

COVID-19 and Mental Health Challenges

In March, 2020 we were just beginning to learn about coronavirus disease and adjusting to life in quarantine. We have now been living with prolonged periods of stress, loss and restrictions that the virus brought with it for over a year now. This has taken a toll on the mental health of us all, in particular, the vulnerable young families that we serve at the Rose of Durham.

Our young parents are struggling with Covid stress, feelings of fear, anger, sadness, worry, numbness, frustration and loneliness which they carry with them throughout their days as they try to care for their children. The impact of this constant toxic stress is seen in the parent's ability to cope. On a daily basis we are seeing young parents struggle with increased anxiety and heightened mental health concerns. Science also

teaches us that toxic stress can be harmful to the brain development of infants and toddlers. Parents are worried not only about themselves, but the long-term effects on their children; not just physically but the long-term mental health implications of COVID-19.

strategies will help the young parent and in turn the children they care for become more resilient. Building resiliency is optimal for healthy mental health for both parent and baby.

Anna Aitchison
General Manager

Research in a cross-national online survey across 64 countries of pregnant and postpartum women shows a substantial proportion of participants reported high levels of anxiety/depression (31%), post-traumatic stress symptoms (43%), and increased loneliness (53%). Whether and how this affects their infants' development remains to be examined, but based on prior research we know that experiencing stress during sensitive periods of development (pregnancy – age 3) has important implications for parent-infant bonding and infant development, so we really need to continue to learn and intervene more.

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/qa-the-coronavirus-pandemic-mental-health-one-year-later/>

As a community we need to focus our attention on helping young parents to build the capacity to cope with stress in a healthy way. Healthy coping

Healthy Ways to Cope with Stress

- **Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories**, including those on social media. It's good to be informed, but hearing about the pandemic constantly can be upsetting. Consider limiting news to just a couple times a day and disconnecting from phone, tv, and computer screens for a while.
- **Take care of your body.**
 - Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate
 - Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals
 - Exercise regularly
 - Continue with routine preventive measures (such as vaccinations, cancer screenings, etc.) as recommended by your healthcare provider.
 - Avoid excessive alcohol, tobacco, and substance use
 - Get plenty of sleep
 - Get vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine when available
- **Make time to unwind.** Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
- **Connect with others.** Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.
- **Connect with your community or faith-based organizations.** While social distancing measures are in place, try connecting online, through social media, or by phone or mail.

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Our Vision
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Fundraising at the Rose During Covid

The Rose of Durham has always relied on our ability to raise funds for our programs; we do not receive any government funding. We are grateful for the funding we graciously receive from Catholic Charities, but it only covers half of our costs. Our diverse and successful fundraising events every year allow us to be able to provide the supportive programs to our clients. As you can imagine COVID-19 hit us hard last year, and many of the events that we rely on like our Golf Tournament, Monthly Bingo's and Annual Open House to name a few were cancelled; but we were not about to let a pandemic stop us! Creativity and determination were strong within our team, allowing our first ever Virtual Trivia Night to be developed. Fun was had by all as the player's love of Trivia showed through. Congratulations to the winner Michael de la Mothe! Please join us for our next Trivia Night May 20th, 2021.



Our largest annual fundraiser that helps us to be able to offer all the diverse and needed programs to our young families is the Victorian Tea. With an average of 300+ attendees, physically gathering at a venue was out of the question so we were faced with trying to duplicate the successful event virtually. Although much smaller in scale and sadly missing all the wonderful homemade baked treats, we held our very first virtual Victorian Tea. Smaller for sure, but the energy of the night was just as spectacular. Many of our supporters purchased draw tickets and were excited as we announced the winners of the spectacular baskets the Victorian Tea is famous for.



Fundraising during COVID-19 is challenging and The Rose has been greatly affected by the challenges, but we are forever grateful for our dedicated donors who throughout the past year have thought of us and donated from their hearts, have supported our virtual events and have been there for the Rose so we may continue to be there for our most vulnerable of families. Thank you!

Christmas at The Rose

Christmas at the Rose is always a fun and busy time of the year as we see our community support us. As we approached Christmas, 2020 we were concerned as many faced hardships due to the Pandemic. We wondered if we were going to be able to support all our young families who more than ever needed Christmas help.

The Rose of Durham's faithful donors once again were there for our families. We were able to provide 93 Christmas sponsorships and dinners to our most vulnerable of families. We were also able to replenish our layette supply thanks to our Shop for Baby supporters. Thank you to all our sponsors who willingly switched to donating gift cards from the traditional hampers, making it a safe Christmas for all.

A special thank you to the Mitch Marner Foundation. The \$5,000 donation will go very far in supporting our families this year!!! Wonderful meeting you all!!!



Every year the Rose of Durham staff looks forward to the Ontario Motor Sales Shopping Spree. We didn't know if it could happen due to Covid restrictions, but our friends at Ontario Motor Sales did not disappoint and the shopping spree was on. Thank you once again!!



Rose of Durham staff work hard during the Christmas season to ensure that all families receive what they need, but the best part is that they get to spread Christmas Spirit. This year was no different. Our Virtual Christmas Concert was a huge success. All of our talented staff contributed. We danced, sang carols, read stories, played the sax all while our families sang along and enjoyed. Christmas Cheer was in the abundance. Thank you to all!!!

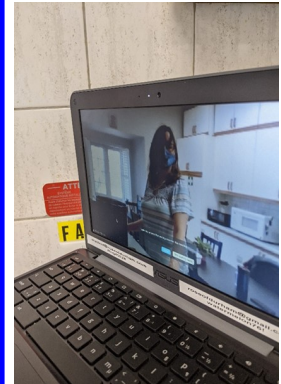
hope 🌹 promise 🌹 new life

Program Spotlight



Our Cooking Program Went Virtual!

