

**Champlain Region Family Council Network
District Co-ordinator's Report
Annual General Meeting, May 15, 2021**

This report covers two years of activity for the Network with communicating with Family Councils and family members, not an easy task as much has evolved during this period.

Background:

The By-laws for the Champlain Region Family Council Network were passed at the first Annual General Meeting, 2008. In addition to the Executive, the structure included five Districts: Hawkesbury, Cornwall/Maxville, Ottawa East, Ottawa West/Centre, and Renfrew County. It was envisioned that each District would elect or appoint a representative from that District who would attend the Network Executive meetings. Because of the distances involved this was not so practical.

What was successful were the Annual District Meetings hosted by a Family Council. This enabled family members to share their experiences working with the Administration of the home to enhance the lives of the residents. Concerns and in some cases serious issues were raised and often resolved at these District meetings.

In 2019 the Network streamline the information distribution lists: Brian Graham, working with Janet Luloff, using a spreadsheet format, set up e-lists by Districts of Family Council Chairs, home administrators, staff liaison, and other organizations. This will eventually include the many family members, where there is no Family Council organized, who wish to be aware of the Network activities and receive the FCO Updates and other information that is sent out. Maintaining the lists is constant as there are many changes.

In response to the impact of COVID-19, the Network began organizing virtual meetings with Family Council Chairs. In August 2020, the Network held the first Zoom meeting with Family Council Chairs or their delegates. This was a great success thanks to Brian Graham who is the Zoom 'master'. Holding such meetings provides an opportunity for the Family Councils to provide feedback to the Executive regarding issues in a home and assists the Advocacy Committee to focus on specific topics to advocate. such as when family member(s) were unable to visit their loved ones in their Long-care Home. The designation of essential caregiver, enabling family members to visit their loved one in the home, even during a lockdown, became a reality as the result of much advocating.

We envisage using Zoom as the method of communicating in the future which could include holding District Family Council Meetings. While that has not yet happened, we think the use of this technology could revive and enhance those meetings. It would also help in the organizing of new Family Councils. We have come a long way since 2008 when Canada Post was used for distribution to some family members as internet was not available throughout all the Districts.

In the past year Family Councils were more involved, due no doubt to the impact of COVID-19. Some Family Councils maintain membership lists which is an excellent way for the family members to be informed of matters related to long-term care. Our thanks to the Family Council Chairs and the many family members who continued to be involved with their Family Council after their loved one has passed away.

We received many desperate calls and e-mails since COVID-19 struck and hopefully we were of assistance. My personal thanks the members of the Executive who assisted in trying to get answers to the issues raised, who drafted the many letters sent to the Premier, the Ministers of Health and Long-Term Care, and to our elected representatives at both the Provincial and Federal levels of Government.

We are grateful to Family Councils Ontario for producing the COVID-19 now twice a week. The COVID-19 Updates are a good source of Ministerial directives and policy decisions made and includes many opportunities to join relevant webinars.

My thanks to all who expressed appreciation for the efforts of the Network.

Respectively submitted.
Eleanor Ryan
May 8, 2021