

Where exceptional families thrive

Issue 157
May 2023

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What's In This Issue?

As always, we'd like to start off our May issue by thanking everyone who supported us at Evening of Elegance on April 14, whether you joined us in person, shared the event with your friends and family, donated items to our silent auction, and/or volunteered your time. Your support was felt deeply by our team. Thank you!

The night was exactly as we'd hoped, and the funds raised will help us continue to support families in Waterloo Region! Head to page 10 to see all the highlights.

There are also a ton of amazing opportunities in the community this May. Be sure to read through this issue of Family Pulse to learn about all the new programs, events, and more coming your way!

Have a wonderful month of May.



Support WRFN

Waterloo Region Family Network
www.wrfn.info
info@wrfn.info
519.886.9150

SEAC Updates

Waterloo Catholic District School Board - Special Education Advisory Committee Update ***Submitted Erin Sutherland & Karen Applebee***

At this month's SEAC meeting, Tee Battistella, Lead of Student Services spoke about the WCDSB overall goal of Building Independence for students and working to train at the system level with all professionals involved with students.

Supports are offered in tiers based on needs of classroom and/or students. Tier 1 includes the following examples; visual schedule, first and then language, positive reinforcement, modeling a lesson, CYCW providing classroom support, ensuring classroom teacher understands universal supports. Skill building resource tools are made available to all staff to support with practical classroom suggestions and to support with implementing the program.

Tier 2 examples are as follows; group offerings such as PEERS Program (implemented in secondary school), individual supports to students within grades 6-8 for students who require, pre-school life skills taught mostly to 4-6 year olds, either 1:1 or in small group settings.

Individual agency updates were provided.

For Trustees updates please see here: **[WCDSB Board Meeting Bulletin — March 2023 – Waterloo Catholic District School Board](#)**

The next SEAC meeting date has not yet been finalized, but it will either take place May 17 or 24.

Lets think about 'functioning' language

By Cristina Stanger, Self-Advocacy Liaison

It is common to hear people use the terms "high functioning" or "low functioning" to describe exceptional individuals. Individuals with exceptionalities may even use this language to describe themselves. For the remainder of this article, I will refer to this linguistic approach as 'functioning language'.

Over the years, I've started to question the functioning language approach. I would like to explore why and how this language is used, and the value judgements it may imply. As you read, I invite you to reflect on these concepts too. I will share my own perspective and experiences, as a neurodivergent person, along with some linguistic alternatives that I've started moving towards in my own conversations.

Why is Function Language Used Today?

I have wondered if the functioning language trend may have been exacerbated by changes in the latest Diagnostic Statistical Manual (DSM-5). The fifth edition removed some neurodevelopmental diagnostic terms that people were accustomed to, terms that had come to be associated with certain (presumed) levels of support needs. Without these terms, people look to pair a more general diagnostic term with a descriptor.

In my estimation, a speaker using functioning language is often looking to concisely communicate an individual's support needs. Or if someone is inquiring about an exceptional person, they want to know what kinds of support that person might require. All of this is typically well-intentioned. More information or a better understanding is usually the goal, because there is so much individual variation within neurodevelopmental conditions.

And if you've used this terminology before, don't worry, I've used it too earlier on in my journey. So, no judgement here. The aim of this article is by no means to evoke shame or guilt, but rather to give you something to think about.

What is the Impact of Functioning Language?

"High functioning" is often used as a positive qualifier. Something like, "Jack has autism, but he's very high functioning" as if to imply "but don't worry, it's not that bad." Or a neurodivergent individual may get a reaction something like, "You can't possibly have ADHD? Well, I guess if you do, then you must be so high functioning" as if that is a compliment.

These kinds of statements make several assumptions: (1) a certain diagnosis is inherently negative, (2) the extent of someone's challenges are minimized, and (3) there is a presumed level of ability and/or value.

I question more and more if these kinds of statements are appropriate. I hear "low functioning" used much less often, but it is used. And we can extrapolate that if society holds high functioning in a more positive esteem, then low functioning has a negative connotation; sadly, it is seen as 'less than'. And is any of this really fair? In my opinion, no, it isn't.

I think it's important to step away from categorizing others, from making presumptions about what another individual can and can't do. I also wouldn't want to box someone in, because really there is some variability in what one is able to do in any given situation or on any given day. Don't we all have days when we 'function' better, and days where we 'function' more poorly?

My Experience Being Called "High Functioning"

When people tell me I'm "high functioning," it feels like they expect me to perform at a certain level. All. The. Time. And that's just not possible. I use the word 'perform' intentionally because in certain situations I am actively working to mask my neurodivergent symptoms. It also feels like my very real challenges are being glossed over. When I took my five-year-old to a birthday party at an extremely busy play place, between the sensory overload and parental small talk, I can assure you that I felt anything but high functioning. The struggle was intense, whether other people could see it or not.

Alternative Language to Consider Using

So then, you may be wondering, what exactly am I supposed to say? Well, let me offer you some alternatives. I've used one option a few times in this article already: the extend of support needs. Since I suspect one of the driving forces behind functioning language is a desire to communicate how much support an individual needs, then let's just talk about support needs, shall we? A "functioning" statement does not need to be part of the equation.

I think one can also look at things in terms of a degree of independence. I live a highly independent life, and in some ways my independence can mask my symptoms because I can choose to modify my day to meet my needs. Some of my neurodivergent peers have less independence, needing more support in their daily lives, and that is okay too. Neither situation is better nor worse than the other, they just are what they are, as we each try to live our best life. We all have intrinsic value. We all have something to contribute.

And I try to be mindful that language isn't static, so my opinion in a few years may shift. For now though, I will be going with a 'support needs' and 'independence' approach to the language I use. I understand everyone has different preferences and perspectives, and you may very well come to a different conclusion about functioning language than I have. All I ask is that you give it some thought.

What's Happening at WRFN

WRFN programs and services are transitioning into being available in person. Supports are also available through phone and email connections and through other virtual formats. Please reach out and let us know how we can help you and your family.

Do you have a question about community resources or child development?

WRFN Drop-Ins at EarlyON

Meet with Erin, our Family Resource Coach

Erin will be hosting in-office drop-in meetings at various EarlyON locations this spring. Meetings do not require an appointment, but are on a first-come, first-served basis.

DATE	LOCATION	TIME
May 2	Early ON Oak Creek 80 Tartan Ave, Kitchener	10-11 am
May 3	EarlyON Roger St 161 Roger St, Waterloo	10-11 am
May 5	EarlyON Riverside 250 William St., Elmira	10-11:30 am
May 9	EarlyON Water St 73 Water St., N., Unit 105 Cambridge	10-11 am
May 10	EarlyON St. Boniface 225 Starlight Ave, Breslau	10-11 am



Contact Erin -

erin.sutherland@wrfn.info
226-808-5460

More dates to come in June!



www.wrfn.info





Thursdays from 3 – 5 pm
KidsAbility, Waterloo
(500 Hallmark Drive, Waterloo)

As special needs families, life is constantly changing but together we can help each other see that it remains beautiful.

