



ANNUAL REPORT

We are pleased to present our 2017/2018 Annual Report. This year our CEO and our Board Chair have joined forces to deliver a joint message on our activities, outcomes, and successes. And of course we have included information on our financials for the year. We follow that with stories on our 4 program areas – Seniors’ Services, Community Development, Housing, and Developmental Services – with each story highlighting the positive impacts our work has on the people we support. And finally, for those who aren’t familiar with what we do and where we service, our new infographic will help you visualize the scope and reach of our services and programs.

Please enjoy!



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JOINT MESSAGE FROM THE MCS CHAIR AND CEO



KAREN MILLIGAN

Chair of the Board of Directors

It is our pleasure to report that 2017-18 marked another exciting and eventful year for Mills Community Support (MCS).

Perhaps most notably, Michael Coxon, Chief Executive Officer for MCS since 2008 - nearly a decade - retired in July 2017.

Mike had a huge impact on the Lanark County community throughout those years. From the early days of his tenure, Mike demonstrated his passion for community and his knowledge of the issues facing communities.

In preparation for the entrance of a new CEO, Mike worked with the MCS Board of Directors and the Senior Leadership Team to develop a refreshed strategic plan to guide Board and staff during the search for a new leader, and to guide the new CEO in 2017. The plan has three central Strategic Directions:

- **Strategic Direction #1:** Create Opportunities to Engage with One Another to Build a Healthy and More Welcoming Community
- **Strategic Direction #2:** Create and Sustain Environments Which Support Individuals to be Contributing Members of Their Communities
- **Strategic Direction #3:** Develop MCS' Capacity to be a Resilient, Sustainable and Effective Structure for Creating Community Benefit

With these strategic directions firmly in mind the Succession Committee set out to find the next CEO. On July 10th, 2017 staff, Board members and partners welcomed Robert Eves as the new CEO. The succession committee felt that Robert's background and experience were a great fit with MCS's current needs, directions and priorities. Robert had a very strong track record of bringing people together towards a common goal, developing partnerships that are mutually beneficial, and contributing to better outcomes for the people served and the broader community. Prior to joining MCS, Robert spent the majority of his 25-year career working in health and community services with a focus on vulnerable populations such as older adults, children and persons with disabilities. Throughout this time Robert has been driven by the belief that vital community services, like those delivered by MCS, play an important role in building strong and healthy communities especially those that assist people to thrive and live independently "in place".

With Robert on board as the new CEO, MCS continued moving the markers forward on its strategic directions. The following are some of the highlights from 2017-18 in each of the three directions:

Create Opportunities to Engage with One Another to Build a Healthy and More Welcoming Community

MCS is at its core a community development organization. MCS started out in 1975 as “Almonte Community Development Corporation” and MCS intentionally returned to community building as a core part of our identity. In 2017-18 MCS continued to maintain and grow its role as a public benefit corporation, engaging with organizations and businesses across Lanark County. This includes the continuation of MCS’s partnerships on the very successful [Neighbourhood Tomato, 5 Wednesdays in July](#) concert series and [Seniors Expo](#) (see page 23 for details).

2017-18 also saw the inception of the Get A Grip program.

A partnership between MCS and Community and Primary Health Care (CPHC), and the brain child of Jeff Mills, our Community Development Coordinator, the program seeks to prevent winter slips and falls by giving free easy-to-use ice grippers to seniors (people 65-plus) across Lanark County. Grants and an ingenious “pay-it-forward” model – where anyone who can afford to purchase grippers pays \$25 and by doing so help fund free pairs for seniors – helped the program exceed its targets in the first year, and distribute an incredible 1,000 pairs of grippers.

Create and Sustain Environments Which Support Individuals to be Contributing Members of Their Communities

Seniors and community services in Lanark County have resoundingly said that opportunities for healthy living activities in a central and affordable facility should be a priority. In response to this need MCS began planning the Country Street Centre (CSC) in 2015. The CSC was designed to provide a local and accessible space for seniors and community members to participate in



ROBERT EVES
Chief Executive Officer

Neighbourhood Tomato

The Neighbourhood Tomato is a community gardening movement that is all about growing food to build community. These community gardens can be found at Augusta Street Park in Almonte, the Mississippi Mills library, the youth centre, and in Carleton Place. Each year, the Neighbourhood Tomato runs the friendly Great Veggie Grow-off challenge, where 9 communities across Lanark County compete to see who can grow and donate the most fresh produce for the 4 area foodbanks.

