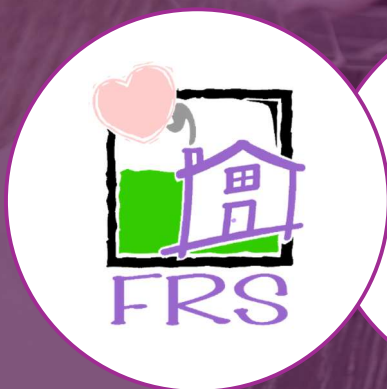




Family Respite Services Windsor – Essex

We believe that all children belong in our community.

2025 – 2026 Annual Report

OUR VISION

A community where families are strong and all children belong.

OUR MISSION

Family Respite Services works in partnership with families who have children with disabilities. We coordinate support and provide short breaks that strengthen families and contribute to children having meaningful lives in their community.

Family Respite Services provides families who have children with disabilities with short breaks from caregiving. This is done through a range of supports and services including assisting families to have an individual care for their child in their home or in the community, providing supports for children in community recreation and activity programs and short stays in one of our licensed respite homes.

Family Respite Services began with the vision of families in Windsor and Essex County. The service is designed to provide individualized, flexible, caring for children from infancy to age 18 who have developmental disabilities or mental health challenges.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

LAURIE TIEGS	BOARD CHAIR
RACHEL HESS	BOARD VICE CHAIR
SONIA BAJAJ	TREASURER
DANIELLE POIRIER	PAST BOARD CHAIR
JUSTINE DANFORD	DIRECTOR
JACLYN LITYNSKY	DIRECTOR
MARIE CLAIRE KUBWIMANA	DIRECTOR
ANNA MIJOVCIC	DIRECTOR
CHRIS MOORE	DIRECTOR
JANET MULLEN	DIRECTOR (RESIGNED SEPTEMBER 2025)
DOUGLAS SARTORI	DIRECTOR
CATHARINE SHANAHAN	EX OFFICIO

MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The past year has been one of successes for the organization as well as contemplation of future possibilities because of internal and external conditions.

The Board has worked diligently to support the organization with our strategic priorities at the forefront of our efforts. We have explored and implemented different ways to respond to the diverse population we serve, including support through Special Services at Home, in home respite and community-based respite. We have been able to provide support for children with complex needs at our Solcz and Spago respite homes, both on the weekend and through specialized supports after school. We have worked on strategies to attract and retain quality staff and have been rewarded with a positive organizational culture and excellent performance.

Our organization continued its steadfast support for children and their families we serve through a range of beneficial initiatives. Our summer programs at the community centres were once again a success, providing access to inclusive activities for children. We are thankful to our donors for helping us provide extra community-based services.

Our delivery for children's mental health respite is anchored in our support services. This initiative provides therapeutic respite, working collaboratively with working with clinicians at children's mental health centres, providing trained direct support providers to address the needs of children with significant mental health concerns.

As we embark on a new fiscal year, our commitment remains. We will continue to deliver compassionate, high-quality services in partnership with families, partners, and the community.

Thank you for being a part of the promotion of our vision, a community where families are strong and all children belong.

With thanks for your support, **Laurie Tiegs – Board Chair**

We continue to hear from families that respite is a critical component of their overall wellbeing. Demand for these services continues to grow. Last year, we received 452 new requests for support, in addition to serving the many families who already rely on our programs.

We know that many families are stretched to capacity, and respite services provide much-needed relief for both parents and children. With our support, children had opportunities to participate in community activities, day camps, and skill-building programs. We also provided assistance to children with complex needs through our respite resources, Urgent Response Services, and Complex Special Needs funding.

This year, we expanded access to our therapeutic mental health respite program through a collaboration with Connections Early Years Family Centre and a highly respected local chef who generously volunteered his time. We also transitioned to the Respite Now recruitment and matching platform, enabling us to continue connecting families with qualified direct support providers.

