

May 2025



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Durham Family Resources

# FAMILY focus

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

## Mark Your Calendars and Join us for DFR's Annual General Meeting on Thursday June 19, 2025!

This year's AGM will take place at the Jubilee Pavilion Banquet & Conference Centre in Oshawa - a beautiful venue to gather together, celebrate achievements from the past year, vote on important organizational activities, and head into the Summer on a festive note with a celebratory dinner following the business portion of the meeting!

Our theme for the evening is **Bridges – An Invitation to Reciprocity**

- » In building a life we all cross bridges, explore, take big steps, make choices, and we aim for outcomes or steps where there is reciprocity - in our home when there is a degree of independence of childhood that in turn lets parents age and pass in peace. In all of our work and contributions, where we are giving of time and skills, while gaining roles, relationships, and places of welcome. And in our leisure lives too.
- » Our new recruitment and matching app, **bridges**, is a tool for win-win relationships – someone gets more deeply involved in community life, while another shares their time or interests and is compensated, and together their relationship builds a better community.
- » For our role in truth and reconciliation and honouring what Indigenous history wants to teach us - a land acknowledgement moment where we honour the privileges and riches that have been afforded us.
- » And our “together with families” approach where we bridge in ways that we believe will positively contribute to community and receive back from community.

The AGM is a great opportunity to meet other like-minded people and celebrate the significance of our partnerships with families. Good news - you do not need to be a member to ATTEND the AGM (assuming our capacity has not been reached) but if you and your whole family wish to VOTE at the AGM and are not yet approved members, then applications ([click here](#)) must be received at DFR by noon on May 15th

Please mark your calendars and click the registration link below, so you don't miss out on this event!

## Annual General Meeting

Thursday June 19, 2025 - 6:00pm to 8:30pm  
Jubilee Pavilion Banquet & Conference Centre - 55 Lakeview  
Park Ave, Oshawa

**REGISTER HERE!**

# Membership Month is Here! Current Members are Automatically Renewed!

**New! Automatic Renewal for Current DFR Members.** If you currently hold a membership with our organization, we have moved to an automatic renewal membership model. Soon current members will receive a notification that their 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, instructions to do so are included in that communication. If you no longer wish to continue your membership, there is a simple option for you to “opt out”. New applicants will be approved at the May 15th Board meeting - so if you want to vote at this year’s AGM, get your membership application in by May 15th!

**Not yet 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.

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**



## A Rejuvenating, Hopeful and Learning-Packed Making The Most Retreat!

A chance to think by a still lake, walk and talk along tree-lined paths, and come together to learn and share ideas of possibilities with other families. At the end of April, families came together for another successful Making the Most Retreat at the beautiful Elmhirst’s Resort in Keene, Ontario.

We were delighted to have 24 people (10 families and 4 mentor families) come together for our latest Making the Most learning series weekend retreat. This was a great opportunity for families to hear stories of possibilities rooted in a vision of those ‘Good Things of Life’ we all want and seek for ourselves and our loved ones.

Families were introduced to strategies to craft roles, build relationships and find places of belonging, with and among others in our neighbourhoods and communities. It was a weekend of brainstorming opportunities together, sharing delicious food together, and appreciating our time together.

As families left, they described feeling hopeful, positive, rejuvenated and knowing that they are not alone. Taking away some new ideas to try this summer, or as one participant shared, baby steps make huge strides!

To learn more about a future Making the Most Learning Series or Retreat, contact Laura Powell at [lpowell@dfrs.com](mailto:lpowell@dfrs.com)



# A Small Contingent of Families and Team Members Head Eastbound to Halifax!

We are crossing t's and dotting i's for our upcoming presentations, packing our bags, checking our tickets and getting the May Newsletter out before we head out the door and off to the 8th International SRV Conference from May 7-9th, 2025!

The theme of this year's conference is 'The Good Things in Life at Home, School, Work and Beyond'. The conference welcomes many from around the world, inviting people and their families/friends or allies to attend, as well as educators, policy makers, advocates, and professionals.

This conference is a wonderful opportunity to come together to meet and hear from others from many different places and cultures, who are using SRV in a multitude of ways - ultimately helping to create pathways that will assist people in building the good and ordinary lives in their communities that we strive for.

We are excited to have the privilege of contributing three separate presentations to this international conference.

1. **There's Nothing More Natural Than Supports for Decision Making: Families Using CVA to Reflect on Recognizing Capacity**  
Presented by: Janet Klees, Laura Powell with Tracy MacGillivray & Allan MacGillivray
2. **The Bounty of SRV for Young Families: Baby Steps and Low-Hanging Fruit Guiding Family Focus Back to the Ordinary Good**  
Presented by Selena Blake and Sue McLellan with Ambika Sharma
3. **How Home Happens: It is Not Innovative to Want Ordinary**  
Presented by Janet Klees and Erin O'Reilly with Carron Jensen and Diane Douglas



Now, we would tell you that while we are away that we are going to miss you, but in truth, we are bringing you with us. Each presentation was woven together through our collective experience, it represents the journey we have taken together and what we have learned. It's your questions, your conversations with other families, your commitment to principles that lead you down a different path and plan, and all that comes to fruition from those efforts.

