

# Strategic Plan 2026-2029

Rooted in Faith: Deepening Connection, Empowering Choice, Nurturing Communities



**karis**  Disability Services





# Letter From the CEO

## Our Strategy

Over the past five years, Karis Disability Services has been on a journey of transformation—one rooted in our Christian faith and shaped by the voices of the people we serve, our employees, and our partners. This strategic plan is the result of that journey. It reflects our commitment to walk faithfully alongside people with developmental disabilities, fostering communities of dignity, choice, and belonging. Across Canada, provinces are reimagining how they support people with developmental disabilities. Ontario's *Journey to Belonging*, Saskatchewan's *People Before Systems*, and Nova Scotia's *Human Rights Remedy* each signal a shift to flexible funding, early intervention, and the dismantling of institutional models. While each province structures and delivers services differently, all three plans emphasize individualized planning, direct funding, and increased community participation supports.

At Karis, we are focused on Ontario and Saskatchewan, provinces where we actively serve. Access to services remains unequal—some people have supports, while others have little to none. In Ontario, funding has not kept pace with inflation, challenging both service quality and sustainability. Operational leaders are burdened by administrative demands, limiting their ability to coach and develop their teams. Housing arrangements don't always meet people's unique needs.

This moment calls for a shift in systems and structures, and in the relationships and beliefs that have historically limited choice for people with developmental disabilities. It also presents an important opportunity to collaborate with like-minded partners, who share our values and collective

goodwill to influence social policy and perceptions, and to respond to evolving needs.

As people with developmental disabilities are recognized and enabled to access supports and create good lives in their communities, Karis is committed to delivering these supports through both its services, and by helping people access safe, affordable housing. With thousands of people looking to us for support in both Saskatchewan and Ontario, Karis will increase our supports by at least 15% over the next three years through person-directed services for those who choose us as their service provider. We will work collaboratively with partners to shape government policy and advocate for both funding for people with disabilities, and fair wages for our employees. We will also work to inspire churches to welcome people with disabilities as full, contributing members—nurturing communities of belonging.

In order to experience this growth, we will focus on these three enabling strategic investments: **our people, our services, and our partners**.

Our work will be shaped by three guiding commitments: **elevating quality** in all aspects of service and operations, **strengthening sustainability** across our services and systems, and **furthering our Christian values** through relationships and advocacy.

We recognize that resources are limited, government funding cannot meet every need, and our teams are already giving their best every day to provide excellent

supports. I believe this is the time for Karis to lean into our strengths, creativity, and relationships, to strengthen our services so we can welcome more people who need supports.

This strategy reflects a shift in mindset— toward people leading their own lives, with Karis walking alongside each person, to foster dignity, choice, and belonging. You will note the beautiful design of this document, depicting a vine growing on a strong trellis. We plan to invest in and strengthen our trellis to provide opportunities for growth and vibrancy in our services, helping people in communities have good lives.

As we move forward, we do so with humility, hope, and a deep sense of purpose. We are grateful for the dedication of our employees, the trust of the people we support, and the strength of our partnerships. Together, we will continue to promote communities where everybody belongs and where the love of Christ is made visible through our actions.



*Janet Noel-Annable*

**Janet Noel-Annable**  
Chief Executive Officer

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# Introduction

## Responding to a Shifting Landscape

Karis provides services in Ontario and Saskatchewan. In both provinces, issues like long waitlists, limited housing options, workforce shortages, and regional inequities continue to make it harder for people with disabilities to access quality supports. In Ontario alone, over 53,000 adults are waiting for developmental services. Rural

communities across both provinces experience added barriers due to geographic isolation and limited service availability. Karis' strategy responds to this moment with urgency, committing to supports that are responsive to the needs of people with disabilities across the provinces.



# The Opportunity Before Us

**There has never been a better time to invest in delivering high-quality, flexible, person-directed services for people with developmental disabilities.** As the sector continues to shift away from institutional models toward community-rooted approaches, we have a unique opportunity to strengthen our teams, systems, and partnerships through values-based approaches: amplifying choice, dignity, and belonging for the people we support.

**We believe this is the moment to act because government reforms and changing public expectations are creating space for organizations like Karis to shape more inclusive practices, where equity and access are recognized as rights.** There remains significant concern around a lack of investment in organizations that support people with disabilities. Without intentional change, communities may default to institutional approaches that are not what people and families are asking for: respite, meaningful community participation, and more options for individualized housing and supports. Lack of additional resources causes a strain on staff wages and organizational infrastructure. These reinforce the need for strong partnerships and advocacy to protect and advance inclusive systems.