**Come play, connect, support and be supported
as we bring our differences together.**

Kaleidoscope Kids is a free drop-in program. There is no age limit, and you are encouraged to bring your children with special needs, siblings or come by yourself.

No registration required.

If you have any questions, please reach out to info@wrfn.info

A partnership program of:



KidsAbility is mask-friendly environment. Masks are no longer mandatory in our facilities.



A NEW CHAPTER

This group is for family members & caregivers interested in preparing for the future of their youth/adult family member with a lifelong disability.

We have a new feature to our meetings called "Ask Us Anything" from 9-9:30pm. This is a chance for those who attend the meeting to ask questions or clarify points when the main part of the meeting is over.

Join our Facebook group called A New Chapter – parent and caregiver connections.



May 2, 2023

Employment Stories: Pt. 2

We welcome representatives of:

- Lutherwood Employment Services
- Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work
- KW Habilitation Services' Career Compass Program

This is an opportunity for parents and caregivers of youth and adults with disabilities to learn about organizations that can support individuals to prepare for and to find work.

All meetings are virtual Zoom meetings from 7:30pm-9:00pm

If you would like to receive emails about our monthly meetings (always the first Tuesday of the month), please email Mary at maryjpike@hotmail.com and ask to be put on our email list.

A New Chapter meets again via Zoom on May 2 at 7:30 - 9 pm for the second part of our Employment series. In this meeting, we'll welcome representatives of Lutherwood Employment Services, the Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work, and KW Habilitation Services' Career Compass Program. This is an opportunity for parents and caregivers of youth and adults with disabilities to learn about organizations that can support individuals to prepare for and to find work. There will be a chance for you to ask your questions after the panel has presented their information.

From 9-9:30 pm we will hold our post meeting segment called Ask Us Anything where we stay in the Zoom room for discussion about a broad range of questions brought by you, our ANC parents and caregivers. Members of our Planning Team will respond to questions and strive to connect you with helpful resources.

If you are interested in attending the May meeting, please email Mary Pike at maryjpike@hotmail.com with your rsvp. Only those who rsvp will be sent the Zoom link for this meeting.

A banner for the Youth Impact Survey. The top half features a white background with large, colorful paint splashes in magenta, orange, and blue. The bottom half is a solid blue rectangle containing white text and logos.

Youth Impact Survey

Helps inform decisions about programs, services,
and supports available to young people in our
community.



Children and Youth
Planning Table
of Waterloo Region

www.youthimpactsurvey.ca

The Youth Impact Survey is BACK! If you're between 9 and 18 from Waterloo Region, we want to hear from YOU.

What you have to say will make a difference! Data from past survey results was used for grant proposals, program planning and strategic planning. Organizations have also used the data to have deeper, more focused conversations with young people to better understand their lived experience and the issues they face in their everyday lives.

WRFN is hopeful to see lots of children and youth with exceptionalities participate, too! If you are a parent or caregiver of children of a youth with exceptionalities, we'd be so grateful if you could let them know about the survey and encourage their participation.

[Complete the Survey](http://www.youthimpactsurvey.ca)



THEMUSEUM is pleased to offer WRFN Families 25% off the admission price—which includes access to the new EYEPOOL Gallery immersive experience.

The discount code for Waterloo Region Family Network is EPWRFN25

When pre-purchasing tickets on THEMUSEUM website there is a “Apply Discount Code” button in the checkout, or in-person visitors can provide the code to our Guest Services desk to receive this discount.

Some Key Accessibility points about THEMUSEUM:

- Parking is available in the City of Kitchener garage on Duke street, which has a direct connection to THEMUSEUM building on the second level. There is also a loading/unloading area directly in front of the building on King Street (no parking there, although there is surface-level parking along King Street and another city lot around the corner on Queen St).
- There is elevator access to all five floors, and the accessible washrooms are located in the elevator lobby area on every floor.
- The Eyepool installation has flashing/moving lights that could trigger photosensitive seizures.
- There's more information about the current exhibit here:

<https://themuseum.ca/exhibitions/current-exhibitions/eyepool-presents-impossible-geometries> and a short clip of the installation in action here:
<https://www.instagram.com/p/CpdP8Lgg2fj/>



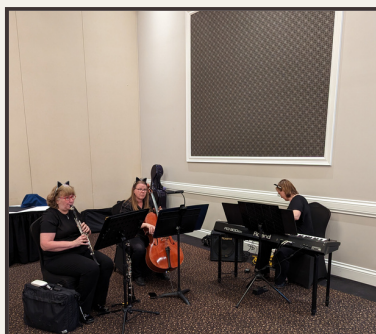
On Friday, April 14, 2023, over a hundred guests joined us at St George Banquet Hall in Waterloo for our eighth annual Evening of Elegance event. This was the first year we were able to host a mix and mingle style event since 2019!

During Evening of Elegance, guests socialized with their friends and new connections, participated in a silent auction with a range of items from generous local businesses, snapped fun photos in an elegant photobooth, and tried delicious bites with wine pairings. They also had an opportunity to purchase raffle tickets for a 50/50 draw. A musical trio, Tre Gatte, also joined us for the evening to play instrumental covers of various popular songs during the first hour of the evening.

While we are grateful to all those who supported our silent auction and donated items, we'd like to extend extra warmth and thanks to Dave Rutherford and the KW Woodworking and Craft Centre crew! Our silent auction table looked absolutely stunning with all the handmade items made by local craftspeople in our community. So much time and dedication went into these items, and we still feel honoured to have been gifted such beautiful pieces to include in our auction.

Chantal Huinink, motivational speaker, author, social justice advocate, and Regional Councillor in Waterloo, was our special guest presenter for the evening. Chantal is a strong voice representing folks with disabilities and is such a wonderful advocate for inclusive spaces in our community. She gave an inspiring speech about her campaign and work as a Regional Councillor and left the audience with a few key reminders. Chantal reminded us how improvements in accessibility often result in improvement of services for all. She was also a proud representative for disability accommodations, and what those with disabilities are able to accomplish when their accommodations are met. We were honoured to have her come speak at our event!

Neil Aitchison was a wonderful Master of Ceremonies for the evening, keeping our guests informed and entertained. His quick wit and sense of humour were delightful additions to the evening.



Matthew MacGregor

Award for Volunteerism

Recipients 2022/23



Karen Applebee



Lyn McGinnis

The recipients of our 2023 Volunteer Awards were Karen Applebee and Lyn McGinnis.

Both Karen and Lyn have been active participants in the groups they volunteer with. Karen has been the alternate representative for WRFN on the Waterloo Catholic District School Board Special Education Advisory Committee for the past several years, while Lyn has been an integral part of Coffee Club. We send our thanks, once again, to Karen and Lyn for their involvement and dedication to WRFN families and self-advocates through their volunteer roles.

