

APRIL 2026



# CONNECTIONS



## The Family Centre Connect: Quarterly Newsletter Welcome to Connections

Welcome to Connections, the Family Centre newsletter. Each issue shares updates, stories, and opportunities that highlight how families, partners, and community organizations come together at the Family Centre to support wellness, connection, and belonging across Waterloo Region

The Family Centre Newsletter — Spring 2026  
As we welcome Spring 2026, we are reminded of the season's themes of renewal, growth, and connection. Spring at the Family Centre is a time when families, partners, and community members come together to reconnect, learn, and build toward shared wellbeing. We are pleased to welcome you to this spring edition of Connections. This spring, we are excited to come together for seasonal highlights including our Spring Wellness Fair, ongoing Community Hub capacity-building initiatives, and the welcoming of new grassroots organizations as others transition into the Accelerator Phase of the Community Hub.



## A Message from the Director

Spring is a powerful reminder of what is possible when we invest in relationships, community, and care. At the Family Centre, we continue to be inspired by the families, partners, and grassroots organizations who show up every day with commitment, creativity, and compassion.

Whether you are a family member, community partner, service provider, or someone discovering the Family Centre for the first time; we are glad you are here! Welcome to a spring filled with connection, collaboration, and continued growth across our community. I look forward to connecting with you this spring as we continue working together to strengthen families and build a more inclusive and supportive community for all.

Thank you for being part of this incredible community!

Warmly,

Dr. Oluwakemi Aderibigbe

Director, Community Engagement and Prevention

Family and Children's Services of Waterloo Region



## Call for Community Organizations

Join the Family Centre Community Hub Incubator Program

The Family Centre Community Hub is inviting grassroots community organizations to apply to its Incubator Program. As several partners move into the Accelerator Phase, new spaces are available for organizations seeking mentorship, training, and collaborative support to strengthen their capacity and sustainability.



## Community Hub Spotlights:

Canadian Aweil Youth Association (CAYA)

We are proud to celebrate Canadian Aweil Youth Association (CAYA), a valued member of the Family Centre Community Hub on being awarded the Building Safer Communities Grant. This important investment will allow CAYA to expand programs that support the safety, wellbeing, and leadership development of African, Caribbean and Black-identifying and Indigenous youth. Through culturally grounded programming, CAYA continues to address the root causes of youth vulnerability while strengthening identity, belonging, and long-term resilience.

Located right here in our community at 65 Hanson Avenue, CAYA plays a vital role in creating safer, more inclusive spaces where young people feel seen, valued, and supported.

We congratulate CAYA and look forward to seeing the positive impact of this work across our community

## SPRING WELLNESS FAIR



### Ethiopian Association of Kitchener-Waterloo & Surrounding Area

We are proud to celebrate the Ethiopian Association of Kitchener-Waterloo & Surrounding Area (EAKW) as they graduate from the Incubator Phase to the Accelerator Phase of the Family Centre Community Hub.

The Family Centre Community Hub was created to support grassroots organizations through shared space, mentorship, and capacity-building supports. During the Incubator Phase, partners receive tailored supports to build strong organizational foundations. Graduation to the Accelerator Phase reflects an organization's readiness to deepen its impact, strengthen sustainability, and engage more fully in peer learning and systems level collaboration. Throughout their time in the Incubator Phase, EAKW has demonstrated strong commitment to community-led, culturally responsive work that supports Ethiopian and newcomer families across Waterloo region. As an accelerator partner, EAKW will continue to enhance organizational effectiveness, participate in advanced capacity building opportunities, and collaborate with other Community Hub members to promote family and community wellbeing.

We congratulate EAKW on this important milestone and look forward to continuing our partnership as they enter the next phase of growth and impact within the Family Centre Community Hub.

Spring into Wellness at the Family Centre! Join Us for the Family Centre Spring Wellness Fair. The Family Centre is pleased to invite families, caregivers, and community members to our Spring Wellness Fair—a free, family friendly event focused on health, wellbeing, and community connection.

**Date:** Thursday, April 24, 2026

**Time:** 2:00 – 4:30 p.m.

**Location:** The Family Centre, 65 Hanson Avenue, Kitchener

This welcoming event brings together Family Centre programs, Community Hub partners, and community service providers under one roof to help families learn about free and low cost supports available in our community.

**What to Expect**

- Families can explore a variety of wellness focused booths and activities, including:
- Information on health, mental health, and family wellbeing supports
- Connections to community programs and services
- Interactive activities for children and youth
- Opportunities to meet Family Centre staff and community partners
- Light refreshments and prize draws

The Spring Wellness Fair is designed to be relaxed, inclusive, and engaging, allowing families to drop in, ask questions, and connect at their own pace. This event is open to everyone, and we encourage families to invite friends, neighbours, and community members, especially those who are new to the area or looking to learn more about local supports.

We look forward to welcoming you for an afternoon of connection, learning, and community celebration at the Family Centre Spring Wellness Fair.

## News from our Partners

**Neighbourhood Nursing Team (NNT)** – Public Health Public Health Neighbourhood Nurses meet people where they are providing support in spaces where individuals feel most comfortable. They help families navigate their healthcare needs and connect with appropriate community supports.

The Neighbourhood Nursing Team (NNT) continues to be active in communities across Waterloo region, supporting families with access to public health programs and helping them navigate the regional health system. Recently, NNT nurses have been visiting schools and community sites to offer vaccines in advance of upcoming suspension dates under the [Immunization of School Pupils Act \(ISPA\)](#).

