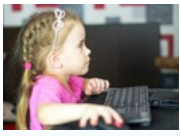


January 2021



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Durham Family Resources

FAMILY focus

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

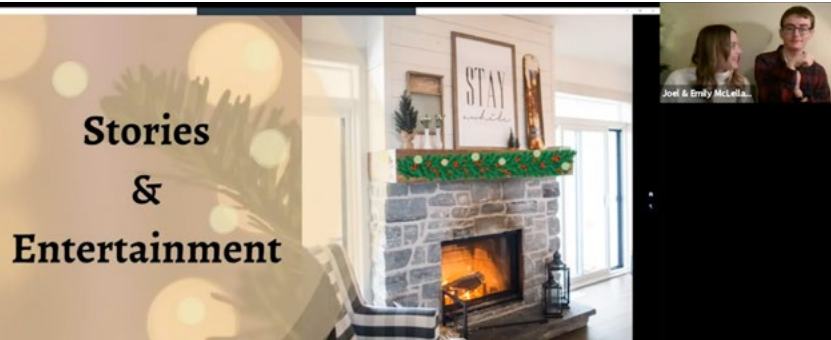
Welcoming a New Year with Optimism, Planning, and a Focus on Learning Together

As a new year unfurls and we look to what's ahead, it is natural to reflect on the months past. While deeply conscious of loss and missing what we had taken for granted in our lives, our December *Stories by the Fire* event was a vivid and moving reminder of what was found, discovered, and newly appreciated and created from new circumstances.


The seven stories that unfolded on our screens were stories of ordinary people among us getting on with their lives. We heard and saw photos, videos and words to help us understand what is possible when one door shuts and you look for another to open. Many of us were strengthened by the “can do” and “why not” attitudes in these stories.

We met Callie who became a significant Caremonger volunteer along with her mother over the summer and fall, collecting over 30 bags of groceries for a food drive and contributing to a coat drive. Thomas set himself new fitness goals and found some safe space for practice along with a trainer he connects with well. Marcus and Keyaan have become fast friends over the internet. Gaby is investing into her growing passion for photography. Kiel is moving from being a neighbour who offers his snow blower for local driveways to a small business entrepreneur taking on contracts further afield. Jessica is using her love of good coffee and good friends to lure those she loves into safely distanced, open air visits to her spacious garage. Shirley moving from nursing home to family just before Christmas was another story of what is possible when great minds and hearts think together.

Clearly, we see that visiting is possible, jobs and volunteer roles continue to thrive, fitness goals are achieved and relationship is strengthened in these ways. And more was on



Our annual *Stories by the Fire* event took place online this year and was filled with excellent stories!

offer that evening – with music from local artists, a song sent in from a sister on the West Coast, and a poem that rang in our hearts. Finally, family and relationship were woven throughout the evening – from brother and sister, Joel and Emily, as brilliant emcees, to a brother narrating, to a friend’s mother telling her story – reminding us that relationships and supports in families of all kinds are a blessing, not a burden. If this sounds interesting and inspiring to you and you missed it, contact Heather  who may just share a copy of our recording if asked nicely!

And so, building on what 2020 has offered us, we can approach this new year 2021 with optimism and a positive, hopeful mindset. We had great turnout to our learning events this past year and we heard many great things from families.

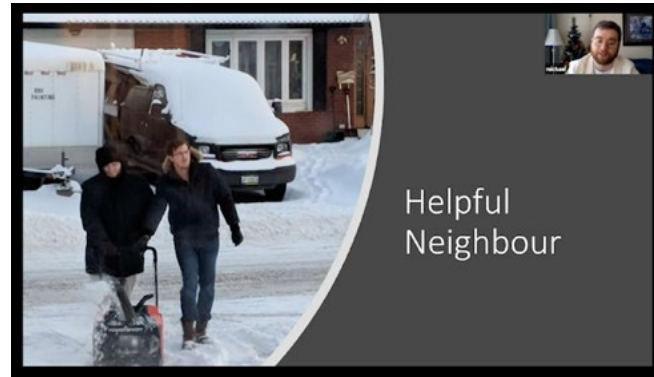
The physical distancing and lockdowns enabled people to find time to try new things. With more time at home with family, people tried or expanded budding interests - finding virtual classes, developing small business plans, starting virtual meet-up groups, connecting with local groups active in safe community-building initiatives - the creativity was outstanding.

The introduction of “household bubbles” changed our physical interactions with one another - however they also reframed the importance of family and friends. Having to negotiate the safety of ourselves and others by keeping apart from one another has allowed much

reflection on how important others are in our lives and the lives of those we care for. We’ve heard that finding time for phone calls, letters, and virtual face-to-face chats have been prioritized in many people’s lives - commitments which should be honoured and strengthened going into the new year.

