

Where exceptional families thrive

175

November 2024

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What's In This Issue?

November has arrived, ushering in a time of reflection and awareness. As we embrace the chill in the air, we also recognize Indigenous Disability Awareness Month (IDAM), a time to celebrate the vital contributions of Indigenous individuals experiencing disabilities within our communities. This month serves as a powerful reminder of the strength found in diversity and the importance of addressing the unique challenges faced by these individuals.

As the landscape transforms with the onset of winter, it's an ideal moment to connect with local resources and initiatives that uplift families. In this edition, we invite you to participate in workshops and events designed to foster collaboration among parents, caregivers, and the broader community.

At WRFN, our mission is to connect families of children with exceptionalities to the support and resources they need. We envision a community where every family feels valued and empowered.

In this edition of the Family Pulse, we hope these offerings inspire you to engage with the spirit of November and strengthen the bonds within our community.

Please Note the "*" represents new items for November



[Support WRFN](#)

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

SEAC Updates

Waterloo Region District School Board- Special Education Advisory Committee Update - Submitted by Carmen Sutherland, WRFN SEAC Representative

To begin the evening, two staff members from the board came to speak about the universal screener for testing students reading skills, called the Acadience Universal Screener. They discussed how the WRDSB recommends that all students from Senior Kindergarten to Grade 2 should be tested at the beginning and middle of the year. The screener is made up of five to eight brief tests - not all of which are given each time. These tests can help teachers target where instructional support is needed and help target students at risk for learning difficulties.

There was also a big discussion about how on report cards there is only an indication about whether the reading benchmark has been met or not, and that this may cause stress for parents and caregivers whether they have students in special education or not. There was a conversation about who should be exempt from the test, who gets to decide who is exempt, family involvement in this decision, and other important concerns, including what other assessments will be used for students who are exempt.

The Trustees did not have an update. It was discussed that in the future we will talk about what topics we want to cover this year for SEAC. The next SEAC meeting will take place on Wednesday, November 13, 2024.

The next SEAC meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, November 13.**

SEAC Updates

Waterloo Catholic Region District School Board- Special Education Advisory Committee Update - Submitted by Erin Sutherland & Karen Applebee WRFN SEAC Representatives

Superintendent Jennifer Ritsma and Kelly Roberts outlined the Student Achievement Plan (SAP). They spoke about the Better Schools Act and noted that they are now responsible for reporting on 11 specific indicators. The next steps involve continuing to learn more about the SAP and making board staff more comfortable with its implementation.

All administrators are currently developing their own individual school plans. The internal calculations for the SAP are being conducted by the research team, which is drilling deep into data within groups such as students on Individual Education Plans (IEPs), Multilingual Learners (MLL), and Equity. At this point, they are starting with indicators one through three.

Additionally, they are developing a SAP dashboard that will be accessible to leaders and the community. Social workers are focusing on one of the 11 indicators related to attendance, particularly addressing concerns regarding attendance that may lead to social work referrals.

In recognition of ADHD Awareness Month, Erin Lemak shared resources and messaging for October, including examples for teachers to use in developing IEPs. These resources will also be made available to families.

Finally, a formal motion was made to approve the Special Education Plan. Gerald Foran reviewed the key changes that were made, including the addition of Project Search, the removal of the re-engagement social worker role, and the decision not to offer gifted workshops this year due to a staffing issue. The plan now also includes the role of Principal of Student Services.

The next SEAC meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, November 6.**

What's Happening at WRFN

WRFN programs and services are 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.

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. 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 Lisa Cook at 226-338-7274 or email Lisa.Cook@wrfn.info
Call Leah Bowman at 226-898-9301 or email Leah.Bowman@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. Coffee Club has also started meeting in-person two Mondays each month from 7 to 9 pm.

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.

Program Spotlight: Ask A Self-Advocate Program Frequently Asked Questions

By Cristina Stanger, Self-Advocacy Liaison

What is the Ask A Self-Advocate Program?

The Ask A Self-Advocate program is a supportive initiative for individuals with exceptionalities and the people who support them. Participants can engage with me, Cristina Stanger, WRFN's Self-Advocacy Liaison, to discuss their goals, challenges, and any questions they may have. By sharing my lived experiences, I aim to provide insights and ideas that can help guide them on their journey.

How was this program developed?

This program was born from my own experience of seeking resources after receiving my diagnoses of exceptionality in adulthood. I wanted a positive and hopeful space where I could connect with someone who understood my challenges. Collaborating with the Waterloo Region Family Network, we created the Ask A Self-Advocate program, which has been running since 2018.

Who is this program intended for?

The program is designed for self-advocates (individuals with exceptionalities), their family members, and professionals. We welcome anyone experiencing any form of exceptionality, whether or not they have a formal diagnosis. Open to individuals of all ages, I have had the privilege of meeting self-advocates as young as 9 and as old as 60, reflecting WRFN's mission to support all life stages.

What kind of things do you talk about?

Our conversations are client-centered, meaning we discuss what matters most to you. Topics can range widely, from "Why is it so hard for my child to brush their teeth?" to "How did you decide to start a family knowing there is a genetic component to your exceptionality?"

Common themes include:

- Navigating life transitions
- Pursuing a diagnosis and the diagnostic process
- Coming to terms with a diagnosis
- Professional supports and destigmatizing them
- Communicating needs to loved ones
- Giving yourself permission to do things differently
- Self-advocacy in everyday life

What does a typical appointment look like?

Appointments are usually 50 minutes long (or less, if desired). I will start by introducing myself, I check-in with my understanding about you or your family, and I'll ask if there's anything else they'd like to share. After that, we can dive into questions or topics of interest; these questions can be provided to me in advance, or we can just see where the conversation takes us when we meet.

How can AASA support be modified to suit my needs, or the needs of my family?

The meeting format is flexible and chosen by the client. We can meet virtually, in-person, or by phone. Some individuals prefer support exclusively through email. I adapt appointments to meet various needs, whether by adjusting the environment (like dimming lights) or modifying social dynamics (such as sitting off to the side).

When working with youth, I accommodate different family preferences. Sometimes I meet with a parent first, followed by a session with the youth, or I may meet them together. In some cases, I meet the youth independently to facilitate a more comfortable connection.

Is there anything else about this program that is helpful to know?

Support through the AASA program can be a single session or multiple sessions, either closely spaced or spread out over time (e.g., returning months or years later as life evolves). A written summary is provided 1-2 weeks after each appointment, detailing discussed topics, terms, and resources for future reference.

Welcome to The Team!

Family Resource Coach

Lisa Cook

With over a decade of experience in the non-profit sector and over 20 years in marketing and communications, Lisa has honed her ability to develop effective communication strategies that benefit her organization and the families it serves.

As a parent of children with multiple exceptionalities, Lisa possesses invaluable personal insights into families' challenges while navigating available resources. This firsthand experience fuels her passion; she takes pride in standing alongside families to champion their needs.

Before her role as a Family Resource Coach with WRFN, Lisa was actively involved with the organization for several years as a parent mentor, where she received essential support for her own children. This transformative experience inspired her to give back, helping other families in the region access the resources and guidance crucial for her journey.

At the core of Lisa's work is her unwavering commitment to problem-solving. She thrives on collaborating with families, understanding their unique circumstances, and crafting tailored solutions that empower them. Lisa firmly believes that every child and family deserves access to the support they need to foster a sense of belonging within their community and school.

Welcome, Lisa! We are fortunate to have someone so committed to ensuring families get the support they need to thrive. WRFN, At this time, also extends well wishes to Erin and Marla, who have moved on to other opportunities thank you for your time with WFRN.



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

WRFN Drop-Ins at EarlyON

Meet with Erin, our Family Resource Coach

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

DATE	LOCATION	TIME
Nov 12	EarlyON Roger St 161 Roger St, Waterloo	11 am - 12 pm
Nov 13	EarlyON Oak Creek 80 Tartan Ave, Kitchener	10-11 am
Nov 19	EarlyON Water St 73 Water St., N., Unit 105 Cambridge	10-11 am
Nov 20	EarlyON St. Boniface 225 Starlight Ave, Breslau	10-11 am
Nov 29	EarlyON Cedar Creek 55 Hilltop Dr, Ayr, ON	10-11:30 am



Contact Lisa -

lisa.cook@wrfn.info
226-338-7274

More dates to come!



www.wrfn.info





Tuesdays 3:00pm - 4:00pm

Please check www.KEyON.ca for planned closures

EarlyON | Roger Street

(161 Roger St, 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 for children under 8 years of age and their parent or caring adult. 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:



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

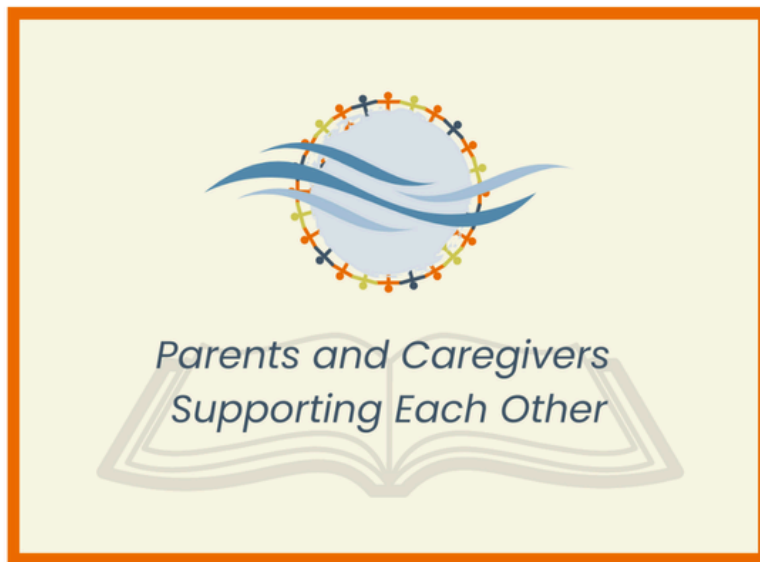
Important: While Kaleidoscope Kids is a drop-in program, families new to EarlyON will need to register with KEyON before arriving or when they arrive. Register for free at www.KEyON.ca.

