

WonderTree marks grand opening of family clinic, offering wraparound mental health care

By Sam Odrowski

WonderTree Child, Adolescent and Family Practice celebrated the grand opening of its clinic in Orangeville on Friday, Oct. 18, with a ribbon cutting and open house.

The clinic, located at 685 Riddell Rd., Unit 105, offers clinical psychology services for families, with a focus on children and adolescents with autism, genetic disorders, ADHD and neurological diagnoses.

WonderTree's 15-staff-member team provides wraparound mental health care to clients with depression, anxiety and other mental disorders, both in-person and virtually across Ontario.

The grand opening marked the organization's one-year anniversary of offering virtual care.

"WonderTree was born out of a shared desire between Dr. Michelle Cardella and myself to create something special, a space that wasn't just another clinic, but a true support system for children and families," said Dr. Stephanie Lavoie, director and clinical neuropsychologist at WonderTree, who founded the organization with Cardella.

"We both saw a pressing need for a place where families with complex presentations could find support, not just through one specialist, but through a coordinated multidisciplinary team. In Ontario, right now, many families are often being told your situation is too complex or they are left waiting for services for months and sometimes years. Michelle and I wanted to change that narrative."

Lavoie said WonderTree's mission is to offer personalized care that nurtures every child's potential.

"When we look at the existing health and education sectors, we see significant gaps. Too often families struggle to access the services they need. The system can feel fragmented, especially for those navigating neurodiversity and complex medical concerns or twice exceptional profiles," she said. "We built WonderTree to bridge those gaps, offering wraparound care so that families don't have to jump around between different providers or face long wait lists."

The clinic's multidisciplinary approach brings together experts from different fields to collaborate on the care their clients receive. Lavoie said this sets WonderTree apart from a typical private practice.

"By working together, we ensure that no child is left behind and that families can find the answers they've been seeking," she remarked.

"Whether a child is struggling with anxiety, learning disabilities or complex needs, we bring together experts in various fields to collaborate and tailor interventions that truly work for each family."

WonderTree offers psychological assessments, executive function coaching, job coaching, parent coaching and therapy, speech and language therapy, child and adolescent therapy, occupational therapy, medication consultations, targeted academic support, and life skills support.

"Our team includes a range of professionals, and we all really want to work together to meet that one goal of supporting the child. The collaborative journey has shown us the power of multidisciplinary care. Families are no longer left to piece together the solution on their own, and instead, they have us to work side by side with them to create that comprehensive plan to meet the needs that their child has," said Dr. Michelle Fardella, Director and Clinical/School Psychologist at WonderTree, during its grand opening.

'We've heard stories of parents who are overwhelmed by a system that wasn't set up to support their child's full potential, and we believe that we're the place where families find answers sometimes when other people have said 'no.'

Lavoie and Fardella designed the clinic to be sensory-friendly to support the children and youth they serve in-person.

'We also actively seek to learn and grow from the communities we serve, seeking the feedback of neurodivergent families as we designed the space and designed our services. By incorporating feedback, we hope to continuously refine, adapt our services and be more affirmative and responsive, ensuring that every family feels seen, heard and supported,' said Fardella.

Attendees of the grand opening at WonderTree on October 18 included Orangeville Mayor Lisa Post, Councillor Joe Andrew and Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones, who's also Ontario's Health Minister.

'I am here as the MPP, but I have to say as the Minister of Health, my heart grows big when you talk about multidisciplinary care,' Jones remarked.

'As a province, we were able to, in February, expand multidisciplinary teams, and it is exactly what you highlighted in your speech, that ability to ensure that we are not just giving phone numbers to people or brochures to families who are looking for service. It's bringing those teams together.'

Jones added, 'When I see that happening here in our own community, it makes me very proud, and I know that you will do well. I know the families that you're serving and will expand to serve will really see the impact because we have to go beyond individual silos and ensure that people get access. No doors, the wrong door, and the multidisciplinary teams, I feel strongly, is the way to go.'

Dr. Lavoie said she'd encourage parents to reach out if they are interested in having their children receive care at WonderTree.

'The first step is just reaching out. We offer free 15-minute consultations, whether they connect with either myself or Dr. Michelle Cardella, and we'll speak with them, and get a sense of what's going on. We can make some recommendations about what services or what kinds of supports might be the right fit for them,' she explained.

WonderTree's phone number is (905) 425-9525 and the clinic is open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. seven days a week.