



Connect4Life: A Decade of Progress and Achievement Unfolding

History

In 2012, we proudly introduced a new and emerging charity called Connect 4 Life, which aimed to make a difference by empowering individuals with disabilities to become more independent, contributing members of society. Connect 4 Life's unique education and training programs were designed to address all stages of life and encourage skill development along a continuum from basic life skills to full independence, including job readiness.

The number of people living with a disability was staggering. According to Statistics Canada, in 2010, there were approximately 2 million people, or 15.5% of the population in Ontario, living with a disability, and this number was expected to grow with the aging population. In Peel Region alone, which had a disproportionate number of people living with either a visible or non-visible disability, there were over 171,030 people, or 14.8% of the population, affected—a much higher rate than the provincial average. In the post-economic crisis climate, due to both a lack of program availability and the absence of financial support to access local programs, the basic service needs of both children and adults in the Peel region living with disabilities were left unmet. This trend was also observed in Halton and the GTA regions.

As an agency, Connect 4 Life sought to meet the needs of these individuals through the provision of accessible, relevant programming. The organization offered services in the areas of Training, Advocacy & Referral, Counselling, Public Education & Training, and operated the Voices 4 Ability radio station.



Brief Description of Each Program

1. Skills 4 Life: A 12-week program offering lifestyle improvements and barrier-free living through workshops, seminars, hands-on training, and skills-based mentorships.
2. Introduction to Public Speaking: A 6-week foundational course emphasizing communication skills and public speaking techniques.
3. An Accessible Voice in Broadcasting: A 20-week hands-on radio broadcasting course providing comprehensive training in radio fundamentals, content creation, interviewing, and technical aspects.
4. Connect 4 Wellness: A 12-week virtual mental wellness program offering support in self-care, social skills, health promotion, coping strategies, and advocacy for individuals ages 18 and above.

Total Number of Clients Served Over 10 Years

Over the past 10 years, Connect4Life has had the privilege of serving approximately 2,000 clients, averaging around 200 clients per year, demonstrating our sustained commitment to excellence and impact.

Total Number of Clients Served Last Year

Last year, we had the privilege of serving a total of 350 clients, reflecting our ongoing commitment to growth.

Where The Programs Are Delivered

Connect4Life's programs are delivered virtually, ensuring accessible and flexible support for all our clients.

Appr. Number of Clients in Scarborough/Toronto

Connect4Life approximately serves 150 clients located in Scarborough and Toronto.



Expansion Activity in South Africa and at The UN

Connect 4 Life, Canada's only charity of its kind, is making its way to South Africa. Connect 4 Life South Africa was founded in 2024 by Melanie Taddeo-Nxumalo with the goal of providing hands-on training and skill development to assist individuals of all abilities with the necessary skills to become self-sustainable whether through entrepreneurship, or employment in a fulfilling career. Our journey began with our founder starting Connect 4 Life in Canada in 2014 after recognizing the need for innovative and empowering skill development for individuals of all abilities. From her personal experience of acquiring a life changing disability at the age of 21, and discovering the barriers that people of all abilities face in achieving their goals and becoming self-sustaining. After visiting South Africa and learning of the need for a similar program, Melanie decided to launch a South Africa chapter with the help and support of passionate volunteers in both South Africa and Canada.

Connect4life SA's long-term program is to establish an inclusive community serving as a training center for skill development, aiming to provide transformative education for post-high school youth in South Africa. This initiative is led by an internationally certified educator specializing in inclusion and diversity.

Connect 4 Life is also expanding internationally into the United Nations, one of very few Canadian charitable organizations to do so. This work will provide enhanced knowledge of program and service delivery around the world, learning about the experiences and successes found in other UN-member countries. In the first instance our work will help monitor and assist with the implementation of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, which helps guide Canadian accessibility legislation at all levels of government. Connect 4 Life is also in the process of seeking UN accreditation to become an organization in consultative status with the UN's Economic and Social Council, which is a key policy-making function of the entire United Nations organization.