SPECTRUM ON THE SPECTRUM

NEW DAY!
SUNDAY, NOV 3
6:30 - 8:30PM

A monthly drop-in group for queer and trans people in the Autistic community in Waterloo Region (18+)





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.



November 5, 2024

Self-Care: Beyond the Bubble Bath

This month we host an evening with well-being coach Jessie-Lynn MacDonald on November 5 at 7:30pm. The focus will be on you, the caregiver/parent. In a kind and thoughtful approach, you will be provided with ideas to help lift you up on those difficult days. The meaningful self-care inspiration provided by Jessie-Lynn will last far longer than a bubble bath.

Jessie-Lynn is a very experienced coach, To find out more about her approach you may google her at: jessielynnmacdonald.com.

All other 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.

EarlyON Resource Page

EarlyON November Programming*

You can now register for EarlyON programming. You and your family are invited to [drop in to an EarlyON location](#) throughout Waterloo Region and in the City of Stratford. Specialty and online programs that require pre-registration are also available. Check out the [KeyON calendars](#) for more information. To view the monthly program calendars by site, or to register for specialty programs, login to your [KeyON](#) account and select the EarlyON location of your choice.

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 at 519-741-8585 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.

EarlyON Grandparents Connect

This program brings together a compassionate community ready to provide grandparents with the knowledge, resources, and emotional support needed if they are the legal guardians or primary caregivers for their grandchildren. Weekly meetings include childminding, snacks, and the opportunity to increase your circle of support. EarlyON | Oak Creek (80 Tartan Ave, Kitchener). Email capc@caminowellbeing.ca to register.

Rainbow Family Drop-In

Rainbow Families drop-in runs Thursdays at EarlyON | Roger St from 3:30 - 4:30 pm. Join other 2SLGBTQIA+ children (aged 0-6), caring adults and families in play and exploration together! EarlyON Educators and a SPECTRUM Registered Early Childhood Educator are available to provide support and information around early learning topics, community resources, programs, and referrals in a play-based environment.

EarlyON Onsite Services. EarlyON Centres partner with a variety of community agencies to provide onsite appointments for your child and family. [Learn more.](#)

Early Learning and Child Care Navigators

Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Navigators seek opportunities to assist families in accessing Child Care, EarlyON programming, and other services that support the healthy development of children aged 0 – 6. They focus on supporting families who experience barriers accessing these services.

- [Send an online request to meet with an Early Learning & Child Care Navigator Request](#)
 - [Email an Early Learning and Child Care Navigator](#)
 - For more info please visit [ELCC Navigators Landing page](#)
- Call 519-741-8585 ext. 3008 and ask to speak with an Early Learning and Child Care Navigator

EarlyON Mobile Sites

In addition to our Centres, EarlyON offers mobile drop-in at various sites in the Waterloo Region. Join other children, caring adults, and families in play and exploration together! EarlyON Educators are available to provide support and information around early learning topics, community resources, programs, and referrals in our play-based environment. To learn more about our mobile sites, call 519-741-8585 x3001 or visit the [Locations Page](#).

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

Community of Hearts Social Sundays*

Crafternoons

Get ready to unleash your creativity at our very first social club event! Join us on Sunday, November 3rd, from 3 PM to 5 PM at the Community of Hearts Lifelong Learning Centre (Inside Old Quebec St Mall, 55 Wyndham St N, Guelph). For just \$5, you can participate in guided origami and paper airplane making, along with open art time and complimentary latte beverages. Don't miss out on the ultimate craft event of the fall!

Hockey with the Gryphons

On Sunday, November 10th, cheer on the Guelph Gryphons as they face off against the Brock Badgers! Join your friends from COH at the Gryphon Centre Arena (University Centre, 50 Stone Rd E, Guelph) at 2:30 PM. For \$20, your ticket includes admission to the game and some delicious game day snacks. It's a perfect way to enjoy an afternoon of sports and camaraderie!

Lunch at the Real Deal

Join us for a delightful lunch at The Real Deal (224 Victoria Rd S, Guelph, ON), a popular local sports bar, on Saturday, November 16th, from 12 PM to 2 PM. For \$50, you'll have the chance to savor some fine bar food, enjoy a drink, and play pool after our meal. It's a fantastic opportunity to relax and socialize with friends!

Wizard's Initiation Escape Room

Experience something brand new with COH on Sunday, November 24th! We're heading to Exitus (340 Woodlawn Rd. West, Guelph, ON) for a magic-themed escape room adventure from 1:30 PM to 2:45 PM. For \$40, this event promises to build teamwork and challenge our brains. If you've never tried an escape room before, this is an accessible and safe opportunity to dive into the fun!

Register today at info@communityofhearts.ca or call 519-826-9056. All programs are in Guelph, Ontario, and are passport-funding friendly.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region: Pre-Teen Hangout Group*

Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region is offering a Pre-Teen Hangout Group for youth aged 8-12, running on Fridays from November 15, 2024, to January 3, 2025, at 14 Braun Ave., Kitchener. This program provides respite for caregivers while offering meaningful recreational activities and skill-building opportunities. The cost is \$85 for the session. Families can register through [MyCommunityHub and pay online here](#). If you have SSAH funding through Extend-A-Family, a coupon code will be emailed for registration. For more information, contact Teen Meet Up Groups at 519-741-0190 ext. 213 or teenhangout@eafwr.on.ca.

Toyota STEM & Sport Program – Free for Kids

In partnership with Wilfrid Laurier University, the Sun Life Centre for Healthy Communities is thrilled to present the Toyota STEM & Sport program at eight locations across Kitchener-Waterloo. This exciting program merges a love for sports with engaging STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) learning through various sport-related games and activities.

The program is designed for children aged 9 to 12 and will take place on the following days and times:

- Mondays:
 - 3:30 to 5 pm at Monsignor Haller C.S. (Oct 21 to Dec 2)
 - 6:30 to 8 pm at J.F. Carmichael P.S. (Oct 21 to Dec 2)
- Tuesdays:
 - 6:30 to 8 pm at Rockway P.S. (Oct 22 to Dec 3)
 - 6:30 to 8 pm at Cedarbrae P.S. (Oct 22 to Dec 3)
- Wednesdays:
 - 3:45 to 5:15 pm at St. Timothy C.S. (Oct 23 to Dec 4)
 - 6:30 to 8 pm at Queen Elizabeth P.S. (Oct 23 to Dec 4)
- Thursdays:
 - 3 to 4 pm at Hillside P.S. (Oct 24 to Dec 5)
 - 6 to 8 pm at Winston Churchill P.S. (Oct 24 to Dec 5)

New participants can register online using the following link: [Registration Form](#). Returning participants can log into their Scoreboard account to register at [Scoreboard Login](#).

If you have any questions, please email SunLifeCHC@wlu.ca. Don't miss this wonderful opportunity for fun and learning!

Information, Opportunities & Resources

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.

Special Olympics

Visit the Special Olympics events calendar to get additional information, resources and registration links for events coming up in Kitchener-Waterloo. <https://www1.specialolympicsontario.com/events/calendar/>

Ready. Set. READ!...

Kitchener Public Library: Ready. Set. READ!...is a program for JK, SK and Grade 1 students. Through stories, literacy games and reading in small groups with volunteers the program aims to show kids reading can be fun! Sign up online at: <https://kpl.events.mylibrary.digital/event?id=55160> or by phone: 519-743-0271 x261.

YMCA Diabetes Fit

Are you struggling to get started with healthy habits like exercise? Are you at risk of, or living with type 2 diabetes? Join free Diabetes Fit program to build life changing habits at home or at the YMCA. The program takes place at A.R. Kaufman Family YMCA (333 Carwood Ave, Kitchener,) and runs on Mondays and Thursdays from September 23 to November 16. To register, please [email Nidhi](mailto:Nidhi@ymca.ca) or phone 519-824-5150 x 234.

Empowered 4 Employment – A Program for Job Seekers

Pathways to Growth is excited to announce the Empowered 4 Employment (E4E) program, designed to enhance the independence of individuals actively seeking employment who identify as differently abled. Starting October 4 and running until November 8, 2024, the program will happen on Fridays from 9 am to 12 pm at the St. Dunstan Learning Centre at 1525 Cuthbert Ave, Mississauga. Participants will gain valuable skills, including soft skills, communication, problem-solving, critical thinking, resume and cover letter basics, interview skills, and more. The program costs \$300; participants will receive a certificate upon completion. For more information, please contact Karina Vozniuk at (905) 793-5400 ext. 226 or email Kvozniuk@thelearningplace.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>

Sunbeam

Sunbeam's Recreation & Wellness Program enhances the quality of life of program participants. With a focus on recreation, socialization, inclusion, and community, including both physical and emotional wellness, the Recreation & Wellness team provides fun and engaging programming at various community locations.

