



# ANNUAL REPORT

April 1, 2020 - March 31, 2021



CHILDREN'S  
COTTAGE  
SOCIETY



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Community Volunteer

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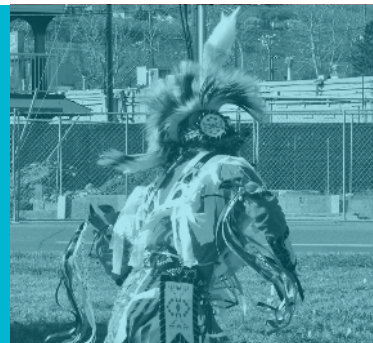
## OUR VISION:

**Resilient children blossom in healthy families.**

## OUR MISSION:

**Building strong children and safe nurturing families through prevention programs and support services.**

We acknowledge Treaty 7 territory and the traditional lands of the Blackfoot Confederacy, including the Kainai, Siksika and Piikani First Nations. We acknowledge the traditional lands of the Tsuut'ina First Nation, and the Stoney Nakoda, including the Chiniki, Bearspaw and Wesley First Nations. We would also like to recognize the Métis people, and the Inuit people who have made their home here in Moh'kins'tsis. Here is where we live, learn and play. We are all Treaty People.



## Message from the President & CEO



Vicki Reid  
PRESIDENT

Early in 2020, it became clear that the COVID-19 pandemic would be a huge challenge for the Children's Cottage Society, but our nimble and dedicated staff quickly showed us that they were ready to take it on. Thanks to them, the Crisis Nursery and Brenda's House continued to operate throughout the pandemic while we found new ways to deliver our many community, home visitation and housing programs so that we could continue to help children and families. 2020 was a year marked by innovation and hard work.

We appreciate our donors and funders who kept faith in our programs and continued to give despite the challenging times. Thanks to their generosity, we were able to keep all our programs running so that we could continue to serve those who were more in need than ever. We also want to acknowledge the role of the federal and provincial governments, who moved quickly to develop funding to assist organizations like the Children's Cottage Society as we adjusted to the growing needs caused by the pandemic.



Patty Kilgallon  
CEO

This year, we also worked closely with the Ministry of Children's Services to create the new Family Resource Network for Calgary West. This resource centre, located in Bowness, offers a variety of services, including parenting and child development programs, counselling and other types of support. We are proud to have established new partnerships with five agencies so that children and families can access a wide range of support in this new location. We look forward to seeing the new Family Resource Network grow and become a vital support in Calgary West in the years to come.

Finally, the past year marked the launch of our Caring Together Campaign, a \$23.5-million fundraising drive with the goal of building a new Child and Family Centre in the northwest Calgary community of Montgomery. The new facility will house an additional 20-bed crisis nursery as well as a wide range of programs, services and agencies. Once open, the new crisis nursery will help ensure we never again have to turn away 1900 children in a single year.

Donors, funders, volunteers, management, and most importantly frontline staff were all heroes this year, making sure that the families we serve were protected each and every day. It was not an easy year, but here at the Children's Cottage Society we are very proud of how we continued to support Calgary kids and their families throughout the pandemic.

# COVID-19

## Children's Cottage continued to serve vulnerable children throughout the pandemic

The scale and complexity of serving children and families amidst the threat of COVID-19 made our work incredibly challenging in 2020. But our staff showed up every day to make the impossible possible, so that we could continue to make a difference in the lives of isolated children and their parents.

### COVID-19 adaptations

Frontline staff wore Personal Protective Equipment during work hours, while staff and families were given daily health screenings, including a temperature check. Office staff worked from home with newly-purchased laptops, meeting regularly over Zoom and Teams so they could see each other and work with purpose. We held virtual Town Hall meetings regularly to keep everyone connected, which included staff appreciation with service awards and other prizes.



**W**e distributed dozens of Wellness Hampers to our families throughout the year. Our mascot Jenny and her baby Joey came along to brighten the days of children and their families as they isolated at home. Jenny and Joey even managed to bring smiles to the faces of this group of Calgary Police officers as they made their way through the city.

### Crisis Nursery

As children from different families could no longer share bedrooms due to the risk of COVID-19, the Crisis Nursery was not able to care for 14 children at a time. Rather, 10 children became the norm, resulting in many families in crisis being turned away each day. Family Coaches continued to support parents through phone or video calls to make sure that families were not left on their own during difficult times.

