



THE FAMILY
CENTRE

2023/2024

ANNUAL REPORT

LETTER FROM

the CEO & Chair, Board of Directors



Looking back on the past handful of tumultuous years in our sector, it was this past year that we experienced increasing stability re-establishing our work, relationships, and a forward focus. We developed some new partnerships and worked hard to regenerate more longstanding associations. As such, we provide services, in partnership, at over 40 schools and 20 community agencies in conjunction to our work in 100's of family homes. Although much of our work occurs side by side with children and families, we have found ways to use technology to increase flexibility and access to services as well. As a result, we were able to provide services to over 25,000 children and families this year.

It has been a year of reconnecting to our work, our community, and each other. Relationship is and has always been the key ingredient to healing, thriving, learning, and experiencing a sense of belonging. In meeting with each unit of the agency this year to review the staff satisfaction survey, it became clear that connection to colleagues and the pride we feel in our work provide us with joy and hope. Our satisfaction rates have never been higher, which I believe, in part, speaks to our inherent need to be connected and engaged in the work we feel honored to do.

We had much to celebrate this year. We were reminded how important in-person events are and came together to celebrate employee milestones, appreciate staff and their significant anniversaries, gather with our families at a family picnic, and acknowledge 11 employees with awards at our winter celebration. We have 3 employees celebrating significant anniversaries this year. Fred Sudfeld, Therapy and Counselling Supervisor, celebrating 30 years of service. Jonathan Leeming, IT Director, celebrating 20 years of service; and Andrew Pahl, Manager of Evaluation and Growth & Development, celebrating 20 years of service.

All three have contributed most of their careers to TFC and the families we support. Some highlights from this year were the completion of our Indigenous Practice Framework, the recertification of our agency and services with the Council on Accreditation and the expansion of our mental health and family supports to Edmonton Family Resource Networks.

The accreditation reviewers observed that we are a learning organization, willing to respond to new ideas, open to challenge ourselves to find solutions and although they didn't use this language "to do better when you know better". It was an opportunity to share the work we are passionate about and discover some spaces to grow into. Always a gratifying, important experience.

We have had and continued to cultivate such strong community support again this year. Our funders and our partners work with and alongside us, embedded in community, where we work collaboratively to make the most impact. We are so fortunate to have funders that see the value of our work.

The Board is in a generative mode, building on its good work, developing strategy, and leading The Family Centre into our next iteration. We have committed, supportive members who freely give their time and expertise.

TFC is a relational agency, attracting people who take pride in their work, respect each other, and aspire to achieve our mission. It is an honor to work alongside such a dynamic, engaged workforce. Some of the good work is shared in the pages of this report.

**- Pauline Smale, CEO &
Page Stuart, Chair of Board of Directors**

Our Year in NUMBERS



Family Support Services (FSS) supported:

- 804 children & youth
- 37 circles, ceremonies, & family group conferences
- 33 families, children, & youth in reunification homes

ohpikîhakan “a child that is being raised”

- 8 homes
- 17 caregivers becoming licensed foster care providers
- 7 youth currently matched with therapeutic caregivers

Community Initiatives

Youth Community Safety Liasons:

- 276 community engagement events with 726 participants
- 11 responsive projects aimed at improving youth safety and increasing positive interactions in the community

Success Coaches:

- Supported 3978 children and youth through one-to-one support and group programming
- 19,305 presentations for children and youth

Cultural Coaches:

- Facilitated presentations for 3866 youth
- Engaged 356 youth through one-to-one support and group programming

Roots and Wings:

- 722 families
- 1918 children received individualized support

Education Services

- 707 people participated in 142 classes: to enhance parenting, relationship, communication, & self-regulation skills
- 93% of participants agreed & strongly agreed: they will implement their new learnings

Counselling Services

- 5943 unique participants
- 29,395 hours of counselling
- 30 service providers: community partners/schools

Participant Feedback:

- *“Overall great experience; learning different tips to become an active listener has been very helpful!”*
- *“The facilitator was exceptional in covering all topics in the workshop and explaining their importance and relevance to parenting.”*
- *“I enjoyed the way I felt during the workshop. I really liked the examples that the facilitator used during the presentation so I could better understand the point they were trying to make.”*
- *“The facilitator knew the content very well and presented it in a very practical way, which made a lot of sense for me. They presented interesting content and was able to keep the group focused.”*

ohpikîhakan

- “a child that is being raised” | *Therapeutic Foster Care Program*

The **ohpikîhakan** program is a unique approach to foster care that emphasizes the therapeutic needs of youth, matches caregivers with therapeutic supervisors, and empowers these individuals to provide safe home environments for youth who have experienced trauma. The goal of the program is for youth to have increased family and cultural connections and become reunified with their family or community.

