

## Intellectual Disabilities Awareness Survey

Do you know what the term “**intellectual disability**” refers to? Do you know what organization is most involved with providing services for those with intellectual disabilities? Have you ever heard of **Community Living**?

These are just some of the questions that Trent University student researchers Benjamin Angle and Alicia Woodward asked Peterborough residents (City and County) from October 17, 2008 to January 27, 2009 as part of a statistical survey conducted on behalf of Community Living Peterborough in collaboration with the **Trent Centre for Community-Based Education**.

### The Project Goals Were To

- Evaluate the local understanding of the term “**intellectual disability**”, a term that most often refers to people who, in the past, would have been called mentally retarded or developmentally disabled.
- Measure awareness of Community Living Peterborough.
- Compare the local results to those of a survey carried out in 2003 on behalf of Community Living Ontario.

### Key Findings

- **Understanding of “intellectual disability” (unaided):** Less than one quarter of respondents (23%) were able to provide an appropriate description of the term “intellectual disability” if unaided. This percentage is significantly lower than throughout the whole of Ontario (50%). Moreover, the county had a significantly lower appropriate understanding (17%) than the city (31%).
- **Understanding of “intellectual disability” (prompted):** When given several options for the meaning of an intellectual disability, just over one in five (22%) were able to identify the correct response. Once again, the percentage is lower than throughout the whole of Ontario (55%).
- **Awareness of Community Living:** While most respondents (84%) have heard of Community Living, awareness of the services provided by the organization is limited. When asked to identify the name of an organization providing services for people with intellectual disabilities in Peterborough, only 7% identified Community Living. More than half (58%) did not identify any organization, while others mentioned the Mental Health Association (7%) and the United Way (7%).
- **Community Living Advertising:** In Peterborough, one quarter of people (26%) have seen advertising in the last year from Community Living.

## Methodology

For the survey, one member of each of 85 randomly selected households within the City of Peterborough was interviewed in person, and one member of each of 65 randomly selected households in the County of Peterborough was interviewed via telephone. Unfortunately, the non-response rate of the survey was high. However, data from a sample of callbacks indicates that the opinions of the non-respondents are not significantly different from those of the 150 responses obtained.

## About Community Living Peterborough

The results of this study accentuate the need to increase awareness of the services provided by Community Living to persons with intellectual disabilities:

- Community Living Peterborough is a charitable non-profit organization providing support and services to approximately 350 children, youth and adults with intellectual disabilities and their families living in the city and county of Peterborough.
- The organization's mission: to inspire respect and equality for people with an intellectual disability by promoting: community knowledge, organizational excellence, and individual quality of life.
- Community Living Peterborough helps communities to build capacity to support people with intellectual disabilities and advocate for social change toward the full inclusion of all people in the community.

## About the Trent Centre for Community-Based Education

- **Our Mission:** The Trent Centre for Community-Based Education connects students and faculty with local organizations to create community-based research, service learning and experiential education opportunities that enhance the social, environmental, cultural and economic health of our communities.
- **Our Vision:** The Trent Centre is widely recognized as a strong and healthy organization that is a leader in community-based education. This organization delivers high quality service to its clients and partners while making a positive difference in communities throughout South-Central Ontario.
- **Our Core Principle:** Our community-based work is about offering an equitable and independent place for all affected stakeholders to communicate, learn and achieve goals that are mutually beneficial and related to positive community action.

This project offered the students course credit towards their degree (a major in Mathematics, with a Specialization in Statistics) and the opportunity to apply their skills to real world challenges while aiding a local non profit organization. Benjamin Angle and Alicia Woodward conducted the research under the supervision of Professor Michelle Boué, of the **Department of Mathematics** at Trent University.

For more information about the **Department of Mathematics** at **Trent University**, please visit [www.trentu.ca/math](http://www.trentu.ca/math) or contact [math@trentu.ca](mailto:math@trentu.ca)

For more information about **The Trent Centre of Community-Based Education**, please visit [www.trentcentre.ca](http://www.trentcentre.ca) or contact [info@trentcentre.ca](mailto:info@trentcentre.ca)

For more information about **Community Living Peterborough**, please visit [www.communitylivingpeterborough.ca](http://www.communitylivingpeterborough.ca) or contact [contact@communitylivingpeterborough.ca](mailto:contact@communitylivingpeterborough.ca)

For more information about our **Info Notes** contact Dawn Berry Merriam at 705-743-5915 or email [dawnbm@pspc.on.ca](mailto:dawnbm@pspc.on.ca).