### Brenda's House

Normally, the shelter can accommodate up to 60 people, but with COVID-19 protocols limiting access to shared areas, we quickly realized that it would be a challenge to isolate families to their private rooms within the shelter. Fortunately, some Government of Alberta COVID-related funding helped us move families from Brenda's House into their own homes in record time. Staff and leadership worked tirelessly to bring the average length of stay down

from nearly three months to just 33 days. At one point, the staff worked day and night to move all families residing with us into permanent housing to prevent them from spending two weeks restricted to their rooms, due to a positive COVID-19 case discovered on site.

## Home Visitation

Home Visitation staff worked from home, connecting with parents virtually. They also produced a series of videos about parenting, and put together dozens of activity kits for families who were self-isolating at home.

## Volunteers

We truly missed the volunteers who normally come in to help with the daily care of children at the Crisis Nursery and Brenda's House. It is hard to fathom how we survived without them for more than a year. However, volunteers found ways to help with important tasks like picking up donations, delivering supplies to families, doing yard work and teaching virtual cooking, crafting, science and music classes.

Over the past year, the community has been there for us as we made our way through these difficult times. Donors, concerned that the cancellation of annual fundraising events could lead to financial difficulties, stepped up and helped us get through the pandemic. People in the Children's Cottage community kept a close eye on our social media feeds so that whenever we announced a needed item, we quickly received it. At Christmas, hampers, gift cards, food and toys miraculously made their way to those in need.



**Volunteers** continued to help throughout the pandemic by picking up donations, doing yard work and delivering supplies to families. They also taught virtual crafting, music, cooking and science classes.



**Staff** members created a series of "Early Years Parenting Pointers" videos to keep families engaged and to help parents who were isolated at home with their children.

# How we made a difference

In 2020

**2,129**  
**CHILDREN**

were buffered from the stress of crisis, which helped improve their physical and emotional wellbeing.

**1,392**  
**FAMILIES**

were fully supported through crises like parental stress and exhaustion, homelessness, financial strain and violence.

## We helped families reconnect:

**“I was able** to remove or take a break from my life situation and everyday responsibilities associated with being ‘Mom’. And by doing that I was able to give and receive ‘self-care’. And also have the time to reflect and get the chance to miss my son and appreciate the valuable/good times I have with my son”

*(unedited testimonial)*



# Our Programs

- develop the capacity of parents to create nurturing environments to raise healthy children
- enhance child-parent relationships and stabilize family functioning
- support parents to deal successfully with adversity
- help families have hope for the future
- create opportunities for families and caregivers to experience manageable levels of stress
- decrease the risk of child maltreatment and neglect as parents experience less stress, more hope and more positive feelings

We couldn't do it without our

**761**  
**VOLUNTEERS**

**who helped us keep  
children and families  
safe and healthy**



**8,635**  
**HOURS**

**were donated by  
volunteers**

# Crisis Nursery

Providing 72 hours of loving care to children up to age eight while parents resolve their issues with the help of family coaches.

**913**

children served

**557**

families served



## Why parents reach out for help:

Parental stress & exhaustion	<b>29%</b>
Family illness	<b>20%</b>
Housing issues	<b>7%</b>
Child safety concerns	<b>8%</b>
Medical appointments	<b>11%</b>
Parent wellness needs	<b>10%</b>
Domestic violence and relationship concerns	<b>3%</b>
Incarcerated, financial issues, child behavioural problems, educational stressors	<b>12%</b>





**We make a difference when children are able to stay in a supportive environment during a family crisis and parents receive help from family coaches:**

**99% of parents** reported that admitting their child to the Crisis Nursery allowed them to work on their problem. This resulted in parents being better able to cope with their children's needs when the children returned home.

**98% of children** admitted to the Crisis Nursery returned home. This resulted in a decreased need for child apprehensions by Child and Family Services.

**67% of parents** said that they have increased hope between the time of admission and discharge. This helped parents have a more positive outlook on life.

**88% of parents** told us that their stress decreased after receiving care for their children. When parents are supported and their strategies are developed, we see improved family stability and wellbeing.

**100% of parents** felt more prepared to parent and were better able to care for their children when they took part in the Nurturing Parenting program through Family Coaching. This resulted in children having a more consistent relationship with their caregivers, which will lead to an increased ability to cope with stresses in later life.

