

ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024



Rural
Response
for Healthy
Children

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ABOUT US

Rural Response for Healthy Children is a non-profit organization serving families in Huron-Perth, Ontario.

Our team offers education and support groups, activities, and workshops for parents and caregivers who are experiencing life transitions or coping with vulnerable situations.

We also educate children and youth with a focus on social and emotional learning, mental well-being, and personal safety at home, in the community, and online.

VISION

A responsive community that supports, nurtures and strengthens families and children.

MISSION

Helping families and children to create an environment of well-being through community engagement and capacity building.

VALUES

Responsiveness • Making Connections • Capacity Building
Caring • Fairness • Accessibility

OUR PEOPLE

Thank you to the community volunteers who hold us accountable to our vision of a responsive community that supports, nurtures and strengthens families and children.

Also, gratitude to a staff team who live our mission every day by helping families and children create an environment of well-being through community engagement and capacity building.

THE BOARD

Shannon Beattie - Secretary
Kerri Lyn Courtney
Jaleena Goldsworthy
Wendy Hutton
Karen Kan - Vice Chair
Mark King
Judy Lambers - Treasurer
Erin Roy
Christina VanPoucke - Chair
Jessica Van Raay
Amanda Zehr

THE STAFF

Nicole Bedard
Katrina Clarke - Executive Director
Susan Cowman
Kristi Michel
Jill Robertson
Alex Robinson



WHAT'S NEW THIS YEAR

Early last year, we moved into our new office space, located within the Huron-Perth Children's Aid Society building at 413 MacEwan Street in Goderich. After more than two years of being fully remote, we are all grateful for the opportunity to share a hybrid working space where we host team meetings, share resources, and meet with community partners.

In the spring of 2023, we learned we were the successful recipients of a 2-year Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) Resilient Communities Fund grant in the amount of \$121,000. This grant supports the addition of one full-time Communications Specialist team member for two years, the development of a long-term strategic plan, and monthly activities to support the well-being of team members.

In May, we launched a virtual book study of the book *What Happened to You: Conversations on Trauma, Resilience, and Healing* by Dr. Bruce Perry and Oprah Winfrey. This community learning experience was enjoyed by about 40 parents and community professionals, and was supported by a New Initiatives grant offered by United Way Perth-Huron.

On the Saturday of Father's Day weekend, we joined Virtual High School in hosting Run4Kids, a 5km fun-run in support of Rural Response for Healthy Children. Almost \$3000 was raised to support family programming.

In September, we launched SWELL: Strengthening Well-Being through Emotional Learning and Leadership in partnership with Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board. Through SWELL, our aim is to support the well-being of entire school communities by engaging in SEL learning and fostering healthy relationships among students, teachers, school teams, and families.

OUR WORK

In 2023, we served over 350 families in family programs and approximately 600 students through classroom programs.

Our family programs:

- Our Grandparents Raising Grandchildren peer support group met bi-weekly, in-person and virtually. This group saw significant growth this year, and continues to be an important resource for grandparent primary caregivers.
- We offered weekly drop-in sessions at Huron Women's Shelter and second-stage housing to support families escaping domestic violence.
- Staff joined the Huron County Food and Distribution Centre on their monthly rounds with the Mobile Food Bank. Parent resource packages and child-friendly activities were distributed to over 110 families.
- Dads/Male Caregivers & Kids Night at the Museum took place monthly in partnership with Huron County Museum, alternating between virtual and in-person programming, promoting involved fatherhood. About 40 families took part, some attending monthly.
- Crockpot Family Cooking was offered twice this year, helping close to 20 families provide healthy, budget-friendly meals in their homes.
- Nobody's Perfect Parenting and Circle of Security Parenting were offered virtually and in-person to help parents and caregivers develop positive-parenting skills and improve their family dynamics.
- The Family Community Garden program was enjoyed by families in Goderich, who had the opportunity to learn about growing healthy foods and incorporating healthy eating habits into their day-to-day life.



- Family Walk & Talk took place, supporting parents and young children to get together and engage in healthy movement.
- Family Nature Explorers is a new program offered in partnership with Seeds Rooted in Youth, supporting families in learning about the natural world around them through the seasons.
- Sibshops took place monthly, in partnership with Community Support for Families, as a valuable group for children who have a sibling with a disability.
- Caregiver Connections was offered, in partnership with Huron Respite Network, for parents/caregivers of a child with a disability or mental health concern.

HURON COUNTY CHRISTMAS BUREAU

The Huron County Christmas Bureau raised over \$275,000 towards Christmas gifts for children in need. 500 families in Huron County were supported with grocery and retail gift cards, ensuring over 1300 children had gifts under the tree this year.



OUR SUPPORTERS

The Public Health Agency of Canada continues to invest in our community with the ongoing support of the Community Action Program for Children (CAPC). This funding was extended in 2023 for an additional two years.

The Ontario Trillium Foundation has supported our organization in the form of a Resilient Communities Fund grant. These funds support additional staffing, establishing a staff well-being program, and the development of a long-term strategic plan.

The Government of Canada supported our Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Peer Support Group with a New Horizons for Seniors Program grant. This funding allowed us to enhance and grow this important program.

United Way Perth-Huron provided \$6,000 in support of a new initiative, allowing us to establish a virtual book study for parents and professionals.

We gratefully received a donation of \$7,000 from The McCall MacBain Foundation to support food security initiatives in our region.

Compass Minerals and Unifor 16-0 made a significant donation of \$6,000 in support of Rural Response for Healthy Children programming.

We are also very grateful to the individuals and businesses in Huron County and area who support our work. Every donation makes a difference in improving the well-being of children and families in our community.

OUR IMPACT

We are grateful to our program participants, who have chosen us as their partners in improving the well-being of their children, their students, their communities, and themselves. We are privileged to work with each of them.

TESTIMONIALS

"We love this program and look forward to it each month. It is great having an activity dedicated to Dads and their kids. We love going to the Museum and have learned lots from the programs."

"I would be lost without this program! It helps me to strengthen the bond of our family unit."

"I've thoroughly enjoyed this group and continue enjoying it. I have learned so much, and don't feel as alone. I didn't know that a group like this even existed until I stumbled upon it. The facilitator is amazing - very understanding and caring towards our needs. It's been nice socializing as I was starting to isolate myself. It's been quite a struggle, but this group has helped me realize I'm not alone. Thank you from the bottom of my heart."


"The facilitator does an excellent job engaging all students! The materials provided are being used in our classroom multiple times a day, and are both user-friendly and helpful. Overall, excellent time spent and an investment in helping all of my students, and myself to be a better teacher. Would highly recommend this to any class, teacher or family."

“Thank you RRHC for providing professionals in Huron County with this opportunity! I really appreciated the learnings from this book, as well as the opportunity to discuss it with others from different professions in our community! I truly feel that this opportunity enhanced community capacity and supported relationship building among professionals. I will be sharing my copy of the book with others in my personal life for their learning as well. Thank you again!!”

FINANCIAL REPORT

A copy of our 2023-24 Audited Financial Statements, prepared by Seebach & Co., is available for review on our website, or by request at mail@rrhc.on.ca.





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