- Offered as a fee-for-service option to individuals living with a developmental disability.
- Program participation is an eligible activity for the use of Passport Funds.
- For all activities and events, participants must be accompanied by their own support person or a family member.

For more information about this program, its calendar of upcoming events, and how to register please click to visit: www.sunbeamcommunity.ca/recreation-wellness-program.

Fun Fearless Females

Fun Fearless Females offers a variety of supportive services and social events and programs that create a welcoming environment for all women to have fun, try new things (be fearless) and connect with other women. Check out the events calendar to see all the festive and creative events happening this month!

<https://www.funfearlessfemales.ca/events>

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

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!](#)

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.

SPECTRUM Youth Under the Rainbow

Join SPECTRUM across the Region as they read stories, explore art and have fun together in a safe and supported environment for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth, families and allies. Visit <https://wrfn.info/CommunityNewsAndUpdates/Family-and-Youth-Under-the-Rainbow.htm> to see a full list of upcoming events and where to register.

Karis & Humber College's Culinary Skills Development & Employment Program

Get hands-on kitchen training from professional chefs through in-person & virtual ETraining with Humber College's Culinary Skills Development & Employment Program. This program is open to adults 18+ with a developmental disability. Learn more and fill out an [application here](#), then email your application to Mary Lou Kelly, Program Coordinator: mkelly@karis.org.

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

MoveMeant For All

Inclusive fitness training for all individuals with special needs, mental health, trauma and more. Contact Courtney Hughes at 519-503-4489 or move.meantforall@gmail.com.

Join the Smart Waterloo Region Nurture Youth Group

This is a youth group for those who like to connect with plants, and who are curious about learning ecological design and food forest planning. Join the SWRIL Nurture Youth Group! We meet Wednesday evenings from 5-7 pm at Communitech and Steckle Heritage Farm. We will be meeting weekly to:

- do fun hands-on activities like seed sprouting, kombucha brewing, apple pressing, etc.
- explore regenerative design concepts.
- learn about nature, the land, and our relationships to our traditional and local foods.
- train our creative problem-solving skills through IDEATION and innovation sessions!
- enjoy movies and hear from inspiring food-systems folks, locally and abroad.

Email Nikola at nbarsoum@regionofwaterloo.ca or register at [Join the Nurture Youth Group! \(google.com\)](https://www.google.com).

Region-wide tutoring information

Camino Wellbeing + Mental Health provides tutoring and homework spaces that are accessible and free of cost to families and students. For more information, visit www.caminowellbeing.ca/tutoring.

Level Up

[Level Up](#) in partnership with the City of Waterloo and City of Kitchener are facilitating three eight-week play-based programs introducing kids aged 9-12 years to topics crucial to generating a social justice practice. Register now at [City of Waterloo ActiveNet](#) and at [City of Kitchener ActiveNet](#)!

Corte

Corte Kitchener is an exciting and unique racquet and social club! Our programs are designed to offer fun and competitive play for all types of players, from beginners to advanced! Questions? Please reach out to our Pickleball Director, Matthew Pitts: matthew@corte.ca.

<https://cortekw.ca/programs>

Information, Opportunities & Resources

CADDAC Online Support Group for Non-ADHD Partners

Beginning October 8th and running through November 12th, an online support group for non-ADHD partners will be available. This series of sessions provides a supportive environment in which to share experiences and connect with others while navigating similar relationship dynamics. Learn more and register here:

<https://www.lilianaturecki.com/supportgroup>.

Ontario Caregiver Organization Programs

Caregiver ID Programs

Available in healthcare settings, these programs formally identify caregivers, recognizing their role in patient care.

Partners in Care Pandemic Toolkit: Designed for hospitals, long-term care homes, and other care settings, this toolkit provides tools to facilitate caregiver engagement during COVID-19.

Caregiver as Partners e-Learning:

A two-module series for healthcare providers, offering practical tips and strategies for working with caregivers.

Time to Talk Toolkit:

For providers across care settings, this toolkit promotes meaningful conversations between staff and caregivers.

Health Privacy and Consent Resources: Resources to help caregivers understand privacy and consent rules to optimize care partnerships.

E-Learning Module for Caregivers:

A 1.5-hour learning module to help caregivers communicate effectively with care providers.

Ontario Caregiver Helpline:

A 24-hour helpline offering information and referrals to connect caregivers with support. Call 1-833-416-2273.

OCO Caregiver Programs & Services:

Programs supporting caregivers, including peer support groups and SCALE Program.

Resources to Support Meaningful Engagement and Co-Design with Caregivers:

Resources and tools for organizations and caregivers to engage in meaningful co-design efforts.

For more information, visit ontariocaregiver.ca or contact partners@ontariocaregiver.ca

Information, Opportunities & Resources

KW Habilitation Youth Exploring Possibilities Winter Sessions*

Laser Tag and Arcade (PD Day)

On Friday, January 31, from 9 am to 4 pm, join YEP Social for an exciting day at KingPin arcade located at KW Habilitation. For \$140, families can enjoy a fun-filled day of games and laser tag missions, with lunch and snacks provided.

Holiday Cupcake Creations

Celebrate the holiday season on Tuesday, December 17, from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM with YEP Social's Holiday Cupcake Creations event. Taking place in the Out and About Room at KW Habilitation, this workshop invites families to bake and decorate delicious cupcakes. For \$55, participants can also enjoy games like trivia while indulging in their sweet creations.

Taco Tuesday!

Mark your calendars for Tuesday, January 21, from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM for Taco Tuesday with YEP Social. Held in the Out and About Room at KW Habilitation, this event costs \$55 and promises a delightful evening of taco-making fun and a lively dance fiesta with friends.

Baking Fresh Cinnamon Rolls

Join YEP Social on Tuesday, February 18, from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM for a delicious baking experience. In the Out and About Room at KW Habilitation, families can come together to bake fresh cinnamon rolls for just \$55. Enjoy the warm, sweet treats in good company!

[To register visit here.](#) All sessions are held at KW Habilitation is located at 99 Ottawa St South in Kitchener

Information, Opportunities & Resources

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 fashioned mail. They mail letters, postcards, colouring sheets, activity sheets, stickers and other fun goodies!

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

City of Cambridge

The City of Cambridge has two 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.

KidsAbility Behaviour Support Services

Find support for your family with Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) services offered at KidsAbility locations across Waterloo Region and Guelph-Wellington. The team works closely with you to address your family's needs by creating a personalized plan within carefully set up packages for you and your child with the tools to support and succeed. Explore fee-for-service options for your child by connecting with at GPS@kidsability.ca. For more information and a current list of service offerings, visit us www.kidsability.ca.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Recreational Respite

Virtual group programs have been developed in partnership with participants to address a variety of interests, skill practices, 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.recrespite.com/virtual-services/>

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! Aptus' Clinical Services team created the Sensory Workout training and demo videos, with generous funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services.

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

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>

Spectrum BRIQ House

BRIQ House is Spectrum's monthly group for Black, Indigenous, and other Racialized Queer folks in Waterloo Region! Come meet for discussions and community building. We connect both in person at Spectrum and virtually on Zoom.

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.

Resilience Project

The Resilience Project from FACS Waterloo has some new programming for children, youth, and caregivers this summer. Learn more and register for programs <https://resiliencecollective.ca/programs-offered>.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Black Youth Mental Wellness Circle

The African Community Wellness Initiative staff are trained for Afrocentric Clinical Therapeutic Practice with individuals, families, groups and youth. They now offer a Black Youth Mental Wellness Circle, a space for Black youth (ages 13 – 18) to engage, connect and grow, on Tuesdays from 6 – 7:30 pm. For more information, please contact chantal@africancommunitywellness.org. Register at <https://africancommunitywellness.org/mental-health-wellness/>.

Sports for Special Athletes Programming

A volunteer-run organization that provides subsidized recreation and sports for teens and adults with exceptionalities in the Waterloo Region. We focus on fitness and fun and sometimes forget all about the score. We are inclusive and never leave anyone on the bench. Pay a \$20 annual administration fee (from Sept-Sept) no matter how many sports you participate in. Plus, a \$5 sports fee for each sport you sign up for. Some sports may have additional program costs; for example, Basketball for beginners will be on Fridays from 6:30 pm to 8:00 starting October 11, 2024; the cost is \$165, including a \$50 sports fee. Or Adapted Swimming will be on Thursdays, starting October 10, 2024, at 253 Fisherville Rd. The cost is \$100. Contact Don Clarke (519) 744-4881. [Visit here for contact info](#) and to register

Student Links Program: Application and FAQ

Funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, Student Links is an opportunity for students (ages 14 to 21) who identify as having an intellectual disability to explore ideas for their future after high school. It matches students and mentors who share a common passion or interest. The goal is to enhance their capacity to make informed decisions about their future before leaving school and support the natural development of relationships and connections to their community. Student Links is tailored to meet the needs of each individual student and may include hands-on experiences, exploration of new interests, and an introduction to work, volunteer or community-based roles. Opportunities are created for students to meet with people currently engaged in or with substantial knowledge of the identified interest.

