

2024/2025

ANNUAL REPORT



THE FAMILY
CENTRE

LETTER FROM

the CEO & Chair, Board of Directors



The Family Centre has been providing services for over 82 years now. During that time, we have seen significant changes in our community and in our responses to the needs of our community. This past year, we expanded our offerings to include foster care services and training for organizations on leadership, employee skill development, and Indigenous teachings. In addition, we expanded our community-based presence to include four Civida housing locations, preparing the community space to provide local services. Responding, adapting and reimagining our work is part of TFC culture. It is a part of our DNA.

This year was filled with plenty of challenges - local, national, and global. It was difficult to get through a day without political issues infiltrating our thoughts and conversations. We are experiencing great need in our community. Affordability is a primary concern for so many families, and we know poverty effects can be debilitating. Our work is as important as ever. And, it is such a privilege to be able to provide services that reach so many people. The strength and resilience of the human spirit always encourage us. Even more so during times of disruption and change. It seems like disruption is a catalyst for bringing people together, and there is nothing more therapeutic than connection and relationship.

Through the pages of this report, you will see that TFC has continued to work in partnership with many community stakeholders. This year we worked in 100's family homes, over 40 schools, over 30 worksites, in 10 community agencies, 7 Family Resource Networks, and most recently 4 social spaces at Civida Housing complexes. We want to ensure we reduce as many

barriers as possible by embedding our work in the community. Working alongside others allows us to enhance our offerings and coordinate efforts. This work cannot be done without the support of our funding partners: Child and Family Services, Family Community and Social Services (FCSS), the United Way, and the Edmonton Community Foundation. These longstanding relationships of 50, 75, and 80 years are a testament to the importance of collaboration and our collective impact.

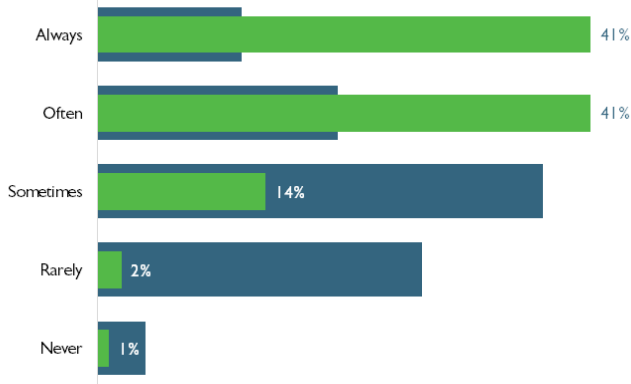
All of this work is possible due to our over 200 employees with a wide range of backgrounds and expertise. We hear about the quality and effectiveness of our staff in the community on a regular basis. It is common for people to come up to us and comment on the value of our work. You will see we are celebrating 5 employees this year with 15- and 25-years experience. It is such a privilege to work alongside such dedicated people.

Our Board of Directors invested their time and efforts this year to develop an ambitious 3-year strategic plan providing leadership, direction and focus. Part of this work led them to enhance the mission to read: The Family Centre empowers families and children to thrive by connecting people with one another, improving individual mental health and well-being, and providing resources and tools that strengthen families. **Together, we are building healthy, safe, and connected communities.**

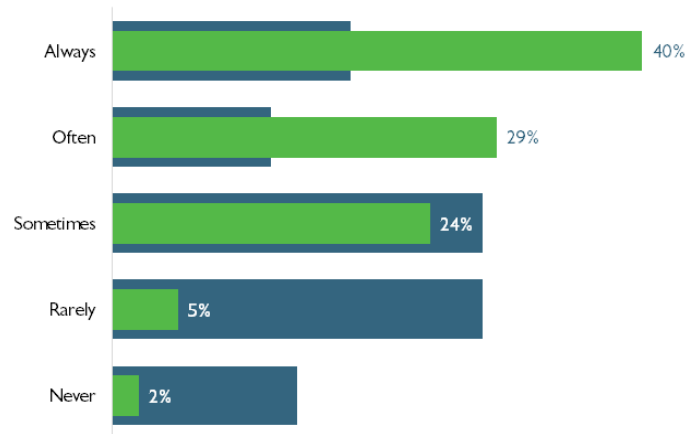
*Enjoy the report,
Pauline Smale and Page Stuart*

