

2024 FALL SPEAK OUT



EMPLOYER
PARTNER

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2	Erica & Mahmood's Stories
3	Staff Appreciation Week
5	2024 Possibilities in Paint Art Show
6	Ladies Group 10th Anniversary Celebration
7	Halloween
9	Community Stories
11	Fierce & Fit Boxing
12	Showdown in The Downtown
13	2024 Carmell Tait Memorial Walk
14	Empowering Families: Future Planning Project

Erica's Halloween Bash

A SPOOKTACULAR NIGHT OF GIVING FOR ANIMALS IN NEED

In October, Erica hosted a festive Halloween costume party with a heartwarming twist— guests were encouraged to bring donations for the Humane Society. Thanks to her efforts and the generosity of attendees, she was able to donate an impressive collection of cat and dog toys, food, treats, collars, leashes, litter, and more, making a meaningful difference for animals in need.



Meet Mahmood

A LIFELONG LEARNER!

In 2021 Mahmood began doing some virtual schooling to stay engaged. Last year, he enrolled in Chemistry 1301 at Western University, attending labs and exams in person, while completing readings and assignments online. To stay on track, Mahmood enjoys the support of other students who take notes on his behalf.

Mahmood is proactive about ensuring his academic success. He works closely with Western's accessibility office to arrange accommodations for exams and works with his coordinator to plan his schedule. Together, they carefully select lab days that fit Mahmood's routine.





STAFF APPRECIATION WEEK

PHSS celebrated staff appreciation week, from September 23rd to 27th. It was a time to recognize and honour the incredible contributions of our dedicated team members. The week was brimming with exciting activities, heartfelt gestures, and moments of fun and camaraderie.

The festivities included visits from the Rocking Chip Truck and the Executive Team to various locations, bringing smiles and delicious treats. Senior leaders also presented thoughtful gifts to their teams, showing appreciation for their hard work.

At the office, staff engaged in fun-filled activities such as soccer in the parking lot, receiving memorable scrolls, and participating in a playful duck hunt—with a humorous twist that not all the ducks were accounted for! The week concluded with a delightful potluck at the main office.



Night Owl Award



Mission Impossible Award



Volunteer Award



One of the highlights of the week was the presentation of five special awards to team members who have gone above and beyond in their roles:

- **Night Owl Award:** Awarded to **Margaret McCarty** for her unwavering commitment during night shifts, consistently going above and beyond to ensure safety and exceptional care.
- **Mission Impossible Award:** Presented to **Jessica Blais** for her outstanding problem-solving abilities and innovative "out-of-the-box" thinking.
- **Team Spirit Award:** Honored **Deveron**, a team whose enthusiasm, collaboration, and embodiment of PHSS's mission, vision, and values have strengthened the organization.
- **The Rookie Award:** Given to **Alex Craig**, recognizing his impressive contributions and outstanding performance as a new staff member at PHSS.
- **Volunteer Award:** Presented to **Andy Bowman** for his positive impact on both the individuals he supports and their teams, exemplifying the spirit of volunteerism.

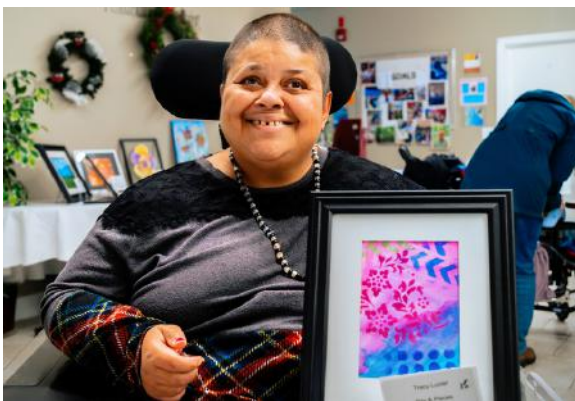
Congratulations to all award recipients for your remarkable dedication and exceptional contributions to PHSS!

Team Spirit Award



The Rookie Award





POSSIBILITIES IN PAINT

ART SHOW

The Possibilities in Paint Art Show celebrated its 10th anniversary this year, a remarkable milestone! Held on November 23rd at our Community Place North building, this year's show and sale brought together 40 talented artists who displayed their unique works of art. With over 100 framed pieces on display, the event was a vibrant testament to the power of artistic expression and community.

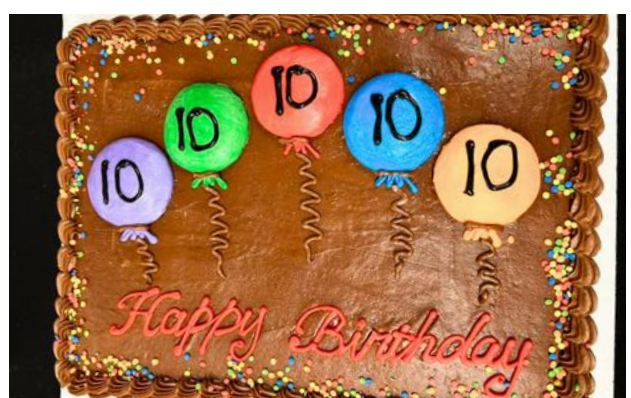
The artists, each with their distinct style and perspective, shared not only their creations but also their stories. One of the highlights was the opportunity to hear directly from the artists about their creative processes, inspirations, and intentions behind their work.