5 Wednesdays in July

Each year on sultry July Wednesdays, free concerts and community food events are hosted by the Friends of Augusta Street Park. Depending on the year, there can be as many as 5 concerts – which explains the event’s quirky name. These grass-roots, inclusive community concerts welcome everyone, and feature local musicians (some of whom are Juno winners) who donate their performances. The community potluck evenings are a highlight, and a tour of the community gardens in the Park during intermission is a must!

health, social and recreation activities. In 2017-18 we completed the long-awaited first phase of the CSC. Phase 2 of CSC will be completed in 2018-19.

Another building project is already underway at Country Street. Construction on 12 new affordable housing units started in March, at the site just adjacent to the existing building at 411 Country Street. We anticipate completion in the fall.

Develop MCS' Capacity to be a Resilient, Sustainable and Effective Structure for Creating Community Benefit

MCS is committed to being a leader in sustainability by adopting integrated business practices that encompass the multiple bottom-line concepts of environmental, social, economic and governance sustainability disciplines. We embrace sustainability's multiple bottom-line philosophy to improve our decision-making process and to continuously enhance our organizational effectiveness.

Key to MCS's sustainability and multiple bottom-lines is the strength of our people. The MCS frontline staff are where the rubber hits the road for us. It is the passion and dedication to help others that drives our frontline staff and that brings them to work every day. Recognizing this, Robert Eves as the incoming CEO took the opportunity to connect and to consult with staff to ensure that we are giving our staff what they need to be successful in their work. In these consultations he heard clearly there are improvements to be made. In response to this, the MCS Board and Leadership Team have committed to working with our staff and our union partners to create a workplace that supports them in achieving the highest level of service to our clients. Another important key to sustainability is resource development. While we are very grateful to our current funders for the funds we receive, there remain priorities for MCS that are unfunded. MCS is fortunate to have a very engaged and committed group of volunteers on our Resource Development Committee to help MCS meet its goals and grow sustainably. In 2017- 18, the MCS Resource Development Committee took a leadership role on a capital campaign to raise funds for the Country Street Centre (see above), a project very much needed by the community and solely funded by donors and MCS.

We are both very proud of MCS's accomplishments in 2017-18 and remain excited by what we see in our collective future. Our successes are the result of our passion, hard work, and commitment, and we are grateful to our whole team at MCS, for their commitment to our goals and strategic directions. We also remain grateful to our diverse and experienced Board of Directors. Their individual and collective wisdom has provided valuable guidance and has kept our governance strong. We also cannot thank enough our small army of over 100 dedicated volunteers, without whom we could not easily provide programs and services to over 1,000 people in Lanark County. Finally, we remain grateful to all our funders and partners for their engagement and trust as we continue to build for the future.

CORPORATE & FINANCIAL INFORMATION

**FINANCIAL
HIGHLIGHTS**

**STATEMENT OF
OPERATIONS**

**STATEMENT
OF FINANCIAL
POSITION**

**SOURCES OF
FUNDING**

USE OF FUNDS



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Statement of Operations

Mills Community Support had an operating budget approved by the Board of Directors of \$8.5m for the fiscal year with a small \$53k budgeted surplus (0.6%). This budget includes the collective activity of our Developmental Services, Seniors' Services, Housing and Administration department.

The Statement of Operations indicates that we completed the fiscal year with an \$86k deficit, 0.9% of gross revenues. This deficit is due to small operational deficits in our Housing operations and increased administration costs. Consistent with financial objectives of other charities, we try to maximize the benefits we provide in the community while remaining financially healthy.