FEEDBACK FROM FAMILIES

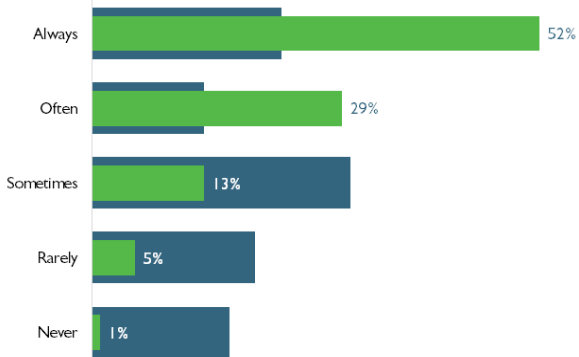
"I make positive decisions for myself", **before** and **after** working with TFC.



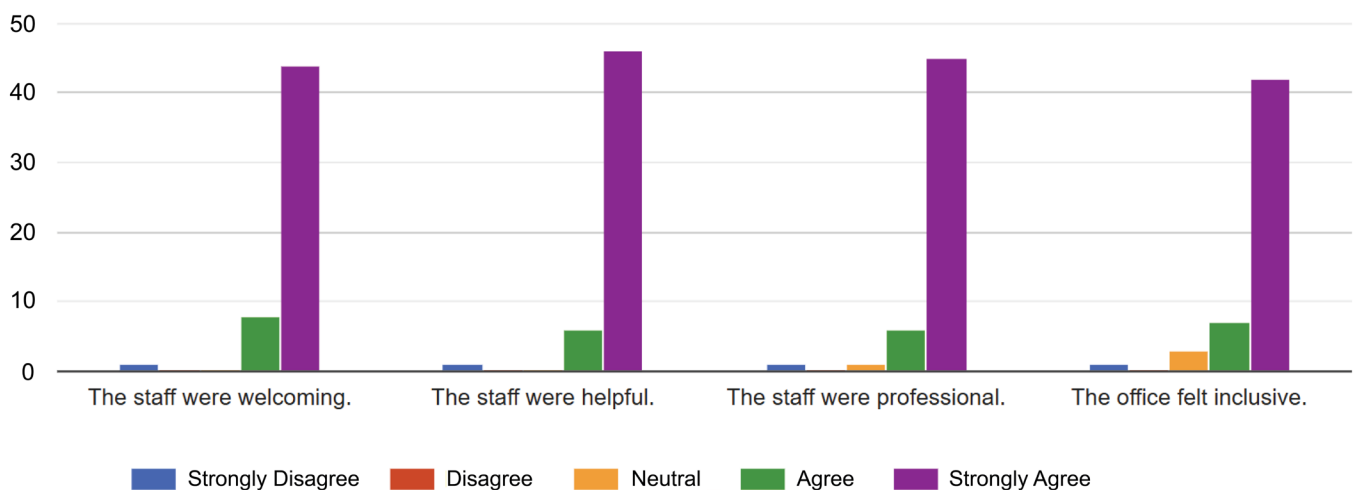
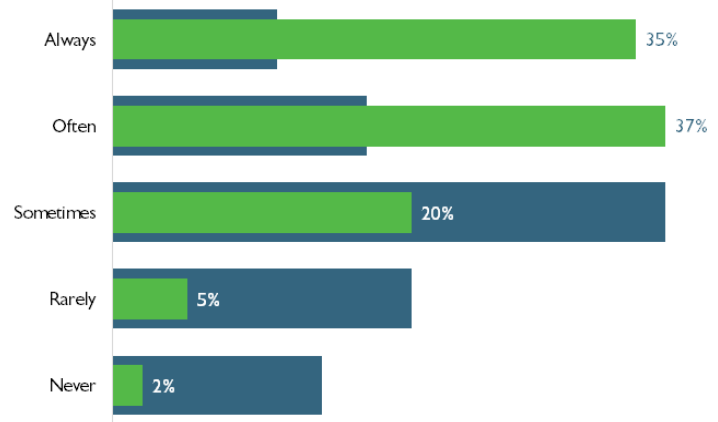
"I feel like I belong", **before** and **after** working with TFC.