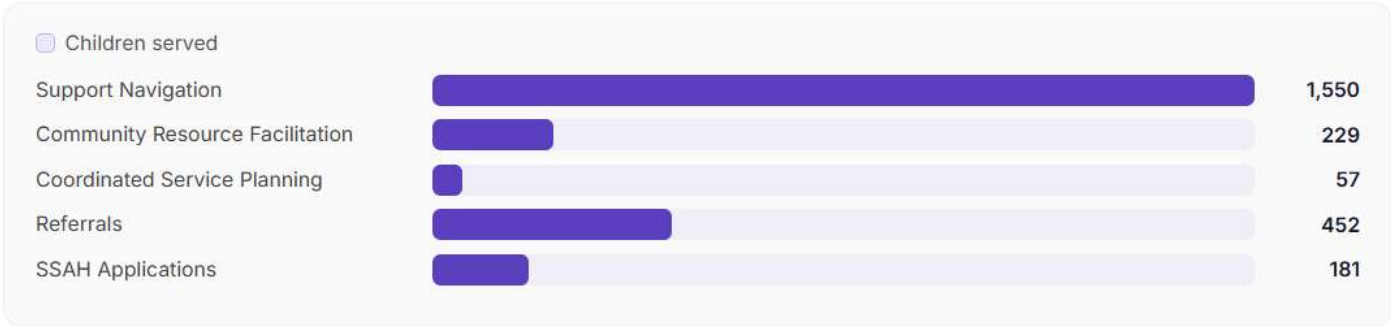
We are deeply grateful to the hundreds of direct support providers who deliver this vital service, to our dedicated staff who respond with compassion and commitment, to the community members who support our work, and to our Board of Directors for their leadership and guidance.

