

A photograph of two men smiling together outdoors. The man on the left is older, balding, and wearing glasses and a dark suit with a light green tie. The man on the right is younger, with dark hair, wearing a blue and white plaid shirt and a black backpack. They are both looking towards the camera with warm expressions. The background shows green trees and a building under a bright sky.

FOCUS

Communitas Supportive Care Society

FALL 2015 | **INSIDE**

A GOOD LIFE

From Parking Lot to... | Telling our Story

A Good Life



Photo: Charlie Cornfield (left) with his son Matthew and his daughter Kim.



You can read the Cornfield's full story when you visit communitascare.com

Matthew Cornfield lives a pretty good life. His family loves him deeply. He's got a great friend and roommate, Seann, who has shared a home with him for 18 years. He has a lovely home and support workers who genuinely care about him. When his dad, Charlie, reflects on his son's journey, he is grateful.

Matthew lives with challenges. He's been diagnosed with autism as well as Lennox Gastaut disorder, which means he lives with daily seizures that are hard to control. His speech is limited, so sometimes it's hard for him to communicate his needs.

"It seems as if everything goes in but nothing comes out," Charlie says. "It must be very frustrating for him."

Living on Vancouver Island has been a blessing. The resources available to them in the community and in the school system were extraordinary.

"It felt like we had died and gone to heaven," Charlie says.

When Matthew became an adult, he moved into his current home with Seann and Charlie says they've noticed a real difference.

"The level and quality of care and the resulting positive changes with Matt and Seann are amazing," Charlie says.

"I credit Communitas and all their great staff for creating a safe and caring home environment rather than an institution."

Communitas' philosophy of care is person-centred. Individualized care means that Matthew has people investing in him personally, taking the time to discover what he is capable of.

Charlie says that Matthew's support workers treat him like the young man he is. When he first came into Communitas' care, they took Matthew shopping to buy age-appropriate clothing and began to explore activities that he would enjoy. As Matthew was treated with dignity, love and respect, he began to trust those who were caring for him.

And while this was a transformation for Matthew, it was also a transformation for his family. As the Cornfields saw how well Matthew was cared for, it enabled them to do things they hadn't ever done before.

"When our daughter, Kim, graduated from university in Finland, my wife, Heather and I traveled there, taking our first vacation in 30 years," Charlie remembers. "It was the first time Heather felt comfortable enough to leave Matthew for so long a period of time and to be so far away from him."

Knowing that Matthew is so well-cared for means Charlie is at peace as he considers the future.

"I don't have any real worries. I feel confident that the people caring for Matthew know what they're doing, and they love my son," he says. "He's got a pretty good life."



Communitas Annual General Meeting 2015

Join us for our Annual Meeting where we will focus on **Vision 2018**: our five strategic, long-term goals.

Thursday November 19th, 2015
At the Communitas Supportive Care Society provincial office: #103 – 2776
Bourquin Crescent West, Abbotsford
6 pm – open house and light food
7 pm – meeting begins

jobs

COMMUNITY LIVING PROGRAM EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

The Service provides individuals with developmental disabilities a thorough discovery process, assessing their skills and abilities in order to help them find meaningful and sustainable employment. Individuals receive classroom instruction, work experience and volunteer opportunities. We support employers by providing on the job support in order to incorporate a smooth orientation process. Learn more at <http://www.communitascare.com/services/vocational/361-clp-employment>

Telling our Story

**That's what we storytellers do. We restore order with imagination.
We instill hope again and again and again.**

—WALT DISNEY (2013)



*By Karyn Santiago,
Chief Executive Officer*

Many of us enjoy a good narrative. I, personally, enjoy settling into a good story, connecting my life to that of the characters and losing myself within the plot. A story is even more powerful when I become a participant in the narrative and have a hand in shaping the outcomes.

This month we bring you two new stories in the FOCUS newsletter. We offer you, the reader, an opportunity to celebrate the positive experiences of the characters and envision future chapters.

The enthusiasm of Communitas staff member, Courtney, is both enriching and inspiring. She has stepped into the story in one of our group homes and has begun to shape the future for those she supports. In the story of Matthew, his family reflects on the past, looks at the present and invites us to find hope in the ongoing narrative, to help shape Matthew's narrative.

We are honoured to be telling these stories. It is a privilege to be fellow characters in the chapters of the epic tale that is Communitas. As you read these stories, may you be encouraged. May you imagine a world where these stories are the norm. And may you consider how you might be a participant in the continuing story of Communitas Supportive Care Society. Join us at our Annual General Meeting on November 19th to hear more about our vision of the future. We hope to see you there!



*..there was a boy
named Matthew...*

..who had a good life...



From Parking Lot to Meaningful Employment

Photo: Courtney (left) and her friend Cory (right) love their work with Communitas.

It's not every day that a parking lot conversation can turn into meaningful employment but that's exactly what happened when Courtney ran into her friend Cory late last year.

Courtney was studying to become a Health Care Assistant but wasn't sure how to go about applying for jobs in the field. When she ran into Cory in a parking lot, Cory told Courtney all about Communitas.

"I told her about the residence that I work in and that Anna, our manager, was a wonderful person to work for. I encouraged her to apply," Cory says.

Courtney did just that and has been working at the same residence since last fall. The two friends love their jobs.

"Communitas is a very understanding and respectful place to be employed," Cory says. "Supporting the people we serve is such rewarding work."

Courtney agrees, adding that Communitas truly lives out its mission.

"The Communitas mission of being 'a place of belonging, growth and contribution' doesn't just apply to the people it serves but the people it employs," she says. "Communitas treats its employees extremely well."



Read their full story when you visit communitascare.com To learn more about how you can find meaningful employment with Communitas, visit CommunitasCare.com/careers

Participate in our story...

Learn...

..more about our ministry
when you visit our website
CommunitasCare.com

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Visit CommunitasCare.com/careers

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Pray...

..for the people we serve, and for
those who serve, that we might live
an abundant life

Become...

..a member. Email
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