The possibilities are endless! After completing the application found at the bottom the first step is for the student to meet with the Student Links coordinator and together identify ideas, interests, passions and roles they are interested in. [Fill out an application form here](#) and see some frequently asked questions by visiting <https://studentlinks.es/faqs/>.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

March of Dimes

Paving the Path: Beginning my Journey to the World of Work

Has a disability or other barrier prevented you from imagining yourself in the workforce? Have you ever wondered what it would be like to have a job? Do you want to learn about the types of jobs that best suit your personality? Would you like to know how working would affect the benefits you currently receive? If you answered yes to any of the questions above, Paving the Path for Work can help. This 6-week program offered by March of Dimes Canada is for people who have had limited exposure to employment but want to learn more. Offered virtually and in person. For more information or to register for an upcoming session, please contact: Steven Hendry at 519-501-9868 or email shendry@marchofdimes.ca.

Muslim Social Services Programs

Muslim Social Services KW provides a professional, confidential, and affordable counselling service at The Family Centre Hub. Counselling services extend to individuals, children, couples, and families, including group therapy sessions conducted in various languages. We are dedicated to offering culturally sensitive counselling tailored to victims of gender-based and domestic violence.

Al-Nour Project

The Al-Nour Project is an exclusive program for young women aged 13-25, to uplift, inspire, and empower. They participate in both fun group activities and focus on building relationships. The program will be facilitated by the counsellor Fatima Haneef, once a month on Thursdays from 6 to 8 PM. To register and for more info, visit our website at www.muslimsocialserviceskw.org, email info@muslimsocialserviceskw.org, or call (519) 772-4399 ext. 2707.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Every Friday evening, from 5 to 7 pm at the Chandler Mowat Community Centre, join the "Neighbors Helping Neighbors" program. This initiative, facilitated by Community Connector Sally Alkarmi, reaches out to all women to create a healthy and supportive environment. The program aims to reduce the risk of isolation and promote diversity within the KW area.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

ThriveTogether Youth Program

Join the exclusive ThriveTogether Youth Program every Friday from 5 PM to 7 PM at The Family Centre, 65 Hanson Ave, Kitchener. This program is designed for young men aged 14-20 and combines sports and social activities to promote mental well-being. Participants can earn volunteer hours, enjoy snacks, and receive bus tickets.

For More information visit <https://www.muslimsocialserviceskw.org/>.

Adults in Motion: Summer and Winter Camps

Adults in Motion offers engaging Summer and Winter Camps for adults (18+) with diverse needs. These camps provide enriching experiences tailored to individual interests and abilities. With a supportive 5:1 camper-to-staff ratio and personalized skills and needs assessments, every camper gets the attention they deserve.

PD Days Camp

Adults in Motion offers PD Days Camp for adults (18+) with diverse needs. These single-day camps are ideal for those looking for an enriching and flexible way to spend their day off. With activities tailored to individual skills and interests, participants will enjoy a fulfilling experience.

School Transition Programs

Transitioning from high school can be a significant step, and Adults in Motion provides specialized School Transition Programs to support adults (18+) with diverse needs. These programs facilitate a smooth transition by focusing on skills development and personal growth.

Virtual Camp (Lubdub)

Adults in Motion offers Virtual Camp Days through [Lubdub] (<https://www.lovelubdub.com>) for those who prefer online activities or cannot attend in person. These sessions provide a variety of engaging and fun online activities tailored to adults (18+) with diverse needs. Join from anywhere and enjoy the inclusive and supportive environment of Virtual Camp.

Free Program Trials

Are you not sure if these programs are the right fit? Adults in Motion offers the opportunity to try out any of their programs for free! This allows participants to experience the camps and activities without any commitment.

For more details and to register visit <https://www.adultsinmotion.org>.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Locations and Contact Information:

Adults in Motion operates in multiple locations to serve the community better. Reach out to the nearest centre for more details and to sign up:

Oakville: 141 Bronte Rd | 289-400-3723 | [oakville@adultsinmotion.org]

[\(<mailto:oakville@adultsinmotion.org>\)](mailto:oakville@adultsinmotion.org)

Cambridge: 653 King St E (Preston) | 519-277-3723 |

[cambridge@adultsinmotion.org] (<mailto:cambri0dge@adultsinmotion.org>)

Hamilton: 627 Main St E | 905-541-3723 | [hamilton@adultsinmotion.org]

[\(<mailto:hamilton@adultsinmotion.org>\)](mailto:hamilton@adultsinmotion.org)

Kitchener: 317 Franklin St N | 519-577-3723 | [kitchener@adultsinmotion.org]

[\(<mailto:kitchener@adultsinmotion.org>\)](mailto:kitchener@adultsinmotion.org)

LEG Up Winter Break Sessions

Trip to the Movie Theatre!

on Tuesday, December 31 from 9 am - 4 pm come along to the movie theatre with YEP Social, as the group enjoy some popcorn and watch 'Mufasa: The Lion King' OR 'Sonic the Hedgehog 3'. Lunch and popcorn provided. The cost is \$120.

Swimming Day

on Thursday, January 2 from 9 am - 4 pm Join YEP Social for a fun afternoon of indoor swimming! Splash around with friends at the pool and cook mini pizzas for lunch! Lunch and snacks provided. The cost is \$110.

SkyZone Trampoline Park

On Friday, January 3 from 9 am - 4 pm YEP Social will be jumping around SkyZone trampoline park! Lunch and snack provided. The cost is \$140.

Register for these socials and more at the KW Habitation shop:

<https://shop.kwhab.ca/product-category/youth-exploring-possibilities/yep-social/>

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Tech 4 Success – Digital Literacy Program*

A Digital Literacy Program for people with a mild or moderate developmental disability. Learn key concepts such as Computer Basics, Internet Basics, Email Services, Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint, and Internet and Email Safety. Please note that space is limited! The \$300 Passport and ODSP funding are accepted.

Cohort 1: Mondays and Tuesdays, November 4 to 19, from 12 - 4 pm The Learning Place 307b-7700 Hurontario Street, Brampton

Cohort 2: Wednesdays and Thursdays starting November 6 – 21 from 9 am – 1 pm. The Learning Place 307b-7700 Hurontario Street, Brampton.

Cohort 3: Tuesdays and Thursdays, November 26 - December 12, 9 am - 1 pm St. Dunstan Learning Centre, 1525 Cuthbert Ave, Mississauga

For more info: Karina Vozniuk: (905) 793-5400 ext.226

kvozniuk@thelearningplace.ca.

oneROOF Youth Services Host Homes program*

oneROOF's Host Homes program offers short term stays for youth who are at risk or experiencing homelessness in the Waterloo Region. OneROOF staff work alongside private homeowners who volunteer by opening up a space in their homes offering short term accommodation to youth in need. While in the home, youth are supported by program staff to establish goals and work towards finding long term, stable housing by the end of their stay. Program staff also offer support to the home providers with weekly check-ins and 24/7 on call support. Both home providers and youth are screened to ensure safety and ability to follow program guidelines. Providers are expected to provide a grab and go breakfast, evening meal, as well as a room that is furnished. In return, youth participants pay a weekly stipend of \$90. Providers are not expected to take on a guardian/parental role, but rather to be a supportive adult who can be a mentor and role model. To learn more information visit <https://www.oneroof.org/host-homes>.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Family Centre Fall Programs

The Family Centre Creative Space offers a safe environment for children to develop their artistic skills individually and in groups. The program encourages children to discover their unique styles while building resilience throughout the creative process. A vital element of the program is connecting with peers, volunteers, and facilitators to collaboratively find solutions and progress in their creative journeys. The Family Centre is expanding to include youth and adults interested in exploring their creativity. Admission is free, but registration is required.

For Fall 2024, programming includes:

Creative Space on Mondays

From 6 to 7:30 pm (Facilitator: pamrojasp@gmail.com),

Music Academy on Tuesdays

From 6 to 8 pm (Facilitator: kev.saltarelli@gmail.com)

Creative Space on Wednesdays

From 6 to 7 pm (Facilitator: pamrojasp@gmail.com)

Mini Act Theatre on Wednesdays

from 6 to 8 pm (Facilitator: yazan.maarouf@gmail.com).

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Workshops, Training & Events

CADDAC's Centre for ADHD Awareness, Canada (CADDAC) 16th Annual ADHD Conference

Save the dates for November 2 and 3, 2024, in Oakville, Sheridan Conference Centre, 1400 Trafalgar Rd, Oakville, ON L6H 6W4. This is an essential learning opportunity for individuals with ADHD, their families, educators, and healthcare professionals. Keynote presentations by Ari Tuckman will address important topics such as "How to Actually Get Things Done" and "Better Relationships with ADHD." Additional discussions will cover ADHD in older adults, marginalized communities, puberty, long-term memory, and more. You can register for both days for \$255 or a single day for \$135 plus HST [here](#).

Developmental Services Ontario Creating Your Individualized Housing and Support Plan*

This Workshop series from DSO includes three (3) sessions, each at 6 pm - 8 pm designed to help participants begin creating an individualized housing and support plan for themselves or their family member(s) with a developmental disability. This virtual workshop series is free and open to people with developmental disabilities, their family members, and/or their support networks living in Ontario. Questions about this event can be sent to, Bambi Pepe at b.pepe@lccare.ca, Raegan Wilkin at r.wilkin@lccare.ca, Christina Hall at c.hall@sunbeamcommunity.ca, Tanner Stranges at housing@dsohnr.ca and Robin Knott at robinknott@dsoswr.ca. Note: It is recommended you attend all three sessions as the content of each session is connected.