Last year our pace had to slow down, and many things required much more planning. Families have never been strangers to plans changing and are resilient and adept at change and pivoting to accommodate change! However it has become clear that slowing down to plan ahead is just as fundamental now as it ever has been. Although 2020 may not have been the year any of us planned, it did reiterate the importance of planning, talking things through with others, and checking in regularly to keep things on track. We heard time and time again of families creating great plans amidst much uncertainty and the great steps that have continued their momentum despite various hurdles which popped up along the way.

We hope this new year finds you with creativity, commitment to those you care about, and enthusiasm for planning next steps. As we look ahead, and plan our offerings, we will continue to keep the family voice front and center. [Help us get started by suggesting topics or feedback for our 2021 learning events!](#)



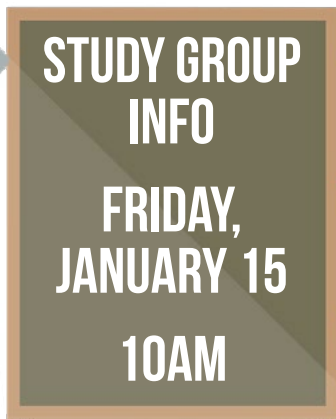
Wonderful guests filled the evening with song, music, and poetry!



Bio-Medical Approaches Study Group Begins New Year with Conversation About Technology and Bio-Feedback

Awake Labs from Toronto has offered a number of local families an opportunity to try out a watch plus smart phone technology to recognize stress earlier on when it is more easy to manage. The offer is without cost for a year and provides some back up support and training for families as well. Member of our Bio Medical group spoke about this with interest in November.

About 8-10 families that we know have been offered the technology. We know another 8-10 families who are interested in looking at this technology as well. On Friday, January 15, 2021 we will bring together a few of the current user families, some of the interested families, the Chief Product Officer of Awake Labs Paul Fijal, and any other interested members of our community for 1.5 hours of show and tell.



Everyone is welcome to attend and participate in the Bio-Medical Approaches Study Group when we meet (typically on the second Friday morning of each month). Regulars, those who drop in when they can, occasional drop-in for various topics, and curious on-lookers all join for morning discussion, learning, sharing and a good laugh that accompanies fellow learners who respect each other!

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.

Please RSVP your attendance to jklees@dafrs.com so that we can plan a successful morning.

Reflecting and Reaffirming Vision and Principles for Housing and Home is how Imagining Home will Begin the New Year!

January at Imagining Home is a chance to reflect on our vision for housing and home and imagine the big and small steps we can take to get there, one person at a time, together! Join us this month as we focus on planning the year ahead and identifying some hopes and goals to think and plan through along the way.

Each month at Imagining Home, we engage with anything “housing, home and community” and enjoy critical discussion, sharing stories, learning and often having a good laugh among respectful and supportive people! Families bring a wealth of experience and knowledge and are ready to share and support others along their journey. All are welcome to attend and participate in Imagining Home when we meet on the second Wednesday of each month. If you are new to the group and would like to attend Imagining Home for the first time, we’d ask that you first contact Erin at (905) 436-2500 ext. 2511 or eoreilly@dafrs.com to arrange an introductory call.

Our next Imagining Home meeting is on **Wednesday, January 13th 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, JANUARY 13, 2020 • 6:30PM

ONLINE, VIA ZOOM!

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



Charter Statement

An Act to amend the Criminal Code
(medical assistance in dying) (C-7)

JUSTICE.GC.CA

Canada

Bill C-7 to amend the current Medical assistance in Dying law in Canada

Just before the holiday break, we experienced a mini – success in delaying a Senate third and final vote on this bill to late February, 2021. Many of us took part in a concentrated effort to persuade the Senate to delay the vote in order to give Senators more time to hear from important stakeholders and to more closely follow the current law's requirement that changes should be suggested only after a full review of the current law (this review is currently in process).

This is the time to try to become more articulate about the challenges of this amendment. The link below is a summary of a longer article by Dr. G Pike When consent is an allusion and informed consent fails. It's a quick read – and mostly in point form, and so quite helpful in understanding some important points.

● <https://alexschadenberg.blogspot.com/2021/01/euthanasia-and-assisted-suicide-when.html>

Let us know if you are interested in more information about this topic or about joining a group of people who share material and come together and talk through some of the issues from time to time - send an email to Janet ✉.

Long Term Care and People with Developmental Disabilities

We have already taken the stand that planning for people to live in nursing homes is not planning but a failure of planning. This is even more true for people with a developmental disability who end up in nursing homes at much young ages and stages of their lifespan than formerly non-disabled elders.

Here is a December 31st 2020 Op Ed article in the Toronto Star written by Dr. Judith Sandys, well known in our SRV circles and in our sector both providing services and taking on significant professor roles at Ryerson, and by Dr. Trish Spindel, known well in Durham Region for her advocacy in elder and other community issues.