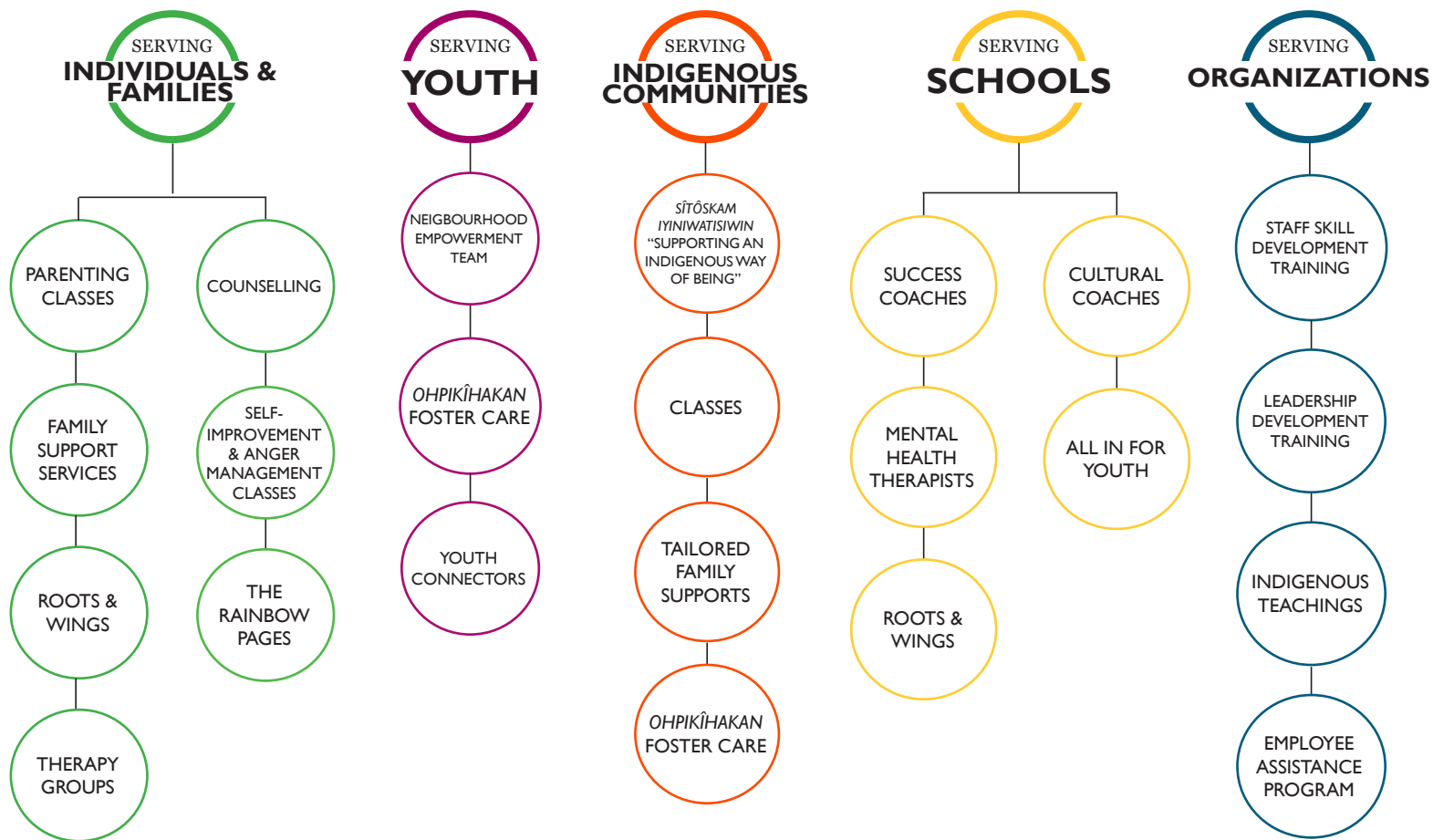
"I have hope for the future", **before** and **after** working with TFC.



