



MEDIA RELEASE

June 30, 2022

Cherish Integrated Services Opens a New Centre for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities in Markham

MARKHAM, ON – On June 30th, Cherish Integrated Services held a Grand Opening and Recognition Ceremony to celebrate the completion of its newly renovated centre for individuals with developmental disabilities. At the ceremony, Cherish announced and recognized key sources of support for the new centre project including \$549,800 Canada Community Revitalization Fund (CCRF) from the Government of Canada, and \$128,700 Resilient Communities Fund (RCF) that was awarded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation grant earlier this year. As a non-profit charity organization, these grants were critical contributions that ensured Cherish could create suitable spaces and new programs for families in need.

“Cherish Integrated Services is a pillar in our community, providing high-quality support and learning to those most vulnerable. The opening of their brand-new facility right here in Markham - Thornhill is supported by the Canada Community Revitalization Fund CCRF, a fund created in direct response to Covid-19, and means their important work will continue to reach those in need”, said Minister Mary Ng. “Cherish Integrated Services relied on this funding to reach their goals of building a new facility, which will help bring people back to public spaces safely as health measures ease. Congratulations to Cherish Integrated Services on this milestone.”

“As the MPP for Markham-Thornhill where Cherish Integrated Services is located, I am honoured to have this organization provide services and programs to help support persons with developmental disabilities,” said Logan Kanapathi, MPP. “This is a charity organization that I hold very close to my heart. Since 2010, Cherish has been dedicated to serving our Markham community and I want to congratulate the Cherished Team Members and volunteers for their hard work and dedication these past two years in renovating the 5200 square foot facility which will continue to meet the needs of people with disabilities.”

Despite the COVID-19 Pandemic, Cherish persisted to complete their two-year project of creating a uniquely designed facility for individuals with developmental disabilities. Located in Markham, the 5200 square feet facility features a multi-sensory room, barrier-free washroom, large kitchen, and a recreation room fit for various activities such as dancing and games. With a new centre, Cherish is opening their doors to serve more families in need, create new innovative services, and provide trainees with unique opportunities to expand their skills and enrich their lives. Funds from the Ontario Trillium Foundation grant helped with furnishing the space, hosting three new social group programs and provide safety and wellness training for staff.

“Since coming to the new centre, I have learned how to make coffee and perform Chinese Opera; I’m very happy,” said Po Lin Szit, an adult trainee at Cherish.

“It is my goal to learn how to make Lasagna at the new centre,” said Luen Liu, Cherish’s trainee of the year.

“With this new centre, our trainees are able to access opportunities that they never had before. In this space, they are making new friends, establishing new hobbies such as cooking and dancing, and building their skills and confidence through job venture projects. This space is dedicated to the community and our desire is to help more families in need for generations to come,” said Kyoko Leung, Executive Director.

These CCRF and RCF grants provided important and timely support to Cherish as they continue to respond to high demands for services. During the pandemic, many individuals with developmental disabilities could not receive appropriate social, behavioural, and learning supports, which are especially critical during childhood and adolescence. Due to their disability, many individuals could not benefit from online services and therefore, could not maintain ongoing training and social connections.

"I used to sit at home everyday during the pandemic, but now I get to make new friends and learn new skills at Cherish," said Cindy Lau, an adult trainee.

Many families continue to experience difficulty accessing services and social supports to this day. With a new centre, and appropriate resources, Cherish will not only meet the current demands but also dream further to re-imagine how services for individuals with developmental disabilities can effectively adapt to a post-pandemic world!

For more information about Cherish’s new centre and services, please visit <http://cherishis.org/>

The Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) mission is to build healthy and vibrant communities across Ontario. As an agency of the Government of Ontario, and one of Canada’s leading granting foundations, last year, OTF invested nearly \$209M into 2,042 community projects and partnerships, which included funding for the Government of Ontario’s Community Building Fund. Since 2020, OTF has supported Ontario’s economic recovery by helping non-profit organizations rebuild and recover from the impacts of COVID-19. Visit otf.ca to learn more.

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