This program became operational in March of 2023. Since then, this is what we have been up to:

- 26 recruited caregiving homes
- Licensed 8 homes (the remaining 19 homes are in the process of being licensed)
- Matched with 8 youth therapeutic caregivers

Our recruitment strategy:

- Through targeted community presence, approachability, curiosity, participation in ceremony, and following protocol when engaging with Indigenous people, our recruiter has begun building relationships and creating a dialogue about our program to members of the community and prospective caregivers.
- Attended 136 community events.
- Had follow-up one-on-one conversations with 116 interested caregivers.



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Kokum Rebecca's Story

> *Holding Space for Cultural Reconnection*

“

I'm so grateful to have met you and to share the knowledge we both carry and pass it on to others.

*- Kokum Rebecca
on her time together in ceremony with Tracy*

”

Initially kokum Rebecca was referred to Kun Wang, roots and wings worker from Delton school as part of our All In for Youth Program to develop parenting skills as she raised her grandchildren. During their time together, three of Rebecca's family members had deceased and her self-care and loss & grief became the focus. Kun recommended cultural events at The Family Centre (TFC) and Rebecca showed interest.

Kokum Rebecca first came to see Mountain Offering Woman, Tracy, our Knowledge Holder at TFC for smudge teaching and practice. She wanted to be reconnected to ceremony and was very open to learning. From Onion Lake First Nation, Rebecca is a second generation residential school survivor as her parents attended residential school. She has been married 31 years, works, and likes to bake.

Rebecca became connected with Tracy as soon as they met and built a close relationship. Tracy made an intentional effort to honour Rebecca, her voice, and her experience throughout all of their time together. She then soon attended smudge kit making, tea and bannock, and the spring equinox pipe ceremony.

Tracy held space for Rebecca to share her stories, and they shared feast ceremony protocol stories together with many others. While getting to know her, Tracy noted Rebecca's thirst to learn and her positivity.

Rebecca shared about her time together in ceremony with Tracy: “I'm so grateful to have met you and to share the knowledge that we both carry and to pass it on to others.”

Currently, Rebecca is busy raising her grandchildren and just recently moved back to Onion Lake First Nation with them. She shares that she is doing well, will continue to live the teachings, is settling with her three grandchildren in Onion Lake, and will remain connected to Tracy.

Ava's Story

> Finding Identity with a Cultural Coach

In grade eight, Ava struggled with setting boundaries, anger issues, and feeling out of place. This led to problems at school, such as low attendance and bad grades. "I was lashing out and not being able to keep things under control," Ava confesses. Ava's friend was concerned about Ava's impulsive behaviour and conflicts with others, so she brought Ava to see the school's Cultural Coach, Doris.

At first, Ava wanted to avoid speaking with Doris because she didn't trust school staff. Once she shared what was going on in her life, a mindset shift took place for Ava. She was surprised at how fast she was able to open up to Doris and kept going back to see her. "She's really good at giving advice," Ava shares. "I started seeing her more often, and I'm really glad I did because it made me grow in a lot of ways."

Ava eventually opened up to Doris about her cultural dilemmas. Being half-Indian, Ava struggled with racist comments from her peers. Ava did her best to brush these comments off and convince herself that they were supposed to be funny. But, these comments left Ava feeling insecure and vulnerable about her cultural identity. She was always too shy to ask her grandma and dad more about her culture. Doris helped her explore those

aspects of her identity. "Doris reassured me that being Indian isn't something to be ashamed about or embarrassed about. You can express it, and if people don't like it, they're not meant for you."

Ava can now understand the consequences of her actions and see other people's points of view. "I definitely am a lot more understanding now than when I was before I met Doris," Ava expresses. She feels that Doris taught her patience, how to manage her emotions, and how to focus on what she needs.

