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July 2020

*Durham Family Resources*

# FAMILY *focus*

SO THAT ALL PEOPLE ENJOY A FULL AND MEANINGFUL LIFE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.

## Let's Talk... Home and Community - a New Collaborative Project Aims to Contribute to Creative Housing Solutions

Durham Family Resources is initiating an exciting year- long collaborative – a series of 5 facilitated community conversations entitled **Let's Talk...Home and Community**. At the heart of it, our aim is to bring together two groups of people who rarely have opportunity to meet, who are often seen or talked about in terms of their housing challenges and deficits instead of what they have to offer, and for whom housing is vitally important. Families that include an adult family member with a disability and newcomers to Canada within Durham Region have many resources and assets to contribute to creative housing solutions that will benefit whole neighbourhoods and communities.

In a project co-designed with families we will come together to imagine and build. Together, we'll open our hearts and minds to listen deeply to one another, share and explore our collective understanding of the housing issues within Durham Region, uncover the assets, resources and contributions of each group, and together create a positive and inclusive vision for how we would like our communities to be. When and as ideas unfold, participants may create opportunities to share housing or build stronger neighbourhoods. This group of individuals will comprise the Community Conversations Collaborative. The project will also bring together a variety of other Durham community leaders as part of an Advisory Group, that will offer guidance and subject matter expertise throughout the duration of the project.

Our collective goals will be to deepen all of our perspectives of what we have in common and to imagine, build upon and even bring about opportunities for immediate or short-term action in housing. By focusing on building stronger and better communities by paying more attention to the assets and resources of community members, than to their needs and what they are lacking, we will create the most vibrant, diverse and inclusive communities!

This initiative is funded by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC)'s Solutions Lab program under the National Housing Strategy and is supported by SHS Consulting. Look out for opportunities to join or hear about the outcomes of this initiative.



Let's Talk... Community and Housing is bringing people together to discover new opportunities for good, sustainable housing!

# Changes to Essential Visitor Policy at Lakeridge Health and Toronto Region Hospitals a Needed and Welcomed Adjustment

At the end of June, we were pleased to hear that Lakeridge Health has adjusted its visitation policy to accept and welcome essential family/caregiver support for people with disabilities!


This is an adjustment to their previous policy which allowed for families to make an appeal to the visitor policy in order to have family members or paid supporters accompany the person to ensure good communication and best outcomes. This process of organizing for an appeal left many families worried about their family member perhaps not being allowed to have support during hospitalization.

This new policy is now seen as a “broad and standard” exception to the visitation – which means that families can now expect that their request is generally permissible. In Sean Hillman’s words: “Happy news to share to you, your staff and the families! I wanted to let you know we now have a broad and standard visitation exception at Lakeridge Health for patients with any disability who require a support person. Also, patients who meet any exceptions can have two delegates, over different days. We were previously handling many of these cases as appeals, and all but one were granted... but there is no longer any need for such appeals as we have made it generally permissible now. I have been encouraging this consistently, and the disability cohort was top of mind when we released our first stage of visitation loosening.”

A new relationship through Ethical Services at Lakeridge and families and staff of DFR this past Fall had led to some better communication with the hospital system. With the arrival of COVID-19, a core of families and staff began to meet to think about how to ensure best outcomes for people at hospital. Sean Hillman, Clinical Ethicist, and our Ethics connection at Lakeridge, helped us to understand how to petition the then-in place Visitor’s Policy for an exemption for a person with a disability who would need some support and accompaniment for a particular hospital event. That increased understanding and just generally working in positive ways led to at least three families reporting excellent reception and support during emergency hospitalizations (non-COVID) during the pandemic period.

Now with the new and broader visitation understanding, families can feel even more at ease when they explain how essential family or caregiver supports at the hospital will ensure a voice for their family member and lead to better health and treatment outcomes. Such requests will now be expected and likely easily permitted.

