



2020-2021

# ANNUAL REPORT

## RURAL RESPONSE FOR HEALTHY CHILDREN

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PO Box 687 Clinton Ontario N0M 1L0  
519-482-8777 [mail@rrhc.on.ca](mailto:mail@rrhc.on.ca)  
[www.rrhc.on.ca](http://www.rrhc.on.ca)

# BOARD & STAFF

## THE BOARD

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## THE STAFF

Susan Cowman  
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Kristi Michel  
Nicole O'Neill  
Jennifer Reaburn  
Genelle Reid  
Jill Robertson

Thank you to the community volunteers who dedicate their time to hold the organization accountable for striving for the vision of a responsive community that supports, nurtures and strengthens families and children. Also gratitude to a staff team who collaborate to achieve the organization's mission of helping families and children create an environment of well-being through community engagement and capacity building.

# PANDEMIC RESPONSE

We don't even know where to begin with the overwhelming effort by the team and community to respond in the pandemic.

- A \$25,000 donation from an anonymous Foundation for pandemic response
- A donation of \$5000 grocery gift cards from Second Harvest and Loblaws (Zehrs)
- A \$10,000 contribution from Perth Huron United Way to purchase grocery gift cards for high need families we support through Huron Respite Network, Healthy Babies program and Huron Women's Shelter.
- An anonymous local business donated boxes of baby diapers and wipes
- Coordinating with Huron Food Bank Distribution Center the creation of healthy meal kits and snack kits for bi-weekly delivery by porch drop to our grandparents raising grandchildren families

# PANDEMIC RESPONSE



- Collaborating with Avon Maitland District School Board to create bi-weekly resiliency activity kits for families with students from Kindergarten to Grade 8. We even did porch deliveries and mail-outs in the early days of the pandemic!
- Weekly interviews with Roz and Mark on The Staysh so our team could share parenting tips to cope with all the changes at home.
- Between March and August, the team made weekly calls to past clients as well as a group of twenty residents at Goderich Place.
- Through emergency funding from the Government of Canada's commitment to seniors and our organization's existing relationship with Service Canada, we purchased and distributed iPads through Alzheimer's Society of Huron, supported OneCare's Grocery Delivery program, invested in Gateway Rural Health's Lonely No More program and supported senior and volunteer program to decrease isolation at the Mackay Centre in Goderich and the Bayfield Centre for the Arts.



# LET LOVE GO VIRAL

**Bethany Davidson** approached us in April 2020 with an idea. Her WorldRooted initiative felt a need to respond to local community at the start of the pandemic. In collaboration with in-house artist, **Genelle Reid**, the two evolved the Let Love Go Viral campaign. Posters, t-shirts (thanks **Hijinks - Steve Dawe**), stickers and even a puzzle produced by a social enterprise in Toronto strived to share our message of showing community love.

They engaged their network in helping to spread the word and leverage local talent to inspire others to help. In May, **Ryan Malcolm**, a real estate agent with **Royale LePage in Goderich**, and **The Staysh** teamed up to bring us a much-needed evening of live music streamed on Facebook.

Thousands of dollars in donations from individuals and local businesses, such as **Corrie's Foodland Clinton**, helped us purchase food and gas gift cards for families.

**THANK YOU SO MUCH!!!!**



# OUR WORK

## YOUTH SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING

The 2020-2021 school year was our final project year, funded by Ontario Trillium Foundation, to evolve the model of youth-led mental health and well-being (MHWB) initiatives and evaluation tools.

Thanks to the collaboration with AMDSB, the UWO and Queen's research team and most importantly, a group of dedicated and amazing student leaders, YOU MATTER 2.0 launched in January. Over 250 students and their teachers met via Zoom, from their homes during a stay-at-home order, to kick-start planning of school MHWB projects for the schools. The student planning group met Minister Lecce, Lisa Thompson M.P.P. Huron Bruce and Randy Pettapiece M.P.P. Perth Wellington to share their experiences about MHWB, the pandemic and what works in rural schools.

A celebration event with the students is planned for June 2021.



# OUR WORK

## COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN

Public Health Agency of Canada continues to invest in Huron County through our ongoing agreement with the Community Action Program for Children. The intention of the investment is to improve healthy child development.

This year, our partnerships with community organizations grew stronger and expanded as we strived to connect with as many families as possible.

We stayed connected to families through porch visits to drop-off food and activity kits and by traveling with the Mobile Food Truck. We strengthened our commitment to Huron Women's Shelter and Second Stage Housing through weekly in-person visits to each location. We delivered programs, such as Circle of Security, with high participation rates due to the convenience of accessing services from home.



# OUR WORK

## GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN

With an investment from New Horizon's for Senior program, we built capacity and awareness about grandparents who are raising grandchildren.

Through coaching and mentoring amongst the group, some grandparents decided to share their experiences to help people understand how Rural Response helps and what changed in their lives when their grandchildren moved into their homes.

We produced a video, in collaboration with Perth Huron United Way, to build understanding and had an interview on The Staysh that received over 1300 views. Stories were also shared with a group of engaged seniors from the Mackay Center in Goderich via zoom discussion.

Visit our web site to watch the video and learn more  
<http://www.rrhc.on.ca/grandparentsraisinggrandchildren>





# ORGANIZATION GROWTH

Rural Response for Healthy Children undertook a significant strategic decision to shift to permanent remote work.

The organization no longer has a physical office location. The team work from home and travel to smaller communities to provide support and services to families. This means that the interim phase of "working from home in a pandemic" will naturally flow into "working from home after the pandemic".

We can't wait to return to in-person groups again. Every time we planned an in-person outdoor group, the pandemic foiled us with another stay-at-home order.

We also committed to increasing social media presence and building content for a newly designed web site.

# RESPONSE



*When participants share their feedback it helps us improve our delivery and content. Thank you to all our participants from this past year.*

- I participated in this program virtually, via zoom. It was very well done, given they had to adapt from their typical type of presentations. Actually, I enjoyed the online platform, as it would have been VERY unlikely that I would have participated if it was in person. Overall, a great first experiences with Rural Response.
- The program was great. I wish there were more examples of "what to do when " and how to say things versus what not to say. I have learned a lot of useful strategies and I am thankful.
- It was really helpful at getting myself and my partner to be on the same page about parenting.
- Such a great presentation for both parents and educators, especially now with so many people experiencing so many different situations and emotions . Great tool to better understand good mental health. Well done.