

DURHAM ASSOCIATION FOR FAMILY RESPITE SERVICES

an opportunity to learn  
about the unique work  
and abundance of  
resources on offer

WHAT'S AT OUR TABLE



APRIL 2017

While the information contained in this document was accurate at the date of publication, changes in circumstance afterwards may mean this document does not reflect the most current situation at the time of reading. This document goes through an annual review and edit, but in-between there may be changes to date which are not reflected.

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# INTRODUCTION

Durham Association for Family Respite Services is a Durham-based, family support and resource organization that began with and for families over 35 years ago, and is largely but not solely funded by the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Our work is shaped by our relationship with a range of over 300 families and our mutual understanding of their potential and capacity, and of what supports, resources, and information they might welcome in order to pursue a positive Vision of a good life for their family member within their neighbourhood and community.

We are anchored by a deep understanding and thoughtful application of the principle of Social Role Valorization (SRV) which is explained on the following page. This guides us to promote and value a good, ordinary life in every day community for all, and to design ways to make this the option of choice for people whenever possible.

What we offer, that is, what is on our table for families, is offered with trust in the capacity of family and ordinary people to truly want to build a community where everyone belongs and is appreciated and recognized for their contributions. Therefore, what is offered is done through a family lens - the intensity of participation, the selection of when and how to use the resources, and the ways in which families choose to take part in our resources and supports are, as much as possible, family led and decided.

At our table you will find a rich variety of such supports. Within our programmatic offerings under Family Supports, managed capably by Teresa Dale and more recently together with Selena Blake, are facilitation and information supports, projects and resources. Within our administrative side and through Central Administrative Department, ably directed by Sue Talmey, there is a range of financial management, accounting, and human resource supports provided both to our own organization and as supports to other non-profit organizations.

We are all steeped in common vision shared by families, staff and board members to live our lives and make our contributions, not in the separate world of Disability, but instead along the Road Most Travelled by typical others - among them and with them - in our communities.

## DAFRS AND THE PRINCIPLE OF SOCIAL ROLE VALORIZATION (SRV)

The principle of social role valorization (SRV) is not immediately familiar to most people who come to DAFRS as board members, families, or even as new staff members. However, the depth and truth of this anchoring principle and its implementation framework is often clear and recognizable to people once they hear it described in common language, and once they understand its effectiveness as it guides the implementation of strategies that make a positive difference in the lives of people who are vulnerable. Fairly quickly, most people can appreciate this framework as a way to safeguard and build lives of value and meaning within the hearts of our communities.

Simply put, SRV explains that human beings are hard-wired to judge one another and quickly decide whether the other is "like me and mine" or "unlike me and strange and different". Those we recognize as like us and ours, we embrace and treat well. Those whom we judge to be essentially different, we push away and distance ourselves from. Much of this interaction is unconscious, however the impact on people and their lives and opportunities is very real.

Two things impact powerfully upon whether another person is seen to be "one of us" or "one of them" and these are: a) the company we keep lets others know that we (a new person) are okay if we are seen together with people, singularly or in groups, that they already know and like, understand and value; b) the roles we are perceived to hold - everyday, familiar and valued roles (sister, employee, and teacher) help others to see a person as knowable and sharing common values, while weird, unfamiliar and negative roles (adult day programme participant, special needs guy, and criminal) make others see the person as different and disconcerting, causing them to withdraw or turn away. Some roles are chosen by us in our lives (teacher, swimmer, neighbour) and others are thrust upon us by circumstances (poor person, sister, disabled person). The roles we are seen to hold are powerful ways that influence how the other will judge us. Interestingly, building relationships (i.e., the company we keep) that are rich, rewarding and safeguarding most easily arise when a person holds a range of typical and familiar roles in their lives (uncle, neighbour, drummer, volunteer, churchmember).

As an organization, as staff and board members, and as families and community members we can use this principle to positively influence the perception of the people with disabilities we love in our community, so that other community members are able to perceive their interests, gifts, talents and the things they have in common with that community member. When people with disabilities are included in everyday family and community life - among their non-disabled family members, peers and neighbours and holding typical, ordinary roles - the aspects of their lives and personalities that are familiar, knowable and in common with others are emphasized. The disability does not disappear, but it becomes less important. This allows community members to share common spaces and experiences and include each other as "like me and mine". They come closer, ask questions, invite, offer opportunities and enter into relationships.

When this is not done, people with disabilities are almost always grouped together- to work, to live, to recreate - and set apart from others so that what is emphasized instead is their disability, the ways that they are different, and their strangeness from "the rest of us". Other community members who come across people in such groups and settings turn away, feel uncomfortable, address the group rather than individuals, and save their best opportunities and genuine relationships for people who are more "like themselves".

More specifically, as an organization, through board, staff and families, we can assist families to see and bring out the wonderful and positive and ordinary aspects of their family member's personality and lives; we can help families to remember the value and benefit of just being one of the family or one of the crowd in ordinary ways; we can offer strategies that assist people with disabilities to make their contributions in regular society in typical ways; we can promote ways in which people are seen and become known among their non-disabled peers so that their common interests and familiar roles shine through; and we can identify interests and build strong and

new roles based on these. We can use all of this as a context for encouraging relationship - which will bring new opportunities of its own. We can gently bring awareness and teach about the impact of a life where the person is seen and treated as different, and how simple changes can more effectively bring about the Vision for a good life that almost every single family member has for their whole family.

Therefore, the resources, information, and supports offered to and with the families of DAFRS are provided within an SRV mindset. This means that from board to staff to volunteers to mentoring families SRV is a lens through which we design, develop and offer ourselves. DAFRS was started and developed many of its programmes and services in the past without a conscious thought to the principle of SRV. However, when this principle and framework became known, it was thought to be a natural fit for providing guidance to the work of the organization.

Although the work within DAFRS has long been steeped in the ideas of SRV, it is only in the past few years that this is being applied consciously and with some rigour. This work will continue into the future. This means that we continue to think about the parts of our supports and resources that seem to challenge the principle of SRV and keep on trying to figure out how to offer supports in a way more consistent with this guiding principles and therefore, likely more able to bring the people into a good life in their community.

For the time being, where we might offer a resource that is not fully true to the principle of SRV - and therefore less effective in bringing about good life opportunities for the person - we allow our deep caring and respect for the family to come first. We identify what is a compromised situation, we do not judge familiar and comfortable supports but focus on the family experiencing something different which they may possibly come to see as better. We encourage families to give the new and unfamiliar a try in small well-supported steps, and meanwhile we ensure that whatever supports and resources we do provide is of the highest possible calibre.

