



## 2018-2019 MCCSS Investment in Family Support Networks

### Q3 Project Report - February 15, 2019

The Care and Share Family Network has undertaken goals and objectives which are aligned with the MCCSS 2018-19 Investment in Family Support Networks. This report identifies what was achieved with the investment funding to December 31, 2018, demonstrates how capacity has been strengthened as a result of our work 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:** From April 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018 the CSFN organized and held five (5) meetings, providing opportunity for peer support at each meeting. Topics at the meeting were directly linked to responses from 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.

Each of the meetings was a different format, from an informational meeting focusing on Transitioning from School, an outdoor summer gathering with food and games, a ‘Kitchen Talk’ style meeting with conversation prompts, an informal meeting in Sarnia with information on regional recreation and support services, and a meeting where families enjoyed a musical concert, followed by networking and conversation.

Meeting dates	18-Apr-18	16-Jun-18	19-Sep-18	17-Oct-18	23-Nov-18
Location	Chatham	Mitchell's Bay	Wallaceburg	Sarnia	Wallaceburg
Expenses	\$93.47	\$637.82	\$76.62	\$0	\$34.00
Total # of participants (family members + persons supported)	48	78	24	16	59
# of family members attending	39	32	15	11	37
# persons supported under 18 attending	7	20	7	0	2
# persons supported over 18 attending	2	26	2	5	20
Meeting evaluation completed	no	yes	yes	yes	no
Advisory committee debrief	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

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 December 31<sup>st</sup> the email list had 108 families and continues to grow, an 89% increase. There are also several families who do not have email and are contacted by mail or phone on a regular basis.

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 5 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 five meetings.

The average meeting attendance compared to the same period last year rose by 69%. Between April to December 2017 the average meeting attendance was 14 people. In 2018 the average is 45 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. This was demonstrated by a member who, during the Transitioning from School meeting, became upset describing challenges she was having with the school system; several families with adult children offered support and ideas; at a later meeting, the same member was able to share a success story about advocating for her daughter's special needs.

As a result of being a part of a family network, families 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 five meetings held to date, 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. Personal contact in the form of an email or telephone call is more effective in connecting with some families.

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 volunteer 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.

Meeting evaluations are summarized in the APPENDIX.

As of December 31, 2018 the expenses related to organizing and holding meetings in 2018-2019 totaled \$876.39, which is 73% of the total for the year of \$1200. The CSFN has planned for three meetings to be held in January, February and March of 2019, and expects the remaining funds will be utilized.

**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:** For family members of someone with a disability, each day can bring new challenges, and seeing the big picture and dreaming of the future can be almost impossible. The CSFN Advisory Committee engaged in Vision and Mission Statement development in 2017 and from those sessions the phrase “Dream Big” stood out. Through the Family Network funding, the CSFN was able to launch the “Dream Big” campaign in 2018. This slogan reminds us that all people, including those with disabilities, are capable of reaching heights that may exceed expectations, and to never stop dreaming.

Between April 1, 2018 and December 31, 2019 the CSFN began using the uniquely designed ‘Dream Big’ logo, incorporated with the Care & Share Family Network logo. 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. One thousand (1000) 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 December 31, 2018 the site had 257 visits. The website is linked to a social media Facebook account interacting with 55 Facebook followers as of December 31st. Through the Facebook account, a contest was held with the objective of increasing followers, resulting in 15 new followers. Resource information can be downloaded on a variety of topics for caregivers from the CSFN website, including resources on the benefits of unpaid caregiver and family involvement in the lives of people with disabilities, such as the article “*Building An Inclusive Life Based on Gifts, Talents and Strengths*” by Darcy Elks.



	Q1 Apr 1 - June 30	Q2 Jul 1 - Sept 30	Q3 Oct 1 - Dec 31
<b>Marketing Expenses</b>	\$785	\$637	\$85
<b># of pamphlets printed</b>	1000	0	0
<b># of locations of pamphlets</b>	3	3	3
<b># of pamphlets dist.</b>	120	70	140
<b># of promo items made</b>	0	375	0
<b># of pens distributed</b>	0	45	65
<b># of mugs distributed</b>	0	24	35
<b># of website visits</b>	134	78	45
<b># of social media page views</b>	52	46	66
<b># of social media likes, friends</b>	48	49	55

**What we learned:** Through significant marketing efforts over the past 9 months, 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, therefore more conventional methods of contact and outreach such as mailing and phone calls must be continued. We have also learned that communication to membership must be succinct and clear – people’s email boxes tend to overflow with superfluous information, and the CSFN has adapted to be more innovative to get people’s attention in order to convey information.

