



**11th Annual  
CONFERENCE  
AND AGM**

**WE LIFT YOU UP**

**Dates: June 8 - June 11, 2023**

**Location: Nottawasaga Inn, Alliston, ON**

# LOFF CONFERENCE



Greetings and welcome to the 2023 LOFF Conference. Thank you to each and every one of you for planning to join us. We will be very pleased to welcome those of you who have been with us for a long time as well as those who are new to this community. We want to assure all of an inclusive and accessible space.

The League of Ontario Foster Families came together 14 years ago. It was a grass roots sort of beginning. Representatives from four different Foster Parent Associations got together for mutual support. The idea was that foster families know other foster families best.

We can help each other with understanding and encouraging children and youth in care. Furthermore, through interaction with the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies and the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, our members have been kept informed and have been included in the development of trainings, data contributions and tools for the important work that we do in providing places of safety and in caring for society's children in need.

We have grown to represent 12 different Foster Family Associations across Ontario. We are proud to be offering this excellent training and networking opportunity and we hope to see you soon.

*Judith Clark*

PRESIDENT - LEAGUE OF ONTARIO FOSTER FAMILIES (LOFF)



# LOGISTICS

**NOTTAWASAGA INN RESORT. & CONFERENCE CENTRE**  
**6015 HIGHWAY 89, ALLISTON ON. L9R 1A4**  
**WWW.NOTTAWASAGARESORT.COM**



**Play a round of golf on one of the two golf courses offering 45 regulation holes of golf or participate in the non-stop recreational activities available within the 70,000 sq.ft. health and fitness centre.**

**Take an exhilarating ride down the 3 storey 100 ft waterslide, splash in the indoor Tropical Rainforest themed 25m swimming pool, perfect your shot on the indoor mini-golf adventure or enjoy a workout in the fully equipped gym featuring indoor squash courts.**

**From Toronto: Take Highway 400 north to Highway 89 (exit #75 west). Drive west on 89 for 14km. The Nottawasaga Inn Resort is on the south side of the highway.**

**From Pearson International Airport: Take Highway 401 east to Highway 400 north. Drive north 75 km & exit westbound on Highway 89. We are located at 6015 Highway 89.**

**From Barrie: Take Highway 400 south to Highway 89 (exit #75 west). Drive west on 89 for 14km. The Nottawasaga Inn Resort is on the south side of the highway.**

**WANTED: DONATIONS FOR THE SILENT AUCTION**

**\*CONTACT YOUR FPA REP FOR MORE INFORMATION**

# KEYNOTE SPEAKER

*Saturday Evening*



## JOE ROBERTS

The most effective leaders in society are those rare individuals who can inspire their audience with a passion that can only come from personal experience. As the former President and CEO of an extremely successful multimedia company, Joe Roberts has faced and overcome key business challenges, which confront every modern organization. With a track record of proven business success, Joe formed his own multimedia company, Mindware Design Communications, and in less than four years led the company to a phenomenal 800% increase in business. Joe's business solutions have made millions of dollars for his clients, across a variety of business sectors. What is most amazing about Joe is that in 1989 he was living on the streets of Vancouver as a homeless skid row addict. Through perseverance, determination and his resilient human spirit,

Joe pulled himself out of the darkness and despair, to become a highly respected business and community leader.

Joe Roberts (aka The Skidrow CEO)'s mission has been, is, and always will be to instigate a ripple effect of positive change everywhere he goes by reminding people of their unlimited potential.

When Joe was homeless in Vancouver he made a promise if his life was spared he would pay it forward. He did just that in the form of triumphantly pushing a shopping cart a staggering 9,064 kilometers across Canada in the name of youth homelessness prevention. This very act birthed a national awareness campaign called The Push for Change, inspiring fellow Canadians to create ripple effects of transformation in the lives of at-risk youth throughout the country.

Since 1989, Joe has acquired two college diplomas, became the CEO of one of Vancouver's leading multimedia companies, walked across Canada and achieved more success than he could ever have imagined. Joe has been recognized by MacLean's Magazine as one of "10 Canadians who make a difference," won the BC Courage to Come Back Award, received The Ontario Premier's Award for Business, was given an Honorary Doctorate from Laurentian University, was recognized by the Senate of Canada with their Canada 150 Medal, received the Medal of Good Citizenship from the province of BC and the Meritorious Service Medal from the Governor General of Canada.