Over the course of the Board's year, we will spend more time understanding the principle of SRV and its practical implications and we will discuss the ways in which we are working in line with the principle and where we still have work to do.

IN THE MEANTIME, THE FOLLOWING IS OUR CURRENT WORKING DEFINITION OF A GOOD LIFE IN COMMUNITY:

The aim is to belong to a community where all people are valued, our differences are respected, our contributions drawn forth, and our needs are met in typical and valued ways so we can live in dignity among and in valued relationship with all others, and in in typical life circumstances as enjoyed by all of us, as citizens.

A SOCIALLY INCLUSIVE SOCIETY IS THEREBY EVIDENCED BY PEOPLE –

- o being present regularly and frequently in ordinary places in their communities,
- o in typical and normative ways,
- o in demographically representative groupings,
- o holding valued social roles based on their interests and passions and choosing
- o wherein they make relevant and welcomed contributions
- o in and through their relationships with a range of valued and typical citizens

## FAMILY SUPPORT - A PLACE OF WELCOME

Over the past two years the Family Support Team has grown substantially- offering a variety of resources and supports to families. Creative projects, emerging practices and evaluative methods are now key pillars amongst principled facilitation and planning. Currently 248 children and adults are supported by the actions of facilitators, coordinators and a collaborative management team.

The Family Support Team is dedicated to intentionally working towards assisting members to find personal fulfillment and to contribute to their families and communities through the discovery of their places of belonging, one person at a time, nurturing their most personal desire to discover, to grow, to participate, to share, and to become part of something more.

The supports and resources of DAFRS are available to families in many different ways with Family Support:

Several family groups are facilitated here at DAFRS. Families that meet regularly in groupings offer strength to each other and are a great source of encouragement and resource. Some groups are ad hoc and interest-based groups to focus on an issue; others are committed members of a longer standing family group with facilitation over the long term.

Some families make use of the opportunities provided by the Adult Respite Home. Many of them work with a dedicated facilitator who supports them to think about a life beyond the use of that home.

Countless more people are invited to participate in a variety of learning events (see page 11) via our Family Focus newsletter, the Information Network, Durham Family Network, and [respiteservices.com](http://respiteservices.com), where they will discover support to dream big, and network with others in order to turn those dreams into reality.

We are into our second year of providing a guided family-to-family learning series, Making the Most of Funding Dollars which is open to all interested families who want to begin to think and plan differently.

Two MCSS-funded projects are happening right now. These projects are designed for their ability to further the work of DAFRS to strengthen families and build community: "My Direct Plan" is an on-line tool developed to help families manage and plan their direct support finances. It puts the recipients in direct control of submitting expenses, tracking expenditures, and keeping records which are available to them night or day at their convenience. "Housing is a community issue" is a housing project taking place in both Leeds Grenville Region and Durham Region which started October 1, 2015 has proven successful in bringing families together to explore creative housing options.

Administrative revenue generated from these MCSS Projects and other administrative fees allow us to run other family support initiatives deepening our support to those longing for connection through their community involvement. These projects are described later on, but are all based firmly in the interests of the participants and the discovery of where those interests can be experienced within their local community as well as other ways of providing supports to families. These include innovative ventures such as the Bio-medical Approaches Study Group, Interest Based Recruitment, Job Development, Mindfulness and our Storyteller to the Board.

Throughout the year there are many learning opportunities and times set aside for families to drop by and meet with a facilitator to get information that can be very helpful to their family in trying to figure things out. Everyone who is interested is welcome to participate regardless of formal registration with our organization. This is our way of providing additional support to those not directly connected to our facilitation support.

Many families take advantage of our richly presented Recruitment services, at the core of which is [respite-services.com](http://respite-services.com) as the recruitment and hiring of competent supporters is key to enjoying a good life in community.

In terms of support to families and the broader community we are very pleased with our monthly publication the "Family Focus" which is broadly distributed both electronically and in print, keeping all who request it informed about relevant events and topics of interest.

Additionally, many of our staff hold active roles with multi-agency committees always keeping in view our particular focus on the importance of family, personal networks, true community, and valued social roles, all considered for one person at a time.

# A RANGE OF POSSIBLE FACILITATION SUPPORT FROM DAFRS

In partnership with the individual, their family and where possible, personal networks of support, DAFRS facilitators are available to:

## PROVIDE PLANNING SUPPORT

- Available on an as needed basis, for as long as it takes, and throughout the person's life
- Planning the supports needed to make personal and unique contributions to one's family, friends, neighbours, co-workers, classmates and civic. Includes all parts of life such as leisure pursuits, recreational involvements, faith communities, neighbourhood and country.
- Creating a vision of...a home of my own, the pursuit of their passions and interests, gaining more independence, learning and growing, etc. AND how to make the vision a reality. (Interests and passions, learning and growing)
- Planning: visioning, securing and creating and maintaining a real home of my own-whatever that may be; by focusing on me personally, and person-centred.
  - Transition planning; getting from A to B with the big picture and the details (from home to school, through school, to work and play and my contributions. Whole life continuum)
  - Succession Planning: the people, the plans, the transitions, the information; usually but not always with aging families
  - Crisis planning; avoiding it, getting through it, being prepared

## FACILITATE THE PROVISION OF PAID DIRECT SUPPORT

- All about Paid Supporters: in partnership with families we design supports, find, interview, mentor, provide support to supporters, coach people in learning and developing the skills of the overall management of supporters.
- Securing both private and public direct support funds such as Life on Campus, DSNAP, Passport, Bascule Bursary, Urgent Response Crisis funds, I.F., Residential, etc. ASD Children's respite, camp bursaries, Critical Intervention Funds for children and youth, and Dual Diagnosis funds.
- Support Funds: assist to design budgets, figure out ways to make the most of those funds, seek and secure other funds both temporary and long term

## EASE THE WAY

- Relationships: strengthening the person and their family's networks of support, formal circles of support, family groups, connecting to other families, relationships and roles within the family
- Finding Ways through Various Systems: making the way through systems easier, to get the most of what is needed, and avoid pitfalls and dead ends. This could include all types of systems such as education, Developmental Services Ontario, health, ODSP, legal, etc.
- To provide resources and information about a multitude of things such as RDSP, estate planning, wills, trusts, guardianship, supported and substitute decision making, home renovation bi-laws, and introducing them to the people who have the information and expertise that is needed
- To gain information and access to other services such as, counselling, subsidized housing, child and youth services, community programs and services, etc.
- From activity driven planning to role driven planning
- From segregated and congregated settings to individualized involvements and supports that are non-disability focused environments typical of their age and gender within their chosen communities

- Support to attend DAFRS learning events and other workshops that fit the purview of DAFRS
- Gaining peace of mind for parents and other care givers as their sons and daughters fill their lives with meaningful engagements.
- Other areas of facilitation support could also include but not limited to: employment opportunities, continuing education, high school and elementary school, post-secondary school, and home, community, civic and work life, home and housing, home renovations to accommodate changing family needs and aspirations for independent living.