Engagement through contests and door prizes has been helpful as we expand our contacts – using the door prize entry ticket as a means to gather contact information has been successful and allows us to keep records of attendance also. Door prizes have also been used to ensure those attending complete a brief evaluation of the meeting.

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 nine months. 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 December 31, 2018 the expenses for enhancing marketing materials and improving connections in 2018-2019 totaled \$1507, which is 82% of the total for the year of \$1840. During the fourth quarter, the CSFN plans to print additional information pamphlets, and map out a plan to distribute pamphlets to key professional contacts in the Chatham, Wallaceburg, Sarnia region. Another Facebook contest to promote World Down Syndrome day, where participants will be asked to send in a photo of their ‘crazy socks’ to enter, will be promoted throughout the month of March. The CSFN expects the remaining marketing funds will be utilized by March 31, 2019.

### 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 is to assist family members to attend educational events and bring back information on the events to the CSFN membership. It is hoped this 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”* but their favourite part of the conference was the inspirational Luca “Lazylegz” Patuelli, who is a professional dancer and lives with a neuromuscular disorder and other physical challenges. Linda wrote: “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, parent Sandra Reilly and parent Sandra Thorne 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.

	Q1 Apr 1 - June 30	Q2 Jul 1 - Sept 30	Q3 Oct 1 - Dec 31
<b>Expenses</b>	\$0	\$1,933	\$46
<b># of members attending educational events</b>	0	4	0
<b># of members sharing information</b>	0	4	0

**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 of December 31, 2018 the expenses for assisting caregivers/families with costs to attend education events in 2018-2019 totaled \$1979, which is 52% of the total for the year of \$3800. During the fourth quarter, a family member will attend the Canadian Deaf Blind Association regional meeting in Paris, Ontario on January 17, 2019. An information gathering visit will occur in January with a First Nations Special Needs Worker at Bkejwanong Biiweziimag Kinomaagziwaad – Family Place of Learning, and several families have expressed interest in attending the upcoming Dben-Daag-Zid Special Needs Conference “Inclusion: We all belong” being held on Walpole Island First Nation. In March, two family members will travel to meet with and learn about another Family Network group, Ensemble, in Essex Ontario. CSFN expects the remaining funds for educational events will be utilized by March 31, 2019.

#### 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 quarterly newsletter to be distributed to membership. The Fall Newsletter format and content was well received, and will serve as a model for upcoming newsletters. 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.



	Q1 Apr 1 - June 30	Q2 Jul 1 - Sept 30	Q3 Oct 1 - Dec 31
<b>Expenses</b>	\$1,174	\$1,155	\$1,155
<b># of hours worked by Admin Support</b>	30.5	30	30
<b># of website updates</b>	16	12	20
<b># of social media updates</b>	24	15	18
<b># of newsletters distributed</b>	0	0	1
<b>Number of Advisory Committee meetings attended</b>	7	3	3

**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 December 31, 2018 the expenses for engaging a part-time administrative support person totaled \$3484, which is 68% of the total for the year of \$5130. During the fourth quarter, it is expected the admin support person will use more hours related to newsletter development, preparation of a funding request for 2019-2020 and other requirements related to the Family Network funding.

## 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
Did the meeting format give you enough time to connect with other families?	3.75	5.00	4.60	4.00	--
Do you feel more supported as a caregiver after attending this meeting?	4.00	3.00	4.83	4.00	--
Were the topics discussed at the meeting of interest to you?	4.75	3.00	4.33	4.00	--
Did the discussion increase your understanding of the topic?	4.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	--
Do you feel more capable to advocate for your family member since attending the meeting?	4.25	3.00	4.00	3.60	--
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
Did you observe participants connecting and engaging in peer mentoring?	3.00	4.00	4.50	5.00	4.00
Did the topics spark interest and conversations among participants?	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.50
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
Did the Advisory Committee have the time and resources to plan an effective meeting?	4.00	5.00	5.00	3.50	4.50
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

### **Meeting Evaluation and Advisory Committee Comments:**

*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*