

# Programs and Services Supporting Ontario's Young Carers

Prepared by The Change Foundation  
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## **WHO ARE WE?**

The Alzheimer Society of Toronto offers support, information, and education to people with dementia, their families, and their caregivers. They also have a mandate to raise awareness about dementia and promote research related to dementia.

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## **WHAT MOTIVATED OUR FOCUS ON YOUNG CARERS?**

A staff of the social work team at Alzheimer Society of Toronto was a young carer herself and wanted to start a program that focuses on young carers. Young carers in the other existing groups also expressed that they felt that they did not fit in with older participants in the other supports groups that Alzheimer Society of Toronto was holding. Hence, the Young Carers Meetup was created as a special program that is a part of the Alzheimer Society of Toronto's work.

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## **WHO DO WE SERVE?**

In 2016, Alzheimer Society of Toronto's Young Carers Meetup program supported 20 young carers between the ages of 16 and 35 from Toronto, including Etobicoke, Scarborough, and North York. These young carers are those who are supporting a parent or other family member, such as grandparent, living with dementia. There is an observed need for a specific group for older young carers between the ages of 25 and 35.

## WHAT DO WE PROVIDE?

Referrals to the Young Carers Meetup can be from anyone. A simple intake process is conducted to understand what the young carer needs.

**Young Carers Meetup** meets six times a year, every other month. Three of these meetings are exclusively online, and the other three meetings are in-person with the option of joining online or over the phone. The meetings help young carers learn to process their emotions, respond in difficult situations, and maintain relationships with their other family members. There are discussions about self-care, education, exploring personal strengths, and accessing resources (including dementia-specific education and caregiver strategies).

## PRIMARY CONTACT

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# FAMILY ASSOCIATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH EVERYWHERE (FAME)



## WHO ARE WE?

The Family Association for Mental Health Everywhere (FAME), originally named the Family Association for Mental Health Etobicoke, was founded and incorporated by a group of families supporting unwell loved ones in Etobicoke in 1989. The Toronto Central and Central West Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs), the United Way of Peel Region, and charitable donations fund FAME and its programs.

## WHAT MOTIVATED OUR FOCUS ON YOUNG CARERS?

FAME recognized early on that children needed education and support at early ages to understand their family member's or loved one's mental illness. Hence, they developed fameShare in 1999. FAMEkids was developed later. As children and youth were accessing FAMEkids services, it became apparent that an increasing number of young people under the age of 18 were the primary caregivers of their loved ones. With these vast responsibilities, FAME identified the need for these young carers to receive acknowledgement and support required for self-care, hope, and resilience.

## WHO DO WE SERVE?

FAME supports families and caregivers who have a loved one with a mental health concern. Programs are tailored for specific age groups: children (ages 7 to 12), youth (ages 13 to 17), and adults (ages 18 and up). FAME offices are located throughout the Greater Toronto Area in Mississauga, Brampton, Orangeville, Bolton, Rexdale, Etobicoke, North York, Toronto, and Scarborough, but there are no catchment areas.

## HOW ARE WE CONNECTED TO OUR COMMUNITY ?

FAME partners with many other local community agencies, including: the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), The Hospital for Sick Children (including Hincks Dellcrest Centre), and the George Hull Centre for Children and Families.

# FAMILY ASSOCIATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH EVERYWHERE (FAME)



## WHAT DO WE PROVIDE?

FAME programs and services can be accessed through an open-referral process; these are commonly from the Children's Aid Society, hospitals, school boards, community mental health agencies, and family self-referrals. An intake process is conducted on or before the first session begins. No fee or identification is required to access services.

Group support programs are tailored to specific age ranges, where developmental age takes precedent over biological age. Program facilitators also consider participants' varying degrees of contact and caring responsibility for their loved ones.

Program evaluations are conducted using participants' evaluations at the end of group programming. Anonymous service evaluations are also sent out to clients quarterly.

**Individual Support** services provide confidential, client-led supportive counselling. Available at any satellite office, these services help children: learn about mental illness, identify and express feelings, explore healthy coping strategies, develop effective communication strategies, develop personal support networks, develop resiliency, and develop an operational action plan. Individual support is provided on an as-needed basis.

**FAMEkids Group Support** is a 10-week, closed-group program for children ages 7 to 12. A therapeutic approach is used to introduce the topic of mental illness. Children have the opportunity to explore and share their experiences in a peer-supported environment.

