

AGENCY

## Coristine will assume role in March



By [Trevor Terfloth](#), Chatham Daily News

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Ron Coristine Jr. was announced as the new executive director for Community Living Chatham-Kent on Tuesday. In March, he will replace Lu Ann Cowell, who is retiring after 39 years with the organization. (Trevor Terfloth/The Daily News)

A familiar face will soon take over as executive director of Community Living Chatham-Kent.

Ron Coristine Jr. will succeed Lu Ann Cowell, who is retiring after 39 years with the organization.

Coristine, who officially begins his new role March 1, said he's excited for the challenge.

"I would like to grow our participation within the community," he told The Daily News Tuesday. "I think we do some really good things right now and I would like to do even more."

Coristine is currently a program director supervising the operations of children's respite, adult respite, community supports, JOBWORX - Employment Services, Making It Happen Program, quality assurance and planning department, and several residential locations.

He also played a lead role, in co-operation with the Chatham-Kent Police Service, to institute protocols for reporting abuse and protecting people who have an intellectual disability.

Coristine's selection comes after an executive recruitment search that attracted the interest of candidates from many jurisdictions.

"Ron has worked with the agency for over 24 years. We congratulate Ron on his accomplishments and look forward to the leadership commitment he will bring to Community Living Chatham-Kent in his new role as executive director," board president Stephen Andari said in a media release.

There are 260 employees in the organization, which supports approximately 475 people.

"I give credit to the people who have gone out and secured employment and are working competitively, and demonstrating that disability is in fact just a characteristic," Coristine said. "Skill and talent is the priority."

He said his goals include continuing to ensure Community Living is a service provider of choice, as well as an employer of choice.

Crediting various partners, including school boards, Coristine said there has been a reduction in stigmas over the years.

"That has definitely occurred," he said. "There's been a real growth with respect to inclusive education."

Coristine is University of Windsor graduate, and has completed numerous courses and certifications, including the OASIS leadership program at Queen's University, the executive management program at McMaster University, the OASIS advanced leadership program, Merging Talent with Strategy at Queen's University, and the University of Delaware's Ontario Leadership Institute.

He also serves as a member of the board of directors with the Chatham-Kent Legal Clinic, Kent Minor Hockey Association and New Beginnings Housing Project.

Coristine praised the leadership of Cowell, calling her a solid mentor who prepared him well.

"She's extremely well-respected," he said. "This agency supports many people who moved from regional centres into their communities.

"She has just put this agency in a position to move forward and be very successful."