Revenues and expenses exceeded the 2017-2018 budget due to incremental housing funding received during the fiscal year and due to use of capital reserve funds to complete housing retrofits and improvements. Furthermore, the revenues and expenses include the financial activity of the Five Arches apartment complex purchased in early July 2017. Five Arches operations were not included in the original budget

Statement of Financial Position

There are several major changes in the Statement of Financial Position for the 2017-2018 fiscal year:

- The \$430k decrease in operating cash is offset by a \$264k increase in investments
- Accounts receivable increased by \$502k due to outstanding year-end government funding announcements and funding due from the Five Arches Non-Profit Housing Corporation
- The increase in capital assets is due to the purchase of the Five Arches apartment complex and new construction project
- Long-term debt increased by approximately \$600k due to Mills Community Support assuming responsibility for the Five Arches apartment complex mortgage
- The increase in deferred contributions is due to the transfer of Five Arches deferrals and new funding provided to Mills Community Support for construction of housing units

Internal Changes

During the fiscal year the Finance Department implemented a number of changes to improve operations:

- Completion of the transition of Five Arches from a standalone entity to a department within Mills Community Support
- Development of a new chart of accounts that will provide enhanced internal reporting and make reporting to funding agencies significantly easier
- Negotiated a new mortgage for St. James Street housing development that dropped interest costs from 4.713% to 1.865%

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

Mills Community Support Corporation Statement of Operations

For the year ended March 31	(Note 16) Budget	2018	(Note 16) 2017
	\$	\$	\$
Program Revenues			
Province/County operating subsidy	5,730,056	5,848,519	5,954,172
Market rental revenue	518,309	490,036	464,386
Rent geared to income	790,969	885,208	798,901
County rent subsidy	701,664	840,200	730,425
Deferred revenue earned	296,490	510,873	128,443
Investment revenue	3,000	34,553	20,682
Other income	276,912	298,592	303,036
Donations and fundraising	41,121	22,021	53,059
Program and user fees	186,160	200,132	216,092
	8,544,681	9,130,134	8,669,196
Expenditures			
Salaries and benefits	5,869,777	5,677,376	5,856,377
Program costs	462,714	597,767	596,345
Amoritzation > housing projects	429,092	518,525	381,188
> group homes and administration	36,580	137,963	131,563
Capital asset write-down	---	---	55,225
Utilities	224,935	245,219	243,924
Client related expense	247,125	225,064	224,684
Property taxes	228,381	259,744	212,283
Repairs and maintenance	481,872	878,516	393,344
Interest on long term debt	145,945	125,586	161,544
Client occupancy costs	104,219	99,670	100,561
General administration	88,375	210,864	126,474
Insurance	74,175	66,219	94,232
Professional fees	46,900	124,157	48,000
Training	51,752	49,107	56,289
	8,491,842	9,215,777	8,682,033
Net (Expenditures) Revenues for the Year	52,839	(85,643)	(12,837)

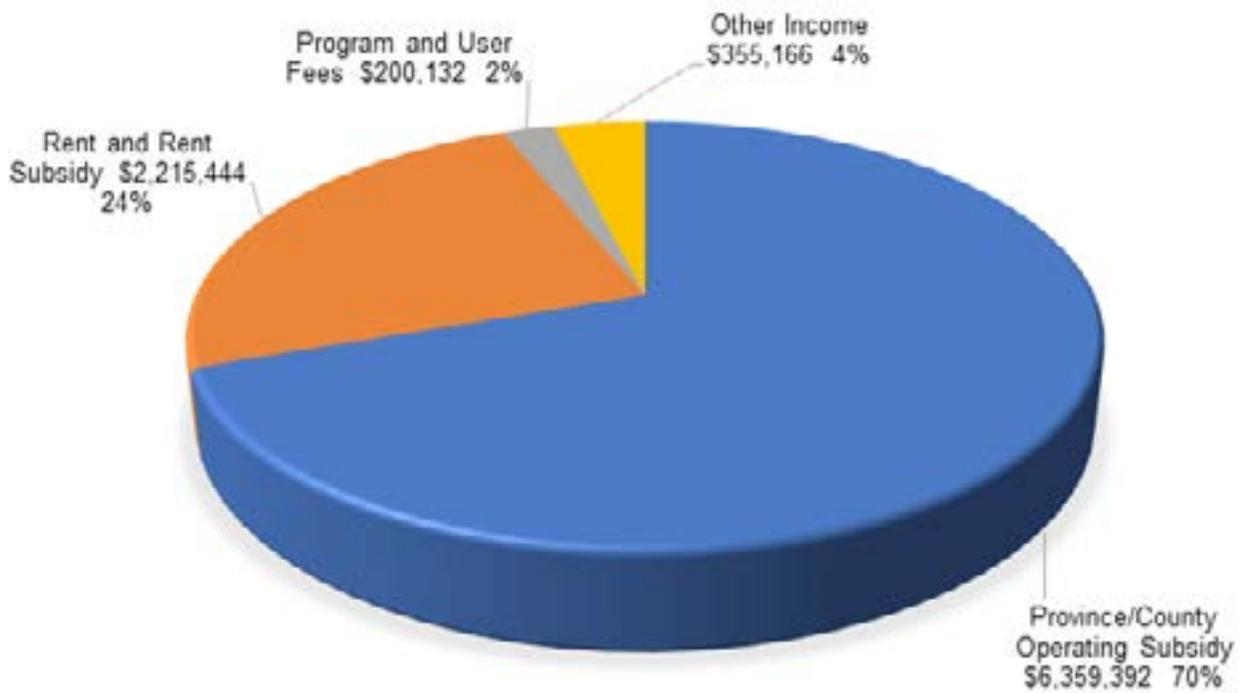
The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