**Youth Group** is a closed-group program that runs for four sessions for youth ages 13 to 17. It is a specialized psychoeducational program that provides education and equips youth with coping skills and peer support, while focusing on personal mental health. Topics include: stigma, empathy, recover process, addictions concerns, and risk and protective factors.

## PRIMARY CONTACT

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# GILDA'S CLUB GREATER TORONTO



## **WHO ARE WE?**

Gilda's Club Greater Toronto, which opened in 2001, is part of a greater network of Gilda's Clubs, the first of which opened in New York City in 1995. This was in honour of legendary comedian Gilda Radner of Saturday Night Live who had visited a cancer support community while she was living with cancer. She hoped that anyone who experiences what she experienced, would be able to access that kind of community. Donations and charitable events fund Gilda's Club Greater Toronto.

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## **WHAT MOTIVATED OUR FOCUS ON YOUNG CARERS?**

During intake and programming with adults and families, Gilda's Club Greater Toronto observed that families were expressing that their children had specific questions and concerns and wanted answers. This inspired staff to create a space where children and youth affected by cancer could learn about cancer, developing coping skills, and connect with other youth who have or have had similar experiences.

A 20's and 30's caregiver group was started because members in that age range shared that they did not feel they were able to connect to the same topics that were being shared in the other support groups. These young adult caregivers are often navigating other milestones, such as graduate, new careers, relationships, and family planning. So, a group was created to bring this group together.

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## **WHO DO WE SERVE?**

Each year, Gilda's Club Greater Toronto serves approximately 100 young carers between the ages of 4 and 30 from the Greater Toronto Area. These young carers are caring for a family or loved one with cancer.

# GILDA'S CLUB GREATER TORONTO



## WHAT DO WE PROVIDE?

Referrals to Gilda's Club Greater Toronto can be from anyone, including self-referrals. An intake process takes place at the Gilda's Club Greater Toronto clubhouse, and it allows new members to meet with program staff, receive a tour of the clubhouse, and discuss their participation in one of the support groups.

Participants complete pre- and post-evaluation surveys as part of the organization's program evaluation.

**Kids Talk Out** and **Kids Grieve Too** each run three times a year in the fall, winter, and spring for children between the ages of 4 and 12. Both programs are facilitated by mental health professionals, and guided by a 10-week curriculum that includes discussions about: coping skills, cancer and/or death, worries, fears, and resiliency.

**Teen Programming** runs three times a year in the fall, winter, and spring for youth between the ages of 13 and 18. Through recording podcasts and video, the program aims to build self-esteem, community, and provide an opportunity for self-expression.

**The 20's and 30's Caregiver Group** runs twice a month throughout the year. It is a support group facilitated by mental health professionals on topics including: challenges of caregiving, coping skills and self-care, relationships, and navigating increasing responsibilities.

**March Break and Summer Camps** combine play and camp activities with creative ways to learn about feelings, coping skills, and building resiliency. Both the March Break and Summer Camps are divided to target specific age groups. The teen group (ages 14 to 18) of the summer camp have the opportunity to learn how to use their natural leadership abilities in other settings and provides them with 40 hours of community service.

## PRIMARY CONTACT

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## WHO ARE WE?

Heart House Hospice provides grief and bereavement support and support to dying patients and families, including caregivers and children, in their homes so that people can receive end-of-life care at home. Heart House Hospice also leads the Children and Youth Grief Network (CYGN) and runs the Helping Us Understand Grief (H.U.U.G.) Program.

## WHAT MOTIVATED OUR FOCUS ON YOUNG CARERS?

In the beginning, an informal collaborative group started to discuss the lack of support to families and children living with dying, death, and grief. These discussions highlighted the impact of grief on the household, the family, and parents. Through the data that Heart House Hospice was collecting, the organization realized that existing services were identifying over 100 to 150 palliative patients with children and youth in the home receiving no formal supports. Hence, the H.U.U.G. Program was initiated at Heart House Hospice, and developed and supported by members of the informal collaborative group (which is now a formal collaborative group known as the CYGN). In its first year, the Community Foundation of Mississauga's Pendle Fund funded the H.U.U.G. Program. Currently, it is funded through a three-year grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, community donations, and fundraising efforts.

