

SUMMER 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.

A Message from the Director

The spirit of summer is alive throughout the Family Centre. We are in the season of growth, connection, and possibilities.

As I walk through our space and connect with partners across the community, I am continually inspired by what we are building together here at the Family Centre. This quarter, we welcomed the African Women's Alliance of Waterloo Region to our Community Hub, and celebrated expansion to the collaborations between Capacity Canada and grassroots organization. We saw examples of partners coming together to support children, youth, and families in meaningful ways.

Whether you are advancing food security, supporting newcomer families, strengthening mental health and wellness, delivering summer camps and creative arts programming, making wraparound supports more accessible, or creating spaces where everyone feels welcome and valued, you are helping make the Family Centre a vibrant and thriving community hub.

In this issue of CONNECT, you will find stories of innovation, partnership, and impact. I encourage you to explore what's happening across our network and consider where new opportunities for collaboration might exist. Some of our best ideas begin with a simple conversation.

And speaking of conversations, I would love to hear from you. If you have an idea, a challenge, or a dream for our community, let's connect. Send me an email or invite me for a coffee chat. My role is to support our partnerships and help turn great ideas into meaningful action.

Thank you for your partnership, your leadership, and your unwavering commitment to families and communities. Together, we are creating something truly special.

Wishing you a joyful, safe, and restorative summer.

With gratitude,

Dr. Oluwakemi Aderibigbe,

Director, Community Engagement and Prevention





Ethiopian Association of Kitchener-Waterloo & Surrounding Area

Celebrating Community, Culture, and Connection: A Message from the Ethiopian Association of K-W

The Ethiopian Association of Kitchener Waterloo & Surrounding Areas (EAKW) is pleased to share an update on our recent activities and upcoming plans with our neighbours at The Family Centre.

A Milestone Year

Since our founding in 1995, EAKW has served as a grassroots community-based organization, offering cultural, educational, and community events, programs, and services to Ethiopians and Ethiopian Canadians in Waterloo Region. As we reflect on nearly 30 years of presence, we continue to evolve—strengthening our capacity to better serve our community.

Welcoming New Leadership

In a significant step forward, we appointed our first Executive Director, Ato Sisay Shega, in 2025. This part-time position, made possible through the Capacity Building Fund from the Region of Waterloo Upstream Fund, marks an important milestone for our community. Sisay brings over 20 years of leadership experience and will help guide the association into its next chapter of growth and impact.

Summer Programs: A Season of Connection

The summer months have been a time of vibrant community engagement. Our Summer Outdoor Drop-In Soccer program kicked off with great success, drawing community members in impressive numbers. A special thank you goes to the Men's Soccer Team for their support and participation. These gatherings have brought families together, and we look forward to more beautiful Saturdays on the field.

In addition to soccer, we were pleased to offer a Summer Camp program, which provided children in our community with a safe, fun, and enriching experience. Activities included arts and recreation, skill-building, and plenty of opportunities to make new friends. We are grateful to our dedicated staff and volunteers who made this program possible.

Ongoing Community Programs and Services

We are proud to offer a range of programs that support families, youth, and seniors throughout the year:

Family Counseling Service: Our volunteer-led service provides a safe, private, and respectful space for couples and families. Dinku Korsa, MSW, RSW, a registered social worker with experience supporting families and youth in Waterloo Region, leads this initiative.

Seniors Program: We are excited to be launching our culturally responsive Seniors Program. This program will offer activities including traditional food competitions, coffee ceremonies, storytelling, intergenerational mentorship, wellness workshops, and digital literacy training for seniors.

Coming Soon: Autism Program

In the coming days, we will be launching a new Autism Program to support families in our community. This initiative aims to provide culturally appropriate resources, peer support, and educational workshops for families navigating autism and neurodevelopmental differences. More details will be shared soon—stay tuned!

Upcoming Events: Ethiopian New Year Celebration

We warmly invite the community to join us for our Ethiopian New Year (Enkutatash) Celebration on Saturday, September 12, 2026, at The Family Centre, 65 Hanson Avenue. This celebration will feature traditional music, dance, food, and a special presentation of care packages to post-secondary students from our community.

Stay Connected

We are grateful to be located alongside so many dedicated organizations at The Family Centre. If you are interested in learning more about our programs, volunteering, or becoming a member, please reach out to us at the family centre or visit our website at eakw.ca.

