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Durham Family Resources

FAMILY *focus*

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

Brimming With Possibility - A Look Ahead at 2025!

Happy New Year! Our calendar is filling up as we plan for a year chalk full of possibilities - new and familiar! We've heard from families like you about what is on your mind, have taken what you have shared and, together, we will build on those ideas and questions and find opportunities to explore, learn and connect with one another. We are curious and excited for the year ahead!

With your pen poised over those pristine new calendar pages, here are some details, dates, and other information you may want to jot down...

Seizing New Opportunities

DFR staff have already traveled to Nova Scotia to teach and/or participate in **Michael Kendrick's Optimal Individual Service Design Course**, which focuses on designing highly individualized optimal home and lifestyle supports for people with disabilities. With this opportunity came an invitation for Janet, Selena and Laura to meet, teach, and learn from local families and family groups that are walking the same road of building a good life for and with their family members. The conversations were rich with ideas, thoughtful questions, and excitement about what could be possible. We will take what we have learned from these experiences and share it with families closer to home.

That famous question that comes with all great trips is, "are we there yet." Yes, we are ALMOST there! For months, we have been sharing the trip we've been on to design our **new recruitment and matching website**. Our destination has been to design a user-friendly website that is more comprehensive and responsive to family's needs, and that reaches out to a broader community of people who might offer support. We have shared this journey of design with you, and listened to your past experiences with the former website, hearing what could be better. Your insights have been crucial to our design, as well as those of the family Advisory Committee.

We are thrilled to announce that the design of the new site is complete. Development has started and will take place over the next couple of months. During this time, the Advisory Committee continues to meet and gear up for the official launch in the Spring.

Ongoing Family Learning

This year promises to offer all of those regular family learning meetings that you attended last year or that maybe you have on your list of things to do this year. Dare we say they'll be brimming over with good conversation, interesting topics, and timely information that is relevant and very useful to you and your family. Circle your calendar with the monthly meetings for Imagining Home, Bio-Medical, Next Generation and the MTM Study Group. They will continue to meet on their regular days and times.

Parents of school-aged children will want to mark their calendar for [Springing into Possibilities](#) - there is no better way to begin this year of opportunity! Springing into Possibilities is a three-part learning series via Zoom, that provides an opportunity for families to come together in conversation and learn from one another about how to grow those important neighbourhood connections and explore new interests that may lead to lifelong passions. At the end of this series, you will have some new ideas, strategies and the confidence to plan those next steps. January 23, 2025, February 6, 2025, and February 20, 2025, from 6:45 – 8:45 PM via Zoom.

You will want to flip the calendar to April because our [Making the Most Weekend Retreat](#) is back – April 25 to 27th, 2025! For over 10 years, we have offered the Making the Most Family Learning Series to families as a six-week interactive workshop. Over the years, many families who have participated in this workshop described the series as a key learning opportunity, that helped them shift the way they were fundamentally thinking about planning; putting them on a path of planning for a life that reflects interests, hopes and dreams, and one that utilizes their family member's funding as one of *many* tools to help them build and support that life. One of the underlying reasons for this series' success is that it is co-led by mentoring parents who have real, practical experience, from years of planning with their family members to build a good ordinary life.

We understand that not all families can commit to a six-week series and some people prefer a more concentrated learning experience. Therefore, we have been offering a weekend Making the Most Retreat for families to come out for a weekend learning event instead. This has been a wonderful experience for those who have participated. It is hosted at the beautiful Elmhirst Resort in Keene Ontario (Just south of Peterborough). Not only will you feel a bit pampered, but this is an amazing opportunity to learn and engage in conversations and connect with other parents on a similar path as you, that will be incredibly useful to you as you plan. You will walk away with some good ideas, new strategies, a plan, great tips and some next steps.

Twice a year, Janet Klees facilitates her foundational **Building a Context for Relationship** workshop. This one-day interactive workshop has become a highly sought-after learning opportunity for those involved with planning and supporting a person to be a fuller member of their community and who need a practical approach that works. This workshop is grounded in Social Role Valorization (SRV) principles and combines a good, principled framework with a practical, straightforward approach for bringing about the two elements that will make the most significant difference in people's lives: valued roles and relationships. Keep a look out for this opportunity, we'll post it here in the newsletter.

