

Durham Association for Family Resources and Support

Oshawa Botanical Gardens

Annual Report
2024

Business Meeting Agenda

Land Acknowledgment

Welcome - Chair of the Board

Approval of Meeting Agenda

Approval of the June 26, 2023 Minutes of the AGM

Report from the Chair of the Board

Report from the Executive Director

Presentation of Audited Financials

Approval of Auditors

Nominations Committee Report

Election of Board of Directors

Staff Recognition

Business Meeting Adjournment

Annual General
Meeting Agenda
Wednesday,
June 26, 2024
6:00 pm

Following the Business Meeting:

Families Thrive When....

A Family Story from Tracy and Allan MacGillivray

Good afternoon, and welcome to our Annual General Meeting. It has been an honor to support the organization, its mission and vision for another year.

First and foremost, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all of you — the families who are the foundation of our organization. Your dedication and hard work for your loved ones with disabilities truly inspire us and drive our mission forward.

Last year, we developed our strategic plan, and this year we have made significant progress on our strategic initiatives. I want to give special recognition to our outstanding Executive Director, Janet Klees, for her exemplary leadership. Her contributions have been pivotal in advancing our strategic initiatives.

Chairperson's
Report
2023-2024

Here are some of the organizational major achievements this year:

1. Engagement of Young Families: We have successfully increased engagement among young families. By keeping track of their issues and opportunities, we are now more responsive to their needs than ever before.

2. Housing Initiatives: Families are taking the lead in housing initiatives, and local municipalities are seeking our contribution to build inclusive communities. We were invited by the mayor of Whitby to discuss their housing strategy, reflecting our growing influence.

3. Recognizing Capacity and Ensuring Voice: DFR completed participation in the provincial Supportive Decision-Making Pilot to make an impact on future legislative change in Ontario. The report and videos were submitted to ensure our voice is heard.

4. Health Care Collaboration: We are building strong relationships with Lakeridge Health to improve safety, accommodation for individuals, and address consent issues, ensuring better care and support for our loved ones.

5. Individualized Funding Pathways: We are working closely with the ministry to align the Individualized Funding Pathways model with our values. Additionally, we are making significant progress in collaborating with like-minded organizations to envision future possibilities.

6. Data Collection and Evidence: By leveraging our new Apricot database, we are tracking progress and extracting valuable data. We have gathered substantial data for our Housing initiative, Recognizing Capacity, and Young Families initiatives, which will help us understand trends and demonstrate our impact.

I invite you to celebrate the progress we have made together and the potential that lies ahead.

The Board diligently ensures the organizational governance, with members bringing both expertise and heart to every meeting. Many are families and members of DFR, much like yourselves.

Throughout the year, our Board committees diligently supported key governance functions. Special recognition goes to Carron Jensen, Chair of the Nomination Committee, for the efforts in recruiting high-quality board members. Peter Killam, Andy MacGillivray, and Ambika Sharma will be presented to the membership for approval later in our meeting. Additionally, I would like to acknowledge Hassnane Sajan and Peter Killam, who shared the position of the Chair of the Finance Committee and Treasurer. Under their oversight, the organization further solidified its financial position.

This year, the Board will be saying goodbye to Ginnette Cormier Pennell, Johanne Penrose, and myself. After 6 years on the Board, my tenure as a Board Chair and a member concludes, my deepest thanks extend to the entire board for their exceptional service. It has been a privilege to collaborate with such dedicated individuals.

To our incredible staff at DFR, thank you for your relentless efforts and for organizing the remarkable “What’s at Our Table” event, which authentically captured the heart and spirit of the DFR community. Your hard work is deeply valued and does not go unnoticed.

Looking ahead, I am confident that together, we will continue to make significant strides in advocating for families and advancing our strategic objectives. The dedication and resilience of our families is what truly inspires us to move forward.

As we reach another milestone, let’s take a moment to celebrate our collective achievements and how far we have come. Your presence at the Annual General Meeting is a symbol of our unity and your trust in what we do. We deeply appreciate the opportunity to be able to share this moment with all of you.

Thank you.

