



Rural Frontenac Community Services

613-279-3151 or 1-855-279-2052

Newsletter: 2025

| rfcs.ca

Living Rural Life to the Fullest: Our 50-Year Legacy



Capturing the spirit of community, our Rural Frontenac Community Services staff team.

Rural Frontenac Community Services has been a steadfast pillar in rural Frontenac County since the early 1970s, empowering rural residents to live life to its fullest. Their journey is rooted in grassroots community connection and continues today with a wide range of inclusive programs.

In **November 1970**, concerned citizens met at the Anglican rectory in Sharbot Lake to address pressing rural issues: declining population, limited services, and dwindling community spirit. By

February 1971, they organized a public meeting and formed a "Communications Group" to revitalize local ties. That same spring, they published the first edition of the North Frontenac News, a simple mimeographed sheet edited by Mervyn Rutherford. This was the beginning of what we all know today as the Frontenac News. Fulfilling a vital community need, then and now, of sharing news across the townships, villages and hamlets so Frontenac residents have access to local news.

Over the next few years, community grants enabled the development of various services: senior clubs and employment supports, and the transformation of the rectory basement into a multi-service hub. In **1975**, the organization was officially incorporated as **North Frontenac Community Services**, becoming one of Ontario's first multi-service centres.

Over five decades later, Rural Frontenac Community Services stands as a vibrant community hub offering vital supports across generations:

Children & Families

A licensed daycare, EarlyON drop-ins, and youth programs such as Kids Club, summer camp, and leadership development.

Adults & Seniors

Seniors receive compassionate services including Meals-on-Wheels, community cafés, respite care, home help, foot care, and transportation. Adult services also extend to family counselling and supports for mental health, income, protection, and crisis prevention.

Transportation

The Frontenac Transportation Services rely on a network of volunteer drivers connecting isolated residents to ap-

pointments, errands, and social activities—filling a vital gap in public transit access.

Rural Frontenac Community Services' mission

is simple yet powerful: to create opportunities that enhance well being and self sufficiency, allowing rural residents to truly thrive. ■

Thank You to The Sponsors of Our 50th!

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Looking for a way to support our services?
visit rfcs.ca to donate today!

RURAL FRONTENAC COMMUNITY SERVICES 50th Annual General Meeting

The Board of Directors for Rural Frontenac Community Services cordially invites you to attend the 50th Annual General Meeting.

The meeting will take place on
October 16, 2025 | 6:30pm | OSO Hall

For more information
Please call 613-279-3151 or
email info@rfcs.ca

Thank You
to our
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Daycare

Rural Frontenac Community Services Daycare provides a play-based program with an emphasis on engaging in the community. The Registered Early Childhood Educators use their creativity by bringing new ideas yearly to their programs at the daycare to initiate community engagement for the children that attend. The Daycare started the annual bus trip for the children in June. The trip was created to help prepare the preschool children for school by teaching bus safety and

showing the drop off point at Granite Ridge Education Centre. Over the years we started adding extra stops on our trip to provide more opportunity for the children to explore what our community has to offer. This year was the biggest trip yet. We started our trip by learning bus safety explained by our volunteer bus driver, Jen Cox. The children loaded onto the bus and we drove to the village where the children enjoyed a tasty snack at the Lions Club Picnic Table and Bench. The Children

explored the playground at the Railway Heritage Park. We continued our journey to Central Frontenac Fire and Rescue Station Three. The children watched a presentation on the gear fire fighters require and enjoyed sitting in the fire trucks. The highlight of the fire station was meeting Sparky and giving him all the high fives! Next, we stopped in at the Kingston Frontenac Public Library - Sharbot Lake Branch for an engaging circle time with Kinlee! The children practiced their colours and we talked about visiting the library with our library card to borrow books. Our last stop on the bus was Granite Ridge Education Centre. The children who were going to school in September practiced getting off the bus safely. The children were able to say hello to the kindergarten teachers and visit inside the classroom! The children talk about our trip frequently and because of the people in the community who are happy to collaborate, we are able to provide such a fun outing! The daycare educators and children appreciate having these amenities available to help the children live rural life to its fullest! ■



Children learning about fire safety on their field trip to the fire hall



Daycare children learning bus safety

What is the saying “if you build it, they will come”, thirty four years later children are still coming. Our rural daycare provides childcare for families and their children. In 2022 we applied through the City of Kingston to be part of the new childcare initiative called Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) offered by the Provincial and Federal Government. This program was the introduction to what is to be affordable \$10.00 a day childcare. Being part of the CWELCC program has made childcare more affordable for families. It has also increased demand for childcare spaces. Since September 2024 we have had 26 full-time children attend. Due to the demand, we no longer offer part time care. In 2024 we also went through a license revision that changed our enrollment. Our model with three infants and five toddlers in the same room has been updated. We now have 10 toddlers. It was a big change for staff in the infant and toddler program. One year later the staff have created a beautiful program for the toddlers. ■

