

Planning for Our Future

Annual Report 2025 - 2026



quadcounty.ca



QUAD COUNTY
SUPPORT SERVICES

Planning for Our Future



Linda Long
Executive Director

It's been a busy year at Quad. I love scrolling through our Facebook page, watching the people we support volunteering, attending the community events, caring for animals, hanging with friends and having fun.

All of this is made possible by having a dedicated staff team, strong Board of Directors, committed family members and a supportive community. Thank you to each of you for being there and making a difference.

Since our day programs closed during COVID, we've seen a gradual shift in culture. Small changes have built on one another over time. These have led to slow but meaningful progress.

I know that change can feel overwhelming at first, but it often becomes more manageable as people adjust. We have already seen many positive shifts and stories in both the people we support and our staff. However, as people and circumstances continue to change, our learning must evolve with them.

Our strategic direction

One way we continue to plan for the future, and evolve, is through our strategic plan. Over the last year, much work has been done on advancing the four strategic priorities outlined in our plan:

- Advance our service model toward person-directed supports
- Focus on community development and partnerships
- Develop a long-term sustainability plan
- Support staff with training and resources





Advance our service model toward person-directed supports

This priority looks at how to empower the people we support to become more active and independent with the following actions taken:

- Involving individuals in the interview process for new support staff
- Staff shifting their supports to be more person directed by asking the important questions like – “How would you like me to support you? Where would you like to go?”
- Individuals being brave, taking risk, pursuing opportunities, watching what others do and making the decision they want to try it too.

Focus on community development and partnerships

Throughout the year, we’ve hosted various events in the community that are open to all. Some of these are fun and others are to provide education to the community while celebrating people with disabilities. These events include:

- Bringo Bingo
- Movie nights
- World Down Syndrome Day (March)
- Autism Awareness Day (April)
- Shine the Light for Community Living Month (May)

The people we support are also active in the community by participating in local events as well as giving of their time. They can be found volunteering for the fall fair, Canada Day, Earth Day and more.

Our vision is to provide authentic and meaningful participation where every person belongs. Part of this process is deepening our roots in the community. Through this journey we’ve developed partnerships with organizations that are also committed to helping the community grow, such as London-Middlesex Housing Corporation and Municipality of Southwest Middlesex.

Finally, we rely on donations from our community to make all these events possible





and we sincerely thank everyone for their support.

Develop a long-term sustainability plan

In addition to implementing new software platforms and attending conferences and workshops, we also worked with Xavier Noordermeer, a consultant, who conducted a comprehensive engagement process.

Over the summer of 2025, 31 employees from across the organization took part in facilitated conversations, sharing valuable insights. Core themes emerged with 29 recommendations of how to strengthen the organization and prepare for the future, particularly around challenges and requirements of the Ministry's 10-year *Journey to Belonging* plan, which is now at the half-way point, with the full implementation path still evolving.

General observations included:

- Quad County has successfully built a positive organizational culture rooted in respect, teamwork, and dedication to the people it supports, families and the community.
- The small size of the leadership team creates both opportunities (flexibility, close connection to employees) and challenges (limited capacity, high workload).
- Some staffing structures and budgeting processes are not aligned with individualized support needs or with the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) directions in the Journey to Belonging document.

- The Ministry's Journey to Belonging reform will require Quad to quickly adapt to new approaches such as individualized funding, person-directed budgeting and supports, and potential increased competition from other organizations.
- We're a strong, respected organization with a workforce that's both proud and passionate about its work. While employees feel connected and committed, they also recognize and acknowledge the challenges that come with a small management team and evolving expectations in the developmental services sector, both today and into the future.
- By implementing the recommended changes—notably the addition of support coordinators, restructuring reporting relationships, strengthening communications, and planning for leadership succession—we can reduce pressure on managers, improve accountability, and continue to foster a supportive workplace culture.
- The message is clear: Quad County is a great place to work, but must continually evolve its structures and practices to ensure its strength into the future. With thoughtful planning and deliberate actions, we are well-positioned to remain both an employer of choice for people and families and a trusted provider of community supports for years to come.