## WHO DO WE SERVE?

The H.U.U.G. Program has actively supported 380 children and youth since the program started in 2015. Specifically, these children and youth are living with the dying or the death of an immediate family member or primary caregiver, or they are facing death themselves. Heart House Hospice and the H.U.U.G. Program serve clients from the Regions of Peel and Halton, which includes: Brampton, Mississauga, Acton, Georgetown, Oakville, Burlington, and Milton.

## WHAT DO WE PROVIDE?

Children and youth access the H.U.U.G. through internal and external referrals. Internal referrals come from hospice counsellors who identify children and/or youth in the home who might need support. External referrals come from schools, hospitals, community organizations, Child and Family Services, health care providers, or the families themselves.

The internal or external referee completes a referral form that is passed to a counsellor from the H.U.U.G. Program. The counsellor contacts the individual within two business days, or within 24 hours if the issue seems urgent.

In general, support provided is focused on the caregiving role and coping with the emotions experienced as a caregiver. Conversations are tailored to the individual's needs and concerns.

Heart House Hospice requests parents, children, and youth to complete pre- and post-surveys as part of their program evaluation and as part of their funding requirements from the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

**The H.U.U.G. Program** is a short-term program that happens over six to eight sessions for anticipatory grief and four to six weeks for bereavement. These sessions are scheduled weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly depending on the families' needs. Therapeutic elements and theories are used to understand how each individual grieves and experiences the grieving process. Young carers are also taught to recognize grief in themselves as well as others, and to develop coping strategies to manage and identify their support systems. Since the H.U.U.G. Program runs on a one-to-one basis, children and youth are seen individually in their homes. Siblings can be seen in a group or individually.

## PRIMARY CONTACT

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# HOSPICE TORONTO & YOUNG CARERS PROGRAM



## WHO ARE WE?

Hospice Toronto started as a non-profit organization whose primary service was volunteer-based in-home hospice and palliative care. Over the years, it has evolved to include a primary focus on caregiver support

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## WHAT MOTIVATED OUR FOCUS ON YOUNG CARERS?

Hospice Toronto has provide support for children living with family members with life-limiting illnesses since 1998. Increasingly observed was the number of children who were in active caregiving roles, assuming responsibilities that impacted their social and school lives. At an innovations event in 2008, Dena Maule, Executive Director of Hospice Toronto, learned about the Young Carers Program in the Niagara region from Marge Dempsey and Sylvia Baago. She then connected with Jenny Frank from the Children's Society in the U.K. In 2009, she applied for funding through a call from the Social Development Partnership branch of Service Canada, and succeeded in securing funding to develop both a local (urban) model for Young Carers and a "tool kit" that other communities could use. Hospice Toronto continues to work with the Children's Society.

The Young Carers Program is currently funded by Mackenzie Investments Charitable Foundation, Ontario Trillium Foundation, RBC Foundation, and TD Securities Underwriting Hope. The Young Carers Program has been selected as a 2016 Vital Youth/Playing for Keeps Grant Recipient; this award is provided through the Vital Toronto Fund at the Toronto Foundation.

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## WHO DO WE SERVE?

Hospice Toronto currently supports 302 families and 167 young carers between the ages of 5 and 21 from Toronto and the Greater Toronto Area. These young carers are in a caregiving role for a parent, grandparent, sibling, or any relative with a chronic or life-threatening illness, disability, addiction, mental health challenge, or language barrier.

# HOSPICE TORONTO & YOUNG CARERS PROGRAM



## WHAT DO WE PROVIDE?

Referrals to the Young Carers Program can be from anyone. A formal in-home assessment is then conducted, and the young carer is invited to visit the program to see if it fits their needs and interests.

A yearly review is conducted with families about programs and services. A monthly program review is conducted with the clinical team to assess the effectiveness of programming and themes delivered to young carers. Young carers are also asked to give their feedback following each group session.

**The Young Carers Program** runs twice a month. One session is a recreational peer support-based program in the community, and the other session is a therapeutic activity that focuses on life skills and emotional well-being. Therapeutic elements are incorporated in the sessions, focusing on building resiliency and coping skills and on building relationships with peers to reduce isolation. Children and youth are split into three age groups, depending on maturity and group sizes. There is also specific siblings programming that target the high population of young carers who care for a sibling in their families.

**Therapeutic skill-based programs** are offered each month, focusing on stress reduction, life skills, leadership, and emotional well-being. **March Break Camp, Summer Camp, and Mentorship Training Camp** are offered throughout the year.

