



THE FAMILY
CENTRE

ANNUAL REPORT

2019/2020

Message from the Chair of the Board of Directors Michele Annich

As I provide my contribution to The Family Centre (TFC) annual report this year, my message is one of gratitude to all of the staff at TFC. You are all amazing people! You offer excellent service to our many clients, with unrivalled passion and innovation. Thank you.

We are living in very uncertain times, and Edmonton children and families need our support now more than ever. You make the difference. You are helping families negotiate their way through a global COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring that children and families develop the capacity to address mental health challenges, recover from violence or trauma, address poverty, and access educational resources, all in a world where human contact and touch have been dramatically reduced. In addition to these critical supports, what you offer is hope. Again, thank you.

Although this is my last year on the Board of Directors, I leave knowing that the Board continues to enthusiastically support the tremendous work of Pauline and the leadership team and, of course, all of you. I know that TFC will continue to create a safe space for children and families. I know that TFC's employees and partners will ensure that Edmonton children and families have the tools to recover and regain their strength, and to develop the resilience that is critical to ensuring that they can meet the challenges of our complex world and the ever changing realities of a post pandemic environment.



Message from the CEO Pauline Smale

This has been a unique year from so many perspectives. The transition to a new government, the economic instability in Alberta coupled with the austerity budget, and most recently the COVID-19 pandemic.

The challenge has been steep. As 90% of our work is considered essential, it was paramount that we respond quickly, adeptly, and with resolve. And respond we have. Individually and collectively, we applied our experience and our gifts to the tasks of each moment. It was imperative that we connect and support those we serve as many have struggled to meet their basic and essential needs. All the while many of us had our own personal obstacles to overcome, like childcare, homeschooling, caring for elderly parents, personal loneliness, and increased levels of anxiety and fear. Together we found ways to keep ourselves safe, emotionally and physically, and move our work into the virtual realm. We have found that we are agile, creative and deep.

I want to acknowledge the courage this kind of adjustment required and validate everyone's contributions. It is awe-inspiring to know that each day we provide safety, comfort and hope for others and with each other.

I'd like to thank Michele Annich, as she retires, for her years of leadership as both board director and board chair. Her passion, wisdom and unwavering support has been felt by all and realized through the work of the agency.

Each year is built on the past and shapes us as we move forward. This has been a year of immense learning. I am grateful that we have risen to the challenge of continuing to aspire to our mission, "Healthy Families in Healthy Communities."



Our Year in Numbers

Translation & Interpretation



documents were translated into a different language



We reduced the language barrier by providing **4,456** interpretations

Counselling

9,141 people accessed
49,174 hours of counselling



*That's **2,049** days of counselling!*

Families & Children



children and youth lived in our reunification homes

The family support services team supported **448 families** and **916 children and youth**



We brought families together **62** times in circles, ceremonies, and family group conferences to create plans for displaced children

We were able to keep **154 children** in family care through our kinship program



Employee Assistance Program

We served **1,149** individuals through our Employee Assistance Programs to receive mental and physical health, financial, and legal supports



Community Initiatives

Roots and Wings

assisted **1,423** families with parenting skills, finances, mental health, and community connections

