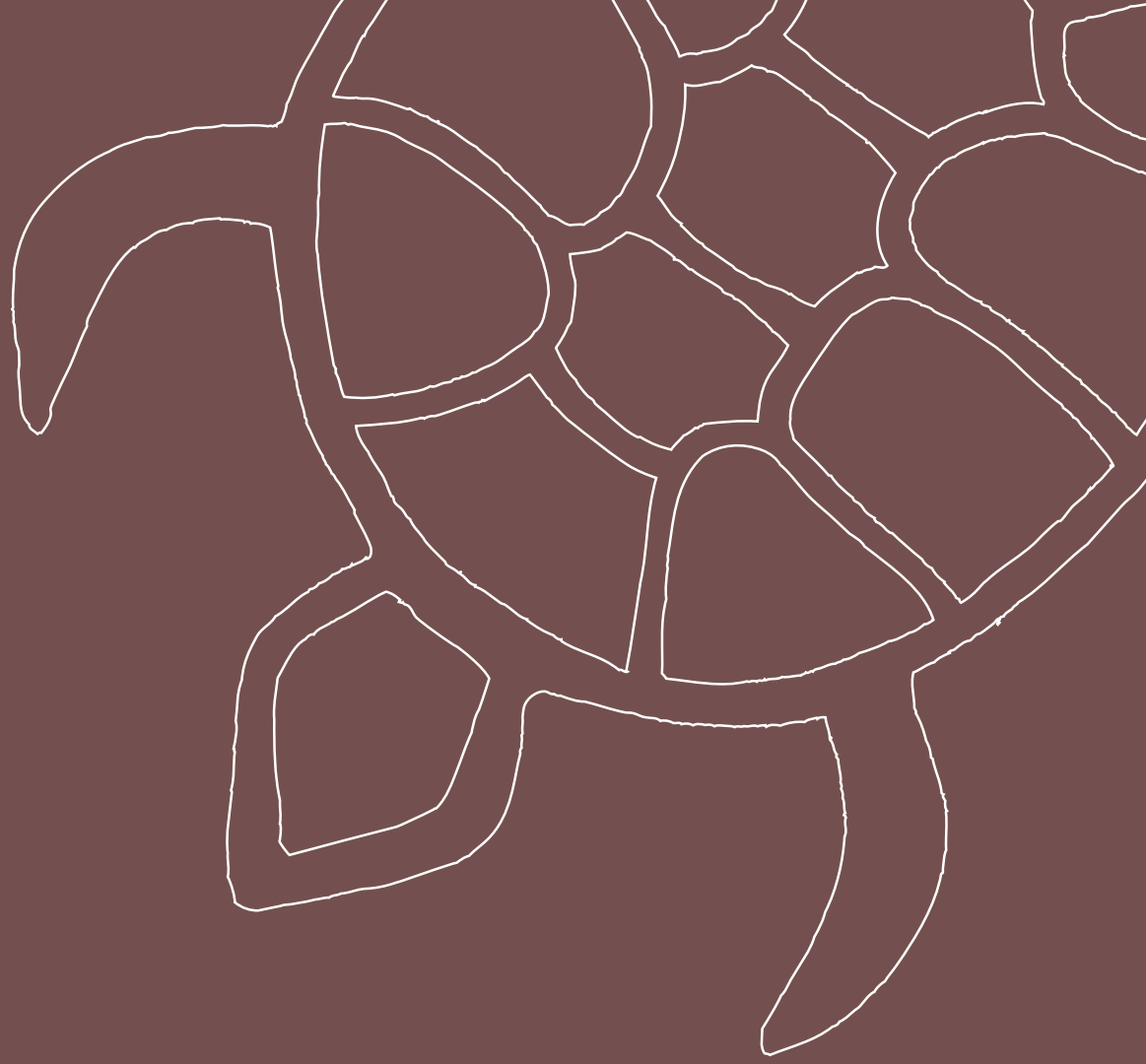


# NATIVE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES OF TORONTO



**ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022**





CHILD CENTRED,  
FAMILY FOCUSED,  
COMMUNITY DRIVEN.





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# MISSION STATEMENT

Native Child and Family Services of Toronto strives to provide a life of quality, well-being, caring and healing for our children and families in the Toronto Native community.

We do this by creating a service model that is culture based and respects the values of Native people, the extended family, and the right to self-determination.








