



INNOVATION
WORKS

Linda volunteers weekly as a Welcome Desk Volunteer for London's Innovation Works. Read more about Linda on page 4.

Tenants making a difference

We love to see tenants experience health, wellness, and belonging—and then pass it on by giving back to their communities through volunteer work and jobs.



Ilesha - Blossom Park, Woodstock

Ilesha has been working for three years at The Raw Carrot, a social enterprise that creates meaningful employment for people living with disabilities and mental illness.

According to Ilesha, "A typical day for me includes chopping up the vegetables, and cooking and packaging the soup. My favourite thing about working there is getting to make soup every day."



Chris - Rudy Hulst Commons, Hamilton

Chris has been volunteering at the Good Shepherd for years now. Three or four days a week, early in the morning, he stocks shelves, unloads bread, takes out garbage and more.

Chris explains that Elizabeth Cronk, a Street Outreach Worker gave him "a hand up, not a hand out...she saw something in me that I didn't see in myself and introduced me to the Good Shepherd. They have top notch staff. It gives me a purpose to get up and help others. I enjoy going in there and it's like a million dollars to me. They appreciate me and thank me every time I come."

Chris won the Volunteer Dedication Award in 2021.



Brandon - Harvey Woods Lofts, Woodstock

Brandon has been volunteering at the Salvation Army Food Bank for one year, making emergency and street bags as well as stocking shelves with donated food items.

He says, "I enjoy supporting people through their time of need and making life a little bit easier for each person who reaches out for help."



Safe: Creating change through stories of hope

Over the past few months, we've been blown away by the response to *Safe*. This 2021 documentary by John Butler, which explores the housing and opioid crises through the stories of Indwell tenants, was shown in Hamilton, Mississauga, Chatham-Kent, London, St. Thomas, Kitchener, Simcoe and Woodstock during February and March. Audiences have consistently shown compassionate engagement with tenants' stories, and keen interest in safe, permanent, affordable, and supportive housing.

Filmmaker John Butler states:

Through the process of making this film, and seeing it gain traction outside of the Indwell community, I've learned how important the issues surrounding affordable housing are to most people. We often don't know what to do about the problem, or where to go if we need help, but seeing tenants and staff talk about housing and supportive care openly in an accessible way is the first step in growth as a country. Listening and understanding will lead to solutions, and Indwell has been one of the leaders in this space; they have the on-the-ground experience that can bridge the gap between shelters/encampments and affordable homes in communities well beyond Southern and Southwestern Ontario.

Watch the YouTube premiere of *Safe* on May 26, 2023 at 8:30 pm. Scan this QR code or visit youtube.com/@johnbutler2881



Shelby Vosburgh (left), Program Manager for Norfolk County, and Debra Vandermeer (right), Program Launch Supervisor for Dogwood Suites in Simcoe, address audience questions at The Strand Theatre, where *Safe* was shown twice during February and March.



Rachel Courey, Program Manager at Parkdale Landing, Strathearne Suites, and McQuesten Lofts, and Jessica Brand, Regional Manager for Hamilton, address audience questions at The Westdale on Thursday, March 2.

The Canada Disability Benefit Act: A hopeful solution

Picture this: You're in your late 60s. Your son, in his 30s, first showed symptoms of schizophrenia at age 20. You've helped him as much as you can: connecting him with good doctors, helping him to stay consistent with medications; when he's well, he's been able to hold onto a part-time job for a few weeks.

Now receiving ODSP (Ontario Disability Support Program), your son is paying his own bills and contributes faithfully to household expenses. You're getting by financially and have made provisions in your will for your son, but it won't be much. As you age, your son is anxious about moving out on his own—he knows the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment is well over \$1,500/month right now. No one knows how to make the numbers work.

At Indwell, we hear scenarios like this over and over. We're thankful that this family has been able to keep their loved one at home. But we all know that his housing is now precarious—in the next few years, this man will need other housing, hopefully before an emergency puts him at risk for homelessness.

The underfunding of ODSP effectively treats people who have a serious, chronic, and diagnosed disability as unworthy of living with dignity and respect. A survey of the past 20 years of ODSP shelter allowance and CMHC's data for apartment rents is sobering (see graph below). Over the past 20 years, ODSP shelter allowance rose by 17% while rents rose by 48%. But the situation is much

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more dire—CMHC's data considers **all current rentals, including many rent controlled situations**. For a new renter in Hamilton, according to Zumper.com, **average rent will be \$1,715 as of April 2023**.

The federal Bill C-22, a proposed Canada Disability Benefit Act which is supported by all political parties, has the potential to address some of the inequities faced by people with disabilities by establishing a Canada Disability Benefit and making an amendment to the Income Tax Act to “reduce poverty and to support the financial security of working-age persons with disabilities.”

