

# SPOTLIGHT

on transformation

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## Ron Pruessen to chair new Housing Task Force

We are pleased to announce that Ron Pruessen will chair the Developmental Services Housing Task Force that Minister McMeekin told you about in our [last issue of Spotlight](#).

Ron, who works as a history professor at the University of Toronto, has been actively involved in advocacy and organizing work in the developmental services sector for the past 15 years.



He is a board member of Opportunities Mississauga for 21+, a volunteer group now representing 180 families working to improve the lives of adults with developmental disabilities. Ron has also served as a community group representative on the Peel Planning Group.

Ron is a member of the Joint Ministry Developmental Services Sector Partnership Table. It brings together

representatives from the Ministry of Community and Social Services, people with developmental disabilities, family members and agency representatives from across the province.

At the Partnership Table, Ron chaired the Housing Study Group that recommended the creation of a housing task force in its September 2013 report "Ending the Wait: An Action Agenda to Address the Housing Crisis Confronting Ontario Adults with Developmental Disabilities."

Based on this report's recommendations, Minister McMeekin announced he would create a housing task force to bring together different parts of government, municipal partners and experts in housing and social services to recommend innovative housing solutions for people with developmental disabilities.

Ron, the proud father of 36-year-old Caroline who has developmental disabilities, said he is looking forward to having the new and broadly-representative group act as a creative force for action addressing critically important problems.

Read on to find out more about the task force and how you can get involved in its work.

## Seeking Housing Task Force members

Do you have great ideas about innovative housing solutions for people with developmental disabilities? If yes, we need your help nominating potential members for the Developmental Services Housing Task Force.

We are seeking 15-20 members with expertise and experience in one or more of the following areas:

- Residential services and supports for adults with a developmental disability
- Community-based housing, including housing for people with disabilities
- Policy, program development and financial planning experience in the area of housing
- Building/designing/developing housing
- Technological support/assistance to improve and promote inclusion, independence and community participation for people with disabilities
- Government/non-governmental organizations

The task force will also include:

- Individuals with a developmental disability and/or their families
- Family support organizations
- Agencies providing adult developmental services and supports
- Provincial or local organizations advocating on behalf of people with a developmental disability

Nominations are open to all individuals.

**The deadline to submit completed nomination forms is April 22, 2014.**

Download a nomination form:

[ontario.ca/bqqd](http://ontario.ca/bqqd)

Read the task force's terms of reference:

[ontario.ca/bqqb](http://ontario.ca/bqqb)

If you have any questions about the task force or nomination process, please contact Allan Devlin at [allan.devlin@ontario.ca](mailto:allan.devlin@ontario.ca) or 416-325-1950.

### What will the Housing Task Force do?

The Developmental Services Housing Task Force – the first cross-sector task force to tackle housing issues specifically for adults with a developmental disability – will review proposals and make recommendations on innovative housing solutions.

The task force will develop a framework for capacity-building projects and recommend housing projects for potential government investment and evaluation.

The task force will also identify performance indicators and develop online resources to help individuals and families access information, collaborate and support each other in exploring and creating successful housing solutions.

## Innovative housing in Waterloo Region

After reading Minister McMeekin's update in our last issue of Spotlight, Gregory Bechard, the Executive Director of Elmira District Community Living, contacted us about innovative housing programs his organization offers in Waterloo Region. One of them is Trying It On For Size (TIFS).

TIFS helps individuals with developmental disabilities prepare to leave home and live more independently. Participants live in a furnished apartment for one to five nights per month over the course of a year. This way, participants get a chance to gain the experience and responsibility of living independently before finding their own home.

Using a self-directed planning process that puts individuals in the driver's seat, TIFS gives people with developmental disabilities, their support networks and service providers an opportunity to work together to explore creative or non-traditional residential support options. Participants and staff work together to determine the supports they may need to successfully live independently.

To learn more about TIFS, visit Elmira District Community Living's website: [www.elmiradcl.com](http://www.elmiradcl.com)

## Update on Huronia, Rideau and Southwestern Regional Centres Class Actions

For updates on the status of the three class actions, visit our website: [ontario.ca/community](http://ontario.ca/community)

### Claims process begins

Settlement agreements have been approved by the court to give former residents of the Huronia, Rideau and Southwestern Regional Centres who suffered harm while living at the facilities, access to compensation. The claims process begins April 4. If you wish to apply for financial compensation, please visit the Claims Administrator, Crawford Class Action Services, websites:

- [huroniaclassaction.ca](http://huroniaclassaction.ca)
- [rideauclassaction.ca](http://rideauclassaction.ca)
- [southwesternclassaction.ca](http://southwesternclassaction.ca)

### Huronia Regional Centre site access

Huronia Regional Centre (HRC) Class Members (former residents or a family member) can access the former HRC grounds as part of the recent settlement agreement. The first opportunity to access HRC is April 25 and 26 and additional dates are scheduled in May and June. For more information about access to the Huronia site, visit our website: [ontario.ca/bqkh](http://ontario.ca/bqkh)



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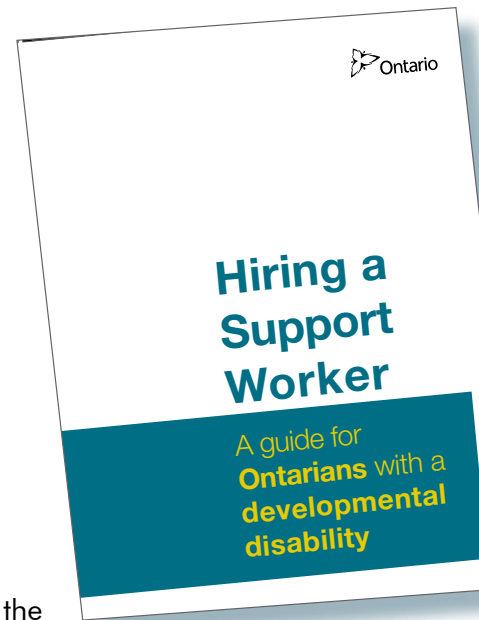
## New guide on hiring a support worker

Having a support worker can open up many opportunities for someone who has a developmental disability. But if you've never done it before, hiring a support worker can be complicated.

Our new guide can help people with a developmental disability hire their own support worker. The guide, written specifically for individuals, their families and friends, aims to answer common questions about the hiring process. It covers everything from figuring out what a person needs help with, to how to create a job description and maintain a good relationship with the worker once you've hired them.

To help develop the guide, we worked with 10 individuals with a developmental disability from across Ontario who had experience with direct funding and person-directed approaches to support. They provided valuable information and ideas for the content of this guide.


You can view, print and download a free PDF copy or listen to an audio version of the guide on our website at: [ontario.ca/bqfe](http://ontario.ca/bqfe)



## Ministry of Community and Social Services Community and Developmental Services Branch

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