



2018-2019 MCCSS Investment in Family Support Networks

Project Report Final- June 15, 2019

The Care and Share Family Network proposal for MCCSS 2018-19 Investment in Family Support Networks funding described our objectives to enhance engagement of members, promote communication and information sharing amongst members, and to provide administrative support to the CSFN. This report identifies what was achieved with the investment funding to March 31, 2019, demonstrates how capacity has been strengthened as a result of the funding and describes what has been learned as a result of the activities undertaken.

1. Organize and hold eight regular meetings in 2018-2019 \$1200

What we wanted to do: To enhance engagement of CSFN members, and promote communication and information sharing among members, the CSFN objectives were to increase membership by 10%, improve member experience of support, increase connections, engagement and mentoring between members, increase member understanding of specific topics and increase positive interactions between caregivers/families and service providers.

What we did: Through the Family Network funding, the Care and Share Family Network was able to successfully engage with a significant number of families and caregivers in the region spanning from Sarnia to Wallaceburg to Chatham. In April 2018, the CSFN email distribution list had 57 families, and as of March 2019 the email list had grown to 272. There are also several families who do not have email and are contacted by mail or phone on a regular basis.

From April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019 the CSFN organized and held eight (8) meetings, providing opportunity for peer support at each meeting. Topics at the meeting were directly linked to family responses from 2016 & 2018 member surveys. Knowledgeable speakers or facilitators were provided and a concurrent activity session was held during the meetings for persons supported, with activities relevant to those with special needs. Evaluations were completed following each gathering.



Topics and format ranged from informational meetings such as "Transitioning from School", "Advocate to Inspire" and "Get to Know the DSO", self-care meetings such as "Kitchen Talk" and "January Warm-up", a summer picnic and social event, an Open House and a meeting where families enjoyed a musical concert, followed by networking and conversation.

Item 1 - Organize and hold eight regular meetings in 2018-2019								
Meeting dates	18-Apr-18	16-Jun-18	19-Sep-18	17-Oct-18	23-Nov-18	16-Jan-19	20-Feb-19	20-Mar-19
Location	Chatham	Mitchell's Bay	Wallaceburg	Sarnia	Wallaceburg	Chatham	Sarnia	Wallaceburg
Expenses	\$93.47	\$637.82	\$76.62	\$0	\$34.00	\$88.95	94.94	185.87
Total # of participants (family members + persons supported)	48	78	24	16	59	40	22	24
# of family members attending	39	32	15	11	37	28	17	16
# persons supported under 18 attending	7	20	7	0	2	9	2	4
# persons supported over 18 attending	2	26	2	5	20	3	3	4
Meeting evaluation completed	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Advisory committee debrief	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

Results of a survey sent out to area families supporting someone with a disability provided our family network with valuable information around when, where and what topics our families were interested in. The MCCSS Investment in Family Support Networks has enabled the CSFN to organize and hold 8 meetings to date, on topics that members indicated were of interest to them. During the meetings, family members were observed participating in the meeting discussions, engaging with each other, sharing stories, and lingering after the meetings to talk with other caregivers. Some of the same families attended all eight meetings.

The average meeting attendance rose compared to the same period last year. In 2017 the average meeting attendance was 14 people. Between April 2018 and March 2019 the average was 39 people attending.



Participants indicated that the topics discussed at the meetings were of interest, and most felt that the discussion increased their understanding of the topic. Regarding engagement and member experience of peer support, participants indicated that they felt more supported as a caregiver after attending the meeting, and that the meeting format gave them enough time to connect with other families.

The sharing of personal experiences with each other resulted in more positive interactions with service providers. During the “Advocate to Inspire” themed meeting, families learned how to put together an information binder for medical, school and other service provider visits, to clarify information and avoid having to repeat stories.



As a result of being a part of a family network, families told us they are more able to



obtain, improve, and retain the skills and knowledge they need to be effective caregivers, and capacity within families has been strengthened. Based on the meeting evaluations, some participants indicated they feel more capable to advocate effectively for their family member after attending a CSFN meeting.

What we learned: Reflecting on the eight meetings held, the Advisory Committee has learned that people seem to prefer the meetings being held on consistent dates, and with ample time to share stories and just talk, rather than just having a speaker or a certain topic. Hands on activities such as those offered during the self-care focused “January Warm-up” were very popular.