### ***From Skid Row to CEO – There's More To You Than You Can See***

In this keynote, Joe shares his story of redemption from a lifelong struggle with substance use disorder and mental illness.

In 1989 Joe was homeless on the streets of Vancouver. With the proper support and people believing in Joe's possibility, his life was transformed.

As you walk with Joe through the tough streets of East Vancouver in the 1980's, you will experience the depths and degradation of a former homeless addict, to the triumph of a successful entrepreneur and philanthropist.



# SPEAKER



## **ZAC CROUSE**

Zac Crouse (M.Ed, CTRS) is a recreation therapist, musician & expedition kayaker who delivers keynote presentations and workshops focusing on mental health, recreation and leadership.

Zac has a unique ability to discuss sensitive topics with respect and humour. His presentations are designed to engage and entertain the audience through stories, film and live music.

He specializes in working with individuals who have mental health and substance use issues; and has an extensive background in adventure therapy and eco-therapy.

Zac is currently an instructor at the University of Lethbridge Faculty of Health Sciences.

## **Dare to be Bored**

Learning to cope with boredom is an essential life skill. Many people are uncomfortable being alone with their thoughts – no distractions, no connectivity. Just...you.

Critically examine the growing trend of pathologizing boredom; as though it were a serious illness or a problem to be solved. Learn how to stop falling into the role of entertainment director for your family.

Teach the young people in your life to take responsibility for their own time. Allow your brain the time & space it needs to process life's unexpected hurdles.

Discover the benefits of boredom, the skills that it teaches us, and how striving to eliminating it contributes to exhaustion and anxiety.



# ADVOCACY TRAINING



## LANDY ANDERSON

Landy Anderson is a Senior Manager with over 30 years of experience in child welfare. She has worked as a child protection worker, supervisor, and senior manager in several Children's Aid Societies in Ontario for various departments, such as Community Services, Shelter & Transition Housing, Aboriginal Head Start, Youth Services, Intake, After Hours, Family Services, Placement, Kinship Services, Customary Care, Foster Care, and Adoption. Landy is a former Treatment Foster Parent and Licensed Group Home Operator. She has supervised staff-operated group homes and foster care departments for various child welfare agencies including Indigenous Children's Aid Societies, known as Child & Family Well-Being Agencies.

## ADVOCACY TRAINING

Participants will review the key concepts of how to advocate for and support foster parents during internal/external complaints and child protection investigations. The risks of fostering and safeguarding strategies will be discussed. The role and responsibilities of the advocate will be examined in relation to the foster parent, agency, and advocate perspectives and complaint letters. Participants will review various methods of filing complaints through internal and external systems (Ombudsman, RPAC, and CFSRB).

Specific learning objectives for this presentation are:

- To become familiar with internal and external complaint systems.
- To gain knowledge about the role and responsibility of the advocate during internal/external complaints and child protection investigations
- To understand the key components of effective complaint letters
- To be knowledgeable about risks of fostering
- To understand the importance of strategies to safeguard against allegations
- To apply critical thinking while supporting caregivers during complaints and child protection investigations



# WORKSHOPS

(Saturday)

## JILL PARKER

### ***Bridges Out of Poverty***

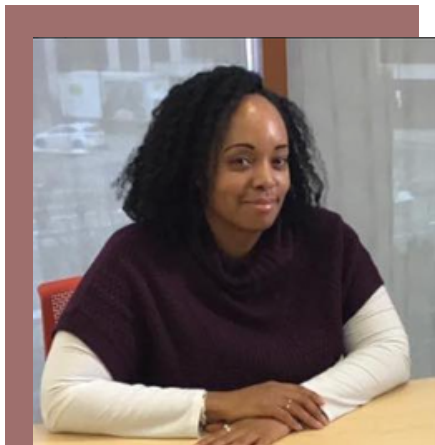
Gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and strengths of people living in poverty. This workshop will help you partner with individuals to create opportunities for success. You will:

- Examine the impact of poverty on families
- Explore the hidden rules of economic class
- Provide an opportunity to collaborate together
- Identify ways to improve relationships
- Develop new tools to better address individuals' needs
- Increase awareness regarding life-stabilization necessities



Jill began her employment with the County of Lambton in 2009. During that time, she has worked in Ontario Works income support, workshop facilitation, and most recently as a coach for the Circles program. Jill welcomes the opportunity to share her knowledge and understanding of the Bridges Out of Poverty initiative and is passionate about helping others build stronger communities.