Thank You To Our **Special Guests**



Chantal Huinink, Speaker



Neil Aitchison, Emcee



Tre Gatte, Performers



Keely Photobooth Co.

50/50 Raffle

Winner!

**Congratulations to
Wesley Hauck! You are
the winner of our 2023
50/50 Raffle.**

Congrats

Waterloo Region Family Network's

Evening of Elegance

Is Generously Sponsored By:

Heffner







This event was generously sponsored by Heffner Toyota. Additional sponsors include: Melloul-Blamey Construction, Gowling WLG (Canada) LLP, Coupal Markou Commercial Real Estate Inc. Brokerage, and Your Neighbourhood Credit Union.

What's Happening at WRFN

Ask A Self-Advocate

Do you need to look at a challenge you are facing with a new perspective? Would you like to bounce ideas off someone who's been there? Cristina was diagnosed with exceptionalities as an adult, and is passionate about sharing her lived experience. Speak with Cristina to discuss your own questions and concerns to gain new insights and ideas. This program is open to individuals with disabilities, families, or service providers.

For more information on Ask A Self-Advocate please contact Cristina Stanger at Cristina.Stanger@wrfn.info or call 226-753-9090.

Parent Mentor Program

Through our Parent Mentor Program, we provide a means for parents to connect with each other, as well as guide, support and help empower each other to work through the highs and lows that make up their journeys. Our Parent Mentors provide information and emotional support; share ideas and strategies; and connect their mentees with community resources.

Learn more about our Parent Mentor Program [here](#).

School-Issue Parent Support Group

This peer-led group provides support, advice and a safe environment for parents who have questions or concerns about school issues affecting their children with special needs. The WRFN School Issues Support Group meets on the last Wednesday of each month during the school year. The next regular meeting will take place April 26. For more information, please contact Sue Simpson at Sue.simpson@wrfn.info.

Family Resource Coach

Our Family Resource Coaches are available to meet in person, by phone, email, or virtual call to lend a helping hand and personal guidance to families and to connect you to updated information, resources, and opportunities available in our community.

Call Erin Sutherland at 226-808-5460 or email Erin.Sutherland@wrfn.info.

Call Leah Bowman at 226-898-9301 or email Leah.Bowman@wrfn.info.

Call Marla Pender at 226-338-7274 or email Marla.Pender@wrfn.info.

Coffee Club

Greetings from Coffee Club! We currently meet on Zoom, usually on Thursdays from 3 - 4 pm. Generally, we are just catching up and chatting, mixed with a little bit of watching YouTube.

If you would like to join us, please send me an email at Carmen.sutherland@wrfn.info. I will make sure to keep you on the email list so that you receive a Zoom invite and I will also keep you aware if we ever change or add a meeting date.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Here at WRFN, we are community oriented and committed to connecting families to local events and learning opportunities.

The information provided in this newsletter is not a recommendation, referral or endorsement of any resource, therapeutic method, or service provider. You are urged to use independent judgement when considering any resource.

Programs & Recreation

Cambridge Family Early Years Centre

Cambridge Family Early Years Centre is offering "Young Parents Connect," a free family program for pregnant and parenting youth, Tuesdays from 1-3 pm. Call the centre for the next session start date. Each week the group cooks a meal to enjoy together and discuss a parenting topic/resource/service that is of interest to the group. At the end of each session, join EarlyON staff for a fun interactive circle time with the children. Cambridge Family Early Years Centre, Unit 105, 73 Water Street North, Cambridge, Ontario.

Spectrum Community Space

Spectrum has just launched **Youth Under the Rainbow**, a program for 2SLGBTQIA+ children and allies aged 4-12 in Waterloo Region. This program will include story time and arts programming that take place at all 24 library branches across Waterloo Region over the next 24 months, launching with arts programming for children aged 8-12 in partnership with Artshine. These sessions begin May 6. Participants can register for one or more weekly sessions, and they are free!

[Register here.](#)

Infant Massage

This is a one-on-one 5-week course for families with babies 0-12 months of age. This program encourages and supports families through teaching stroke techniques, offers a relaxing environment, a place to ask questions, learn with others, and receive referrals to other community organizations. Shawna will be offering one-on-one and group sessions in clients' homes. Fees are \$150 (about \$30 a week). Register at **www.kwinfantmassage.ca**. Please email shawna@kwinfantmassage.ca if you have any questions.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

LEG Up! Thursday Youth Social

Join LEG Up! at KW Habilitation (for ages 14 - 21) from 6 -8 pm.

- May 18 - Victoria Day Celebration
- June 15 - Let's Paint

Bullas Hall, KWH 99, Ottawa St.S

<https://shop.kwhab.ca/product-category/leg-up/leg-up-youth/>

Rainbow Drop In

How Does Learning Happen? Through Play! Join other 2SLGBTQIA+ children (aged 0-6), caring adults, and families in play and exploration together. EarlyON facilitators are available to provide support and information around early learning topics, community resources, programs, and referrals in a play-based environment.

Rainbow drop-in takes place at EarlyON | Roger Street (YMCA Early Years) 161 Roger St, Waterloo. Upcoming dates:

- Saturday May 27, 2023 9 -11 am
- Saturday June 24, 2023 9 -11 am

<https://www.ourspectrum.com/2022/10/12/rainbow-family-drop-in/>

Fun Fearless Females

Join Fun Fearless Females in May for a fun movie night, dinner at Kelsey's, and a DIY Self-Care session at Riverside Park in Guelph. Stretch and Unwind also takes place each Monday, and there will be a Talk it Out virtual session at the end of the month for attendees to chat through big emotions in a safe space. Check out the calendar at: <https://www.funfearlessfemales.ca/events>

YMCA of Three Rivers

YMCA of Three Rivers is offering free Spring Wellness Workshops! These workshops are open to YMCA members & non-members. Interested in going but can't make the time the workshop is being offered? Register anyway and you will receive a link to the recording of the workshop to view on your own time up to 7 days after the workshop has been delivered. Register at <https://www.ymcathreerivers.ca/health-management>.

Cambridge Food Bank

Cook, stuff, plant, bake and play at the Cambridge Food Bank! To learn more about and register for programs offered at Cambridge Food Bank, please contact Vanessa Tonicic: vtoncic@cambridgefoodbank.org 519-622-6550 x109.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

OK2BEME

OK2BEME– Families in TRANSition (FIT) is a program for trans, non-binary, and gender-questioning kids and youth ages 5-18 and their parents/caregivers. FIT is open to all adults who play a primary caregiving* role for a trans/non-binary/gender-questioning person aged 5-18. There are separate groups (by age) for the kids and youth that run at the same time in different rooms. If the young person doesn't want to attend or isn't able, the parents/caregivers can still attend the parent/caregiver group. Please visit the [webpage](#) for more info about the FIT program.

