



DISTRICT OF RAINY RIVER SERVICES BOARD

NEWSLETTER

September 2026

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Children's Services • Paramedic Services • Ontario Works • Housing & Homelessness Prevention

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New Early Years Hub Opens in Rainy River

River's Edge Atelier and the Rainy River EarlyON Child and Family Centre are now open at 202 Little Street in Rainy River, co-located within the new Rainy River K-12 School. Since opening on August 31, 2026, the new spaces have expanded access to licensed child care, early learning and family-centred programming for local children and families.

River's Edge Atelier is operated by the District of Rainy River Services Board and is a licensed child care centre offering toddler, preschool, kindergarten and school-age programs. The centre provides families with additional child care options in the community while supporting children's learning, development and well-being in a welcoming environment.

Led by Child Care Supervisor Mykenzie Borger, RECE, River's Edge Atelier is supported by a team of eight full-time staff and two casual staff. The program's name reflects its approach to early learning. An atelier is a studio or workshop where people learn through exploration, creativity, questions and new ideas. At River's Edge Atelier, children are recognized as capable, curious and active learners who grow through play, discovery and connection.

The Rainy River EarlyON Child and Family Centre offers free programming and drop-in play opportunities for parents, caregivers and young children. Led by EarlyON Coordinator Amanda Cyr, the centre provides a welcoming space where families can play and learn together, connect with others in the community, and access information about child development and local supports.

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Contact Us:

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DISTRICT OF RAINY RIVER
SERVICES BOARD

NEW EARLY YEARS HUB OPENS IN RAINY RIVER

Continued from Page 1
Having child care, EarlyON programming and school-based services together in one location creates an accessible early years hub for Rainy River families. The shared setting supports smooth transitions for children as they move through their early learning years and into school, while giving families access to services and supports in a familiar community space.

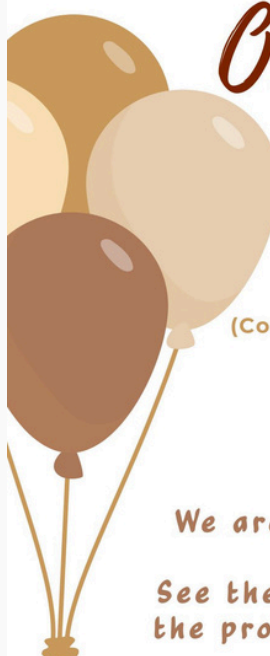
Families and community members are invited to attend an open house on Thursday, October 1, from 5:15 to 6:30 p.m. at 202 Little Street. Guests are encouraged to use the south parking lot at the Rainy River K-12 School. The open house will provide an opportunity to tour the new spaces, meet staff and learn more about the programs and services available.

For more information about River's Edge Atelier, the Rainy River EarlyON Child and Family Centre or child care applications, visit www.rrdssab.ca.



RIVER'S EDGE ATELIER
&
RR EARLYON CHILD AND FAMILY CENTRE

OPEN HOUSE



Thursday October 1st
5:15-6:30pm
202 Little Street
(Co- located in the Rainy River K-12 School)
Use the South parking lot

We are excited to welcome you!

*See the Centres and learn about
the programs and our philosophy!*



Seven Grandfather Teachings

Stepping Stones Atelier partnered with the Donald Young School's Ojibwe class to create paintings representing the Seven Grandfather Teachings for the childcare centre.

This meaningful project celebrates Indigenous culture, strengthens community connections, and creates a welcoming learning environment for children and families.

Thank you to the students of the DYS Ojibwe class for sharing their creativity, knowledge, and time with our centre.



PAINTING WITH DAISIES

This summer, toddlers at Northern Lights Atelier enjoyed exploring painting with daisies!

“Process art invites children to experiment with materials, textures, and colours freely, building fine motor skills and confidence. Product art adds gentle structure, helping children plan, focus, and take ownership of their creations. Together, they form a balanced approach that supports creativity, problem-solving, and self-expression.”