"I know how to reach my goals", **before** and **after** working with TFC.



WHAT WE DO



Board of Directors

The Family Centre is extremely fortunate to be governed by the following volunteer board members, who give their time to help us continue improving the lives of families and individuals within our communities.

Page Stuart, Chair
Faye Rault, Treasurer
Brian Andrais
Brian Zrobek
Holly Strang
Karen Penney
Kevin Stevenson
Tristan Patterson

ohpikîhakan

“a child that is being raised”



ohpikîhakan Foster Care is a new program dedicated to providing safe homes for children and youth aged 0 to 17. *ohpikîhakan* is trauma-informed and embedded with culturally responsive services and Indigenous worldviews.

Currently we have:

- 17 therapeutic foster care caregivers
- 14 youth placed (or in the process) in caregiver homes
- 25 foster care caregivers in the licensing process

Youth Voices

Youth in our Therapeutic Foster Care program have shared these reflections about their experience:

“[Caregivers] are connected to their culture, and they have helped me connect to mine.”
“People support me no matter how I’m feeling. I feel safe.”

What Caregivers Are Saying

Seven caregivers identified program strengths as:

- Positive support from program staff and on-call supervisors
- Communication with supervisors and program staff
- Knowing someone is always available to support them through situations
- Feeling connected to the program’s goals and focus. Working toward the same goal.
- Feeling prepared for the caregiving experience through the offered training

Our Work in the Community

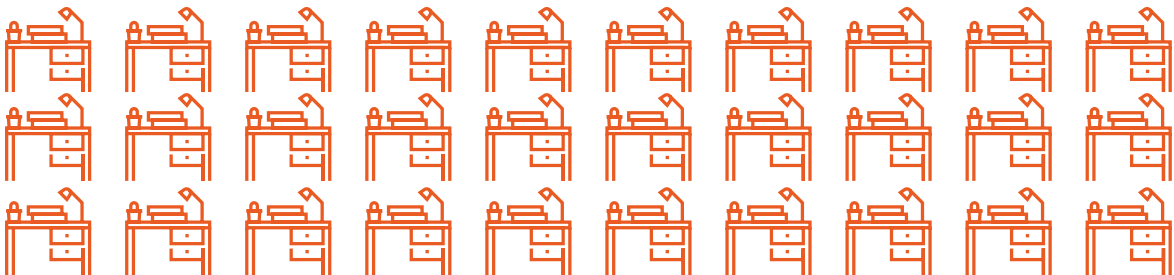
The Family Centre strives to ensure we reduce as many barriers to mental health and wellness services as possible. As such, our business model focuses on working in collaboration with community partners to provide our services in conjunction with them on their sites.

Last year, we provided services in over 90 locations: 40 schools, 30 worksites, 10 community agencies, 7 Family Resource Networks, and most recently, 4 social spaces at Cvida Housing complexes.

Schools



Worksites



Community Agencies



Family Resource Networks



Social Spaces



Girls' Lunch Program and In-Class Visits at John A. McDougall School

At lunchtime, warm chatter and connection fill the walls of John A. McDougall School. With Meena, the school's mental health therapist, young girls build relationships and explore their feelings together. Each grade has a day during the week when they gather together. They share their emotions, laugh, and move their bodies through dance.

Many of the girls hear about the program through their friends. "My friend used to be here in kindergarten, and she told me that it's fun and you get to share your feelings," mentioned Layla, a grade 4 student. The girls begin by eating lunch in a sharing circle and talking about their current emotions. Then, they have time to engage in activities like games or making up group dances.

Hailey, grade 6, mentioned how the girls are free to participate based on their level of comfort. "You don't have to participate in everything, and you can just leave whenever you want. You don't have to stay the whole time."