*biological, adoptive, kinship, foster, legal guardians, informal caregiving and extended family

Siblings Canada: Savvy Siblings

Siblings Canada, in partnership with PLAN, is delighted to introduce [Savvy Siblings: Strengthening the Financial Security of Your Sibling with a Disability](#). Funded by the Government of Canada, this free online course is for adults who want to play a role in improving the financial security of their siblings with disabilities—whether today or in the future. [Register for Savvy Siblings today!](#)

Youth Job Connection Summer Program

Cambridge Career Connections is now recruiting for the Youth Job Connection Summer Program. This program is for students 15-18 who are currently registered in school and will be returning to school in the upcoming semester! We are looking for youth who are living in Cambridge and are interested in finding part-time or summer employment. Connect with the resource room (519-622-0815 ext 223) to complete the eligibility screening form with staff.

LCOworks

LCOworks is a free online program that supports positive employment outcomes for individuals with developmental disabilities, a traditionally underrepresented and at-risk population in the labour market. Any Ontario resident with a developmental disability is eligible to participate in LCOworks. Email to apply or learn more at support@lifecourseonline.com.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Recreational Respite

Virtual Services

Virtual group programs have been developed in partnership with participants to address a variety of interests, skill practice, goals and outcomes that promote inclusion, encourage community participation and nurture social connectivity. Visit the website for the May virtual group program calendar for Children and Youth and Young Adults! <https://www.recrepite.com/virtual-services/>

Respite Services

Recreational Respite professionals work one to one with children, youth, adults and older adults who have a disability, mental health, or face social isolation. Those we support may face barriers to participation, struggle with social relationships, connectivity, that effect opportunities for participation. Targeted goals are for positive mental health, emotional wellness, social health and connectivity.

Cost: \$36.50 - \$38.50/hour

Summer 2023: Offering one-to-one respite support at summer camps and community recreation programs.

<https://www.recrepite.com/respitesupport>

Sensory Workout

Sensory workout is a program that combines what we know about exercise and sensory processing to make physical activity more accessible and enjoyable for all! The Sensory Workout trainings and demo videos are created by Aptus' Clinical Services team, with generous funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services.

[Check out Sensory Workout on YouTube!](#)

Return of the Dragon

Return of the Dragon Martial Arts offers a safe and positive environment for students to build their skills and confidence. Whether you are looking to lose weight or wanting to learn self defense, they can help you achieve your goals. They offer Kung Fu, Kickboxing, Jiu Jitsu, Bootcamp and self defense seminars for all ages and genders. Visit www.rotDMA.com or call 519-503-6087 to learn more.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Bridges to Belonging

BE-Friends: BE-Friends is a volunteer matching program that connects people with any disability 17 years or older (Friend) with a community volunteer "Buddy" (19 years or older). The pair get together as often as they want, enjoy fun activities they choose and become part of each other's world. BE-Friends is a bridge to meaningful reciprocal relationships and lifelong friendships.

People are being matched and friendships are blooming. We invite you to become part of this friendship adventure!

If you are 17 years old or older, living with a disability, and want someone to spend time and build a lasting friendship with, we invite you to [Click Here](#) and fill out an application to be matched with a Buddy Community Volunteer.

If you are 19 years old or older and want to create an authentic friendship as a Volunteer Buddy to a person with a disability and be part of their journey to living their best life, we invite you to [Click Here](#).

We are also matching seniors together for fun and connection. If you are 65+ and are interested in making a new friend to connect with in community, [please apply here](#).

March of Dimes Connect & Share

Wouldn't it be wonderful to visit with someone regularly who shares your interests? March of Dimes virtual Connect & Share program was designed to make that happen. You will be matched with a volunteer who shares your interests and your buddy will visit with you (as often as you like) – just for the fun of it.

You can have phone visits or you can have a video call using a platform like Zoom.

<https://www.marchofdimes.ca/en-ca/programs/rec/connect>

Stepping Stones Expressive Arts

Stepping Stones Expressive Arts is partnering with Homer Watson House and Gallery in Kitchener to offer a full day Expressive Arts session called Retreat into Art and Nature on May 27. A light lunch (vegan) will be provided by Little Mushroom Catering. All abilities are welcome. The session is geared to those over 16 years old.

Enrollment for this session will be limited and there is early bird pricing. Register here: <https://bit.ly/40vgAuA>

Information, Opportunities & Resources

YWCA Canada – The Next Accelerator

Are you a parent or caregiver planning for your child's post-secondary education? Connect with The Next Accelerator to learn more about the Canada Learning Bond (CLB) and how you can apply for free funding for your child's education. A child is eligible for up to \$2000 if they: are from a moderate or fixed income family, are born on or after January 1, 2004, and are a resident of Canada. Learn more at ywcacambridge.ca or email s.hohenadel@ywcacambridge.ca.

ConnectABILITY's Friendly Connections

Friendly Connections is focused on helping its community and individuals of all ages with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, overcome isolation. It aims to help improve the well-being of individuals through socializing and providing entertaining resources. Friendly Connections wants to connect with individuals across Canada through phone calls, video calls, emailing, messenger chats and good old fashion mail. They mail letters, postcards, colouring sheets, activity sheets, stickers and other fun goodies!

<https://connectability.ca/friendly-connections/>

Community of Hearts Summer Break

Community of Hearts is offering a summer break program for high school students, Mondays through Fridays from 9 am to 3 pm. The program is \$60 a day, but free trial days are offered to try out the program! It's also Passport Fund friendly. Youth will take part in health and wellness activities, person-centred learning, community engagement, employment readiness, life skills, arts, and gardening at Summer Break at Community of Hearts. Contact info@communityofhearts.ca to book a tour or free trial.

City of Cambridge

The City of Cambridge has two new yoga programs for youth: Adaptive Yoga for teens with disabilities (13-21 years) on Wednesdays 6 – 6:50 pm and Girls Only Yoga (10-14 years) on Wednesdays 7-7:50 pm. For the Adaptive Yoga classes, participants can bring a program assistant when using a PAL card and there will also be a Leisure Buddy to support the class. For more info, connect with Jenn at blanchardj@cambridge.ca.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

CNIB's Virtual Program Offerings

Whether it's children and youth groups, employment workshops, tech sessions or book clubs, CNIB's innovative programs are designed to educate, entertain and engage! CNIB's free programs are available to Canadians who are blind or partially sighted as well as their families, friends and caregivers.

Visit their website to learn more: <https://bit.ly/38cRE1o>

Keep Your Head Up Foundation

Join Keep Your Head Up Foundation for its new Waterloo Region Youth Mindfulness and Movement program for all ages of individuals living with the effects of traumatic brain injury (there's also a national program available, too). These are free virtual classes to do activities like gentle yoga, meditation, beading, painting and more.

Registration is now open! Visit www.KeepYourHeadUp.ca/mindful-moments.

