

# Family Leader Program

*Quarterly Update  
Summer/Fall 2022*



## A message from the CEO...

The Family Leader Program at Grandview Kids impacts the decisions made by senior leaders and the Board of Trustees in a meaningful way.

Parents and caregivers are valued as equal partners in care.

Our Family Engagement Team supports the Family Leader Program, which is made up of advisors, ambassadors and advocates.

We are elevating our approach to family-centred care by broadening the family voice in our decision-making. In addition to our Family Advisory Council (FAC) and Youth Advisory Council (YAC), Grandview Kids is about to embark on a new Family Advocate program.

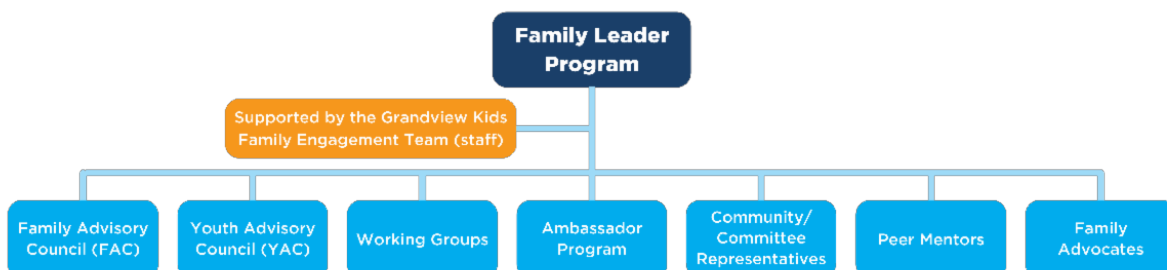


***Grandview Kids CEO,  
Lorraine Sunstrum-Mann***

Through the pages of this quarterly update, you will learn about the work of these groups and how you can become involved.

On behalf of Team Grandview, thank you for your continued partnership in driving our collective passion to supporting children and youth live life at their full potential.

Sincerely,  
Lorraine Sunstrum-Mann,  
CEO, Grandview Kids



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## Get involved, become a Family Advocate

Grandview Kids highly values the voice of clients, youth, parents and caregivers. From setting goals in a therapy session, to informing how to best share information with parents, we seek out feedback regularly through the support of our Family Engagement Team. This year, Grandview Kids aims to formalize this process by onboarding Family Advocates for Centre-wide initiatives and projects.

### ***Who can be a Family Advocate?***

A Family Advocate is a Grandview Kids graduate (youth) or a parent/caregiver of a Grandview kid or graduate, who lend their lived experience to help shape the programs, services and procedures followed at Grandview Kids. Family Advocates share their knowledge and make the decisions for the good of all families.

### ***What does a Family Advocate do?***

The Family Advocate will provide feedback and guidance to Grandview Kids on specific projects. For example, a Family Advocate may share feedback on a Missed Appointments Policy, or provide input on how to strengthen our presence on social media. Family Advocates may also participate on external committees or groups, representing Grandview Kids in the community. For the most part, meetings take place virtually.

### ***How much time does a Family Advocate give to Grandview Kids?***

One or two Family Advocates are recruited per project. Some projects are longer than others. When Grandview Kids advertises for a Family Advocate, they will tell you how much time is required.

### ***How will my time be recognized?***

Grandview Kids will honour your preference on how your time should be best recognized. This is either through volunteer hours, a donation to the Grandview Kids Foundation in your name, or through a gift card. The amount will be depend on the length of time and responsibilities the project requires.

### ***How do I apply?***

Visit our Grandview Kids webpage to learn about current Family Advocate openings. Download an application form and submit it to [FamilyEngagement@grandviewkids.ca](mailto:FamilyEngagement@grandviewkids.ca). We'll follow-up with all those who apply. You may be asked to participate in a brief, 15 to 30 minute virtual interview before the post.

All successful applicants will be required to participate in a Grandview Kids virtual onboarding with the Family Engagement Team.