Cultural Coaches

engaged with **458** students to help adjust to life in Canada

Success Coaches

supported **3,673** students to become positively engaged in school

Youth Liaisons

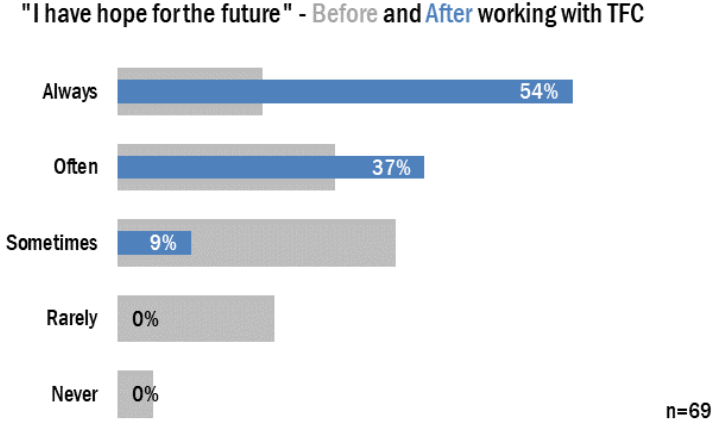
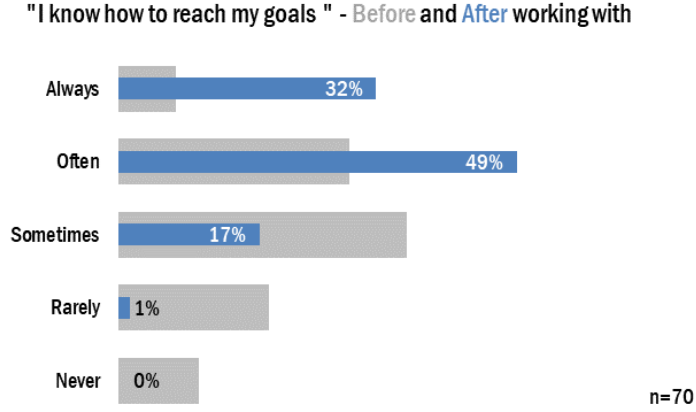
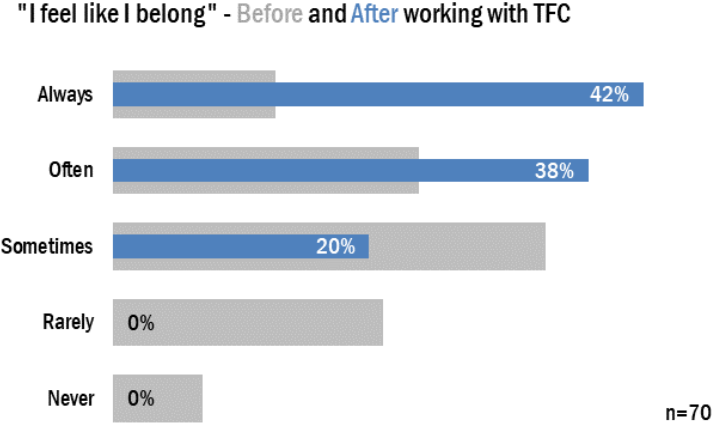
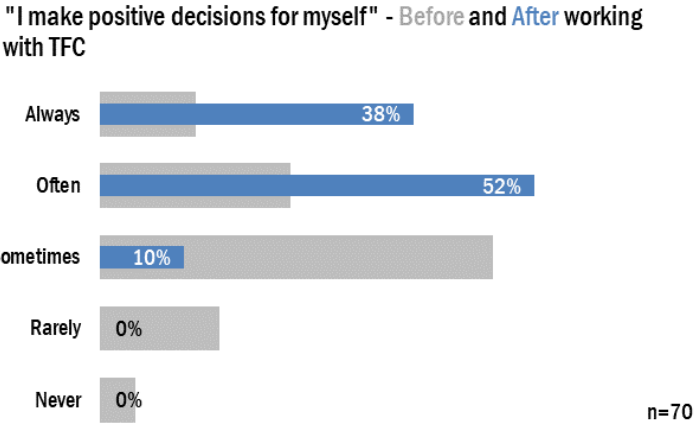
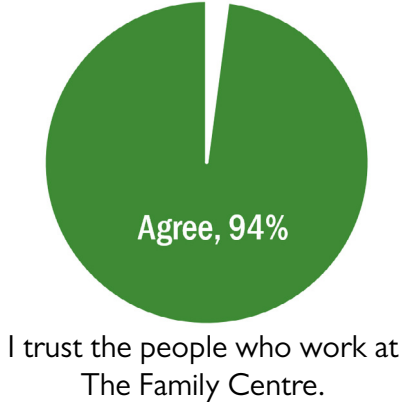
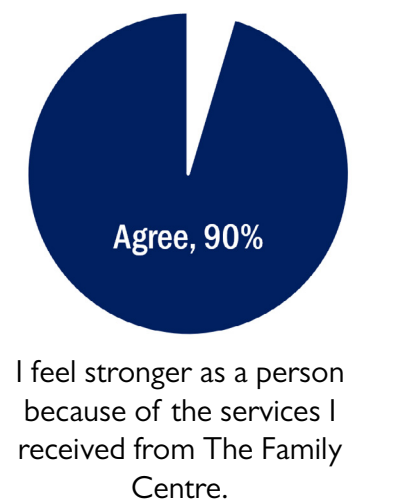
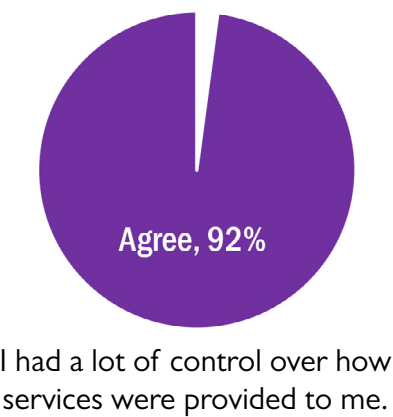
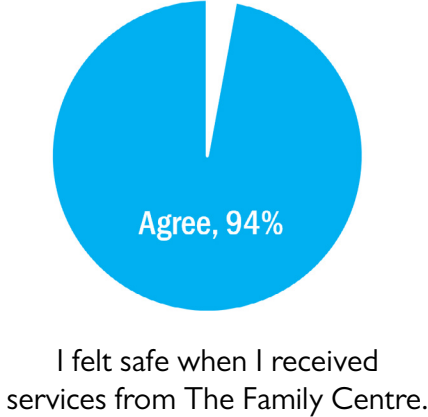
facilitated **20** projects to improve community safety and youth empowerment - **432** people engaged via community events, resource mobilization, and presentations