Youth Programs

The youth program which primarily serves youth ages 6-18 began in 2007 with a Trillium grant. This grant kick started the recreational based program for our rural youth. Over the course of the past 18 years the youth program has evolved, adapted and changed. The program went from providing an 8-week sport programs to weekly afterschool Kids Club programming, summer day camps and more. The Youth Program focuses on providing recreational based programming across North and Central Frontenac for youth to engage in their own communities, learn new skills and grow together. Our Summer Day Camp has grown over the years. We now operate three days a week for up to 20 youth, 6 to 12. This year, camp was fully booked on the first day of regis-

tration. Over the years our camp team has grown from two to four staff, including two local high school students. With the support of Canada Summer Jobs, we receive funding for one student position. Our afterschool Kids Club program provides recreational activities, cooking and crafts at four locations for youth in grades 1-8. This program typically sees 65 youth attending each school year. Youth attending the program are encouraged to lead games, prepare snacks and give input on what activities they would like to take place. Our newest program for youth is the Rural Frontenac Youth Hub. This program began in 2019 when a couple of high school students who worked in Kids Club mentioned that they needed places to hang out with their friends. With the help of these youth, we

opened the Youth Hub bi-weekly on Thursdays after school for high school students to drop-in, play games, connect with the Rural Outreach Worker, and prepare and share a meal. The youth attending the drop-ins helped plan each program night, shopped at Mike Deans Local grocer for ingredients to make dinner together and provided feedback on what activities or special events they would like to take place at the Hub. As we look forward, we are excited to be able expand the Youth Hub program to meet our younger youth's needs. After hosting a couple of junior hub nights (grades 6-8), we will be launching a bi-weekly junior hub in the fall of 2025. Our youth program is committed to providing opportunities for youth. We hire local youth to work in our Summer Camp and Kids Club. We provide



Baking at the Youth Hub

Co-op Placements for high school students, hire many youth volunteers and are always asking our youth what they want to see happen in our programs. We believe giving youth a say in what takes place in our programs is the key to creating programming that youth want to attend. ■

Transportation

In many rural areas across the country, the lack of public transportation leaves seniors, low-income residents, and people with disabilities struggling to access basic services. Therefore, a growing number of volunteer-based transportation programs are stepping in to meet the need—offering rides, hope, and human connection.

In Frontenac County, Frontenac Transportation Services program is making a big difference. Founded in 2005, the initiative matches trained local volunteers with neighbors in need of transportation to medical appointments, grocery stores, and social

events. “Our volunteers aren’t just drivers, they’re lifelines for many of our clients; this is their only way to stay healthy, independent, and connected to the community” said Nicki Gowdy, Supervisor of Frontenac Transportation Services.

Drivers use their own vehicles and are reimbursed for mileage. Clients typically call our dispatcher at least 3-4 days in advance to schedule a ride. In some cases, volunteers accompany passengers into doctor’s offices or help carry groceries, creating a more personalized experience than traditional transport services.



Frontenac Transportation Services drivers and staff, Nicki and Brooke

Demand has increased significantly in recent years as aging populations grow, and fewer public transit routes serve remote areas. We’ve seen a significant uptick in ride requests this year alone, the need is real, and the impact is profound.

For one of our clients

who lives alone on a farm, many kilometers from the nearest medical clinic, the service has been a game-changer. “Before this, I missed half my doctor appointments,” they said, “Now I know I will get to my appointments and have someone to talk to along the way.”

Local governments and non-profit agencies often

help fund volunteer driver programs, recognizing their value in reducing social isolation, preventing health emergencies, and promoting equity. We are grateful to receive funding from the County of Frontenac to support our service.

Recruiting and retaining volunteers remains a challenge. “We’re always looking for more drivers,

even giving just a few volunteer hours a week can make a huge impact in someone’s life,” said Nicki Gowdy.

As the area continues to grapple with rural transportation challenges, community-led solutions like Frontenac Transportation Services are proving that friendly care and creative thinking can go a long way. ■



RFCS EarlyON, Community Support Services and Youth at Plevna Summerfest

EarlyON



Our EarlyON staff: Shania, April, Charissa, Brittany and Amanda

Young families want to raise their families in rural communities so they can enjoy the outdoors and participate in their local community. It can be difficult to know where to go to ask questions about your child’s development, to find local resources or a place to go for socialization for both child and parent.

The EarlyON staff at Rural Frontenac Com-

munity Services provides a space where children 0-6 years of age and their caregiver can come to sing songs, play with other children, and access important early learning experiences.