## Become a Grandview Kids Advisor



**GRANDVIEW  
KIDS**

**AMBASSADOR  
FAMILY**

## REASONS TO JOIN

- ✓ To share your Grandview journey
- ✓ Help to communicate the value of Grandview Kids
- ✓ Practice writing, public speaking, and advocacy skills

**EMAIL TO JOIN**

[gillian.jackson@grandviewkids.ca](mailto:gillian.jackson@grandviewkids.ca)



## The 2022-23 Family Advisory Council

The Family Advisory Council (FAC) is a group of volunteer parents and caregivers who partner with Grandview Kids to provide advice and guidance from a client and family perspective on programs, services and policies that affect families within Grandview Kids and the broader paediatric health care system.

In June 2022, the FAC gathered to hear about Grandview Kids' annual objectives from our senior leaders. The group collaboratively prioritized “how might we” questions for which they will focus on in 2022-23. The FAC selected:

1. How might we ensure the family voice is embedded into initiatives at Grandview Kids?
2. How might we contribute to the strategic priorities of Grandview Kids as a Paediatric Centre of Excellence?
3. How might we ensure technical and digital resources at Grandview Kids meet the needs of parents and caregivers?
4. How might we support the successful implementation of SmartStart Hubs?

The FAC members will actively participate in four workshops to tackle these questions. Parents and caregivers will be invited to participate in working groups to support each topic. Stay tuned to Grandview Kids' social media and website for an upcoming call for volunteers.

## Meet your 2022-23 FAC

**Allyson Eamer**



***Why did you join the FAC?***

I wanted to give back because Grandview Kids has been such a blessing to my family. I also wanted to understand more about family supports. I joined the online support group because I have found that I learned so much from other parents and caregivers, and realized I could learn even more by being part of the FAC.

***What are your hopes for the FAC?***

I'd love to be part of whittling down the wait list, and connecting parents to one another. I'd also like to have some input into the new Grandview Kids and playground. My grandson is not currently able to enjoy features of the school playground and I want to have some say into the design of the new playground equipment.

## Taju Punnoose

***Why did you join the FAC?***

To continue advocating for children in Grandview Kids who are waiting for services. Also to bring access of information to caregivers who recently got diagnoses and are not sure on next steps. To make experience at Grandview Kids better for children, caregivers and employees.

***What are your hopes for the FAC?***

I want to deliver on tangible outcomes that would improve experience for children, caregivers and employees at Grandview Kids.



## Debbie Smith

***Why did you join the FAC?***

To contribute with transition to services for those going from adolescence to adulthood. To share my knowledge as I have an adult son. I have figured so much out on my own and I want to be able to share with parents so they are aware of what's out there and don't make the same mistakes I made.

***What are your hopes for the FAC?***

That we can continue to shape services for the future so families will know where to go for support when trying to navigate the systems. To shape policy and procedures in order to best maximize Grandview Kids services for the success of our children's development. To provide support to one another. I want to deliver on tangible outcomes that would improve experience for children, caregivers and employees at Grandview Kids.



## Colin Mills

***Why did you join the FAC?***

To have and share a voice with other parents of Grandview Kids. To learn from other families their journeys and we can all use that information to assist Grandview Kids with supporting all our kiddos.

***What are your hopes for the FAC?***

I want to deliver on tangible outcomes that would improve experience for children, caregivers and employees at Grandview. I want to assist Grandview Kids to support all our families.



## Bobeth McBarnett

### ***Why did you join the FAC?***

I joined over three years ago, and have never looked back. It's such an empowering feeling knowing your voice is being heard as a special-needs parent on these panel discussions. I was hooked from the very first meeting! I'm grateful for the opportunity to be a voice and support other Grandview Kids families! It is an honour.

### ***What are your hopes for the FAC?***

I want to continue to have a voice in our community so that special needs families will thrive, and obtain the supports and information they need.



## Sam Micieli

### ***Why did you join the FAC?***

I was interested in joining the team because I have been with Grandview Kids for several years and have seen the many changes it has gone through. I would like to help it continue to grow, adapt with challenges and continue to offer exceptional services to its exceptional community.

I wanted to help families and improve services for all.

### ***What are your hopes for the FAC?***

To help other families and help set the course for the best services so each child thrives.



## Claudia Nosseir

### ***Why did you join the FAC?***

When I began my son's journey at Grandview Kids, and witnessing the impact that it had on him, I wanted to give back my time in some way to show my gratitude and appreciation and to help as I was helped.