Jill is a trained Bridges Out of Poverty presenter and spends time in her own community, as well as other municipalities educating the audience regarding front-line strategies and solution-based programming.



## JUDIE POWELL M.S.W.

### ***Anti-Black Racism in Child Welfare***

The Anti-Black Racism training will look at the definition and development of Anti-Black Racism and the definition and purpose of child welfare and how the two fuel each other. We will see how powerful privilege, power, perspective and positionality are in child welfare and how it lends to ABR being as natural as opening our eyes every day.

Judie Powell has worked for 19 years in various roles in protection and to date is an Anti-Black Racism Practice Integration Lead. She also worked in various residential services for 13 years.

She spent six months working on the One Vision One Voice project, as a community engagement worker, which aimed to decrease the over representation of Black youth in care and the disparities in service to the Black community. In her role she consulted across the province with CAS's to support workers in their work with Black families. She also created and delivered Anti-Black Racism Child Welfare Navigation training for community-based partners who were supporting Black families.

She is a facilitator of Caring Dads, a program aimed to support fathers in positive parenting and specifically facilitated groups with the priority for Black and racialized fathers. Over the years Judie has developed a passion for Anti-Black Racism work and currently facilitates Anti-Oppression Anti-Racism training and is an Equity and Confronting Anti-Black Racism in Child Welfare for Leaders Trainer for the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies.

# WORKSHOPS

(Saturday)



## **RALPH B. STEINBERG**

### ***Navigating the Complexities of Criminal and Child Protection Investigations***

Many pitfalls await the foster parent who is either being investigated or has been arrested for a criminal offence involving a foster child. Several common misconceptions interfere with the foster parent's ability to protect himself or herself after an allegation has been made. The situation is further complicated by the involvement at the investigative stage of both police and child protection agencies.

Knowledge of investigative techniques used, and of the law that relates to the use at trial of statements and other evidence provided to police by the foster parent considerably assist the foster parent during the investigation and assist in ensuring a positive trial result.

Ralph was called to the Bar in Ontario in March 1977. He has practiced since that time as a sole practitioner, specializing in criminal law. He has been certified by the Law Society as a Specialist in Criminal Law since 1996. His practice has included dozens of lengthy Superior Court jury and non-jury trials, of which approximately 24 were murder trials, and hundreds of trials in lower courts. He has acted as a representative of the criminal bar as a member of several administration of justice committees and at international legal conferences.

---

## **FOSTERING TEENS**

*Facilitated by: Sherry Smrczek*

A foster parent led panel to discuss and share about the intricacies of fostering teenagers while navigating through the child welfare system. Through this peer led discussion, you will be provided with a safe space to ask the questions you've always wanted to ask.



Sherry is a resource parent who opened her home to foster teens. She is currently the President of her local FPA and Co-Chairs the Eastern Zone collaboration committee (which incorporates 8 Foster Parent Associations). Provincially, Sherry is also the co vice-president of LOFF and sits on various working groups advocating for children in care and the youth who have aged out of care. Not only is she a mother of five adult children, Sherry has fostered over 50 teens and is passionate about ensuring that their voices are heard .



# WORKSHOP

(SUNDAY)

## JOE ROBERTS

### *Energy Health Management - How to Respond to Stress and Rapid Change by building energy health & resilience for work & life*

Learn how to manage energy and build a resilient mindset that will boost productivity and stress-proof your life. In this session Joe Roberts shows you the links between stress, energy demands, health and performance in your life, including the following...

