

FAMILY focus



▶ Introducing New Recruitment Matching Site... 2



▶ Join our Federal Election Non-Partisan Conversation ... 3



▶ A focus on Brain, Body & Being with Peter Marks... 6

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

Membership Month is Here! Support The Work of DFR by Becoming a Member!

Becoming a Member is an opportunity to show your support for the work of Durham Family Resources. Your membership not only tells us that you believe in the vision, mission and values of DFR, but it also demonstrates to funders, policy makers, community organizations and the public that you believe that this work is important and beneficial to our community.

New! Automatic Renewal for Current Members

If you currently hold a membership with our organization, we are moving to an **automatic renewal membership model**. Each year you will receive notification that your membership has been automatically renewed, along with information about the upcoming Annual General Meeting (AGM). If you need to make any changes or additions to your membership, there will be an opportunity to provide that information at the time of that communication. If you no longer wish to continue your membership, there will be a simple option for you to “opt out”.



Not yet a Member? We encourage anyone interested in our work to consider becoming a member of our organization. Time and again, we hear directly from families how they’ve benefited from the work of DFR; from conversations over time, to support given to take that next step, to the varied administrative supports offered, and the myriad learning opportunities and chances to hear from other families. Or perhaps it’s the principles we hold, the partnerships sought and the roads we travel alongside families together. These are the valuable ways our work has touched the lives of many across Durham Region and beyond. *Whatever your reasons, your Membership Matters!*

In order to vote at this year’s Annual General Meeting in June, **we must receive any new membership applications by May 15th, 2025**

**Not yet a member?
Fill out a membership form here today!**



Save the Date for our 2025 Annual General Meeting!

We are starting to prepare for our Annual General Meeting in June. Plan to join us on **Thursday June 19, 2025**. More details will follow regarding time and venue.

2025 AGM

Thursday
June 19th,
2025

Introducing Our New Recruitment Matching Site!

We heard a resounding YES from families when they learned that DFR was designing a new recruitment and matching platform! We've listened to families and other users about their past experiences and ideas of what would be better, and intentionally incorporated their insight into the design of this new recruitment and matching platform.

Over the months, we know that excitement and anticipation has been building as we've shared ongoing progress updates ... without further ado, we are thrilled to announce the name of our new recruitment matching platform - **bridges**!

bridges is a product of Durham Association for Family Resources and Support and has been developed together with families to expand the concept of recruitment and to replace respiteservices.com.



So what's this recruitment and matching platform anyway? **bridges** is a web-based, centralized platform that facilitates introductions and simplifies connections between people looking for paid support, and a wide range of Associates (paid support) looking for meaning work.

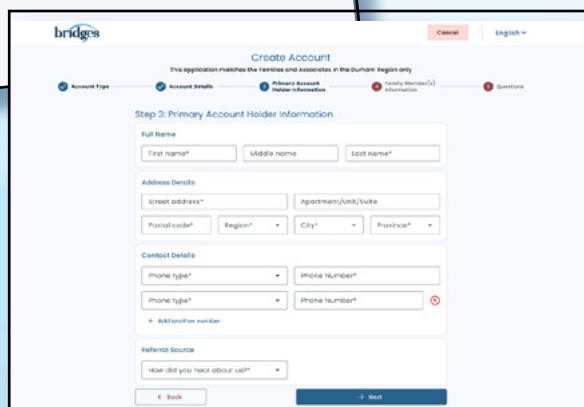
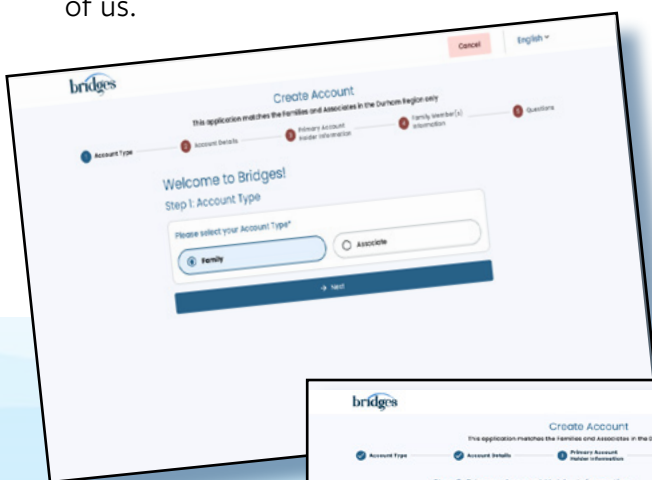
Our Soft Launch of **bridges** will be on Tuesday, April 15, 2025. Families currently registered with rs.com will be first up for the soft launch and will have a chance to explore and experience some of the features of the new site. Our full launch of **bridges** will take place on Monday, June 30, 2025, when all the features of this new site will be available to explore and ready to welcome any new users!