Women's Crisis Services

Women's Crisis Services of Waterloo Region's spring session programs are open at ALL YOUTH in Waterloo Region. Programs offered include:

- I AM Program is a self-esteem building program for youth aged 12-14 that creates opportunities for participants to examine the messages and stereotypes portrayed both in our lives and through the social media messages we receive. Location: Forest Heights Community Centre [Register Here](#)
- INSPIRE is an empathy building program for youth aged 10-13 that creates opportunities for participants to learn more about building healthy relationships, bullying, and changes in our lives. Location: Chandler Mowat and Kingsdale Community Centre [Register Here](#)

City of Kitchener

Are you an older adult looking to learn about tech? Join one of the Kitchener Tech Connect courses. Programs are being offered in person at the Downtown, Kingsdale, Chandler Mowat & Doon Pioneer Park Community Centres. These free tech courses are for older adults in our community looking to improve social connections, access to information and digital literacy.

[Click here](#) to see upcoming courses and to register!

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Workshops, Training & Events

Mindfest

Mindfest is an all-day informative, inspirational, inclusive community-building mental health and wellness fair on Friday, May 5 from 10 am – 3 pm at the Hart House, University of Toronto St. George Campus. Mindfest aims to increase awareness of mental health and illness as well as provide resources and services for people with lived experiences, families, advocates, and our communities. Mindfest is free and no registration is necessary. <https://www.mindfest.ca/>

Developmental Services Ontario

Understanding Microboards

There are many benefits to creating a Microboard. Learn what those benefits are and how a Microboard can help a person realize their vision of their future. Join DSO Housing Navigators on May 4 from 2 -3 pm with guest speakers Karen Bell, Executive Director for Microboards Ontario and Board, members Xavier Noordermeer and Kathleen Gifford.

<https://conta.cc/3mRxgy8>

Creating Your Individualized Housing and Support Plan

Join DSO for a workshop series from May 10 until May 24, 'Creating Your Individualized Housing and Support Plan.' This three-session workshop series is designed to help you begin creating an individualized housing and support plan for you or a family member with a developmental disability.

<https://conta.cc/3Nav3Zd>

Healing of the Seven Generations

Healing of the Seven Generations will be hosting Ga'nigqhi:yo, a youth conference that is youth inspired, but all are welcome, on May 15 and 16 from 9 am until 8 pm at 425 Bingemans Centre Dr., Kitchener. Ticket Prices Includes lunch & entertainment for both days. Please [click here](#) to purchase a ticket. For more information, please reach out to [Latasha](#).

Sexual Assault Support Centre of Waterloo Region

As part of Sexual Violence Prevention Month, join SASC May 18 from 6 – 8 pm at Lazaridis Hall (64 University Ave Waterloo) for an evening of discussion on creating a culture of consent in sports with former OHL and professional hockey player, Brock McGillis. Details and registration [can be found here](#).

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Kitchener Downtown Community Health Centre

Held at Kitchener Public Library Central Branch, "Living Life to the Full" is an interactive, eight-week course based on the principles of cognitive behavior therapy (CBT). In groups, participants work through topics related to overall mental well-being to gain skills and knowledge to cope with life's everyday challenges. Tuesday, May 2-June 20, 2 - 3:30 pm. <https://livinglifetothefull.ca/>

Bridges to Belonging: Pathways to Belonging

Join Bridges to Belonging on May 16, from 10 am - 4 pm at The Family Centre (65 Hanson Avenue, Kitchener) for a full day of sharing, story telling, activities and learning about the various paths and intersections a person with diverse identities, including disability, can explore for meaningful connection and contribution on their journey to belonging. Individuals, families, organizations, and service providers are all welcome. Community organizations are invited to showcase their services and individuals with disabilities and diverse identities are invited to show their gifts and strengths. This is a Passport Eligible Event. Learn more and get tickets here: <https://bit.ly/41Bd5U1>

Explore Your Future

Business & Education Partnership of Waterloo Region: Explore Your Future career expos are an opportunity for grade 7-12 students and their parent/guardians to explore opportunities for work and learning from local employers, community organizations and post-secondary institutions. There is one more session happening: **Wednesday, May 17 at the Aud in Kitchener.**

Woolwich Counselling

Woolwich Counselling Centre has many great small group therapy sessions and workshops for children, youth, adults, and seniors. See the link below to learn what's new this month! To register, please call 519-669-8651 or email info@woolwichcounselling.org. <https://woolwichcounselling.org/upcoming-events/>

CADDAC 15th Annual Conference

Join the ADHD community in Calgary this October for CADDAC's 15th annual conference on October 28 & 29! Stay tuned for more details.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Resources

Aide Canada

Many of Aide Canada's resources relate to autism, but there are also plenty that apply to all disabilities. There is a parent series of "Ask a Question" where families & self-advocates can respond with their experience. There is also a resource page where you can borrow books and items and is available Canada wide. Check it out at www.aidecanada.ca.

Breastfeeding Dashboard

Canada's "[Breastfeeding Dashboard](#)" is now available on PHAC's Public Health Infobase platform. Along with this data tool, the first edition of Canada's Breastfeeding Progress Report is available. The data provides an overview of breastfeeding rates in Canada, including information on breastfeeding initiation, duration and exclusivity, examined by various geographic and sociodemographic factors. Reasons for not breastfeeding and reasons for stopping breastfeeding before 6 months are also presented, as are rates of vitamin D supplementation of breastfed infants. Questions related to the new materials can be directed to: dca_public_inquiries@phac-aspc.gc.ca

Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work

CCRW Employment Services help job seekers with disabilities get connected with local businesses. They provide industry-specific training, workplace accommodation and adjustment planning, employer matching, and access to a hidden job market. For more information or to register, call: Jennie Di Girolamo – Employment Facilitator (519) 571 6788 ext. 7661 or email [jdigirolamo@ccrw.org](mailto:jdigiolamo@ccrw.org)
<https://www.ccrw.org/>

March of Dimes Hi, Tech!

If you have a disability and are 18 years or older, you are eligible to be matched with a tech support coach. Your coach will answer your technology questions and help get you set up. To learn more visit <https://www.marchofdimes.ca/en-ca/programs/atech/hitech>.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Plexus

Plexus is a new network of FASD support and services in Waterloo Region. The services of the Plexus team are available to children, youth, and families living with (potential) FASD up until the age of 18 or 21 and still attending school. You must reside in the Waterloo Region. A referral can be made by the individual or their legal guardian. Plexus will also accept referrals from extended family members, family physician, or any agency acting on the individual's/family's behalf if permission to do so has been provided by the individual or their guardian.

Referrals can be made here: [Plexus Referral](#)

National Advisory Council on Poverty

National Advisory Council on Poverty's 2022 report on the progress of Opportunity for All – Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy. The council interviewed 1000 people across the country about the underlying and overlapping causes and impacts of poverty and hosted eight small-group sessions where people with lived expertise of poverty could share their personal stories. Those conversations and the insights that the participants shared are the foundation of this report.