We also learned that offering a concurrent group activity for persons supported has been successful in drawing families out to the meetings. Having skilled experienced assistants to help with the activities with persons supported is a necessity. Caregivers let us know they appreciated the time to be able to relax, knowing their loved ones were enjoying spending time nearby. As of March 31, 2019 the expenses related to organizing and holding meetings in 2018-2019 totaled \$1211.



Meeting evaluations are summarized in the APPENDIX.

2. Enhance marketing materials and improve connections \$1840

What we wanted to do: To enhance engagement of CSFN members, and promote communication and information sharing with members and with the community, the CSFN objectives were to increase marketing materials, improve connections with members and the community, increase website and social media contact, and increase awareness of the benefits of unpaid caregiver and family involvement in the lives of people with disabilities.

What we did: Through the fourth quarter of 2018-2019, “Dream Big” continued to be used in Family Network material, incorporated with the Care & Share Family Network logo. This slogan, launched in 2018, reminds us that all people, including those with disabilities, are capable of reaching heights that may exceed expectations, and to never stop dreaming.

This design is now found on our mailings, email distribution, coffee mugs and pens, brochures and other promotional material, website and on our social media Facebook account. Two thousand (2000) information pamphlets were printed. The CSFN website is updated regularly, actively providing valuable information to members on upcoming meetings, along with access to all resource materials. Between April 1, 2018 and March 31, 2019 the site had 352 visits. The website is linked to a social media Facebook account interacting with 64 Facebook followers as of March 31st. Resource information can be downloaded on a variety of topics for caregivers from the CSFN website, including resources on advocacy, tips for self-care, a guide to transitioning from school and resources on how to access services through the DSO.



Item 2 Enhance Existing Marketing materials and improve connections				
	Q1 Apr 1 - June 30	Q2 Jul 1 - Sept 30	Q3 Oct 1 - Dec 31	Q4 Jan 1 - Mar 31
Marketing Expenses	\$785	\$637	\$85	\$665.43
# of pamphlets printed	1000	0	0	1000
# of locations of pamphlets	3	3	3	40
# of pamphlets dist.	120	70	140	400
# of promo items made	0	375	0	300
# of pens distributed	0	45	65	60
# of mugs distributed	0	24	35	14
# of website visits	134	78	45	95
# of social media page views	52	46	66	192
# of social media likes, friends	48	49	55	64

What we learned: Engagement with families has improved through the use of technology, as well as using a door prize draw to gather contact information from those attending events. Incentives have also been used to ensure those attending complete a brief evaluation of the meeting.

Through significant marketing efforts over the past year, the Advisory Committee has learned most members prefer to be contacted and receive updates electronically and online. We have observed more frequent interactions through social media, and more focus will be on online communication with our membership moving forward. However, some family groups in the area do not use email or social media, and phone calls must be continued to maintain contact with some families. We have also learned that communication to membership must be succinct and clear –the CSFN has adapted to be more innovative to get people’s attention in order to convey information.

With this funding the CSFN has been able to develop marketing materials to more effectively engage with members, promote communication and information sharing with members and with the community. This is demonstrated by generous contributions and donations from the community to CSFN events over the past year. Having

professional informational material, an up to date website

and clear vision and mission has helped CSFN find and develop potential sponsors or donors, leading to the development of long-term sustainability for the Family Network. Successful communication and engagement through marketing will allow the Family Network to achieve goals and increase awareness of the benefits of unpaid caregiver and family involvement in the lives of people with disabilities.

As of March 31, 2019 the expenses for enhancing marketing materials and improving connections in 2018-2019 totaled \$2172.



During the fourth quarter, the CSFN printed additional information pamphlets, and mapped out a plan to distribute pamphlets to key professional contacts in the Chatham, Wallaceburg, Sarnia region.

3. Assist four caregiver/family members to attend education events \$3800

What we wanted to do: To promote information sharing among members, the CSFN objective was to assist family members to attend educational events and bring back information on the events to the CSFN membership. Sharing of information and experiences will increase motivation and visioning, hope and inspiration in members, and increase ability to advocate effectively, as well as increase connections, engagement and mentoring between the members.

What we did: Upon learning of the approval of the Family Network funding in September, the CSFN Advisory Committee informed members of the opportunity to attend educational events, and assisted interested caregivers and family members to find events of interest to them.