Catharine Shanahan – Executive Director

YEAR IN REVIEW



NAVIGATION & COORDINATION SERVICES

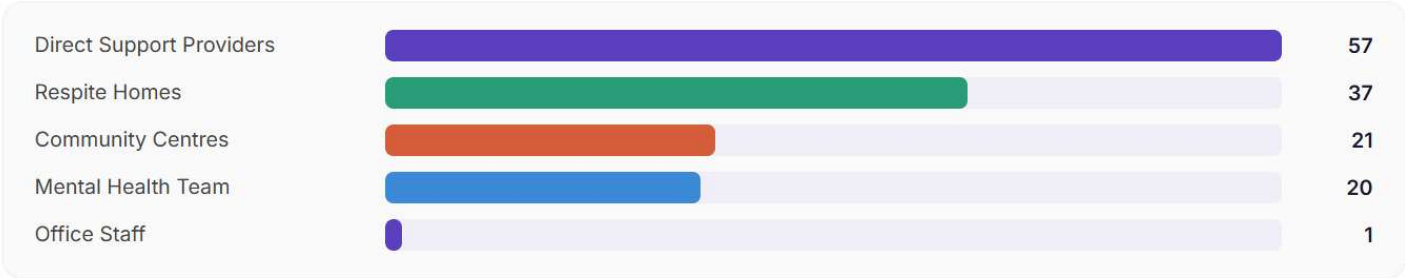


DIRECT SUPPORT PROGRAMS

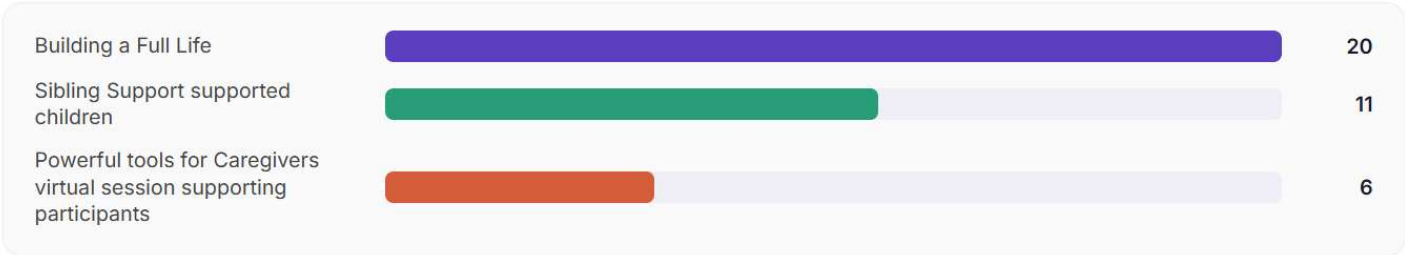
PROGRAM	CHILDREN	HOURS / YR
Community Centre Programs	135	8,231
Mental Health Circle of Security	15	118
Ministry Funded Family Based Direct Support / Respite	491	30,442
Ministry Funded Mental Health Direct Support	119	4,456
Other FRS Administered Respite	15	1,195
Purchased Supports at Solcz Home	13	
Spago Home Day Camps	11	2,993
Spago Home Residential	6	21,720
Special Out of Home for children with complex needs	8	852
Specialized Respite	27	10,630
SSAH FRS Managed Authorizations	341	
Summer Support In-Home	105	2,854
Weekend with Friends Program & Day Camps	48	11,270

YEAR IN REVIEW

RECRUITMENT



SUPPORT



Other Community Initiatives	- Planning for Success - Enhancing Family Support for Education - Family Safety and Well Being Community Coordinating Committee - Transition Planning
Family Engagement	The family engagement committee continued to provide input for the program. A Trunk or Treat activity was held, and planning occurred for a spring event.
Other	Christmas gifts from the Optimist Club Mother's Spa Event

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Respite is a way for creative partnerships to support families.	- Refresh Day Spa - Adventure Bay - Estate of Health - Caesars Windsor - Best Western - Spago - Antoninos Original Pizza - Jose's Bar & Grill - Anchor Coffee House
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A FAMILY TESTIMONIAL: Nyamuoch

I am a mother of two boys both diagnosed with autism and life was very stressful, having dealt with two energetic boys that run up and down all day long. I could not afford to hire a reliable worker and that is where FRS came to rescue me from losing my mind. My boys now have a worker that comes to my house to help the boys with activities so I can have time to myself.



Having said that, having an FRS has been a great benefit for my family. Their support has allowed my children to be introduced to new learning activities, engage with new people, and has provided them with meaningful teachings though their knowledge on special needs. Their dedication has made a noticeable difference in how my kids go about their day-to-day routine.

In addition to that, having an FRS has helped my family as a whole. Their assistance has made it easier for us to handle financial matters when it comes to providing new experiences and opportunities for the kids. Most

importantly, they have given us time to rest, recharge, and have some personal time. I am grateful that someone knowledgeable and trustworthy is caring for my children. - **Nyamuoch**

DIRECT SUPPORT PROVIDER: Amanda Beety

The importance of working as a DSP has added value to my days, potential, to my heart and soul.

We all have something to learn from one another...when we learn we earn! The children are brilliant and extraordinary. I love observing their creative self expression and uniqueness.

Respite for me is both an honour and privilege. Each family I work with, we are a team, no separation.

It is a celebration of coming together for a greater good. Through solid communication and consistency we set goals and focus, some of the goals and focus involve reading, printing, cursive writing and workbook sheets, a trip to the park, running errands together, learning how to pay the cashier on an outing, a peace filled presence to administer medicine and positive affirmations to support self esteem and behaviour. Trips to the library that include learning to check out our own books using technology, being social with the staff and while we are there we check out the community board for some extra interests; so we can tell our other friends about all the cool stuff going on in our community! We remember to use our manners and to lead by example. During the summer months we have fun playing at the splash pads, having picnics in local parks, being outdoors with all the smells, feels and colours in full bloom. We laugh and praise each other, talk about life, our hopes, dreams and wishes. For me Not only do I reflect and see the growth of the child, I see we are ALL growing and developing together mentally, emotionally and spiritually too as A FAMILY.

I have much gratitude for our time and energy shared and I am so thankful to be apart of their journey.