## ALL OF THIS FACILITATION IS PROVIDED

- From a holistic approach; with the whole family system, while also amplifying the disabled members voice, self-determination.
- By looking to typical community involvements and supports as a first resort
- Perspective of a team member because while facilitators may have a very wide range of knowledge and access to a wide range of resources, they are not expected to be experts in everything! Part of the knowledge they learn is how to can depend on the family support team to help find answers, and to whom they can connect a family for the resources they want and need.
- By always planning with someone individually, not as a group. It is Community based, building capacity, supporting capacity and nurturing it, empowering the person, small steps and big steps, etc.
- Sharing stories of others and how they've paved the way.

## FACILITATORS ARE :



# FACILITATION SUPPORT THROUGH DAFRS FOR YOUNG FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

## Family Centered and Community Focused

### WHO DO WE SERVE

- Newborn - Children - 18 years old
- Children with impairment/disability - more broadly defined
- Young parents impacted by disability themselves
- Young parents needing short-term & longer-term assistance
- Grandparents raising grandchildren with impairment/disability

Here at DAFRS we currently do not have a waitlist for children. A DAFRS Facilitator is able to personally connect with each young family. We get calls from an average of 1-2 new families regarding children each month.

### HOW DO FAMILIES FIND US

- Most call themselves
- Many are advised by others to call
- School and agency referrals
- Hospital/Doctor/Social worker referrals
- CAS referrals

When a young parent calls DAFRS a friendly person at the other end of the phone takes time to listen to them and offers some initial ideas/suggestions prior to a personal visit with a DAFRS Facilitator.

### COMMON REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

- Respite
- Support to understand the impact of a new diagnosis
- Support with applications - government funding - community funding
- Support to navigate other systems - health, education, child protection
- Support & planning during major transitions and/or crisis - medical/family

Young parents make the first call to DAFRS seeking assistance around a number of issues. Respite is often a beginning topic of conversation because many families assume we provide traditional respite support because of our agency name. Initial conversations with families often involve offering a new conceptualization of the term 'respite'.

### RESOURCES ACCESSED BY A FACILITATOR TO SUPPORT YOUNG FAMILIES

- Networking - Family Groups, Durham Family Network, Experienced Parents, Community Resources
- Family Learning - Parent to Parent, Workshops both in-house and outside DAFRS, TED Talks, YouTube, Websites, Books & videos
- Funding - Children's Flex Funding, Respite funding, SSAH, ACSD, Private/charitable, Bascule Bursary, Family Leadership Fund, RDSP, Insurance, Child Support, Wills & Trusts

In partnership with families we access small amounts of funding & community resources that can assist and support a child to participate in typical community opportunities from summer camp, clubs, vocal & piano lessons, Girls Guides & Boy scouts to art lessons and Karate classes.

## FACILITATION SUPPORT FOR YOUNG FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN

Conversations over time ~ Supporting families where they are at ~ Planning for the child and family is incorporated into ordinary conversation ~ Creating & Sharing resources to support new ways of thinking ~ Shedding light on the multitude of potential and new possibilities for the child.

Supporting access to family learning opportunities ~ Building family/parent/child capacity ~ Connecting families to other families for support and learning ~ Planning & developing initiatives & opportunities to build family/parent/child resilience, that allow families to find and support each other ~ Developing networks of relationships so that families remain in the lead using agency support only as needed ~ Supporting the development of new Ideas ~ Sparking new vision for the child.

A New vision for the child with a disability ~ yet it is the typical vision all parents have except when disability is present parents can be directed/lead down a different path ~ intentionally choosing to chart a path that leads to authentic social inclusion ~ Supporting the family to support the child to be an integral part of their family, church, school & neighborhood ~ New vision that puts the child at the center and leads a young parent away from choices that could result in exclusion towards choices & opportunities for meaningful participation and inclusion in typical community.



## ADULT RESPITE HOME

The Adult Respite Home is a small cozy bungalow in North Oshawa owned and operated by DAFRS since 1989. There are 50 families currently accessing the house for their adult sons and daughters. We can host 4 guests at a time. Families are referred to DAFRS by the DSO (Developmental Services Ontario) and after a brief interview process are approved and the introduction to the house and the agency begins. Generally families can access up to 24 overnights per year, however exceptions can be made under certain circumstances provided we have the space to accommodate the request, especially around a parent's health, or for that once in a lifetime trip or special occasion.

While staying at the respite home our guests are supported to do what they would normally do during the day or evening, for example, going to school or work. Activities are also planned according to people's personal interests. Compatibility with others is also considered when making guest arrangements.

Although the house is wheel chair accessible via a ramp, there are no specialized pieces of equipment such as lifts, so guests staying at the house must be able to assist the staff with their transfer for safety reasons.

We have an excellent complement of 10 staff at the respite home. They are diverse in their experience allowing them to respond to the varying personalities, abilities and health related matters that our guests bring.

During the spring of 2016, we hired a new full time staff member who shares her time between supporting families directly, and working at the Adult Respite Home. This staff member has the incredible opportunity to get to know each guest who stays at the house, allowing her to provide facilitation and role development for the families who utilize the house. She is able to thoughtfully and creatively help families plan for the future and work toward developing new roles for the guests based on their interests, and where and how they want to spend time when they are not visiting the respite house.

We have an active Parent Advisory Committee who organizes and hosts both our annual fundraiser and Christmas social. One of the most exciting things about the annual yard sale is that along with providing an opportunity for people to contribute, it really brings families, friends and neighbors together, along with raising funds to do home improvements.



## FAMILY LEARNING EVENTS

DAFRS partners with families, the Durham Family Network and others to develop and present gatherings and workshops on various topics. Events are typically offered during weekday evenings, sometimes afternoons or weekends at the request and convenience of families. We network with other local agencies, which in turn welcomes and supports the participation of their member families. We have DAFRS representation planning Kerry's Place Training Events and developing training with the Durham Region Staff Training Committee. We host and participate in workshops with the Southern Ontario Training Group which bases all its training on Social Role Valorization. DAFRS also engages with independent trainers, some of whom are known internationally.