Olga



DFR Staff
Years of
Service

**We’d like to recognize the following DFR staff
for their ongoing years of service:**

ERIN O'REILLY	Began Dec 4 2018	5 years of service
MELANIE PINEDA	Began Jul 2018	5 years of service
LAURA POWELL	Began Oct 1 2018	5 years of service

EIGHTEEN

Organizations served by the Collaborative Administrative Department

18

OVER TWO HUNDRED

Adults supported through the Family Support team

200+

OVER SEVENTY FIVE

Children supported through the Family Support team

75+

EIGHTY FOUR

Free learning events hosted by DFR

84

NINE HUNDRED FOURTEEN

People attended our events

914

Durham Family Resources by the Numbers 2023-2024

Siblings Rosanne and Irving as Masters of Ceremony at Stories by the Fire



Other 2023-2024 Ventures

It has been another fruitful year of imagining, learning, connecting and of Changing Hearts and Minds. Not a month went by without opportunities for families to come together in ways that focused on listening carefully to the voice of their loved ones.

In our way, support to the person in the context of family (chosen or otherwise), we heard loudly from those considered the 'Next Generation' that they wanted to be part of further discussion with other family members who were figuring things out after their parents were aging or just no longer as available as they might have been in previous years. The sons and daughters of a long-established family group came together in partnership with Next Gen and DFR to produce a learning series in which stories of Navigating the Future Path were featured with time for good discussion and mutual learning. The series was made possible through a Community Living Ontario Family Network Grant. Although the grant was finalized, the conversations continue.

Next Gen captures those thinking about longer-term futures and planning, but we are well aware that life does not begin in adulthood. We have been making strides in engaging families with young children to embark on a path that leads to opportunities for roles, relationships, and places of belonging from the start. This past year, we began Connect IRL, a place for parents and extended family to come together in mutual learning and support. This could not have been possible without eager families, our Biomedical Coach, and our newest addition to the DFR team – the Children's Implementation Lead. Connecting families to one another remains core to how we have heard families thrive.

Changing the hearts and minds of our community.

Last year we began a new Strategic Plan. Our focus going forward is to help build and share good stories that will change what typically goes into the minds of community members. With good and impactful stories, a greater amount of everyday interactions with community members, and a higher profile to share these, together we can influence how our greater community welcomes and expects contribution from its members with disability.

And so our central theme to this strategic plan is: **Changing the hearts and minds of our community: one story, one relationship at a time.**

We have been getting to work on all four strategic directions and have some highlights to share!

Solid Foundation in Practice and Implementation

- Investment in families and all Family Support staff through hosting of four-day Social Role Valorization training.
- Families are involved in all aspects of Family Support that make for viable and authentic principled partnerships including a recently completed CLO Family Engagement Grant which resulted in a new learning series. *Navigating the Future Path* focused on Legacy Planning and was co-designed with the Community Explorers family group and the Next Gen family group.

Organize and Extend our Learning, Teaching, and Sharing Stories of Possibility

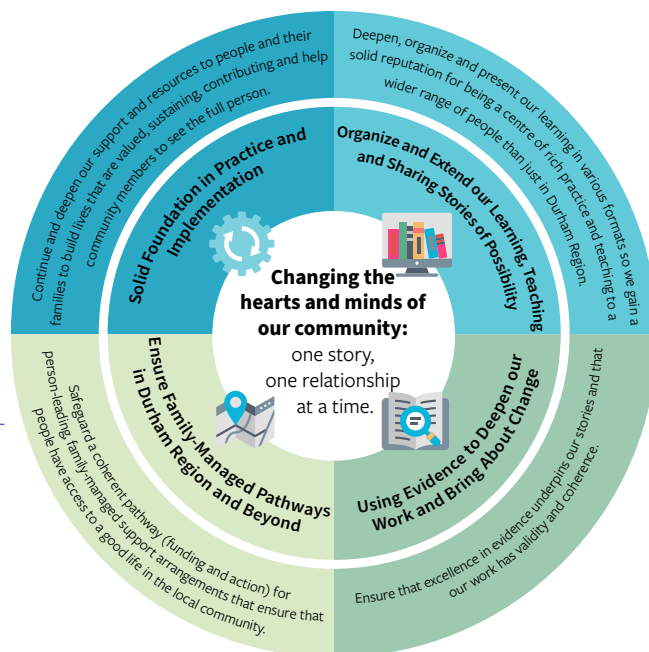
- We continue to organize the learning material we have created this past year as we examine platforms which could hold and offer this online.
- New resources developed in the past 6-months period includes 12 new videos showcasing Recognizing Capacity learning. [A new website resource](#) includes nine individual family reflection highlight videos alongside full written reflections, and three themed compilation videos with supplementary key highlights and discussion questions for continued learning.