## A PARENT'S STORY

**"I was able** to take my daughter to her surgery & be there for her during her hardship of coming out of anesthesia which has been difficult for her. I was able to get some rest myself which helped to calm myself and regain control over my frustrations, and be able to come up with a new tactic of how I wish to handle my families day to day life during this time"

*(unedited testimonial)*



# In-Home Infant Respite

Providing relief to isolated and stressed parents with infants in their first six months.

# 56

children served

# 41

families served

**We make a difference when we provide respite services for parents:**

**92% of parents** reported feeling less stress after being supported by home respite visits. This resulted in parents who felt better able to parent and protect their children from the negative effects of high stress, which benefited their family's longterm stability and wellbeing.

**97% of parents** felt more prepared to parent after they had learned more about their child's development. Parents also reported an increase in positive interactions with their child, which results in a strong parent-child bond, enhancing brain development and positive child behaviours.

## Why parents reach out for help:

High parental stress	<b>32%</b>
Postpartum depression	<b>24%</b>
Parent illness	<b>11%</b>
Lack of sleep	<b>7%</b>
Parent mental illness	<b>11%</b>
Isolation / Lack of support	<b>15%</b>



## HELP FOR EXHAUSTED, ISOLATED PARENTS

**“I was so isolated** + didn’t have any socializing network. I was told about program I was so excited. I really appreciated the help I did get from you. Sometimes just talking through a little takes the anxiety and stress away. I got some self-care, sleep + even my baby got great company, it is so great I can trust someone. You were so flexible + help by sending links + resources. I wish I had you for a couple more visits. It is a great help for moms like me. Thanks a lot for all that you did for me and my child in those tough times”

*(unedited testimonial)*

## Child Care Respite

Supporting high-needs parents with subsidized day care placements to ensure positive child development.

**42**

children served

**24**

families served

\*Program closed March 31, 2020

## Volunteer Day Care Respite

**18**

children served

**12**

families served

Supporting isolated parents with daytime child care during times of stress.

# Brenda's House

Ensuring homeless children and their parents are sheltered in a safe, respectful environment, 14 families at a time.

# 152

children served

# 90

families served

Since 2009, the Brenda Strafford Foundation has generously partnered with and contributed to this shelter to give families respectful and nonjudgmental support. Their philanthropy is appreciated by every child and parent who comes to stay at Brenda's House.