DAFRS has a long history of supporting family and staff attendance at learning events in line with the values and principles of our agency. In 2016, for example, the number of attendees at all events was over 633, advertised both through our agency community networks and our monthly newsletter.

Topics have included:

### DAFRS HOSTED:

A Brief Introduction to Social Role Valorization  
Getting Coverage or Getting a Life (Michael Kendrick)  
Doing a Good Job at Getting a Good Job (Milton Tyree)  
Conscious Care and Support (Peter Marks)  
The Power of Roles, The Art Of Listening, & Building a Context for Relationship  
OADA Customer Service Training  
Ways of Knowing (Michael Bach)  
The Art of Belonging

### DAFRS PRESENTED:

Good Steps Forward for 14 - 18 year olds, Circles, Family Groups, Relationships  
Discovering Gifts and Passions  
Biomedical Study Group  
Planning: Finding and Designing Support that Works  
Leaving the Nest: Creating Home and Unique Support Arrangements

Workshops for young families on the IEP (individual education plan)

Hiring and Cultivating Good Support

Making the Most of Direct funding Dollars (family series)

Community Living Ontario conference presentations (Kicking the Tires of Inclusion; Making the Most of Passport Funding)

International SRV conference (Providence Rhode Island - The Road Less Travelled)

Family Focus conference, BC

Housing Forum and project

Stories by the Fire

Winter Seasonal Events

### HOSTED with OTHERS:

Taxes and RDSP, Wills and Trusts

OIFN Independent Facilitators Forums

Moral Coherency, Sanctity of Life, Introduction to PASSING & Personalism

## INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Our information and resources reach a diverse audience both with Durham region and its surrounding areas. A large portion of our audience does not have access to a facilitator, or are not directly working with DAFRS. That being said, we feel we offer fantastic opportunities, helpful information, and a strong SRV perspective which no one should be “wait-listed” for.

Our efforts are always striving for family led, community-minded opportunities for people to meet and forge relationships amongst each other. We believe in capacity building and in the natural authority of families, and try to keep that front and center in our dialogue with our public.

CURRENTLY WE HAVE A FEW WAYS IN WHICH WE DISTRIBUTE INFORMATION:

### NEWSLETTER – DAFRS FAMILY FOCUS

We currently have over 400 subscriptions to our monthly DAFRS Family Focus. Most of the recipients are sent this newsletter via email, though we are also mindful of those who prefer a hardcopy. Facilitators find this a helpful resource to take along to families; often as a resource and prompt for engagement. DAFRS Family Focus is our way to promote news from our organization, and to present ideas and conversation in a manner that is consistent with our strong values and principles. We are mindful of the words we choose, the pictures we use, and the content we share. We focus on what everyone has in common (those with and without disabilities), the significance of valued social roles, and make a conscious effort to present ordinary and typical vs “special”.

### WEBSITE – DAFRS.COM

We currently rely on our website as a landing zone for lots of things we reference in our newsletter, as well as in our conversations with families. Along with an introduction to our organization and the values and mission we work within, we are open with our contact details and try to keep information current and accessible. We have recently restyled and reconfigured our website with the aim of using it more efficiently to be able to share and link material we have created and come across through different projects and presentations. As we progress through our strategic direction around using technology creatively and well we are sure this will positively impact and support our other strategic objectives and work in general.

## RESOURCE LIBRARY

One of our offices is a dedicated library in which new material is added regularly. Families and facilitators are free to browse the selection of books and DVDs and sign out materials to borrow. We have various topics of interest including: planning, health care, community, compassionate care practices, inclusive education, Social Role Valorization, family leadership, and more. We encourage the suggestion of new material and find the resource library a great tool to further bolster families with information along their journey.

## TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT

The Family Support team works in a myriad of different ways with families, using techniques as unique as each family we support. When opportunities arise that call for using technology creatively and well, the Family Support Coordinator often supports the family and facilitator in these endeavors. We have used Google applications (such as Forms, Docs, and Drive), Adobe applications (Acrobat, Photoshop and Illustrator), presentation software (Prezi, Powerpoint) to be successful with certain goals. We have used video editing and animation software to help illustrate, in different ways, important information to different audiences. Building a good life means evolving and being flexible- we strive to support families and our own team with technology that is current and available to us - always looking at creative and sustainable ways to accomplish what we are trying to do.

## NAV CARE

The NavCare series is composed of 7 volumes and is the result of a collaborative project amongst 15 organizations. Its intent is to help people:

*Navigate* complex healthcare, legal, government, financial, and other systems;

*Negotiate* the best care and services possible;

*Mediate* problems if they arise;

Reduce the stress on these systems by helping people use them more effectively.

We recently redesigned this series with our own branding, and that of our new publishing name, "One at a Time Press". We hope to distribute the series, as well as individual books, to other organizations and families.



## DURHAM FAMILY NETWORK

The Durham Family Network was formed by a group of parents in 1990 to ensure that the voices of families/parents directly would be heard by Government, Agencies and the greater community. The Durham Family Network was the first self-directed family network formed in Ontario. There are now 15 family network organizations across Ontario all connected and following the Accord of Family Alliance Ontario.

The Durham Association for Family Respite Services and the Durham Family Network have always had a positive, supportive relationship. Since 2002, we have been housed with DAFRS and have received In Kind and financial support; we often work together collaboratively to create opportunities that will benefit the families of Durham. It is important that the Durham Family Network is seen and operates autonomous from any organization and it remains held and led by families for families.

The Durham Family Network operates outside of the legislative requirements that are enforced by the Developmental Services Ontario; therefore families are able to call directly and we are able to engage without having to verify eligibility or disability. Involvement with the DFN is an opportunity to feel the collective strength; the ever expanding wisdom and the support of many families who have been truly the architects of this organization and continue to shape and direct our work together.

The Durham Family Network strives to stay current and connected with the families of Durham Region and those issues municipally, provincially and federally that will impact them directly. The Durham Family Network currently lists 126 families serving all areas of Durham.

A significant part of the work of the DFN is to connect families to other families. These connections are made between families in many different ways; it can be as simple as families connecting over the phone or through email, offering a ride to another parent to an event, attending an important school meeting with another family or setting some time aside to meet up over coffee and good conversation. Through the work of the DFN families have not only been connected to resources in the community; they have also participated in thoughtful conversations about how to best engage in neighbourhood roles /events/activities either with informal or paid support. It is those everyday conversations around the kitchen table of how to help my son connect with scouts or how to get away for a special trip as a couple; to those bigger conversations of where might my son find a home of his own or who will do this when I am gone that the experience of other families can be extremely helpful.

