Message from the President

Summer’s over, and I hope everyone had a great one and enjoyed lots of wonderful family time! We now stand on the doorstep of winter. Fall is a strange season, warm and sunny one day, cold and rainy the next. It kind of reminds me of a childhood cancer journey as we never know what tomorrow brings; either wonderful news for our family or for one of the many families that we’ve gotten to know on their journey, or the stormy times of setback and uncertainty.

I’m sitting here writing this message from the wonderful Parent Support Group of which I’m happy to be a part of. Parent and family support is the pillar that OPACC wants to bring to all our families across the province. Not only institution-based support, but support in the communities where our families live. I’ve been very lucky to be connected with Candlelighters Simcoe for about ten years. OPACC will continue to work towards building more community supports as more funding and facilitators become available.

September was Childhood Cancer Awareness month to raise awareness of childhood cancer. OPACC was very busy that month. Every September, OPACC holds its Annual General Meeting that is open to all of our members to attend. We also hold one of our regular board meetings following the AGM and again it is open for all our families. Input from all our families is an important part of how we operate. Also during September, Sick Kids and POGO held a Sidewalk Chalk event to help raise childhood cancer awareness. OPACC was represented at this event by our Parent Liaison, Susan and Administrative Coordinator, Sarai. From all reports it was a fun event along University Avenue. At the start of September, the Coast to Coast Against Cancer Foundation National Ride left from the west coast. This year they also hosted their first national Inside Ride events that left from the east coast. In mid-September, the two events met at Dundas Square. There was an Inside Ride event that started after the National Riders were escorted by the Toronto Police on site. OPACC entered a team and had a lot of fun. I volunteered and helped to set up the bikes. OPACC will be receiving some of the funds raised during this fun event.

OPACC’s Parent Liaison hosts a co-facilitated support groups at the Hospital for Sick Children. These groups have been well received by our families. Dates and times for these are listed in this newsletter.

OPACC is continually seeking funds to further our Parent Liaison and Facilitator training. We are currently in Round Three of the Aviva Community Fund voting. We are seeking funds to start a Parent Facilitator Training Program. Once someone who has been through a childhood cancer experience has been trained, it is hoped this person will go back to their community to start a Parent Support Group or enrich an existing Group.

Please feel free to send us your comments and add your voice to help OPACC become a stronger voice for our families.

Always,
Hannah’s Dad
Dave Munro
New Website
We are very proud and excited to announce the launch of our newly re-designed website! Our hope is to make it more helpful, informational, and user-friendly. Please be sure to check it out here: http://www.opacc.org

Aviva Community Fund competition
OPACC has submitted an idea to the Aviva Community Fund competition to win money to help our families.

Please vote for our idea to set up training for parent facilitators to run local parent support groups for families of children/teens with cancer. Just click on the link below and vote for our idea - it's that simple!

Let your friends and family know too. Bookmark the page and vote every day! The top ideas with the most votes will move on to the semi-final round and a step closer to the funding that will make a big difference in helping families to cope and get the support they need. All voting ends on November 30th. Make it count!

http://www.avivacommunityfund.org/ideas/acf11054

Parent Liaison Update
OPACC’s Parent Liaison, Susan Kuczynski, meets with parents and families at Sick Kids and helps to address fears or concerns they may have. She passes out information on available services and can direct them to Parent Support Groups that may exist in their communities. Susan can be found at Clinic on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings. Please stop by and see what free materials you might want to pick up. As well, she hosts a drop-in from 6:30-8:30 pm on Tuesday evenings in room 8704. In addition to support materials there is the opportunity to sit and chat with parents and enjoy refreshments in a comfortable setting. Susan is available for informal chats and visits wherever you might be in hospital and can be reached at 416-543-3701 or at liaison@opacc.org. Her voicemail at the hospital is 416-813-7654, ext. 28781.