● <https://www.thestar.com/opinion/contributors/2020/12/30/time-to-provide-funding-and-real-choice-in-long-term-care.html>

If you are interested in opportunities to lend your voice or your pen or your keyboard strokes to this hugely important issue affecting cherished members of our computer, please visit [Seniors for Social Action \(Ontario\)](#).



COVID-19 and Understanding to Keep Your Family (and Team) Safe

In December, a physician working directly with COVID patients came to our Bio-Medical Approaches Study Group to talk about her understanding, experiences and ways of thinking about COVID 19 infection, consider best treatments, and beginning to think about the upcoming vaccines.

In the near future, we will be hosting an event to understand, learn about and consider the current vaccines on offer. A second event may focus on understanding where you and your family member stands in terms of priority to getting vaccine – and what, if any, advocacy is needed in this area.

In the meantime, we have some excellent resources to begin to educate yourselves in reasonable, accessible and well organized ways.

● Coronavirus vaccine tracker article - <https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/coronavirusvaccinetracker/>

● Ologies podcast regarding COVID-19 Immunity - <https://www.alieward.com/ologies/vaccineinfodemiology>

If you are interested in hearing directly from us about these events, contact Heather ✉.

Thinking it Through Together - Supporting Children to be Ready to Learn this New Year



HERE WE GO AGAIN! This shift back to at home learning can be far from ideal for many young learners and difficult for all parents -the expectations surrounding what should or shouldn't be happening with learning from home can be a challenge for all families.

PARENTS YOU HAVE GOT THIS! All of us, however, could benefit from a virtual supportive hug to remind us that we are all in it together. Let's begin the new year with a conversation about taking care of our own foundational needs so we are ready and able to parent and provide for our children's needs.

JOIN US! For our first 2021 'Thinking it Through' session - an upcoming chat with other parents about, mindset, showing up energized for the challenge of supporting our children to be ready to learn - setting the foundation in place for 2021.

Join together with families on Thursday, January 21st 2020

from 6:30pm-7:00pm to "think it through TOGETHER"

Register Here to Receive the Zoom Link Details!

Inclusive Post Secondary Education: Learning from the Alberta Experience

Join the The Southern Ontario Training Group, with the co-sponsorship of Community Living Ontario in exploring the life-changing opportunity of inclusive post-secondary education for adult learners with intellectual disabilities. Through a collaborative conversation over four sessions, participants will explore the foundation and history of Alberta's inclusive post-secondary education initiatives that seek to guide students and families on an inclusive pathway.

The four sessions will explore topics such as Normative Pathways, supporting students and families to create a vision for an inclusive life- a life not dependent on services and funding, dreaming big- the history and experience of inclusive post-secondary education in Alberta, student life (on campus & in the community), career and employment, and life post-studies.

February 2nd, 4th, 9th, and 11th, 2021 from 1:00pm to 3:00pm via Zoom.

[See the flyer and registration details here!](#)

Support SRV, Share the Ideas, Inform Others and Join the Collaborative Effort

The International Social Role Valorization Association is an international organization, comprised of individual and organizational members from across the globe, which provides a network of support and alliance with others working to understand and use SRV.

Their purpose is to promote SRV development, education, assessment, and leadership to assist people and organizations to implement SRV concepts so that vulnerable people may have access to the good things in life.

If you are interested in supporting the ISRVA, [you can find membership details here!](#)

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 with a loved one.

For the last number of months we have been focusing on Circles of Support and what can result when a group of people are intentionally invited to come together. We have thought more deeply about the value and reasons for creating a circle, along with who could be invited and the many varied ways that circles can begin. Before the holidays we talked about the kinds of things people might bring to their Support Circle and this month we will focus on building and sharing a vision of a good ordinary life, following typical pathways and seeking real purpose and belonging. This meeting is open to anyone who has attended a MTM series and wishes to join the conversation.

This group will meet via Zoom from 6.30-7.30pm on Monday, January 25th and members will be sent a link to join a few days before.

JANUARY 25, 2021
6:30PM TO 7:30PM

Online via Zoom Meetings



**MAKING THE MOST
STUDY GROUP**

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

or contact Heather
by phone or email:

**(905)436-2500
ext.2314**

hminors@dafrs.com

respiteservices.com

CHAP
COMMUNITY HELPERS
FOR ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

RespiteServices.com is continues connecting families to
supporters! Contact Sandy for details!

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. Contact Sandy at (905)436-3404 or 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,
and see the "Upcoming Events" tab.

Durham Association For Family Resources and Support
850 King St. W, Unit 20, Oshawa, Ontario L1J 8N5
(905)436-2500 www.dafrs.com