Adding to the excitement, this year's event marked the launch of the highly anticipated 2025 Possibilities in Paint calendar. The calendars, which feature stunning artwork created by the program's artists, were met with overwhelming support. Each calendar sold helps sustain and grow programs that enrich lives through the transformative power of art.

The 10th annual Possibilities in Paint Art Show not only celebrated a decade of creativity but also reinforced the importance of community and collaboration. Here's to the next decade of empowering artists and sharing their incredible talents with the world!

Ladies Group Celebrates 10 Years!

October 17th, 2024



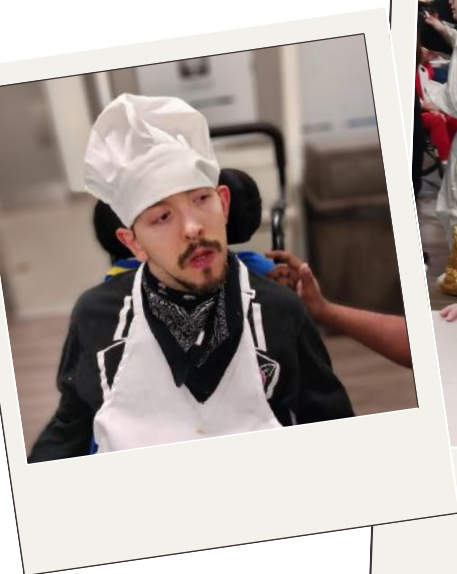
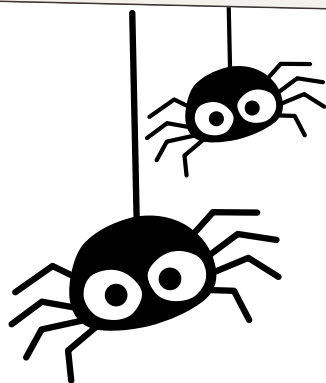


HALLOWEEN





2024



Bowling Together

FINDING COMMUNITY AT THE BOWLING ALLEY!

Sometimes finding accessible activities can be hard—but Sarah and Missy have found a welcoming community by joining a local bowling club.

Every week, they headed to the lanes, greeted by the warm smiles of their fellow bowlers. It's not just about strikes and spares—it's about being part of a community where everyone feels included and supported.

Sarah and Missy have discovered a place where they can build friendships, boost confidence, and have fun in an environment that celebrates their abilities. This is the power of creating inclusive spaces.



Viva Las Vegas!

JIM AND DEAN'S ADVENTURE

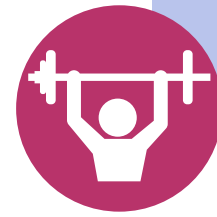
Jim and Dean kicked off October with an unforgettable trip to Las Vegas. Staying at the iconic MGM Grand, they soaked in the city's vibrant energy. Their nights were filled with stunning shows like KA by Cirque du Soleil and Criss Angel: Mindfreak, which left them amazed.

By day, they explored lively attractions like M&M's World and iconic hotels such as the Bellagio and Excalibur, sampling Vegas' unique charm. They even tried their luck at the slots, celebrating small wins with big smiles. The trip ended with memories as dazzling as the Strip's lights.



Amy's Story

of Unstoppable Resilience and Humor



Amy was born in 1975. Her mom, just 22 at the time, remembers that first embrace, a moment when her heart transformed into something new—a mother's heart. That heart would be tested in ways few can imagine, but it would also be inspired and honored by Amy's indomitable spirit.

Amy's early years were anything but easy. By age nine, she had already endured years of hardship, only to face another life-altering event: being struck by a car, resulting in an acquired brain injury. But, even as a child, Amy was a fighter. She graduated high school, formed meaningful relationships, held jobs, and even lived independently for years. She didn't let challenges define her.

In her twenties, Amy faced her darkest battle when she struggled with addiction issues. Yet, in true Amy fashion, she found a way to rise again. Fitness became her salvation, and as she often says, "Working out saved my life." Amy didn't just embrace fitness; she conquered it, competing in bodybuilding competitions and even qualifying for the Canadian Nationals in British Columbia.

But life had more hurdles in store. At 44, Amy noticed her vision failing and her balance faltering. Her once-reliable skateboard rides became dangerous, and an assault exacerbated her symptoms. Tests revealed lesions on her brain, and doctors diagnosed her with progressive MS and legal blindness. Within a year, Amy went from striking poses on a bodybuilding stage to being unable to walk her dog.