To register for this virtual workshop series, please [visit here](#).

Dates:

Session 1: Wednesday, Nov. 13, 2024

Session 2: Wednesday, Nov. 20, 2024

Session 3: Wednesday, Nov. 27, 2024

Information, Opportunities & Resources

The Regional Assessment and Resource Centre (RARC) Webinar for post-secondary Transition*

The Regional Assessment and Resource Centre (RARC) is hosting a info presentation on November 26, at 6-7 pm, they will discuss programming, accommodations, and supports that equip students with disabilities with the necessary knowledge and skills to access post-secondary education. Presenters will highlight the important role of transition planning to help students feel more confident and prepared to meet educational challenges. The role of assessment and appropriate determination and implementation of accommodations will also be central to the discussion. This training is appropriate for grade 11 and 12 students with learning disabilities, ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorder, and/or Mental Health Disorders, parents/guardians, and resource teachers. There is no fee or registration required for this event. [Join via Microsoft Teams Meeting](#). Meeting ID: 278 204 256 553 Passcode: bEjZix

Bridges to Belonging: Learn All About the Ontario Disability Savings Plan*

Join Bridges to Belonging on Thursday, November 14 from 6:30 - 8:30 pm on Zoom as ODSP Caseworker Tony Domingos answers questions about the ODSP! Register for your FREE spot here: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/future-planning-event-learn-all-about-the-ontario-disability-savings-plan-tickets-1045117002087>. This webinar is also supported by GGFI Law and Kindred Credit Union.

Early Learning and Child Care Community Engagement Event at Kinbridge Community Association*

Join on Thursday, November 14th, 2024, from 5 to 7 pm at the Kinbridge Community Association in Cambridge. Share your thoughts on child care and early learning services to help improve our community's child care system. Enjoy children's entertainment by Erick Traplin, engage in activities, and provide feedback directly to childcare professionals. Translation and transportation supports are available upon request, along with a light buffet dinner. Registration is required [click here](#) to register. Learn more at regionofwaterloo.ca/childrens-access-inclusion-plan.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Re:Action4Inclusion Youth Workshop*

Re:Action4Inclusion is launching a new workshop series for youth aged 14-29. Starting in January 2025, our provincial youth leaders will facilitate workshops, covering topics such as civic engagement, youth advocacy and allyship, and community building. These workshops will be offered virtually and in-person for a variety of group sizes. Our goal is to provide youth with social justice education, so they begin to see themselves as changemakers and are empowered to start their own advocacy initiatives. The official workshop topics and registration details will be released in November 2024. If you are interested in:

- Arranging an Information Session for your staff about R4I's initiatives
- Being added to our distribution list to receive updates about the workshops
- Receiving further information about how to get involved with R4I

Reach out to Leshona Lennard (Youth and Community Engagement Coordinator) at lennard@communitylivingontario.ca

Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County: Financial Literacy Workshop*

Join LDAWC for a FREE virtual workshop on "How to Teach Your Kids About Money" with Christine MacDonald, CPA and Treasurer of LDAWC on November 20, 7 to 9 pm. This is a great opportunity for parents and caregivers to learn practical tips and strategies for raising money-smart kids. [Register here.](#)

Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County: 2024 Annual General Meeting*

Mark your calendars for Learning Disabilities of Wellington County's Annual General Meeting on December 4 at 6 -7 pm, a FREE virtual event where we'll discuss our impact over the past year and our exciting plans for the future. Join us to hear how we're growing as an organization! [Click here to register.](#)

Development Services Workforce Initiative: Core Competency Café*

Registrations for the fifteenth installment of the Core Competency Café are now open! In this series of monthly Core Competency Cafés, we will delve deeper into each core competency. We'll focus on the Inclusive Leadership Competency for our November session. Join us on Wednesday November 13th, 2024, at 12:00pm for a 1-hour interactive session. During this session, we will explore how inclusive leadership competency can be applied across various positions within your organization, and we'll share examples of this competency at various growth stages. [Click here to register for the session.](#)

Information, Opportunities & Resources

KW Accessibility hosts a Wheelchair Repair Clinic*

On Saturday, November 2, from 11 am – 1 pm, it's the Wheelchair Repair Clinic Returns with the amazing support of Mobility Makers - a new collective of dedicated volunteers looking to support our community by providing minor fixes of mobility devices, ie. Wheelchairs, walkers and scooters. If you are having minor issues, please call the KW Accessibility Office at 519-885-6640 to let them know you are planning to stop by so that we can ensure we have what is needed to fix your issue. The clinic will be held at the KW AccessAbility office, 659 King St. E., Suite 250, Kitchener.

OneRoof Shared Living Collective Waterloo Region Open House*

oneROOF has recently partnered up with other community organizations to form the Shared Living Collective Waterloo Region. The Shared Living Collective is a group of local organizations (Karis Disability Services, oneROOF Youth Services, Community Justice Initiatives and Extend-A-Family Waterloo Region), each offering unique, affordable housing opportunities throughout the Waterloo Region. Each Shared Living model is built on the value of relationships, sharing space and housing affordability. You are invited to come to the upcoming open house on November 18, 2024, at Kitchener Public Library - Central Library located at 85 Queen St N, Kitchener, from 7 - 8 pm. Learn how you might support this creative opportunity to deepen your relationships, extend your home to someone in need, and receive the reciprocal benefit of developing a new relationship and housing affordability in our community. You can follow them on Facebook and Instagram **@sharedlivingwaterlooregion**.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Resources

Aging and Elder Care: Time for Transformation

This book includes essays on caregiving, the importance of relationships as we age, ways to enhance home care, and many ideas for healthy aging. It can be ordered [online here](#) or purchased at Wordsworth Books in Waterloo, located on 96 King St S, Waterloo, ON.

SNR Collaborative

The SNR Collaborative offers support to Licensed Child Care Programs in Waterloo Region for children up to 12 years old. KidsAbility and KW Habilitation make up the SNR Collaborative, which aims to streamline services and ensure all children can thrive in early learning environments regardless of their abilities. Early Childhood Educators, parents, and caregivers can contact the SNR Collaborative with questions about a child's needs. The Collaborative operates within a tiered services model to provide tailored assistance. Visit their website for more information on programs, tips, strategies, and referrals. To contact KidsAbility, please email spotservices@kidsability.ca. For inquiries related to KW Habilitation, you can reach them at earlylearning@kwhab.ca. If you have any questions, you can call SNAP at 519-514-7627 or email snap@kwhab.ca. For inquiries regarding the SNR Collaborative, please email [Kristy](#) or [Carlyn](#).

CAMH Blog Post & Video

Yona Lunsky's latest blog post discusses the inspiring "brother. do. you love. me." event at CAMH. The post delves into the heartfelt discussions and unique sibling perspectives that made the evening unforgettable. Read the blog [here](#). You can also watch the video of the event in its entirety via [YouTube here](#).

Ask a Nurse at the Welcome Spaces

Public Health Family Nursing services are available at three Welcome Space locations, offering one-to-one, drop-in support from Public Health Nurses. This service is provided from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM on the following days:

- Waterloo: Mondays at 99 Regina St S
- Kitchener: Tuesdays at 20 Weber St E
- Cambridge: Thursdays at 150 Main St

Nurses can assist with questions on pregnancy, growth and development, feeding, child health, and local health services. For more information, e-mail Lrintche@regionofwaterloo.ca

Information, Opportunities & 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 Public Health Agency of Canada'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 six 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:jdigirolo@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 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](#).

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.

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>

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

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>.

CanFASD Mental Health Resource and Practice Guide

The CanFASD Research Network released a new resource that all mental health professionals need in their toolbox. This resource is grounded in the belief that people with FASD are capable of significant change and personal growth. It is therefore imperative that, as mental health professionals, we continue to explore how we can adapt our supports so that individuals with FASD can benefit from practices suited to their unique strengths, challenges, and neurodevelopmental needs. [Towards Healthy Outcomes for Individuals with FASD](#)

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 \(planningnetwork.ca\)](#)

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

Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence: National Caregiving Strategy Engagement

Read the full report, Caring in Canada, and learn about Canada's National Caregiving Strategy's development. The report is available here [Report: Caring in Canada - Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence \(canadiancaregiving.org\)](#)

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Access 2 Card

The Access 2 card is designed for individuals with permanent disabilities who need attendant support at participating venues. The card allows the attendant to enter for free while the cardholder pays regular admission. Eligibility extends to people of all ages and disability types. It's accepted at numerous venues across Canada, including many movie theatres and recreational sites. To obtain the card, the person with the disability fills out an application form on the Access 2 website, which requires confirmation of need from a healthcare provider. The card costs \$20 for three years or \$30 for five years, and once the application is submitted, cards are typically issued within 4 weeks. Visit here to apply [Access2 - Easter Seals Canada Access 2 Entertainment Program \(access2card.ca\)](https://access2card.ca).