**People with disabilities, families, and donors are looking to organizations like Karis to lead in delivering**

**high-quality services and fostering belonging for people with disabilities in their local communities.** They're calling for meaningful change in the structures and mindsets that uphold the rights and value of people with disabilities. Belonging is already a reality in God's design, yet it also needs to be nurtured, fostered, and practiced in daily life. Karis is uniquely positioned to contribute to transformation through collaboration with local communities and government to advance inclusive and person-directed supports. With deep experience, trusted relationships, and a faith-rooted approach, Karis can influence systems to uphold dignity and belonging—because we believe every person is an image bearer of God, worthy of respect, autonomy, and opportunity.

**If we don't act now, we risk missing this critical opportunity to uphold people's rights, remove barriers, and build lasting pathways to belonging with people with disabilities.**

**We believe we can achieve this opportunity by empowering our teams, delivering person-directed services, and strengthening relationships with Christian communities and partners to advocate alongside us.** Through shared effort, and guided by our faith values, we can influence structures and relationships that have historically excluded people with disabilities to nurture communities where everybody belongs.



# Foundation

## Grounding Our Strategy

This strategic plan is grounded in insights gathered through a co-design journey with over 1,000 individuals—including people supported, families, employees, and external partners—through more than 40 listening sessions, surveys, and targeted research. Across all groups, we heard a clear call for greater choice, transparency, collaboration, and connection.



People supported by Karis expressed a desire for more choice and control over their daily lives and deeper opportunities to belong and contribute.



Families emphasized the importance of consistent communication and reliable support through key transitions.



Employees highlighted the need for clearer roles, integrated systems and processes, and a culture that fosters growth and wellbeing.



Christian and community partners called for stronger collaboration and continued leadership from Karis in advocating for inclusive, faith-rooted practices, and shaping public thinking about people with developmental disabilities as inherently valuable.

These insights reflect a shift away from doing things for people, and toward walking alongside people as they lead their own lives. These insights have directly shaped our strategic priorities and goals. A full summary of engagement insights is available in the accompanying Engagement Report: “What We Heard and Learned.”<sup>1</sup>

Beyond what was said in engagement sessions, we also considered the underlying systems, beliefs, and barriers that shape people’s experiences. This includes listening

1. While this process captured a wide range of voices, we recognize that some perspectives—particularly from people in complex support settings—may not have been fully reflected and remain important as we implement our strategy.



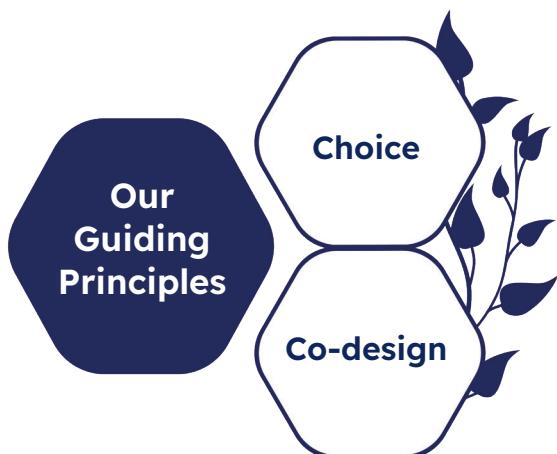
People we support from Toronto Community Participation Supports, 2025

beyond words to discern the mental models and systemic structures that limit inclusion and connection, and identifying the enablers—such as trust, leadership, and shared purpose—that foster lasting belonging.

Our strategy is not only about what we do, but how we do it. We are committed to building a culture based on the truth that every person has God-given worth. This shapes every interaction, decision, and relationship. We ground our work in inherent dignity, meaningful self-direction, and real belonging arising out of our Christian faith.

Technology will play an important role as a key enabler of transformation in this strategy, helping us grow stronger as an organization and improve how we deliver services, while staying true to our values and commitment to inclusive, community-rooted supports.

**Our guiding principles** for the next three years—**Co-Design and Choice**—will shape how we work, make decisions, and deliver services. *Co-design* ensures that people supported, families, and employees shape services together. Recognizing that we are created to relate with others, we make room for everybody to experience being valued through relationships. *Choice* affirms the right of individuals to direct their own lives, make informed decisions, and access supports that reflect their unique goals and preferences, while also being supported to understand the responsibilities connected to those choices. When people know they are valued, they feel empowered to make meaningful choices.



# About Us

## Our Values

Our values are rooted in our belief that every person is loved by God and created in His image: **We will honour God and value people in all we do and with all our resources.** Created in God's image, everybody is a gift from God and has unique gifts to offer. Communities flourish only when all people—including those with and without disabilities, employees, families, volunteers, and partners—are celebrated and have opportunities to contribute.



**Valuing People:** We believe that all people are created in the image of God and are valued not only for their gifts and abilities, but for their inherent worth as beloved by God.



**Fostering Belonging:** We work to foster belonging for everybody—recognizing that people with disabilities face unique barriers to experiencing communities where they are known, celebrated, missed when absent, and recognized as irreplaceable.