OPACC and the Parent Liaison collaborate with HSC to run a co-facilitated Parent Support Group as well as continue to work with them in the development of additional needed supports for families. The co-facilitated group began in October and runs every other Thursday evening from 6:30-8:00 pm in room 8704. The dates are: October 6, October 20, November 3, November 17, December 1, and December 15. Please note that parking for attendees will be reimbursed by OPACC up to a maximum of $7 (evening parent rate). Contact Dr. Kim Daniel at 416-813-7394 if you are interested in attending or would like more information.
Childhood Cancer Awareness Month

September was Childhood Cancer Awareness month and a very busy month for OPACC. On September 10th, we had our Annual General Meeting at Sick Kids – thanks to all of the families who took time to attend! On September 14th, OPACC took part in the Childhood Cancer Awareness sidewalk chalk event hosted by Sick Kids and POGO. And on September 16th, we participated in the Toronto Inside Ride event where money was raised for OPACC’s overall fund and disbursement to our groups – again, thanks to all who came out to ride, volunteer, or who donated to this fun and important event.

Updates from Organizations

- **Candlelighters Simcoe Parents of Children with Cancer** supports families of children with cancer in Simcoe County, Muskoka, and the surrounding area. We have monthly parent support group meetings with a concurrent children’s expressive art program. All of our meetings are held the first Monday of each month at 7:00 pm at Gilda’s Club Simcoe Muskoka (10 Quarry Ridge Rd) in Barrie. New families are welcomed to join!

  *Satellite Care:* On December 5th, representatives from Orillia and Southlake satellites will speak to the parents.

  *Christmas Party* on December 11th from 2-5 p.m. at St. John Vianney Church (13 Baldwin Lane, Barrie). There will be food, entertainment, games, crafts, gifts (for ages 16 and under) and a visit from Santa. Fun for the whole family! Please RSVP by November 25th to Barb Johnson at 705-737-4296 or email albarbjohnson@sympatico.ca. Families must be registered with Candlelighters Simcoe to attend.

  *Christmas Care Program 2011:* This will be our 6th year doing Christmas baskets for our families on treatment. Each year we have supported 20 to 25 families through this program, bringing some cheer at a difficult time in their lives. Our Christmas care committee is looking for donations for our Christmas baskets (including baked goods, toys, money, food, gift cards etc.). We provide Christmas baskets for families whose children are currently on treatment. If you can help in any way please contact our committee chairs Cheryl Gotthelf at 705-424-2133 or Cheryl Enick at 705-728-7059.

- **K-W Support Group for Parents of Children with Cancer** Our group has been meeting every second Tuesday of the month for over 3 years thanks to the generosity of HopeSpring Cancer Support Centre (43 Allen Street West, Waterloo; tel: 519-742-4673). The group began when Lisa Skinner (whose son Cole had V.H.R. A.L.L.) read a story about Helen Robertson (and her son Liam who had stage 4 neuroblastoma) in the local paper noting that she wanted to start up a support group for parents. Children who are diagnosed with cancer living in Waterloo Region may be treated at one of three Children’s Hospitals, either in Toronto, London or Hamilton. As a result, we believe it is essential to have a support group for families here in our community. We have been communicating to parents through the Children’s Outpatient Clinic at Grand River Hospital. We have also attended POGO conferences as delegates and representatives of OPACC, providing information to those working in pediatric oncology about our local group and our provincial affiliate OPACC.
Updates from Organizations, con’t.

For more information, contact either Helen or Lisa through HopeSpring. We meet the second Tuesday of each month (September through June) from 7:00-8:30 pm.

- **Gilda’s Club Simcoe Muskoka**

  We invite all who are interested in becoming a Member of Gilda’s Club to attend a New Member Meeting during which one of the Program staff have an opportunity to better explain about Gilda’s Club, the Program, highlight all that we offer in sharing our Program Calendar with you, and then provide a tour of the Clubhouse. Following that general meeting, any of those interested in becoming a Member can make arrangements to meet to complete a Customized Membership Plan which is a one-on-one meeting during which we can discuss more specifically what brings you to Gilda’s Club, what it is that you are uniquely looking for in terms of social and emotional support and how we can best offer you that support including highlighting various items on our Program Calendar that may be of interest to you.