Using Evidence to Deepen our Work and Bring About Change

- We completed a two-day retreat in which all DFR departments contributed towards identifying areas and indicators where “change” can be seen and evidence collected in our work. Cross-department brainstorming identified how we can use existing data and think through new ways to collect and showcase the impact of family-managed and family-led initiatives.

Ensure Family-Managed Pathways in Durham Region and Beyond

- A successful collaboration via the Resources and Capabilities Subcommittee has led to the creation of [Individualized Funding in Ontario: Possibilities and Pathways – Three Approaches to Work for All](#) which contains practical approaches leading to more opportunities and choices for people with support from families, trusted others, supportive agencies and organizations as part of a full life. This document is being used to advocate for and safeguard the ways that have worked well in Durham Region for many years.



Read our full Strategic Plan by using the QR code to the right:

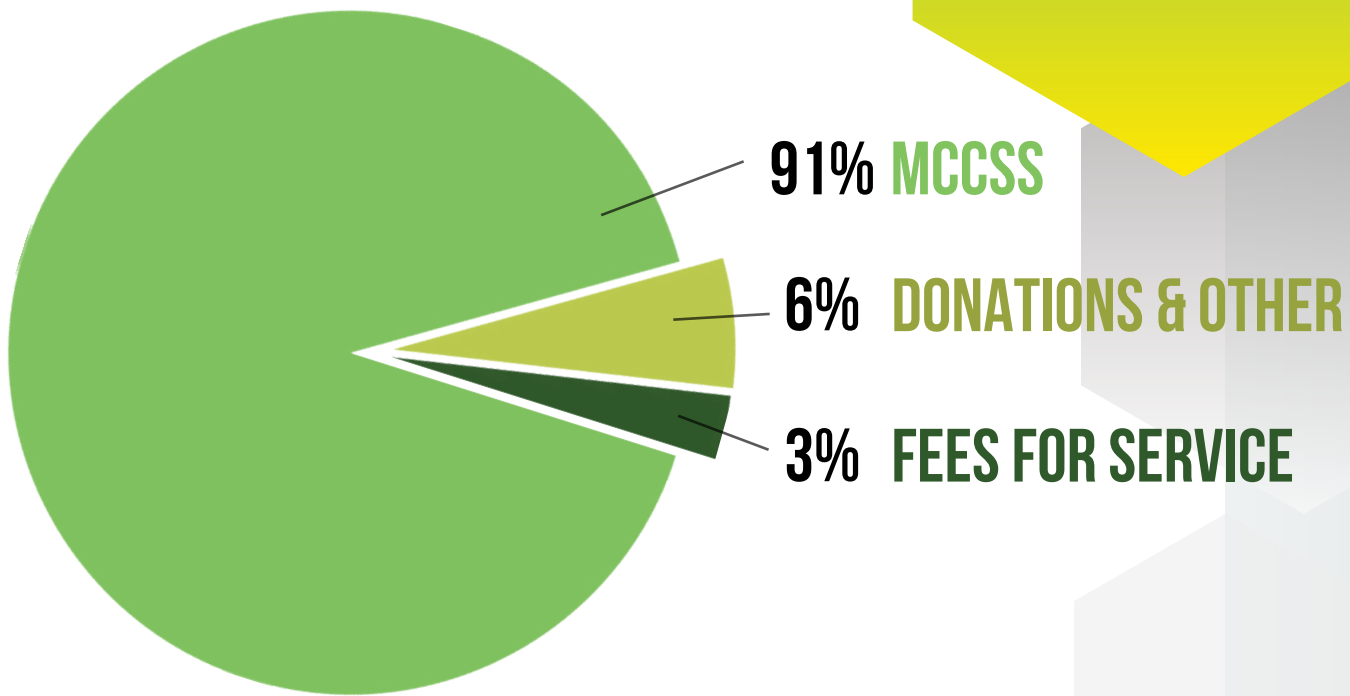
- Open your camera app on your smart device while connected to the internet.
- Focus the camera on the QR code by gently tapping the code.
- Follow the instructions on the screen to complete the action.