# SERVICE MODEL

Native Child and Family Services of Toronto (NCFST) was founded in 1986.

Our service model was developed through four days of ceremony by Aboriginal Elders, Knowledge Carriers and community leaders. It directs us to develop a holistic and sustainable multi-service organization to support the quality of life of Aboriginal children and their families in Toronto. The community that came together to create NCFST was responding to the impacts of residential schooling and a European model of child welfare on Aboriginal children and families. Our service model directs us to develop and deliver integrated services for healing, wellness, and family supports sufficient to provide Aboriginal children and their families with multiple pathways to a quality life. We do this by developing programs and services that are grounded in Aboriginal values, knowledge, best practice and worldview.



# 2021-2022 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mae Maracle, President

Bryan Winters, Vice-President

Dr. Richard Cummings, Treasurer

Heather Levecque, Secretary

Kaitlind Peters, Executive Member

Dr. Barbara Fallon

Stephen Lindley

Robert Pruitt

# PRAYER FOR HEALING AND WELLNESS

*Aanii Boozhoo Gizhe Manidoo,*

*Miigwech maanda gaamiizhang Mino  
Bimaadiziwan. Chi miigwech maampii  
eninkii'yang maaampii Binojiinh Gamik.  
Daabiwezenmigo maanda giizhgak  
wiikwanmang maampii enkijik miinwa  
ogimaajik wena wiigenaanmoyang  
miinwa wiikowanmang ninda binojii'ik  
miinwa indoodemik. Daabawezenmigo  
wiinaandeyang miinwa mingaaneyang  
maanda enenmang, niyaw miinwa  
jiibay megowa wiinaandegizad miinwa  
wiiminaaneyad gaynawa maampii  
Anishinaabec endaajik. Mii maanda  
ebiwezenmigo maanda giizhgak.*

*Kina Nindaawenmajik,*

*Miigwech*

*Greetings Creator,*

*Thank you for the Good Life that you  
have given to us. We thank you for the  
work that we do at Native Child and  
Family Services of Toronto. We ask you  
this day to watch over the management  
and workers that work together for the  
care and protection of our children and  
families. We ask you for the healing and  
wellness of our minds, bodies, and spirits  
as we work toward the healing and  
wellness of our Indigenous community.  
This is our prayer today.*

*All My Relations,*

*Thank you*



# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



*Mae Maracle*

This has been a quiet year for the board. We continue to deal with the restrictions of Covid 19 health protocols. We have not met in person since March 2020.

In that time, we have brought on new board members that we have only met on zoom.

As a Board we attended a community meeting in September of 2021, at the Mount Dennis location. There were several board members and staff present to hear from a concerned segment of the community. This was in part looking at ways to decolonize child welfare

Native Child continues to host community circles, but the board is not always present at these meetings

The board has met quite successfully through zoom meetings, and we continue to do our due diligence as the governing body of Native Child and Family Services. An important area we looked at and discussed was the purchase of a campground. The Executive Director brought a business case regarding this purchase, and we approved the business case to purchase a permanent campground for our on the land programming.

To ensure that we are looking after the best interests of Native Child we have established sub committees of the board. We currently have a Governance committee, a Financial committee, and the Indigenous Spirit Fund or fundraising committee.

The Indigenous Spirit Fund committee supports the work of staff as they develop a more detailed fundraising program for Native Child.

The Governance committee has gone through some change over the past year, with Alain leaving and Barb joining. However, the committee has followed up last year's work of revising





the by-laws and articles of incorporation by making additional changes which will see them be aligned with new legislation. In addition, the committee is currently developing a Board skills matrix and related materials, including a revised Board orientation package.

The Finance committee with dedicated board oversight and highly skilled staff support have enabled continued growth and improvement to our finances and administration. Substantial revenue growth has allowed us to allocate resources where they are so greatly needed to ensure our capacity to meet great challenges including Covid, and to enrich our ongoing and future support to our community. Comprehensive risk management and strategic decision making have kept us moving with strength and determination.

In May 2022 the board and senior staff held a strategic planning retreat. We met in person and had facilitated discussions on our vision for Native Child. This was a successful weekend away, not only did we do some creative thinking, but we met people we have only talked to at zoom meetings.