As Amy's health began to decline rapidly, life became a whirlwind of changes and challenges. She was losing her vision, her mobility, and her independence. The cost of round-the-clock care was overwhelming, and it was clear something had to change.

Amy moved into her new home on December 6, 2023. It wasn't easy for her or her mom to adjust at first. Her mom made countless calls to the staff, worried and unsure, but every person she spoke to reassured her. Slowly, her mom let go of the caregiver role and focused on being Amy's mom again.

Now, Amy is thriving in her new life. She works out at the gym three times a week, goes to pottery class, spends time with friends, and is about to start horse grooming. Her sense of humor and sarcasm remain as sharp as ever, keeping everyone around her on their toes. Her zest for life has inspired a new athletic sponsorship in her name for aspiring bodybuilders who share her drive to be the best they can be. Amy's story is one of transformation, resilience, and laughter. It's the tale of a woman who faced unimaginable challenges yet refused to lose her spark. Through every twist and turn, Amy remains unapologetically herself: sarcastic, funny, and undeniably awesome. As her mom says, being Amy's mother has been an honor—an inspiring journey marked by love, laughter, and the unstoppable force that is Amy.



FIERCE ^N FIT BOXING



Strength Through Movement

Fierce n Fit Boxing is more than a fitness program—it's an opportunity for individuals with special needs, using the sport of boxing and physical exercise to improve physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Designed to be fully inclusive, the program ensures that participants of all abilities can engage in a meaningful way, creating a supportive environment where confidence and connection can thrive.

Through a partnership with PHSS, Fierce n Fit Boxing hosts a virtual boxing workout every Thursday afternoon at no cost, making it accessible to people who can join from the comfort of their homes.

We are incredibly grateful for our partnership with Fierce n Fit Boxing and are excited to see how it continues to grow and evolve. Together, we look forward to continuing to create opportunities that empower others and make a meaningful impact.

SHOWDOWN IN THE DOWNTOWN

On October 26, 2024, PHSS was once again honored to attend Showdown in the Downtown, and to be a beneficiary of this remarkable annual fundraising event. This year's event, organized by Dr. Faisal Rehman, featured professional boxing. Showdown in the Downtown has grown into a powerful platform for addressing key community needs, including homelessness, mental health, and support for special needs populations.

This year, PHSS received a generous \$10,000 donation from the event, continuing its tradition of support and partnership. This year's contribution will benefit the PHSS Staff Support in Hospital Fund, which ensures that individuals supported by PHSS are accompanied by familiar, trusted staff members during hospital visits. This program provides comfort to both individuals and their families, knowing that compassionate care remains consistent even in challenging medical situations.

The ongoing partnership between PHSS and Showdown in the Downtown reflects the shared commitment to enriching lives and fostering a stronger, more inclusive community. PHSS extends its deepest gratitude to Dr. Rehman, the event organizers, volunteers, sponsors, and attendees for their continued support and dedication.



2024 CARMELL TAIT MEMORIAL WALK



On October 5th, 2024, friends and family came together at Eco Park for the 2nd Annual Carmell Tait Memorial Walk, a heartfelt event honoring the memory of loved ones who have passed. This special gathering celebrated the life and legacy of PHSS' late COO, Carmell Tait, and also served as a meaningful tribute to all members of the PHSS community who are no longer with us. The walk provided an opportunity for reflection, connection, and unity, as we remembered those who left an indelible mark on our hearts.



Educating Families: Future Planning Project

Pro Bono Students Canada Collaboration

Making plans for the future is something very familiar to families of individuals with disabilities and complex medical needs. However, when legal questions arise, finding answers and navigating the landscape can often feel overwhelming. To help address these challenges, PHSS has partnered with Western University law volunteers and Pro Bono Students Canada to develop a public legal education project.

The law students will not provide legal advice as part of the project, but will share well-researched information tailored to the unique needs of families in the PHSS community. This initiative focuses on providing families with essential information about wills, trusts, estates, substitute decision-makers, and powers of attorney (POAs), empowering them to plan for their loved ones' futures.



The information is intended to educate families, providing clarity on topics like financial and medical decision-making, the legal responsibilities of guardians, and how to secure their loved ones' futures through estate planning.



The law students will be diving into complex legal questions that many families grapple with, including:

- Who will make decisions for my loved one when I'm no longer here?
- How can I leave money for my child without jeopardizing their eligibility for support programs?
- Is there a way to handle financial matters with the CRA without obtaining legal guardianship?
- What happens if a person with disabilities has no family or legal representative?
- Can individuals who cannot make decisions on their own still have a will?

Please watch for future updates about this new educational project.



Contact Us

Main Office

620 Colborne St., Suite 101

London, ON N6B 3R9

t: 519-660-6635

f: 519-660-1654

e. info@phsscommunity.com



Donate Today!

Your donation matters!

Our donors help enhance the ability for individuals we support to achieve independence and be part of their communities.



**EMPLOYER
PARTNER**