Parents Linda and Ewart Godfrey were provided with financial support to attend the Community Living Ontario Conference September 12 – 14, 2018 in Richmond Hill, Ontario. Conference topics included *Navigating Life: Real Stories from Real People Living with a Developmental Disability*, and “*Journey to Assertiveness*”. Linda and Ewart spoke about the conference at the February Family Network meeting “This event was such an amazing opportunity to come together with other families and sector agencies and learn from each other about the struggles and successes of caring for a person with a disability, it was absolutely wonderful.”

Also in September, two families were supported to attend the Family Alliance Ontario Gathering and Annual Meeting, held September 14-15, 2018. The FAO hosted this conference which included representatives of Family Networks from all over the province of Ontario. The gathering was an opportunity to make new connections, share inspirational stories and explore solutions to help move Family Networks forward.

During the fourth quarter, a family member attended the Canadian Deaf Blind Association regional meeting in Paris, Ontario on January 17, 2019. An information gathering visit occurred in January with a First Nations Special Needs Worker at Bkejwanong Biiweziimag Kinomaagziwaad – Family Place of Learning. And seven CSFN caregivers attended the Dben Daag-Zid Special Needs Conference “Inclusion: We all Belong” being held on Walpole Island First Nation. Those attending the conference had valuable take-aways to share with other family members including information on Self-Regulation and Sensory Vs Behaviour, as well as a very informative session on Working with Indigenous Families. In March, two family members travelled to meet with and learn about another Family Network group, Ensemble, in Essex Ontario.

Item 3 Assist four Caregivers/Family members with costs to attend educational events outside region				
	Q1 Apr 1 - June 30	Q2 Jul 1 - Sept 30	Q3 Oct 1 - Dec 31	Q4 Jan 1 - Mar 31
Expenses	\$0	\$1,933	\$46	\$1,879
# of members attending educational events	0	4	0	11
# of members sharing information	0	4	0	7

What we learned: Family members who had the opportunity to attend educational events returned from the events motivated to share information and experiences with the CSFN through informal narrative presentations. The power of the narrative draws the listeners in, expanding the opportunity for engagement and connecting. As March 31, 2019 the expenses for assisting caregivers/families with costs to attend education events in 2018-2019 totaled \$3858.

4. Engage a part-time administrative support person \$5130

What we wanted to do: In order to allow the Advisory Committee to focus more time, skills and resources on member engagement, the CSFN objective is to provide administrative support to the Care & Share Family Network, to increase member and public access to information on the CSFN website and social media accounts, and to increase connections, engagement and mentoring between members through a quarterly newsletter.



What we did: The Advisory Committee engaged a part-time administrative support person. The admin support person was provided with direction and up to date information to maintain the website and social media accounts as well as the creation of a newsletter to be distributed to membership. Newsletter format and content was well received. Standing items in the newsletter include current events, and an in-depth interview with a family connected with the Care & Share Family Network. The admin support person also assisted with contacting members about upcoming meetings, helped with the MCCSS FSN funding proposal, attended Advisory Committee meetings, took minutes, and served as a resource to the committee.

Item 4 Engage a part-time Admin Support person to work approx 10 hours per month				
	Q1 Apr 1 - June 30	Q2 Jul 1 - Sept 30	Q3 Oct 1 - Dec 31	Q4 Jan 1 - Mar 31
Expenses	\$1,174	\$1,155	\$1,155	\$1,247
# of hours worked by Admin Support	30.5	30	30	30
# of website updates	16	12	20	10
# of social media updates	24	15	18	12
# of newsletters distributed	0	0	1	1
Number of Advisory Committee meetings attended	7	3	3	4

What we learned: The Advisory Committee was fortunate to have the services of an admin support person who also works in the developmental services field, providing assistance as a resource to the committee for networking and outreach. Contributions from the admin support increased the capacity of the Advisory committee through her knowledge and experience, as well as freeing up committee time for committee members to focus efforts on membership, meeting preparation and content. The work, expertise and connections of the admin support person brought value and enrichment to the Family Network. As of March 31, 2019 the expenses for engaging a part-time administrative support person totaled \$4731. During the fourth quarter, the admin support person used more hours related to newsletter development, initial preparation of a funding request for 2019-2020 and other requirements related to the Family Network funding.

Summary

The Advisory Committee for the Care & Share Family Network is pleased to report that all objectives related to the MCCSS 2018-29 Investment in Family Supports were met. The impacts of the funding are evident. Families members indicate increased feelings of support, more connecting and engaging in peer mentoring with one another, increased understanding of topics, and increased positive interactions with service providers. Membership and meeting attendance has increased beyond objectives. We learned that offering a concurrent group activity for persons supported has been successful in drawing families out to the meetings, and having experienced assistants to help with the activities with persons supported is vital.