- Amanda Beety



IMPACT OF RESPITE CARE SURVEY

RESPITE IMPACT

98%

responded to the survey that the use of respite made a positive difference to their family

Over 40% reported that it allowed them, as a parent, to take care of their own health and well-being.



40%+

Over 50% reported that it benefited their child with increased opportunities to try new things or participate in activities they enjoy.



50%+

PARENTS REPORTED THAT IF THEIR RESPITE SUPPORT ENDED:

“It would greatly affect our quality of life and support for our child”

“We have no family nearby, so having no respite would impact the quality of life and mental health of me and my husband”

“Relationships would be very strained without respite”

“Having the time to calm down and take a much-needed break is very important to my mental health”

“It would have a profound impact to lose our respite. My child can experience things I’m not able to bring him to because of health issues.”

“You can’t pour from an empty cup...It would affect the quality of care for our children”

“I’m not sure where our family would be without the support and hope given by FRS.”

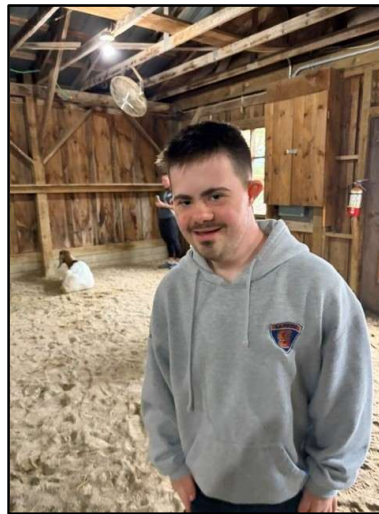
SPAGO RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

Spago is an accessible home that provides respite for youth with exceptionalities. Weekend respite gives families a chance to have a break while the youth are having a fun-filled weekend at Spago! The Spago home provides many opportunities to join community activities with their peers, enjoying places they may not have the support to attend regularly. Adventure Bay, Bowling, Colasanti's, neighbourhood parks, splashpads and seasonal activities throughout Essex County are a few of their favourite places to attend.

Our goal is to provide care for the children in a home-like environment that is fun and nurturing. Currently four children/youth live at the home in partnership with WECAS.



Judah is all smiles when he goes to Spago. We can tell he looks forward to it, and it shows he is excited. We are so blessed to have this opportunity for him and to give us a great as a family. It gives Judah a chance to socialize and experience having a sleepover and being a teenager. I'm sure he does not mind having a break from his parents too!!



David enjoys coming to Spago and venturing into the community. He loves bowling, swimming and checking out new places with his friends.



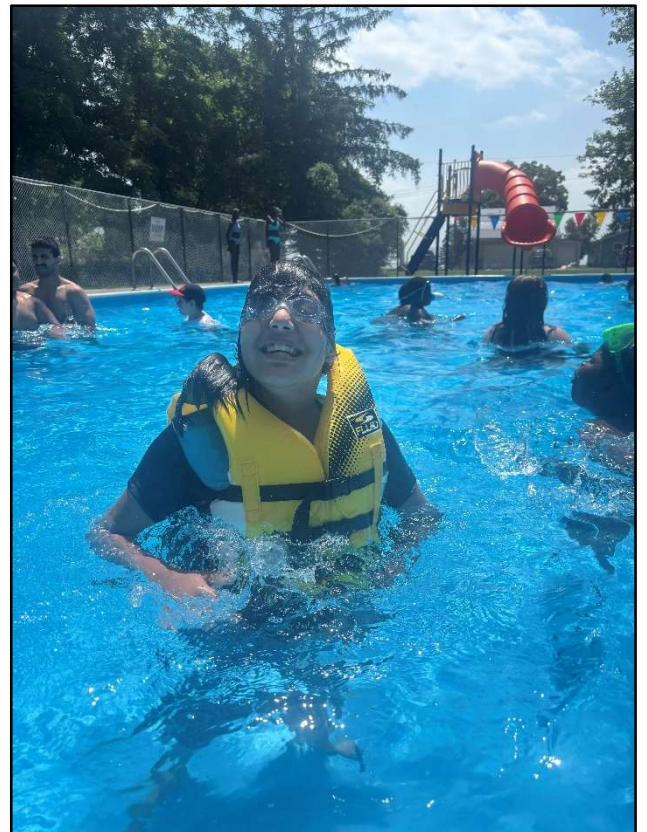
Staff enjoy utilizing the many accessible pools available within the city and the County. One of the more favourite activities includes hitting the waterslides at Adventure Bay, the easy entry at the Atlas Tube Recreation or the wave pool at the Vollmer Recreation to name a few!