Our EarlyON staff act as a bridge to community resources that families may otherwise not be aware of. The trained early childhood educators are able to provide

insight into their child’s development and offer referrals to resources such as Maltby, Mental Health and Autism Services for Children and Youth, KFL&A Public Health.

EarlyON is not just a place for children to come and play with other children. It’s a safe place for families to come together connect and build their own communities of support. ■

Family Counsellor Supporting People To Live Rural Life To The Fullest

Rural living presents unique opportunities and challenges, which change as people grow and develop throughout their lives. The Family Counsellor helps people by providing immediate and free counselling that focuses on finding practical solutions to the residents when facing hardship or transitioning to a new phase in their life.

Having a friendly face that can meet people when and where they are

ready to get help is at the heart of the service. Together with the Family Counsellor, people are able to identify and address any barriers they face and feel more hopeful about the future.

The Family Counsellor acts as a first point of contact to the wider support systems in Frontenac County. Whether it is helping new parents connect with EarlyON, or an isolated senior get assistance from Community Support

Services, the connections the Family Counsellor has, to both the professional and community networks within the area, assists people by making introductions and helping people navigate the health care and mental health system.

These connections let people live their life to the fullest and to enjoy everything that our rural communities have to offer. ■

Seniors Services

Living as a senior in rural areas can be challenging at times. To assist seniors to stay in their home longer, Rural Frontenac Community Services can make life easier with their seniors services.

Whether living alone or not, sometimes cooking well-balanced meals can be difficult. Rural Frontenac Community Services delivers hot Meals-on-Wheels three days a week and frozen meals for a small fee. We have heard from clients and their families that this service gives them peace of mind, knowing that a few days a week, they have a delicious home cooked nutritious meal delivered to their home.

Cleaning at any age is a struggle, but especially

as you get older. Simple tasks, such as vacuuming or laundry, can become more difficult and challenging. These struggles can be addressed with our Home Help services. Workers come into the seniors’ homes for a couple of hours to complete light housekeeping duties to maintain a clean and comfortable living environment.

For the caregivers who are taking care of loved ones in the home that need a break, there is our Respite Program. A personal support worker will come into the home to spend time with their loved ones, so they can take a much-needed break and run some errands knowing that their loved one is safe at home. They are also able to provide help with per-

sonal care.

Living in a rural area can be lonely and isolating when living alone or not having transportation available. It is important for our mental and physical health to have connections with other people and share time together, so Seniors and Law Enforcement Together (SALT) events and Community Cafés are offered throughout the year. These community programs provide opportunities to socialize, learn about community programs and health related services, and share a light lunch with others. For those without transportation, we can arrange a ride with a volunteer driver so they too can join our community programs. ■

Rural Frontenac Community Services 50th Reunion June 7

"Remembering the fun times with our grand girls."
Grandparent

"Incredible place and people."
Board Member

"What a special place, congratulations!"
Parent

Keith Conboy's Legacy Continues



Keith Conboy's family joined the 50th Reunion

Keith Conboy joined the Board of North Frontenac Community Services in 1977. In those early stages, the board was very active and involved directly in the services. Over the ensuing 43 years Keith continued his commitment to the organization and its allegiance to "being good and doing good" in the community. A sugar maple tree was planted in honour of Keith Conboy. The tree will remind us of Keith's service to the community and his role as a Dad to Chris and Andrew who attended the daycare and more recently as a grandfather. ■

Audrey Tarasick's Contribution was Celebrated



Audrey's Great Grandson's Sully and Walter with their Mom at the 50th Reunion

Audrey Tarasick was the first staff to oversee the Children's Services. Between 1987 to 1998 she had several titles from Coordinator, Supervisor and Director. Audrey's knowledge of child development, and passion for family supports, led to the truly amazing array of services for our rural area. Children and families were Audrey's passion. She was a calm, caring, empathetic person who was committed to giving children opportunity to learn. A bench in the Child Centre playground was dedicated as a reminder of Audrey's vision of this space, what she gave to our community and her passion for children and families. ■

Four Decades of Family Counsellors

The Rural Frontenac Community Services 50th anniversary presented a rare opportunity for four decades of Family Counsellors to come together. The Family Counsellor program started in 1979 to serve the residents of Central and North Frontenac and continues to do so to this day. This picture represents over 40 years of service to our rural communities. From the beginning, funding from United Way of KLF&A has ensured that



Kevin, Brad and Branden

the Family Counsellor has been, and will continue, to serve our community for years to come. ■

"A special welcoming happy place so full of memories!"
Volunteer



Board Members Geoff Michie, Susan Irwin and Meredith Stratton



Susan Leslie and Scott Black



Marcie Webster and Pam Giroux



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If you would like to make a donation you can call the office at 613-279-3151 or send an etransfer to accounting@rfcs.ca or donate on line through Canada Helps.