The Durham Family Network also provides user friendly materials, person to person conversations and learning events. We are also often asked many questions about Registered Disability Savings Plan, Ontario Disability Support Program, housing, funding, hiring workers, how to interview, how to make an appointment with their MPP or MP, talking about Passport dollars before calling the Passport office, who and where to get help to pay for their son/daughter's funeral, discussing their plans before going to a lawyer, learning about trusts, assisting families of children who have just left school and connections to Community Care Access Centre.

Part of the important work of the DFN is to keep abreast of what is happening with in the province, the country that would impact the families of the DFN and keeping them informed. We closely follow issues around housing, accessibility, supports and justice issues. The DFN stands with families facing social justice issues and will walk beside them as they investigate the possibilities for redress; such as understanding their rights and the rights of their children, commencing an appeal process, entering into mediation, initiating a tribunal procedure, understanding the human rights code and processes and obtaining legal counsel for themselves and their children. The opportunity of having someone knowledgeable to walk with you when facing an injustice provides the family with a deep sense of being heard, understood and having someone on their side.



## RESPISESERVICES.COM

Durham Association for Family Respite Services hosts the respiteservices.com program in Durham region as a valuable resource for families for accessing support workers as well as information and training opportunities.

The support of this program, augmented with additional funding from DAFRS, and the Facilitation Team's support creating our workshop modules, help and participation presenting the Orientation Training Sessions, have contributed to the success and uniqueness of this valued community based opportunity for both families and support workers in Durham Region.

This program helps promote healthy community. Providing good support workers in turn helps people to be meaningfully engaged and connected to their community. It also promotes employment opportunities within Durham Region, giving families the opportunity to link with support workers without the added cost of advertising and the peace of mind that some of the initial screening has been done.

Respiteservices.com provides information about respite services and supports including support workers, workshops and events available in Durham and across the province. Families can visit the website to get general information about respite in our area. Once registered, they will receive periodic updates and notices of items of interest such as training opportunities and funding opportunities. All registration information is maintained on a secure, confidential database in respiteservices.com.

Families have the opportunity to discuss their support worker needs, funding requirements; they are also guided through the website if needed, receive information regarding upcoming Orientation Training learning events and the opportunity to connect with other families. Families may also be assisted in registering on the website if they do not have a computer or access to a computer. Ongoing support and mentoring are provided as needed in the search for workers

The Community Helper's for Active Participation Program, CHAP is a worker database that connects families with workers based on the family needs and the worker availability and skills. The CHAP program is available to families registered on the website. The workers on the site must be registered, submit their resume, three references, have a current police check with the vulnerability sector, attend an interview and attend our seven hour orientation training. It takes 11 hours to process each support worker including the Orientation Training. Support workers are also given the opportunity to access workshops and training to become better support workers.

The Respite Coordinator in Durham is responsible for the day to day operations of the respiteservices.com website. She collaborates with the provincial partners, is responsible for the support worker recruitment, monthly CHAP Orientation Training, Meet and Greets for families and workers, interviewing, matching of the CHAP workers, support and resource to families and agencies who use the service, development and support to our Parent Voice advisory committee, development of public relations materials, promotion of the service to community partners, oversee the development of current and relevant training and promotional materials, provide reports as required and participate in fundraising for this program. In the end, our respiteservices.com program is one of the most effective and solid in the province!

## MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR DOLLARS

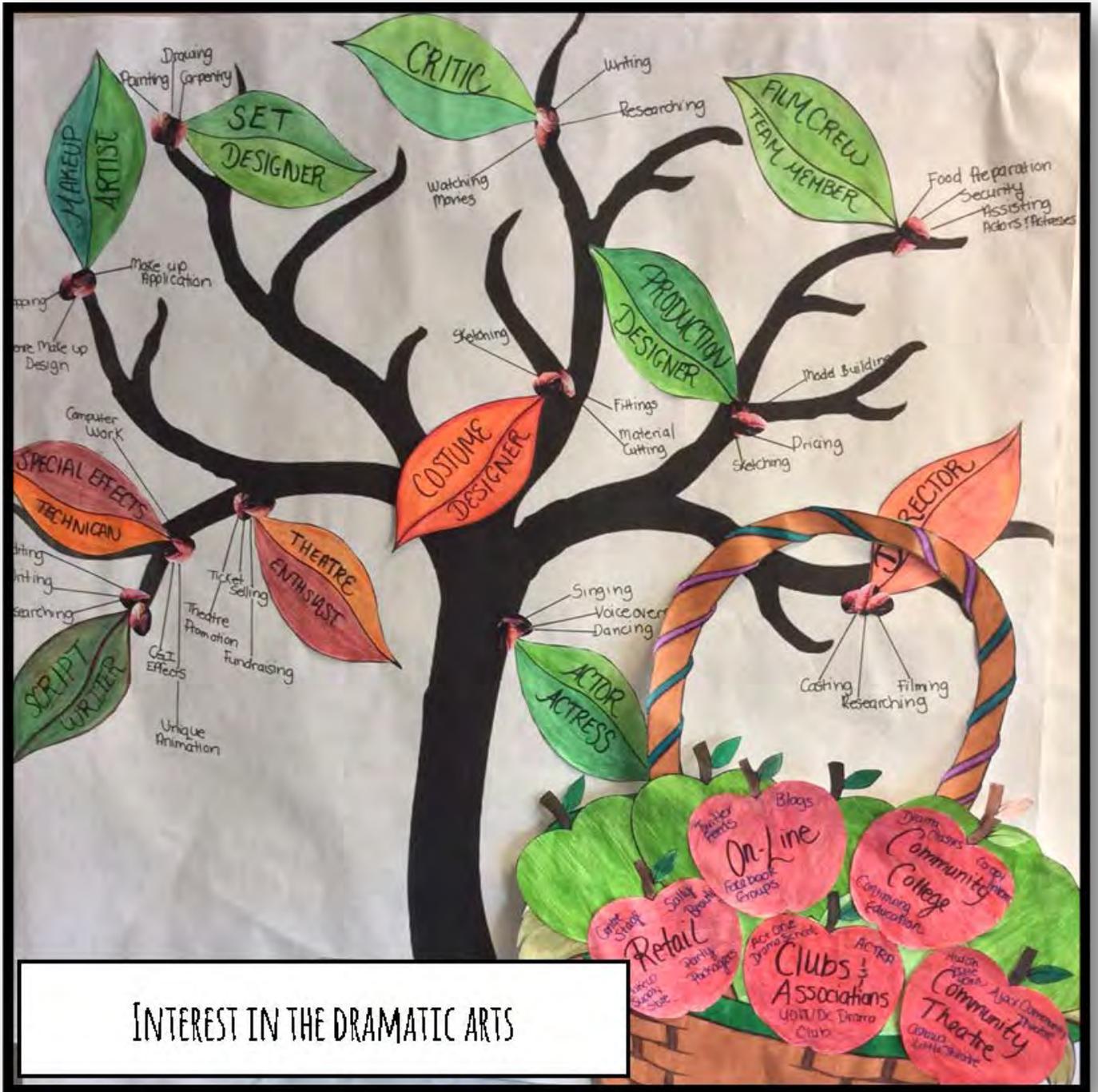
Making the Most of Your Dollars is a dynamic six-week series that welcomes families to reimagine opportunities and explore options in using their Passport funding, or other direct or personal funding. The heart of the series is to go beyond the standard uses for funding, and utilize Passport funds in a way that is authentic and purposeful to support family members in building good full lives in their communities.