We hope that the next year 22 -23 brings about a more regular working environment for the community and staff. As the board members of this agency we will ensure that Native Child continues to be the support that enables the Indigenous families of Toronto to be strong and successful.

# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



*Dr. Jeffrey Schiffer*

It has been a privilege to steward Native Child and Family Services of Toronto (NCFST) for another year. Our team has had another dynamic year working with community to respond to the ongoing impacts of COVID-19, to continuously improve

our services, and working towards systems transformation through Indigenous self-determination.

The recruitment of Indigenous leaders continues to be a high priority. I am happy to say that this year we hired Ron Hodgson as our Director of People and Culture. Having an Indigenous leader in this role has greatly enhanced our cultural approaches to recruitment, retention and the development of Indigenous community members working at NCFST. As you will hear later in this report, Melissa Hamonic will also be transitioning into the role of Director of Holistic Services in the fall of 2022. Across the agency, we continue to recruit and develop strong Indigenous community members for key leadership positions. We have also worked over the past year to continue to increase community participation at the board level. We are very excited to have new members from the community who will be standing for election as members of the board.

We continue to support a diverse set of children, youth, families, and seniors from dozens of different First Nations and from the Métis and Inuit communities. This work requires a continuous commitment to investing in the cultural resources and supports available at NCFST. This end, we have increased the Elders, Knowledge Carriers and cultural resource advisors available to support community and staff over the last year. This work has also enabled us to steadily expand our trauma-informed land-based practice across the city of Toronto, and through the purchase of a new location for our summer camps.

This year we celebrated Canada's first National Day of Truth and Reconciliation on September 30th. We made several commitments as an agency that day, including developing and delivering a learning series on decolonizing child welfare; convening a community advisory circle on child welfare transformation; and reporting out to community every September 30th on our progress working with community to transform child welfare and achieve better outcomes. I want to personally thank all the community, staff, Indigenous partner organizations and other partners and stakeholders who have supported this work. We are looking forward to our community report back on September 30th, 2022.

Native Child and Family Services of Toronto has also been working to engage in a support the larger national transformation of Indigenous child and family wellbeing through Bill C-92:





An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis Children, Youth and Families. We held a National Forum on Urban Indigenous Child and Family Wellbeing to bring agencies together who are working in this space. We also attended meetings and events with the Association of Native Child and Family Services Agencies of Ontario (ANCFSAO), the Chiefs of Ontario (COO) the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and others working in this space. As an urban agency we remain committed to working as a helper to support First Nations and other Indigenous Governing Bodies in exercising their inherent rights of child, family and community safety, wellbeing, and prosperity.

NCFST remains committed to working alongside Indigenous agencies, Indigenous Governing Bodies, allies and other partners and stakeholders to ensure that Indigenous children and families have access to Indigenous services. This work has led us to develop new partnerships with the Peel Children's Aid Society and the Indigenous Network that will see NCFST providing child and family wellbeing services to Indigenous families in Peel Region

Over the past year we have also made significant advances in NCFST's internal process of Peaceful Relations, including establishing a Peaceful Relations Committee. This process is about respecting the diversity of the community we serve, the staff at NCFST and the partners and stakeholders we work with. In recognition of the prevalence of systemic racism in Canadian society, we are taking an Indigenous approach to equity, diversity and inclusion through traditional Indigenous values, teaching, and approaches to honouring the diversity of the human family and working together towards common goals.

We have also started the process of developing our next strategic plan. This process will be completed over the next

fiscal year and will be highlighted in more detail in our next annual report. I do however want to share my gratitude here for the community members, staff, community partners and other stakeholders who have been involved in supporting this process.

I will conclude my message with some brief comments on our core mission of transforming Indigenous child and family wellbeing through self-determination. The province of Ontario continues to engage in a provincial process of child welfare redesign and have committed to the development of a distinct Indigenous approach to this work. The changes coming to Ontario's system are complicated by changes that happened at the Federal level through Bill C-92. While this context is dynamic and challenging, it also presents a unique opportunity for Indigenous agencies, communities, and governing bodies to work together to create new Indigenous systems and mandates for the safety, wellness, and prosperity of our children. NCFST is committed to working in this space with humility, bravery, honesty, wisdom, truth, respect, and love for the continued benefit of the children we are privileged to serve.