SOLCZ FAMILY RESPITE HOME



The Solcz Family Respite Home provides support to youth in several ways, including the Weekend with Friends program where up to 5 youths, aged 8-18 with developmental disabilities, can spend the weekend alongside their peers in a nurturing, home-like environment. Activities occur inside and outside of the home around the clock, including crafts and games, and the use of the beautiful backyard play structure and splash pad. One of our biggest goals within this program is to foster community involvement and peer engagement. Youth using this program can explore the community through a variety of outings and activities that are tailored to their unique needs and interests. Some of these engagements include visiting local swimming pools and splash pads, going to places like malls, arcades, and indoor playgrounds, as well as exploring local markets and events. This program allows youth the opportunity to have a fun weekend away with their peers, while providing parents and caregivers with the time to rest and recharge.

We also run a summer day camp program out of the Solcz Family Respite Home during the months of July and August. Last year, our summer day camp prioritized weekly themed activities as well as community outings. We were even fortunate enough to join the Kiwanis Sunshine Point camp in Harrow, where youth got to spend the days outside, meeting new friends and participating in a variety of activities like tie-die, volleyball, and swimming! This was a special addition to some of our camp weeks that we were so excited to introduce to families. Throughout the year, we continued to provide support at the home as well, through programs such as Urgent Response Services and Complex Special Needs. This out-of-home respite is essential for youth who may need a higher level of care or specialized support. This also allows consistency in building rapport and relationships with these youth, ensuring their time with us is meaningful and engaging.



MENTAL HEALTH RESPITE PROGRAMS



Funding is provided to Family Respite Services as a core children's mental health service provider. Working collaboratively with local children's mental health agencies, including Maryvale, HDGH/Regional Children's Centre, and Children First, we provide dedicated direct support staff who use respite time to help children work toward goals identified within their mental health treatment plans.

Children served are typically between the ages of 4 and 18. During respite visits, support may focus on emotional regulation, building healthy peer and family relationships, strengthening self-esteem, developing coping skills, and supporting trauma recovery. Services are individualized to each child's needs and are designed to reinforce therapeutic goals in a community-based setting.

Most support plans involve weekly one-to-one sessions with the child over 20 weeks, providing consistent opportunities to

practice skills, build confidence, and support positive mental health outcomes.

Our staff members also provided support in two group locations, with Connections Early Years Centre and a Cooking Group with local chef, Robert Catherine.

MENTAL HEALTH WORKER: Kristopher Giachini

Working as both a mental health respite worker and direct support provider for Family Respite Services Windsor - Essex has been a profoundly rewarding chapter in my professional journey. There is no greater joy than witnessing firsthand the transformation of the youth we serve as they master new skills, build resilience, and discover their own unique potentials. Knowing that our guidance and support help provide the foundation for these milestones makes every challenge worthwhile, reaffirming my commitment to helping create a community where families are strong and all children belong. - **Kristopher Giachini**

MENTAL HEALTH WORKER: Rachel Picard

Working as a mental health worker has been one of the most meaningful and rewarding experiences of my life. Having the opportunity to support children and youth through both their successes and challenges has taught me invaluable lessons about resilience, compassion, patience, and the importance of building trusting relationships. Every child is unique, and being able to meet them where they are, support their growth, and celebrate their achievements has brought me a great sense of purpose.