The series is led by mentoring families that engage in rich conversations, sharing their experiences from years of planning and creating opportunities for their sons and daughters. These conversations highlight the simple choices that families can make to discover ordinary, yet significant ways for their sons and daughters to be involved in their community.

Many families that have participated in the series have developed a greater understanding of the unique interests of their sons and daughters, providing a springboard for implementing ideas leading to more meaningful and fulfilling lives. Furthermore, the series has birthed a sense of community ranging from formed friendships to families sharing ideas and resources.



Josephine Spitale - Making the Most



## PROJECTS AND EMERGING PRACTICE

The Durham Association for Family Respite Services tries to be timely and responsive to the growing and changing interests and needs of families. The development of projects is often a good way to test new ideas, listen more quickly to families, implement more focused actions and plans, and explore new ways to communicate and work with family members.

In addition, because each project is a potential source of rich learning, we are taking the time to evaluate our learning carefully. For us, this means reflecting back to the original purpose behind each project to ask ourselves: Is this project achieving for people what we thought it might do? Is this leading us to equally good but unintentional places? What could be better next time? What else do we need to know? In the understanding that busy family members vote with their feet and their presence we also ask who is interested and making the time to be a part of this project. We also are interested in knowing what was not helpful what the impact is over time for the person and their family. This learning will ultimately be for the benefit of all the families we connect with at DAFRS.

Project staff are keen and full members of our staff team and we welcome their new energy, approaches and insights. Sometimes project staff become more permanent members of our staff team, and sometimes projects are seen as so valuable that we have been able to make them a part of our core offering. For us Projects allow us to learn, to share our learning, to discover new and effective ways of offering support and to discover keen new staff to join and bolster our team.

### CURRENT PROJECTS INCLUDE:

Housing is a Community Issue

Mindfulness for Families

Interest-based Recruitment

Storyteller to the Board

Family Leadership (an enduring project with variations in focus)

Biomedical Approaches Study Group

Supportive-Decision Making: Ways of Knowing (new and emerging)

At the foundation of each project, SRV principles are the corner stones in which everything else is built upon. We have also woven into each project's content other values and principles that we believe safeguards good work. We hold strong to individualized options only, a mindset of doing this with families and not for families, that family to family conversations are key to learning, we are always looking to a person's family/neighbourhood/community for resources and places of belonging and it is one person at a time.

Family Leadership at DAFRS is expressed and supported in a number of ways. DAFRS' financial and office space supports to the DFN together with our ways of working together have long standing roots. Through the DFN family leadership is promoted, role modelled and celebrated. Our small Family Leadership fund allows family leaders to attend learning events locally and further afield. In our learning events, family mentors are sought, family leaders are often found to be co-leaders and facilitators, and emerging leadership skills are recognized and encouraged. Families are involved in hosting, presenting, leading learning series, and more.

## MY DIRECT PLAN

Durham Family Respite received a three year MCSS Innovations Grant in 2015 as the lead agency for My Direct Plan in the Durham and Hamilton Region. DARTS Solutions is the software developer of the MDP program and has a staff representative in our office full-time. Caitlin is available to assist families to get set up with their invoicing of Passport expenses and serve as a help-line for troubleshooting as needed.

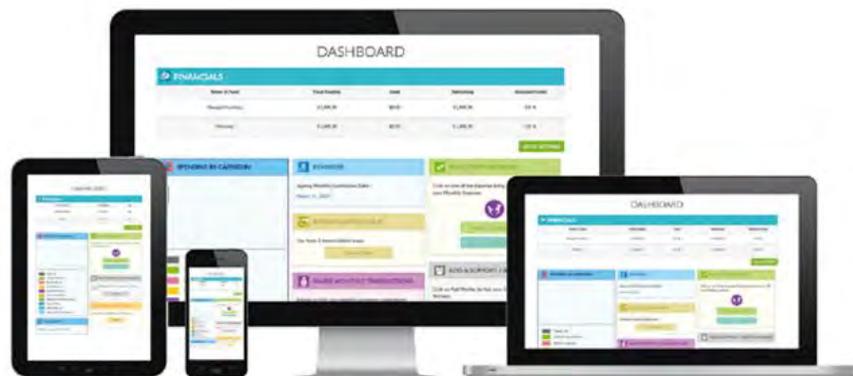
We were interested in becoming involved during this early development phase because of the strong opportunities this gives to families to provide input to DART on the usability of their program. Almost every family with an adult son or daughter connected to us receives Passport funding at this time.

MCSS sees the Passport Funding Program as a growing mechanism through which families will receive customized supports, so ease of use is critical if individualized funding options are going to be successful.

MDP has the ability to put the family, the Passport recipient, or their designate, in the driver's seat with full control of their financial information. What they want, when they want it, in the comfort of their home or any other setting they choose, as it is a "cloud based" program.

We think that this could even bridge some of the generational gaps families experience by giving younger people a way to assist their family because they are more comfortable with the on-line world. One of the things that we have begun to see among siblings who want to get involved is they're looking after the payment of invoices via electronic transfer from one smart phone to another. MDP provides another great option.