<https://bit.ly/3D15p2m>

Positive Behaviour Supports Corporation (PBS Corp.)

PBS provides high quality Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) therapy to children and adults diagnosed with Autism or other qualifying diagnoses. Services are provided in the home, school, and community settings. ABA is implemented in real world situations with the parents being an integral part of ABA therapy. PBS also offers respite services for your family.

<https://www.teampbs.com/>

Family Support Network for Employment

FSNE is a family-led coalition advocating for employment opportunities and jobs in the open labour market for individuals with developmental disabilities who face higher employment barriers.

[Click here to find out their mission and explore resources.](#)

Rainbow Community Calendar

[The Rainbow Community Calendar](#) from SPECTRUM collects 2SLGBTQIA+ events from organizations across Waterloo Region (and sometimes in Guelph-Wellington). SPECTRUM's events will include the name in the title. Please read the details of each event carefully.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Ontario Caregiver Association

- *SCALE Program: Caregiver Needs and Well-being*: **SCALE (Supporting Caregiver Awareness, Learning and Empowerment)** focuses on topics relevant to new or experienced caregivers, including caregiver stress, managing feelings of anxiety or guilt, and self-care for the caregiver.
- *Caregiver 101*: Learn about caregiving roles, conflicts in caregiving, caregiver burnout, what to expect, developing resilience, and what supports are available. Access the online course [here](#).
- *Young Caregivers Connect*: Young Caregivers Connect is a website to help young caregivers aged 15-25. The website was designed in collaboration with, and for, young caregivers and offers information and resources and a way to connect that address their unique needs. Visit the website [here](#).
- *Time to Talk Podcast*: Join Host Michelle Jobin along with experts and caregivers, to discuss things that matter most to caregivers. Access the podcast [here](#).
- *Caregiving Communities* : a new portal that provides an easy way for people to search for organizations in their community that can help with: Grocery pick up and delivery, delivery of prepared meals, medication pick-up, social support – friendly phone calls, accessing communication devices like a tablet, mental health support, spiritual support, providing things to do like books, games and crosswords. www.ontariocaregiver.ca/caregivingcommunities

Family Compass Waterloo Region

Family Compass Waterloo Region is a central website to guide families to services for children, youth, and families in our community. The website offers the option to find information about general services for children and youth as well as specialized services that can help to address developmental concerns. To learn more, please visit <https://www.familycompasswr.ca>.

Fostering Information from Family & Children Services

Are you interested in learning more about fostering? For general information about fostering, please visit <https://www.facswaterloo.org/foster>.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Partners for Planning

Every high school graduate deserves a bright future. The Beyond Graduation Toolkit can help families think creatively, collaborate with school teams, and explore pathways that can lead to a full and meaningful life for their son or daughter once they reach the end of their high school career. Designed for parents with a child transitioning out of high school in the next few years, this new toolkit provides critical concepts and resources that can help parents prepare for this transition. It includes:

[Partners for Planning - Planning for a Good Life Beyond Graduation Toolkit - Overview \(planningnetwork.ca\)](#)

Take5

Take5 is an online space for children and youth in foster care, in group homes, or living away from their parents in Ontario. On Take5 you can find information for your age on things like: coping with stress, stuff about your identity and culture, relationships, and who to ask for help. You can also find activities, podcasts, videos and online events. Take5 is for children 6 to 12 and youth 13 and above.

Visit the **[Take5 website](#)**.

The Royal Mental Health Care & Research

The Royal Mental Health Care & Research is one of Canada's foremost mental health care, teaching and research hospitals, located in Ottawa. The Institute of Mental Health Research, affiliated with the University of Ottawa, brings together leading mental health professionals, scientists, and technology to gain a deeper understanding of the brain, and investigate innovative approaches to preventing and treating mental illness. To learn about The Royal's programs, please visit:

<https://bit.ly/3dRvIo2>

The Vulnerable Persons Registry

The Vulnerable Persons Registry promotes communication between vulnerable persons, the people who support them and the police. This information will assist officers when responding to an emergency involving the vulnerable individual. The registry provides quick access to critical information about a registered person, such as who to call in an emergency, a detailed physical description, and any particular sensitivities that the person may experience.

www.vulnerablepersonsregistry.ca

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Inclusion Canada

Family Matters: Job Loss & COVID-19 Findings Now Available

This project worked with families and self-advocates to better understand the impact of job loss during the pandemic and considerations for future supports for families and individuals. You can see the report and its findings here:

<https://inclusioncanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Final-Report-EN-Oct-27.pdf>

Pathways to Home Ownership

The Pathways to Homeownership project demonstrated inclusive models of homeownership and created resources to help people with disabilities (and their families) purchase their own homes. Inclusion Canada is currently working on new resources to support Pathways. It will be coming soon. Learn more here:

<https://bit.ly/3B4n0E2>.

CRA Info Sessions:

In February, the Canada Revenue Agency released its most recent pre-recorded webinar sharing information on the different tax benefits and credits that are available for people with disabilities. This webinar might be helpful to you! It includes information on:

- Disability Tax Credit (DTC)
- Child Disability Benefit (CDB)
- Canada Workers Benefit (CWB) disability supplement
- Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) and Home Buyers Plan (HBP)
- Canada Caregivers Credit (CCC)
- Ways to do your taxes and other CRA services.

You can find the link to Webinar on the Benefits and Credits for Persons with Disabilities here [English Video](#) / [French Video](#)

The CRA also has some of its past webinars available online that include more information on the different tax benefits and credits available for people with disabilities. You can access these webinars here:

- Video: Webinar for persons with disabilities - Part 1 [here](#)
- Video: Webinar for persons with disabilities - Part 2 [here](#)

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Inclusion Canada Continued...

Free Income Tax Clinics:

Do you need help with your tax return? You may be able to get your taxes done by a volunteer for free.

The Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP) is a longstanding partnership between the CRA and community organizations and their volunteers.

Through this program, community organizations host free tax clinics where volunteers file tax returns for free for people with a modest income and a simple tax situation. There are also options to get help in person, over the phone or virtually. To learn more, [click here](#).

To find out if you're eligible for a free tax clinic, [click here](#).

To find a tax clinic in your area, [click here](#).

Breakaway Passport Services

Breakaway Passport Services is a unique, person-centred approach to providing people with meaningful, engaging, Passport-approved activities. The team at Breakaway has worked in the field of developmental services for over 20 years combined. Their mission is to enhance the experience of people who live with intellectual disabilities by supporting them to engage in their community, develop relationships, pursue interests, and direct their lives. Connect with the team at www.breakawaypassportservices.com, breakawaypassport@gmail.com, or call 519-721-7932.

Indwell

Indwell is a Christian charity creating affordable housing communities to support people seeking health, wellness & belonging. They are one the fastest-growing developers of new supportive affordable housing in Ontario. Looking for housing? Visit <https://indwell.ca>

Imagine Canada

Imagine Canada has a ton of great resources and information on non-profit and charity sector-related policy in their newsletter, The Early Alert.