**We make a difference when we provide shelter for homeless families:**

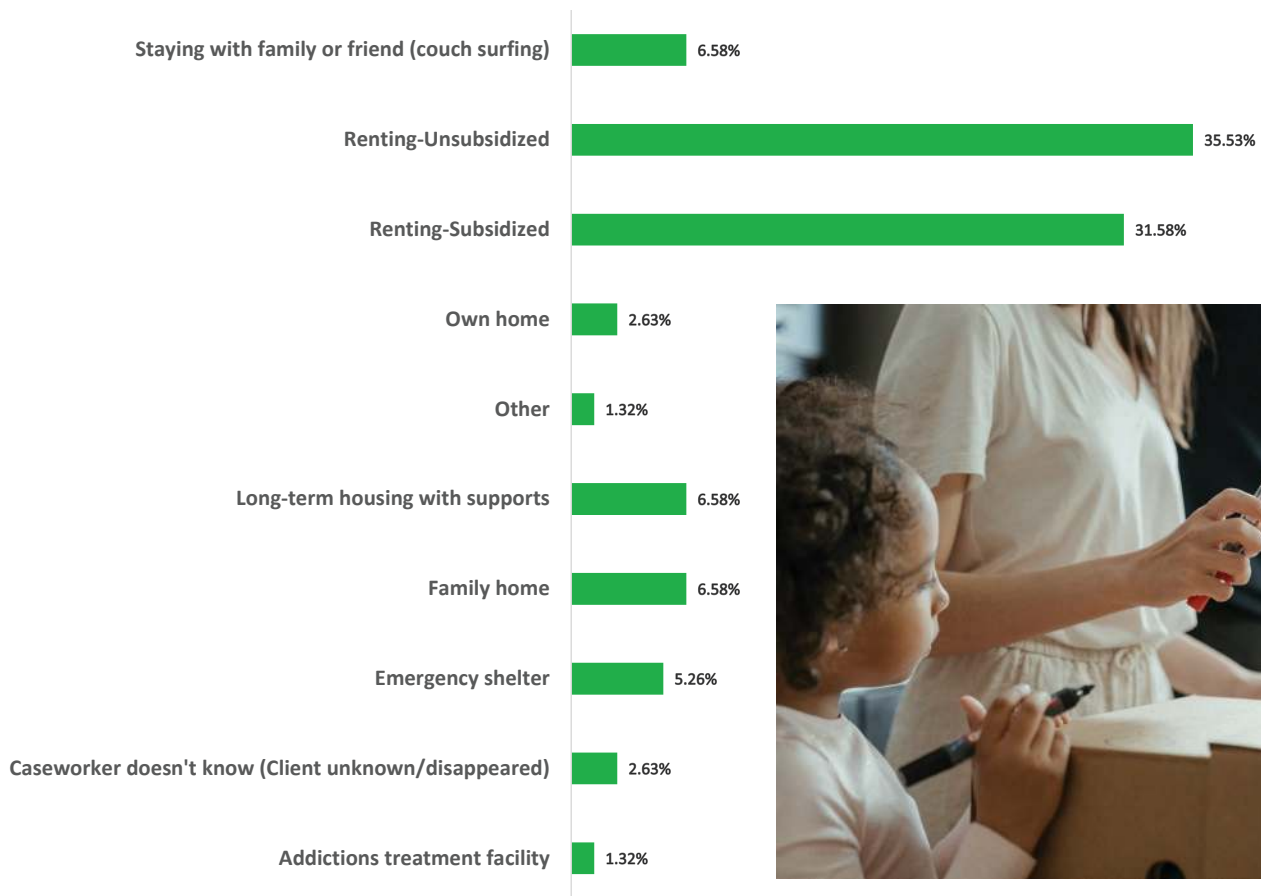
## 100% of families

entered stable permanent housing after receiving services at Brenda's House. The provision of safe and secure housing is essential and must be the first response to child homelessness.

In 2020, our average length of stay was just 33 days, down from 87 days in the previous year!



## Where families went to live after their stay at Brenda's House:



## JOANNE'S STORY

Joanne and her two children came to stay at Brenda's House during a time of homelessness. After she shared her goal of finding permanent housing, staff at Brenda's House helped her assess her income, look for suitable homes and attend viewings. Funding from the Government of Alberta helped provide Joanne with a damage deposit and first month's rent, often insurmountable barriers to those experiencing homelessness. Joanne also received support with her parenting and child development concerns. Joanne and her children were excited and happy to move on from the shelter and resume their lives in the community.

# Housing Programs

## HomeLinks

**61% of families** with complex needs successfully accessed housing when intensive case management support was provided. This resulted in a decrease in the negative impacts of homelessness for children including depression, anxiety, aggression and learning disabilities, and an increase in protective factors such as access to social and community supports, adequate stable housing and the ability to cope with a crisis.

**70**

children served

**45**

families served

## Adaptive Case Management

**82% of families** supported through the program remained housed. When families are able to leave shelter and quickly get back into permanent housing, the stress of homelessness is reduced.

**60**

children served

**26**

families served

## Rapid Rehousing

**87% of families** were able to independently maintain housing when assistance was provided. This means children were protected from the negative experiences of housing instability and homelessness, which includes effects on brain development and on the parent-child bond.

**102**

children served

**43**

families served

"I'm so grateful for everything you did for the boys and I. You went above and beyond for us from getting furniture to now moving us to [another city] to be close to our family. The amount of support you have given me is unbelievable and for that I am forever grateful. Thank you so much and God bless your heart."

# HomeBridge Program

Supporting parents and working with community agencies to prevent families from becoming homeless.

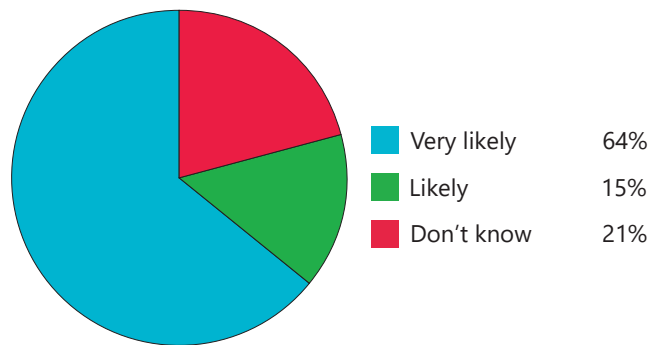
**162**  
children served

**75**  
families served

**100% of families are still housed.**

**79% of parents said if HomeBridge had not been available to support their family, they would have become homeless.**

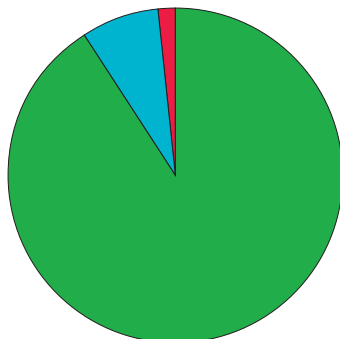
If HomeBridge had not been available to support your family, how likely is it that your family would have become homeless?