Miigwetch,

*Jeffrey Schiffer*

# HOLISTIC SERVICES

## **SIOBHAN MCCARTHY, DIRECTOR**

This marks the fourth and final Annual Report I have had the honour of completing as the Director of Holistic Services. During this time, Holistic Services has grown exponentially with the addition of two new Child and Family Centres, a Healing Lodge, the development of a live-in Family Reunification program, increased Transitional Housing, and many other programs. We have strengthened existing relationships with community partners and begun new ones with the Garry Hurvitz Centre for Community Mental Health, Toronto Zoo, Dixon Hall, and Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child & Family Services to name a few.

As an ally, this has been a very meaningful journey and I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to work with so many talented and dedicated staff members. From the beginning, my goal has been to mentor and support an Indigenous community member to assume the role of Director, Holistic Services.

We are so fortunate as an agency to have brought Melissa Hamonic into the role of Associate Director over the past two years. Melissa will be assuming the role of Director, Holistic Services on October 1, 2022. Her knowledge, skills, kindness, and strong Indigenous values will continue to move Native Child and Family Services of Toronto in the right direction; to continue supporting community members to thrive, heal, and maintain their dignity and rights to self-determination. I look forward to continuing my work with NCFST in a new role, stewarding us through the Accreditation process and supporting Leadership with new initiatives.



**MELISSA HAMONIC,  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR**

I began my work with NCFST as a BSW placement student, moving into the role of Mental Health Worker and then Clinical Supervisor before arriving into the role of Associate Director, which I have held for the past two years. During this time I have had the honour of working alongside many teachers, Charlene Avalos, Maria Huerta, Randal

“I have been humbled  
by the unwavering  
commitment and  
ingenuity of staff..”

Defant, Kevin Fujita, Alita Sauve and most recently Siobhan McCarthy and all the members of the Director’s circle.

In every role, I have been humbled by the unwavering commitment and ingenuity of staff in supporting the wellbeing for First Nations, Métis and Inuit children and families across a range of programs, and the unrelenting resilience of the Indigenous community. It is with humbleness and gratitude that I move into the role of Director, Holistic Services. I look forward to working in a reciprocal relationship with the community, staff, land, and environment as we navigate from the present toward a truly sovereign future.

Maarsii.





## **TRAUMA-INFORMED ON THE LAND PROGRAMMING**

### **Early Years**

Staff at all EarlyON sites have welcomed the chance to offer in-person and On the Land (OTL) activities as COVID Protocols have allowed. Community members have been grateful to be outside engaging with the land and continue to attend at the three Child and Family Centres. These Centres have begun to offer in-person programming which has been met with excitement and enthusiasm. The Aboriginal Head Start programs have been well attended and graduations will be taking place in June. The childcare at Scarborough Child and Family Life Centre (SCFLC) quickly filled after re-opening. Outreach efforts have been very successful in the Scarborough Community.

SCFLC staff has again provided support to the community through Food Hampers, both to families and individuals on lockdown due to COVID isolation. 3018 Hampers were delivered or picked up by families throughout the year and 67 individual hampers were delivered to isolated community members.

The Malvern Aboriginal Child and Family Centre (MACFC) has started a 10-week School Readiness partnership with the Reading Partnership for Parents Program. This program is supporting 14 different families and their children in building excitement around literacy and Kindergarten prep. One staff from each site is currently being trained to facilitate the program ongoing, independently through this first cohorts.





NEW CAMP PROPERTY AT CLARENDON STATION

## Camp

In late Winter 2022, NCFST purchased a Camp property located in Clarendon Station on the traditional territory of the Anishinabewaki, Treaty 27. We continue to develop relationships with the surrounding First Nations and look forward to collaborating to ensure the Camp honours the Land and its original caretakers.

The Camp comprises a spacious waterfront, large kitchen and recreation Hall, 11 newly renovated cabins with room for a total of 25-30 campers, along with space for teepees, a Sweat Lodge, a Sacred Fire, and a range of cultural activities and outdoor adventures. We look forward to offering culture camps On the Land year-round, including Winter!

This is the inaugural year of our summer camps program at the new site and we are very excited to welcome our first campers! This summer we will be providing an expansive cultural camp experience to over 180 campers and 40 families.

With this welcome comes a goodbye. Our original camp, Camp Grundy, located within Grundy Lake Provincial Park has provided many years of memorable Summer camp experiences for community members. Opened from 1990 to 2021, the camp saw 5047 campers throughout its time. While we have outgrown the space, it is with deep gratitude that we bid farewell to Camp Grundy.