<https://bit.ly/3IH2kQg>

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Support Groups

Parents for Children's Mental Health (PCMH)

If you are a parent/caregiver worried about your child, or a young person looking for help yourself – please reach out. Our network of child and youth mental health centres has 4000 professionals ready to help children, youth and families with free counselling and treatment. We provide care in person, on the phone and virtually. No problem is too big or small. The next Waterloo PCMH **regular support group meeting** will take place May 23. The next **ADHD support group** will take place May 17. Find your closest child and youth mental health centre here:

<https://www.family.cmho.org/>

PFLAG Waterloo, Wellington & Perth Region (Parents & Friends of Lesbians & Gays)

The Waterloo Wellington Perth Chapter of PFLAG invites you to attend our support group focusing on topics of interest to parents, family and friends of LGBTQ individuals. PFLAG Canada is Canada's only national organization that helps all Canadians with issues of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. More info at: **<https://www.facebook.com/PFLAG.WWP/>**

The Association of Parent Support Groups in Ontario

The Association of Parent Support Groups in Ontario (APSGO) is for parents struggling with the behavior of a child, youth or young adult. APSGO support groups help parents/guardians develop effective strategies, set limits and boundaries, and build better relationships with their children. The group currently meets via Zoom on Wednesday at 7:15pm. Go to **[apsgo.ca](https://www.apsgo.ca)** for more information.

Province-Wide Monthly Virtual Groups for Adults with FASD

The Fetal Alcohol Resource Program at ABLE2 is happy to announce the first two Province-wide virtual groups for adults living with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). They include the FASD Educational Group and the FASD Social Group. Both groups will be held monthly. You can participate at your comfort level from the comfort of your home. For more info contact the Fetal Alcohol Resource Program at 613-761-9252 Ext. 234 or **fasd@able2.org**.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Sawubona Africentric Circle of Support

Sawubona Africentric Circle of Support, formally known as The Black Parent & Caregiver Support Group (BPSG) was created to provide a safe space for families of African descent to come together to meet and connect, share resources, expertise and needs, inspire and support one another through our unique and often challenging and isolating journey of raising Black children or supporting a sibling, of any age, with a disability. This is a volunteer-run group that meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month from 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. via ZOOM. There will be guest speakers, resource sharing, support and mentorship opportunities for attendees. Contact: For more details or to register, please contact us at bpsgroup2020@gmail.com.

South Asian Wellness Group

The South Asian Wellness Group is a drop-in group every Thursday from 6 pm to 7:30 pm on Zoom with occasional in-person meetings. With a South Asian Peer Facilitator fluent in Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu, this group will focus on coping, recovery, and fostering hope from a South Asian lens. This group is intended for folks who identify as South Asian to connect and build community with one another. ALL Self Help & Peer Support groups are open to adults living in Waterloo Wellington communities who identify as living with mental health or/and substance use issues. To join this group or if you have questions about it, please send us an email: selfhelpgroup@cmhaww.ca. To view this information in Punjabi, please [click here](#).

The A-Team of Waterloo Region

The A-Team of Waterloo Region is primarily run by individuals with Asperger's Syndrome, for individuals with Asperger's Syndrome, with some assistance from Bridges to Belonging. Their goal is to create a safe and welcoming environment to meet fellow adults (age 18+) with Asperger's Syndrome (ASD – level 1), discuss topics of interest, share experiences, and embrace their neurological diversity. Please go to <https://ateamwaterlooregion.wordpress.com/about/> for more information on how to register and attend the upcoming virtual meetings!

Information, Opportunities & Resources

CIA - Connecting, Interests and Activities

CIA is a group in Waterloo Region for adults (18+) with Asperger's or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) level 1. The purpose of the group is to create a safe and supportive space for people to have fun, meet and connect with others, and take part in activities. Join if you're looking for a positive place of belonging! Meetings take place at the Downtown Community Centre (35 B Weber Street West), in the Multi-Purpose Room. This is a drop-in group, so folks are welcome to join anytime between 5 and 7 pm. If you have any questions, please reach out to Kelly Groh at 519-731-3923.

Virtual Support Group for Adolescents with FASD

The return of the Virtual Support Group for Teens with FASD. This group meets every Wednesday night at 7 – 8:30 pm.

Contact Rob for more information rmacdonald@lutherwood.ca.

CADDAC Support Groups

CADDAC's virtual support groups are a safe space for you to share your experiences with others who understand what it means to have ADHD or parent a child with ADHD. [Programs and Events - CADDAC](#)

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Engagement Opportunities

Queens University Research

Participate in Online Emotional Research

This online study is looking at the emotional life of adolescents on the autism spectrum or neurotypical controls. Participants and their caregiver will complete a few questionnaires and will receive a \$20 and a \$10 Amazon gift card for their time. Looking for parents of individuals who are non-verbal, aged 12-18, on the autism spectrum. Contact asd@queensu.ca or call 613-533-2894.

Volunteers Needed for Study on Covid-19 Stigma

Are you of East Asian or Southeast Asian descent between the ages of 16-19? Did you contract Covid-19 during the pandemic? You may be eligible to participate in a study to explore your experiences. Participation involves completing an online demographic form, answering interview questions about your lived experiences from a researcher. Everything is done virtually OR in-person at York University and the interview will take about an hour to complete. To participate, please contact Nasteho Hasan at 647-575-2891 or email nhasan28@yorku.ca.

University of Calgary

Exploring the Mental Health Benefits of Participating in Physical Activity Study

A senior psychology student at the University of Calgary is recruiting youth between the ages of 15 to 24 years, who have been diagnosed with a neurodevelopmental disability and engage in some form of physical activity (i.e., daily walking, running, soccer, biking). These youth will be asked to complete a screener survey and a 1-hour interview (online or in-person). Youth will be given a \$20 gift card as a token of appreciation for their participation. For more information, please contact Henna at henna.hans1@ucalgary.ca. All inquiries will be kept strictly confidential. This study has been approved by the University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board (REB#21-0687).

Information, Opportunities & Resources

York Parenting Project Study

Are you the caregiver of an infant 3 – 10 months old? You may be eligible to participate in an interesting virtual study examining caregiver experiences and infants' reactions to caregivers' use of technology. This study will take approximately 45 minutes to complete + a few questionnaires. Participants will be paid \$20 and will be entered into a raffle to win 1 of 4 prizes valued at \$150-\$200. If you are interested in participating, please contact yorkparentingproject@gmail.com.

York University

Study Asian-Canadian youth identities in a pandemic era: Arts-based research

Are you an Asian-Canadian youth between the ages of 16 - 24 years with an ancestry/origin from the following countries: China, Philippines, or India? Would you like to participate in an arts-based study to explore youth identity? If yes, we invite you to participate in our project. You will take part in drawing a simple visual art, followed by an individual interview. For further details, please contact Attia Khan at attiax2@yorku.ca, Tel: 416- 736-2100 Ext. 44527.