Support staff with training and resources

We have been busy hosting several events such as our summer picnic, Christmas party, Women's Day – all to celebrate each other, mental health and well-being. We also took part in Developmental Support Professional (DSP) week by hosting activities for staff appreciation and recognition.

We also invested in staff development by hosting training on fetal alcohol syndrome. Feedback from the engagement process will be used to develop new ways to support staff.

Future plans

In the coming months (hopefully not years), we're looking to move our administrative offices under one roof in Glencoe. This requires funding, which is challenging in our current economy. Under our current model, staff work independently. As individuals explore and experience new opportunities and the world around them, we feel that having staff under one roof will strengthen our team by improving our ability to share valuable experiences, a sense of community and have some fun!



Connecting Job Seekers and Employers

Community EMPLOYMENT choices

Since 1999, Quad County Support Services has operated Community Employment Choices (CEC), a separate program that shares the same Board of Directors and Executive Director.

Based in Strathroy, CEC supports businesses and job seekers across Middlesex County, with staff who have deep roots in communities from Parkhill to Lucan and all points in between.

CEC's dedicated team brings specialized knowledge and a strong understanding of the needs of job seekers and employers in rural communities, drawing on the local expertise that comes from being part of the communities they serve.



How CEC can help job seekers

- Transition to employment
- Resume writing
- Career coaching
- Assisting with job search
- Interview skills

Supporting employers

- Sharing job postings
- Resume collection
- Pre-screening applicants
- Onboarding support
- Hiring incentive

Facts about CEC

- Founded in 1999
- Serving job seekers and employers in Middlesex County with locations in Parkhill, Lucan, Strathroy, Glencoe, Dorchester and surrounding areas
- 12 staff

Youth Transition Program – Bridging the Gap



Key numbers

- Program launched in 2018
- From 2020 to 2025
 - 35 youth participants
 - 29 successful work placements
 - 20+ local businesses and community partners have provided opportunities for youth
- 10 youth registered for this summer

Dylan's Story

Dylan joined our Youth Transition Program in 2025. Dylan is non-verbal and was often described by others as a “runner,” a label that sometimes overshadowed his many strengths and abilities. His family, however, always believed in his potential and knew he had valuable skills to contribute.

By listening to Dylan's family, and working together, we learned that he regularly helped with a family business by placing stickers on bags of ice. Dylan was meticulous, took pride in his work, and completed tasks with great accuracy.

With this knowledge, we arranged a work placement

for Dylan at McNaughton's Home Hardware in West Lorne. His role was to face shelves and keep products organized. On his very first day, Dylan quickly understood the task and demonstrated that he was more than capable of doing the job. Week after week, he attended his placement and took pride in his work.

One of his coworkers recognized Dylan from school and felt he should have a work shirt just like everyone else. Dylan proudly wears that shirt today.

The most meaningful part of the placement is that Dylan gets to work alongside his grandfather. What began as a simple opportunity became something much bigger. By listening to family members, recognizing strengths, and creating opportunities for success, Dylan gained meaningful work, a sense of belonging, and a community he looks forward to being part of each week.

Dylan's story reminds us that when we take the time to understand a person's strengths and interests, we can create opportunities that allow them to thrive.

Helping with transitions

This year, the Ontario government asked Regional Assessment and Resource Centre to develop a Transition Resource Guide to help students with disabilities prepare for life after high school. Darlene was invited to participate on a working group and provide feedback on the guide.

www.transitionresourceguide.ca

While these resources are an important step forward, families continue to tell us that much more support is needed. Funding and services often decrease significantly after graduation, leaving youth and families to navigate adulthood with limited supports. The challenges and gaps are even harder to address in rural communities.

