

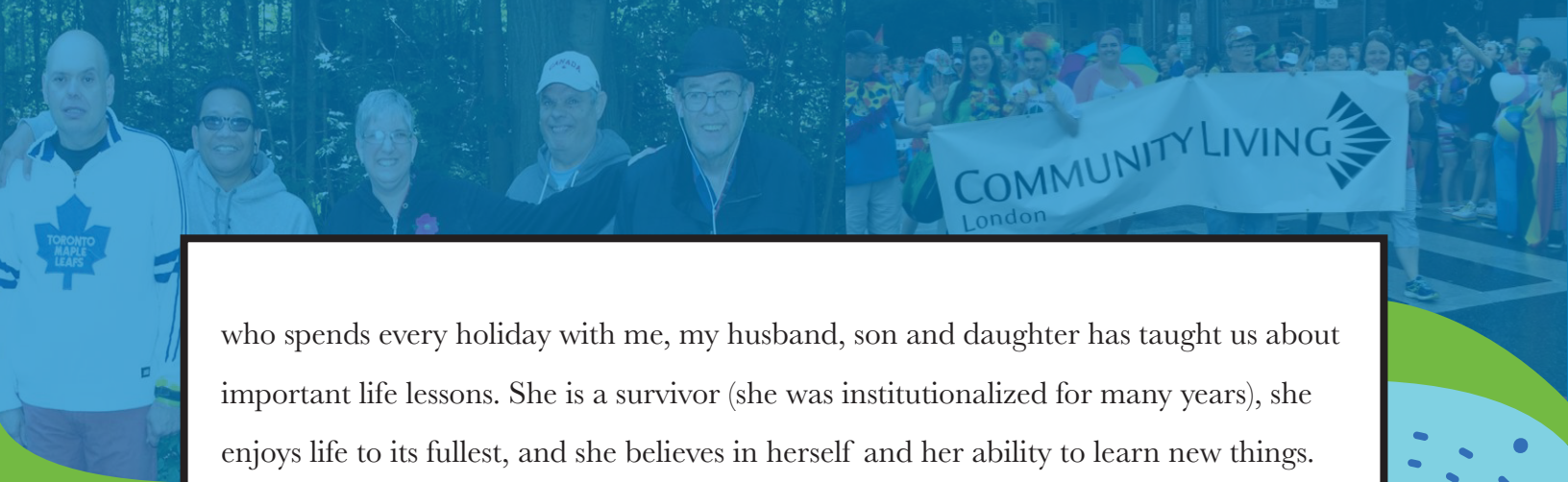


## **Those Big Brown Eyes Changed My Life - Kay Wigle, CLL Board Member**

My first contact with Community Living London (CLL) was in 1972 on a student placement at “Scattered Children’s Centre”. I was not sure of my career choice yet, but one little boy in the centre helped me with my decision. He looked at me with big brown eyes. He was nonverbal and my job was to feed him. He would not open his mouth for me and I wondered if he understood I had food. His mother happened to come in at that point, spoke to him, and helped me by taking the spoon as he gladly opened his mouth for his mother. He knew I was a stranger, and at that moment I knew this was the career for me.

My career in the Developmental Services Sector spanned 43 years. I was employed at the Alice Saddy Association, Family Service Thames Valley and Fanshawe College. In 2018 I retired from Fanshawe after 30 years in the Developmental Services Worker Program (DSW). As a coordinator in the DSW program, I had the privilege of working with CLL. They are the largest placement agency for students in the DSW program and also have representation on the DSW Program Advisory Committee that helps with direction and advocacy for the program. CLL’s input and expertise is highly valued by Fanshawe’s DSW program.

I have continued my involvement in the DSW sector as a board member of Community Living London, legal guardian and friend to two people who have been part of my life for many years. You hear many times that people with disabilities enrich your life, but I have to add my families’ lives have been enriched as well. One woman



who spends every holiday with me, my husband, son and daughter has taught us about important life lessons. She is a survivor (she was institutionalized for many years), she enjoys life to its fullest, and she believes in herself and her ability to learn new things. She loves singing and has the incredible ability at family holidays to get all of us to sing with her. When she received money from the institution from years of abuse, my son suggested she purchase a karaoke machine. She proudly had all of us singing along with her at Christmas that year.

In my career, I have seen many amazing changes. The closure of institutions, the integration of people with disabilities in daycare and schools, the growth of community alternatives, full-time employment and the advocacy movement for people with disabilities. CLL has always been on the forefront of positive change. They are committed to advocate for change for all people with disabilities.

Community Living London offers many diverse supports and services to children, adults and families. Their vision is to “Inspire Possibilities”. Volunteers may discover their career path like I did at CLL. I look back at how one little boy with big brown eyes changed my life.

CLL is a charitable, non-profit organization that helps people with developmental disabilities realize their dreams. Please consider donating to Community Living London. They change lives.