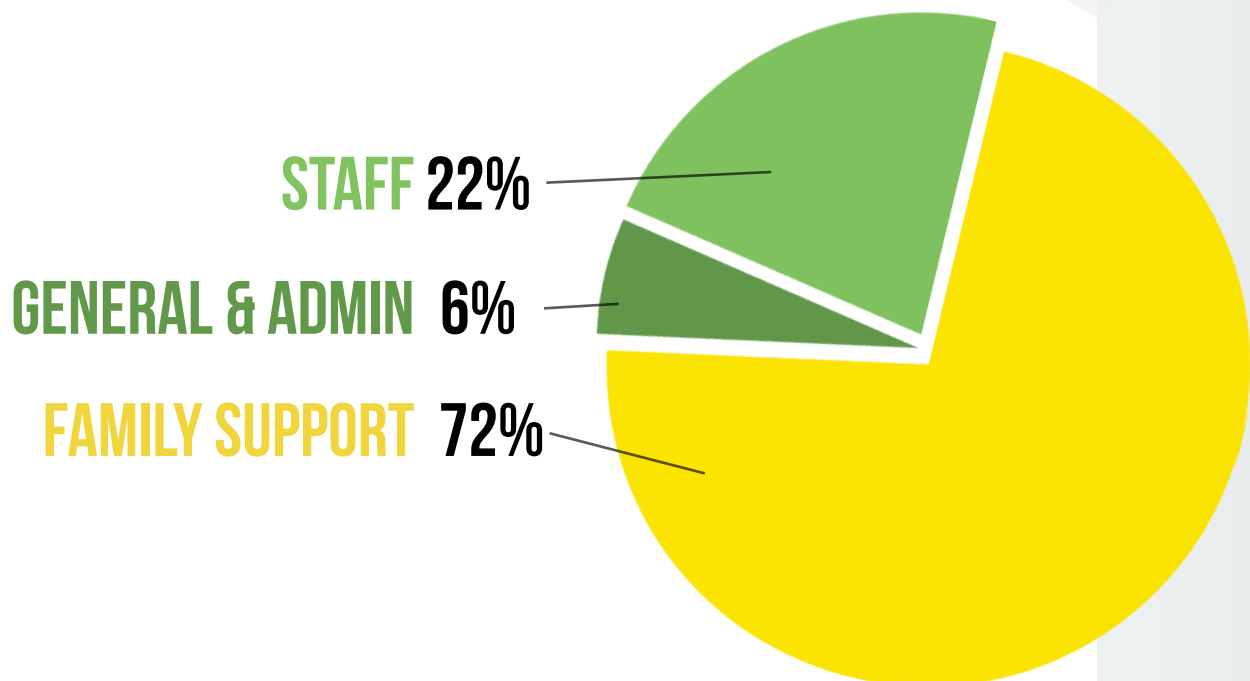
BDO Canada LLP audited the financial statements of Durham Association For Family Resources and Support for the year ended March 31, 2024 and the Board of Directors approved the statements at their meeting of June 20, 2024. The results are positive with a net surplus of \$268k.