Toddlerhood is the perfect time for children to explore the process of making art with unique and exciting materials, especially pieces of nature! The finished art is on display in our classroom.



LEMONADE STANDS

The school age children at both Pathways Atelier and Tall Oaks Atelier held their annual Lemonade & Iced Tea stands this summer. The event is always a hit with the children and families and all fund raised goes to support the children.



DRRSB AND NOSDA CONTINUE TO ADVOCATE FOR CHILD CARE ACCESS

In August 2026, at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) annual conference in Ottawa, the District of Rainy River Services Board (DRRSB), as part of the Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association (NOSDA), continued to advocate the Provincial Minister of Education for targeted support to better enable access to affordable and reliable licensed child care across Northern Ontario.

In the Rainy River District, child care helps parents work or pursue education, supports local employers, contributes to a strong economy and sustainable communities. A major barrier to expanding access to child care in the district and in many districts across Northern Ontario is the shortage of qualified Early Childhood Educators and other child care staff. Northern providers face additional challenges to many communities in Southern Ontario when trying to recruit staff, including limited affordable housing if recruiting from outside the district and fewer local training opportunities.

NOSDA continues to ask the Province to work with Northern service managers including the DRRSB on a northern strategy focused on staff recruitment and retention. Better staffing supports will help providers maintain existing spaces and expand child care access for more local families.

PREPARING FOR FALL: SUPPORTING SAFE, STABLE HOUSING

As cooler weather approaches, September is a good time to prepare your home for fall and winter. A few simple steps can help keep your home safe, warm and comfortable while preventing small issues from becoming larger repairs.

Residents are encouraged to test smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, check that windows and doors close properly, keep vents and heating areas clear, and report leaks or maintenance concerns promptly. If your unit requires heating-system maintenance, arrange it early where possible.

Fall can also bring added household costs, including utilities, transportation and seasonal needs. Planning ahead for heating expenses, reviewing your monthly budget and contacting service providers early if you anticipate difficulty paying a bill can help prevent challenges later in the season. Prioritizing rent and essential household expenses is an important part of maintaining housing stability.

If you are having difficulty maintaining your housing, do not wait until the situation becomes an emergency. DRRSB may be able to connect you with housing stability, affordability, homelessness-prevention and community support programs available in the Rainy River District.

Housing stability is supported by more than a place to live. Access to food, transportation, employment, health and financial supports can help individuals and families remain safely housed over the long term.

For Community Outreach Support, contact Krista McCaig or Michelle Jewel at 807-274-5349.

FIRE AT ROSE MANOR

The District of Rainy River Services Board is deeply saddened by the loss of a Rose Manor tenant following the fire on September 22.

Our sincere condolences are with the tenant's family, friends, neighbours, and everyone affected by this tragedy.

We are grateful for the care and compassion shown by our staff, emergency responders, crisis-support workers, community partners, and others who have supported residents throughout this difficult time.

All other tenants were safely evacuated and are receiving temporary accommodations and ongoing support as we work through the impacts of this tragic event.



CANADA-ONTARIO
HOUSING BENEFIT (COHB)
CURRENTLY AVAILABLE
IN THE RAINY RIVER DISTRICT

LIMITED FUNDING
is available

WHAT IS COHB?
Financial assistance for eligible low-income households to help with rent in the private rental market.

WHO MAY QUALIFY?

- ✓ Must live in the Rainy River District
- ✓ Must be on, or eligible to be on, the social housing waitlist
- ✓ Must meet program eligibility requirements
- ✓ Generally not eligible if already receiving rent-geared-to-income assistance or another government-funded housing benefit

HOW CAN COHB HELP?
COHB can help eligible households reduce the amount they pay toward rent while remaining in their current housing.

Back to 'School'



The team at 450 Scott Street embraced the back-to-school spirit with a playful throwback to Grade 3 picture day. Between the classic poses and plenty of smiles, it was a great opportunity to share some laughs and have a bit of fun together.