  What is important to know, beyond that Gilda’s Club is entirely **free**, is that Gilda’s Club is a Member-driven Program and so it is dynamic and ever-evolving in nature based on the feedback and suggestions of our Members. We invite you at any point to please share freely any interests you may have in seeing particular lecture topics, guest speakers, workshops, social activities, etc.

  Again, as it relates to the New Member Meetings specifically, we host a number of them each month and they are open to those diagnosed with cancer whether currently on-treatment or having finished their treatment, as well as friends and family members supporting those living with a cancer diagnosis. The purpose of this very informal 1hr gathering in a small group is to share information about Gilda’s Club, what our Program is all about, to have you see a sample of our Program Calendar and to have a tour of the Clubhouse itself.

  Our remaining New Member Meetings for the month of November include:

  Saturday November 19th from 10-11am and Wednesday November 30th from 7-8pm

  If any of these dates might work with your schedule, please do feel free to contact us via email program@gildasclubbarrie.org or by phoning the Clubhouse at (705) 726-5199 and we’ll be sure to sign you up! And if not, be sure to check out our website for additional dates and monthly Program Calendars! www.gildasclubsimcoemuskoka.org

- **Hearth Place Cancer Support Centre** All events below take place at Hearth Place, 86 Colborne Street West, Oshawa, except for the children’s Christmas Party:

  November 19th from 10:00 a.m. - Noon: Children as Authors and Illustrators, Part 1 of 2. Paige Sterling Fox, an early literacy specialist, helps children to create their
Updates from Organizations, con’t.

own story about hope and courage. Space is limited please register early.

November 24th from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.: Family Support Drop-in. Parents speaker Rita and Keith Benson assist couples with their relationship through their child’s cancer diagnosis and treatment.

December 7th from 6:15 - 7:00 p.m.: Children as Authors and Illustrators, Part 2 of 2. Children who have completed Part 1 of this program will present their stories to their parents from their book.

December 10th from 10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.: Children’s Christmas Party. To be held at Whitby Free Methodist Church, 1916 Rossland Road East, Whitby. Arts, crafts, games, a magician, and Santa.

For more information or to register for any of these programmes please call 905-579-4833 or email Janette Berthelot at hearthplacefamilyprogram@gmail.com

- The James Fund

This year’s Walk/Run for The James Fund on October 30, 2011 went international. The 6th annual event saw individuals participating in their own community across Canada and in South America, Great Britain and Europe. Simultaneous events were also held in Vancouver, Vernon, Calgary, Winnipeg and Halifax. We are pleased that approximately $75,000 was raised to support a cutting-edge research project funded by The James Fund at the BC Genome Sciences Centre in Vancouver. www.jamesfund.com
OPACC Board of Directors

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Susan Kuczynski - Parent Liaison (non-voting)

Contact Information:

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Web: http://www.opacc.org

Find us on Facebook here: https://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=3057645252  
Find us on Twitter here: https://twitter.com/#!/OpaccOrg

OPACC Educates, Advocates, Supports and Enables families of children with cancer

OPACC currently receives no government funding and all funding for the development of our programs, services and special events comes from your generous donations. Your donation is greatly appreciated! You can easily make a fast, secure donation through our Canada Helps page: http://www.canadahelps.org/CharityProfilePage.aspx?CharityID=s92379

The diagnosis of a childhood cancer affects the whole family. OPACC is helping families cope with that diagnosis and is working to expand the Parent Liaison role throughout the province.

Coast to Coast Against Cancer Foundation - Canada’s only national charity devoted to fighting childhood cancer

Childhood Cancer Canada - Childhood Cancer Canada is a national, volunteer governed, charitable organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for children with cancer and their families

Lainie’s Angels - Hope, Honesty, Compassion, and Support for the needs of the family with a child who has cancer

Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF), one of Canada’s leading grantmaking foundations, is an agency of the Government of Ontario. The OTF is a catalyst that enables Ontarians to work together to enhance the quality of life in their communities