

Donna Thomson

Author, Caregiving Activist at McMaster University

Ottawa, ON, CA

Author and Leader in family caregiving - disability and aging Instructor, McMaster University Vice-Chair, Kids Brain Health Network

Biography

Donna is the author of *The Four Walls of My Freedom: Lessons I've Learned From a Life of Caregiving* (The House of Anansi Press, 2014) and is the co-author of *The Unexpected Journey of Caring: The Transformation of Loved One to Caregiver* (Rowman and Littlefield, June 2019). She blogs regularly at her website, *The Caregivers' Living Room* (www.donnathomson.com). Donna has a passionate interest in family engagement in health research. She is the Vice-Chair of Kids Brain Health Network (a National Network Centre of Excellence) and is the co-designer and co-instructor of a new post-graduate, online course in patient and family engagement in childhood disability research at McMaster University. Donna also teaches *Caregiving Essentials*, an online course for family caregivers at McMaster.

Availability

Keynote, Moderator, Panelist, Workshop, Host/MC, Author Appearance

Industry Expertise

Women, Philanthropy, Elder Care, Social Services, Health Care - Services, Government Relations, Education/Learning

Areas of Expertise

Health Care Navigation, Family Caregiving, Resilience, Strategic Advocacy, Teaching, Coaching

Affiliations

Kids Brain Health Network, Child-Bright SPOR

Sample Talks

About Care: Know What You Need and Get What You Want

Transitioning through levels of care can be confusing and traumatic, whether it is for yourself or for an ageing parent. This talk offers practical advice and strategic tips on how to survive the process with your sense of control, your dignity and your employment intact.

Resilience, Optimism and Endurance: The Undervalued Survival Skills

Maintaining personal health and productivity through times of chaos and adversity is difficult, but not impossible. This talk will assist audience members to prepare for surviving difficult life events by creating personal support networks and developing strategies that enable effective crisis management while not compromising personal wellbeing.

Event Appearances

The Chambers Family Lecture, American Academy of Cerebral Palsy and Developmental Medicine

AGM, AACPDM

The Caregiving Effect: When Love Meets Necessity in Palliative Care

McGill Council on Palliative Care Annual Lecture

Cities Deepening Community, Tamarack Institute

Asset Based Community Development Workshop

Education

Central School of Speech and Drama

DTIE Theatre in Education (Applied Drama)

University of Ottawa

BEd Education

Concordia University

BFA Theatre (Performance)

Accomplishments

Writer, Policy Options and Open Democracy

Donna Thomson writes on caregiving for Policy Options <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/authors/donna-thomson/> and for Transformation, an online publication of Open Democracy

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/author/donna-thomson/>.

Testimonials

Dr. Samir Sinha

Nobody grows up planning to be a caregiver, but many of us will become one and sometimes when we least expect it. Donna Thomson and Zachary White bring powerful insights to help us understand what it means to be a caregiver and how to truly support those of us who will travel this unexpected journey. (Samir K. Sinha, Director of Geriatrics, Sinai Health System and University Health Network, Toronto and Health Policy Research Director, National Institute on Ageing (Canada))

Adrienne Gruber

Finally! A totally honest assessment of the caregiving experience. Not just another workbook, disease specific account or "how to" book (though there are many helpful guidelines), but a no-nonsense look at the ongoing reality and challenges of how the caregiving experience changes your life. Fear, anger, the unknown, normalcy, are dealt with in a direct, caring and expert manner. Whether you are a "newbie" or a long-term caregiver, this book illustrates all we have in common and gives us guidelines to cope wherever we are in our journey. (Adrienne Gruber, Founder and President, The Caregiver Space)

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