Through the Youth Transition Program, Quad County helps bridge that gap by building community connections, creating opportunities, and supporting youth as they develop the skills and confidence needed for adult life.

Fostering Independence Through Support



Having lived with her grandparents most of her life, after the passing of her grandmother, Cassy moved into her own apartment in 2022. While she enjoyed moving into her own place, she needed some support with the transition.

This is where Quad County stepped in. A staff member worked with Cassy to create a life plan. Through conversations, Cassy was better able to identify the life she wanted to lead.

“When I first moved into my apartment, I didn’t know there could be support to help me,” says Cassy. “My Nana had always helped me with everything.”

“Staff help me by taking my dog and me to our appointments, drive me to get groceries and help me with financial things like understanding my pay stub. They explain things to me to make sure I understand. They also let me know about events and meetings and I give my opinion if I want to participate. I’m grateful to have support.”

Cassy values her independence which includes living in her own apartment, having a job, making diamond painting and caring for her dog Zoey. She also enjoys hanging out with friends and appreciates they’re accepting of her canine companion.

When Cassy’s regular cleaning job was no longer available, staff connected her with an employment advisor at Community Employment Choices (also operated by Quad) to help her find a new position. Through CEC’s program and their incentives, a position was created for Cassy to clean Quad’s offices in Glencoe, rather than using the local cleaning company. After seeing her success, her role was expanded to also clean our administrative building.

The combination of Quad staff who play a supporting role in her life, having the opportunity to live in her own apartment and accessing community services like CEC have helped

Cassy gain and maintain her independence.

Supporting Quad as a Parent and Board Member

At Quad we are grateful for everyone who has volunteered their time. Brenda Szusz is a familiar face, as she's been involved with the organization for many years as a parent, board member and now board chair. Her daughter Katie was born with Downs Syndrome and lives in her own apartment, receiving support from Quad County. We sat down to learn more about her journey and why she volunteers.

Tell us about your journey as a parent and how Quad County plays a role?

When Katie entered school, we were living in British Columbia, which was very forward thinking and had few segregated rooms for children with special needs. Katie was integrated into the main school stream right from the start. We eventually moved back to Ontario where Katie continued her education in an integrated setting. However, we had to push for that decision as Ontario wasn't quite there with fully integrating special needs students.



Throughout her school years she was welcomed and included in all classroom activities. But as she aged, it was obvious a gap was forming between Katie and other students, so we agreed to place her in a segregated classroom when she entered high school. In the end we felt it was the right decision as she had tremendous support from the teachers/EAs and student support.

Near the end of high school we looked for supports for her ever evolving life. Having grown up in the area, we knew of Quad County Support Services and the workshop/resource program in Wardsville but we didn't know how to access their services. The school board was of little help, so I made the bold move to apply to Quad and hope for the best. Thankfully Katie was accepted and began attending the day program when she was 18.

You wear two important hats—as a parent and Board member. What does that mean to you?

You never really stop being a parent regardless of your child's age - with or without a disability. However, I still remember advice I was given when Katie was little and we were trying to navigate what life would be like with a child having Downs Syndrome.

There was a pre-school program in the Strathroy area run by two lovely ladies (Louise & Joyce) for children with developmental and physical disabilities. One of them said to me that even though I have a daughter with Downs Syndrome I should not treat her differently than our other two children. She should be given jobs to do around the house, introduced to people, places, events, travel, activities that the rest of the family was experiencing as that will



mold her and make her more aware of her choices and independence. It has always stuck with me.

I joined the board to learn about the workings of Quad, its programs and vision for the future. Having a daughter supported by Quad I felt (as a parent) that I could have some oversight of how the organization operates, who works in the agency (staff/admin) and how the organization functions as a unit, as well as what type of support would my daughter receive.

I originally joined the QCSS residential board 25+ years ago, before Katie was involved. I remained on that board until I joined the official board 10 years ago.