**Serving Others:** Following Christ's example, we serve through relationships of mutual support, ensuring our service empowers others to discover their own capability to give and receive.



**Celebrating Gifts:** We celebrate how everyone's presence, abilities, and even limitations enrich our communities—recognizing that differences and vulnerabilities draw us together in meaningful ways.

## Our Vision

People with disabilities belong to communities in which their God-given gifts are valued and celebrated.

## Our Mission

As an expression of Christian faith, we work together with people with disabilities to accomplish their goals and nurture communities where everybody belongs.

## Our End Statements

1. People experience services that reflect the Christian foundation of Karis.
2. People experience services that enhance their rights, choices, relationships, dignity and citizenship while supporting their ongoing growth and development.
3. People experience communities where everybody belongs.

# Our Strategic Priorities

## Our People



## Our Services



## Our Partners



Focus on our teams  
to provide great  
supports to people

Deliver high quality  
person-directed services  
that respond to the needs  
and choices of people

Deepen our relationships  
with partners and  
communities to influence  
perspectives and  
government policy to foster  
belonging for people

# Strategic Priority: Our People

Focus on our teams to provide great supports to people



## What We Heard

Karis employees are deeply committed to the people we support and want to feel empowered in their roles. Employees desire clearer supervision, fair workloads, and more time for meaningful connections. They value opportunities for growth, peer support, and leadership development, and see potential in evaluating roles to strengthen coaching and mentoring. Having the right tools and improved communication will help employees stay focused on what matters most—supporting people well.

## Strategic Intent

Foster an empowered and diverse workforce that delivers excellent person-directed supports. We believe that caring for teams results in the delivery of exceptional services. When our employees thrive, they are well equipped to support people.



## Goals: to empower teams in providing great supports to people, we will:

- Review our organizational design to ensure Direct Support staff have the support needed to deliver quality, person-directed service
- Equip first level supervisors to lead their teams in delivering high quality supports
- Increase transparency, trust, and connection
- Invest in employee wellbeing to foster an environment where employees feel valued and able to flourish
- Equip employees with the right tools, systems, and resources they need to succeed
- Build leadership competencies and clarify career progression pathways
- Foster a culture of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging across all levels of the organization

### Outcome

Employees feel equipped, supported, and connected, resulting in improved service quality, and a workplace people choose to grow in.

# Strategic Priority: Our Services

Deliver high quality person-directed services that respond to the needs and choices of people



## What We heard

People supported want real choice in their lives: from daily routines, to housing, relationships, and employment. They're seeking greater autonomy and responsibility in decision-making and finances, and more consistent, respectful, and person-directed supports. Families and employees emphasized the importance of flexible services, inclusive environments, and better matching processes. There's a strong desire for expanded access to respite, community support participation, and real community engagement that fosters belonging and contribution. Delivering quality services will require integrated structures and shared practices to ensure consistency in service delivery.

## Strategic Intent

Strengthen our foundation for quality, to deliver flexible, person-directed services that maximizes choice and responsibility and upholds people's inherent rights. We believe every voice matters and every person has the right to be heard, respected, and supported in making decisions about their own lives. By co-designing services and building consistent structures, we will respond to people's self-direction with innovative supports that reflect our mission.



## Goals: to co-design and deliver high-quality, person-directed services, we will:

- Develop and deliver a shared understanding of quality using a person-direction lens
- Develop and deliver standard operating environments and procedures
- Expand Community Participation Supports, Family Camp, Respite, Host Family, and Assistive Technology service models
- Explore and increase access to affordable and supportive housing resources
- Optimize and integrate systems to improve service consistency and responsiveness
- Strengthen and personalize individualized supports, including continued development of Independent Facilitated Personal Planning

### Outcome

People supported experience improved service quality based on their right to choice. As a result, people experience higher satisfaction, waitlists are reduced, and services are delivered with increased consistency and responsiveness.

# Strategic Priority: Our Partners

Deepen our relationships with partners and communities to influence perspectives and government policy to foster belonging for people



## What We heard

Partners see Karis as a trusted collaborator whose presence and faith-shaped approach help communities take real steps forward. Churches are eager for support and resources as they address barriers and nurture belonging. Families and employees believe Karis can help shape systems that better reflect the value and contribution of people with disabilities—systems that are more flexible, transparent, and person-directed. Similarly, government partners welcome Karis' collaboration in designing solutions that improve individualized supports. Strengthening these relationships through shared advocacy will foster real belonging for people with developmental disabilities.

## Strategic Intent

Advocate with our partners in government, and deepen our relationships with the Christian community to foster belonging for people with disabilities. We believe that local communities are a place where everybody belongs. By deepening collaboration with Christian communities and through government advocacy, we will nurture belonging in communities while also shaping broader attitudes and systems that honour the God-given gifts of people with disabilities.