WORKING TOGETHER DURING EXTREME HEAT

When temperatures climbed during the heat wave in July, community partners came together with one shared goal: ensuring that people experiencing homelessness had access to the support they needed to stay safe.

Staff from the District of Rainy River Services Board (DRRSB), United Native Friendship Centre (UNFC), Northwest Community Legal Clinic, Shelter of Hope, Treaty 3, and the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) worked together to conduct outreach throughout the community. Rather than waiting for individuals to seek help, outreach teams went directly to locations where people were staying.

Over the course of the heat event, more than 24 individuals were reached. Outreach teams distributed cold water, sports drinks, and fans while checking on people's well-being, sharing information about available services, and ensuring individuals knew where they could access additional supports if needed.

While the supplies provided were important, the conversations mattered just as much. Outreach offered an opportunity to build trust, answer questions, connect people with housing and community services, and remind individuals that they were not alone during a period of extreme weather.

This coordinated response reflects the strength of local partnerships. By working together, agencies were able to reach more people, respond quickly to changing needs, and help reduce the health risks associated with prolonged extreme heat. As weather events become more frequent and severe, collaboration like this continues to demonstrate how community partners can work together to protect our most vulnerable residents and ensure that support is available when it is needed most.

Staff Support Human Trafficking Awareness Day

On July 30, District of Rainy River Services Board staff joined community partners at the National Human Trafficking Awareness Day event hosted at Nanicost. The gathering brought together local service providers, Indigenous organizations, police, schools, health-care partners and community members to learn more about human trafficking, cyber safety and available supports.

Human trafficking can occur in any community, including rural and northern communities, and awareness is an important step in prevention and supporting survivors. We are proud to stand alongside our partners in helping build safer, more informed communities across the Rainy River District.



A GIFT OF WARMTH

The HOPE Transitional House recently received a beautiful and thoughtful donation from the Cabin Country Quilt Guild, who generously donated two handmade quilts for our residents. The quilts will be gifted to residents when they graduate from the Transitional Housing program and move into their forever homes. Moving into a new home is an important milestone, and we hope these quilts will provide not only warmth and comfort, but also something special that residents can take with them as they begin this next chapter.



We are very grateful to the members of the Cabin Country Quilt Guild for thinking of our residents and for the time and care that went into creating these beautiful quilts. Community support such as this adds a personal touch to the work we do at HOPE and helps make important milestones even more meaningful. We look forward to the special moment when these quilts are passed along to residents as they settle into a place, they can call home.

DRRSB PARAMEDICS CONNECT WITH COMMUNITY AT THE EMO FALL FAIR

DRRSB paramedics were pleased to attend the Rainy River Valley Agricultural Society Fall Fair in Emo this August.

Located in the Fair's Market Square in the arena, paramedics connected with fairgoers of all ages, shared health and safety information, and provided resources about Rainy River District Paramedic Services. The event was a valuable opportunity to answer questions, promote emergency preparedness and build relationships within the community.

Thank you to everyone who stopped by to speak with our team and learn more about the important role paramedics play across the Rainy River District.



Welcome

Welcome to our FFHS co-op students this semester - Harper Woolsey and Madison LeBlanc



Service Milestone

We're proud to recognize five employees who reached a service milestone between July and September 2026. Your continued dedication helps strengthen our organization and the services we provide across the District. Thank you for your hard work and commitment!

5 Years

Gloria Hamm
Mykenzie Borger
Jasmine Haney
Matthew Nestrovich

20 Years

Sandi Wilson

We'd also like to recognize Krista McCaig who achieved 25 years earlier this year and was missed being acknowledged in the last newsletter.

RAINY RIVER DISTRICT HEALTH CARE MATTERS



Distance shouldn't decide your health

Share your health-care experiences
and tell us what health care looks like *here*.



TAKE THE SURVEY

rrdoht.ca/healthcarematters

SURVEY OPEN Sept. 16 – Nov. 20, 2026



One district. Many communities.
Many experiences.