The working group that has been meeting calls itself *Safe at Hospital* and has brought together families and staff members who have also been concerned and working on two related projects. *Legacy Planning* is a small project to help older families put in place written materials and plans to assist the next generation to support the family member with disability into the future. Much of their early work on good medical and emergency documentation has been helpful in designing uniquely tailored documents for each person. *Recognizing Capacity* is our project on supports for decision making to ensure that each person has a voice and a role in making important decisions in their lives. Having a voice and familiar supports in hospital is a natural fit with that project. Together this group has debated and taken a stand on the provincial government’s draft Triage protocol for treatment, been clear and helpful on helping others to understand the key role of support in hospital for most people with disabilities, and is still working on putting together a publicly accessible website of resources, documents, templates and ideas so that every family can design a Toolkit for hospital and other situations that is uniquely designed for their own circumstances.



The *Safe at Hospital Working Group* is an active group exploring and understanding this more fully. They also work on their family’s own situation and understanding health, medical and personal care issues at a broader level. **Keep an eye out in August for a learning event for families and allies to make the most of the practical learning from this group!**

# Meaningful Support in a COVID World: Living My Best Life Now!

How are you thinking about, managing and moving forward with support under current circumstances? If your family member relies on support to live their best life – how do we think about moving safely, but with purpose and intention, toward meaningful ways of using one’s time, offering contribution, and being a full part of family, neighbourhood and community?

Some people are moving forward and have lots to teach us, and others feel a bit frozen in time – too worried to move out of home and back (somewhat) into the world again. This may be the conversation that energizes both kinds!

This session is for families and their allies and paid supporters – a chance to listen in on the stories of a few families who are planning thoughtful support. What does this look like now, what are the next steps, and how to have the courage to go forward? Participants will have the opportunity to listen in on a few stories, and then ask their own questions and enter into the discussion.

We will also offer a general approach that will ensure that limited support time is impactful, worthwhile and building toward better things.

We are all in this together. Let’s learn from each other and continue to ensure that all members of our family take the opportunity to find some benefit from these strange times. Let’s find and use the silver lining of these times together. Life is tough and different, but what are the opportunities and how do we make use of these to continue to build the communities we wish to see.



**Join us Wednesday, July 22nd from 7-8pm!  
RSVP here to receive the Zoom details!**

## Have You Attended Making the Most Family Series? Come Together to Discuss and Continue Learning!

The Making the Most Study Group is a fantastic opportunity for those who have completed the series to continue their learning and take some next steps in developing valued roles and relationships for a loved one with a disability.



**MAKING THE MOST  
STUDY GROUP**

This month we will be talking about circles of support, a theme we cover briefly in the final Making the Most session. We will share some stories and examples of what can result when a group of people are intentionally invited to come together with a clear purpose, consider what it takes to set up and sustain the commitment, and how we can harness the collective energy to move forward on the path towards a good, ordinary life, embedded in community with valued roles and relationships.

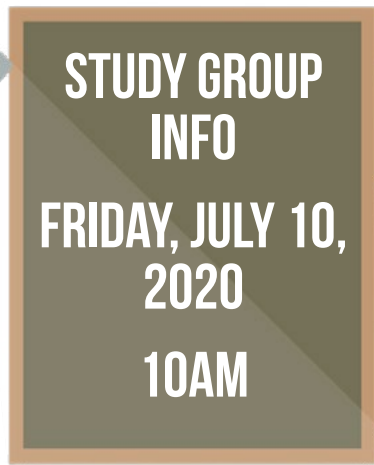
This group will meet via Zoom from 6.30-7.30pm on **Monday, July 27<sup>th</sup>** and members will be sent a link to join nearer the time.

JULY 27, 2020 - 6:30PM TO 7:30PM

Online via Zoom Meetings



## Amy Archer to Join the Conversation at July's Online Bio-Medical Approaches Study Group



As the summer wanes on, the conversation continues with the Bio Medical Approaches Study Group as the group continues its virtual meetings! This month the group will be joined by Amy Archer who is the Palliative Pain and Symptom Management Consultant for Durham Region.

Everyone is welcome to attend and participate in the Bio-Medical Approaches Study Group when we meet on the second Friday morning of each month. We will be meeting via Zoom video or audio conferencing on Friday, July 10, at 10 am. **Your RSVP to Janet below will ensure that you receive the Zoom invite details.**

We engage with anything “Bio – Medical” and so families talk about all of the approaches, alternatives, strategies that we have found, are being pushed into, have discovered online and more!

