

One of the challenges we sometimes have in Renfrew County is that we tend to exist in silos. Unintentionally (or maybe intentionally) we go about our business, not having time to think much about how we can contribute to others. That's just life it seems - it gets busy sometimes and we can only do so much. Well, if Joe Erpenbeck taught us anything, it's that we can do so much more.

Joe Erpenbeck was a speaker our agency brought to Pembroke last November to talk about developing assets that exist within our community by inviting the community to helping us achieve that by becoming involved. We brought him here because, as a community agency, Community Living Upper Ottawa Valley has always been interested in getting in everyone else's silo! We believe "together is better." Our message and our goal is inclusion - we want as many other silos as possible to have a little bit of us in it. We want to be included.



## Let's Move Out Of Our Silos

By: Chris Grayson  
Executive Director

What we have found in our efforts of wanting to be included is that we weren't the only ones. At Joe's workshop, we welcomed 40 other agencies that also wanted to be connected. The work from the session required us to step outside of our comfort zones and have conversations with people we don't normally speak to, and in some cases, who we were meeting for the first time. When's the last time you had a personal conversation with a complete stranger?

The final part of the day was to get into a group and choose a

"burning issue" in the community. We heard from groups that championed county-wide issues such as transportation and affordable housing, and we heard from groups that championed localized community issues such as artistic inclusion and being able to share resources. When tables presented their issue, other tables were invited to provide any help or advice to the group if they knew of resources that could help them. People were excited about what they had accomplished together - all in

the span of just one morning! Imagine what we could do if we kept the conversation going, such as with a social issues committee? (If you're interested in this, we are happy to share our information with you!)

The reason we put effort and energy into connecting to you is because we want to be part of your conversation. We know there are people who can help us achieve our goal of inclusion - of helping us make engaging communities and experiences for the people we support who have an intellectual disability. And, we can help you in return, so please just ask us.

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### ASK THE EXPERT:

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**60 YEARS**  
COMMUNITY LIVING  
Upper Ottawa Valley

We are celebrating our 60th anniversary in 2018! If you have a past connection to Community Living Upper Ottawa Valley, we want to hear from you! Maybe you were a board member, a client or an employee?

Contact us today  
if you can help us.

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Looking for  
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Upper Ottawa Valley

There is no cost to book our speakers. We have experience with children and adults, and in groups both small and large.

To book, contact Dillon Watts  
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