

Annual Report 2025–2026

PART FOUR

Stronger Together: The Heart and Impact of the Elizabeth Centre Family Council



Written by **Renee Ng** Published **September 16, 2026**

For residents in long-term care, home is built not just on physical spaces, but on connection, advocacy, and a deep sense of community. At the Elizabeth Centre, that community is fiercely championed by their Family Council.

Formed years ago to support families navigating the emotional and logistical transitions of long-term care, the Council has evolved into a vital pillar of the home. Current chair Nicole Rivet and former chair Claire Tremblay share a unified vision: to enrich the lives of every resident while building trust and communication between families, residents, and staff.

Rooted in Care and Advocacy

Every Family Council journey begins with a personal story. For Claire Tremblay, who got involved in 2007 following her mother's admission, joining the Council was a way to stay involved in her mother's care, navigate the challenges of transition and advocated for better care. Finding the early council lacking a consistent structure, Claire took the initiative to reform. Armed with resources from Family Councils Ontario and the Long-Term Care Homes Act, and guided by a mentor, she helped revamp the group.

"The main goal was always to improve the care and the life of our residents by being strong, active advocates," reflects Claire.

For current chair Nicole Rivet, stepping into leadership happened organically when she sought a way to stay active in her own mother's care.

"During the first Family Council meeting I attended, it was shared that the Chair was stepping down and seeking a replacement," Nicole recalls. *"It seemed like the perfect way for me to remain involved."*

Hands-On Impact and Community Building

While advocacy is at their core, the Council's work is visible across the entire home through a vibrant calendar of events, fundraising, and daily support.

From collecting donations for Valentine's Day roses and hosting Mother's and Father's Day photo backdrops to celebrating Canada Day and funding prizes for resident bingo activities, the Council works tirelessly to bring joy. They also invest in long-term comfort for the residents, having purchased outdoor benches, a gazebo, and an audiobook reading machine.

The Council also recognizes that caring for residents means supporting the people who care for them. Through dedicated Staff Appreciation Days—complete with treats and gift card draws—they foster a culture of gratitude that translates directly into a better working environment and elevated resident care.

Collaboration and Quality Improvement

The Elizabeth Centre Family Council operates not in isolation, but as an active partner in the home's ecosystem.

- **Resident Connection:** The Council maintains open lines of communication with the Resident Council, reviewing their concerns, discussing solutions, and collaborating closely with its President.
- **Systemic Quality:** Members maintain a consistent presence at Town Halls, Quality Council meetings, and Zero Tolerance policy reviews. They also review Ministry of Long-Term Care reports, ensuring accountability and continuous improvement.
- **Family Outreach:** From welcome packages and informational display boards to transparent email updates sharing meeting minutes and action plans, the Council ensures no family feels they are navigating the journey alone.

Looking Ahead: Overcoming Challenges Together

Despite their many successes, both leaders note that sustaining a volunteer-driven council comes with difficulties.

Recruitment is an ongoing challenge, as families and residents naturally transition over time, leaving a small group of devoted members to carry out initiatives. Furthermore, systemic issues such as staff turnover among registered personnel and managers make it difficult to build long-standing relationships. The Council also continues to advocate for solutions around persistent concerns like language barriers and care plan reviews.

Yet, through every challenge, the core strength of the Elizabeth Centre Family Council remains rooted in open communication, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to the residents.

“We try to bring changes that will improve the lives of residents,” Nicole summarizes, capturing the heart of the Council past and present. “We also believe it is important to have the staff know that we value their contribution.”