

# EVENTS FOR LIFE CENTRE

Once special needs students reach the age of 21, their high school education ends, and many don't continue on to college, university, the trades, or other employment. Opportunities to build life skills, live independently and be engaged in leisure and social activities are limited, especially in rural communities. Events for Life (EFL) fills that gap.

Program director Shelley Higginson started Events for Life in 2014 as a summer day camp on her farm. Since then the program has expanded, incorporated as not-for-profit and moved its day program to Beaver Creek Farm in The Blue Mountains.

"Our growth has been absolutely amazing," says Higginson. "We now are three days a week, we have a waiting list, and we have a summer program. We focus on lifelong learning, recreation and social. We have 15 active volunteers who are involved with the participants and behind the scenes, and we have the full support of our community."

The weekly program currently has 24 participants age 21 and over who come one, two or three days a week. The lifelong learning component includes making muffins to sell

at the Marsh Street Centre's "coffee nook" twice a month, as well as making and selling artisanal crafts. Recreation comprises activities such as hiking, playing pickle ball, bowling and swimming, while social outings include movie nights, dances, live theatre, sporting events and community activities. Participants also learn basic life skills such as budgeting, cooking, loading the dishwasher and doing laundry.

"The parents say the kids are busier than they are," says board chair Cathy Butler, whose own son, Thomas, 25, is a full-time participant. "The bus stopped coming for Thomas when he turned 21 and he was going to end up sitting at home doing nothing. This gets him out three days a week and gives him a purpose. EFL for Thomas is his extended family. They all adore each other and look out for each other; it's quite something to watch."

The summer program is open to participants 21 and over as well as those who are still in high school, providing a transition from school to the Events for Life program.

For more information, visit [eventsfor.life](http://eventsfor.life) or email [info@eventsfor.life](mailto:info@eventsfor.life)



Left to right: Shelley Higginson, Founder and Program Director; Brenda Topham, Staff Support; Lynn Bosco, Assistant Program Director. Absent: Cathy Butler, Chair; Kathy Dewling, Secretary; Christa Carroll, Treasurer; Melanie Johns, Board Member; Kevin Whyte, Board Member.