In addition to the lunch program, Meena also hosts in-class visits. She drops in and teaches students about their brains and how it impacts their emotions. Grade 3 student Sampada loves

that she has "learned about endorphins and the two sides of the brain. The boss brain, which is in your forehead, and the lizard brain, which is in the back."

Using Indigenous traditions, students sit in a circle. They pass a speaking stone, share their favourite feeling, and something about themselves. **"The most helpful thing that I've learned is that it's good to use your feelings sometimes instead of holding them in," shared Vivian, grade 5.** Alongside education and connection, students watch yoga and dance videos to get their bodies moving.

These programs allow all students to meet Meena. Whether they attend private meetings or see her in the classroom, students recognize her as a safe place.

>> [Watch the full video online.](#)



Erin's Story

Struggling with addiction and trauma, Erin lost custody of her eight children. During this time in her life, Erin's mother passed away. Feeling like she had hit rock bottom, Erin knew something had to change. She entered rehab and began her new life.

Within one year, Erin regained custody of her children. However, she struggled with becoming a full-time mom again, having not had children in her care for four years.

When she enrolled her daughter at John A. McDougall School, she met Hermila, the school's Roots and Wings worker. She helped connect Erin with resources and Indigenous supports, like sweats.

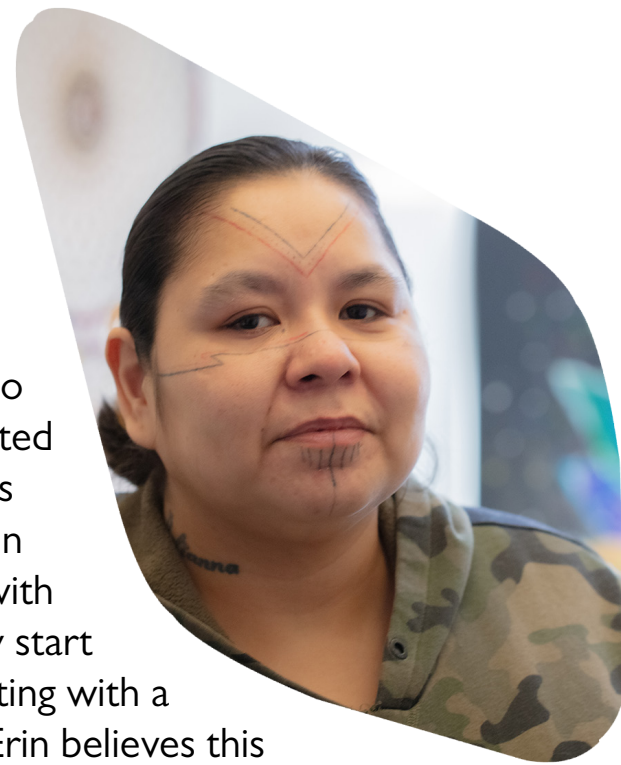
Hermila noticed that Erin needed further mental health support. She was then introduced to the school's Mental Health Therapist, Meena. At first, Erin was hesitant. "I wasn't sure she was going to understand a lot of things if I were to be really honest with her," shares Erin. However, she could tell that Meena genuinely cared for her well-being. "Meena's an amazing person. She's such a caring lady. I just felt like I could trust her."

Meena also incorporated Indigenous practices in sessions with Erin. They start each meeting with a smudge. Erin believes this has helped her on her healing journey.

"It has helped me feel closer to my ancestors, closer to my mother, and makes me feel proud of who I am and where I come from."

Erin thinks that not enough people take chances on school mental health therapists and Roots and Wings workers. "They're not just there for their job. They want to actually help people in good ways," believes Erin.

Erin still works with Meena on her mental health. She implements the coping mechanisms and tools she has learned daily. She plans to continue living a sober and happy life with her children.



>> [Watch the full video online.](#)



CEO Pauline Smale Awarded the King Charles III Coronation Medal

Pauline's leadership has been transformative, guiding The Family Centre to provide vital mental health supports, family services, and community programs that make a real difference. Her dedication to empowering families and strengthening social services has helped countless individuals build brighter futures.

