

Jan 12, 2021

Erin Town Council for upcoming meeting Jan 19th Agenda
Re: CLGW Proposed Day Program Closure

Dear Council Members;

I am writing to request that Council urge Community Living Guelph Wellington (CLGW) reconsider their proposal to close the Adult Day Programs, one of which has run at the Erin Adult Recreation Centre (ARC Community Living building) at the north end of town. This building was designed and fundraised by our community to house this program. Proposed changes would result in reducing a 30 hour interactive week to a “person centred one on one approach” of 1 to 2 hours per week. This proposal has been devastating to the participants and their families. The Covid19 pandemic has understandably affected many programs, but this direction was decided upon prior to the onset of the pandemic.

CLGW’s direction appears to be based on a need to ensure participants are engaged within their communities, and not just placed in “institution-like” day programs. Unfortunately, in making these decisions, the participants’ opinions were not considered. There was no acknowledgement that prior to Covid 19, **these programs were already engaging with the community at large on a regular basis, both at the Erin ARC and out in the community.**

The Erin group had been *out and about regularly* with Church Lunches, Seniors Sing-a-longs, Town celebrations, weekly Young at Heart Singers’ practices, biking outings, to name a few. Line Dancing and “Norma & Jerry” Concerts, volunteer biker buddies came to them, among others. The program won first prize for decorating their building in fine style for the Canada 150 Celebrations.

I have been fortunate to be a volunteer for the last several years, leading a weekly music program at their centre. I have witnessed the incredible camaraderie the participants share with each other. Verbal or non-verbal, there is a genuine, unconditional acceptance and concern for each other’s well being, regardless of their personal challenges. The group looks forward to weekly visits from the Guelph Adult Day Services (ADS program also part of CLGW) who join us. They kibitz, help each other out, and quite simply are friends. I have also witnessed the amazing rapport with caregivers who I originally thought were parents as they seemed to share a wonderful connection and comfort level. These families have had this wonderful program essentially ripped out from under them.

Minto Town Council has urged the CLGW to reconsider the closing of its Harriston Day Program, and I am hoping Town of Erin Council will urge them to do the same with respect to our Erin Community Living Day Program.

Please be the voice of these suffering adults and their families.

Respectfully,

Kim Pearson
Erin Young at Heart Singers/ARC Day Program
Music Director

The following video made in 2017 highlights the importance of this program to the participants

<https://youtu.be/dmzviBGuczU>