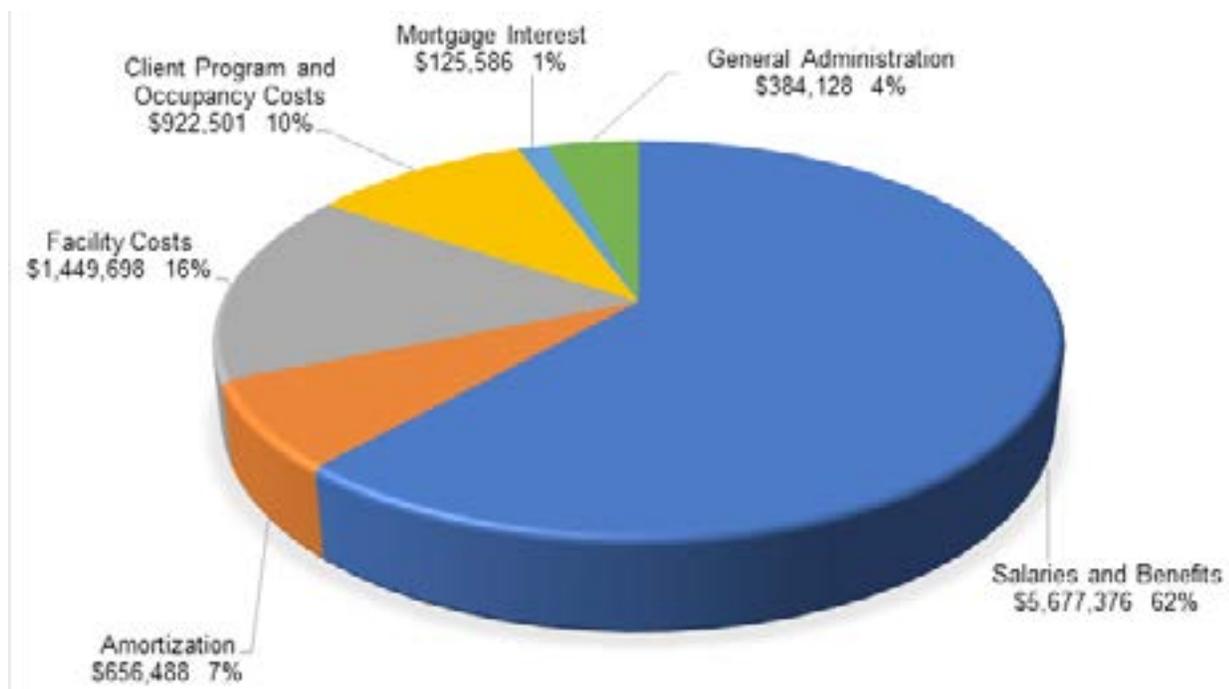
Mills Community Support Corporation Statement of Financial Position

