



Family Pulse

Educate. Connect. Empower.

Issue 99
July 2018

What's in this issue?

Welcome to July!

With the summer upon us we thought it would be a good idea to focus on the benefits of outdoor play. While getting outside can come with a set of logistical problems, the benefits for everyone are well worth the effort!

Wishing you and your family a safe, happy and enjoyable summer!

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Support WRFN Today

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

SEAC Updates

Waterloo Region District School Board - Special Education Advisory Update

Submitted by Carmen Sutherland

First, there was discussion of the updated Safe, Caring and Inclusive Schools Survey. There is not complete data from our Board yet, but they are hoping to get a 100% completion rate.

Next, there was discussion about the school budget for the coming year, and how if approved the school will have the opportunity to provide more services for students, including more social workers in secondary schools.

The Board is also working on PPM 161 to formalize procedures around how to deal with prevalent medical conditions.

The Bill that the Board supported regarding FASD died, but several politicians said they would resurrect it. There was more discussion of how to facilitate Peer to Peer relationships in school, which led to a discussion of how important it is for our associations to talk to school personnel about the various issues we represent. The next SEAC meeting is Wednesday, September 12 at 7p.m. at the Education Centre, 51 Ardel Avenue, Kitchener N2C 2R5.

Waterloo Catholic District School Board - Special Education Advisory Update

Submitted by Christine Zaza

The last meeting of this school year was a brief one. Because of the provincial election, there were no Ministry updates. Laura Shoemaker was pleased to inform the committee that the new Principal of Special Education is Erin Lemak. Dr. Shoemaker was also pleased to announce that the videos of the 2017 Parent Engagement Night are now available on SEAC's webpage. See [SEAC Parent Engagement Night videos](#). The committee also learned that the Education Assistant (EA) assignments will not change much in the coming year, because the new algorithm and rubric has produced results that are similar to existing practice.

Trustee Update

Jeanne Gravelle informed the committee that the Special Education Plan was approved.

The next SEAC meeting will be on Wednesday, September 5, 2018, at 6:30pm at 35 Weber St. West, Kitchener.

WRFN Fact!

Our new website is live! Learn more about how we can support you and what's happening in the community but visiting www.wrfn.info!

What's Happening at WRFN...

Find Your Passion

Save the Date

Saturday, August 25

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Woolwich Memorial Centre
24 Snyder Avenue South, Elmira

Families and individuals of all abilities are invited to come explore many of the accessible sport and recreation opportunities that Waterloo Region has to offer!

See displays, learn about adapted equipment, try a new activity and connect with coaches and recreation providers.

For more information:
Krista McCann | WRFN
519-886-9150
krista.mccann@wrfn.info
www.wrfn.info

Click here to register:
<https://bit.ly/2KiwDc6>

KidsAbility

KW Sports Council

WATERLOO REGION Family Network

HEALTHY KIDS COMMUNITY CHALLENGE WATERLOO REGION

Sun Life Financial Centre for Physically Active Communities

What's Happening at WRFN...

Waterloo Region Family Network's 4th annual Camp Day!

Please join us on Sunday, September 23rd between 2-5pm at
Camp Ki-Wa-Y for our annual Camp Day!

Enjoy camp activities for the whole family while connecting with
others. Bring your appetite because we will be roasting s'mores on the
fire and having a barbeque! Everyone is welcome!

Sunday, September 23rd

Camp Ki-Wa-Y

3738 Hessen Strasse, St. Clements

Event Schedule

2-4pm Canoeing
Hiking
Rock Climbing
High Ropes
Archery
Camp Fire & S'mores

4:15-5pm Barbeque

Please register in advance by
contacting Krista McCann at
krista.mccann@wrfn.info or
519-886-9150 ext. 2



WATERLOO REGION
Family Network

*Please note that the only access to canoes
is by stairs due to environmental barriers

With generous support from:

YMCAs of Cambridge
& Kitchener-Waterloo



What's Happening at WRFN...

