

Connecting the Dots for Caregivers

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CONNECTING THE DOTS FOR CAREGIVERS



IN THIS EDITION OF CONNECTING THE DOTS FOR CAREGIVERS, WE SHARE A SERIES OF FIRSTS. WE SHARE DETAILS ABOUT OUR FIRST CO-DESIGN MEETING (AWARENESS AND RECOGNITION) WHERE FAMILY CAREGIVERS AND HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS CAME TOGETHER AS ONE TEAM TO BRAINSTORM IMPROVEMENT IDEAS. YOU'LL MEET PAT WHO, FOR THE FIRST TIME, SHARES HER FEELINGS ABOUT BEING A CAREGIVER AND YOU'LL LEARN ABOUT THE FIRST YOUNG CARERS FORUM AND FIRST YOUNG CARERS AWARENESS DAY IN ONTARIO.

A Co-Design Approach to Improving the Caregiver Experience

January marks a significant milestone in the Connecting the Dots for Caregivers project. For the first time, our awareness and recognition co-design team, made up of family caregivers and healthcare providers, came together to co-design improvements that will improve both the caregiver and healthcare provider experience.

This team will continue to work together for the next few months and will define a plan to create greater awareness and recognition of caregivers in the Huron Perth healthcare system. These ideas will be piloted at STAR Family Health

Team before being rolled-out to other project partners and eventually other healthcare providers in the community.

But our work doesn't end there. Awareness and Recognition is only the first step. We know to improve the experience of caregivers we also need to consider the themes of Communication and Information, as well as Education, Training and Supports. These themes are based on what we heard from the community. You can read more about what the community told us in our December newsletter available [here](#) or at www.hpha.ca.

A big thank you to our first co-design team. Your energy, passion and commitment made the day an overwhelming success.

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Sarah Givens RN, Nurse Navigator, North Perth FHT

Lisa Wolfkamp Social Worker/Care Coordinator, Southwest LHIN

Jeanette Masse, Community Support Services Supervisor, ONE CARE Home and Community Support Services

Barbara Fewster, Family Caregiver

Hannah Veld, Family Caregiver

Lynn Hainer, Family Caregiver

Louise Spandler, Family Caregiver

Pat Langlois, Family Caregiver

Ali Van Straaten, Family Caregiver



Awareness and Recognition



Communication and Information



Education, Training and Supports

Darlene Robertson, Family Caregiver

Heidi Di Diomete, Family Caregiver

Janette Lyoness, Family Caregiver

Rosemarie Richards, Family Caregiver

Sue Christensen, Family Caregiver

Catherine Walsh, Co-Design Lead/ Education

Lisa Cann, Engagement Facilitator



Brainstorm Bytes



During the brainstorming session, two groups of healthcare providers and family caregivers broke off to talk about the challenges and opportunities in improving recognition and awareness of the caregiver role. Here is some of what we heard:

“Often caregivers become caregivers at times of crisis. We need healthcare providers to take the lead” Family Caregiver

“As healthcare providers, we should be asking patients ‘who else should be included in this conversation?’” Healthcare Provider



Meet Pat



During the engagement phase of the project, Connecting the Dots for Caregivers had the pleasure of meeting Pat, who is a caregiver to her husband George.

For the first time, Pat shared what it was like to be a family caregiver. In her video Pat tells her story with such honesty and raw emotion.

Watch Pat's video and stay tuned for our next newsletter where Pat shares how life has changed since she shared her story.

https://youtu.be/LESaKmSe_28

Shining a Light on Young Carers

There are almost 500,000 young carers in Ontario, between the ages of 15 to 24 years old, who contribute to the care of their friends or a family member. On average, they provide 14 hours of care per week which includes the domestic care, emotional support and personal care of their loved one.

Many young carers are at risk of higher stress levels, loneliness, anxiety, having lower self-esteem and experiencing depressive symptoms. There are very few organizations in Ontario that provide services and supports for young carers and a general lack of awareness or understanding of who young carers are, and how they support their family members. While family caregivers are gaining recognition in Ontario, young carers are almost always left out of the discussion.

On November of 2017, The Change Foundation hosted its first ever young carers forum where young carers shared their experiences, journeys, and stories. For many of them, it was the first time they had interacted with other young carers, the first time they were asked about their experience and the first time they felt like sharing their experiences could make a difference.

On January 25th, Connecting the Dots for Caregivers joined friends and partners across Ontario to recognize Young Carers Awareness Day. [Learn more](#)



Young Carers Awareness Day

01.25.18 🍁 #YCAD

About Connecting the Dots for Caregivers

Connecting the Dots for Caregivers is a partnership between The Change Foundation and six health care organizations in Huron Perth. Together, with family caregivers, we are looking at ways to improve the caregiver experience by co-designing solutions, programs and resources that will ensure family caregivers feel valued, respected, engaged and supported in their important role.

The three-year initiative includes four phases:



Phase 1 - Planning and Engaging Family Caregivers - Fall 2016 to Summer 2017)



Phase 2 - Defining Areas of Focus and Co-Designing Solutions with Family Caregivers and Healthcare Providers - Fall 2017 to Spring 2018



Phase 3 - Pilot Services and/or Improvements with Partner Organizations - 2018



Phase 4 - Further rollout of services and improvements - 2018

PROJECT PARTNERS

Family Caregivers in Huron Perth
Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance
Alzheimer Society of Perth County
North Perth Family Health Team
One Care Home and Community Support Services
South West Local Health Integration Network
STAR Family Health Team

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Get Involved! We are looking for family caregivers to be part of future working groups. If you would like to be part of this exciting project, please contact Jennifer Hubbard at 519.527.1650 ext. 4219 or Jennifer.hubbard@hpha.ca



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