Due to the rapid start of the COVID-19 restrictions, our social programs shifted to a new and creative platform. Social programs have been for many of our clients, a way to come together and share in a fun experience. Facilitators and clients were sad to learn that in the wake of the pandemic, social programs would come to an abrupt pause. With a clear understanding of the importance of our cooking program we were able to arrange for our clients to receive supplies at our curbside pickups/delivery, and Ann, our Facilitator, created meals with our families over ZOOM! We have since received great feedback on how helpful this has been for our parents to be able to come together, have fun and share a meal from the comfort of their homes.



Please help us to reduce our costs (and save the trees!) by signing up to receive our newsletter via email instead of paper. If interested, please email deneen.nolte@roseofdurham.com.

Stories From the Heart



Sarah's Story

"You helped me become the Mom I want to be". This was a statement made by Sarah in the card she gave us this past Christmas. Sarah never misses giving the Rose a Christmas card and gift. This year it was homemade fudge, a snow globe, and as always a handmade card that speaks of her child's development through the previous year, along with her parenting gains and her gratitude. This year's card was especially poignant as Sarah is reaching our age limit for service and took the time to share some of her thoughts and feelings around her time as a Rose client. This included the knowledge and skills she has gained, the insights about herself and her parenting, and her thanks that we saw her as capable which in turn helped her believe in herself as a good mom. Sarah became involved with the Rose when she was pregnant. We have worked together through an abusive partner, moving out on her own, using skills and strategies to deal with her anxiety instead of substances, and a diagnosis that her daughter is on the spectrum. Sarah has been an amazing advocate for her daughter who will be attending kindergarten this fall. With assistance, Sarah has accessed and utilized fully the appropriate resources to help her daughter with almost no other supports in her life to help her deal with a child who has special challenges. Sarah's daughter recently had a birthday. They were planning on going to a toy store, so Sarah prepared her daughter by going through the store online and deciding ahead of time what to put in their cart. What an amazing strategy! When asked about what made her think of doing that, Sarah said that she felt it would be a way to prepare her daughter for something that could have been overwhelming. We are so proud to have been a part of what has not been an easy journey for Sarah, and we are grateful that the support of our community has allowed us this privilege.

* Name has been changed to protect confidentiality.*

The essential services we provide are made possible due to the support of our community. Sincere thanks to:

Denise Carson, Ben Ardiel, Carleen Blissett, Jaclyn Breeze, William Brennan, William Hraynyk, Daniella Johnson, M&M Food Market, Kathleen McMerty, Adam Mitchell, Mortgage Outlet Inc., OPG Darlington, Cathy Parker, Rudy Sankovic, St. Josephine Bakhita Catholic Elementary School, Alexis Walker-Saunders, Durham Region CWL, St. Joseph's CWL, St. Leo the Great CWL, Holy Redeemer Church, Theresa Azzolin, Mary Dimatulac, Durham Trillium Quilters' Guild, Diana Smith, Maria Steventon, Community Care Midwives, District 13 OSSTF, Kindred Hearts Quilting Guild, Stephanie Leslie, Stacey Smith, Bob Alexander, Cheryl Andrews, Robert Armstrong, Theresa Baron, Edemae Bourne, Marie Chenier, Mike Cyr, Christine Hozjan, Amy Macinnis, Joe Modeste, Mavis Naughton, Helen Nicols, Donna Trimble, Roseanna Vachon, Wilhelmina Van Boxtel, Maureen Windross, St. Hedwig Catholic School, Oshawa West Lions Club, Rotary Club of Ajax, FlexoPartners Inc., Ontario Motor Sales, Robert Weindorfer, St. Mary of the People Parish, AirlQ Inc., Al and Elaine Francis, Fran Musial, Elie Alhage, David Gonzalez, Faith United Church Women, Betty Larocque, Natalie and Craig MacDonald, Natividad Nash, Garry and Elsa King, Jonathan and Anne Mitchell, Joan Blair, Brian Reel, Ken Waugh, Jason Fleischmann, United Way Durham Region, United Way Toronto, St. Mary of the People CWL, Bruno Scanga, Sarah Bortoluss.

A special thank you to all the many generous donors that provided Christmas support for our families and supported our Shop for Baby program!

A special thank you also to all the people that supported our first ever virtual Victorian Tea and Trivia Night!

And last but definitely not least, a special thank you for the very generous donation from the Mitch Marner Foundation!



St. Bernadette's Council 10236—\$660
St. Isaac Jogues Council 11098—\$500
St. Joseph Council 9989—\$450
St. Jude's Council 6052—\$1000

St. Joseph's Council 6361—\$300
St. Mary of the People Council 8611—\$1,000
St. Leo's Council 11528—\$500

We also gratefully recognize funding provided by:

- ⇒ Fan's Convenience and Rosswell Convenience in Courtice for continuing to sell Nevada tickets on our behalf funding our Christmas and Mother's Day celebrations
- ⇒ Durham Children's Aid Society for continuing to support our What a Difference a Dad Makes program
- ⇒ Durham Region for their social investment in the work we do
- ⇒ Durham Community Foundation Emergency Support Fund for our outdoor play area
- ⇒ CHUM Charitable Foundation for funding our Christmas celebrations
- ⇒ Second Harvest Food Support Committee for providing the food rescue emergency fund
- ⇒ Red Cross Emergency Support Fund for PPE
- ⇒ Student Nutrition Ontario for funding our school lunches
- ⇒ United Way Emergency Support Fund for helping us obtain new computers

Please note that this newsletter acknowledges donations received from May 2020 to February 2021

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