Pauline began her journey with The United Way of Alberta Capital Region in 2008 as an Employee Campaign Committee Member, later becoming its Executive Champion in 2016. As CEO and a leader in the social services sector for over 30 years, she leads with both heart and strategy, making a lasting impact. A

Red Feather member and frequent collaborator, Pauline is a true United Way ambassador and an exceptional advocate for building a strong and resilient community.

Since 2019, Pauline has served in various leadership roles with the United Way and is currently the Co-Chair of their Workplace Campaign Cabinet. She is consistently going above and beyond in her cabinet leadership role. She champions their work and warmly welcomes new sector leaders into the fold.

Pauline also received the George Letki Award for Outstanding Volunteer of the year by the United Way.

CEO Pauline Smale Awarded the Distinguished Alumni Award by MacEwan University

Pauline Smale (Social Work '00 and Early Childhood Development '84) has dedicated more than 30 years to supporting and advocating for children, youth and families. As the CEO of The Family Centre, Smale works to affect change through collaboration and innovation, incorporating best practices and research to continually improve the work of the organization.

Smale understands the importance of supporting emerging professionals. The Family Centre provides practicum opportunities for 15 students each year. Smale also readily steps up to lead and advocate for better systems. To this end, she serves on numerous committees, boards, workgroups and collaborations with diverse community members and different levels

of government and agency leaders. Smale chairs ALIGN Association of Community Services, Family Services of Canada and co-chairs the United Way Workplace Cabinet.

She is well-known and respected for her quiet leadership and sought after for her creativity, allyship, dedication, mentorship and passion for her contributions to members of her community - and to the human services sector.

Smale is a registered social worker with a master's degree in business administration. She is also a proud grandmother to four children who remind her to laugh and invest time in our beautiful community.

Celebrating Milestone Anniversaries

We are excited to celebrate team members who have reached major work milestones this year - marking 5 to 25 years of service. Their dedication and passion have made a lasting impact on our organization and the people we support.



**25
YEARS**

LISA STERN

Lisa started in 2000 as a Family Aide Worker, graduating to a Supervisor in 2007, to a temporary, then permanent Manager position in 2011, and a Director position in 2016. During her time with TFC, she completed her degree in Child and Youth Care and her Master's degree in Leadership. She has taught at MacEwan University and is a member of the Child and Youth Care Association.

Lisa is fierce in her commitment to children and families, focusing her entire career on the most vulnerable children, those with Child Welfare involvement. She is also fierce in her advocacy for equity-deserving people and a dedicated ally to Indigenous communities. I value her courage, tenacity, and willingness to speak up and out. TFC is a better place because of her leadership. Congratulations on 25 years, Lisa.

- Written by Pauline Smale



ANDY MUNOZ

Andy started his journey with TFC in 2000 as Parent Aide. 25 years later, his authenticity and passion for the work is a core value that continues to shine everywhere he goes. I appreciate his tenacity and openness to dive head first into brand new roles, first with the Reunification Practice Specialist Role, and now with the *ohpikihakan* Youth Coach role. I am continually astonished by his curiosity and embrace of Indigenous practice and his commitment to continue learning about and immersing himself into the Indigenous worldview. He truly meets the youth and caregivers where they are at and gracefully works to build relationships that positively impact those around him. Andy is truly one-of-a-kind, and we are so grateful and proud to have him on our team. Congratulations on 25 years at TFC!

- Written by Kaitlyn Hart



EMILIO ANE

Emilio started his journey with TFC in 2010 as a Family Support Worker. He has a special gift of connecting to those around him with humour, inclusion, and care. Emilio is someone who has cultivated his collaborative and calm coaching approach when supporting frontline staff as an FSS Supervisor and now caregivers, in a Therapeutic Supervisor role. I appreciate his ability to navigate complex situations and relationships during times of change. He is a steadfast and astute leader with a commitment to supporting those around him while continuing to challenge himself with new opportunities. Congratulations on 15 years at TFC!

