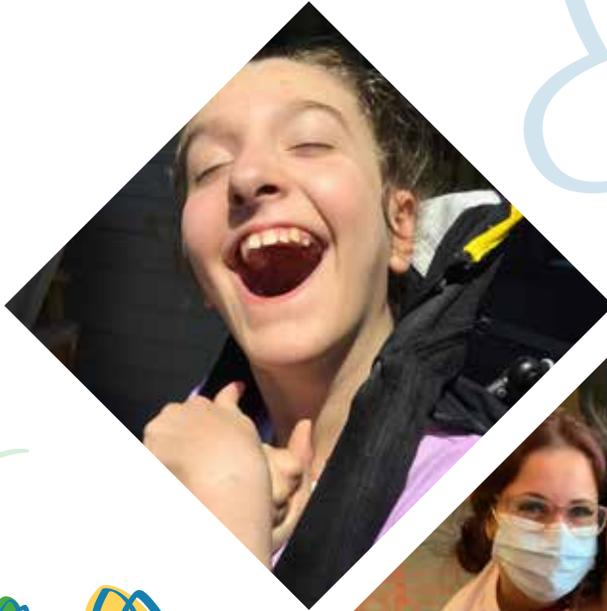




Homefront

SUMMER 2022 NEWSLETTER



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The Cedarbrook Society

5657 15th Side Road. Milton, ON L9E 0C8
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AROUND THE HOME

WITH CLINICAL LEAD STEPHANIE MYERS



Hi! My name is Stephanie Myers; I am one of the Clinical Leads at The Darling Home for kids. I started my career working as a PSW, while completing my nursing degree, then came into the Client Care Coordinator role while gaining acute care experience in the hospital. Today I am a full-time Clinical Lead with a focus on onboarding new staff and providing educational opportunities to our existing staff. A lot has changed since my first day through those bright red doors and this past year has been no exception, as we continue to push forward through the COVID-19 pandemic.

The quieter moments of the pandemic enabled our Care Team to focus on our residential program and dedicate time to developing routines and activities geared towards them. We celebrated BIG events, like birthdays and holidays and little moments, like enjoying the sun on a warm day or splashing in the tub. We strive to make the most of every occasion, no matter how big or small. Staying home throughout the pandemic prompted us to embrace all the spaces in this wonderful Home; building forts in the living room, blowing up pools on the porch, taking trail walks through the forest, bringing sensory play to the bedside and holding bake-offs in the kitchen - we left no space unturned! During times of heightened infection control, we had to get a little creative to stay connected while physically separated, and our Care Team rose to the challenge and engaged our kids in Zoom cooking shows!

Over the past few months, we have welcomed more respite into the Home. For our families, staff and residents this was HUGE! We can, once again, provide a much-needed break to families and bring more smiles and laughter into our space. This allowed our residents and respite kiddos to socialize and enjoy new experiences. Themed parties, outdoor adventures, drive-in movies, board games days and quieter moments of just enjoying each other's company all became livelier with more friends in the Home.

While we have experienced many highs and lows over the past two years, our unwavering commitment to the health and safety of those who enter our doors has never changed. We continue to be diligent with PPE use. Daily screening and frequent rapid swabbing remain our norm. Despite our dedication to the work that we do, we are not immune to the staffing challenges and fluctuations that the world is facing. What I have seen and continue to see, is our staff's commitment to our Home, our kids and each other. I have seen my co-workers step up to ensure we can continue to provide care to our kids, while constantly supporting each other. We have developed our Clinical Leadership Team with the addition of two Care Coordinators. This growth means more support for our Care Team and respite, palliative and residential programs. We are a motivated bunch! The passion for the work that we do and the families that we support always shines through.

I am proud to work alongside such an amazing group of people and humbled by the continued support of our community.



WELCOME HOME, LEAH!



Our newest resident Leah is making herself right at Home at The Darling Home for kids.

Leah is 7 years old and can be recognized by her cute pink glasses, dancing feet, and beautiful hair with soft curls. Her giggles can be heard throughout the Home and her absolute favourites are Sesame Street & Elmo. We look forward to creating some special memories with this cutie!



CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

INTRODUCING THE CONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE



THE DARLING HOME FOR KIDS CONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE

CHAIRPERSON

Tara Redmond

Vice President, Buildings & Systems Engineering, UPS Canada

MEMBERS

Elaine Blaylock

CPA, CMA

David Bowler

Executive Vice President, Catch Hospitality Group

Thomas Cadman

Regional Director, Aon

John McLaughlin

President and Corporate Director, Tall Oak Management

Priya Ferris

CPA, CMA, Director, Finance, Technical Standards Safety Authority

Michelle Scott

Executive Director (Retired), The Grocery Foundation

EX-OFFICIO

Antonio Santini

OAA, MRAIC, LFA, LEED AP BD+C, MEDES, Principal, Red Studio Inc. Architects

The Embrace Campaign

Building more space for the moments that matter



Formed to assist the Board of Directors in fulfilling its obligations as it relates to the capital expansion of The Darling Home for Kids, this Sub-Committee provides recommendations as it pertains to overall construction management, the selection of a construction management firm and other vendors, monitoring compliance with any site plan or building permit requirements, offering financial oversight of the construction budget, and risk management throughout the construction process. The Committee is comprised of members with diverse backgrounds and expertise, including individuals who were involved with our previous two construction phases. Thank you to the dedicated volunteers lending their time to this important initiative.

Expansion Updates

A Request for Proposal was distributed to potential construction management firms at the beginning of June, and site visits with potential construction management firms were held from June 13 – 24. The Construction Committee is currently reviewing submissions and will make a recommendation to the Board of Directors in the coming weeks.

At The Darling Home for Kids, we are always looking for ways to minimize our environmental impact. Consultations continue with Conservation Halton as they work to identify a Conservation Halton property on the same watershed for us to engage in a tree planting initiative to offset the tree removal on our property. Stay tuned for more details on where and when we will be planting our trees.

A new boiler system for hot water will be installed in the fall as we continue to upgrade our current systems to meet the demands of the expanded building.

CELEBRATING A DECADE OF COMPASSIONATE CARE

Congratulations to **Sharleen Sun**, our Director of Clinical Services, for the ten years she has spent bringing joy to the children and families of The Darling Home for Kids.

Sharleen strives daily to bring to life our vision of a world where no child is too complex to receive the love, care, and support they deserve. Giving generously of her time and energy as an advocate, a companion, and a caregiver for our children.

A true champion for our kiddos, we can all be inspired by the hard work, dedication, and passion Sharleen has shared over the past ten years. We could not imagine our Home without her! Congratulations & Thank You, Sharleen!

Sharleen Sun



THANK YOU! FROM A DARLING FAMILY



My name is Diana. I'm the proud mom of two teenagers. My son Daniel is 16 and my daughter Katherine turns 15 in July. We, along with my husband, are a Darling Home Family.

My daughter Katherine is severely disabled. She has a long list of diagnoses, including cerebral palsy, epilepsy and scoliosis. She has limited vision, is non-verbal, eats with a feeding tube, is in a wheelchair and is completely dependent on other people for all her needs. She is also one of the happiest and most resilient people I know.

Something I rarely talk about or share, because I try my best to stay positive and focused on all our blessings, is how difficult it is to provide 24/7 care to Katherine. Where many things have gotten easier over the years, others, like the physical aspect of care, have become so much harder, especially as I get older and she gets taller and heavier. Where Katherine's physical care has taken a toll on my body, the constant worry about her safety, her health, her medications, the next big seizure and all the "what if" worries, have taken a toll on me mentally and emotionally. Recently, there was a day in May when I was getting Katherine ready for school, and I started crying.... and, I'm not sure why. The pain in my arm and back was a little worse that morning; the weight of frustration heavier from how hard it all seems some days or exhaustion from 14 years of sleep deprivation. I really don't know, maybe all three.

What I do know is carrying heart-heavy worries under the stress of full-time caregiving is a lot to carry without a break. The Darling Home

for Kids has been my saving grace. This amazing place provides me with a break from the physical and emotional weight of full-time caregiving. It provides me with a place where I know I can safely leave Katherine; where she will be cared for, loved and have a ton of fun. Those much-needed moments of respite, especially the overnight stays, give me a chance to rest my body and mind; regroup, recharge, and be the mom Katherine (and Daniel) deserve.

I hoped The Embrace Campaign would reach its goal but admittedly, I was a little worried. Let me tell you, I cheered when the goal was reached. I was, and still am, overwhelmed by your generosity and SO excited to see this incredible home grow.

How do I say thank you to you? How do I properly put into words what your support means to my family, the other Darling Home families and all the new families The Darling Home for Kids will be able to help because of you?

I decided to try by sharing a heartfelt email with you that I recently sent to Sharleen Sun. A few days prior to sending the email I had picked Katherine up from one of her longest respite stays, 5 days and 4 nights. I was getting Katherine ready for lunch, singing along to the Hokey Pokey.... a song she listens to on repeat... and she was shrieking in pure delight. At that moment, I was overcome with an overwhelming sense of awareness and gratitude. The minute I finished getting Katherine ready, I wrote an email to Sharleen to share with the Care Team.