One of the aspects I enjoy most about this role is the opportunity to create positive and lasting connections with the children I support. Whether it is helping them develop new skills, navigate difficult emotions, build confidence, or simply providing a safe and supportive presence, I have seen firsthand how meaningful relationships can make a difference in a child's life. Even the smallest moments, sharing a laugh, helping a child overcome a fear, or watching them achieve a goal they once thought was impossible, have made this work incredibly fulfilling.

This role has also had a significant impact on my personal and professional growth. It has strengthened my communication skills, deepened my understanding of mental health, and reinforced the importance of empathy and advocacy. Through working closely with children, families, and colleagues, I have gained valuable experience that has helped shape my future career goals and broadened my perspective on the challenges many individuals face.

The greatest gift of this role was the children themselves. Their strength, honesty, creativity, and resilience continue to inspire me every day. They have taught me the importance of patience, celebrating small victories, and approaching every situation with kindness and understanding. While I strive to make a positive impact on their lives, I know that they have had an equally profound impact on mine.

I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to be part of these children's journeys and to contribute to an environment where they feel supported, valued, and understood. Working as a mental health worker has not only enhanced my career path but has also enriched my life in ways I never expected. It has reaffirmed my passion for helping others and strengthened my commitment to making a positive difference in the lives of those I serve. - **Rachel Picard**

MENTAL HEALTH WORKER: Zain Khan

What I enjoy most about being a Mental Health Worker is the opportunity to build meaningful relationships with children and families from diverse backgrounds. Every child is unique, and I appreciate being able to provide individualized support that helps them feel included and valued. I enjoy introducing children to new activities and encouraging them to step outside their comfort zones while giving children the reassurance that they are never alone and there is always someone who believes in them no matter what stage they are in life. Knowing that I can be a trusted and supportive person in a child's life is what makes this role so fulfilling for me.

What the role has meant to me:

This role has taught me the true meaning of being present. In a world where people are often distracted or in a rush, I have learned that some of the most meaningful connections are built by simply giving someone your full attention. The children and families I have worked with have shown me that support is not measured by big moments, but by showing up consistently and making someone feel valued. Being trusted to play a role in a child's developmental journey is something I carry with me long after each shift ends, and it is an experience that has shaped the way I view leadership, compassion, and human connection. – **Zain Khan**



SIBLING GROUP PROGRAM

Family Respite Services holds a sibling support group for brothers and sisters of those with developmental and/or physical disabilities. Our sibling group is designed for children aged 8 to 13. This group creates an opportunity for siblings to connect with other children who might have similar experiences, build friendships, receive peer support, have a safe environment to share, learn about their sibling with a disability, and have fun! Our Sibling group consists of recreational activities, outside time, crafts, sharing/discussion circles, and a shared meal. Our sibling group offers fun and rewarding opportunities for siblings!

The program provides a supportive space where siblings of children with developmental and physical disabilities can connect, build friendships, and share experiences with peers. Through recreational activities, group discussions, and shared meals, participants develop confidence, strengthen social connections, and gain a greater sense of belonging. The program helps foster emotional well-being while creating positive and lasting peer relationships. **11 children were supported this past fiscal year.**



COMMUNITY CENTRE SUMMER PROGRAMS

This past year, Family Respite Services supported children and youth at community centre-run summer day camp programs. **We provided support at 8 separate locations across Windsor-Essex County, reaching over 100 families.** Children were able to participate in swimming, sports, crafts, and more. Many of the camps took weekly field trips to places like Bowling, Colasanti's, Cannon Cove, Adventure Bay, Miniature Golf, while engaging in exciting themes week to week. This valuable partnership allowed children with exceptionalities the opportunity to fully participate in local summer camps, alongside their peers. Fostering belonging and inclusion, this program allowed children the chance to fully experience going to camp. With tailored support to each individual child, our staff helped children form meaningful connections within their community, enhance their socialization, and removed barriers to provide a fun, enriching experience.