Respiteservices.com No Longer Active

We recently sent a letter to families currently using rs.com with an update regarding the change in status of rs.com. We had been informed that rs.com (the provincial matching app) ended as of March 31, 2025, despite the original intention for this service to remain active for another year. This has come as a surprise to all of us.

We realize that for many, this change will have an impact on you and your family, but we've got you covered. In the coming weeks, we will notify you of both in-house and zoom Information Sessions that will assist you in comfortably utilizing the new platform.

Feel free to reach out to Sandy Ciarlariello, our **bridges** Coordinator, with any questions at sciarlariello@dafrs.com or 905-436-3404



Let Your Voice Be Counted On April 28th - Federal Election Day!

'April Showers' don't only bring us spring rain but also 'shower' us with many questions, as we head to the voting booth on April 28th, to determine who will represent our interests within our federal government. During this time of uncertainty, we've heard a great deal from various leaders of all levels of government. We've likely talked with our colleagues, friends and family members. Regardless of who you are voting for, the spirit of this moment is calling on us to exercise our civil responsibilities, to raise our voice and vote.

An interesting fact: At our last federal election in 2021, Canada's population of eligible voters was 26.3 million people, and the voter turn out was 17.2 million people, which is 62.6 percent. In past years, the turn out has been as high as 79.4 percent, therefore 2021 was reported as a low turn out of Canadian voters. So, what stops people from exercising this right and responsibility? What stops us from assisting a family member to exercise their role of citizen through voting?

Come for an Evening of Open & Non-Partisan Conversation

We are inviting families to come together for a *non-partisan* conversation to talk and share with one another about the questions we hold and the barriers we see to people actively engaging in their civil right to vote. Regardless of who you are voting for, this is an opportunity to come share and exchange ideas amongst others who care about some of the same issues. The aim is for us all to gain more confidence and experience greater ease carrying out our own, or assisting a family member to carry out their own civil responsibility.

What stops us from voting or entering the process with confidence may just be tied to a few questions:

- Are there important deadline dates we need to be aware of?
- What accommodations are available that will allow me or my family member to vote, including on-site assistance at the voting booth?
- What are all the methods of voting such as mail in ballots that make it easier for people to vote?
- In considering the issues relevant to us and the choices before us, what level of government holds what responsibilities?
- How do I figure out the candidates running in my area and what they stand for?
- What can other families share about their experience supporting a family member to take up this role of citizen?
- How do I become a registered voter?

Our Vote is our Voice. Perhaps you have a few questions or you've discovered a few answers along the way that you would be happy to share. Please join us in this non-partisan conversation; an evening that promises to capture the spirit of this Canadian moment!

The **deadline to register to vote is April 22nd**. For more election information and to check if you are registered, click [HERE](#).

Join the conversation and Learning!

REGISTER HERE

Wednesday April 23, 2025

6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

At The Gathering Place

(20-850 King Street W., Oshawa)

Talking Housing Issues With Local and Regional Leaders and More at April's Imagining Home!

We had a robust conversation this month at Imagining Home!

We've been invited to a community consultation for local organizations in Whitby... families talked about and helped shape the important housing issues we want to deliver at these kinds of opportunities that connect us with municipal and regional leaders, and other community organizations.

Families shared some progress made over the past month around home and housing, and other aspects of family life. Collectively we were once again struck by how even the smallest of steps, when taken incrementally, can lead to real progress!

Our conversation drew out questions around planning into the future; what might a first step in "legacy planning" look like? Who might you invite into these conversations to simply overhear, if not to take anything on yet? If you weren't around, what would others need to know about your loved one? Imagining Home is a great place to invite somebody into the conversation!

Come join the conversation. Long time and new families alike, everyone has something to gain and something to offer. 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.

IMAGINING HOME MEETING • WEDNESDAY MAY 14, 2025

• 6:30PM • IN PERSON

CONTACT ERIN FOR DETAILS (EOREILLY@DAFRS.COM)



An Important Reminder as we Enter April Income Tax Season!

Recent Family Focus newsletters have detailed information and updates on the Canadian Dental Care Plan, which is now in place, as well as the Canada Disability Benefit rolling out in July of 2025. Eligibility and yearly renewals of both federal programs are dependent on maintaining the up-to-date filing of income tax forms each year.

If you are interested in reading the details about these two federal programs again, you will find past newsletter articles over the last 12 months. For the Canada Disability Benefit look to our Aug, Sept, and Dec 2024 issues. For the Canadian Dental Care Plan see our March 2025 issue. Access all issues [HERE](#).



Inclusion Canada Reports at The United Nations

Here is a quick summary of some of the issues raised, and the response from the International Committee...