Ava now challenges the way that she operates. She understands that change can be hard and that it's not always easy to be positive. However, she is extremely happy with the way she views and talks about herself now. Before meeting Doris, she felt she was a very negative and mean person. Now, her deep introspection allows her to think about what she wants and she's able to voice that.

Ava is now in grade nine and continues to see Doris regularly. She is a little nervous about entering high school but knows her new skills will help her move forward positively.



“

Doris reassured me that being Indian isn't something to be ashamed or embarrassed about.

You can express it, and if people don't like it,

they're not meant for you.

”

Mohammad's Story

> *Adjusting to Canadian Life with the Help of Roots and Wings Program*

Four months into his new life in Canada, Mohammad has adjusted significantly well. He praises The Family Centre's (TFC) Roots and Wings program for this triumphant feat. "I thought it would be one year for me to improve and adjust to the culture...but with the help of TFC and the Roots and Wings program, it's shortened to four months," shares Mohammad.

Arriving from Afghanistan, Mohammad needed to enroll his children in the school system. Knowing he was a newcomer, Highlands School connected him with the school's roots & wings worker. The worker visited Mohammad's home and had open and detailed discussions about his needs, wants, and goals. "One thing which is so important is visiting the houses," believes Mohammad. He found having the worker come to his home beneficial. He could be comfortable, open up, and share details about his life.

When visiting, the roots and wings worker noticed Mohammad's empty home. "As we came new to Edmonton, we didn't have anything, not even one blanket," shares Mohammad. The worker connected Mohammad with an organization that provided him with furniture and kitchen supplies. "It was surprising for me because in Afghanistan, there are no organizations that help you with the kitchen stuff, furniture, and other house requirements. So, it was amazing for me, but my kids were especially happy."

Starting his own small business is one of Mohammad's goals. His roots and wings worker was supportive and pointed him in the right direction. "He gave me a lot of information about our different options and how to go ahead and reach these goals. We learned how to find jobs, how to assist our degrees, and also how to improve our CVs."

Mohammad is also grateful for the school system. He is happy with his connection to the Roots and Wings program and the additional support he received. "They provided four computers for my kids for their homework." Having a good education for his children is very important to Mohammad.

Mohammad wants new immigrants to know about The Family Centre and the Roots and Wings program. "It's so important that every new immigrant should understand and know about the organization here in Edmonton." He feels the organization is essential to settling and adjusting to the new culture. "They will solve your challenges, your problems, and also bring a lot of opportunities."

“

[Watch His Story](#)

I thought it would be one year for me to improve and adjust to the culture...

but with the help of TFC and the Roots and Wings Program,

it's shortened to four months.

”



Presenting our Long-Serving Employees

At The Family Centre, we work hard to create an agency that engages and motivates employees. We believe that by providing employees with an opportunity to grow professionally and aspire to their passion, we can offer better services to the Edmonton community. We take great pride in celebrating the anniversaries of our long-serving employees. It's a special occasion to recognize and honour the commitment of those who have dedicated their time and skills to serving our community.

30
Years



Fred Sudfeld

Over his thirty years, Fred has demonstrated incredible commitment to The Family Centre and to supporting children and families in Edmonton. He started his work here as a contract therapist, was hired full-time 30 years ago, and went on to serve as the first school-based therapist in Edmonton, working at Norwood School for 7 years! Currently, Fred is a staple around TFC working as a clinical supervisor, a go-to facilitator providing workshops and critical incident debriefs to companies in our EAP program, and a facilitator in our Education Services program. As a clinical supervisor, he has contributed significantly to growing and shaping our work in schools, and has left an indelible mark on the many dozens of therapists he has supervised and supported over the years. Fred is well-known to be incredibly supportive, always responsive, and consistently willing to step-up whenever needed for clients, his team and his colleagues. Congratulations on 30 years of creating impact in our community and at The Family Centre, Fred!