It felt natural to make the transition from the residential to the official board. Having spent years on the residential board, I wanted to put my efforts into the nuts and bolts of the actual running of Quad. So here I am 10+ years later sitting as the Chair, hoping I am making some small contribution to the life and work of the agency.

Being on the board has made me more aware of the difficulties this agency and many others in the province are experiencing on a regular

basis. I've also learned what the future may hold for those of us with adult children with developmental disabilities and other battles we may yet face when it comes to supporting our children and their place in our communities.

When you think of the future, what do you hope for your child and others supported by Quad County?

As a parent you always have some sort of reservations as to what will happen to your child and whether there will be a safe place for them to live/work/socialize/be included etc.

However, over the past five years, Quad has formed relationships with four other like-minded agencies in southern Ontario.

When this idea was first floated, I thought it would be the saving grace for many smaller agencies. I worried Quad would get swallowed up by the larger centre (London) and Katie would become another number on their roster.

However, having sat on the newly formed committee, I feel reassured that Katie will be ok. The strong alliance with these other agencies has strengthened my feeling that she is and will continue to be in good hands with Quad.

Board of Directors 2025 / 2026



Linda Long
Executive Director



Brenda Szusz
Chair



Bonnie Campbell
Vice Chair



Laurie Vereecken
Secretary



Lyn Moniz
Director



Andrea MacKellar
Director



Doug Bartlett
Director



Kelly Lawley
Director



Opening Doors for People

Day Trip: Musicals Sports Games
Disney On Ice
Lion King Cell Phones
Craft Supplies London Knights iPads Movies
Blue Jays Mystery Tour Bus Tours
Local Fairs Plays Blue Jays
VIA Rail Tickets Life Planning
Diamond Painting
Butterfly Conservatory

Over the last year, our organization has supported 33 individuals utilize a combined \$338,000 in individualized funding through the Passport Program.

The Passport Program provides funding to help people realize their dreams and complete goals that they may be unable to afford otherwise. Some of these are big goals and dreams like trips across Canada, the US and even Europe. While others focus on smaller goals that help them access programs, activities and events in their community.

At Quad, our role is to support individuals in finding ways to use their funding which are in alignment with their own personal goals and dreams.

Over the last year, this has included helping people with:

- Transportation to their jobs
- Education and learning new skills
- Communications and technology
- Life planning
- ...and more

We love helping people find ways to use Passport Program funding to live their best life!