Last month Canadian disability advocates were in Switzerland giving evidence at the UN. They were speaking to the CRPD Committee (Rights of Persons with Disabilities) on several issues, including Canada's current MAiD program (Medical Assistance in Dying).

'Track 2' of MAiD allows doctors to end the lives of people with a disability who are not terminally ill. Krista Carr, the CEO of Inclusion Canada, shared that "Since Track 2 became legal, Canada has ended the life of at least one person with a disability every single day."

Several disability organizations and individuals are also challenging Canada's expanded MAiD laws by [launching a legal Charter challenge at Ontario's Superior Court.](#)

On March 26, 2025 the UN Committee published their recommendations:

- Repeal MAiD Track 2, including the planned 2027 expansion to persons whose "sole underlying medical condition is a mental illness," and reject proposals to expand MAiD to "mature minors" and through advance requests
- Implement a coordinated de-institutionalization strategy across federal, provincial, and territorial governments with clear timelines and targets
- Withdraw Canada's interpretative declaration and reservation to Article 12, which limits equal recognition before the law for persons with disabilities and undermines their right to exercise legal capacity
- Establish a national inclusive education action plan to transition from segregated education to quality, inclusive education across all provinces and territories
- Develop a strategy with specific timelines to transition from segregated employment settings such as sheltered workshops to open, inclusive, and accessible employment for persons with disabilities
- Invest significantly in comprehensive measures to address systemic failures in social determinants of health and well-being, including poverty alleviation, accessible housing, prevention of homelessness, and community-based supports



We regularly hear these priorities echoed by families, concerned by the impact of policies that put their loved ones at greater risk; fail to provide adequate support and resources to live in their communities; have their participation in decision-making recognized; and have access to inclusive education and employment opportunities. Durham Family Resources shares in the call to all levels of government to implement the Committee's recommendations. [Click here](#) to read more and remember to ask your local federal candidates what their party will do to implement these recommendations!



BIO MEDICAL APPROACHES STUDY
GROUP HOSTS ...

A Focus on Body, Brain & Being: A Morning with Peter Marks

Peter Marks, beloved by the families of Durham Region, returns for a morning of presentation, discussion and discovery. This time Peter will focus on identifying what families consider to be the major issues facing their family members. He will identify 15 common actions, most often taken by families and the medical/clinicians who advise them, which do not usually work for people.

Peter will address what we can do to take care of these needs right now so that people can live to their fullest potential, using many resources from the current medical system, as well as our own. Peter will provide us with quick wins and basic first steps, outline the power of our own presence, and how to ensure that we are at our best in order to use and teach others the impact of a calm, loving presence with our loved ones.

Peter is the Founder and Director of A Centre for Conscious Care. The Centre has been built on Peter's 40 years of experience in Human and Health Services, his dedication to only recommend evidence-based interventions, his 'hard sciences' training in Engineering, and his more than 30 years of developing intra-personal skills and insights as a mindfulness practitioner and facilitator.

Friday April 11, 2025
9:30am - 12:30pm

The Gathering Place, 20-850
King St. W., Oshawa

**Spaces are Limited.
RSVP Here Today!**

Making the Most Study Group Meets In-Person This Month!

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.

Each month graduates of past Making the Most learning series are invited to come together and think more deeply about crafting and sharing a vision, designing and planning days full of contributions and possibilities, focusing on roles rather than activities, seeking and developing good support, making positive introductions, and finding strength, comfort, and energy through building personal networks, and connecting with other families.

The meeting is open to anyone who has attended the 6-part Making the Most learning series or a MTM Weekend Retreat and wishes to join the conversation.

As the evenings are slowly getting longer and warmer we will meet in person this month. Join us in the Gathering Place from **6.30-8pm on Monday April 28.**

For more info contact Laura at lpowell@dafers.com



**MAKING THE MOST
STUDY GROUP**

Important Dates At-A-Glance!

Imagining Home
May 14 @ 6:30pm

**Bio Medical Approaches
With Peter Marks**
Apr 11 @ 9:30am

**Federal Election Non-
Partisan Conversation**
April 23 @ 6:30pm

**Making The Most Study
Group**
April 28 @ 6:30pm

Next Gen Meetup
May 1 @ 7pm

Annual General Meeting
June 19th @ TBA

For more information,
please visit our website at
www.dafers.com

ONLINE VIA ZOOM

Next Generation Meetup

A casual get together of those who identify as the "next generation" in the support of a loved one with a developmental disability. Coming together to connect, share, and learn from one another.

Contact Rosanne for details!
rpurnwasie@dafers.com
(905)436-2500 ext. 2289

Thursday May 1st @ 7-8pm
Email Rosanne at: rpurnwasie@dafers.com

For more information, please visit our website, www.dafers.com,
and see the "Upcoming Events" tab.

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(905)436-2500 www.dafers.com