- written by Elsie Lobo

Jonathan has been providing TFC with IT oversight and database development for the last 20 years. His dedication and loyalty to our mission is steadfast, ensuring that we use our finite resources intelligently. The responsiveness of his small unit is an indication of the value he places on others and the work they do. Approachable and ready to help, no question, data inquiry or technological problem is too small or too big. In fact, he takes joy in finding solutions to problems, it is part of what makes him so valuable. Every new program requires different reporting and analytical insight. We get tailored solutions to ensure our funders are satisfied and we understand our impact. We are in good hands, feeling absolutely assured that our work is kept confidential and secure, at a time when cyber security is such a serious risk. Congratulations on 20 years Jonathan!

- written by Pauline Smale

20
Years



Jonathan Leeming

Andrew has made incredible impacts to TFC since he first started in 2010. Starting as one of TFC's first success coaches and then joining the leadership team for the past 14 years, currently in the role of manager of evaluation & staff development. Over the years, Andrew has made significant enhancements to improving the experiences for both service users and staff, through leading agency and program measurement and evaluation as well as through the ongoing development of a robust staff training program. Andrew is a strong ambassador, true TFC'er and exemplary leader. He has an ability to connect and develop complex concepts, consistently working to make things better. He applies a humble and logical approach as a leader and mentor. His wisdom and wit coupled with an easygoing demeanour make Andrew a well-respected and sought after colleague. We are so grateful to have you Andrew, congratulations on this big milestone of 20 years of excellence!

- written by Shawna Huff

20
Years



Andrew Pahl



Meena Goalen

From the moment hired, Meena made it very clear that her passion was to work in our school therapist program. Although she's done some counselling work at the TFC office and was for a time a co-supervisor of our intern program, she was thrilled when she was able to be in an elementary school full time. Meena has been at her current school for 8 years and in that time she has influenced the whole school to become trauma informed. She, and her All In For Youth team, have utilized many different forms of support to bring healing and hope to John A McDonald school. Ms. Meena, as she known in the school, has brought not only her caring and knowledgeable therapeutic skills to the school, but has also arranged pet therapy, morning smudging, Indigenous mentors, Muslim prayer time, various types of group work, family game nights, presentations on mindfulness and anxiety, and so much more. When we want to demonstrate to our funders the wonderful work we do in schools, Meena is one of the main therapists we turn to to have her "show off" what is possible to bring to a school. Thank you Meena for your 15 years of service to The Family Centre and principles we stand for.

- written by Fred Sudfeld

Cyndi has spent the longest portion of her 15-year career at The Family Centre working as a family connector from 2009 to 2018. After transitioning into a youth connector role, she quickly moved into a leadership position within Family Support Services. In 2022, she joined the Community Initiatives leadership team and currently leads the NET/Youth Community Safety Liaison and Roots and Wings programs. Cyndi is a compassionate, intelligent, funny, creative, and focused leader. Possessing a depth and breadth of experience, she has continually sought out opportunities to challenge herself and build on her practice. Those who know her, know that she means what she says and can be relied on to say what she means. Always fashionable and never late. Congratulations on 15 years Cyndi, it is a pleasure to work alongside you!



Cyndi Le

- written by Michelle Gibson



Vanessa Contreras Rivera

Vanessa started her journey with TFC in 2009 as a parental support worker, where she focused on building parental capacity and reunifying families, something that she carried on into her role as a family connector. Vanessa's compassionate, strength-based, and trauma-informed care approach to supporting vulnerable populations is evident to anyone who works with her. Her gentle and kind demeanor has also supported her in building trusting, meaningful relationships with those she interacts with. During her time at TFC, Vanessa has continued to find ways to use her strengths to give back to the organization. Vanessa took on the roles of peer mentor and practicum supervisor, which allowed her to inform and inspire the next generation of helping professionals. In her current role as reunification supervisor, she has continued to support the growth and development of TFC'ers. Congratulations on your 15 years at TFC!

- written by Jennifer Hayes

Lynnette has been a cornerstone of the Roots and Wings program, consistently demonstrating a wealth of wisdom and insight that enriches her practice and profoundly supports those she works with. Her invaluable contributions to the program have left lasting impacts on countless individuals. Those who have had the privilege of knowing Lynnette know she has a strong ability to navigate complex systems with unwavering persistence and determination. It is evident that she does above and beyond for those she walks alongside. Congratulations on 15 years, Lynnette. Your dedication and hard work are truly inspiring, and we are grateful for all that you do.



