



Ontario Parents Advocating for Children with Cancer

# Ontario Parents Advocating for Children with Cancer

[WWW.OPACC.ORG](http://WWW.OPACC.ORG)



"To support families of children diagnosed with cancer in Ontario"

- Our Mission





# About OPACC

- Founded in 1995 by parents, for parents of children with cancer with a mission to support childhood cancer families in Ontario
- Helping families in the *here and now* to E.A.S.E. their journey (educate, advocate, support, empower)
- Free support programs include:
  - Peer-to-peer virtual and in-hospital support (Parent Liaison program)
  - Financial support (hospital parking program, gift cards, hospital meal vouchers, scholarships)
  - Community parent support groups
  - Raising awareness & advocacy (Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, gold ribbons, hospital parking)...and more!





# OPACC was founded by parents, for parents of children with cancer



## KEY HISTORY

- Founded in 1995
- Received charitable status in 2006
- Parent Liaison program began at SickKids in 2009
- Launched hospital parking program in 2017
- Parent Liaison program expanded to Credit Valley Hospital (Mississauga) in 2018
- Launched gift card program in 2019
- Began offering virtual supports in 2020
- Parent Liaison program expanded to Grand River Hospital (Kitchener) in 2023
- Parent Liaison program expanded to Scarborough Centenary Hospital in 2025





# About Our Families

- ❖ We currently have **1,450+** OPACC active member families in Ontario (families include parent/guardians, siblings, grandparents, and close relatives)
- ❖ Families are at all stages of their child's cancer journey - from newly diagnosed to long-term survivors, and bereaved
- ❖ We partner with other organizations and programs to provide families with catered meals at the hospital, gift packages & donated items, yarn wigs and beanies, event tickets in Toronto, and much more.
- ❖ Parent quote: *"Thank you for everything you did for us during our time at SickKids. You made a difficult journey so much easier with your financial and emotional supports."* – Maria A. (Toronto)
- ❖ See more family testimonials at [opacc.org/testimonials](https://opacc.org/testimonials)





# HOW ARE WE DIFFERENT?

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- OPACC is different because we support parents of children with cancer;
- The child is supported when the parents are supported;
- Our Parent Liaison program is the only one of its kind in Ontario, with dedicated staff supporting families in-hospital.

OPACC believes in the value of providing parent support and that strong families start with strong parent support!





**Educating, Advocating,  
Supporting, & Enabling  
Families of Children**

**In-Hospital &  
Virtual  
Peer-to-Peer  
Support: Parent  
Liaison Program**

**Financial Support:  
Hospital Parking,  
Gift Cards,  
Hospital Meal  
Vouchers,  
Scholarships**

**Community  
Support:  
Local parent  
support groups,  
event tickets**

**Advocacy:  
Raising awareness  
of issues  
impacting  
childhood cancer  
families**



# PARENT LIAISON PROGRAM

## Who



Parent Liaisons are trained parents that have had a child diagnosed with cancer and understand first-hand the challenges that families face.

## What



- Peer-to-peer, psychosocial, non-medical support;
- Service navigation, information, referrals, and free resources;
- Weekly drop-in support groups and coffee hours;
- Financial support in the form of grocery & gas gift cards, and helping to pay for hospital parking

## Where



Currently offered at SickKids and Scarborough Centenary Hospital (Toronto), Credit Valley Hospital (Mississauga), Grand River Hospital (Kitchener)

Also offer weekly virtual support sessions on Zoom

## Goals



- Reduce social isolation by providing peer connections
- Help families access needed supports
- Relieve financial pressures
- Help parents to focus on their child & treatment plan
- Empower parents to be better contributing members of their child's healthcare team
- Expand program to more Ontario pediatric oncology treatment centres



# Other OPACC Programs & Resources

- ❖ Hospital parking reimbursements
- ❖ Grocery and gas gift cards
- ❖ Hospital dining meal vouchers at HSC
- ❖ Event tickets
- ❖ Scholarships for childhood cancer survivors, siblings, and parents
- ❖ Free resources including personal care items, wigs and hats for kids, educational materials, journals, health record folders, tote bags, quilts, toiletries including detergent pods for doing laundry at the hospital...and more!





# COMMUNITY SUPPORT



Current local parent support groups:

- Hamilton
- Kitchener-Waterloo
- London
- Niagara Falls





# ADVOCACY

Childhood  
Cancer  
Awareness  
Month

Reduced  
hospital  
parking  
rates

E.I. benefits  
for parents  
of critically  
ill children

Childhood  
cancer  
survivors

Special  
education  
needs





# Funding

- OPACC does not receive funding from the hospitals nor from the government
- All funding stems from the donations of generous organizations, businesses, foundations, and individuals

# What Your Support Can Do

- Expand our Parent Liaison program to other Ontario pediatric cancer centres
- Assist families financially with hospital parking reimbursements, gift cards, in-hospital care kits and hospital meal vouchers, scholarships for survivors/siblings/parents, and more!
- Introduce new program offerings





# *Learn More*

Learn more about OPACC on our website  
[www.opacc.org](http://www.opacc.org)

Parent Liaison program:  
[www.opacc.org/parentliaison](http://www.opacc.org/parentliaison)

We're also on social media at:

Facebook @OPACC  
Instagram @opaccorg  
Twitter/X @opaccorg  
YouTube @opaccorg

***Thank you for your time!***