March 31	2018	(Note 2) 2017
	\$	\$
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash	313,440	743,684
Investments (note 5)	1,015,896	752,486
Accounts receivable	734,730	232,796
Prepaid expenses	61,009	87,327
	2,125,075	1,816,293
Restricted Assets (note 6)	1,000,995	974,459
Capital Assets (note 7)	8,092,979	7,260,851
Total Assets	11,219,049	10,051,603
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	759,244	702,287
Deterred revenues and deposits (note 8)	126,648	97,660
Current portion of long term debt (note 10)	766,386	1,758,172
	1,652,278	2,558,119
Long Term Debt (note 10)	5,546,793	3,923,823
Deferred Contributions (note 6)	1,401,974	1,083,042
Fund Balances		
Unrestricted > Administration	258,589	437,733
Internally restricted > housing	685,038	465,000
Investment in capital assets	1,674,377	1,583,886
	2,618,004	2,486,619
Total Liabilities and Fund Balances	11,219,049	10,051,603
Contingent Liabilities (note 12)		

SOURCES OF FUNDING 2017/2018



USE OF FUNDS 2017/2018



A LOOK AT WHERE WE ARE & WHAT WE DO



COMMUNITY SUPPORT

HEALTH & WELLNESS for OLDER ADULTS
over 150 healthy, active seniors this year

SOCIAL SUPPER & LUNCHES
150% Attendance increase since last year

COMMUNITY CONCERTS
free community concerts at Augusta Street Park in Almonte each Wednesday evening in July

TRIPS & OUTINGS
Our two vans and 20-seat bus are fully accessible

FOOT CARE CLINICS
Over 150 pairs of happy feet through our twice-weekly clinics!

ALMONTE

COMMUNITY GARDENING
Growing food, building community in Almonte, Carleton Place & beyond

CARLETON PLACE

RENTAL HOMES & SUPPORTIVE HOUSING
170 Rental Units
5 Supportive Homes

GET A GRIP FOR SENIORS' SAFETY
1,000 pairs of ice grippers

SMITHS FALLS



OUR STORIES

**COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT:
BUILDING
COMMUNITIES
WITH SIMPLE
THINGS**

**DEVELOPMENTAL
SERVICES:
WHEN LESS IS
MUCH, MUCH MORE**

**HOUSING:
EAT, PLAY, MAKE
FRIENDS AT THE
COUNTRY STREET
CENTRE**

**SENIORS SERVICES:
COMFORTS OF
HOME**



BUILDING SAFER COMMUNITIES WITH SIMPLE THINGS

“It’s a simple thing we can do,” said Jeff Mills, Community Developer with MCS, about the new Get a Grip program, which during the winter of 2017/2018 gave away or sold a total of 1,000 pairs of anti-slip and easy-to-use ice grippers to Lanark County seniors.

Developed and delivered by both Mills Community Support and our partner Community and Primary Health Care (CPHC), Get a Grip aims to reduce the risk of slips and falls while helping seniors and older adults to get out and about in safety. The primary goal of this new program was first and foremost to ensure Lanark County seniors were sure-footed, helping them to avoid falls from slippery winter walking conditions. A fall can be the start of declining health and is touted as being the number one cause for seniors to enter long-term care. An underlying objective of the Get a Grip program was to reduce social isolation among seniors by helping them stay safe, active and connected outside the home whatever the weather.

According to the Ontario Injury Prevention Resource Centre, unintentional falls are the leading cause of injury for Ontarians 65 and over, and directly result in a staggering annual cost of \$1 billion across the province.



And that’s just the cost of healthcare. There is also the individual impact if a senior loses independence, which can force a move to a care facility. The fear of falling can lead to social isolation too, since someone may feel they are unable to safely leave the house to take part in their favourite activity, get much needed companionship, go to church, or even buy groceries. With climate change leading to more days of icy conditions per year than ever before, there is an increasing urgency to help seniors stay safe as well as active and connected in winter.

Right now, there are approximately 15,000 seniors (people aged 65-plus) in Lanark County, and an additional 15,000 who are aged 55 to 65.

Get a Grip provided grippers to anyone over 65 who lives in Lanark County for free, and were also available for purchase by anyone of any age who could pay the modest \$25 cost. An ingenious “pay it forward” model was built into this amount, with a small portion of the cost of each pair helping to fund the free-to-seniors distribution program. Grippers were available at any library in Lanark County, through the MCS office, the CPHC office, or any Home Support provider in Lanark County.