Lynnette Pomerleau

- written by Kaylee Grace

10 Years
Athar Masoodi
Chelsey Yee
Matthew Lamoureux
Kun Wang
Michelle Gibson
Kiandra Johnson

5 Years
Sabriya Sroujje

Annual Staff Awards



Amber Luu

Coaching Champion Award | Nominated by Rachelle Smeding

Eric Chaves

Humble Hero Award | Nominated by Sheila Ferreira & Nikki Houde



Sheila Ferreira

Lumineer Award | Nominated by Michelle Gibson



Tracey Cruse

Motivation Mentor Award | Nominated by Michelle Gibson



“How to Child” Award

Group of 6 Success Coaches:

Matt Lamoureux, Kiandra Johnson, Asia Broadbent, Drue Murray, Sabriya Sroujie, Jenna Boonstra

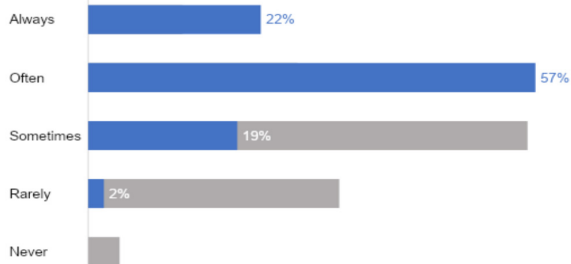
Nominated by Isha Adams & Presented by Janelle Jaster

Feedback from Families:

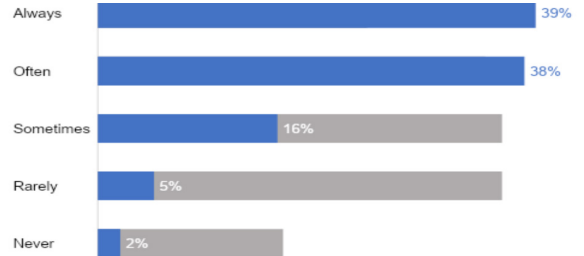
243 Individual Surveys

Before After

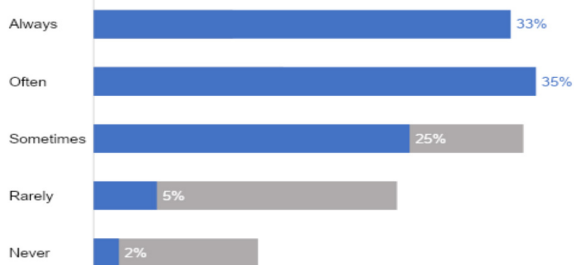
“I make positive decisions for myself:”



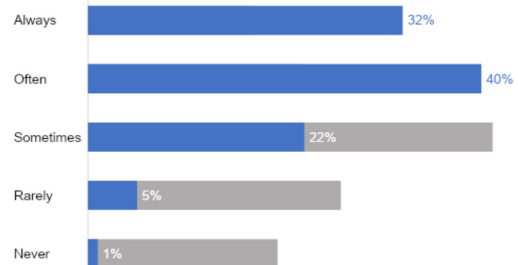
“I have hope for the future:”



“I know how to reach my goals:”



“I feel like I belong:”



Board of Directors



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Faye Rault	Treasurer
Brian Andrais	Director
Brian Zrobek	Director
Bryan Shepherd	Director
Karen Penney	Director
Kevin Stevenson	Director
Patti Hack	Director

Financial Statements

Income

United Way: Allocation	\$1,081,188
United Way: All In For Youth and Youth Capacity Grants	\$995,184
Provincial Contracts	\$ 4,201,024
Collaborative Service Delivery Contracts	\$ 15,406,010
City of Edmonton: FCSS	\$ 1,337,577
Fees for Service	\$ 2,480,964
Grants	\$ 69,929
Interest, Casino, and Other	\$ 308,545

Total \$25,880,421

Expenses

Salaries, Benefits, and Contracted Services	\$ 17,833,728
Occupancy and Office Costs	\$ 1,548,913
Program and Client Expenses	\$ 6,277,755

Total \$25,660,396

This information is courtesy of The Family Centre of Northern Alberta



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The Family Centre of Northern Alberta
(@tfcna)



@thefamilycentre.na



THE FAMILY
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Strength to Families
Since 1942