Financial Summary for 2023-2024

Where the Money Came From



How We Put the Money to Work



Board of Directors 2023-2024

Olga Minikh	Chair of the Board
Scott McGrath	Vice Chair
Kim Southern-Paulsen	Treasurer
Ginette Cormier Pennell	Director
Jordan Etherington	Director
Carron Jensen	Director
Timothy Lee	Director
Bradley Miller	Director
Johanne Penrose	Director
Hassnane Sajan	Director

Annual Report from the Executive Director

Change the mindset, and change the story

Our current Strategic Plan, which was only approved last year, widens the focus of our work together with families. Bringing about good lives for family members with disability in real community has always been our aim. What is different now is that our aim, well beyond the family alone, is to ensure that the wider community hears these stories for the same kind of impact – to shift their ideas of possibility, to increase their expectations, and to extend into real welcome. *Mutually engaged community is better community.*

“I did not know that I could want that” - Repeatedly, we see that families shift their ideas of what is possible for and with their loved ones with disability when they hear stories of others who have done so. Limited ideas and expectations are the result of years of society’s inaccurate limitations on and expectations of their family member. And once family minds begin to change, indeed the stories emerging are quite different – ordinary, typical, familiar, and wonderful. In this new strategic phase, just as families need these new stories to shift their mindset, so do our communities. These stories remind families and community members just how much is gained by all, when people with disabilities are welcomed and contribute to all.

Here are only some broad strokes of the ways that we see this past year of new conversations and new stories arising:

- *There is nothing more natural than seeking support in making the decisions in our lives* - In November we launched a series of videos at the end of our **Recognizing Capacity** project. In these videos, families speak of their experiences in learning to expect their family member to have the capacity to be involved in the decisions of their lives, and how this mirrors how we all make decisions. These videos outline the impact of such expectations – on the people themselves, on the family, and on those around. These beautiful and insightful videos are now available to all on our website and are linked to CLO and IC websites for provincial and national sharing.



Visit the *Recognizing Capacity* project website via the QR code above.

- *When families stop waiting for residential services, home happens* - Our **Imagining Home** family group (energized by the smaller focused IBC group) have been taking the Region by storm, as we have engaged with every new build we hear about – responding, critiquing, and suggesting what would be better. This has led to invitations from Whitby mayor and council, approaches from local developers, early involvement in discussion of good neighbourhoods for Whitby, and more. There is great depth to this unfolding advocacy for communities that work for all, and with families in the lead, the council pays attention.



- *“I now see my family member in a new light – contribution, not disability”* We were able to run two **Making the Most** sessions with families this year – our 15th in just over 9 years! This early family-to-family learning and planning series is powerful enough to make us true believers as we watch families shift their ideas of possibility, begin to plan new steps forward, and have a new imagination of the life story that will unfold.

- *Behaviour is communication on a two-way street* - Our **Safe at Hospital Working Group** has made two presentations to the staff at Lakeridge Health to begin to change the expectations and ideas of the hospital staff for what is possible in terms of good healthcare for patients with a disability. Imagine the shift in mindset possible when stories, told by families themselves, outline people with disabilities as constantly being involved in their own healthcare.

- **Stories by the Fire** and other presentations continually feature stories (live or by video) that speak to valued roles, life in full, a focus on youngest families, and legacy for the next generation. This is done with a constant thought as to *what we are putting into the hearts and minds of others so that perspectives are altered and expectations are shifted.*

On other fronts, we are working hard to ensure that the Ministry in its reform work understands and values the unique way that Durham Family Resources strives to partner and work with families, rather than taking over and doing for. We have collaborated with many other people and agencies on a proposed model for moving ahead **Individualized Funding Pathways and Possibilities**. We continue to have updating discussions with the Minister’s office, and work hard to safeguard the ways that have worked well in Durham Region for many years. In times of change, we need to deeply understand what we value and find a place for that in the new ways forward.

The work to partner and support family plans and ideas would not be possible without an exceptional team. And so I extend thanks and gratitude to all. So much is done that is beyond a simple day’s work. It is noticed and appreciated. In particular I must thank Sue Talmey and Selena Blake for their tenacity, strength, ever-new ideas, and enormous compassion. In addition, many thanks to a hard-working Board of Directors in an organization with high aims and intentions. And finally, I am ever truly grateful for the generosity of families who continually update and share their stories.

Janet