### ***What are your hopes for the FAC?***



My hopes for the FAC is that we keep fulfilling the mission statement for Grandview Kids and to continuously be a unified voice for parents.

## Seana Haley

### ***Why did you join the FAC?***

I wanted to join the FAC to help Grandview Kids continue to provide amazing services for our kids, as it will be part of my son's life for the next 18 years. I also want to help make services and resources more accessible to the families served by Grandview Kids. In addition, my son's condition really made me aware of the challenges that people who are differently abled face in society and it made me want to do more to help make the world a more accessible place for people with disabilities.

### ***What are your hopes for the FAC?***

I hope that we can help make decisions that will help our Grandview Kids families receive the best services possible.



## Shona Vincent

### ***Why did you join the FAC?***

I chose to be involved in the Family Advisory Council because I know how powerful lived experience is, and the impact that is possible when parents/caregivers are involved. Our stories and experiences are important and help to shape and strengthen services and supports that are offered to families now and in the future.

### ***What are your hopes for the FAC?***

I want to continue to grow Grandview Kids in ways that support both new and existing kids and their families.



## Lindsey Stevens

### ***Why did you join the FAC?***

I wanted to be more involved behind the scenes where my daughter receives care. I wanted to bring our struggles to light and possibly make a difference for families facing the same issues.

### ***What are your hopes for the FAC?***



My main goal is to highlight our struggles to find programming and allow for more opportunities at Grandview Kids geared towards ADHD kids and their families. I also thought that my background in events, as well as my many years on the SCC and town board, would lend well to assisting the FAC.



## Jennifer Cantwell



### ***Why did you join the FAC?***

The entire Grandview Kids team of SLP, OT, Social Work, Rec Therapy and ABA/FAST (fee-for-service) has helped my son with the extra support he needs to grow, live and learn. I wanted to join the FAC to become an official stakeholder in the organization and help guide Grandview Kids' future to continue to help and support the children in Durham Region.

### ***What are your hopes for the FAC?***

To continue to provide constructive feedback and visionary concepts for Grandview Kids' future direction. I want to provide a family voice supporting and enhancing client experience and care, and to help promote accessibility of services and work towards removing cultural, physical and socio-economic barriers for families.

## Krista Ormsby

### ***Why did you join the FAC?***

I joined the FAC to become more involved with Grandview Kids. Professionally, I supported individuals with disabilities and their families to access services, supports and activities in their communities. Personally, I advocated daily for inclusion and better access to services for my son in our own community. In addition to joining the FAC, I have had the opportunity to fundraise with the Foundation, participate in various focus groups and meet many extraordinary kids and their families.



## Working Groups

Parents and caregivers volunteer to work together on topic-specific tasks, in support of the Centre. Groups are formed with the guidance of the FAC and supported by the Family Engagement Team.

### **Quick Hits Working Group**

This working group is made up of some true go-getters. The Quick Hits Group is tasked with giving input on a wide variety of projects. Their feedback ranges from the website to new steps after referral. Volunteer members of this working group are knowledgeable and passionate giving

feedback. Thank you to our members, Lindsey Stevens, Mary Sarginson, Krista Ormsby, Seana Haley, Debbie Smith and Allyson Eamer.

### **New Build Working Group**

Already this working group has contributed to the planning of our new Grandview Kids in Ajax. Their contributions going forward will allow for family input and accessibility needs to be beyond expectation. This Working Group is actively looking for new members to join, please reach out to our Family Engagement team at [familyengagement@grandviewkids.ca](mailto:familyengagement@grandviewkids.ca). A huge thank you goes out to our members Krista Ormsby and Seana Haley.

### **Education and Networking Working Group**

This wonderful group of volunteers have been busy planning our Inclusive Resource Fair. The education and Networking Working group are tasked with putting together events for The Grandview Kids community. If you like to plan and be part of hosting events, this is the working group for you. This group has big plans as we look forward to reconnecting in person. Much appreciation for our members Mary Sarginson, Natasha Mills, Annette Neufeld, Bobeth Mcbarnett, Krista Ormsby, Leanne Osborne and Lindsey Stevens.