At the end of the day, one of the most powerful tools that we all possess is storytelling; a tool that can teach and mentor others, that we can learn from, that reassures us of the steadiness of our next step, that will awaken the imagination for more or better. We know we have powerful stories to tell that have inspired others and ourselves to take that next step, and we know there is an art to telling that story well. Good storytelling delivers more than just the facts, it reveals what is real, human, subtle, and intentional, helping the listener to see the possibilities. Janet Klees will present a beloved but not often presented workshop this year, **Putting into Words: Telling the Stories of our Hearts**. Details and dates to follow.

Growing From a Solid Foundation

The 8th International [Social Role Valorization \(SRV\) Conference](#) is being held in Halifax, Nova Scotia on May 7 – 9th, 2025. SRV is an integral part of Durham Family Resources' vision and principles, and how we plan and carry out our work with families and the broader community. Families use the principles that SRV provides as guideposts as they walk the path of designing and implementing highly individualized lifestyle plans. These experiences of working with the principles in everyday life provide not only great learning, but powerful real-life stories of the possibilities and impact of SRV in action, to help someone shape the good things in their life.

The SRV Conference is a fantastic opportunity for us to share what we have learned through the work we do together, and for us to learn from people from other communities around the world. We have offered three presentations to the conference, with a focus on Recognizing Capacity, Home and Housing, and Young Families.

In the spirit of seizing opportunities, if you have been involved with us around any of these topics and are interested in putting your name forward for this amazing opportunity to share and learn, please [email us](#). We will be inviting five families to join us on this learning adventure.

If you're scratching your head, wondering about the term SRV and how it influences the work of DFR, watch out for a March date for our [What's at Our Table](#) event. We put a lot of intention into creating an experience that provides an opportunity to understand the vision and principles that guide Durham Family Resources as an organization, as well as learning about the various ways we work with families throughout the Durham Region. This is an opportunity to engage with our unique resources and chat with our staff team who hold the various roles that represent our organization and the work happening here at DFR. At this event, you will hear how SRV is woven into all aspects of the work we do, and have an opportunity to ask questions about our SRV foundation, principles, and other SRV learning events.

Check Out These Housing Related Federal Tax Savings for 2024 Tax Year

Imagining Home will meet back up in February. Details will come in the February newsletter. In the meantime, as tax season rolls around again, here are some housing related tax savings that you may be eligible to claim on your taxes this year! Click [HERE](#) to learn more.

**IMAGINING HOME MEETING • WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 12, 2025
• 6:30PM • IN PERSON**

CONTACT ERIN FOR DETAILS (EOREILLY@DAFRS.COM)

Come join the conversation! Long time and new families alike, everyone has something to gain and something to offer. Each month at Imagining Home, we engage with anything “housing, home and community” and enjoy critical discussion, sharing stories, learning and often having a good laugh among respectful and supportive people! Families bring a wealth of experience and knowledge and are ready to share and support others along their journey. All are welcome to attend and participate in Imagining Home when we meet on the second Wednesday of each month.

If you are new to the group and would like to attend Imagining Home for the first time, we'd ask that you first contact Erin at eoireilly@dafers.com to arrange an introductory call.





Families are Springing into Possibilities



The last few years have been challenging in lots of ways, and yet there have also been some good things happening for many families of school-aged children and youth!

Join us this January - February for an online, interactive, 3-part mini-series, where we will come together to talk about what is possible in our neighbourhoods and hear stories from other parents on how they have supported their children to continue to explore new interests.

At the end of the series you will leave with ideas, strategies, and confidence to plan for a summer full of discovery, and fun!

Three Evenings of Learning:

- 1 Thursday January 23, 2025
- 2 Thursday February 6, 2025
- 3 Thursday February 20, 2025

6:45 – 8:45 p.m. via Zoom

For more information contact Karen at 905 436 2500 x 2309 or kahudson@dafsr.com

Register Here for your Zoom link!