# MyDirectPlan



[WWW.MYDIRECTPLAN.COM](http://WWW.MYDIRECTPLAN.COM)

Teresa Dale - Manager of Family Supports

## HOUSING PROJECT

The Durham Association for Family Respite Services has a history of helping families explore the dream of what home might look like for their family member and seeing that dream become a reality. In addition to the everyday supports and planning within the Family Support Team, in October 2015 we received a two-year grant from the Ontario Housing Task Force for a project entitled, Housing is a Community Issue.

A home of one's own and living in a vibrant neighbourhood is the vision that continues to be close to the hearts and on the minds of many families involved with DAFRS. The conversations that arise from these ideas generate positive energy and lead to further rich discussions, the thoughtful development of a vision and for concrete planning and implementation.

### PROJECT DETAILS & UPDATES:

This 2-year project which concludes in October 2017 is being developed in partnership with the Brockville Association for Community Involvement and focuses on the ways in which all kinds of families manage to creatively bring about affordable, accessible housing in our local communities.

In Durham, the DAFRS Neighbourhood Promoter and Housing Project Coordinator (two part-time staff) have worked collaboratively to engage with families who share an interest in housing - home - support.

Over the past year and a half, families have come together for monthly meetings. Early on in the process the group of families collectively established a set of principles - ideas that would guide the future work. In essence our ideas would be individual, one person at a time, in ordinary neighbourhoods in typical numbers and with a focus on the contributions of all neighbours. Discussions have varied greatly - sometimes simply to define "home" or to discuss the ingredients needed for building strong, vibrant communities, sometimes to imagining a home of one's own for their loved ones, while being inspired by families who had already taken steps towards creating real "homes". Through shared learning, families were able to explore various housing types and began to realize that they too could customize an arrangement best suited for their own family members; considering, both the bricks 'n' mortar and paid and unpaid supports. The group formerly known as the "Housing Group", became '*Imagining Home*'.

As a result, families realized the importance of planning for the supports that their loved ones would require in a home of their own. The group worked on sample support plans that began with natural kinds of support (being happily and safely on one's own, family support, friends and allies dropping by, etc.) and went on to encompass an individual's interests, community involvement, roles and the mapping of paid and informal supports.

*Imagining Home* has great energy and commitment to meetings. They have benefitted from the guest speakers and resource materials shared. The group learning over eighteen months has fuelled ongoing relationships with local builders, developers, Region of Durham Housing, CMHC Housing Consultants and local politicians.

Additionally, the creation of the website: [www.imagininghome.ca](http://www.imagininghome.ca) has been well received. Its purpose is to be a catch-all for relevant information, events and upcoming meetings.

The gathering of families also inspired a smaller group to formalize- *Intentionally Built Community Group*, is now incorporated and spans across Durham region. They are poised and ready to embark in partnerships with key stakeholders interested in affordable housing.

The successes of families include:

- a new found belief that their loved ones can physically live on his/her own
- the knowing that a move for family members is possible, with the right support arrangement
- families reconfiguring their existing homes to offer completely separate living spaces to their sons/daughters
- families who have renovated their homes to suit loved ones' needs & preferences
- families who have sold one home in order to purchase another which accommodates their loved ones' in a separate space/apartment

Housing Forums celebrating the achievements of the project will be held and this May in Brockville and June in Durham.

# PRACTICAL, TIMELY SUPPORTS FOR FAMILIES

## RECRUITMENT SPECIALIST OVERVIEW

The Recruitment Specialist works towards accomplishing goals related to the development and momentum of interest-based roles. Interests are as diverse as people. One person could hold a passion for the dramatic arts and wish to become a theatre supporter; another may fancy a great game of golf and dream of being an avid golfer.

Focusing on the interest a person holds the Recruitment Specialist uses unique techniques to discover a supportive partnership. This partnership becomes a bridge into the common interest and additional connections and community it can bring. The supportive partnership could take the form of a mentor, teacher, industry expert, or someone with a shared passion.

Recruiting an individual with a particular skillset in a traditional manner can be difficult. Using less traditional methods of recruitment, the Recruitment Specialist is able to create links to interest based matches. The Recruitment Specialist is part of a demonstration project and works concurrently with a Facilitator.

## MINDFULNESS PROJECT OVERVIEW

This project is geared to provide Mindfulness training and learning to parents in family group settings, and with children and all family members at home in very distressful situations. Through our engagement over the past four years with Peter Marks (Conscious Care and Support) and a recent event with Susannah Joyce, we appreciate the benefits of mindfulness in our own lives, and the potential for families who are most stressed. One of the challenges over years has been trying to find a way to tap into this kind of potential when families need it most. This project has built on this earlier investment and is now making the impact and learning available to families in ways that they can quickly access.

We have been seeking ways to help families in times of ordinary and extraordinary stress - especially but not only those with teens - and to prevent deeper crisis. Out of a desire to be helpful, and upon the further suggestion of Peter Marks, we brought a local mindfulness practitioner with a specialty in children and teens into two families who tell us they are in critical situations. The early results have been very, very positive and we feel we might have learned something important about how to help families as they need it most and for the longer term. We acknowledge that mindfulness is not a magic solution but a way of providing space and time to address root causes of child and family stress in a gentle, helpful, and supportive way. All participation in stressful family situations is done in the context of a full plan to ensure that the other issues are being addressed.

## BIO MEDICAL APPROACHES STUDY GROUP

The Bio Medical Approaches Study Group evolved from learning events held at DAFRS by Peter Marks and his work on conscious, mindful approaches to responding to the whole person and what they may be telling us about their diet, their nutrition deficits, their sensory imbalances, their ongoing feelings of deep anxiety, and more. By listening deeply with more and more understanding, we can often find less intrusive and more effective non-medication and non-behaviour management approaches to helping the person feel well and move on with their life. Since the most helpful information is dense and learning from each other is so effective, a small group of families meet together on the 2nd Friday of each month to talk about our learning and personal experiences with all family members. Our conversation focuses on the whole person and how people may respond more or less sensitively to their environment, including diet and nutrition, brain coherence, sensory integration issues, the calmness or agitation of those around them, and more. We bring in guest speakers, other parents with something to share, new books, and our own thoughtful ability to listen and respond to one another.