Secondary school suspension date: April 9

Elementary school suspension date: May 7

The NNT encourages families to reach out if they need support with their child's vaccines or vaccine records. Their goal is to reduce barriers, answer questions, and ensure families feel informed and supported.

### **Hummingbird Centre for Hope**

13th Annual Golf Fundraiser

The Hummingbird Centre for Hope is hosting its 13th Annual Golf Fundraiser, and community members are invited to participate and support their important work.

### [Register here](#)

Understanding Grief – A Resource from Hummingbird Centre for Hope

Grief impacts every part of our lives, from emotional to practical, behavioural to spiritual. It can change how we see the world and how we move through it.

The attached information sheet, "Common Responses to Grief," outlines the many ways grief may show up in daily life. This resource is intended as an educational and supportive tool, not a checklist. You may experience some, none, or many of the responses described.

The resource can be helpful for:

Individuals experiencing grief

Families and caregivers

Professionals and community members supporting others

It encourages understanding, compassion, and patience for yourself and for those around you, as people navigate loss and the overwhelm that often accompanies it



### Space for Youth to Connect

The Family Centre Youth Room continues to be a welcoming and flexible space where youth can gather, connect, and take part in programs that support wellbeing, creativity, and belonging. Designed by youth and with young people in mind, the Youth Room is used for drop-in activities, group programs, special events, and youth-led initiatives.

Through partnerships with Family Centre programs and community organizations, the Youth Room offers a safe and inclusive environment where youth can build relationships, explore interests, and access supports in a relaxed and supportive setting. We are grateful to our partners and youth leaders who help bring this space to life each day.

The Family Centre Youth Room is available for youth programs, group activities, and community-based initiatives, subject to availability.

To request use of the Youth Room:

Visit the Family Centre room booking page and submit a booking request online

Or select the "Contact me now" option on the booking form, which sends your request directly to the Family Centre Administrator

Questions about room bookings:

Email [FamilyCentreBooking@facswaterloo.org](mailto:FamilyCentreBooking@facswaterloo.org) or call 519-576-0540

## Creative Space



### Where Expression, Healing, and Belonging Come Together

The Family Centre Creative Space is a vibrant, art-based program that supports children and youth to express themselves, build confidence, and strengthen peer connections through music, theatre, and visual arts.

Creative Space includes three core streams:

Music Academy – exploring instruments, songwriting, and sound

Mini Act Theatre – building confidence through acting, storytelling, and performance

Creative Visual Arts – encouraging self-expression through hands-on art activities

These free, inclusive programs create a culturally responsive environment where participants can explore creativity at their own pace while building resilience, emotional wellbeing, and a strong sense of belonging.

### How to register:

Families and caregivers are encouraged to visit the [Family Centre website](#) to learn more about Creative Space programs and registration details. Program information, age ranges, and session updates are shared online as new intakes open. Supporting Creative Space Programs

Creative Space programs are made possible through collaboration, community support, and shared commitment to children and youth wellbeing.

You can support Creative Space by:

Sharing program information with families and youth who may benefit

Encouraging participation and attendance

Supporting community fundraising or partnership opportunities connected to the Family Centre

Celebrating youth creativity by attending showcases and community events

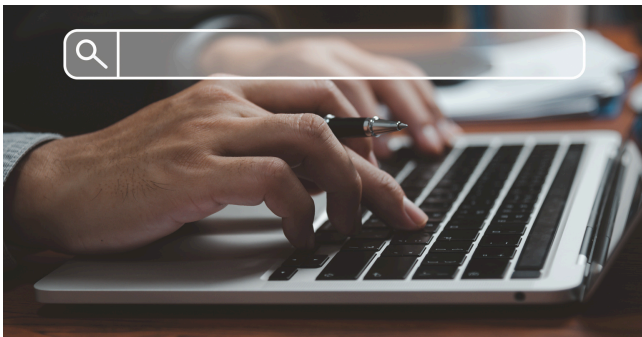
These collective efforts help ensure the Creative Space remains accessible, welcoming, and responsive to community needs.



Welcome to Kenisha Anderson!

Welcome to Our New Family Centre Administrator, Kenisha Anderson!

Kenisha supports the smooth operation of the Family Centre and is often a first point of contact for families and partners. We're excited to have her join the Family Centre team.



### A Fresh Look: The New [Family Centre Website](#)

We are excited to share the new look and feel of the Family Centre website, designed to make it easier for families, partners, and community members to find information, access supports, and connect with us.

The updated website reflects who we are; a welcoming, community-based hub which includes clearer pathways for:

- Families and caregivers looking for support
  - Community partners interested in collaboration
  - Service providers making referrals
  - Community groups looking to book space
- We invite you to explore the site and discover the many programs, services, and partnerships that make the Family Centre a place of connection and care.

## Stay Connected

### Stay Connected: Contact Us & Share Your Feedback

We value hearing from the families, partners, and community members who use the Family Centre. Whether you have a question, suggestion, or idea to share, we encourage you to reach out and stay connected.

#### Contact Us:

If you have questions about programs, space bookings, or services, please contact the Family Centre reception at 519-576-0540 or visit the [Contact Us](#) section on our website.

#### Share Your Feedback:

Your feedback helps us grow and improve. Families, partners, and community members are encouraged to complete the Family Centre feedback form to share what's working well and where we can continue to strengthen our supports. Your voice matters and directly informs how we evolve the Family Centre.

