

# Respitivity to benefit Princeton families

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Dragonfly Pond Co-ordinator, Tina Myers meets with community professional, Brad Hope and Town Councilor, Pam Jones.

*Donnie Mare photo*

Dragonfly Pond, in partnership with local businesses and community members, develops and improves services for families with children who have complex care needs.

Dragonfly Pond Family Respite Society is an incorporated non-profit society with registered charitable status.

Children's programs are offered at different times throughout the year. Children, along with their parents or caregivers, spend time playing and learning in a safe and welcoming environment.

Parents are given an opportunity to connect, share stories and play along side of their children.

Recognizing the challenges of parenting, Dragonfly Pond supports families by hosting networking evenings as well as other events, which provide parents with a chance to relax and to connect with each other.

Respitivity is a unique program that brings together community businesses to provide families with supportive respite evenings.

Respitivity South Okanagan provides parents of children with complex care needs a chance to experience a much needed break in a welcoming and comfortable environment while their children receive care in the family home.

It is a partnership between the hospitality industry, community service agencies and programs, and families of children with complex care needs. Respitivity South Okanagan matches these parents with an overnight stay in an area hotel, graciously donated on an availability basis, by the hospitality industry.

Respite South Okanagan services the area which includes Osoyoos, Oliver, Okanagan Falls, Cawston, Keremeos, Hedley, Princeton and Summerland.

Families apply for Respitivity South Okanagan through the Dragonfly Pond Family Respite Society.

They are registered for an overnight stay donated by an area hotel, while Dragonfly Pond volunteers do the work of application, processing and matching.

Tina Meyers, Dragonfly Pond Co-ordinator, has learned what a valuable resource Dragonfly Pond is in the lives of many families with children with complex care needs.

“Dragonfly Pond Family Respite Society is all inclusive to families of children with complex needs.” says Meyers, “To have programs geared for complex care children that welcome and encourages siblings to take part is unique and has proven to be an invaluable resource to families in our area. the ongoing support our partners provide is immeasurable as we could not do it without them.”

Meyers has undertaken this position with enthusiasm and dedication and is looking forward to meeting everyone and welcomes calls and visits to her office. She can be reached at 250-490-3305.

The positive effects of Respite South Okanagan will touch everyone, from the families of the children to the entire hotel staff who take pride in working for a company that gives back to the community.

Becoming a partner builds goodwill and enhanced public relations.

It draws on the unique strengths of the hospitality industry to fill a need that cannot be met elsewhere.

“I am really happy to be involved with this program,” says Brad Hope, “I would really like to see Princeton involved with Dragonfly Pond, I see it as a great service and I hope Princeton families will take advantage of this excellent service.”

The impact of a Respite stay on the family of a child with complex care needs is immediate and long lasting. For some, it may be the first break they have had in years.

The appreciation of the participating families positively affects the hotel’s stronger presence as community benefactors.

The following are comments made by families of children with complex care needs, “It gives everyone a chance to recharge and regroup, respite acts as the break which literally keeps our family from melt down.”

“ We are a low income family raising a seven year old son with Down’s Syndrome and a five year old typical daughter. While we love both children unconditionally, the act of parenting our son takes so much more time, energy, patience and supervision. Respite saves us from the trauma associated with burnout and allows us to give our best to both of our children.”

Councillor Pam Jones says of the program, “This will be an excellent facility for the people of Princeton and I hope that we can really take advantage of this program. It is not too often that we are offered a service like this and I think that this is very good for Princeton.”