Education Services

1,264 people participated in our educational classes to enhance skills in parenting, relationships, communication, and self-regulation



Feedback From Our Clients



Long Serving Employees

The Family Centre works hard to create an agency that engages and motivates employees. We believe that by providing employees an opportunity to learn, grow professionally and personally and aspire to their passion, we can provide better services to the Edmonton community. We want to honor the following employees by acknowledging their anniversaries.



Oscar Sanchez, 26 years

Oscar Sanchez has spent 26 dedicated years with The Family Centre and is a pillar within the Roots and Wings program. His ability to walk alongside people and engage partners in a relational and humble way is an intrinsic part of who he is, not only as a practitioner but as a human being in the world.

Throughout the years we have utilized many descriptors to illustrate our work, however, you will likely not hear Oscar refer to his practice as strength-based or trauma-informed, this is because he just is – he models the way. You will find him with a smile on his face, Starbucks in hand, and offering love and kindness to all whom surround him.

Michelle Gibson

Lisa started with TFC in 2000 as a parent aide. She was promoted to a family intervention supervisor in 2007 and took a lateral transfer in 2008 to develop the safe visitation program. Shortly thereafter, she became our first family group conferencing coordinator. In 2011 Lisa was promoted to a management position in outcomes based services delivery, now FSS. In 2016 she completed her master's degree and was promoted to director of children services programming.

Lisa is an innovator, motivated to find new solutions to intellectually challenging community needs. She is also an inspiring leader with the unique gift to develop people, processes, and programs.

Pauline Smale



Lisa Stern, 20 years

When Andy began working at TFC in June 2000, I wonder if he could have envisioned he'd still be here 20 years later! During this time, Andy has become a true part of the TFC backbone, as he embodies the mission and vision in all he does. Andy is always up for a challenge, moving with grace through the many changes he has experienced within his role. He is a model of what it means to be client-centric, trauma informed, and relational. We are both fortunate and grateful to have him as part of the TFC family!

Lisa Stern



Andy Munoz, 20 years

5 Years

Alfredo Acedera
Kara Lee Doka
Nyasha Tayengwa
Sarah Garrison
Scott Carter

10 Years

Cricket Walker
Eileen Babey
Emilio Ane
Grace Boender
Jacob VanderMeulen
Mihaela Ionita
Timothy Doyle

Employee Awards

Each year we take the time to honour employees that reflect The Family Centre’s culture and the values we aspire to.