Get a Grip in action on a slippery, snowy day

The value of the program was instantly recognized by potential partners and funders. Grants and donations from supportive community groups and individuals bolstered the program’s success to the tune of just over \$9,600. Lanark County alone provided a \$5,000 community grant, and United Way Lanark contributed a \$3,000 grant. Donations from community groups such as Learning in Almonte, the Almonte Civitan Club, and the Almonte Legion poured in – as did outright sales revenue. Get a Grip sold grippers to the local paramedic programs in Lanark County and Renfrew County, and both Carleton Place Terrace and Riverview Seniors Residence purchased grippers for their residents. The Smiths Falls Rotary Club purchased a large quantity of grippers – which due to the funding model built into the purchase price, helped to fund the donation of 30 more grippers to needy seniors. The Kinsman Club of Smiths Falls also purchased grippers for Smiths Falls seniors. The North Lanark Community Health Centre purchased 100 pairs of grippers to distribute to community members as a memorial tribute to much-loved community physician Dr. Greg Walsh. Many individuals throughout Lanark County also purchased grippers from the program.



Pictured here from left to right, Jeff Mills of Mills Community Support, Patti Lennox, Community and Primary Health Care and Ken Graham, president of the Smiths Falls Rotary Club

Our approach of engaging stakeholders, funders and program users led to a highly successful inaugural year for Get a Grip, and we and the 1,000 seniors who received grippers are more than appreciative. Looking forward, Get a Grip will seek to benefit more seniors in Lanark County by ensuring program sustainability through community partnerships and funding. To help with program funding, a “Get a Grip This Christmas” fundraising campaign will kick off on November 1, 2018, to coincide with national Fall Prevention Month. Maybe you too can help someone you love get a grip by giving them a pair of ice grippers in their Christmas stocking!

DID YOU KNOW?

Mills Community Support initiated and provided seed funds for a small volunteer working group in Pakenham called Bridging Generations. Using the WHO Age Friendly Communities Framework to focus discussion, this working group identified community assets and keen community members, and hosted a series of 3 pot lucks and community forums. An impressive list of issues and actions has resulted. In 2 years, Bridging Generations Pakenham has;



- provided feedback through a community report
- initiated seniors speakers series at the Library
- hosted 2 forums and a 1 day educational Water Ways event to raise awareness regarding water quality
- started the development of a recreational trail
- influenced health and community supports in the community
- advocated for safe road crossings in the village
- supported the local school Council in their successful efforts to prevent a potential closure of the school
- and brought together the local business community to discuss a vibrant future for Pakenham.

WHEN LESS IS MUCH, MUCH MORE

Here at Mills Community Support, we strive to constantly improve and deliver better and additional services to all the people we support. In Developmental Services, the 47 people we supported in 2017/2018 benefitted from our person-centred approach, which focuses on developing and achieving personal goals and enabling the ability to live a self-determined life. The success of this approach relies on information capture and sharing, both internally within our teams and externally with others. And this year, one key project led to better outcomes for all stakeholders, and most importantly, for the people we support.

A key focus for the DS team in 2017-18 was improving efficiency and effectiveness with information capture and sharing. With this in mind, we undertook a project to acquire new tools that would help us meet several core goals:

- **improve our capture of information to make it easier to use and less time-consuming**
- **determine and capture the right information to ensure the people we support live safe, healthy and happy lives**
- **improve accountability to families, community members, other professionals and our MCSS funders**
- **and while doing all this, ensure we could continue to provide professional support to the people we support**

We found the solution to achieving these goals in Nucleus.

Nucleus is a Canadian software specifically designed and developed for support workers and not-for-profit community service agencies like us. Its overall objective is to ensure support staff can spend more time delivering better care to the people they support, with less time spent on administrative work and information input. By year-end, even though our staff had just finished their training and were new to Nucleus, we already knew we would achieve exactly that. One of our support workers said it best: “Nucleus is a great fit with our day-to-day workflow, and it’s 100% more efficient.”