My email read:

This past week was Katherine's longest DHK stay. She came home super happy & tired and I am happy & rested.

I was just changing Katherine, getting her ready for lunch and I realized how calm and patient I am right now. No tired, autopilot actions. No "I have to" do this thoughts, followed by a sigh. No wishing for a few moments of quiet. No feelings of disappointment in my parenting. Yesterday, and today, I'm the mom I'm proud of. I'm doing everything with intention. I'm doing things because "I want to" and "I get to" versus "I have to". We've been listening to the Hokey Pokey now for over 4 hours and I'm still putting my left side in and shaking it all about. I realized the calm and patience I'm feeling right now is because of you. What a difference those respite days and nights have made.

The email I sent to Sharleen could have been sent to each one of you as well because without your support this incredible Home and incredible Care Team wouldn't be able to do what they do, oh so well, for so many families.

Thank you for choosing to embrace this Home, embrace our children and embrace our families. The positive impact you make on our lives which will now be extended to even more families is tremendous.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you so, so much.

Diana, a grateful DHK mom



VOLUNTEER CORNER

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2022 VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION AWARDS RECIPIENTS!



Craig Podrebarac – Award of Excellence – Community Leader • **Evelyn Vieira** – Angel of the Year • **Brenda Speck** – Big Heart Award
Tegvir Grewal – Rising Star Award • **Annika Sharma** – Youth Impact Award • **Bryan Simpson** – Helping Hand Award



Janna Ormond – 2022 Volunteer Halton Impact Award The Halton Volunteer Impact Award is representative of the importance and impact of the roles of volunteers across Halton. The Committee was moved by Janna's dedication to supporting our families, mentoring new volunteers, and sharing her passion for DHK with family, friends and the community. Over the past 3.5 years, Janna has made an incredible impact. We could not be more thrilled for her to be recognized through this award.



Dell Technologies Canada – Volunteer Team of the Year For the past five years, Dell Technologies Canada has rolled up their sleeves and made an incredible impact on our Home, families, and staff. Collectively, they have given over 355 hours of service and brought over 140 employees through our doors. From engaging in outdoor maintenance and gardening to setting up for events and decorating for the holidays, Dell employees show up.

Dell also supports the Home through monetary donations, donating over \$13,500 since 2018. Over the holidays, Dell extended their generosity by running toy drives to support our Family Events.

CARE TEAM SPOTLIGHT

The Darling Award recognizes a staff member who is passionate about the organization and our children and families. This staff member embodies our mission and vision and will do whatever they can to provide our children with an oasis of comfort and joy. Congratulations to **Jillian Mullin**!

A true champion for our children and families, the Children's Champion Award recognizes a staff member who understands the incredible impact that each moment can have on a child's life. Advocating for our kids, this staff member demonstrates a commitment to making each day a great day. Congratulations **Brianna Kelley**!

Committed to the community at The Darling Home for Kids, the Connections Award recognizes a staff member who brings people together. This staff member fosters collaboration and understands the value of working together as a team. Congratulations **Kristenn Reyes**!



Jillian Mullin

Brianna Kelly

Kristenn Reyes



BRAD'S STORY



Our story isn't unlike many new families expecting a newborn... or maybe it is... regardless, this is ours.

First came the words "I'm pregnant". I thought, Ok, then, this is happening... followed by "twins run in the family". Somehow Sarah knew. A few months later it was confirmed that the ultrasound images showed Twin A and Twin B.

As the weeks passed, the shock turned to emotions of joy, fear, and excitement. It was finally time to learn the sex of the twins. We felt there were already enough surprises thrown our way. The

Doctors wanted an extra ultrasound, the 3D kind. As we waited for additional feedback, we were told we were having twin girls. Amazing... I'll be totally outnumbered!

Naming the girls took no time at all. As we waited, we immediately agreed on Skylar, a name that we always wanted for a daughter. Both Sarah and I know strong, smart, independent women named Sonni, so that was that. The entire process took less than 10 mins.

Moments later the Doctor entered with a psychologist. There is a problem with Twin B. Her brain hadn't developed properly. Agenesis of the Corpus Colosseum was the official diagnosis. The issue, as we learned, is that there is a large bundle of more than 200 million nerve fibres that connect the two hemispheres of the brain that didn't develop. We could expect a range of developmental delays, poor muscle tone and epilepsy.

Despite the challenges, Sarah took the girls to full term for twins - 37 weeks and 1 day. She was a champ. To this day both our girls continue to be a handful with a variety of challenges. But we get by - with a little help from our friends at The Darling Home for Kids.

