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Choosing Hope

We invite you to engage with us today!

What does choosing hope mean to you? We'd love to hear from you! Get in touch with us at communications@communitascare.com

We all have things we hope for - safe travels, or a good job, or the love of family and friends. But what does it mean to **choose** hope?

The Oxford Dictionary defines hope as "a feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen." Wikipedia says, hope is "an optimistic state of mind." If this is how hope is defined, then **to choose hope is to look at life from a positive perspective, no matter what the circumstances may be.**

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At Communitas, we are inspired every day by the people we serve and by our staff. The people we serve inspire us because they make the choice to hope for more and then make it happen. The same is true for our staff.



Every day, every shift, the people who work for Communitas do so because they choose hope for the people they serve.

We believe that hope is a gift we give each other when **we choose to create inclusive communities** where we can all live into our abilities. Choosing

hope says **we choose to be a place of belonging, growth, and contribution.** That is why **Choosing Hope is our theme for 2023.**

We've incorporated **sunflowers** into our theme logo because they also have a positive perspective - following the sun from morning to night, keeping their "gaze" fixed on the light. They bloom well into the autumn, providing bees with pollen and birds with seeds. In the same way, when we choose hope, we choose to keep our eyes fixed on what is positive and nourishing.

We've already begun to share stories on our website that focus on **Choosing Hope**. We're going to plant some sunflowers and spread some hope in a tangible way. We'll end our year with a poetry and art exhibit at The Reach Gallery Museum in Abbotsford, showcasing the work of the people we serve.

Photos: Alexander and Austin from Matthew's House enjoy an outing to the Sunflower Festival.





Vocation: the place God calls you to, where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet
– Fredrick Buechner

Finding His Vocation

Communitas' longest serving employee is about to retire! When Jonathan began his work with Communitas 35 years ago, he was looking for a job that met his education and his experience. What he found was much more than that.

"I found my vocation," he says. "I was looking for work that would allow me to express myself and I found it here."

It has been a long and varied vocation, filled with learning, surprises, and great joy. There have also been challenges and disappointments along the way but Jonathan says the good experiences far outweighed the bad.

Jonathan has been with Communitas through some of its most significant periods of change and growth. He has seen how Communitas mission, vision, and values have made a deep impact on the people we serve and have shaped the organization. His journey with Communitas has also shaped his own life.

Read his full story when you visit [Communitas-Care.com/stories](https://www.communitas-care.com/stories)





CHOOSING THE POSITIVE

Photo: Karyn is meeting with Florence and Otto Driedger and Lucy Romanankova from The Florence Centre, Ukraine.

Our theme for this year is *Choosing Hope* and as I reflect, I think about what gives me hope. When staff tell us why they love the work that they do, I experience hope. When I hear stories about people thriving and living an abundant life filled with opportunities and choice, I am filled with hope. The affirmation of community



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support for the work that Communitas does also brings me hope. Most of all, as we purposefully work under the inspiration of Jesus, to create inclusion, belonging, and community in all that we do, I find hope.

Just as a sunflower turns towards the sun, choosing hope is to choose the positive. That's what you'll find when you read the stories in this newsletter and when you visit our website. Everett's story describes the hope found in overcoming the challenges of living with an acquired brain injury. You'll also be encouraged when you

read about Jonathan's amazing 35-year career and the hope he has brought to so many people over the decades. Finally, you will read about our colleagues in the Ukraine and how they continue to choose hope, even in the midst of war.

As I think about the year ahead, our first strategic goal focuses on creating a work culture where people can grow and contribute; in this goal we focus on choosing hope for our staff and that hope is tethered to our belief that God is the ultimate HOPE-giver. For almost fifty years, we have brought God's hope to all that we do: how we live, how we serve and how we give back. We remain grateful for His guiding Spirit and His ever-present help in all that we do.

Wishing you hope for your future,
Karyn



Choosing Hope





A LIFE FILLED WITH HOPE

Communitas offers Acquired Brain Injury Drop-Ins in both Abbotsford and Chilliwack. To learn more visit our website: communitasCare.com/services/drop-in-centres/

Everett is a man of many talents. He is a musician, he's written a novel, he's taught high school science. At one time, he was a hog farmer in Abbotsford, with one of the biggest farms in the province. He is a husband, father, grandfather, brother, and son. He also lives with an acquired brain injury.



“I think God’s purpose for me is to encourage people and help them see their own difficulties differently.

Photo: Everett (seated left) recently celebrated his mother, Mina’s 99th birthday when she and his brother Dirk and sister-in-law Caroline visited Everett at the Brain Injury Drop-In in Abbotsford. (Communitas photo: Angelika Dawson.)

The accident happened on the farm in September, 1995. The dump truck that Everett was operating, tipped into a ravine with him in it. He was in a coma for three months and when he awoke, he had to re-learn everything, including how to walk and talk. It was truly a life-altering injury. Still, though his life is somewhat book-ended by the accident, Everett’s life today is an abundant life, filled with hope.

One of the places where Everett offers this encouragement is at Communitas. For more than two

decades, Everett has received support through our Brain Injury Drop-In. It’s a safe, welcoming place where those living with an acquired brain injury can truly be themselves. Sherale Jones manages the Abbotsford Drop-In. She is inspired by Everett.

“He is so resilient and has such a positive outlook on life, not letting his brain injury define him,” she says.

Sherale has learned a great deal from the people she serves. She has seen how the Drop-In has made a difference, especially when someone has had a challenging day.

“Having the Drop-in really helps people feel connected and realize that they’re not alone in their struggles,” she explains.

Everett agrees. “I can relate to people’s trials and difficulties and they can relate to me,” he says. “People here are so friendly and helpful. I really appreciate that.”

You can read Everett’s full story when you visit CommunitasCare.com/stories





At Communitas, we serve people who live with developmental disabilities, mental health challenges, and acquired brain injury. We do this in the Fraser Valley/Lower Mainland and also in the Comox Valley on Vancouver Island. What you may not know is that for nearly two decades now, Communitas has also partnered with a similar organization in Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine called *The Florence Centre*.

The Florence Centre is committed to education and support of children, adults, and families living with developmental disabilities or dealing with abuse, addiction, and mental health issues. Families who once kept their children at home, ashamed of their disabilities, now have a place to gather for support. University students who come to *The Florence Centre* to do their social work practicums find their lives are impacted positively as they interact with this community.



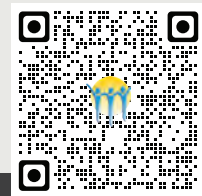
Photo: Staff are supporting children with special needs at The Florence Centre, Ukraine.

As you can imagine, this work has been deeply impacted by the war in Ukraine. Lucy Romanan-kova is the director of *The Florence Centre*. She is herself a temporary refugee in Romania. Lucy continues to support her staff who have been displaced internally or scattered across Eastern Europe. Many are still in Zaporizhzhia where they continue to support families as best they can, despite air raid sirens, blackouts, utility cuts, and bombings.

For all of our colleagues, this has been a time of testing. As a person of faith, Lucy asks for our prayers for the staff and families in Ukraine. We invite you to pray with us for all those who are impacted by the war in Ukraine, pray that they are kept safe in body, mind, and spirit.

Hope for Ukraine

In the coming weeks, we will launch a fundraising campaign to support the ongoing work of The Florence Centre and we invite you to participate with us. Take a moment to support this work by visiting CommunitasCare.com/hopeforukraine



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