

August 15, 2016

Office of the Mayor  
His Worship, Mayor Tony Van Bynen  
395 Mulock Drive  
Newmarket ON L3Y 4X7

**RE: Request for Proclamation for FDR Week 2016**

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We respectfully request that November 21 to 25, 2016, be proclaimed as “Family Dispute Resolution Week” in Newmarket. This year’s theme, FDRvolution, 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.

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 a free public forum at Toronto city Hall; think tanks for professionals at the Law Society of Upper Canada; public forums in Barrie, Durham, Newmarket, Aurora and elsewhere throughout the week. More information about Family Dispute Resolution Week can be found at [www.fdrweek.ca](http://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 would be pleased to provide any additional details you may need. Our proclamation coordinator Laura Bradford can be reached at 289-221-6251 and at [laura@summitmediationgroup.ca](mailto:laura@summitmediationgroup.ca). Kindly let us know if a Proclamation from His Worship Mayor Van Bynen would be possible.

Very Truly Yours,

Laura Catone-Tarcea, co-chair, FDRWeek 2016  
Marty Klein, co-chair, FDRWeek 2016