Time Poverty Study

A York University Masters Student is looking for participants for a study investigating time poverty. They are looking for participants 18-65 years old, who are caregivers (paid or unpaid), and immigrant women from the English-speaking Caribbean. Contact for more information: taylersi@yorku.ca.

Psychology, Law and Neurodevelopment Research and Policy Group at U of G (PLAN)

PLAN is inviting youth and young adults between the ages of 12 and 24 with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) to participate in a study. Youth are eligible to participate whether they have had actual contact with the criminal justice system as our study asks about both hypothetical and real-world legal decisions. Youth will be asked to answer questions relevant to their own past experiences. To participate, youth must be able to speak English and must currently reside in Canada. Interested individuals can email: PLANLab@uoguelph.ca or call 519-824-4120 ext. 53622.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Laurier University

Volunteers are needed for a Laurier University students' research study on the lived experiences of parents with children with developmental disabilities navigating the school system. They are looking for parents or caregivers of a child with a developmental disability using the public school system in Ontario. Participants will complete a background questionnaire (5-10 minutes) and a one-on-one semi-structured interview (30-90 minutes). Participants will also be able to add, remove or clarify any information shared during the interview by reviewing the transcript. To participate, please contact dias8170@mylaurier.ca.

CADDAC – ADHD Advisory Committee

The Centre for ADHD Awareness, Canada (CADDAC) is looking for individuals who have lived experience with ADHD and Substance Use Disorder (SUD) to join our ADHD Advisory Committee. The committee members will meet quarterly (4 times) per year and will help with the development and design of our ADHD and Substance Use Support Groups. Participants will receive a stipend for their time. Must live in Canada.

<https://bit.ly/3z9FOCE>

Health Nexus: The Confidence Project

The "Confidence Project" aims to deliver to pregnant, breast/chest feeding Canadians, and those planning to become parents vaccine information to better able to make informed decisions about the COVID-19 vaccine for themselves and their families. The Confidence Project seeks breast/chest feeding, pregnant people, planning to be or new parents to respond anonymously to our survey on the COVID-19 vaccine, before, during pregnancy or while nursing a baby. To respond to the survey in English, French, Tamil, Hindi, Gujarati, Punjabi and Arabic, [click here](#).

SickKids – Infant and Early Mental Health Promotion

Infant and Early Mental Health Promotion: if you are a researcher or community builder, please take a moment to [complete this survey](#) and help inform the development of new ways to communicate child development to parents.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

SHORE Centre

SHORE Centre is launching a prenatal education program catered to queer families in the region and would like feedback! Complete the survey here:

<https://tr.ee/QAJQvUnE0w>

Accessibility Standards Canada

From words to action: Moving together for a Canada without barriers

You are invited to attend Accessibility Standards Canada's third Annual Public Meeting. It will be held online on **Thursday, June 1, 2023**. To accommodate as many people as possible from coast to coast to coast, the meeting will run from **1 to 2:15 pm**.

Registration is required.

This year's theme is From words to action: Moving together for a Canada without barriers. Over the past year, we have taken strides toward real impacts. Please join on June 1 to learn about how our work is taking shape.

To kick off the meeting, Paul-Claude Bérubé, the Chairperson of the Board of Directors, will talk about what has been accomplished over the last year. This will be followed by a moderated panel discussion. Three members of ASC's technical committees will share their experiences. They will give you a glimpse of what it's like to work with them and to develop standards. To conclude, you will learn how you can join and contribute to our journey toward a barrier-free Canada by 2040.

Register by Thursday, May 18, 2023! For more information, [visit the website](#).

Submit questions

If you have any comments or questions for panellists about their experiences in developing standards, [please email](#). You can also send your questions with your [registration form](#).

Get involved!

If you can't make it on June 1, a video recording will be posted online following the meeting. Visit ASC's site for [many other ways to get involved!](#)

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Community News

Bridges to Belonging Announces ABIDE

Bridges to Belonging is thrilled to announce ABIDE (Access, Belonging, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity). Equity-seeking people and families, grassroots ethnocultural organizations, and religious groups will have access to A Community Connections and Capacity Building Facilitator as a resource to access programs, services, and community resources for people with diverse identities including disabilities to live their best lives as valued citizens across Waterloo Region. For more information contact info@bridgestobelonging.ca.

Region of Waterloo

Region of Waterloo is seeking to hire two Community Connectors whose roles will be to connect with community members to build the Regions' strategic priorities. Please see posting descriptions and links to apply:

- Youth Community Connector will be focusing on connecting with youth of all ages to understand what matters to them. You will have the opportunity to provide information, answers to questions and to increase awareness of the Region's Strategic Plan, including why it's important. You will gain invaluable community feedback and insights that will inform priorities for the Region's Strategic plan. You will share your findings with the Region's Strategic Plan team and collaborate to help support program development and delivery to defined community populations and groups. Interested? Apply here: [**Youth Connector Posting**](#)
- Community Connector will be engaging with local community groups and with individuals to understand what matters to them. You will have the opportunity to provide information, answers to questions and to increase awareness of the Region's Strategic Plan, including why it's important. You will gain invaluable community feedback and insights that will inform priorities for the Region's Strategic plan. You will share your findings with the Region's Strategic Plan team and collaborate to help support program development and delivery to defined community populations and groups. Interested? Apply here: [**Community Connector Posting**](#)

Information, Opportunities & Resources

2023 Anne Stafford Light Up the Future Bursary

The 2023 Anne Stafford Light Up the Future Bursary is now open and accepting applications until Friday, May 26 at 5 pm! This Bursary is available to all Ontario residents aged 18 and older who identify as having an intellectual disability and are seeking to pursue an educational program or personal interest course. Awards of up to \$1,000 per person are granted to help recipients get closer to achieving their goals. For more information and application forms, please click the buttons or links below.

<https://communitylivingontario.ca/get-involved/awards/anne-stafford-bursary/>

City of Waterloo

Earlier in 2023, City of Waterloo Council received feedback from the community about the challenges of moving around the city when there is snow on sidewalks. Council has directed operational staff to investigate ways of reducing these impacts to Waterloo residents. At this time that does not include the City taking on full responsibility for sidewalk snow clearing.

You are invited to participate in a feedback session specifically for people with disabilities, caregivers, and organizations that provide services to people with disabilities.

A hybrid meeting will be held on May 4, 2023, 6 pm to 7:30 pm. Participants will have the option to join in person at the Waterloo in Memorial in Recreation Complex - Community Pavilion or online.

At this meeting, staff will ask questions about unpassable sidewalks, the geographic hotspots for problematic snow clearing and how people with disabilities would like to communicate with the city about real time snow obstacles.

If you are interested in attending, please complete [this registration form](#) to help us understand who will be participating. Registration will close on May 3rd at 11:59 pm.