School-Issue Parent Support Group

Do you have questions/concerns about school issues for your child/youth with special needs? Join us at our peer-led parent support group. This is a great opportunity to share questions, concerns and successful tips in a safe environment while learning from others.

The support group is held the last Wednesday of every month. It will not be running in July or August.

For more information please contact Krista McCann at krista.mccann@wrfn.info.

Coffee Club Update

Hi All,

Happy July! I hope summer is going well. Here are the July Coffee Club activities.

Monday, July 9, 7-9 PM The Studio (109 Ottawa St., South Kitchener): We will have a boxing/sparring event with Active Souls Project, followed by watching *Friends* DVDs. The cost is \$10 per person

Monday, July 23, 7-9 PM The Studio (109 Ottawa St., South Kitchener): We will have a *Star Trek* "Watch and Chat" night.

If for any reason you need to contact me, please use the information below:

(519) 500-7153 (Cell Phone) E-mail: carmen.sutherland@wrfn.info

Carmen

Autism in High School

"[Autism in High School](#)" is a new web-based guide to help students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their families as they navigate the transitions and common challenges of high school. This website was developed as a joint initiative between Extend-A-Family, Waterloo Region Family Network, members of the former Autism Services Waterloo Region, the Waterloo Region District School Board, the Waterloo Catholic District School Board, and the University of Waterloo with generous funding from the [Sifton Family Foundation](#).

Do you like to write? Would you like to contribute to WRFN in a meaningful way?

We are currently looking for volunteers who enjoy writing to occasionally write feature articles for our monthly newsletters. These articles cover a variety of topics that are beneficial to the families in our network. Topics may be suggested by the writer, or provided by WRFN.

If you are interested in learning more about this opportunity please contact Krista at krista.mccann@wrfn.info or 519-886-9150 ext. 2.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Kathryn, our primary feature article writer since 2014, for sharing her time and talents with us. She has written many informative articles for us over the past four years. We look forward to reading her articles on an occasional basis in the future.

WRFN Fact!

Our office proudly displays beautiful photographic prints by the talented Stephanie Prysnuik! Steph takes photos wherever she goes and turns them into beautiful note cards. These versatile cards are great to have on hand for any occasion.

Benefits of Outdoor Play

There's no doubt about it: everyone benefits from being outdoors. It's difficult to get past thinking of the outdoors as a set of logistical problems, because frankly there are a lot of logistical problems associated with outdoor activities. Where are we going? What will we do while we're there? What time of day is it? How will this fit into the routine? How do we plan for contingencies?

There is a lot of research that indicates that those logistics are worth dealing with. Even 15-30 minutes of play outside every day is linked with better overall health and reduced anxiety. Playing outside boosts immune systems, giving children access to vitamin D, something many people are deficient in.

Outdoor social activities provide opportunities for children to problem-solve collaboratively, while improving their gross and fine motor skills. They are able to deal with conflict in a low-stakes environment. This also provides opportunities to advocate for themselves, especially if the activities they're participating in are relatively unstructured. While many children need structure and supervision, allowing them to explore without excessive hovering will result in greater understanding of the world and of themselves.

The outdoors can be conducive to creative play. Your child may want to make up stories or act out a play based on the things they see, learn or experience outside. They may want to explore objects they find along the way, such as rocks, sticks or pine cones.

Regular outdoor play results in better fitness and greater self-esteem as children become more able to overcome physical obstacles and can result in a longer attention span.

All of these benefits apply to caregivers as well. Vitamin D deficiency is common in most children with disabilities and their caregivers, so being outside regularly can combat that deficiency. In addition, the physical and mental benefits of being outdoors apply to everyone.

A good place to start is somewhere safe and familiar, such as a backyard (if you have one). If not, then any safe place that's familiar is just fine. Don't worry about meeting some sort of minimum time requirement. Have everything ready in case things go south. Even if you're successful for just a couple of minutes, you can build on that later.