This program decreases stress for families.

## Stress Rating:

- Stress decreased 91%
- Stress increased 1%
- Stayed the same 8%



# Early Years Family Support

The Early Years Family Support Program assists parents referred by the **Alberta Vulnerable Infant Response Team** (AVIRT). When parents of infants 0-3 months of age need support, a team of child intervention workers, nurses and police officers work together to provide risk assessment and safety planning. The Early Years Family Support Program helps by working closely with the parents in their homes to address safety and wellbeing concerns and by providing guidance on parenting and child development.

## A PARENT'S STORY

"I had no idea what to expect being a first time parent and single mom. I've learned a lot about parenting and received a lot of support and guidance. I would've enjoyed more sessions if it weren't for work and how busy it keeps me. I'm going to miss the support going forward. Thanks for everything.

I found the guidance and encouragement from my FLC, dealing with difficult and stressful situations, very helpful. The program provided advice, guidance and support with parenting my daughter and it provided information on what to expect for my daughter's development. Thank you!"

*(unedited testimonial)*

# 85

children were supported in

# 66

 families



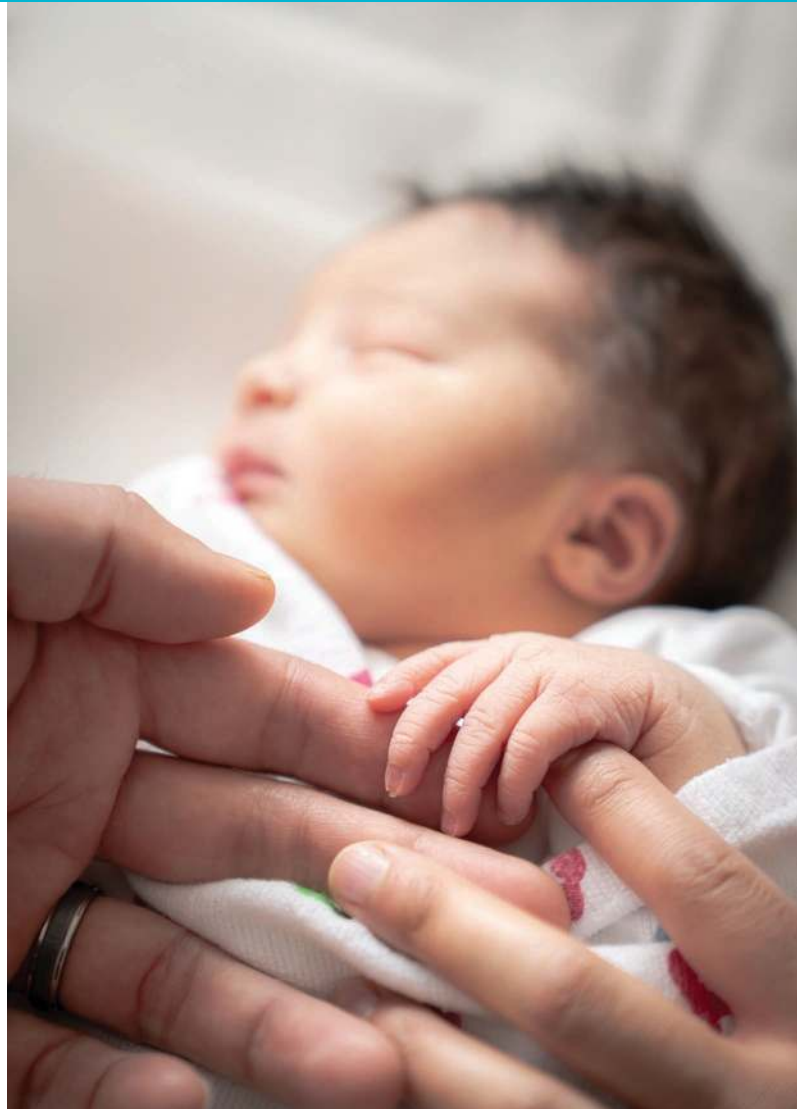
## AGES & STAGES

### **161** Ages & Stages

Questionnaires (ASQ-3) were administered to determine children's developmental statuses.