We are fortunate to have a few DFR families anchoring each presentation, as members of our presentation teams. Their journey is a good representation of many DFR families' stories, speaking to the work, dedication, and courage as they assist/support their family member, young or not so young, to establish themselves in meaningful ways within their home, school, work, neighbourhood and beyond.

We will take copious notes, try to take a few pictures and happily share on our return what we have learned and what people most appreciated from what we had to offer.

# Sharing Our Learning and Perspectives on Home & Housing With an International Audience!

It's been a busy month, planning for our upcoming presentation at the 8th Annual International ISRVA Conference in Halifax, Nova Scotia! Our presentation **How Home Happens: It is Not Innovative to Want Ordinary** is about all the ways that home happens when an SRV lens guides housing expectations, choices, decisions, and creativity. Here's a little of what we wrote about the upcoming session that you may recognize a little of yourself or your family member in ...

Since 2018, Durham Family Resources has partnered with families to think about home, housing, and support for and with their family member with a disability. This presentation is an opportunity to showcase not only the outcomes of such family-led thinking and action, but also to spend some time on the process and safe-guarding of this, a cornerstone of The Good Things of Life for all. This topic is relevant to us all as we cherish and dream of home.

In straight housing terms, 70 families in our Region of Ontario have designed, developed and brought about next-step housing situations together with their family member - 42 since 2018. This session will provide a view of the types and shapes of these housing outcomes based on the idea that every family begins with its own unique set of ideas, assets, vision, connections, and possibility.

These housing gains were achieved *without* special government funding in the sector, without an agency housing program, and without resorting to housing initiatives that group together people with disabilities or those who are otherwise marginalized. These outcomes were achieved in simplest terms by modeling how other citizens, achieve home and housing stability – even in volatile housing times.

We will discuss the evolution of housing, home and support principles which are guided by SRV theory and generated by families over time. We will talk about some success factors including: the safeguarding that happens when critical analysis of various housing situations is practiced in a family group setting, being clear with families at the outset what kinds of housing we are NOT looking at in our meetings and events, the importance of separating home, housing and support, and the value of family-to-family mentoring, discussions, and learning.

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.

Come join the conversation. Long time and new families alike, everyone has something to gain and something to offer. 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 [eoreilly@dafrs.com](mailto:eoreilly@dafrs.com) to arrange an introductory call.

**IMAGINING HOME MEETING • WEDNESDAY MAY 14, 2025**

**• 6:30PM • IN PERSON**

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



## Bridges Recruitment Matching Site Goes Live for Current Users!

We are excited to announce that bridges is live for families that were active on respiteservices.com. Our expected launch of the platform for the public is early July 2025. If you are a family and interested in joining bridges, please contact Sandy Ciarlariello at [sciarlariello@dafrs.com](mailto:sciarlariello@dafrs.com).

Sandy will collect names and email addresses so that you can be notified when the platform is available.

The logo for 'bridges' features the word in a dark blue, serif font. A light blue arch is positioned above the letters 'i', 'd', and 'g', resembling a bridge.

## BioMedical Approaches Study Group Welcomes Mindfulness Coach, Cara Coulson in May!



This month at Biomedical Approaches Study Group, we'll be gathering to review and discuss the lessons and insights we garnered at last month's event: A Focus on Body, Brain & Being with Peter Marks.

Additionally, we'll take time to practice some of our learning - Cara Coulson, Family Facilitator, who has years of experience as a Mindfulness Coach and Yoga Instructor, will lead us through a guided mindfulness session. Our learning from Peter reminds us that regular practice can enable us to feel more settled, present, and thus evermore thoughtful in how we approach daily ups and downs.

For the guided meditation, you are welcome to bring a yoga mat if you have one, we will also have a few extra on hand for those interested.

There was great buzz in the air during April's workshop and over the lunch hour thereafter. This month we can build on the momentum and motivation we felt after listening to Peter and others. It is the perfect time for us to exchange an idea we've tried and other ideas we have in mind to implement.

The Biomedical Approaches Study Group meets monthly and is open and welcoming to new and past participants! We usually meet on the second Friday of each month at 10 am for about an hour to an hour and a half. Janet will be away in May so please RSVP to Karen at [kahudson@dafrs.com](mailto:kahudson@dafrs.com) if you'd like to attend!

**BIOMEDICAL  
STUDY GROUP**

**FRIDAY,  
MAY 9, 2025**

**10 AM - 11:30 AM**



# 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 again this month. Join us in the Gathering Place from **6.30-8pm on Monday May 26.**



For more info contact Laura at [lpowell@dafrs.com](mailto:lpowell@dafrs.com)

**MAKING THE MOST  
STUDY GROUP**

## Important Dates At-A-Glance!

**Bio Medical Approaches**  
May 9 @ 10am

**Imagining Home**  
May 14 @ 6:30pm

**Making The Most Study Group**  
May 26 @ 6:30pm

**Next Gen Meetup**  
June 5 @ 7pm

**Annual General Meeting**  
June 19th @ 6pm

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@dafrs.com](mailto:rpurnwasie@dafrs.com)  
(905) 436-2500 ext. 2289

Thursday June 5th @ 7-8pm  
Email Rosanne at: [rpurnwasie@dafrs.com](mailto:rpurnwasie@dafrs.com)

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

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