We appreciate the partnerships with the municipalities of Windsor, LaSalle, Lakeshore, Tecumseh, and Leamington, and the support received from Canada Summer Jobs, the Sisters of St. Joseph, Emmanuel United Church, BERL Endowment Fund and community donations, which made this possible.



Summer Support Program

In addition to the community centre programs, FRS provides limited funding for school-aged children's activities and respite support. **Last year, we supported 105 children, making their summer a bit more active and fun.**

“Summer camps mean so much to our family because it gives our son the opportunity to be included, participate alongside other children, and build friendships. The support he receives from Family Respite helps him continue to grow, develop new skills, and gain confidence while enjoying experiences that every child deserves. Seeing him welcomed, engaged, and able to connect with others is truly Invaluable to us and gives us great

comfort. We cannot express enough how grateful we are!” – **Jennifer**



FUNDRAISING AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

FRS is truly fortunate to have base funding from the Ontario government; we know however that the demand for respite services in our community is greater than the resources available. The support from our community through fundraising and grants is therefore vital to meet the needs of the children and families we serve. The community as a whole is made stronger and more inclusive when children with disabilities and their families are given the opportunity to more meaningfully participate and contribute.

The donations and grants Family Respite Services is grateful to receive enables our Agency to widen our support in several ways.

Community Support Enables FRS To:

- Support children with disabilities to attend community day camps as well as Summer Camps.
- Provide dedicated opportunities for teens for community recreation groups to support skill building, friendships and community inclusion.
- Provide respite for some families who have children with physical disabilities.
- Provide gifts for 120 children at Christmas with thanks to the **St. Clair Optimist Club**
- Create wonderful respite opportunities for children and caregivers
- Raise funds for the Our Backyard (The OB) at our Spago home.
- Assist families who need extra support due to their family situation.
- Add resources to our “Respitivity” program which focuses on ways to nurture self-care for parents and families. With generous support from several community partners including **Caesars Windsor**.



FRS is proud to partner with many community Groups, Individuals and Organizations to help support the Children and Families we serve.



- We appreciate the ongoing generosity of **Bluewater Pools, Spas and Patio Furniture** who sponsor the Bluewater Pools Raffle, with a donation of \$5000 supporting a range of Respite Programs and Services.

- **Tepperman's** donated a 65" LG 4K TV as the Second Prize in this year's Raffle. The winners of the raffle this year were 1. Mark Goulet 2. Richard Byerley 3. Elizabeth Alfonso
- The **Sisters of St. Joseph** provided a grant of \$5000 to assist with day camp opportunities at Gino Marcus Community Centre.
- **Belle River Legion Ladies Auxiliary** whose support helps fund respite programs.
- Participants and sponsors, including **Sydney Mitton, Bartlet Richardes, Janisse Orthodontics, Monarch Business, Geo T. White, NASR, VIA ITALIA, and Experience Home Health** for our 25th Annual Walk on Erie St. event, which raised \$21,014.



FUNDRAISING AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT



- Host a fun Hallowe'en Trunk or Treat event through the generous sponsorship of **Sam Sinjari** and in partnership with **the Real Canadian SUPERSTORE** on Dougall and CUPE Local 9104.



- **Caesars Windsor**, who renewed its support for our Respite Program.
- The **Students & Administration at Essex Public School** raised over \$1,500.00 through their Doughnut Fundraiser.

- Provide additional respite supports through partnerships with retailers like:
 - **Anna's Garden Home and Wellness** for the opportunity to raise funds at Christmas and in the spring.



- **Williams Food Equipment** for inviting us to participate in their Sharpen for Cause initiative.

- **Purdys Chocolatier** for their support for our Spring Holiday Sweet Relief Campaign



- We are so thankful to the many sponsors and donors and to those who have attended fundraising events, who donate regularly or to support campaigns like Giving Tuesday or this Year's Holiday Ask Campaign.