Above and Beyond Award

The Above and Beyond award acknowledges employees who have gone above and beyond the duties of their position for the betterment of The Family Centre. The Family Centre believes in the importance of extending oneself in an effort to grow professionally while focusing on the larger scope of TFC.



Award winner Kristin Neuman (left) with nominator Stephanie Kolibaba (right).

Best Idea Award



The Best Idea award acknowledges an employee who thinks outside the box in order to solve problems. They are an innovator who creates solutions to enhance the way either children and families or employees experience The Family Centre.

Award winner Nimir Raval (top middle) nominated by Community Initiatives Leadership Team (Katie Wallbaum, Jaclyn Wickens, Sarah Garrison, Michael Hansen, Michelle Gibson, and Danny Allen)

Staff Development Award

The Staff Development award is given to an employee, who has made outstanding contributions to staff development. The Family Centre believes in the importance of mobilizing well trained professional employees in all areas of the agency.



Award winner Sarah Thang (middle right) nominated by Katie Maxwell (right), Laura Lee (middle left), Brandie Rosario (left)

Walk the Talk Award

Walk the Talk award acknowledges an employee who has demonstrated outstanding skill and empathy in their dealing with others. The Family Centre believes in the importance of dealing with people skillfully, compassionately, and respectfully.



Award winner Lynnette Pomerleau (left) with nominator Michelle Gibson (right).