When locked up at home, Virtual Events give us something to look forward to. Every Saturday morning, I can count on an hour to focus on Sonni's needs while Skylar enjoys making a craft and listening to a story. Skylar has always enjoyed crafting and drawing, and it allows her imagination to run wild with wonderful craft ideas. The volunteers are always cheerful, attentive, and patient as they navigate through the steps. My favourite part is seeing the pride & joy that Skylar gets when they spotlight her craft and shower her with positive reinforcement! These virtual events and the volunteers that run them are more than just craft time, they are confidence-growing sessions and time with familiar faces.

The Darling Home has become so many things to our family. When Sonni is in respite it allows our family to make up for missed opportunities that we wouldn't otherwise have. The Darling Home is a trusted place that Sonni can visit, where Sarah and I have complete confidence and peace of mind that she will not only be cared for but also be the centre of attention. Equally important, it's a fun place. Activities, nature walks, movie time, and the Snoezelen room make a wealth of positive experiences for Sonni, and the other kids.

DHK also hosts numerous events that make it enjoyable for the entire family. Any time The Darling Home for Kids is involved with an aspect of our lives, something gets easier, or more fun, and oftentimes both! When the girls started grade 1, both Skylar and Sonni were accepted for after-school daycare. This was HUGE for us as they made some special accommodations for Sonni to be there. Skylar, associating the care of Sonni with The Darling Home constantly referred to the after-school care as 'The Darling Home'.

This to me is a powerful reminder of what DHK has meant to us and our family. Sonni's care, in any form outside our house, is associated with The Darling Home for Kids and continues to be the benchmark.

Thank you for supporting this special Home!

**Brad, with Sarah
Dad of Sonni & Skylar**

Donate now to help ensure families like Brad's receive the care they need.



I consent to receive electronic mail correspondence from The Darling Home for Kids.

Do not mail me newsletters, promotions, reports or updates.



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Donations of \$20 or more are eligible for a tax receipt.

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Donation Amount

\$250 \$100 \$50 Other \$ _____

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One-Time Monthly

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Card Number: _____ Expiry: _____

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When you give monthly, you provide a consistent and reliable stream of support for our Home so we can provide professional, holistic, high quality, and personalized care to our families. We are grateful we can count on you.

To become a monthly donor, please contact Shannon Caskey, scaskey@darlinghomeforkids.ca

THANK YOU, SARGENT FARMS!



If you're more into the chicken than the egg, look no further than Sargent Farms. For every box of product sold in their stores, a portion of the sale is donated to the Home. Through our partnership, Sargent Farms has donated more than \$200,000 in support of our programs and services – that's a lot of chicken! We're grateful to the Sargent Family for taking their support one step further by adding Tap to Give machines to their locations – shop in Mississauga or Milton, and don't forget tap when you pay!

If you'd like to add a Tap to Give machine at your business, please contact Shannon Caskey scaskey@darlinghomeforkids.ca

OUR PATRONS

Thank you to our generous patrons whose support is instrumental in enabling us to provide a Home away from home for our children and families.

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Michele S. Darling and her family,
Michael, Daniel, and Ryan Eagen

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UPCOMING EVENTS

RALLY FOR DHK



We are excited to return to the starting line of our newest Signature Event – Rally for DHK (Saturday, October 1st)! With something for everyone, the Rally for DHK features location-based challenges and a day packed with fun. Teams, aided only by their odometer, a compass and general wits, will be tasked with navigating through the scenic roads that surround DHK. Adventure awaits! With multiple checkpoints that will challenge teams, as well as fuel them, it will be an event you don't want to miss. Buckle up for an epic team adventure!

www.darlinghomeforkids.ca/rallyfordhk/



THE 24TH ANNUAL COMFORT & JOY GALA



Join us, Thursday, October 27th, 2022, for Darling's biggest night out, an evening of glamour and decadence, as we proudly present The Butterfly Ball.

A symbol of resiliency, change, and hope, the metamorphosis of a butterfly is an iconic representation of nature's transformative powers. As we emerge from our proverbial cocoons and push forward through a time of profound change, we spread our wings and lift our gaze toward the many possibilities that lie ahead. The Butterfly Ball is a life-changing event. A storied, grand affair, the Gala has raised more than \$4 million over the past 23 years, in support of the children and families who rely on The Darling Home for Kids.

Guests will revel in the glitz and glam as they waltz the evening away. The highlight – a fundraising auction featuring a stunning array of lavish and meticulously curated items up for bid. Join us for a spectacular affair of food, fun, & philanthropy.

<https://www.darlinghomeforkids.ca/gala/>

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