Run in partnership with



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FAMILY RESOURCES AND SUPPORT
• One Person at a Time • Together With Families •



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Making the Most

**Weekend
* Retreat ***

**April 25 - 27,
2025**



Families throughout the Region of Durham are invited to participate in an innovative and interactive workshop that will support in re-imagining opportunities and real options for their family member. The heart of the series is to move beyond traditional uses for funding, to plan for a life that reflects interests, hopes and dreams.

The workshop is co-led by mentoring parents who engage in useful conversations and share their experiences in planning and creating opportunities. These conversations highlight simple choices that families can make to discover ordinary, yet significant ways for family members to be involved in their neighbourhood and community.

This workshop will take place at Elmhirst 's Resort, Keene, Ontario

Beginning early Friday evening on April 25, running through until Sunday afternoon on April 27.

Accommodation is included for Friday and Saturday night along with all meals and refreshments

Course fee \$100 per person
 (subsidies available if needed)

For more information contact
 Laura, lpowell@dafrrs.com or
 at 905 436 2500 ext. 2312

Making the most of your time, energy and money to
 achieve a good life for your family member



Next Generation Meetup

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

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

Join us!

Thursday February 6th @ 7-8pm, Thursday March 6 @ 7-8pm, Thursday April 3rd @ 7-8pm

Email Rosanne at: rpurnwasie@dafrs.com

BioMedical Approaches Returns in February

The Biomedical group will be back at it in February with more conversations and exploration of those things that bring health and a greater sense of well-being to our lives.

Everyone is welcome to attend and participate in the Bio-Medical Approaches Study Group. We usually engage with anything "Bio-Medical" and so families talk about all the approaches, alternatives, and strategies that we have found, are being pushed into, have discovered online and more! We have a wide circle of families who are ready to share their vast experience and together we sometimes are able to help each member make better sense of the options and choices that surround them.

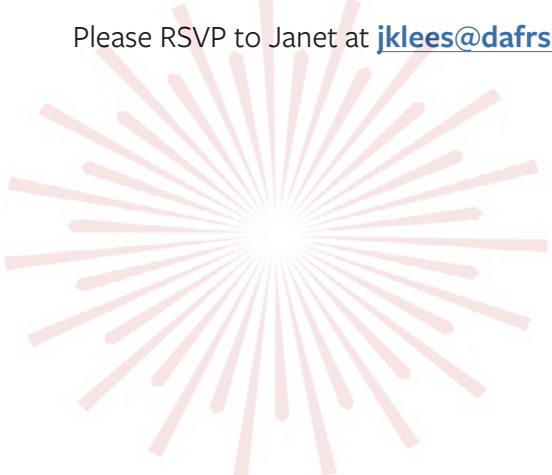
The group meets monthly and is open and welcoming to new and past participants! We usually meet on the second Friday of each month at 10 am for about an hour to an hour and a half.

Please RSVP to Janet at jklees@dafrs.com if you'd like to attend!

**BIOMEDICAL
STUDY GROUP**

**FRIDAY,
FEB 14, 2025**

10 AM - 11:30 AM



Monthly Making the Most Study Group

The Making the Most Study Group is a fantastic opportunity for those who have completed the series to continue their learning and take some next steps in developing valued roles and relationships with a loved one.

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

The meeting is open to anyone who has attended the 6-part Making the Most learning series or a MTM Weekend Retreat and wishes to join the conversation. Contact Laura Ippowell@dafrs.com for more information.

We are looking forward to seeing everyone online again on Monday, January 27th, at 6:30 pm via Zoom.



MAKING THE MOST STUDY GROUP

For more info contact Laura at
lppowell@dafrs.com

Important Dates At-A-Glance!

Springing Into Possibilities

Jan 23, Feb 6, Feb 20

Making the Most Study Group

Jan 27 @ 6:30pm

Next Gen Meetup

Feb 6 @ 7pm

Bio Medical Study Group

Feb 14th @ 10am

Making the Most Weekend Retreat

Apr 25-27th

For more information, please visit our website, www.dafrs.com, and see the “Upcoming Events” tab.

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

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