This fit starts as soon as a support worker accesses the system, typically upon arrival for their shift when they need to be updated quickly and at a glance. Information is easy to access and use, giving our support workers the ability to make more informed service delivery decisions. Important information, such as messages from other team members, and system-generated alerts and reminders, are presented through a built-in “Com Box”. These reminders include when someone needs medical reviews or updates, or when a plan or protocol needs to be reviewed

or updated. Support workers can quickly view a summary of a specific person’s information, starting with a log of most recent and relevant information. Urgent updates, such as medication changes, are highlighted with prominently displayed colour-coded banners.



A typical Nucleus screen, showing an alert for a medication change – the green banner - as well as an event log. This is the first screen a support worker sees when they access a person’s information.

Nucleus is totally portable, and can be accessed anywhere from any device that can access the web, including a smartphone. This means MCS support workers can accompany a person to a medical appointment and share monitoring and other information, without bringing paper reports. For example, Shawn, a Type 1 diabetic, needs to have his blood glucose levels monitored on a daily basis. Test results such as these are entered into Nucleus daily, and can then be charted, displayed and shared for any given period of time, at the request of the physician.

We’ve also experienced a great benefit from the reporting capabilities of the new system. We previously used several information-capture methods: multiple paper files, located in one place and therefore not easily shareable; and a computer system that was more focused on record-keeping than on people. Accessing and consolidating information from both methods for report generation was both challenging and time-consuming. Our team leaders can now provide aggregate reporting to our funders, as well as individual reporting to family members, all from one system. And this system can be accessed from our administrative offices, the residence of the person we are supporting, or during a family meeting.

We are looking forward to discovering further benefits as we continue to use the new system. Above all, we are looking forward to spending less time with administration work, and more time with the people we serve.

EAT, PLAY, MAKE FRIENDS: YOU CAN DO IT ALL AT THE COUNTRY STREET CENTRE

We are delighted to say the first phase of a long-held vision became a reality this year. The Country Street Centre (CSC) - a lively, vibrant place for seniors to gather, socialize and be active - is now open.

Our goal was to create a centre dedicated to social, recreational and health-related services for seniors in our local communities, as well as the approximately 100 tenants in the two MCS-owned apartment buildings at 375 and 411 Country Street. Thanks to a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the existing Stan Mills Lounge and its accompanying kitchen area was renovated, refreshed, refurnished and re-equipped, and is now part of the Country Street Centre. Many of the programs offered by our Seniors Services team, which were offered in diverse locations due to lack of available space, have been consolidated in the Country Street Centre, and we've been able to take advantage of the fresh, bright space to add new programs too.

A visitor to the newly-renovated Stan Mills Lounge and its accompanying kitchen area could encounter a delicious meal being served up by our volunteers, the beat of drums or the rhythms of dance music from a senior adult fitness class, or a euchre, bingo or cribbage



game in progress. And when these scheduled events aren't happening, the Lounge is a quiet and welcoming space for residents of its two flanking apartment buildings to sit, meet and chat. Our social dining programs, including the monthly Wednesday Night Café, and the twice-monthly Lunch Bunch, are held here, and starting in June 2018, we will hold our valued Music and Memories luncheon program (for those with Alzheimers or dementia) at the CSC. Our volunteers, who are the lifeblood of all our dining programs, and the Country Street residents all enjoy working in the new space with its pass-through to the Lounge and new appliances.

We now hold most of our health and wellness programs for adults aged 50+ and adults with disabilities at the Country Street Centre, too. Our Zumba Gold and Get Fit with Drums classes are held once a week here. We also offer weekly Strength and Balance chair exercise, Relax and Stretch, and Fit as a Fiddle programs at this location (although it's important to note we continue to hold Strength and Balance sessions at the Almonte Civitan Hall and in Carleton Place, too.)



