



Hidden Disability Sunflower program launches at the City of Waterloo May 25

Not all disabilities are visible. The City of Waterloo is making an important effort to recognize and support individuals with invisible disabilities by becoming an official member of the **Hidden Disabilities Sunflower** program, a globally recognized initiative that promotes understanding, inclusion, and accessibility.

About the Program

The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower is a simple yet powerful symbol. Individuals with invisible disabilities may choose to wear a sunflower lanyard or bracelet to discreetly indicate that they may need additional support, time, patience, or understanding. Wearing the sunflower is entirely voluntary, and the symbol helps remove the pressure of having to explain personal circumstances.

What This Means for Volunteers

This program encourages a culture of awareness and respect across all interactions. By recognizing the sunflower symbol, staff and volunteers can better support residents through patience, flexibility, and being considerate of individual needs.

How You Can Provide Support

Supporting people who wear the sunflower is simple and meaningful. Volunteers should:

- be observant and recognize the Sunflower symbol
- go up to the wearer and ask if you can help
- not question individuals about their disability, there is no requirement for anyone to not have to disclose what it is
- provide additional time, space, or assistance as needed
- approach interactions with empathy and without assumptions

Distribution of lanyards and bracelets

Residents can pick up a lanyard or bracelet at the Waterloo Memorial Recreation Complex, RIM Park, Moses Springer Community Centre, Albert McCormick and the Waterloo Public Library branches as of May 25, 2026.