## **Youth Advisory Council**

Grandview Kids' Youth Advisory Council (YAC) is eager to get things rolling again with lots of events coming up.

The group enjoyed their first in-person event in what felt like a long time, having a party at NEBS Fun World as a token of appreciation for their hard work thus far on our Durham Work Authority (DWA) project. Some members also attended the annual Grandview Kids Foundation golf tournament, sharing stories about how Grandview Kids has helped them and earning community/volunteer hours.

To kick off the fall season, we will be bringing back our collaboration with Kids Safety Village to host our annual Accessible Halloween event. This will be run by YAC members, from planning through to on-site event management.

The YAC is comprised of highly motivated and compassionate members wanting to help others in their community. We are so excited for what is to come, and with this group, the possibilities are endless!

## **Meet the Family Engagement Team**



### **Andrea Belanger**

*Family Engagement Program Manager*

I became a member of the Grandview Kids family in 2007, and joined the staff team in 2012. Both my children have received services at Grandview Kids. It has been my dream to create a village of support across a family's journey from diagnosis through to adult transition. Fun fact: I have two cats (Lewis and Duchess), two Betta's (Pablo and Penelope) and a bearded dragon named Mushu.

### **Natasha Mills**

*Discipline Lead, Interim Manager, Peer Navigator-OAP*



I have three wonderful kids, ages 23, 21 and five. My youngest was diagnosed Autistic a month shy of his second birthday. My husband and I knew nothing about Autism, but Grandview Kids' Online Parent Support Group (OPS) was there for me. The opportunity presented to give back and help families who were going through a similar journey. I'm blessed to have joined Team Grandview in 2020. My love is all things art.



### **Brad Sexton**

*Peer Navigator-Youth*

My journey with Grandview Kids started at six months of age when I was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy. I also attended Campbell Children's School at Grandview Kids after one of my two major surgeries, and loved it so much that I went back to do my high school co-op there. Once completed, I realized this is where I wanted to pursue my career. I am now living out my dream working here at Grandview Kids. My ultimate goal is to help clients and their families in any way possible reach their full potential, and do my part in making this world a better place for all people with disabilities.

### **Clare Alexander-Arias**

*Peer Navigator-OAP*

I have two daughters, ages six and eight. My youngest is non-speaking and uses an AAC device to communicate. She has been a Grandview Kids client since she was four-months-old. I enjoy spending time going for long nature walks with my family.



### **Fadia Omer**

*Peer Navigator-Complex Care*

My role is unique in a clinic set up, and is likely the first in Canada so far. I am a "friend" to families in the room of therapists, clinicians and medical professionals. I talk to families over the phone, at coffee chats and at events and



listen to their concerns. I facilitate families in making new friends with other complex care families and connect them to resources, programs and services that they are looking for. I also provide emotional support and encouragement and sometimes act as a liaison between the families and the complex care team.

## Jacki Nemisz

*Peer Navigator*

I had the pleasure of volunteering on the FAC for over five years. I love how the members make an impact on Grandview Kids' future. I am a mom to four children, with my second and third sons being Grandview Kids. My 10-year-old son has a rare genetic form of epilepsy and we have utilized several services at Grandview Kids and in the community. I am a firm believer in self-care.



## Annette Neufeld

*Peer Navigator-Adult Transition*

I live with my husband and my son, who is 18. He has been a Grandview Kid since shortly after he was born. I look forward to sharing my lived experience to help many families navigate the journey to adulthood. By supporting families, my goal is to help them be strong advocates themselves and in turn, help their youth become strong independent adults who are living their best lives.

## Sujay Rambajue

*Peer Support Worker Student*

I am currently in my final year of University studying Communications and Digital Media Studies, while I do freelance photography and videography during my free time. I attended Grandview Kids for several services when I was younger and still have fond memories that have

positively impacted my life.



### Gillian Jackson

*Ambassador Advisor*



I have been a Grandview Kids parent since 2019, when my daughter was born with a rare genetic condition that followed with an Autism diagnosis. My goal as Ambassador Advisor is to help families create those important connections in order to work together to spread awareness, provide support and promote inclusivity.



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