## STORYTELLER TO THE BOARD

This one-year project is an opportunity to recognize and develop the leadership skills within some of the people with disabilities who are affected by our resources and supports. The Storyteller is a meaningful role that gives voice to the experiences and lives of people with disabilities connected with DAFRS. The project offers a one-year term to an individual who will, with appropriate support collect and present to the board every month the story of one person connected with DAFRS. In photos and narrative the person will give the board a first person or collected account of their lives and how DAFRS touches their lives. The collection of stories gathered each year might be a published book, edited by the annual Storyteller. (Please note that this role does not replace opportunities for interested people with disabilities to sit as a member of the Board. However, natural pathways for people to gauge their interest in Board membership include firstly sitting on Committees and other smaller groups. This might increase confidence and help with speaking skills. However, having a dedicated Storyteller means that the Board will continue to hear first-person stories of the impact of DAFRS work on the lives of real people.

## THE COLLABORATIVE ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT - CAD

A small independent group, providing a high level of service at a reduced price for organizations and individuals who may not otherwise have access to this level of service.

The Collaborative Administration Department which was established in April 2000 has proven to be a successful and thriving project. Startup funding was provided by the Ministry of Community Family and Children's Services and the Trillium Foundation. The goal was to save not for profit organizations administrative dollars while providing a higher quality of financial and administrative support. Four organizations were involved in the startup however only two carried through with the project.

The CAD provides organizations, which would not normally have funds available or the need for full time "qualified" staff, to benefit from the expertise of a collaborative group with varied professional backgrounds. In some cases we provide ongoing support, in others we step in for short periods of time for specific projects.

In addition, the CAD provides direct support to families in the areas of financial guidance and management, income tax preparation, human resources issues, dealing with outside government agencies and payroll service.

The CAD has never actively solicited new business. All new clients have been through referral. We have some strong supporters across the province, including MCSS and audit firms.

It was never the goal of the CAD to earn a profit. The goal was for all organizations to receive a high level of service while reducing administrative costs. As these costs are reduced within DAFRS, there is more money available for family support. Over the past several years the CAD has generated significant net revenue which has helped to offset operating deficits.

In 2000 there were 4 full time staff supporting 2 organizations. The CAD currently has 5 full time staff supporting at least 13 organizations and many families. The ability to share established processes, systems and knowledge creates much efficiency. We continue to receive request for support. These are carefully reviewed to determine if we have the capacity to assist the organization. The call typically comes when the organization is in crisis. We have to be careful that their crisis doesn't become ours.

We have assisted other organizations in setting up a similar model, although they have restricted their collaborative support to sharing between 2 agencies.

Although we are CAD to everyone externally, at home we are the DAFRS finance and administration team, and with we all work at DAFRS because we embrace the opportunity to "give back". CAD staff understands the organization's values and work hard to incorporate those values in our day to day work.

## COLLABORATIVE ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENT (CAD) - SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS

The CAD is essentially responsible to ensure that all financial, administration and personnel functions of the organizations supported are conducted in a professional, accurate and timely manner in compliance with legal requirements and according to the policies and procedures of these organizations. The CAD will embrace the philosophy of the organizations supported. Service will be provided on a not for profit basis.

### FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION:

- Development and preparation of annual budgets. Presentation of budget to Executive Directors and/or Boards of Directors.
- Document and evaluate financial performance monthly, annually or as requested
- Prepare, review and present financial results to staff, Boards of Directors and funding Ministries or organizations.
- Develop and implement necessary plans for corrective and precautionary action as required.
- Prepare year-end audit files and work with auditors during their year-end review.
- Provide accounting systems and handle accounts payable/receivable, payroll, and human resources
- Coordinate ongoing use of computer technology and required upgrades.
- Assist staff of supported organizations in administrative areas as requested. This may include rental agreements, leases, and funding proposals.
- Participation on management and board committees as requested.

### STAFF RELATIONS:

- Development and maintenance of job descriptions, evaluations, pay equity plans.
- Develop, coordinate and administer staffing requirements and staff training plans.
- Where required interview, hire, dismiss staff and assist in union negotiations.
- Insure the development and implementation of personnel policies and procedures.
- Respond to all staff inquiries regarding payroll and human resources issues.

### OTHER DUTIES:

- Develop and administer ongoing maintenance systems for all properties and equipment.
- Plan, develop and monitor financial investment and borrowing strategies in consultation with Executive Director or Board of Directors.
- Development, coordination and maintenance of information systems including client database and service statistics, insuring confidentiality.

# COLLABORATIVE ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT (CAD) – SUPPORTING FAMILIES

## ACCOUNTING SERVICES:

- Administer Individualized Funding Contracts (includes SSAH, Passports)- broker or hold funds in trust.
- Administer payroll for families – set up a payroll account with CRA, coordinate receipt of timesheets, process payroll, prepare government remittances and filings.
- Administer payment to self-employed support workers on behalf of families.
- Provide assistance to families with general accounting guidelines and basic requirements.
- Work individually with families to review their processes and set up of their accounting system.
- Work with families to meet with government agencies.
- Administer other agency funding contracts for families- such as Insurance, CCAC.

## HUMAN RESOURCES:

- Provide information related to employee issues, Employment Standards Act and Labour Laws.

## INCOME TAX:

- Income tax preparation service provided at a not for profit rate – this is provided for anyone interested in the service.

# DURHAM ASSOCIATION FOR FAMILY RESPITE SERVICES

850 King St. W, Unit 20 Oshawa, ON L1J 8N5  
Tel: 905-436-2500 Fax: 905-436-3587  
Office Hours: Monday to Friday 8:30 am - 4:30 pm  
Website: [www.dafrs.com](http://www.dafrs.com)

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Janet Klees Executive Director

## FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

Sue Talmey Director of Finance & Administration  
Wendy Moss HR Generalist  
Renee van Dorsser Senior Accounting Clerk  
Chantel Sparks Accounting Clerk  
Kathy Sieben Accounting Clerk  
Alicia Munshaw Administrative Coordinator and Accounting Support Clerk

## FAMILY SUPPORT

Selena Blake Manager of Emerging Practices  
Teresa Dale Manager of Family Supports  
Rhonda Alcott Facilitator  
Cathy Bloomfield Facilitator  
Helen Dionne Coordinator Durham Family Network/Community Housing Coordinator  
Jeanne Godfrey Coordinator -Respiteservices.com  
Stephanie Grace Facilitator  
Allison Lythgoe Central File Supports  
Tara McClure Facilitator  
Heather Minors Family Support Coordinator  
Cindy Mitchell Facilitator  
Kim Ng-A -Mann Community Housing Coordinator  
Josephine Spitale Recruitment Specialist and MTM Series Coordinator  
Diana Trotman Facilitator

## ADULT RESPITE HOME

Melissa Reading Supervisor, Adult Respite Home  
Bethanie Lyall Facilitator; Role Development