We look forward to continuing to build connections and strengthen our community together!

The Ethiopian Association of Kitchener Waterloo & Surrounding Areas is a non-profit organization bringing together Ethiopians and Ethiopian Canadians in Waterloo Region since 1995.

News from our Partners



Neighborhood nursing Team NNT: For our Neighborhood Nursing Team and the Public Health Outreach team, the Neighborhood vaccine bus is on the road this summer! Check the schedule here to see when its close to you and visit to see our bus renovations and receive vaccine support!

<https://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/programs-and-services/public-health/public-health-neighbourhood-programs/#Kitchener>

The Ontario Community Changemakers have a grant application open now until July 31st for individuals over 19 years, living in Waterloo Region for initiatives focusing on activating public spaces, enhancing civic engagement or fostering social inclusion.

Find the application here – [**Apply Now | Ontario Community Changemakers**](#)
Read about previous changemakers here – [**Meet The Changemakers | Ontario Community Changemakers**](#)

Fit in the Square with the Caribbean Canadian Association of Waterloo Region, a mini health fair: 7pm at Waterloo Town Square - July 22 and Aug 19.



The Caribbean
Canadian Association
of Waterloo Region

Creative Space

Music Academy

Join us this summer for our weekly Music Academy drop-in sessions! Children and youth ages 6 to 19 are invited to explore music, build new skills, and have fun in a welcoming and supportive environment. Sessions are free of charge and no registration is required.

Come discover the joy of music, connect with others, and learn through engaging weekly sessions all summer long! We look forward to seeing you there.



**TUESDAY
MUSIC
DROP-IN'S**

SUMMER SESSIONS

**JULY & AUGUST
TUESDAYS
6:00 - 7:00 PM**

AGES 6-19 | NO COST | ALL SKILL LEVELS WELCOME

Join us! Play, Listen, Connect.

LOCATION: The Family Centre, 65 Hanson Ave.
EMAIL: resilienceproject@facswaterloo.org

The Resilience Project

Creative Visual Arts

Our Creative Space is also offering weekly drop in classes where families can come together to explore their creativity and enjoy making art as a family.

Join us for our family Art days, held every Wednesday from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM. These fun and engaging sessions provide an opportunity for families to connect, create, and make lasting memories through art.

Artist instructor: Pamela Rojas



**WEDNESDAY DROP-IN'S
CREATIVE FAMILY FUN!**

WHEN: July and August
TIME: 6:00 - 7:30 PM
COST: NO COST
WHO: Families Participate Together

Children and caregivers engage in hands-on creative activities while strengthening relationships

The Resilience Project

resilienceproject@facswaterloo.org

Celebration of Arts – June 2026

The Celebration of the Arts on Friday, June 26, 2026 brought together the bright young talents of Mini Act Theatre and The Music Academy for an inspiring evening of creativity and growth. Mini Act Theatre's students proudly presented a reading of the play they've been developing throughout the winter term — a heartfelt glimpse into the story they will continue shaping in the upcoming 2026 season. The Music Academy's performers shared the musical skills they've been honing with dedication, filling the room with energy, confidence, and artistry. Together, these young creators showcased not only what they've learned, but the passion and promise that will carry them into their next chapter.

Photo credit: Phi Doan



The Family Centre Youth Hub



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 community organizations and donors, 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 many partners whose commitment, collaboration, and contributions help bring the Family Centre and our Youth Hub to life each day. Together, we are creating a welcoming space where children, youth, and families can access the supports, programs, and connections they need to thrive.

As we continue to grow, the Family Centre welcomes opportunities to partner with organizations that provide youth-focused, culturally responsive, and inclusive mental health and psychosocial support services. We believe that strong partnerships strengthen our ability to meet the diverse needs of our community and improve outcomes for children, youth, and families.

Interested in partnering with us? Contact the Family Centre to explore collaboration opportunities.

Youth Summer Programming Register Now

Please see the information below for our upcoming Summer Groups for Youth ages 14+.

Referral Process:

Simply select the link below or click on the Resilience Project Website. <https://resiliencecollective.ca/>
Select the activity/event that you want and complete necessary information.

If you have any questions about the referral process or how a particular group can support your family, please call, or email Tammy Hall-Stoll, Amy Bannerman, or Lori Robbins.

<https://resiliencecollective.ca/programs-offered>.

No plans, no PROBLEM- Just Drop-In Zero pressure, ALL FUN @ the FC.