Website visits, social media interactions and distribution of promotional material has met or exceeded objectives. Use of technology has improved our level of engagement with families.

Family members indicated increased motivation as a result of attending education events, and 100% shared information from the events. Family members who had the opportunity to attend educational events returned from the events motivated to share information and experiences with the CSFN through the informal narrative presentations. The power of the narrative draws the listeners in, expanding the opportunity for engagement and connecting.

Having admin support increased the capacity of the Advisory committee, freeing up committee time to focus efforts on membership, meeting preparation and content. The work, expertise and connections of the admin support person brought value and enrichment to the Family Network.

Moving forward, the Care & Share Family Network continues to seek out and pursue opportunities for self-sustainability. With the 2018-2019 funding the CSFN has been able to develop marketing materials to more effectively engage with members, promote communication and information sharing with members and with the community. This is demonstrated by generous contributions and donations from the community to CSFN events over the past year. With successful communication and engagement with potential funders and community partners, and a clear vision and mission the CSFN continues to develop relationships leading to long-term sustainability for the Family Network.

The Advisory Committee would like to thank MCCSS for the 2018-2019 Investment in Family Supports. We would also like to recognize and thank Community Living Wallaceburg for their continued support of the CSFN since 2016, and as a TPA for this funding. This is a mutually positive and collaborative relationship with ongoing benefits for both CLW and CSFN.

The Care & Share Family Network is very interested in submitting a 2019-2020 proposal to the MCCSS through Investment in Family Supports should the opportunity arise, in order to continue to achieve goals and increase awareness of the importance and benefits of unpaid caregiver and family involvement in the lives of people with disabilities.

Respectfully submitted,

The Advisory Committee, Care & Share Family Network
careandsharefamilynetwork@gmail.com
www.careandsharefamilynetwork.ca

APPENDIX - Meeting Evaluations and Comments

Participant Feedback Response range: 1 = Not at all 3 = Somewhat 5 = Very much so									
Average of responses:	18-Apr-18	16-Jun-18	19-Sep-18	17-Oct-18	23-Nov-18	16-Jan-19	20-Feb-19	20-Mar-19	Overall average for 2018-19
Did the meeting format give you enough time to connect with other families?	3.75	5.00	4.60	4.00	--	4.20	4.50	4.77	4.40
Do you feel more supported as a caregiver after attending this meeting?	4.00	3.00	4.83	4.00	--	4.00	5.00	4.55	4.20
Were the topics discussed at the meeting of interest to you?	4.75	3.00	4.33	4.00	--	4.60	5.00	4.77	4.35
Did the discussion increase your understanding of the topic?	4.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	--	4.10	5.00	4.55	4.10
Do you feel more capable to advocate for your family member since attending the meeting?	4.25	3.00	4.00	3.60	--	3.80	4.20	4.22	3.90
Advisory Committee Meeting Feedback Response range: 1 = Not at all 3 = Somewhat 5 = Very much so									
Average of responses:	18-Apr-18	16-Jun-18	19-Sep-18	17-Oct-18	23-Nov-18	16-Jan-19	20-Feb-19	20-Mar-19	Overall average 2018-19
Did you observe participants connecting and engaging in peer mentoring?	3.00	4.00	4.50	5.00	4.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.43
Did the topics spark interest and conversations among participants?	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.50	4.00	5.00	5.00	4.81
Is there a perception of increased motivation among participants as a result of attending the meeting?	4.00	5.00	5.00	3.50	4.50	4.66	5.00	4.00	4.46
Did the Advisory Committee have the time and resources to plan an effective meeting?	4.00	5.00	5.00	3.50	4.50	4.66	5.00	5.00	4.58
Was a concurrent session for family members offered. If yes, were the activities and topics relevant to those with special needs?	No	No	Yes 4.00	Yes 5.00	Yes 5.00	Yes 4.66	Yes 4.00	Yes 5.00	4.61

Meeting Evaluation and Advisory Committee Comments- January to March 2019:

Thank you for organizing it (16-Jan-19)

Positive thinking, knowing we are not alone with having the role of caregiver is inspiring to us (16-Jan-19)

Great night – everyone was friendly and helpful (16-Jan-19)

I love the variety of meetings. This one was laid back and the one before was all information. Both equally informative. (16-Jan-19)