**29** children were identified with developmental delays.

**97%** of these children received developmental plans, activities and referrals to specialists. Catching these needs in an infant's first months makes a big difference in later life outcomes.



## Healthy Families

The Healthy Families program was discontinued as of March 31, 2020 and changed to the Home Visitation program that is connected to each Family Resource Network.

# 248

children were supported in

# 199

 families

# Calgary West Family Resource Network

## New in 2020!

Located in Bowness and serving communities in southwest and northwest Calgary (west of Crowchild Trail), this resource centre provides free programs for families and their children. Parents looking for resources and support with parenting, child development, counselling and making community connections can access all kinds of programs at this one central location. We are a connector.

## Partner Organizations:

**Families Matter** (family life education)

**Catholic Family Service** (rapid access counselling)

**Hull Services** (youth groups)

**Big Brothers Big Sisters**  
(mentoring programs)

## A special thanks to:

**Cenovus Energy** for contributing the funds to create the new space

**Chandos Construction** and **Systemic Architecture** for designing and building it

**Morrison Homes** for designing our kitchen and providing the appliances and cupboards

**Prime Communications** for wiring up the new space



**Calgary Reads** for creating a reading nook

**Carl White** for the beautiful artwork





We referred **85** families to our partners and made another **44** referrals to other agencies in Calgary. We built connections with **54** unique community organizations and now do regular visits to the Shaganappi Calgary Housing Complex to support families.

**111** children attended virtual baking, crafting, science and music classes.

## Home Visitation

### New in 2020!

Home visitors meet parents and their children to talk about the family's needs and goals in the convenience of their homes. This service is for parents who are expecting a child, or who have children under six years of age.

**77**

children served

**46**

families served

### We are providing Home Visitation support in:

- **Calgary West**
- **Okotoks**
- **Cochrane**

We did **54** Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQ-3), identifying **10** children with developmental delays. Of those children, **90%** received ongoing support and follow-up care, including developmental plans, activities and referrals to specialists.

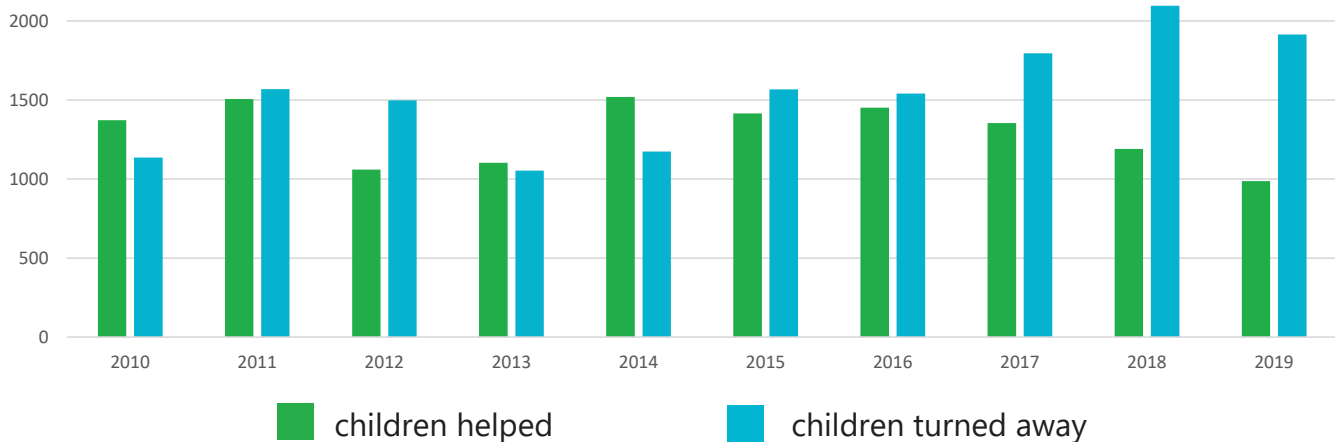
# Caring Together Campaign

The Children's Cottage Society has proudly announced to the public that it has purchased land in the community of Montgomery to build a new 35,000 square-foot Child and Family Centre.