## Toronto Zoo Partnership

This year NCFST was delighted to enter into a partnership with the Toronto Zoo, led by their Director, Dolf De Jong. Dolf De Jong is an avid environmentalist and conservationist whose goal is to enhance knowledge and understanding of the environment and our animal relations, this fits seamlessly with the Indigenous world view of All My Relations

The On the Land (OTL) program has been extended to provide on the land teachings at the Toronto Zoo. The OTL workers are involved in weekly Toronto Zoo programming for EarlyON families and to engage with other zoo members and families. Every Wednesday an average of 10-15 families from within SCFLC and Malvern (MAFC) sites attend the zoo programming. Activities include scavenger hunts, making bird feeders, traditional moon teachings, turtle teachings, medicine wheel teaching, 4 directions, water teachings and a photography contest. These events are open to all zoo visitors.



## CLINICAL SERVICES

### Mdewgaan Lodge

The intersections of colonization, racism, sexism, and inter-generational trauma continue to impact the well-being of Indigenous women and their children. The violence of the residential school system and the sixties scoop intentionally ripped families and communities apart. These projects attempted not only to sever Indigenous peoples from their families and communities but also their cultures and spiritual practices. Women and children continue to experience the impacts of these ruptures in their daily lives.

Mdewgaan Lodge is a live-in Healing Lodge for mothers experiencing the impacts of colonization, including substance use. The Lodge is open to expectant mothers, mothers with their young children, and mothers working toward reunification. The program runs for 6 months and supports 5 mothers and their children per cohort. Since its inception, Mdewgaan Lodge has supported 39 mothers and 25 children.

Open since 2019, we are grateful for the learning we received during the first two cohorts at the Lodge. In early 2021 time was taken to reflect on community feedback and learned best practices. In May 2021 we launched a renewed service model with an approach to stability and wellness centred in culture, with a distinct focus on balance across all quadrants of the medicine wheel and grounded in the relationship between self with children, family, community, Land, and environment. To best support community members participating in the program, we have worked to develop a partnership with Michael Garron Hospital to ensure warm, culturally safe detox pathways for incoming residents. Mdewgaan Lodge continues to be a space of healing and community and we look forward to its continued success!







## 220 Carlton

220 Carlton is an upcoming project in partnership with Dixon Hall. This partnership will see NCFST run a unique live-in program for families experiencing housing insecurity and working on reunification with their child/children. The goal of the program is to expedite reunification while also working toward long-term housing stability. Through this program, we anticipate supporting 15-20 families per year.

The renovated space will feature Indigenous design concepts across 8 en-suite units. Staffed by both Housing workers and Family Support workers, residents will receive wrap-around support to strengthen housing stability, caregiving skills, and wellness, along with the potential for extended access visits in residents' own spaces. We look forward to opening this innovative program in late Fall 2022.

## Anti-Human Trafficking

Indigenous Child and Family Well Being agencies were asked by the Ministry to develop an alternative residential care program for youth who were escaping or at risk of being involved in Human Trafficking. Due to a long-standing relationship with Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiyag Child & Family Services (DBCFS), Native Child and Family Services of Toronto (NCFST) entered into a partnership to provide our clinical support and expertise to the development of the new program. Clinical staff and management are engaged in program development and will be supporting the care home with a newly hired clinician. Plans are in place to develop a second home, either through NCFST or DBCFS with the same goals and objectives. This is the continuation of a very positive relationship with DBCFS that supports the community through an Indigenous lens across a wide area of the GTA.

## Partnership with Garry Hurvitz Centre for Community Mental Health - A division of the Hospital for Sick Children (HSC)

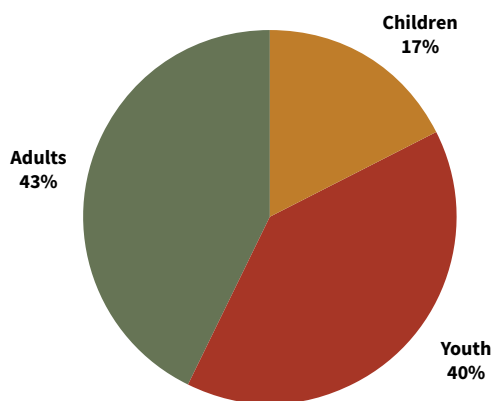
NCFST has recently partnered with the Garry Hurvitz Centre for Community Mental Health to provide collaborative, wrap-around mental health service and family clinical support to Indigenous community members with intensive needs. Dyads comprising an NCFST Indigenous Wellness Worker and a GH CCMH Community Child and Youth Care Practitioner will work in relationship with 10-15 families yearly to provide enhanced in-office and in-home culturally grounded intensive mental health and wellbeing support.