- Written by Kaitlyn Hart



MIHAELA IONITA

After 10 years in frontline FSS work, Mihaela has spent the last 5 years as a FSS Supervisor. Mihaela is an impactful leader in every space she's in. Sometimes that looks like an irresistible urge to share an animated hockey mom story, bringing laughter and connection to the room. She tirelessly digs into her supervisees' development, equipping them with skills and training, and going above and beyond to ensure they feel supported throughout their professional journeys. She is a strong team player, through FSS's ongoing pivots and development, Mihaela challenges herself and those around her to press forward, remaining focused on our vision and mission. Mihaela is skillfully disarming in her collaborative approach and is cherished by our partners. Her heart and determination to support children, youth, and families have made significant impacts in so many lives. Congratulations on 15 years! It is a pleasure to work with you!

- Written by Rachelle Smeding

JACOB VANDER MEULEN

Since 2010, Jacob has been a Reunification Worker. Throughout Jacob's time in Reunification Services, he became a champion for the program and a leader amongst the team. Jacob's vast experiences and understanding of child and youth care practices meant his colleagues looked to him for guidance and support. As a practicum supervisor, Jacob imparted his knowledge and ignited the spark and passion for CYC practice in the next generation of practitioners. Jacob also excelled in his work with youth, starting where the youth are at, focusing on building relationships, and creating safe spaces and moments of connection for youth. Jacob has made a lasting impact on the lives of his colleagues and the youth he served. We are grateful for all Jacob's contributions to Reunification Services. Congratulations on 15 years at TFC!

- Written by Jennifer Hayes



Scott Carter

Alfredo Acedera

Kara Lee Doka



- Martina Jakab
- Ropa Mamutse
- Ali Yuan
- Daniel Kasaija

- Judy Dang
- Nicole Mosele
- Brandy Zelinski
- June Froment

- Charity Ehrenholz
- Kaylee Grace
- Elsie Lobo

Employee Awards



**DERRYL-LYNN
BRAUMBERGER**

Coaching Champion Award
Nominated by Jon Veltman



**ANDRA
BULGAREA**

Humble Hero Award
Nominated by Eric Krepstekies



**STEPHANIE
KOLIBABA**

Lumineer Award
Nominated by Kimberly Allen



**SKYLER
CASSELMAN**

Motivation Mentor Award
Nominated by Chelsey Yee



**MANDY
HEIKKILA**

Conscientious Co-Worker Award
Nominated by Brandon Erasmus



**EMMA POLL-
OYEDOTUN**

Administration Architect Award
Nominated by Skyler Casselman, Jeff
Loch, and Decca Isse

**ALFREDO ACADERA &
TIM KALISVAART**

Humble Swifties Award
Nominated by Janelle Jaster, Natalie Cox and Cyndi Le



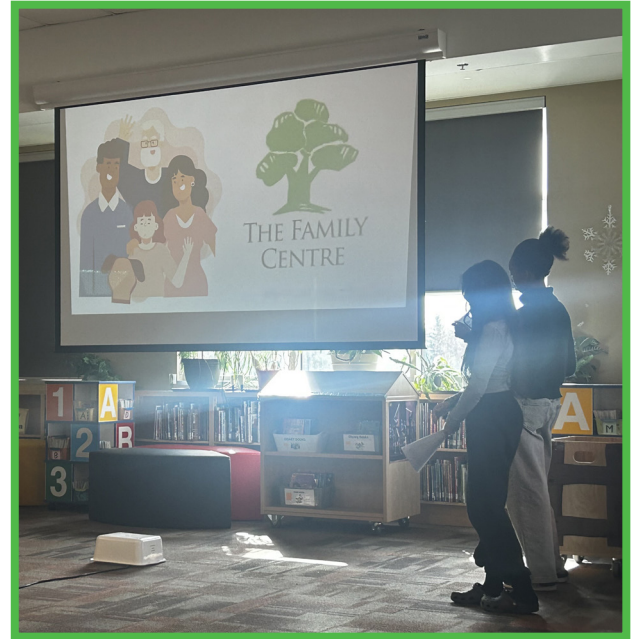


Youth in Philanthropy Initiative

We are so humbled to have been chosen by students from Dr. Donald Massey School as their charity of choice in the **Youth in Philanthropy Initiative (YPI)**.