**The Leaders in Training program** is offered four times a year to young carers between the ages of 12 and 18. The program focuses on leadership skills development, mentoring, and advocacy. Young carers who complete this program receive a Level 1 and Level 2 certification, depending on their age.

**The Photovoice program** is a five-week program that gives young carers an opportunity to share their stories through photography.

## PRIMARY CONTACT

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# PHILIP AZIZ CENTRE & EMILY'S HOUSE



## WHO ARE WE?

Philip Aziz Centre began in 1995 as a hospice for individuals living with AIDS. Within several years, they expanded their care to those living with any life-threatening illness. Soon after that, services expanded to further support the special and diverse needs of children and families. This included building a children's hospice known as Emily's House. Emily's House is a 10-bed hospice that offers integrated respite and pediatric palliative care in a professional home-like, child friendly, and safe setting.

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## WHAT MOTIVATED OUR FOCUS ON YOUNG CARERS?

Through supporting various people in the HIV community, the Philip Aziz Centre noticed that many children were feeling the pressure and burden of being caregivers in the home and needed support exclusively for themselves.

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## WHO DO WE SERVE?

The organization currently serves 58 young carers in Toronto between the ages of 0 and 18 years old. The young carer population consists of siblings to a child or youth with a life-limiting or terminal illness and healthy children who have a parent or guardian living with a life-limiting or terminal illness.

# PHILIP AZIZ CENTRE & EMILY'S HOUSE



## WHAT DO WE PROVIDE?

Young carers must have a referral to access services at Philip Aziz Centre and Emily's House. These referrals may come from any member of the young carer's support system or care team, such as: social workers, doctors, nurses, care coordinators, family, and friends.

The intake process begins with a phone call to the young carer or their family explaining to them the Philip Aziz Centre and Emily's House and its services. A Case Manager will then meet with the individual in person to assess their needs of support.

Since the young carer programs are provided on a one-on-one basis, the frequency of the programming depends on the individual's needs. All programming consists of play therapy, music and art therapy, and grief support, to teach resiliency and coping skills. Resources are provided for medical and disease education, if requested.

**The Community-Based Hospice Care Program** sends trained and screened volunteers to go out to provide respite for siblings and other family members whose child has a terminal or life-limiting illness. These volunteers spend time with both the sick and healthy child, providing musical therapy, therapeutic play, homework help, practical help, companionship, psychosocial support, and (anticipatory) grief and bereavement. The psychosocial component provides an opportunity for a break from caring for their sick loved one, or a break from dealing with the emotional issues surrounding the illness.

**The End-of-Life Hospice Care Program** connects staff and volunteers with siblings to provide them with psychosocial support, recreational programming, therapeutic play, music therapy, camps, one-on-one support, anticipatory grief counselling, and spiritual care.

## PRIMARY CONTACT

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## WHO ARE WE?

Roger Neilson House is a non-profit, 8-bed pediatric palliative care hospice located in Ottawa, Ontario on the campus of the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario. The Ottawa community and large supporters such as the Ottawa Senators Foundation and the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, fund the programs and services offered at Roger Neilson House.

## WHAT MOTIVATED OUR FOCUS ON YOUNG CARERS?

Roger Neilson House began providing bereavement support services to siblings over 11 years ago, but the Spectacular Incredible Brave Siblings (SIBS) Program only started running three years ago in 2014. The SIBS program at Roger Neilson House was started after staff observed isolation and a growing need for support from this group of children while they were living through the trajectory of their ill sibling's life. Thus, staff conducted background research to develop the program. Staff contacted other hospices in Canada to see if they supported the sibling demographic. They found that most of the other hospices noted this need, but were not facilitating on-going groups at the time. Recreation therapists at Roger Neilson House conducted phone interviews and sent out surveys to families to understand and see their interests in a sibling support program. Families were interested in this kind of a support group, and noted the struggles they experienced in supporting their children.

Gathering this information, recreation therapists at Roger Neilson House then completed the SIBSHOP training, which specializes in talking to children who have a sibling with a special need. The recreation therapists also connected with Hospice Toronto to learn about their Young Carers Program. A list of topics to be covered by the program was created, and the first group took place in March 2014.

## WHO DO WE SERVE?

Roger Neilson House serves children living with a life-limiting illness who are not expecting to live into adulthood, and their families. Each year, Roger Neilson House serves 80 young carers between the ages of 4 and 20; the majority of young carers in between the ages of 4 and 12.