If your child is ready for more of a challenge, you can try a nature preserve. We're fortunate to have a number of these in Waterloo Region, such as rare [Charitable Research Reserve](#), [Huron Natural Area](#), [Dumfries Conservation Area](#), and [Laurel Creek Conservation Area](#). For more information on other locations and activities available in the area, please take a look at the [Grand River Conservation Authority](#) website. Municipal parks are also a great option during the summer. Victoria Park has a wonderful accessible playground, and it's a perfect location for a picnic.

Whatever level of physical activity works for you and your child, the fact remains that outdoor play is beneficial to everyone, and well worth the effort.

Upcoming Events

EVENTS

Autism Ontario Upcoming Events

Indoor Playground—Guelph—July 29 and August 26— Families are invited to Funmazing including exclusive use of the play structure, arcade games, Piñata pit, and car track! Registration is required. [Register](#) for the July event. [Register](#) for the August event.

Swimming—Guelph—August 11— Families are invited to come out for an enjoyable swim at the West End Community Centre! The pool and slide will be used only for Autism Ontario's for the hour! [Registration](#) is required.

Great Wolf Lodge Week—Niagara Falls—September 14—23—Families will have the opportunity to come and enjoy at Great Wolf Lodge at a special rate just for Autism Ontario! Learn more [here](#).

Sensory-Friendly Screenings

Cineplex Entertainment in partnership with Autism Speaks Canada is delighted to present Sensory Friendly Screenings. This program provides a sensory-friendly environment for individuals with autism spectrum disorder or anyone for whom the environment is suitable and their families to view new release films in theatres across the country.

Tickets are available the Tuesday before the screening. Find more information [here](#).

Upcoming film(s):

July 28—[Hotel Transylvania 2](#)

August 11—[Teen Titans Go! To The Movies](#)

Straight Talk - About Individualized Funding

There are all kinds of changes underway with what the province calls "Direct Funding." Some of the changes are welcome, and other changes are not.

Join a gathering of families to discuss what is working, what is not working, and what can be done about it. Conversation facilitated by Judith McGill. Judith is the Executive Director of Families for a Secure Future and LifePath Training.

Thursday August 23, 2018 from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

1630 Lawrence Ave W., North York

Register by August 15, 2018 at <https://bit.ly/2KvkzU8>

Upcoming Events

PROGRAMS/RECREATION

New Day Program for Adults with Developmental Disabilities

The Michael Fleming Centre is Cambridge's newest day program for adults who have developmental disabilities! The facility is wheelchair accessible, offers a full sized gym, beautiful kitchen, and a great outdoor space! Participants can expect a full day of leisure activities including art, music, physical activities, animal therapy, gardening, games and so much more! To learn more about this program or sign up, please visit www.michaelflemingcentre.com or call 519-404-3287.

Autism Ontario—Axon Music Session

Children ages 4-9 with ASD, along with their parents are invited to Axon Music Sessions in Cambridge.

This group will meet Monday evenings, for 4 weeks from 6pm to 7pm., starting July 23.

The sessions will be fun, interactive and social. Music, signing and instruments will be used at each session.

Parents/caregivers are expected to attend and participate during each session.

Learn more about this opportunity [here](#).

Gym Drop-In for Youth

The Family Centre runs a drop-in gym program Monday evenings from 6-7:30 p.m. This program is for youth ages 8-17 that are affiliated with Family and Children Services and/or the Family Centre Community Partners.

This is a great opportunity to get active, have some fun and try out different sports.

For more information contact [Caitlyn Morton](#).

Axon Music Therapy—Fall Programs

Preschool Groups—The First Notes (0-2), Music on the Move (ages 2-4)

Autism n'Music (ages 4-8)

Adult Programs (ages 16+)

\$13 per class Register online at www.axonmusictherapy.com.

Contact 519-841-4982 or janel@axonmusictherapy.com for more information.

SkateABLE Program Registration

The SkateABLE™ program was developed so that children and adults with physical and/or developmental disabilities can take part in ice skating in a welcoming, caring, and stimulating environment.

All adaptive equipment is provided free of charge.

Fall and winter registration is now open at www.skateable.ca.