We have a wide circle of families who are ready to share their vast experience and together we sometimes are able to help each member make better sense of the options and choices that surround them.

The group meets monthly and is open and welcoming to new and past participants! We typically meet at The Gathering Place (20-850 King St. W, Oshawa), on the second Friday of each month at 10am - this month, our office is closed, so we will be meeting online via Zoom meetings. Please RSVP for this month's meeting to [jkles@dafrs.com](mailto:jkles@dafrs.com) to get the online meeting details!

## Durham Region Housing Joins July's Imagining Home Online Meeting to Hear Family Stories

During the last Imagining Home meeting we were discussing the timely importance of sharing the stories of families who have been positively impacted by either the Durham Portable Housing Benefit or the Canada Ontario Housing Benefit. Always with an eye on our principles, it feels ever important to create opportunities to highlight the wonderfully ordinary and unique ways in which families have envisioned and are achieving home with their adult family members, through the use of portable housing benefits! With this in mind, we have extended invitations and confirmed that staff of Durham Region Housing including the Commissioner of Social Services will attend our upcoming Imagining Home zoom meeting on July 8<sup>th</sup>, to hear first-hand from families who can speak personally about just what the benefits have meant to them and their family members. It's sure to be an uplifting and positive evening! Once again, this month's meeting will be held via Zoom Video.

Each month at Imagining Home, we share housing updates and discuss timely topics of interest for families. If you are new to Imagining Home and would like to attend a meeting to see if it's for you, we welcome you to contact Erin prior to attending your first meeting, at (905) 436-2500 ext. 2511 or [eoreilly@dafrs.com](mailto:eoreilly@dafrs.com). Our next Imagining Home meeting is on **Wednesday, July 8 at 6:30pm** via Zoom meeting. Please contact Erin to RSVP or for more information about connecting to the Zoom call. Looking forward to our time together!

**IMAGINING HOME MEETING • WEDNESDAY, JULY 8, 2020 • 6:30PM**

**ONLINE, VIA ZOOM!**

**CONTACT ERIN FOR DETAILS ([EOREILLY@DAFRS.COM](mailto:eoreilly@dafrs.com))**



# Thank You Jeanne!

It is with mixed feelings that we announce the retirement of Jeanne Godfrey, Coordinator for [respiteservices.com](http://respiteservices.com). For thirteen years, Jeanne has been trusted by families and support workers alike to perform matchmaking via [respiteservices.com](http://respiteservices.com) hosted here at Durham Family Resources.

Jeanne is known throughout the province for her ingenuity and passion that made DFR's [respiteservices.com](http://respiteservices.com) unique and robust. However, it is her commitment and dedication to families that truly leaves the lasting impression. Jeanne took time to get to know families so that she could be counted on to introduce supporters that would make a positive difference. She was a coach, mentor, guide and confidant to many families, support workers and colleagues.

As Jeanne moves into retirement, here at DFR, we will miss her deep compassion, creativity and drive. Jeanne got things done - with integrity, principle and hope.

Jeanne, may your next chapter be filled with all that is welcome and good!

Want more information?

Durham Association for Family Resources and Support

For more information on our organization or any of our events, please visit our website at

[www.dafrs.com](http://www.dafrs.com)

or contact Heather by phone or email:

(905)436-2500  
ext.2314

[hminors@dafrs.com](mailto:hminors@dafrs.com)

[respiteservices.com](http://respiteservices.com)

**CHAP**  
COMMUNITY HELPERS  
FOR ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

[RespiteServices.com](http://RespiteServices.com) is up and running connecting families to supporters! Contact Sandy for details!

[Respiteservices.com](http://Respiteservices.com) is continuing to operate remotely to connect families and support workers. We know people continue to need good support during this time and are working diligently to continue to provide this service to residents of Durham Region.

To be matched with support workers, you must be registered with [respiteservices.com/durham](http://respiteservices.com/durham). Contact Sandy at (905)436-3404 or [sciarlariello@dafrs.com](mailto:sciarlariello@dafrs.com). New supporters are continuing to be added. Contact Sandy for more information!

For more information, please visit our website, [www.dafrs.com](http://www.dafrs.com), and see the "Upcoming Events" tab.

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