

Huron Respite Network – A History Brief

Approximately 14 years ago various agencies/programs began meeting to explore the possibility of sharing respite resources in Huron County. Interest soon expanded to include Community Living-Central Huron, Community Living - South Huron, Wingham and District Community Living Association, Family-Home Program, Community Support for Families Program, Children=s Aid Society of Huron Perth, Huron Safe Homes for Youth, Community Care Access Centre for Huron, Huron Perth Crisis Intervention Program and the Canadian Mental Health Association. As a result of those meetings, respite resources were shared and together the group explored opportunities to establish a coordinated respite service within the County.

In 1999, the group was successful in obtaining a three year grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, for the coordination of respite services as well as a grant from the Huron United Way for the direct provision of service. Subsequently, the Huron Respite Network established an Advisory Committee, Management Committee, Selection Committee and Appeal Committee. In 2004, the Rural Response for Healthy Children joined the Network membership.

In 2001, the Network successfully submitted a proposal to the Ministry of Community and Social Services for Out of Home Respite Funding for children with high multiple needs. The allocation of this funding coincided with the decision to have the Huron Respite Network manage the adult respite dollars from the MCSS. In January 2004, the Network became responsible for the allocation and management of annualized individual funding for the purpose of out of home respite for people aged 18 and over, who have been identified as requiring additional respite service. And most recently, Huron Respite Network is able to provide regular planned respite to children and youth up to 18 years of age who have mental health concerns. As a result of receiving this funding the Huron Perth Centre for Children and Youth has joined the Huron Respite Network.

In addition to pursuing resources for the provision of respite, the Network continues to develop respite options as well as the ongoing recruitment of In Home Respite Providers and Host Families. Such options include the Huron Respite Network Vacation Respite Home, the provision of 1:1 support for participation in camps, day programs and recreational activities as well as funding to access other respite facilities in and out of the county. The Network values and promotes inclusiveness and recognizes that ongoing education and collaboration with other services providers is essential. This past summer, the Network partnered with several recreation programs within the County and provided a full time Recreational Support Counselor to provide support to children enrolled in programs who needed support to participate. This project was very successful and we hope to be able to provide similar supports this summer in the north of the County.

In the meantime, the Huron Respite Network will strive to listen to families about their respite care needs, develop a respite plan that meets the needs of each individual/family, involve families/individuals in their respite planning, refer to other community services when appropriate, promote safety and security and be sensitive to ethnic, cultural, geographical and language differences

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