## THE NEED FOR MORE SPACE

For more than a decade, our Crisis Nursery has had to turn away more children than it has been able to help due to lack of space. For several years in a row, more than 1900 children were turned away. We have a plan to protect those 1900 children from the difficulties they are subject to when left in a highly stressful environment.



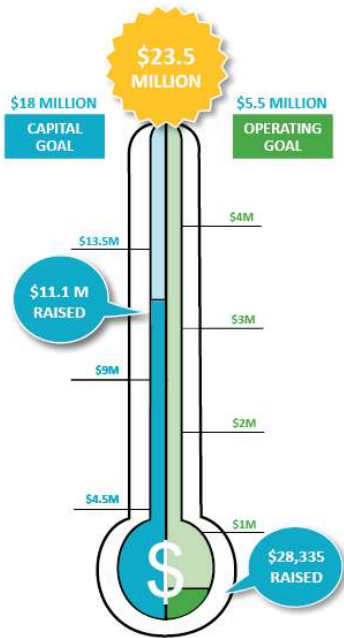
## THE SOLUTION

The new Child and Family Centre will be home to an additional 20-bed crisis nursery, giving us a total of 34 spaces in the city. In addition, parents experiencing a crisis will be able to access a variety of other resources and programs, all in one convenient location. With the help of partner agencies, mental health services, child development programming and more will be available to ensure that children and their families can be helped quickly.

**THANK YOU** to all the generous donors who have contributed to our campaign so far. Together, we will help the 1900 children and make sure they are never turned away from our doors again.

## Fundraising Goals:

Amount raised as of March 31, 2021



## MILESTONES ACHIEVED as of March 31:

- ✓ Land purchased and blessed
- ✓ Building Permit submitted
- ✓ Development Permit approved
- ✓ Property demolition and remediation completed
- ✓ Project approved by Montgomery Community Association

## NEXT STEPS:

- In summer 2021, we will hire a Construction Management Company to get ready to build the Centre in spring 2022!
- By December 2021, we plan to have \$18 million for the building construction



# Treasurer's Report

The Children's Cottage Society is grateful for the continued generosity of the Calgary community in its support of our mission of "building strong children and safe nurturing families through prevention programs and support services." In 2020-2021, donors like you gave \$1.8 million to keep families strong in the face of adversity and to ensure that children are supported during stressful life events.

Because we hold the safety of children and the health of families as a priority, we strive to be fiscally efficient by maintaining tight financial controls. In 2020-2021, we continued to strengthen our financial stability. Our revenue, including some emergency funding relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, reached \$7.5 million, reflecting a 3.8% increase from the prior year, while some program changes and limitations imposed by the pandemic caused our expenses to decrease by 2.9% to just under \$7 million.

Our audited financial statements include information on several new programs, which were initiated in April 2020 and provide some details relating to our Child and Family Centre project and the related capital campaign, which was formally launched in early June 2021. The Society's programs remained operational and active, serving children and families throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, which is still having an impact more than a year after it began. We are pleased that these events, to date, are being effectively managed by our staff, management and the Board of Directors.

You will also notice that our administration costs have continued to remain low, at 6.4% of total expenses, while annual fundraising costs amounted to 2.3% and capital campaign costs were 2.0% of total funding uses. After accounting for emergency costs relating to the pandemic, which utilized 4.9% of total expenses, 84.4% remained to be allocated to essential programs such as the Crisis Nursery, Brenda's House, Early Years Family Support, Calgary West Family Resource Network Hub and Spoke, Okotoks and Cochrane Spokes, community respite, and several housing and homelessness-prevention programs.

In addition to the support of our donors, the Government of Alberta, the Brenda Strafford Foundation Ltd., Calgary Homeless Foundation, the City of Calgary Family and Community Support Services, Calgary Foundation and United Way of Calgary and Area also helped fund programming that supported children and their families. We extend our sincere thanks for their continued support.

Our thanks also go to Echelon Wealth Partners for managing our investments, and to Kenway Mack Slusarchuk Stewart LLP Chartered Professional Accountants for auditing our financial statements. Together, we will move forward in achieving our mission. We encourage you to review our complete set of financial statements and accompanying notes on our website at [childrencottage.ab.ca/main/publications](http://childrencottage.ab.ca/main/publications)

As I close this report, I am passing along the role of Treasurer of the Society to Tracy Baker. I have been honoured to serve on the Children's Cottage board for the past 12 years and have been happy to lend my support toward the growth and development of the organization so that we can help more children in new and creative ways. I am proud to say that the Children's Cottage has a solid business plan and revenue base to lead it into the years to come.