**Goals: to strengthen government relations and collaboration with Christian communities in fostering belonging, we will:**

- Inspire and equip local churches and people within faith communities to welcome and advocate for people with disabilities
- Develop and implement a robust government relations strategy to advocate for appropriate resources to attract and retain employees and high-quality supports for people
- Mobilize and equip self-advocates and families as ambassadors in advocacy efforts
- Keep Karis' values at the heart of every relationship, expressed with grace among Christian partners, government, self-advocates, families, donors, and volunteers

**Outcome**

People supported are known, noticed, and missed in vibrant community relationships. Christian communities become active partners in fostering belonging, and Karis is recognized as a trusted collaborator and faith-rooted advocate for communities where everybody belongs.

# Implementation

## Turning Strategy to Action

This strategic plan sets the direction for the next three years. To turn strategy into action, Karis will develop one Implementation Plan each year, to action our priorities through clear, measurable steps. Each Implementation Plan will include:



Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) aligned with strategic goals



Targets and Deliverables that define success



Assigned Ownership and Timelines to ensure accountability

This strategy is more than a plan—it's a long-term commitment to the people and communities we serve. As we move forward with our strategic priorities, we will align our plans with the capacity of our teams and the pace of change. Real, lasting change takes time, shared commitment, and thoughtful planning. That is why we will take a phased approach to build momentum, while making space to reflect, learn, and adjust together, anchoring our efforts in the lived realities of our teams and the communities we serve. This will help ensure our people and systems are ready to support the work, and that progress is meaningful and lasting across the organization.



Corey standing in his backyard in Windsor, ON, 2023

# Driving Change through Meaningful Engagement and Shared Accountability

As we move forward, we will continue to listen and learn together to stay connected with each other and the people and communities we serve. We will create space for open conversations to help us stay aligned to our strategic priorities, and make sure everybody feels part of the journey.

**Engagement and Communication:** We will continue in our co-design journey, engaging people supported, families, employees, and external partners through listening sessions, surveys, and other feedback channels. We will also use real stories to share lived experiences that challenge assumptions and build support for more inclusive communities.

**Planning Cycles:** Annual planning will define Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) that are aligned with strategic goals. These will guide the development of yearly Implementation Plans.

**Monitoring and Reporting:** Progress will be tracked quarterly and shared with the Board of Directors, leadership, and teams, to support timely adjustments and foster shared ownership of results. Updates on strategic efforts will be shared with communities annually.



Krystal and Hareem preparing smoothies at the Peel Community Participation Supports location, 2024

**Resourcing and Accountability:** Cross-functional teams, led by subject-matter experts, will be responsible for delivering on OKRs. Clear ownership and timelines will support accountability.

**Learning and Adaptation:** We will continue to create space for reflection and learning throughout the journey. Insights gathered will inform future planning and strengthen our ability to adapt in a changing environment.

# Acknowledgements

We are deeply grateful to everybody for their contributions throughout our co-design journey—shaping the priorities and commitments that guide this strategic plan.

- People supported by Karis Disability Services
- Our Voices Matter Council
- Families of people supported by Karis Disability Services
- Community Advisory Networks
- Davis Pier Consulting
- Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
- Ministry of Social Services
- Developmental Services Ontario agencies
- Community Living Ontario
- Passport ONE Family Service Toronto
- Christian partners (church and para-church leaders)
- Community partners
- Karis employees and employee groups:
  - Administrative Employees
  - Area Managers
  - Community Development Managers
  - Community Facilities Specialists
  - Direct Support Professionals
  - Employee Engagement Representatives
  - Human Resources Business Partners
  - Personal Plan Facilitators
  - Program Managers
  - Service Standards Managers
  - Talent Acquisition Managers
  - Workplace Relations Specialists

We extend a heartfelt thank you to the following self-advocates and co-hosts whose leadership brought the Karis Connected Everybody Engages sessions to life:

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- Joanna Sylvestre
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- Linda Lafontaine
- Lorie Downie
- Patricia Morgan
- Ray Ellis
- Shawn Duncan
- Stephen Grundy
- Steven Welbourne
- Tammy Laskowski
- Trevor Hoy
- Wayne Jones

# Our Co-Design Journey



Waterloo Office Meeting,  
December 2025



Toronto Karis Connected Everybody Engages Session, May 2025

Meeting People  
Where They Are  
  
Engaging teams  
and communities

Connecting with  
Communities  
  
Karis Connected  
Everybody Engages  
Sessions across Ontario  
and Saskatchewan



Peterborough Karis Connected  
Everybody Engages Session, May 2025



Leaders Conference in  
Muskoka, 2025

Feedback from  
Teams and  
Communities  
  
Validating what we  
heard and learned



Regina Karis Connected  
Everybody Engages Session,  
May 2025





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