Rhona and Joy, who both walk from their nearby homes to fitness classes at the Country Street Centre and have struck up a friendship from meeting there, have let us know how much they appreciate the Zumba and Get Fit with Drums classes, as well as the location of the Country Street Centre. Rhona, a sprightly septuagenarian,

says, "3 Cheers for 375 Country Street! Great location, great exercise programs for the young at heart - and in my case for the not so young also. Since I moved to Mississippi Mills (Almonte) from Mississauga almost 3 years ago, I have made many new friends through the variety of programs and trips being offered by Mills Community Support. I am so happy to say that I am now physically active, compared to the couch potato that I was when I first moved here. As an added bonus, I can now walk to the exercise programs being offered at 375 Country Street. I feel so energized now - I have never felt better than I do now. Thank you so much for inspiring me." Joy told us, "The Centre is bright and comfortable, and in a great location for me as it is within walking distance of my home. I really enjoy the social aspect of the classes, and my fitness and flexibility levels are improving!"

Positive impacts such as these are just what we planned to achieve with the Country Street Centre. And there's even more to come at Country Street – we did say it was a lively place after all! Summer 2018 saw the start of the next phase of the Country Street Centre: the construction of a sunlit, south-facing solarium. The building is designed to link the residential buildings at 375 and 411 Country Street, providing easy access to the Stan Mills Lounge, plus a new entrance



to the Country Street Centre and more social and gathering space. A fundraising campaign to assist with the construction costs was launched over the winter, with generous leadership donors contributing over \$40,000 this year. Together with gifts received in previous years, we are only \$25,000 away from our fundraising target. A community fundraising campaign will launch in June 2018.

THE COMFORTS OF HOME ... COURTESY OF MILLS COMMUNITY SUPPORT

95 years, and counting That's how long May has lived in the same snug two-story frame house in Almonte. Since the age of two, May has lived on Ottawa Street, initially with her parents and siblings, and later with Frank, her husband of 63 years. And that's where the Assisted Living program from Mills Community Support helps May and Frank continue to live today, in comfort and safety.

May and Frank receive in-home visits from MCS support workers 4 times a week, and a reassuring safety check via phone every night. "We couldn't live here without you," she told us on a recent visit for tea, cookies, and conversation. Assisted Living services such as bathing, meal preparation, and homemaking services ensure both Frank and May are able to enjoy the comforts of their own home while staying connected to the support they need to remain there.

May is an incredible font of information about 20th century Almonte. She can recall events with encyclopedic clarity: when the town water service was completed (1949, after the men who were working on it before the war were back from service), when the electricity was installed



in their house, and how many windows were broken during the violent hailstorm of 1976. "That was one for the books", she tells us. A former millworker at the Rosamonde Mill, she recounts with pride how she started there as a winder, but worked her way up to becoming a weaver, a skilled role. While insisting we put more cookies on the plate for Frank - "you were kinda scarce with them" – she tells us about the decline of the textile industry, and how that decreased her regular work at the mill. "When you saw a black cat, you knew you had work", she tells us with a laugh. Her humour is always present. She loves watching the Young and the Restless, and of Betty White the actor she says, "she's something else". And when asked about her long marriage to Frank, she quips, "We're not a hugging pair. That's how we've lived together so long"

May and Frank are just two of the over 40 people we support with our Assisted Living program, which is fully funded by the

Champlain LHIN. Our person-centred approach to Assisted Living means each visit starts with our support workers asking, “What can we do for you today?” Recognizing that each day might not be the same, we aspire to listen deeply and respect an individual’s choice of what they need in that moment.

Our Assisted Living program is just one of our full range of seniors’ programs and services for personal care and safety, health and wellness, transportation, outings and gatherings, and nutrition. In 2017/2018, over 920 seniors benefited from these services



and programs. In Mississippi Mills, Carleton Place, Beckwith and throughout Lanark County, we continuously strive to ensure seniors live healthy, active, and engaged lives both at home and in the community. This continuous improvement results in greater impacts for seniors – for example, a themed format and better promotion means we now regularly welcome 50+ happy diners at our monthly social suppers, an incredible 150% increase over last year.

We’re so sad to say that since this story was written, May passed away peacefully after a brief illness. She was a bright spot for us, and we will miss her.

DID YOU KNOW?

Mills Community Support hosts the annual North Lanark Seniors Expo each September at the Almonte Community Centre. The Expo is targeted at ensuring seniors in the area know what services, programs and activities are available in their area. The Expo has grown in attendance and scope in each of the 7 years since we started it, and in 2017 we welcomed 644 visitors and 78 exhibitors to the Expo. The 2018 Expo will be held on Thursday, September 6th.





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