For more information please see the following flyers: [Waterloo SkateABLE](#) [Kitchener SkateABLE](#)

Upcoming Events

Our Place Family Resource and Early Years Centre

Our Place has shared their [July & August calendar](#).

Check out all the great programs they have running throughout the Region www.ourplacekw.ca.

Programs at Sunbeam Centre

Sunbeam Centre offers a variety of Passport & Fee-for-Service opportunities (including Adult Respite and Day Program). To see their latest brochure please click [here](#).

Light House - Adult Day Program for Individuals 18+

Light House offers a personalized experience in a group setting by encouraging each individual to engage in a variety of meaningful activities in a manner most suitable to their specific needs. As participants are adults, they will enjoy a program that is AGE and DEVELOPMENTALLY appropriate. With the VOICES and HELPING HANDS initiatives, individuals will be provided with opportunities to learn with, and from each other while connecting and giving back to our community.

To learn more about Light House please see their website: www.lighthouseprograms.com

Sky Zone Sensory Jumps

Sky Zone will turn off the music and dial down the distractions for the comfort and pleasure of their exceptional guests, friends and families. Sensory Jumps are held **every Thursday from 4:00pm - 5:00pm**. Sky Zone will do their best to make every effort to accommodate all jumpers.

Please call us at 519-804-4455 if you have any questions. Cost: \$15 + tax each, chaperones are free.

Front Door Walk-In Counselling Services

Throughout the summer [Front Door walk-in counselling services](#) will be OPEN on all:

Tuesday: 12pm – 6:30pm at Lutherwood, 35 Dickson St, Cambridge

Wednesday: 12pm – 6:30pm at Front Door, 1770 King Street E., Kitchener

Thursday: 9am – 3:30pm at Langs, 1145 Concession Rd., Cambridge

and the following Saturdays: 9:00 - 3:30pm at 1770 King St. E. Kitchener:

July 7, July 14, July 28, August 11, August 25

Front Door Township Service will also be available throughout the summer.

Please call (519) 749-2932 to book an appointment.

Mondays: North Dumfries Community Health Centre, Ayr

Tuesdays: Wellesley Township Community Health Centre, Wellesley

Thursdays: Interfaith Community Counselling Centre, New Hamburg

Thursdays: Woolwich Counselling Centre, Elmira

Upcoming Events

SUPPORT GROUPS

There are a number of support groups that run throughout the community on a variety of different topics. Visit the Events Calendar on our website to learn more about these opportunities: <https://wrfn.info/events/>.

Groups include, but are not limited to:

- Parents for Children's Mental Health (PCMH) Support Groups (includes ADHD and general groups)
 - APSGO—for parents of acting-out youth
- Community Mental Health Support Groups for Family & Friends (includes general and addiction groups and mental health groups)
 - Tick Talk Tourette Group
 - Mothers Addressing Autism Together
 - Premie Parents of Waterloo-Wellington Region (Premie POWWR)
 - Fathers Group—for Fathers of a child with an intellectual disability and/or autism
- The A-Team Waterloo Region— run by individuals with Asperger's Syndrome, for individuals with Asperger's Syndrome
- Support Groups for Adults with ASD (19+) and Parents/Caregivers of Adults with ASD (19+)

****Please note that many support groups don't meet in the summer****

WORKSHOPS/TRAINING

Sleep and Your New Baby

Get to know more about your baby's sleep cycle and how to respond. A free session for parents of newborns from birth to 12 weeks of age. You may bring a family member or friend for support.

Offered at your Ontario Early Years Centre in Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge.

Reserve your spot today at www.earlyyearsinfo.ca/sleep-sessions.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Training Series for Caregivers

This is a four-night Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (FASD) training series for Caregivers hosted by Developmental Services Resource Centre.

- Learn how prenatal exposure affects the brain
- Learn how FASD impacts behaviour with a focus on executive and adaptive functioning
- Identify what is needed to support individuals living with FASD
- Learn about local resources and supports available to families

The training takes place October 3, 10, 17 and 24.

Register with Karen Huber, FASD Coordinator at k.huber@dscwr.com or at 519-741-1121 ext. 2246.

