

FDRIO Family Dispute Resolution Institute of Ontario

August 23, 2016

His Worship, Mayor Fred Eisenberger
City of Hamilton Members of Council
City of Hamilton

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK	
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RE: Family Dispute Resolution Week 2016

We are pleased to share information with you about Family Dispute Resolution Week 2016. This year's theme, FDRevolutions, highlights the emerging complexities of Family Dispute Resolution (FDR) practice.

There is a dire need for the people of Ontario to gain access to these services. While the Canadian divorce rate has leveled off at 38%, 80% of those in Family Court are Self-Represented Litigants—those who cannot afford a lawyer. A great many cases involve mental health challenges, family violence, and limited access to legal and dispute resolution options. There are also new Canadians whose first language is not English and those with low income who would benefit. Dealing with the trauma of dysfunctional divorce and family breakdown can affect children for years and even decades.

The goal of Family Dispute Resolution Week is twofold: first, to increase public awareness of the many free, subsidized, affordable and/or less adversarial resources for helping families experiencing conflict and, second, to support the professionals providing those services.

This is the second annual Family Dispute Resolution Week raising awareness of non-adversarial ways to resolve issues arising on separation and divorce, including mediation,

arbitration, and collaborative practice, including free and subsidized family mediation services funded by the province across Ontario and the many agencies providing supportive divorce-related services. Along with being less adversarial and therefore less harmful to parents and their children, these other means of dispute resolution address problems, such as addictions, mental health issues, safety and family violence that traditional litigation processes often do not.

Program components of Family Dispute Resolution Week include free public forums in Toronto Barrie, Durham, Newmarket, Aurora and elsewhere throughout the province and professional events including access to justice, think tanks and training. More information about Family Dispute Resolution Week can be found at www.fdrweek.ca.

Family Dispute Resolution Week is spearheaded by the Family Dispute Resolution Institute, a federally incorporated not-for-profit. We have the support of the Law Society of Upper Canada, TAG Action Group on Access to Justice, among many sponsors and continue to obtain more sponsor support across the province.

We are looking forward to another successful week this November as we continue to support less adversarial and less harmful dispute options to parents and their children.

Very Truly Yours,

Laura Catone-Tarcea, co-chair
FDRWeek 2016

Marty Klein, co-chair
FDRWeek 2016