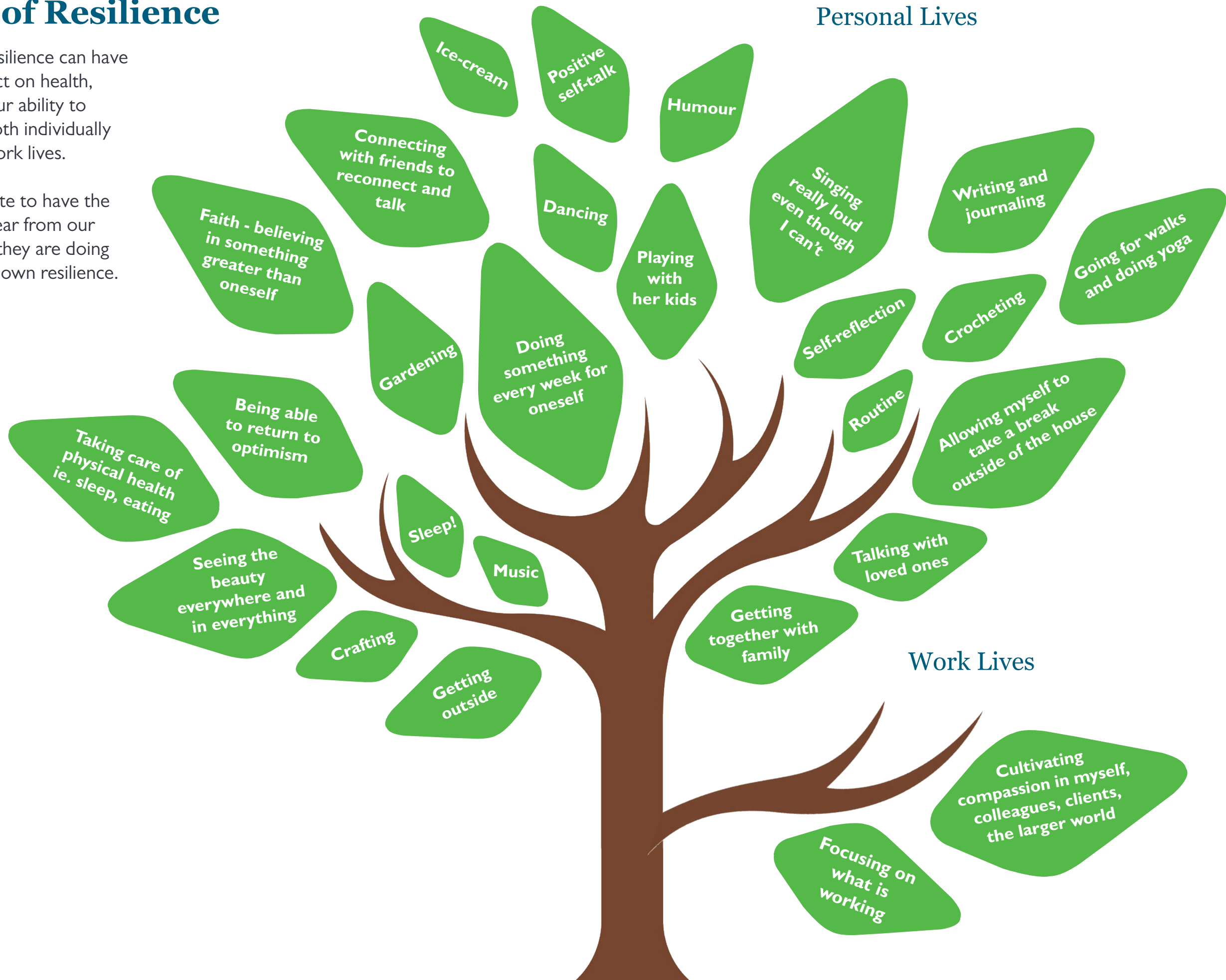


Award winner Vanessa Cutler (left) with Katie Maxwell (right). Nominator Thomas Ngobe (missing).

Sources of Resilience

We know that resilience can have a significant impact on health, well-being, and our ability to manage stress, both individually and within our work lives.

We were fortunate to have the opportunity to hear from our staff about what they are doing to promote their own resilience.



Nataz's Story

Watch Nataz's Video



At the age of seventeen, Nataz was transitioning out of foster care and into her own place. A few years later, her social worker introduced her to Natasha, a youth connector at The Family Centre.

Natasha helped Nataz connect to her roots through the COVID-19 pandemic. Connecting with her culture was very important to Nataz. So, Natasha introduced her to Sherrylynne, The Family Centre's Indigenous Knowledge Holder.

Meeting for the first time over video chat, Nataz felt nervous. But, Natasha helped walk her through the process. "When I first met Sherrylynne, I felt a little awkward. I felt like, what do I talk about? What do I ask?" It didn't take long for Nataz to warm up to Sherrylynne, "Working with Sherrylynne has been amazing. She feels like she's my grandmother." Not having many Elders in her life that know about her culture, Nataz feels as though a door has been opened for her.

Something Nataz was never taught about in the full extent was protocol. She has now learned ways to give tobacco to get advice from an Elder or for prayer. She has even started smudging which is something she never used to do. "Instead of questioning what I really am, I know for sure." Nataz hopes that she will soon be able to dance in a pow wow.

Blue's Story

Watch Blue's Video



When Blue was in the fifth grade, she and her mother, Emily, moved to the Spruce Avenue community. It wasn't easy for her to leave her current school as she didn't get to see her friends as often as she had hoped. Blue recalls that time as "tough" and "really disappointing."

When Blue started grade seven, she was suspended for lashing out and for her use of language. She was then introduced to Philiana, the school's mental health therapist with The Family Centre. "I went in very untrusting and kind of closed off," admits Blue. Blue's full trust in Philiana kicked in when she would not discuss any other student with her. Blue then knew she was safe and felt comfortable with her.

Now, Philiana continues to help Blue work on her self-love. "We made an agreement for me to stop overthinking. It was an overthinking when looking in the mirror," says Blue. "I feel like I've been more comfortable recently because of it. I don't care what anyone else thinks of me anymore."

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, Blue continues to connect with Philiana through Instagram. With the help of Justine, the school's success coach, Philiana has dropped off groceries for Blue and Emily. As restrictions began to decrease, Philiana and Justine have been able to take Blue out to see her friends. They spend time at the park so that Blue can socialize and maintain her friendships during this time.

Wendy's Story

Building a life in Edmonton wasn't easy for Wendy, a Kenyan refugee. Being isolated from friends and family and raising five children without support was overwhelming. Knowing very little English, Wendy did not have the means to advocate for herself. Suffering from depression, she wanted to sleep all the time and would even forget if she had eaten in the day.