CAMH Azrieli Adult Neurodevelopmental Centre brother New Blog Post

In a new blog post, Dr. Yona Lunsky shares her aging and brain health journey within the developmental disability community. This exploration has led to the Brain Health-IDD Project, which aims to understand and address brain health in this community. [Read the Blog](#).

Kerry's Place Brave Space

Brave Space, a collection of resources, services and supports from 2SLGBTQ+ Youth and their families, is a step to honour, empower, and support everyone who lives at the intersection of autism and the 2SLGBTQ+ spectrums with information and evidence-informed resources and services. Kerry's Place aims to support those in our community who are navigating, or supporting a loved one who is navigating, their journey of discovering their identity within the spectrums of gender and sexuality. They are collaborating with subject matter experts to help ensure that the supports developed are evidence-informed and in line with current best practices for the 2SLGBTQ+ community.

<https://www.kerrysplace.org/brave-space-at-kerrys-place/>

CAMH New Report Innovative Practices in Supporting ALC Patients with a Dual Diagnosis

A [new report](#) highlights innovative practices used by hospitals and community organizations across Ontario to support successful hospital-to-community transitions for alternate levels of care (ALC) patients. Organized around the 10 core transition components of the Practice Guidance report, it aims to promote knowledge exchange and facilitate implementation, primarily for health and developmental service providers. Visit the [project website](#) for more information and resources.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Guelph Wellington Family Network

A group of family members and unpaid caregivers supporting an adult with a developmental disability. The Network is peer-based and led by families. The Guelph Wellington Family Network helps build connections and friendships, supports members through networking, education, and socializing and connects members to opportunities, supports, and information.

familynetworkGW@gmail.com

Indwell

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

Qualia Counselling Services

Qualia Counselling Services is accepting new clients at all six locations with no waitlist. Qualia Counselling Services offers counselling sessions, in person and by telehealth, with skilled clinicians. They offer services for children (5+), adults, families and couples. Qualia Counselling Services provides the most evidence-based interventions to help individuals of all ages become their best self. In addition to therapeutic services, Qualia offers a robust selection of professional development courses, workshops, lunch & learns, bootcamps and CBT supervision to professionals. Follow the link provided for further details.

<https://qualiacounselling.com/training/>

Pearson Airport

Pearson Airport has partnered with Autism Ontario and Magnusmode (creator of the Magnus Cards app) to create an activity book to help prepare for travel. The airport also has sunflower lanyards that can be requested to signify the presence of an invisible disability. There are 20 different Magnus Card decks (on phone app) to help navigate aspects of travel. For more Pearson Airport neurodiversity support options, please visit: [Travel tools for autism and other diverse needs | Pearson Airport \(torontopearson.com\)](#).

Information, Opportunities & Resources

HCARDD Updated Website

Explore the newly revamped H-CARDD website to learn how the team has been working together with scientists, clinicians, service providers, policymakers, and people with developmental disabilities to improve the health and health care of adults with developmental disabilities. Here is what you will find on our website:

- [Projects](#) - Get an overview of H-CARDD's projects, including our latest report, [Supporting Alternate Level of Care Patients with a Dual Diagnosis to Transition from Hospital to Home: Practice Guidance](#)
- [Health Care Resources](#) - Access a wealth of resources tailored for health care professionals, family caregivers, and adults with developmental disabilities
- [Knowledge Exchange](#) - Explore easy-to-read summaries, snapshots, reports, newsletters, podcasts, and videos.
- [H-CARDD Blog Posts](#) - Dive into our archive of blog posts spanning from 2014 to the present.

Practice Guidance for ALC Patients

Adults with developmental disabilities who also have a psychiatric condition, often referred to as a dual diagnosis, face a significantly higher risk of becoming Alternate Level of Care (ALC) patients. These individuals no longer require hospital-level care but remain hospitalized due to a lack of suitable community settings. In this report, the H-CARDD team presents a comprehensive set of principles and core components designed to guide and support the successful transition of ALC patients with a dual diagnosis from hospitals to community settings in Ontario. Download our full report and summaries:

[Full Report](#) - [Summary](#) - [French Summary](#) - [Easy Read Version](#)

211

Life can be hard, but finding help is easy. Contact 211 day or night to find support for all of life's challenges. Call toll free at 1-877-330-3213. 211 is free and confidential and offers support in 150+ languages.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Accessibility Services Offered Through the KPL

Borrow a Chromebook

Kitchener Public Library partnered with the City of Kitchener to expand WIFI access in public spaces. Community members can now borrow Chromebooks from the collection to take home for a one-week loan period. The devices are available at all five library locations.

Daisy Reader with Download Content

Daisy readers are intended for customers who are blind, have low vision, or have another form of print disability. KPL recently purchased 15 new Daisy reader machines with enhanced navigation functions for easy use. They've added eight Victor Stratus machines to play Daisy audio discs and digital direct-to-player content through the Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA) digital library. They also have five Victor Stream readers, a smaller pocket-sized device that only plays digital direct-to-player content.

The library has been lending Daisy Readers and Daisy discs for a long time, but this is the first time lending Daisy devices with pre-loaded digital direct-to-player content. Staff can pre-load a mix of about 50 titles of different genres and interests on the Stratus and Stream readers, and the content rotates every few months. Customers can also complete a reading profile, and library staff will load additional digital content that suits their reading interests and preferences on a device for them.

New Yoto Mini Collection

The Yoto Mini is an excellent audio format for young kids. The small audio player plays audiobooks encoded on colourful plastic-coated cards. The Yoto players and accessories are nicely designed, attractive, and easy to use and manipulate. They are for children from birth to 12 years old. They are accessibility friendly for users with print, learning or developmental disabilities. The current collection includes 13 Yoto players, each with a set of audio cards on a different theme.

Visiting Library Service

Visiting Library is a free service that provides monthly delivery of library material to Kitchener residents who cannot visit the library in person.

Visiting Library customers can select their library material by placing holds through the catalogue or have a Visiting Library Selector (volunteer) gather library material based on their DiscoverRead form (reading profile).

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Employment Solution's Developmental Disabilities and Home Care

AO Employment Solution provides individuals living with Developmental Disability with professional personalized care including respite care, personal care, overnight care, and care management services. Learn more at <https://www.aoemploymentsolution.ca/>.

Surrey Place and CAMH – New Online Mental Health Toolkit

The Developmental Disabilities Primary Care Program (DDPCP) at Surrey Place introduces a new toolkit designed to assist physicians in addressing the mental health needs of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). These resources complement the Canadian guidelines on primary care for adults with IDD, filling essential gaps in specialized supports. [View the Mental Health Toolkit here.](#)

2023 Youth Impact Survey Data Briefs and Snapshots

This data brief overviews the 1,867 responses received, covering UNICEF's nine child and youth well-being domains. It offers insights into the post-pandemic well-being of young people in the Waterloo Region. [View the briefs.](#)

2023 Youth Impact Survey Geography Snapshot

This snapshot report separates data by four geographic regions—Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo, and the Townships—to give a more detailed picture of child and youth well-being across the Waterloo Region. [View snapshot.](#) [View Geography deep dive.](#)

2023 Youth Impact Survey Age Snapshot

This snapshot report presents data segmented by three age groups: ages 9 to 12, 13 to 15, and 16 to 18. [View snapshot.](#) [Request the deep dive.](#)

2023 Youth Impact Survey Immigrant Snapshot

This snapshot report compares the experiences of children and youth born in Canada with those not born in Canada, highlighting well-being trends between these groups. [View snapshot.](#) [Request the deep dive.](#)

2023 Youth Impact Survey Gender Identity Snapshot

This snapshot report breaks down data by gender identities—boy, girl, and gender diverse—to provide a detailed picture of child and youth well-being. [View Snapshot.](#) [Request the deep dive.](#)

2023 Youth Impact Survey Sexual Orientation Snapshot

This snapshot report compares the responses of children and youth from various sexual orientations to offer a clearer picture of their well-being. [View the snapshot.](#) [Request the deep dive.](#)

Information, Opportunities & Resources

2023 Youth Impact Survey Experiences of Homelessness

This snapshot compares the responses of children and youth who have experienced homelessness to those who have not. [View the snapshot](#). [Request the deep dive](#).

New 2023 Youth Impact Survey Long-term Physical or Mental Condition Impacts Experiences*

This snapshot explores the responses of children and youth who have experienced a mental or physical condition to those who have not and reflects in their experiences. [View the snapshot](#). [Request the deep dive](#).

Tiny Home Communities: Innovation or Segregation?

With the ongoing housing crisis, several Canadian provinces are developing tiny home communities for vulnerable populations, including people with disabilities. Senior Policy Analyst Rachel Mills explores how these well-intentioned solutions can sometimes lead to harmful outcomes. It's crucial to learn from history and build truly inclusive communities. [Read the full article](#).

Partial Day Attendance in Canadian Schools: an Inclusive Education Canada Roundtable

Inclusive Education Canada held a roundtable discussing the issue of partial day attendance, where students with intellectual disabilities are forced to attend school for only part of the day. This practice disrupts learning and can lead to isolation. The roundtable featured leading experts and Mr. Kelly Lamrock, K.C., the New Brunswick Child and Youth Advocate, who recently released a powerful report titled "A Policy of Giving Up". [Access the report](#) and [watch the roundtable](#).