Very well done (16-Jan-19)

Great event. Looking forward to the next email. (16-Jan-19)

Thanks for a lovely evening (16-Jan-19)

A great night out with our family (16-Jan-19)

Great meeting, wish I would have known about them sooner, but now that I do, I will be attending on a regular basis. Lots of great information! (16-Jan-19)

Name tags would help for meeting new people (16-Jan-19)

*We could revisit this topic [self-care] again. Good conversation and feedback (16-Jan-19)**

*People seemed engaged and responded positively to all that was offered. The variety appealed to those attending. Although the venue was crowded, it encouraged people to chat and get to know one another. (16-Jan-19)**

This meeting was fantastic as all the others (20-Feb-19)

Great info! Helped us a lot (20-Feb-19)

Great snacks. Good speaker (Beth George-Watson). Thanks (20-Feb-19)

Well done. Happy to speak to other families tonight (20-Feb-19)

*Speaker was interesting and talked to everyone's level (20-Feb-19)**

Another great informative meeting. Thanks (20-Mar-19)

Fab! (20-Mar-19)

Ladies presenting are wonderful (20-Mar-19)

Wonderful atmosphere among those attending (20-Mar-19)

Very friendly group of people (20-Mar-19)

This group is awesome!! (20-Mar-19)

*Several people said the puppet show was enjoyable [concurrent activity for persons supported](20-Mar-19)*Conversations amongst participants continued after the meeting (20-Mar-19)**

Prior comments from April to December 2018:

*Good info sharing (18-Apr-18)**

*There was much opportunity for sharing with participants and introducing them to the benefits of networking with other caregivers.(18-Apr-18)**

*Many were glad for a "listening ear" and opportunities for support (18-Apr-18)**

Enjoyed talking to the people at the tables (18-Apr-18)

Lots of resources, good information. Nice to meet everyone.(18-Apr-18)

Loved the drumming and mindfulness. Good resources. Lots of information (18-Apr-18)

*The program provided activities for all age levels while being surrounded by support from volunteers and other families. (16-Jun-18)**

*Everyone was engaged, participating as families but also interacting with others. It gave opportunity for celebrating the success of loved ones (16-Jun-18)**

Games were very geared to special needs - Kids had a blast (16-Jun-18)

Great to see everyone out! (16-Jun-18)

*Not as much engagement, but great conversation and conversation prompts (19-Sep-18)**

*Very easy, comfortable (19-Sep-18)**

*Personal experiences shared empathy and sharing (19-Sep-18)**
*The group gathered seemed to appreciate the opportunity to share and provide input. (19-Sep-18)**
*The relaxed setting was just what was needed to allow everyone to take part. The success of this type of program was dependent on the facilitator who drew everyone into the conversation. (19-Sep-18)**
Liked meeting everyone! (19-Sep-18)
Thanks we want to come back. Enjoyed the Kitchen Talk. (19-Sep-18)
Other people have the same problems. (19-Sep-18)
The kids enjoyed the crafts and the snacks. Thanks for the pen and the mug. (19-Sep-18)
Nice to meet and see everyone. (19-Sep-18)
*The comfortable setting ... was very conducive to getting to know others and gave opportunity to continue the conversations begun with the 'Kitchen Talk' questions. (17-Oct-18)**
*Several new faces were introduced to the benefits of a family network (17-Oct-18)**
Information sharing amongst participants (ie horseback riding, summer camps) . (17-Oct-18)*
*We feel we brought together a group of people who otherwise were quite isolated and they appreciated the opportunity to hear other stories – Power of the Narrative (17-Oct-18)**
Thanks for the tips on summer camps (17-Oct-18)
Great meeting, will come again. Loads of good information. Thanks (17-Oct-18)
Good connecting – Fun night (17-Oct-18)
Looking forward to the next email. Many thanks (17-Oct-18)
Good info Well done (17-Oct-18)
Peanut free cookies for next time Please. Good Conversation (17-Oct-18)
*People lingered to talk. Music is a strong connector. Photo booth was a hit. Crafts were awesome. (23-Nov-18)**
*The gathering provided an opportunity to promote the purpose of the family network. Music provides entertainment as well as relaxation and speaks to caregivers as well as those being cared for. (23-Nov-18)**
*Those attending had opportunities to share with others around the tables and it was evident that relationships were beginning to develop (23-Nov-18)**

*Feedback from Advisory Committee