Where: The Family Centre, Youth Room

When: Monday, August 10th & 17th

Time: 11:00 am - 2:00 pm



*Weekly activity & snack included

Themes include - tie dye, bracelet making, DIY paint your own planter, DIY lanterns, open gym, video games.

Welcome to the African Women's Alliance of Waterloo Region (AWAWR)



Welcome to our new hub partner African Women's Alliance of Waterloo Region. Dr. Fadhilah Balogun is the Executive Director of African Women's Alliance of Waterloo Region. (AWAWR) The African Women's Alliance of Waterloo Region (AWAWR) is a community-based organization dedicated to empowering African women, girls, youth, and families through culturally responsive programs, advocacy, education, and leadership development. Since 1995, AWAWR has fostered safe, inclusive spaces that strengthen resilience, promote health and well-being, prevent gender-based violence, and celebrate African heritage while building stronger, more connected communities.

Canadian Arab Women's Association (CAWA)

CAWA's 5th Annual Festival will be taking place

When: Friday, August 14, 2026

Where: Carl Zehr Square in Downtown Kitchener

Time: 4:00 PM to 9:30 PM

This free, family-friendly community celebration brings together thousands of residents from across Waterloo Region for an evening of cultural performances, local businesses, community organizations, food vendors, children's activities, and interactive experiences that celebrate diversity, inclusion, and community connection. Our goal is to create a welcoming space where individuals and families of all backgrounds can come together to learn, celebrate, and build meaningful relationships.

We would be incredibly grateful if you could help share our attached festival flyer with your staff, clients, families, and community networks. Your support in spreading the word would help ensure that more families throughout Waterloo Region have the opportunity to attend and enjoy this community celebration.

Thank you for the important work you do to support children, families, and our community. We truly appreciate your time and consideration and hope to welcome members of your community to the festival this August.

Levant



Our summer camp begins on July 27th. The registration link is below.

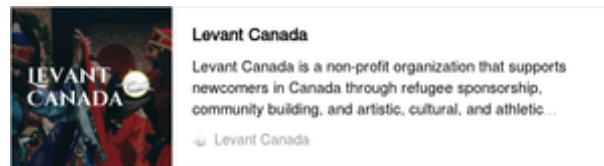
[Registration Link](#)

Please follow our social media for updates:

Instagram: [levant_canada](#)

Facebook: [Levant Canada](#)

Website: <https://www.levantcanada.org/>



The Hummingbird Centre for HOPE

Our virtual support groups for widowed parents with children run year-round, making it easy to join when you need connection and understanding most.

We offer **Legacy Academy** for all widowed parents, as well as a **Dads Group** created specifically for widowed fathers. Each session features a topic that reflects the unique challenges of parenting while grieving, with plenty of time for discussion and peer support.

Our groups are offered on a **drop-in basis**, so you can attend the sessions that fit your needs.

Register today and join a community of parents who truly understand.

registration link

Legacy Academy runs 1st Thursday of each month

Better Together Dad's group runs 3rd Wednesday of each month

Both from 7:00 - 8:30 pm

For more information or to ask questions reach out to Marny

marny@hummingbirdcentreforhope.com

Tel: 519-500-8535

Stay Connected

Stay Connected: Contact Us & Share Your Feedback

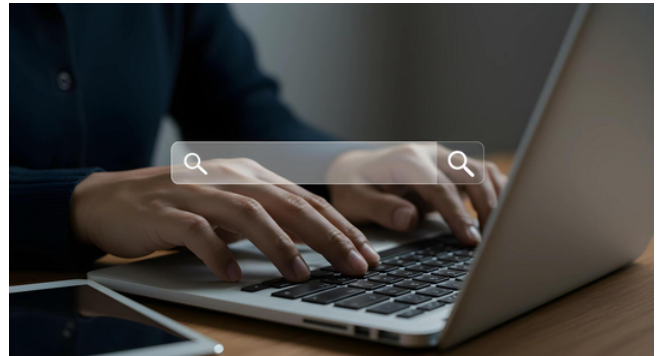
We value hearing from the families, partners, and community members who use the Family Centre. Whether you have a question, suggestion, or idea to share, we encourage you to reach out and stay connected.

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.



Thank You To All Our Partners



EXPONENTIAL LEARNING
Learn & Achieve your Dream



SUPPORTING REFUGEES CULTURE AND ART