## WHAT DO WE PROVIDE?

Young carers must have a referral to access services at Roger Neilson House. This can come from a physician, social worker, nurse, teacher, friend, parent – any and all referrals are accepted if they qualify for the scope of service.

The intake process begins with the referee to discuss and collect information. A recreation therapist then meets with the parent or guardian and the young carer to discuss support services needed.

A simple evaluation survey is sent to families once a year to evaluate the program and determine the improvements that need to be made.

**The Spectacular Incredible Brave Siblings (SIBS) Program** is a group support program for siblings ages 5 to 14 that meets once a month for two hours. Siblings are free to join as little or as many sessions as they prefer. A variety of activities, games, expressive art, drama, therapeutic play, and music are used to facilitate discussions about: emotions, worries, stress, coping strategies, daily experiences, and medical questions. Recreation therapists facilitate the group, but siblings largely lead the discussions. The goal of the program is to teach children how to share their feelings, to understand and educate about what they want to know about their sibling's illness, and to allow them to find peers living through similar life circumstances.

## PRIMARY CONTACT

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## WHO ARE WE?

The Teresa Group was founded 25 years ago initially to help children who were dying of AIDS. But with advancements in medical treatments, children no longer die of AIDS and very few children are born with HIV in Canada. So, The Teresa Group shifted to a psychosocial agency that supports families dealing with the stigma and discrimination related to the illness. The AIDS Bureau and other donations and grants fund the Teresa Group.

## WHAT MOTIVATED OUR FOCUS ON YOUNG CARERS?

At present, there are still no other agencies helping children and youth affected by and living with HIV.

## WHO DO WE SERVE?

The Teresa Group serves 600 children and youth, mostly from racialized families, up to 18 years of age in the Greater Toronto Area. These children and youth are either living with HIV themselves, or they are children of parents living with HIV.

## HOW ARE WE CONNECTED TO OUR COMMUNITY ?

The Teresa Group receives referrals from around the Greater Toronto Area, and refer clients to other HIV/AIDS organizations. The Teresa Group has a working relationship with the University of Toronto to access Master of Social Worker students, as well as with The Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto and the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario in Ottawa on research projects.

## WHAT DO WE PROVIDE?

Access to programming requires a referral (e.g., hospitals, clinics, AIDS service organizations, etc.). Self-referrals are permitted. Clients must be living with a family member with HIV, or they have HIV themselves. An intake process is conducted.

The programming focuses on developing coping skills, resiliency, and emotion identification and expression. The programming is also an opportunity for supporting clients with systems navigation and making any necessary referrals.

Formal program evaluations are conducted for the support groups using an adaptation of the Public Health Ontario's 'Evaluating Health Promotion Programs' tool.

**Age-specific support groups** (Junior, 7- 9 years old; Intermediate, 10-13 years old; and Senior, 14-18 years old) are offered for six weeks throughout the year. Each group has 8 to 10 participants.

**Summer Camp** is a 5-day sleepover camp held once a year for clients between the ages of 9 and 18. The summer camp provides a counsellor training program, where older youth clients who have been disclosed to about HIV diagnosis in the family can be counsellors for the camp. Counsellors help run camp programming, which covers topics such as: HIV stigma, dealing with stress and emotions, and building social supports.

**Leading the Way** is a weekly support group for children and youth between the ages of 5 and 18 that runs for nine weeks at a time each spring and fall.

## PRIMARY CONTACT

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# YOUNG CARERS INITIATIVE POWERHOUSE PROJECT



## WHO ARE WE?

The Young Carers Initiative is a non-profit organization focused on the well-being of young carers, their families, and their community partners. It was created in 2003 by the Alzheimer Society of the Niagara Region as a special project. Powerhouse Project is an initiative that was developed by the Young Carers Initiative to meet the needs of young carers in the Niagara and Haldimand-Norfolk regions. The Haldimand Norfolk Hamilton Halton Local Health Integration Network (HNHB LHIN) and the Alzheimer Society of Brant, Haldimand Norfolk, Hamilton Halton, fund Powerhouse Project.