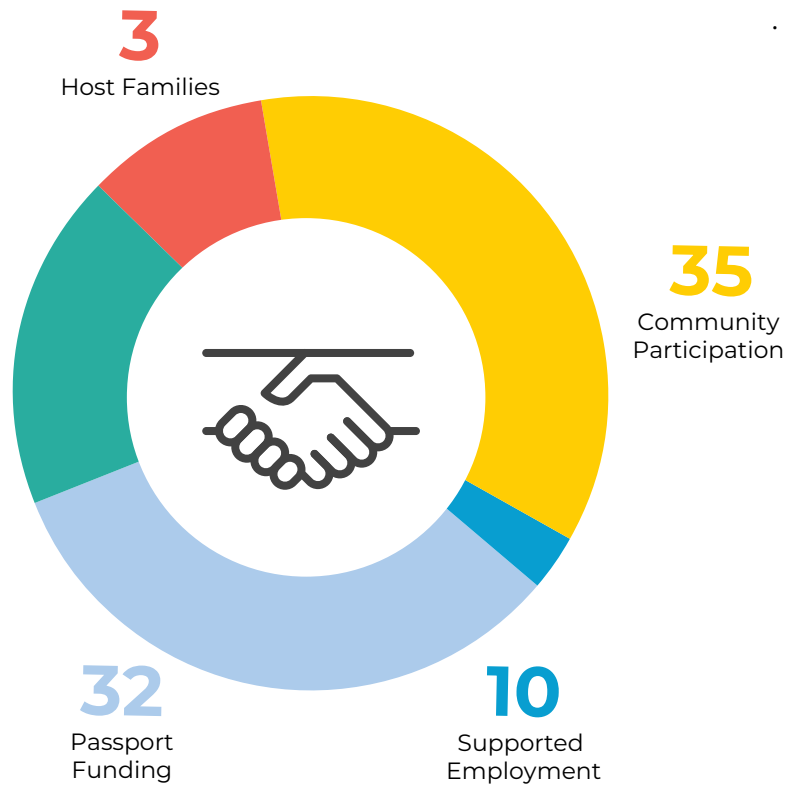


Changing Futures:

Our Impact Metrics
2025-2026



18
Residential
Supports

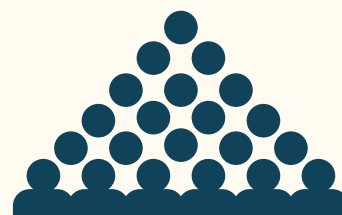


Passport Program

Did you know our work with the Passport Program is growing?

We serve 33 people and manage \$338,000 in funding.

We're thankful for the flexibility from the Ministry in how funds can be used. This has opened opportunities for people to purchase technology to stay connected to their families and friends.



33 INDIVIDUALS
\$338K+ ACCESSED

855 WORKING HOURS

Highlights:

Find more pictures on our Facebook page and follow us to be part of the Quad County community!



FACEBOOK PAGE:

Quad County Support Services





Ted Vink bursary award

In 1999, the Vink family established this annual award in member of their family member, Ted, who was killed in a tragic accident. This \$200 bursary is awarded to a student at Glencoe District High School who is entering a Developmental Service Worker, or similar program, at a community college.

We appreciate their ongoing commitment to supporting students who are entering a field working with individuals with developmental disabilities.



Municipal Grants

County of Elgin

Municipality of West Elgin
Southwest Middlesex

List of Donors

Lorne Masonic Temple Corp.

Glencoe Lions Club

Rockland Flooring

Duff Church Ladies Aid

J. Johnston

Pat Kelly

Nancy McEachren Memorial

Barbara Dobie

Jacqueline D. Bishop

William Leitch

Bill and Susan Allan

Bruce and Etta Edward

Millie Pettit

Harold and Lynnda Lee Carruthers



Thank you for your years of service

The following individuals have been employed by Quad County Support Services for:

0-5

Jessica Blais
Nicole Bogaert
Jamie K Coaker
Emma Cookson
Nathaniel Dow
Beau Felkar
Jacob Gott
Gabrielle Gowers
Raegan Harding
Kim Heywood
Taylor Holmes
Laurie Hume
Heather Jacobs
Leta Keating
Jennifer Keech
Brenda Laing
Shannon Lovell
Ayako Macdonald
Paul Macdonald
Janice McCallum
Danielle McGill
Briana McLeod
Laurie Pfeiffer
Alexdandra Renaud
Taylor Shearer
Tory Spry
Linda Therrien
Katie Tisdale
Stephen Tomasi
Rosanne Tomes
Jennifer VanHooydonk

Jamie Weese
Rebie West
Mallory Williams
Rebie West
Mallory Williams

5+

Lesley Campbell
Okolisan
Alynn Forrest
Greg MacMillan
Brooke Mazerolle
Megan Murray
Katelyn Pittman
Michele Sands
Samantha Silveira
Barbara Tulpin

10+

Julie Bullock
Stephanie Caron
Jeffery DeBruyne
Donia Jean Harper
Matthew Hill
Cassie Hodgins
Andrea Knight
Margaret Perry
Janine VanEvery
Kali Zwambag

15+

Robin Hamilton

20+

Sherry McNeill
Josie Mitchell
Terry Rankin

25+

Darlene Hoover
Damon Munro
Terry Rankin
Sharon White

30+

Tina Walker
Gerald Zwambag
Damon Munro

35+

Linda Long
Gordon Walker

40+

Lyn Stevenson



Facts:

Over **57 staff**
help support
35 people
accessing
service.