Then, her oldest son began getting in trouble at

school. Bethany, a Roots & Wings worker at her son's school, connected with Wendy to see how she could help. Wendy admits that getting help wasn't easy. "I had a hard time because if you're sick you think that disease will never go away. I would say I can't change."

Since accepting help, Wendy has been able to improve her English and can now speak at a low intermediate level. She has also improved on

self-care strategies and learned to make her own appointments. Before, Wendy had an "I can't" attitude but now she is mindful of her self-talk and tells herself that she can do things.

When the COVID-19 pandemic started, Wendy was pregnant with and gave birth to her sixth child. During isolation, she continues to exercise everything she has learned. "You can't leave everything on The Family Centre, you have to

try and push yourself. If you wait for everything forever, you'll never change."

Moving forward, Wendy wants to get her Canadian citizenship and travel back to her country to see family. "Before I couldn't see the future, now I see many futures."

Jessica’s Story

Watch Jessica’s Video



Two days before her eleventh birthday, Jessica’s father passed away in a motorcycle accident. Then five years later, her mother succumbed to brain cancer. Her mother was diagnosed when Jessica was three and was sick for thirteen years. Jessica was a caretaker for her mother for a long time and had to grow up fast. “That was really hard. I was practically her nurse for a lot of my life,” says Jessica.

After the first year of her father’s death, Jessica was molested by a close family member. “I didn’t know how to tell anybody. My mom had cancer, my dad was dead. You know, it was very hard.” She went to a youth centre and explained what had happened to her. Three weeks later she was introduced to a caseworker.

Throughout her life, Jessica had seen many counsellors. It wasn’t until she began working with Kristen, a mental health therapist at The Family Centre, that her mindset began to change. Kristen helped Jessica take a step back and allow herself to be a kid for a little bit longer. “I’ve always been a lot older than I think I am like mentally because of everything that I’ve been through. She definitely helped me see that I needed to back up.”

Jessica began seeing Kristen three weeks before the COVID-19 pandemic started. “We didn’t really get too much of a face-to-face connection before we had to start on video.” Jessica was happy when video chats became available. She preferred meeting over video than the phone. “I can see her. I can connect with her. I can see her facial expressions. It’s just a lot easier to tell that she’s really listening.”

At the beginning of the pandemic, Jessica was extremely fearful of what was going to happen. Her NAIT classes moved online which caused her a great deal of anxiety. “My counsellor definitely helped me get through a lot of my anxieties and fears with going online.” Kristen then encouraged Jessica to get back into the things that make her happy. She and her boyfriend have occupied themselves be creating an art wall in their home.

Counselling with Kristen during this time has given Jessica confidence and reassurance. “Her words definitely stick with me and I think that’s what I personally need most in a counsellor is to have their words stick with me in a time where I’m not OK.”

Jessica is currently upgrading with the hopes of attending business school. She dreams of opening a restaurant for troubled youth. “I would like to be the setting where youth can come into work and feel safe.” Jessica’s overall goal is to be a good person and to continue to care for others.

Board of Directors

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John Cotton.....	Director
Page Stuart.....	Director



Financial Statement

Income

United Way: Allocation	\$762,547
United Way: All In For Youth and Youth Capacity Grants	\$1,592,604
Provincial Contracts.....	\$3,110,167
Collaborative Service Delivery Contracts.....	\$12,829,139
City of Edmonton: FCSS	\$1,201,778
Fees for Service	\$4,241,712
Grants.....	\$91,887
Interest, Casino, and Other.....	\$124,342

Total \$23,954,176

Expenses

Salaries, Benefits, and Contracted Services.....	\$17,809,687
Occupancy and Office Costs.....	\$1,619,302
Program and Client Expenses	\$4,420,873

Total \$23,849,862

This information is courtesy of The Family Centre of Northern Alberta



THE FAMILY CENTRE

#20, 9912 - 106 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 1C5



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@tfcnalberta



thefamilycentre.na

780.423.2831

info@familycentre.org