



For Immediate Release
May 06, 2020

Ontario Brain Institute Announces \$520,000 in Funding to Promote Care within Communities

TORONTO, May 06, 2020 – The Ontario Brain Institute (OBI) has selected three community-led organizations to receive funding through their [Growing Expertise in Evaluation and Knowledge Translation \(GEEK\) program](#). Launched in 2019, the OBI-GEEK initiative targets programs across Ontario that aim to improve the lives of people living with brain disorders.

Community-led initiatives not only help reduce the burden on the healthcare system but simultaneously helps build capacity by addressing a crucial gap on a community level where care can be local, accessible, and more personal.

“We believe it’s important to view the community as a key piece to the system of care for individuals. The OBI-GEEK program recognizes the significance of community-led organizations that are making a transformative impact in supporting people with brain disorders,” said Dr. Tom Mikkelsen, President & Scientific Director, Ontario Brain Institute. “Our efforts are aligned with those of the provincial government to strengthen our mental health and addictions system – instead of duplicating programs or reinventing the wheel, we want to focus on the programs that are working, help to bolster their outreach and promote inclusion.”

The 2020 “OBI-GEEKs” are [Alzheimer Society of Ontario’s U First! For Care Partners, Kids Can Fly’s Peer-Administrated CBT-Informed Support for Post-Partum Depression](#) and [Surrey Place’s Mashkikiwininiwag Mazinaatesijigan Wichiiwewin \(MMW\) Clinical Videoconferencing Program](#). The three select organizations will receive \$520,000 in total funding over 2-3 years to support their initiatives. In 2019, [OBI’s GEEK program provided \\$300,000 in funding over two years to three other community organizations](#).

The groups selected this year all address vulnerable communities with great need:

- **Alzheimer Society of Ontario’s ‘U-First! for Care Partners’** program provides informal care partners (family members and friends) across Ontario with consistent hands-on training, essential skills, and best practices in the care of persons with changes in behaviour due to dementia and other cognitive impairment.



- **Kids Can Fly's** 'Peer-Administered CBT-Informed Support for Postpartum Depression' program trains women who have recovered from postpartum depression to deliver a nine-week group cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)-informed support program to women currently struggling with postpartum depression.
- **Surrey Place's** 'Mashkikiwininiwag Mazinaatesijigan Wichiiwewin (MMW) Clinical Videoconferencing Program' provides specialized clinical services and resources from urban Toronto to adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) living in rural communities in Northwestern Ontario, via videoconferencing technology. By providing services when and where people need it, the program aims to support people with IDD to continue to live in their homes and community for as long as possible (aging in place).

"Kids Can Fly is incredibly grateful for the funding from the Ontario Brain Institute which will allow us to partner with McMaster University to bring much needed support for the one in five moms suffering from postpartum depression in our community," says Sharon Brooks, Executive Director of Kids Can Fly. "Putting Dr Van Lieshout's brilliant concept into practice – of women who have recovered from PPD facilitating Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for moms currently dealing with it, will help us fill a local gap in service and ease the suffering of women in Brant. We believe it will become a best practice and help moms in other communities, as well as those in remote areas."

For more information on the 2020 OBI-GEEK participants, please visit the [website](#).

Additional Quotes:

Terri Hewitt, Interim CEO, Surrey Place - Mashkikiwininiwag Mazinaatesijigan Wichiiwewin (MMW) Clinical Videoconferencing Program

"People with developmental disabilities are living longer than ever before and addressing the unique age-related changes – particularly for those living in remote communities – is critical to maintaining the quality of life," said Terri Hewitt, Interim CEO, Surrey Place. "In cases where these issues are not addressed early enough, individuals are often inappropriately referred to long-term care facilities, placing people away from their community and family. Now, thanks to the support from the Ontario Brain Institute, Surrey Place has the resources to address these health problems by increasing the capacity to provide specialized care in northern Ontario and educating caregivers so that they can provide optimal care."



Cathy Barrick, CEO, Alzheimer Society of Ontario - U-First! for Care Partners

“The Alzheimer Society of Ontario is thankful for funding provided through the OBI GEEK Program. Their support will enable the implementation and further evaluation of our new U-First! for Care Partners program. Through this program we aim to increase confidence and skills of informal care partners (family and friends) of people living with dementia to better understand and respond to behaviour changes caused by dementia,” said Cathy Barrick, CEO, Alzheimer Society of Ontario.

“Evaluation of the program will tell us more about the impact on care partner-participant knowledge, confidence and ability to report and share information with the care team, care partner well-being, the incidence of behaviours in the person with dementia, and improved collaboration with the care team and will help to build evaluation capacity within our organization.”

About the Ontario Brain Institute:

The Ontario Brain Institute is a not-for-profit organization that accelerates discovery and innovation, benefiting both patients and the economy. Our collaborative ‘team science’ approach promotes brain research, commercialization and care by connecting researchers, clinicians, industry, patients, and their advocates to improve the lives of those living with brain disorders. Welcome to Brain Central. Visit www.braininstitute.ca for more information. Follow us on Twitter (@OntarioBrain). *Funding provided, in part by, the Government of Ontario.*

The Growing Expertise in Evaluation and Knowledge Translation (**GEEK**) program provides funding, evaluation expertise, and support to community-led programs and services for people living with brain disorders. GEEK supports the sustainability, scale or spread of these programs, to improve the quality and quantity of evidence-based care in the community.

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