Re:Action4Inclusion: Empowering Youth for Inclusive Communities

This project from [Community Living Ontario](#) aims to empower youth to take individual and collective action to make schools and communities more inclusive. The goal is to change the Canadian disability narrative and make a real difference. This initiative has empowered thousands of youth across Ontario to become community leaders in their schools and communities. Over 100 provincial events have been hosted to educate youth and continue to reframe their understanding of inclusion. Youth have been provided various platforms to share their lived experiences with community stakeholders. Are you interested in learning more and joining the Youth Advisory Committee? Please complete a Youth Advisory Committee Application 2024 <https://form.jotform.com/241634797390264>. For more details visit (reaction4inclusion.com).

Information, Opportunities & Resources

ConnectABILITY Roommate Matching Webpage

Are you looking for a roommate or want to post your own roommate ad? ConnectABILITY has got you covered! Their roommate matching webpage is a fantastic resource where you can find and post ads that accommodate your specific housing needs. Whether you need a space that's accessible, close to transit, or just a great fit for your lifestyle, ConnectAbility.ca makes it easy to connect with potential roommates in our community. Check it out today and find the perfect match for your housing needs. Visit:

<https://connectability.ca/connected-families/forum/housing/>.

Partners for planning: Update to the Special Services at Home Guidelines

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) has updated the Special Services at Home (SSAH) guidelines to align with CanChild's F-Words in Child Development. Families can now use their SSAH funding flexibly to support their child's interests and development. [Visit the MCCSS website](#) for the new guidelines. P4P has created an [SSAH Overview video and resource page](#) to help families navigate SSAH applications.

Counselling Collaborative of Waterloo Region: Autism Mental Health Support*

Are you a parent of an autistic child or teen or an autistic adult seeking mental health support? The Counselling Collaborative of Waterloo Region is here to help. This collaborative includes five Community Mental Health Agencies in the region, with over 50 therapists offering professional autism-informed therapy. Locations throughout Waterloo Region include Kitchener, Cambridge, Waterloo, Elmira, and New Hamburg. Virtual and telephone appointments are also offered. The central intake can connect individuals with the CCWR agency of choice. Flexible payment options include a sliding scale based on income, insurance benefits, or OAP core funding. Eligibility for other funding may also be discussed during intake. To register for counselling, visit counsellingwr.ca or call 519-884-0000.

Porchlight: Quick Access Counselling*

Porchlight offers single-session Quick Access counselling sessions, letting you get help sooner, when you need it. Because, sometimes, you need a little help, sooner. Call now for your appointment: 519-621-5090 or visit porchlightcnd.org.

Support Groups

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 7:15 pm. Go to 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.

Qualia Counselling Services – New Moms Experiencing Postpartum Anxiety and Depression

Qualia Counselling Services is extremely excited to announce the launch of a brand-new support group for new moms! The support group has an 8-week program designed for New Moms Experiencing Postpartum Anxiety and Depression. This specialty group is for new moms looking for a welcoming space to learn, share, and practice skills and techniques to manage their emotions and thought patterns as they lead a balanced life through their postpartum. For more information, please contact our administration team at info@qualiacounselling.com or [visit our website](#).

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Sawubona Africentric Circle of Support

Sawubona Africentric Circle of Support 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 second and fourth Tuesday of each month from 7 – 8:30 pm via Zoom. There will be guest speakers, resource sharing, support and mentorship opportunities for attendees. Contact: For more details or to register, please contact bpsgroup2020@gmail.com.

South Asian Wellness Group

The South Asian Wellness Group is a drop-in group every Thursday from 6 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. 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.

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!

Virtual Peer Support for Newly-Diagnosed Autistic Women

Researchers are evaluating the impact of participating in a [virtual peer support program](#) on the well-being of newly-diagnosed autistic women. Who can participate? Adults 18 years or older who identify as a woman, have received a formal diagnosis of autism in the last 8 months, and live in Ontario. [See flyer for additional details](#). Questions? Contact Princess Owusu at AWPeerSupport@camh.ca.

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 on the second Thursday of each month. 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 or grohtech@xplornet.com.

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 at rmacdonald@lutherwood.ca.

Street Therapy

Street Therapy is a fee-for-service psychotherapy clinic located at 177 Victoria St. N in Kitchener. Street Therapy will be offering a monthly ADHD support group starting January of 2024. The group will take place virtually on the first Saturday of every month throughout the year. Their goal is to help provide the local ADHD community a safe space to connect with like-minded individuals and encourage access to a neuro-inclusive community. Please see the following link for details.

<https://www.streettherapy.ca/groups/>

Waterloo Wellington Down Syndrome Society Support Group

Mothers Connection is a group supporting Moms with young children with Down syndrome with childcare provided. Go to WWDSS.ca or email info@wwdss.ca for more information.

Centre for ADHD Awareness Canada (CADDAC) Past Webinar Presentations

Are you interested in accessing the recordings of CADDAC's seminars from the live presentations at the 15th Annual ADHD Conference? Please click the link below!

<https://caddac.ca/past-premium-conferences-workshops/>

Information, Opportunities & Resources

CADDAC Support Groups

ADHD Support Groups - Adult ADHD and Parent Support Groups

CADDAC is excited to announce that our ADHD Support groups for both Adults and Parents are now back in session! In addition, we are excited to introduce a new Western Time zone Parent Support Group. You do not need to join the group of the time zone you're in. You can join whichever regional meeting that fits in your schedule. [Learn more and register!](#)

ADHD and Substance Use Disorder Peer-led Support Group

Through these virtual group sessions, participants will receive emotional support and mentorship, critical education about ADHD, and strategies on how to manage some of the core symptoms that have led to substance use. These groups will be offered in different time zones across Canada and will be peer-led by trained Peer Support Facilitators.

<https://caddac.ca/programs-and-events/#support-groups>

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Engagement Opportunities

Vulnerable Persons Alert - Support Bill 74

There is a Bill in front of the Provincial legislature right now called Bill 74 Missing Persons Amendment Act. It proposes to amend the Amber Alert system to add vulnerable people - children and adults with disabilities, adults with dementia, other vulnerabilities. The bill was presented to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy on May 16 for a first reading. You can help push the government to pass this act! Show your support by emailing your MPP and ask them to pass Bill 74. Sign the petition here:

https://www.moniquetaylormpp.ca/vulnerable_persons_alert

Siblings Canada

For Families

Are you a sibling of a person with a disability? Watch the webcast, [Understanding the Experiences of Siblings of People with Disabilities](#). The session sheds light on some of the research Siblings Canada has done on siblings of individuals with neurodevelopmental disabilities, and the challenges, joys, and important roles that siblings play in the lives of their family members with disabilities. After watching the video, you will have the chance to [answer 3 questions to help with the work](#) they do.

For Service Providers

If you work for a community agency, service provider, or disability organization, Siblings Canada wants to learn more about how organizations are including siblings in their programs and services. [If you want to contribute to this research, please consider completing this 5-minute survey.](#)

P4P Planning and Facilitation Collaborative*

The Planning and Facilitation Collaborative (PFC) is live! This space allows professionals and aspiring professionals to share knowledge, experiences, and develop skills through online courses on planning and facilitation. We invite planners and facilitators to join the PFC and help spread the word. For more information, visit this [link](#).

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Community of Hearts

Community of Hearts is looking to add some new programs to its Day Program as well as some new group Evening Programs! They are currently discussing the subject options with participants during the Day Program and would also love caregivers, supports, and participants' who attend other programs feedback! The survey should only take you 2-3 minutes.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3N725XM>

WRDSB

The WRDSB is building a public education system where every student can experience success - but, they can't do it alone! These three new engagement plans will allow them to better hear from the students, families and community members they serve: <https://wrdsb.social/468vSsf>

Azrieli Adult Neurodevelopmental Centre Research Study: Clinical trial of nabilone for severe behavioural problems (aggression) in adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities

The aim of the study is to improve the well-being of adults with developmental disabilities and distressing behaviours through the use of Nabilone medication. Open to adults with a developmental disability, difficulty managing anxiety or frustration, 25 years of age and older.

Phone: 416-535-8501 ext. 32817

Email: n-and@camh.ca or hsiang-yuan.lin@camh.ca.

OMSSA Recreation Providers Survey

This Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA) survey collects baseline information about recreational care availability across Ontario. Results will help identify gaps in provision, staffing and funding across the province.

[Take the OMSSA Recreation Providers Survey here.](#)

Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) Lab at Queen's University

The ASD Lab at Queen's University is running an online study called the Tone of Voice study. We are trying to better understand how youth perceive emotions through tone of voice. We are seeking youth with and without autism between the ages of 13-18 to participate in our study. The study takes about 75 minutes to complete over Zoom with an experimenter, and youth will be compensated \$30 for their time. If you have question or would like to participate, please contact Daniel at tov.study@queensu.ca.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Wilfrid Laurier Research Study: Help us understand the pathways to ASD diagnosis*

Wilfrid Laurier researchers are looking for parents of children who have obtained, or attempted to obtain, an autism diagnosis for their child in Canada. We are looking for parents of children who have, or have attempted to, obtain an autism diagnosis for their child in Canada, and are willing to share information about their experience. If you are interested. 18+ years of age and agree to participate you will be asked to provide information about when you first suspected your child might be autistic, the steps you took trying to obtain a diagnosis, resources that were helpful and unhelpful, as well as provide information about your child's autistic traits. Information will be gathered through a secure online survey that takes 15-45 minutes (depending on the length of your responses) to complete. Upon completion, you will be entered into a draw for a \$50 gift card. For more information about this study, or to volunteer for this study, please contact: Dr. Nichole Scheerer at diagnosispathways@gmail.com This research has been approved by the Research Ethics Board at Laurier REB #8510 This research is being conducted by Dr. Nichole Scherer.