## WHAT MOTIVATED OUR FOCUS ON YOUNG CARERS?

The Alzheimer Society of the Niagara Region developed the Young Carers Initiative because of their observations from delivering their support services, such as home visits, for people with dementia, their families, and their caregivers. They noticed many children and youth were taking on caregiving roles to help the family. It became clear that many of these children and youth struggled with stress, anxiety, and other emotional problems. Building on the principle “Caregiving is a family event”, the Alzheimer Society of the Niagara Region decided to take action. After conducting research and discovering the young carer work being done in the UK, they brought the young carer concept to Canada and created a project including youth under the age of 18 involved in any kind of caregiving situation. This became the Young Carers Initiative.

With a two-year fund from the Trillium Foundation, the Young Carers Initiative joined efforts with 17 community agencies, and conducted and published research into young carers in the Niagara Region with Brock University. A determined group of individuals revived the project in 2007 as an independent registered charity. With the support of the Alzheimer Society of Brant, Haldimand Norfolk, Hamilton Halton, they received funding from the HNHB LHIN’s “Aging at Home” Strategy to support the creation of Powerhouse Project in 2008.

## WHO DO WE SERVE?

Powerhouse Project currently supports 335 young carers from the Niagara and Haldimand-Norfolk regions. These young carers are caring for family members who have chronic illness, physical or intellectual disabilities, terminal illness, mental illness, and addictions, as well as those who experience barriers accessing health, such as language barriers.

# YOUNG CARERS INITIATIVE POWERHOUSE PROJECT



## WHAT DO WE PROVIDE?

Referrals to Powerhouse Project can be from anyone. The intake process begins in the home where a staff member can meet all family members. The intake includes an assessment of the young carer's level of caregiving and impact, as well as their interests. The intake also involves the parent to create a 'plan of care', where family goals are created and referrals to other community services may be suggested.

All programs are based on monthly themes with a therapeutic focus. Young carers learn to build resilience and use coping skills with challenges at home or school. In some situations, medical and disease education is offered.

All programs have outcome measurement built-in. They are evaluated based on annual client satisfaction surveys. Dr. Heather Chalmers and her students from Brock University support our program evaluation.

**Teen and Young Adult Carers Night Out** is a weekly respite program that takes place from September to June for two hours a night. This program alternates its host location in five different communities across Niagara and Haldimand-Norfolk.

**Life Skills Programs** occur through the year, typically once a week for a four- to six-week program.

**In-School Programs** take place at four elementary schools in the District School Board of Niagara. A weekly program is run for eight weeks throughout the school year.

**Summer Camps** are week-long day camps in four communities in the Niagara and Haldimand-Norfolk regions.

**Teen and Young Adult Programs** are for older young carers, tailored to their experiences and needs.

**The Youth Advisory Committee** allows young carers to contribute to program ideas, and advocacy and awareness activities and special projects.

Other activities include **joint events** bringing together young carers from the Niagara and Haldimand-Norfolk regions, and **special trips** to places like Ontario Science Centre.

## PRIMARY CONTACT

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# YOUNG CARERS PROJECT

Young Carers Project

## WHO ARE WE?

The Young Carers Project began with a Leadership Waterloo program where the team decided to focus on young carers because their agencies had a mandate to support them but had not been successful on their own. The group put out a wider invitation to involve more groups, and it has since grown. The Young Carers Project functions, for the most part, with resources given by community partners and volunteers. The Homewood Foundation has given a grant to form a Young Carer Advisory Group to create the 'By Us For Us Guide: Support Matters' resource, documentary, and website.

The purpose of the Young Carers Project is to educate the community about the existence and needs of young carers, and motivate them to action so that young carers can access support and connect in many community settings where they already find themselves.

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## WHO DO WE SERVE?

The Young Carers Project supports young carers in the Waterloo region, and defines a young carer as: a child, youth, or young adult who is impacted by a family member's exceptional need(s). Family members can include someone living with the young carer, or someone they are very involved with. Exceptional needs can include: illness, disability, mental health issues, addiction, or language or cultural barrier.

# YOUNG CARERS PROJECT

Young Carers Project

## WHO ARE WE?

The Young Carers Project offers **training** to the community as well as specific organizations, to educate them about young carers and their needs. In **working with various community partners**, the Young Carers Project helps to increase their capacity to support young carers by helping them adopt best practices within their context.

The Young Carers Project conducts **research about young carers**, such as participatory action research, to evaluate their impact on their community, and **develop resources** that can be used across Canada. Currently, a **Community of Practice** is being developed that will be open to people anywhere in Canada. It provides an opportunity for people to meet virtually four times a year, to discuss how to better support young carers and address their needs in specific areas throughout the country.

## PRIMARY CONTACT

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