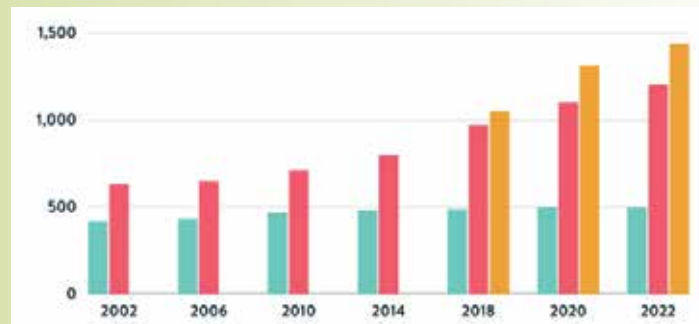
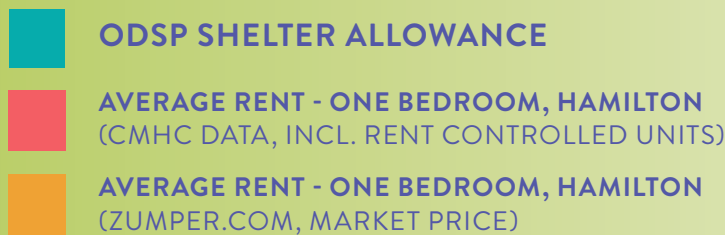
Bill C-22 is currently under review by the Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, with the potential to become law this summer, with an additional year of regulation development by the Governor in Council to enact the Bill—this will determine its substance.

Jeff Neven, Indwell's CEO, appeared as an expert witness to the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities in the House of Commons about Bill C-22. He and other witnesses advocated for a significant increase in shelter supports, with no “claw back” of provincial disability supports if a person receives a Canada Disability Benefit.

If you were in the above scenario, the Canada Disability Benefit may mean that your son would be able to pay nearly market rent for an apartment close to his brother, with some funds left over for other expenses. For anyone with a disability, it would mean they would have choices about where to live, and increased access to various levels of supportive housing.

If you would like to stay updated on the progress of Bill C-22 and the regulations, send a message to Judy at jeising@indwell.ca.

HOUSING COSTS vs. ODSP SHELTER RATES



“Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Average Rents for Areas with a Population of 10,000 and Over.” Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Government of Canada, Statistics Canada, 17 Mar. 2023, <https://doi.org/10.25318/3410013301-eng>.

“From the Archive: ODSP & OW Rates Sheets from 2015 to 2021.” Income Security Advocacy Centre, 8 Aug. 2022, <https://incomesecurity.org/from-the-archive-odsp-ow-rate-sheets-from-2015-to-2021/>.

Ontario Works and ODSP Rates 2003-2016. <https://pub-london.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=34005>.

“Average Rent in Hamilton, on and Cost Information.” Zumper, 2023 Zumper Inc., 1 May 2023, <https://www.zumper.com/rent-research/hamilton-on>.

Coming this year

We have more doors opening later this year!



St. Mark's Place (left), Kitchener, completion fall 2023 and The Station (right), St. Thomas, completion summer 2023

Subscribe to our email list, check indwell.ca and follow us on social media to receive announcements and invitations to grand openings.

Share hope with these special giving opportunities

Nurses and retired nurses across the London area are joining together to support Indwell's transformation of the former War Memorial Children's Hospital into 42 units of deeply affordable, supportive housing.



Agents for Hope™ offers realtors, mortgage brokers, and insurance agents a way to improve the lives of people in their communities, by pledging a designated portion from every sale to build affordable housing with Indwell.



For details about Nurses for Housing, visit indwell.ca/nurses or scan QR code



For details about Agents for Hope, visit indwell.ca/agents-for-hope or scan QR code



Stay tuned for these exciting events:

Woodstock Hope & Homes Banquet

Friday, November 3
Maranatha Christian Reformed Church, Woodstock

Mississauga Reception

Thursday, September 14
Small Arms Inspection Building, Mississauga

For details about Indwell events visit indwell.ca/events or scan QR code



Linda - Woodfield Gate, London (pictured on cover)

Linda volunteers weekly as a Welcome Desk Volunteer for Innovation Works, a co-working space operated by Pillar Nonprofit Network. This helps out those who use the space and enables Linda to get experience in office work after completing Administrative Clerk training at Pathways Employment Help Centre. She loves being part of a community.

Linda says, "I enjoy the smiles on people's faces and helping people navigate to where they need to go. I love the green wall, a recent addition to the common space. It's nice to see people networking and collaborating."

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