Space is limited so register early.

Upcoming Events

RESOURCES

KidsAbility Resource Guide

The KidsAbility Program and Activity Guides for Spring/Summer is a great resource for local programming.

[Birth to 5 Years Program & Activity Guide](#) or [6 Years & Up Program & Activity Guide](#)

Guides can also be found on the KidsAbility website at www.kidsability.ca

Check out FamilyCompassWR.ca!

Find and connect to local services for children, youth and families. The website offers three doors to help you find the resources you need.

1. Search for services: a self-search database for local health, social & recreational services for children & youth.
2. I Have a Concern: Do you have a concern about your child's development? Answer a few short, confidential questions to get connected to a local organization that can help.
3. Resources for Parents: connect to Parenting Now to learn, find support and connect with other parents.

FASD Caregiver Consultations

Families and service providers can have a chance to sit 1:1 with our FASD Project Coordinators to ask questions and learn more about diagnosis, financial supports, parenting strategies, recreational opportunities, ideas for school and/or community resources.

When: Second and Fourth Tuesday of the month. No appointment necessary. Just drop in.

Where: 99 Regina Waterloo Rm 208 (Waterloo Region Public Health)

Do you have Passport funding?

For free help and advice on what is available to you, where to find supports to purchase or how to spend your funding, contact Lisa Hardeo, the Passport Community Developer for Waterloo Region, at Developmental Services Resource Centre – 519-741-1121 ext. 2227,

or by email at l.hardeo@dscwr.com.

Help Paying for Child Care

The Region of Waterloo helps parents pay for licensed child care so they can go to work or school knowing their children are well cared for. Families of different sizes and incomes can apply.

To view a graphic of what you would pay if you received subsidy click [here](#).

Learn more about this program at www.regionofwaterloo.ca/helppayingforchildcare

Upcoming Events

ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Ontario Autism Services Study

If you are a parent or primary caregiver of a child or youth diagnosed with autism living in Ontario you are invited to provide your feedback on Ontario autism services, education, and family stress & well-being through an online questionnaire. Please click https://wlu.ca/qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2c8jIj8w8pOZWaV for more information on this project. The survey should take approximately 15-30 minutes of your time. As a small token of thanks for your participation, you may choose to enter a draw for a grand prize of \$500 or one of three consolation prizes of \$100, following completion of the survey.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Wilfrid Laurier University research ethics board (REB #5422).

Physical Activity and Sport for Young People in the Region of Waterloo

Physical activity and sport are important for social, physical, and psychological development; however, there are many barriers that hinder families from becoming active. The purpose of this research is to examine the physical activity and sport involvement of young people within the Region of Waterloo and determine if there are any barriers to participation. The findings will be used to develop programs that fit the needs of families in the region. The survey can be accessed at: <https://goo.gl/SrLUzW>.

Roots of Empathy Recruiting Volunteer Families for the Fall

Are you a proud parent with a new baby? Will your baby be 2-4 months old in October?

If so...Your baby could be a teacher...and YOU could be a Roots of Empathy Family!

Learn more about this opportunity [here](#).

KidsAbility Young Adults Facebook Group

The KidsAbility Young Adults Facebook group aims to keep young adults with disabilities (ages 14-25) informed about opportunities and events happening in Waterloo Region, Guelph and Wellington county. You can look forward to information regarding social events, volunteer and employment opportunities, educational events and more. The KidsAbility Young Adults group page is facilitated by the KidsAbility Youth Advisory Council (KAYAC). Check out the Facebook group at:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/KidsAbilityYoungAdults/>

Calling All Youth!!

Are you between the ages of 14 and 24? Are you a client, alumni, volunteer, student or someone who wants to become connected to KidsAbility? Are you interested in having some input into KidsAbility youth programs?

Are you looking for an opportunity to earn volunteer hours?

Join the KidsAbility Youth Advisory Council (KAYAC). Be a voice for youth in our community!

To join or for more information, contact: Joanne Duddy at transitions@kidsability.ca.