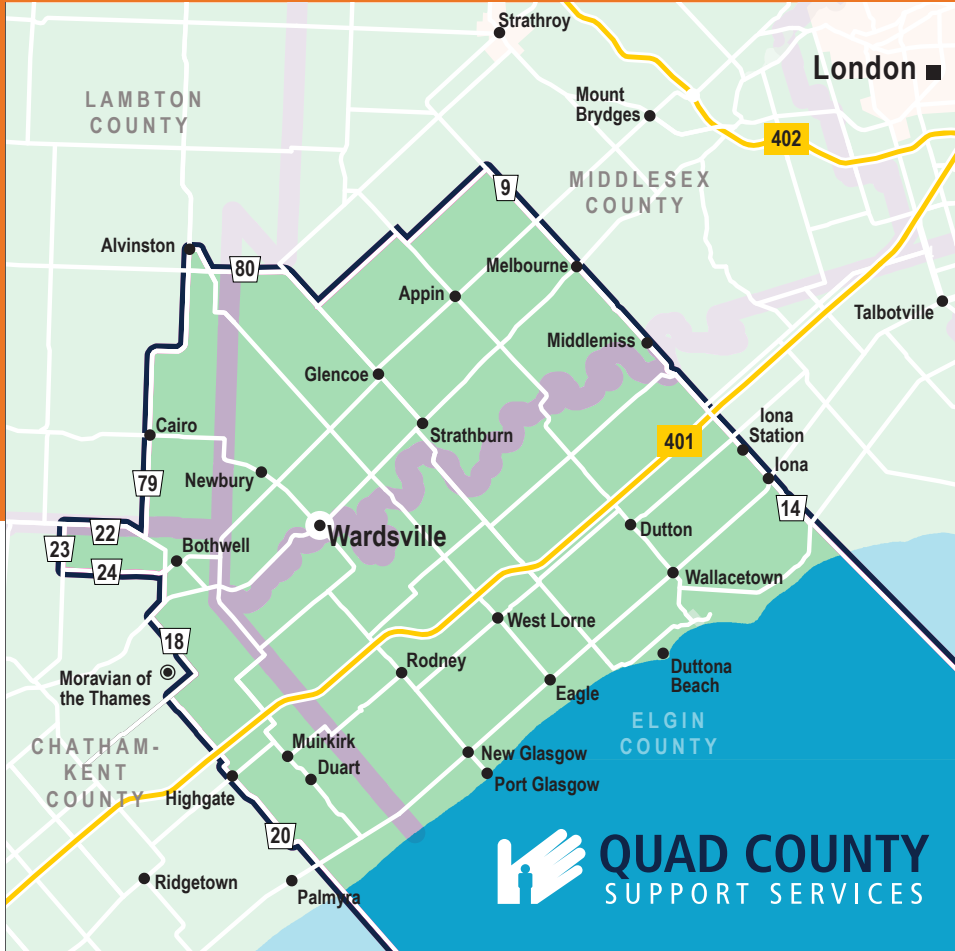
57,925 hours
worked

*Thank you for all
that you do!*



Donations Appreciated

Donations from our community members and businesses are always appreciated. Financial and in-kind donations allows us to expand the supports we provide.



We are at the heart of 4 counties.

We strive to create authentic and meaningful participation through community connection which is driven by individual choice.

Full Financials Available

To request a copy of the audited financials for Quad County Support Services please email us at info@quadcounty.ca

We want to hear from you!

Have ideas for a community program or questions about services and supports we provide? There are lots of ways to connect.



EVENTS:

quadcounty.ca/events



FACEBOOK PAGE:

Quad County Support Services



WEBSITE:

quadcounty.ca



EMAIL:

info@quadcounty.ca

quadcounty.ca