They made it to the finals and presented to a panel of judges who selected their team as the winners. This means that The Family Centre has been awarded a \$5,000 grant!

This is the second year in a row that students have picked us to present as part of YPI, and we are endlessly thankful. Funding like this helps us support our community.



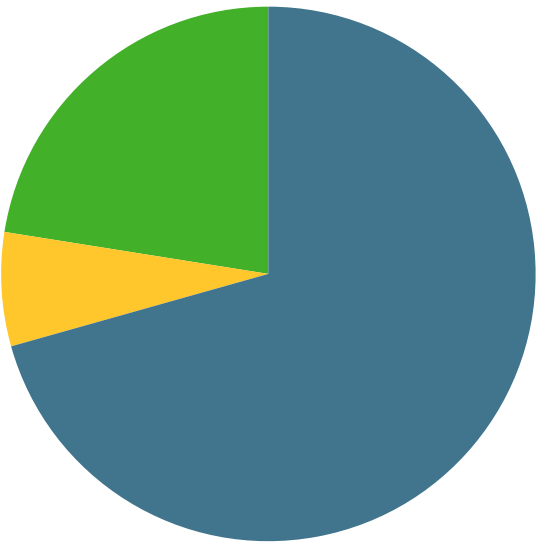
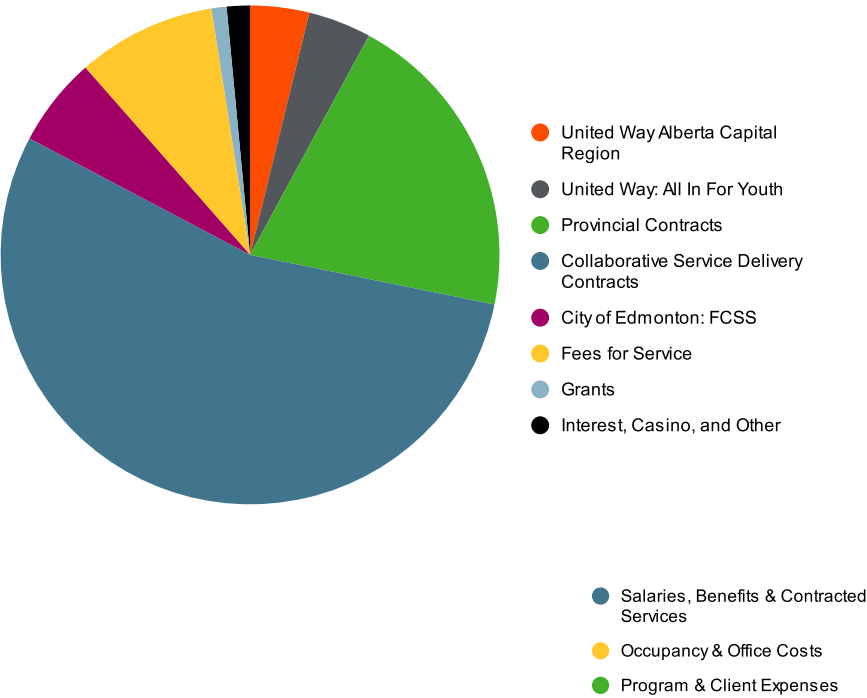
Financial Statements

INCOME

United Way Alberta Capital Region	\$ 932,500
United Way: All In For Youth	\$ 995,184
Provincial Contracts	\$ 4,940,145
Collaborative Service Delivery Contracts	\$ 13,285,128
City of Edmonton: FCSS	\$ 1,410,555
Fees for Service	\$ 2,192,670
Grants	\$ 238,702
Interest, Casino, and Other	\$ 366,402
Total \$24,361,286	

EXPENSES

Salaries, Benefits, and Contracted Services	\$ 18,025,971
Occupancy and Office Costs	\$ 1,756,617
Program and Client Expenses	\$ 5,739,186
Total \$25,521,774	





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THE FAMILY
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Strength to Families
Since 1942