. Participants enjoyed, listening to music, dancing, socializing and good food. Every month our Recreation & wellness teams organizes exciting and meaningful activities and events that are passport funding eligible.

Follow us on social media to stay up to date on the monthly activity calendars and learn more about the program by visiting us at:
https://sunbeamcommunity.ca/recreation-wellness-program/







To sign up for activities:



For Sunbeam persons served:
Email m.hunter@sunbeamcommunity.ca

For community participants:
Please go to https://mycommunityhub.ca to register.

Supporting Transitions to Adult Developmental Services

Transitioning from children's to adult developmental services is a major step for individuals and families. Developmental Services Ontario Central West Region (DSO CWR) works with local partners to provide clear information and practical support throughout the process.

DSO Developmental Services Ontario Central West Region

partners with

Waterloo Region: Monthly DSO Information Nights with Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region feature presentations by Service Navigators, Q&A, one-on-one help with forms, and the option to complete the intake application on the spot.

Peel Region: Virtual sessions (three times a year) with InfoPeel offer an overview of adult services, eligibility, the application process, and live Q&A.

Halton Region: Annual participation in the Empower Halton Resource Fair fosters collaboration creating a more coordinated and seamless transition from children's to adult services.

Extend-A-Family WATERLOO REGION — INFO Peel — Halton REGION

DSO CWR also sits on Transition Advisory Committees in Halton and Peel and the Community Participation Supports Committee for Wellington/Dufferin to improve ongoing system coordination. These partnerships help families access reliable information and move confidently into adult developmental supports.

Sunbeam 5th Annual Kids' Day

Sunbeam celebrated our 5th Annual Kid's Day on Saturday August 29th.

This year the day featured a barnyard petting zoo and pocket pets, face painting, henna tattoos, a fun whack-a-mole game and the always-popular fire trucks and ice cream truck. We are grateful to the Kitchener Fire Department for again coming out to give kids tours of their trucks and hand out fire helmets. Adding to the festivities, local musician Juneyt provided the soundtrack to a wonderful day.

The day ended with a raffle where every child received a prize. It was great to see so many happy faces again this year.

Thanks to our staff, volunteers and donors for contributing to another great Kid's Day. We had over 70 children attend this year, with their families – our biggest turnout yet!

A special thanks to everyone who came out to enjoy the day and help us celebrate such a great community. We can't wait to see everyone again next year!







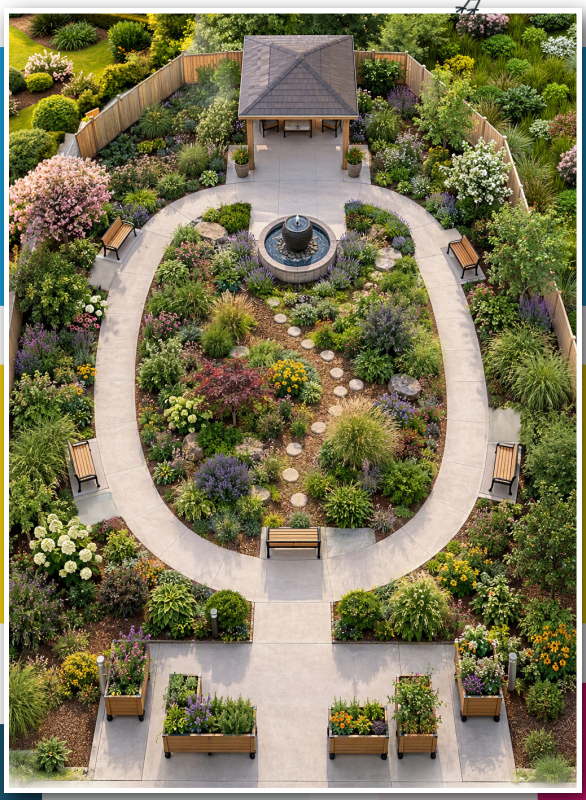
Help Grow a Garden Where Everyone Belongs

Sunbeam's 2026 Holiday Appeal will help transform 3,400 square feet of underused greenspace at the Kingsway Campus into an Interactive and Accessible Sensory Garden. Designed for people of all ages and abilities, the garden will feature accessible pathways, five-senses planting zones, a covered gazebo, sensory elements, comfortable seating, and a beautiful water feature.

The Waterloo Region Community Foundation (WRCF) has provided a $10,000 strategic grant as the project's founding supporter, helping turn this vision into reality and supporting a space centred on inclusion, well-being, and social connection.

With continued community support, we can create a welcoming outdoor space where people can connect with nature, build relationships, learn, reflect, and experience a true sense of belonging. Every gift will help this special space take root and flourish for years to come.

Please consider supporting Sunbeam's 2026 Holiday Appeal.



Envisioning our Sensory Garden

Donate online at:
https://sunbeamcommunity.ca/donate/
or **Call Us** at (519) 893-6200

Learn more: https://sunbeamcommunity.ca/sensory-garden

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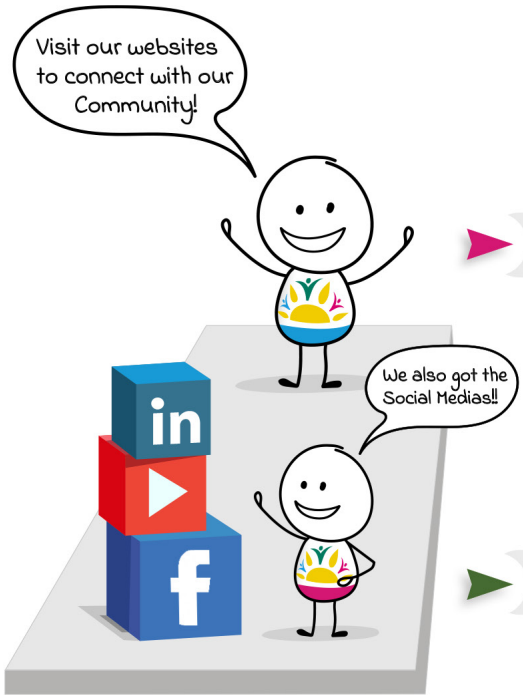

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