- Skills to prevent burnout and build your energy health
- Developing & applying resilient mindsets to work & life
- Exploring strategies to reduce stress and support energy recharge



Joe (aka The Skidrow CEO) pulled himself out of the darkness and despair, to become a highly respected business and community leader. Joe's mission has been, is, and always will be to instigate a ripple effect of positive change everywhere he goes by reminding people of their unlimited potential.

When Joe was homeless in Vancouver he made a promise if his life was spared he would pay it forward. He did just that in the form of triumphantly pushing a shopping cart a staggering 9,064 kilometers across Canada in the name of youth homelessness prevention. This very act birthed a national awareness campaign called The Push for Change, inspiring fellow Canadians to create ripple effects of transformation in the lives of at-risk youth throughout the country.

---



# CASUAL, SEMI-FORMAL, FORMAL ?

**Wondering what to wear for our final dinner Saturday night? Come as you please and don't forget to capture the moment by getting your picture taken by a dedicated photographer who will make sure our best moments are remembered beautifully!**



**\*SMALL PHOTO FEE APPLIES - PAYABLE ON SITE**



**Ray 416-871-6949**

# PHOTOGRAPHER

**Quality that speaks for itself**

# SCHEDULE

## ADVOCACY TRAINING

<b>THURSDAY</b>	<b>JUNE 8, 2023</b>
4:00 - 6:00 PM	Registration
6:00 - 7:00 PM	Dinner
<b>FRIDAY</b>	<b>JUNE 9, 2023</b>
7:30 - 8:45 AM	Breakfast/ Day Registration
9:30 - 12:00 PM	key concepts: Advocate for and support foster parents during internal/external complaints and child protection investigations
12:00 - 1:00 PM	Lunch
1:00 - 3:30 PM	key concepts: Advocate for and support foster parents during internal/external complaints and child protection investigations

## FRIDAY, JUNE 9, 2023- CONFERENCE

4:00 - 7:00 PM	Main Registration
5:00 - 6:30 PM	Dinner Buffet
6:30 PM	Silent Auction OPENS
7:15 PM	Opening Greeting / Land Acknowledgment
7:30 PM	<b>Entertainment with Zac Crouse</b>
9:00 - 10:30 PM	Hospitality Suite

# SCHEDULE

## SATURDAY, JUNE 10, 2023

<b>7:30 - 8:45 AM</b>	Breakfast/Day Registration
<b>9:00 - 11:45 AM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bridges Out of Poverty</li> <li>• Anti-Black Racism in Child Welfare</li> <li>• Navigating the Complexities of Criminal and Child Protection Investigations</li> <li>• Fostering Teens</li> </ul>
<b>12:00 - 1:00 PM</b>	Lunch
<b>1:15 - 2:30 PM</b>	<b>ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)</b>
<b>3:00 - 4:00 PM</b>	<b>Landy Anderson "Caring for an Indigenous Child"</b>
<b>4:45 PM</b>	Silent Auction Closes
<b>5:00 - 6:30 PM</b>	Dinner
<b>7:15 PM</b>	<b>Joe Roberts "From Skid Row to CEO – There's More To You Than You Can See"</b>
<b>9:00 - 11:00 PM</b>	Hospitality Suite

## SUNDAY, JUNE 11, 2023

<b>7:30 - 8:45 AM</b>	Breakfast
<b>9:30 - 10:30 AM</b>	<b>Plenary/Workshop presented by Joe Roberts : Energy Health Management - How to Respond to Stress and Rapid Change by building energy health &amp; resilience for work &amp; life</b>

# Conference Packages

## *ADVOCACY*

**Day Package**

**Includes training and lunch**

**\$180.00**

**Single Occupancy**

**Includes Thursday Accommodations & Meal**

**\$395.00**

**Double Occupancy (per person)**

**Includes Thursday Accommodation & Meal**

**\$320.00**

## *CONFERENCE*

**Day Pass**

**Includes Workshops, lunch, dinner and Keynote**

**\$290.00**

**Single Occupancy**

**Includes Friday & Saturday Accommodations & Meals**

**\$770.00**

**Double Occupancy (per person)**

**Includes Friday & Saturday Accommodations & Meals**

**\$630.00**

**DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION: APRIL 30, 2023**

**\*\*please DO NOT contact Nottawasaga Inn directly**