We want to understand yours.

Paramedic Recognition

We would like to recognize the 8 wonderful peers, some renewing and some new, who have stepped up to the plate as Field Training Officers to prepare for the upcoming Fall In-house 8 hour Training Sessions.

Thank you to Raphael Desautels, Steve Youden, Adam Schmidt, Donna O'Sullivan, Shelby Tymkin, Kenzie Godin, Sandi Wilson, Kathryn Lessard and Michael Barlow.

Meet Our Paramedic Superintendents

As of September, the Rainy River District Paramedic Service is pleased to have a full complement of four Superintendents supporting our team and operations across the District.

Superintendents play an important leadership role in helping ensure paramedic services remain safe, responsive and well supported. Working closely with employees and leadership, they provide day-to-day operational support, help address time-sensitive issues, monitor service readiness, and advance key priorities such as health and safety, training, equipment, certification, staff well-being and community partnerships.

Meet the four Superintendents and learn more about the unique portfolios they lead in support of our employees, operations and the communities we serve.



Ray and Alyssa

Land Ambulance Certification, Operations and Logistics – Mitchell Carlson

This portfolio helps keep our paramedic service ready to respond. From vehicles and equipment to supplies, certification and PSTrux, the focus is on making sure our teams have what they need to provide safe, reliable service across the District.

Health and Safety and Risk Management – Kim Jacobson

Keeping our people safe is at the heart of this portfolio. It supports inspections, hazard reporting, audits and follow-up while working with employees, leaders and the Joint Health and Safety Committee to build a strong culture of safety.

Training and Professional Standards – Ray Luck

This portfolio helps our team continue to learn, grow and feel confident in their roles. It coordinates training, tracks competencies and uses feedback and operational experience to ensure learning remains practical, consistent and responsive to employees' needs.

Health, Well-Being and Community Engagement – Alyssa Goldamer

This portfolio focuses on supporting our people and strengthening our connections. It brings together employee well-being, recognition and engagement while also building positive relationships with communities and partner organizations across the District.

Together, these portfolios help ensure the Rainy River District Paramedic Service remains prepared, connected and focused on delivering safe, reliable care across the District.

VISIT: www.rrdssab.ca

DRRSB LAUNCHES 2026 ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT SURVEY

The District of Rainy River Services Board (DRRSB) is taking steps to better understand the experiences and perspectives of its employees.

In partnership with unHR, an independent third-party organization, DRRSB is inviting employees to participate in the 2026 Organizational Assessment Survey. The survey is designed to help identify strengths, opportunities for improvement, and areas where the organization can continue building a positive, respectful, and effective workplace.

Employee feedback is an important part of continuous improvement. By listening to staff perspectives, DRRSB can make informed decisions that support its workforce and strengthen the services provided throughout the district.

Participation in the survey is voluntary and confidential. Individual responses will not be shared with DRRSB; findings will be reported only in aggregate, with safeguards in place to protect anonymity.

The survey is open to employees until Friday, October 9, 2026. Employees are encouraged to check their work email for the link or look for posters with a QR code to the link around DRRSB buildings.

National Day of Truth & Reconciliation



DRRSB IN THE DISTRICT



Welcome Week at SGEI



Canada Day Parade



Miracle Treat Day



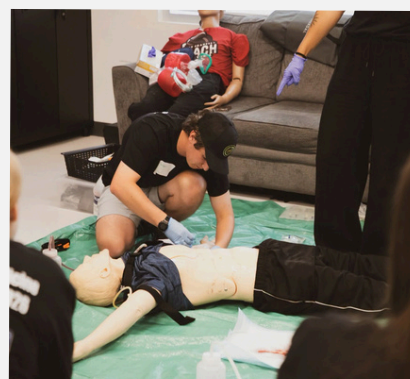
Ribs on the Rainy



Teddy Bear Picnic



Rainy River Walleye Tournament



SGEI Explore Paramedicine camp



Emo Fair



EarlyON Bubble play at McIrvine Park