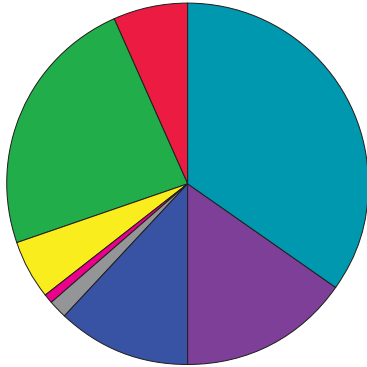
With Sincere Gratitude,



Faye Brown, CPA, CA  
Treasurer

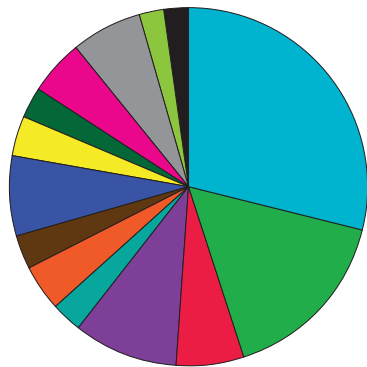
# Statement of Operations

For the Fiscal Year ended March 31, 2021



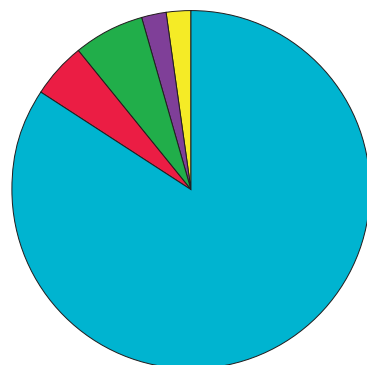
## Funding Sources

Government of Alberta	34.9%	\$2,611,085
Calgary Homeless Foundation	15.2%	\$1,136,455
The Brenda Stafford Foundation Ltd.	12%	\$897,552
City of Calgary Family and Community Support Services	1.7%	\$123,854
United Way of Calgary and Area	0.7%	\$56,408
Emergency funding	5.4%	\$404,868
Donations, fundraising and grants	23.7%	\$1,775,719
Investment income	6.4%	\$476,010
<b>100%</b>		<b>\$7,481,951</b>



## Funding Uses

Crisis Nursery	29.1%	\$2,023,016
Brenda's House	15.9%	\$1,104,954
Early Years Family Support Program	6.2%	\$433,307
Calgary West FRN Hub and Spoke	9.4%	\$650,404
Okotoks and Cochrane Spokes	2.9%	\$200,162
Community Respite Program	4.2%	\$290,000
Rapid Rehousing	3%	\$208,564
HomeLinks	7.1%	\$495,500
HomeBridge	3.8%	\$261,080
Adaptive Case Management	2.8%	\$193,707
Emergency costs	4.9%	\$339,868
Administration	6.4%	\$443,704
Fundraising	2.3%	\$163,134
Capital Campaign	2%	\$141,058
<b>100%</b>		<b>\$6,948,458</b>



## Functional Expenses

Program delivery costs	84.4%	\$5,860,694
Emergency costs	4.9%	\$339,868
Administration	6.4%	\$443,704
Fundraising	2.3%	\$163,134
Capital Campaign	2%	\$141,058
<b>100%</b>		<b>\$6,948,458</b>

**Net income** \$533,493

# Donors

**THANK YOU** to everyone who continued to donate to the Children's Cottage Society throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. We really could not have made a difference in the lives of thousands of Calgary children and their families, many of whom went through an extraordinarily difficult year, without your support.

Thank you to the core funders who ensure safety nets are there for children in need.



The Circle of Hope is a special group of philanthropists making a multi-year commitment to donate \$5,000 or more annually. Their support ensures the best care for children and families, contributing to a healthy future.

## Circle of Hope

Bruce McFarlane and Dr. Janice Heard  
Christian Bayle and Nicole Cramer  
CIBC Children's Foundation  
CKLAS Foundation  
Henry and Linda Crawford  
Inter Pipeline Ltd.  
John and Susan McWilliams  
Royal LePage Shelter Foundation  
Wee Wild Ones



CHILDREN'S  
COTTAGE  
SOCIETY

 **CHILDRENSCOTTAGECALGARY**

 **CHILDRNSCOTTAGE**

 **CHILDRNSCOTTAGE**

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