Safety for Independent Living*

This course is a personal safety program designed to empower participants with life skills that help them make safe choices and respectful decisions in their daily lives, both online and offline. The course covers essential topics such as Basic First Aid, Fire Safety, Emergency vs. Non-Emergency situations, Being Assertive, Bullying, People Safety, Getting Help, Tricky People, Safe Strangers, and Online & Road Safety. Course sessions are available virtually and will be held via Zoom on November 4-7, 2024 (10 am - 12 pm). The cost for virtual sessions is \$30.00, while the in-person session is \$55.00 (lunch included), with Passport Funding admissible. For virtual participants, course materials will be delivered or mailed prior to the start date.

For more information, contact Ashlyn Northfield, Passport Community Developer, at anorthfield@cwsds.ca

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Queens University Study – Caregiver Stigma Experiences

This study aims to better understand the impact that stigma can have on caregivers of autistic children. This study involves five questionnaires which will take about 45-60 minutes for you to complete. Looking for primary caregivers of autistic children to participate. Must be fluent in English. Please email asd@queensu.ca to participate.

Karis Disability Services – Host Families Needed

We are looking for caring families and individuals: please consider sharing and welcoming a person with a disability into your home. In addition to personal rewards, as a Host Family you will receive ongoing training and support from professional staff and non-taxable financial remuneration. Part-time (respite) host families are always welcome to apply!

E-mail: gwfamilyhome@christian-horizons.org

<https://christianhorizons.org/host-family-services/>

Federal Survey Re: Registered Disability Savings Plans

The federal government is currently hosting a survey on Registered Disability Savings Plans. If you or a relative have an RDSP, we would encourage you to complete the survey, which can be found here: www.pra.ca/SurveyCDSP.

Shared Picture Book Study

Wilfrid Laurier University Department of Psychology invites parents/caregivers of children age 3-5 years to participate in a “shared picture book study.” During the one-hour sessions, parents will do a survey and children will engage in literacy games with the researcher. Parents will take home picture books to explore together with their child in between sessions. Commitment time: five (5) in-person sessions 3-4 weeks apart. If you have any questions, please email Katie Reid at reid4150@mylaurier.ca.

ADHD Community Needs Assessment Survey

CADDAC is looking to expand its programs and services in Canada, and would like to get a better understanding of how to support individuals living with ADHD and their families. Please take a few minutes to fill out this survey. Those who complete the survey will be entered into a draw to win 1 of 3 \$50 Amazon gift cards!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JFHP55X>

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Barriers for Participation in Physical Activity Study

You're invited to participate in an online survey to help a Wilfrid Laurier University PhD student gain valuable insights into the topic, barriers and facilitators of physical activity among adults with intellectual disabilities. Feedback will be used to identify resources, tools, or program needs to promote physical activity of this population in subsequent study.

If as a caregiver (parent, guardian, friend, and relative) you are an adult over the age of 18, free from intellectual disabilities, provide care, and are knowledgeable about the daily patterns of an adult aged 18-64 with an intellectual disability and are interested, you would complete an online survey (about 15-25 minutes) about demographics, physical activity levels of the person with intellectual disabilities, and the physical activity barriers and facilitators you perceive adults with intellectual disabilities experience. This study has been approved by Wilfrid Laurier University's Research Ethics Board (REB#8659).

https://wlu.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_d6m5iWuZ5QajCHc

Please feel free to contact the facilitator, Hashem, at faal8600@mylaurier.ca if you have any questions/concerns.

University of Windsor: Parenting Behaviours Study*

You are invited to take part in a research study: The Relationship Between Parenting Behaviours and Parental Characteristics on Children's Emotion Regulation. You will be entered for a chance to win one of six \$50 gift cards to Amazon or redeem a \$5 electronic gift card for completing a survey. Please email parentchildstudy@uwindsor.ca to complete the survey. For more information about the study, please email the principal investigator, Lerna Hanceroglu, at parentchildstudy@uwindsor.ca or call 519-253-3000 (ext.2219).

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Community of Hearts Social Committee - Call for Members

Community of Hearts invites individuals to join their Social Committee this fall to help plan and host inclusive social events for adults with disabilities in Guelph. If you have a disability, support someone with a disability, or want to assist in creating engaging community activities, this is a beautiful opportunity to get involved. Members will receive a \$50 honorarium for attending all four meetings, which will take place on the first Tuesday of each month from 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM: September 3rd, October 1st, November 5th, and December 3rd. Meetings will be held at the Community of Hearts Lifelong Learning Centre, located inside Old Quebec St Mall, 55 Wyndham St N, T28, Guelph, ON. Refreshments will be provided. For more information or to join, contact info@communityofhearts.ca or call 519-826-9056

CAMH: Azrieli Neurodevelopment Centre Brain Health-IDD Study

The Brain Health-IDD virtual education programs will be offered again this fall. These programs are open to the following individuals:

- [Adults with a developmental disability aged 40 years and older](#)
- [Family caregivers aged 60 years and older caring for an adult with IDD OR caregivers \(any age\) of an adult with IDD aged 40 years and older](#)
- [Health and social service providers support adults aged 40 years and older with IDD.](#)

For more information, email brainhealthIDD@camh.ca.

Volunteer Opportunities with LDAWC

If you're looking to make a meaningful difference in a child's life, the Learning Disabilities Association of Wellington County (LDAWC) offers several rewarding volunteer positions. Volunteers will gain valuable experience working with children with suspected or diagnosed learning disabilities, earn volunteer hours, and receive graduate school reference letters. Training and supplies are provided.

Reading Rocks

A literacy support program that focuses on improving the reading skills of children with learning disabilities. Volunteers can work one-on-one with a child to help them progress on their literacy journey. For more details or to apply, contact ldwacrr@gmail.com or call 519-837-2050.

Information, Opportunities & Resources

Executive Skills

A program that helps children develop essential executive functioning skills such as planning, organizing, and time management. Volunteers will work closely with children to enhance these skills in a fun, supportive environment. For more information, contact ldawcexecutiveskills@gmail.com or call 519-837-2050.

SOAR

A program is designed to support children in developing their social and organizational skills. Volunteers can help children build confidence and practical skills to navigate their academic and social environments. To apply, contact LDAWCSOAR@gmail.com or call 519-837-2050.

For more information about these volunteer opportunities, visit www.ldawc.ca.

Spectrum Events Calendar and More

Check out the [Rainbow Community Calendar](#), where you'll find details on SPECTRUM's groups and events. This is also your clearinghouse of 2SLGBTQIA+ events in Waterloo Region.

QRIB Hangouts

Come join the QRIB community hangouts, where Queer, Racialized, Indigenous, and Black individuals foster a home away from home! In collaboration with the Willow River Centre, Spectrum's BRIQ House hosts get-togethers with refreshments (ex., Karaoke, bonfires, etc). The events are free though capped at 30 people, so we recommend RSVPing! All allies are welcome and encouraged to donate (ex. \$5) to the Willow River Centre to support safer queer racialized spaces locally. [RSVP here](#).

Recruiting Board Members

Spectrum is looking for individuals with the following experience or skills: finance and accounting, IT, legal and liability, or governance. This is a great opportunity to network and build connections within the community.

They strive for their board to match their community as fully as possible. Therefore, they are especially interested in hearing from candidates who identify as non-binary and/or Black, Indigenous, or Racialized. If you are interested, visit [here](#).

Information, Opportunities & Resources

News

Inclusion Canada: Canada Disability Benefit - Hear From Those It Impacts

Inclusion Canada is disappointed by the federal budget's allocation of a maximum of only \$200 per month for the new Canada Disability Benefit (CDB). This amount falls significantly short of what the community recommended and is insufficient to meet the needs of people with disabilities living in poverty. A social media campaign featuring several board members expressing their concerns about the CDB has been launched. Explore their opinions through the video series and check out the updated policy brief for detailed insights. [Access the vision and design for the CDB](#) and the [French version here](#).

H-CARDD Holds First Annual Brain Health-IDD Summit

The Brain Health-IDD team recently held its first annual summit, gathering 52 participants from six provinces, including scientists, clinicians, people with disabilities, and family caregivers. Attendees learned about virtual education programs for self-advocates, families, and [service providers funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research \(CIHR\) in partnership with the Azrieli Foundation and its Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence](#). Program teachers shared valuable lessons on aging, caregivers' challenges, and those they care for.

The summit also introduced the second [Brain Health-IDD study](#), funded by the same brain health initiative and conducted in collaboration with nine community agencies across Canada. This study aims to enhance the spread and scale of an IDD dementia screening program.

Next year's summit is eagerly anticipated. Stay tuned for upcoming Communities of Practice sessions, where brain health and aging topics will be explored in-depth-

CARDD Team at IASSIDD 2024 World Congress

The H-CARDD team will present their work to the global intellectual disability research community at the IASSIDD 2024 World Congress in Chicago. To stay updated, follow the hashtag #iassidd2024 on social media.