We are proud to have the opportunity to serve children with disabilities and their families across the Windsor/Essex region. The demand for our services continues to grow and it is only through partnerships with these and many other community organizations that we can hope to meet the needs of our community. Together, we build a more inclusive community where families are strong and all children belong.

Thank you to our partners, here are some of the moments and initiatives in 2025-2026 that through this incredible community support brought joy and comfort to the children and families we serve.



POWERFUL TOOLS FOR CAREGIVERS

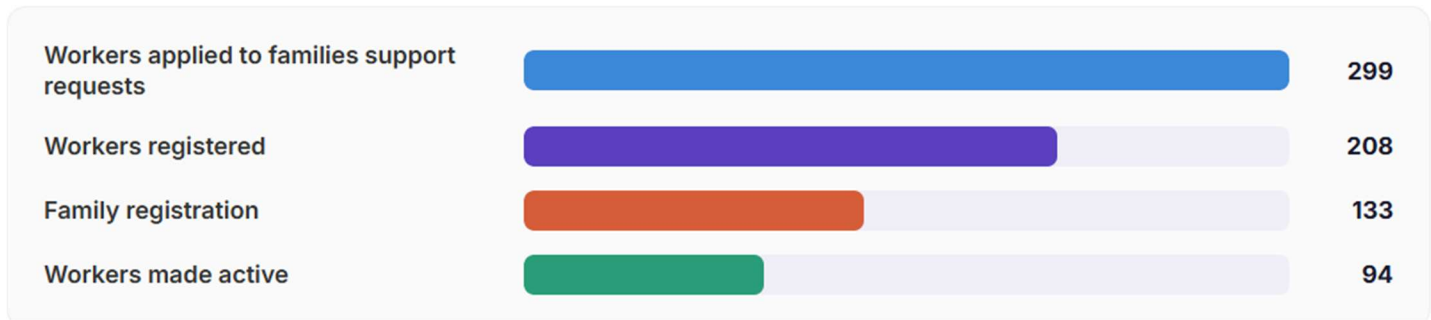
Powerful Tools for Caregivers is a 6-week educational group offered to caregivers who are caring for a child with a disability or mental health concern. The group focuses on offering information on self-care, managing emotions, building self-confidence, and building awareness of community resources. While focusing on these distinct aspects, there is also an opportunity to build connections in the community with other caregivers. This educational group offers an opportunity for caregivers to address caregiving challenges, adapt tools for their self-care, and learn innovative approaches they might be able to use in their day-to-day. Powerful Tools for Caregivers was held virtually once in 2025 and served 6 individuals. This group will be run 2 times per year on an on-going basis.

RESPITE NOW: CONNECTING FAMILIES AND CARE PROFESSIONALS



Within the last year, **Family Respite Services** adopted **Respite Now**—a free, user-friendly app that connects individuals seeking care with Independent Support Workers. Our mission is simple: build a supportive community that empowers both families and care professionals. Whether you need short-term relief or want to provide compassionate support, Respite Now makes matching efficient and seamless. <https://respite-now.com/>

Here is a summary of our platform usage from **May 2025 to March 2026**:



STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS: 2025-2026

REVENUE

Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services		\$2,840,574
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care		\$384,241
Special Services at Home Funding (individual child contracts)		\$1,156,828
WECAS Purchased Supports		\$437,168
Purchased Supports		\$483,797
Grants		\$119,457
Fundraising and Donations		\$139,511
Interest on Accounts and Investments		\$32,491
Offsetting Revenue & Family Contributions		\$348,564
Other		\$28,469
Total Revenue		\$5,971,100

EXPENSES

Salaries & Benefits		\$1,350,224
Direct Support Salaries & Benefits		\$1,546,716
Respite Supports		\$1,153,760
Other Program Expenses		\$1,377,126
Administration		\$348,673
Fundraising Costs		\$23,892
Other		\$105,781
Total Expenses		\$5,906,172

EXCESS (SHORTFALL) REVENUE OVER EXPENSES

Excess (shortfall) revenue over expenses		\$64,928
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Contact Us

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