This partnership will also provide direct, warm referral pathways to other services available through the HSC network, ensuring community members receive all support needed in culturally safe and timely ways.

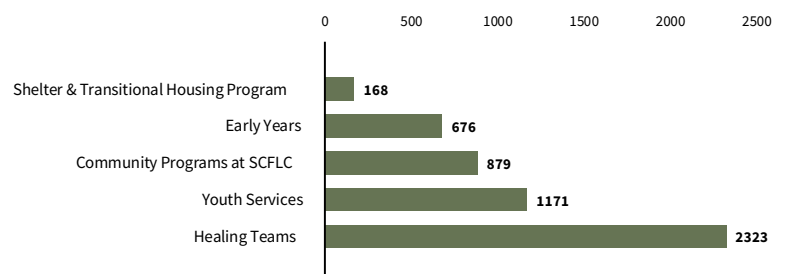
## After Hours Support Line

The After-Hours Support Line has continued to support community members with telephone support for the second year in a row. This has been expanded, reaching out to community members who have been identified by their Child and Family Wellbeing workers as needing additional support during the after-hours period. This support could be a quick phone call, an offer of some emotional support, or delivery of food cards or emergency supplies. This is a pilot which we will be evaluated at the end of the fiscal year.

**HOLISTIC SERVICES' PARTICIPANTS**



**UNIQUE PARTICIPANTS BY PROGRAMS**





## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### Ogichidaa Program

The Ogichidaa Training Program was developed to support Community Members on their healing journey and to ready them for further education and/or employment in various positions at NCFST. The late Vera Martin, one of our first Elders, provided many teachings about Ogichidaa.

“Ogichidaa are those who stay behind  
and wash dishes at the Pow Wow,  
those who stand up to take part in  
helping the Elders, those brave warriors  
who continually push for  
community healing.”

It was from these teachings that the program was born based on the Teachings of the Medicine Wheel and the four quadrants of self: mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical.

The program was a 16-week entry-level arts-based program. The curriculum of the Ogichidaa Program focused on the Wandering Life, the stage where children develop their gifts and prepare for their fast. This aligns with the Middle Years stage of life, ages 6 to 11. This age group was an identified gap in service delivery identified by both service providers and community members. The first cohort had 27 applicants and a group of 10 was selected by a team of NCFST Staff. It was a close group with members previously knowing each other. Due to COVID-19 Protocol, almost all the program was conducted on Zoom. There was one full day on the land and the Ogichidaa and their children, 29 folks in total, attended the ceremony to learn their spirit names and clans. It was a large gathering, and many went into the Lodge with James Carpenter. They also made ribbon skirts, beaded earrings, lanyards, drums, and shakers.

All ten applicants completed the program. Four Ogichidaa enrolled in the First Nations Technical Institute for further education. One Ogichidaa successfully completed an Internship with NCFST and has been hired as an Early On and Transition House support staff. Another volunteers at the Scarborough Child and Family Life Center (SCFLC). An Ogichidaa whose son recently passed, continues to stay in touch and continues with the support of the Holistic Team. A much larger program including teachings of the western doorway will help the community with the increase in deaths due to fentanyl. An Ogichidaa was able to leave an emotionally abusive relationship with the support of the

Holistic Team. More than one Ogichidaa explained that their depression and anxiety sometimes prevented them from having their cameras on, they saw the program as a lifeline into the real world and expressed gratitude that they could listen to the information. Two Ogichidaa have entered another Peer Navigator Program with 2 Spirits of the First Nation in their Harm Reduction Training Program.

The second cohort started the program in January. There were 29 applicants and 13 were chosen to take part. Due to COVID most programming was conducted over Zoom. Similar positive outcomes were seen with two Ogichidaa expressing their excitement to complete the program as they reported they had never completed anything before. Another Ogichidaa who was faced with eviction created a support team and was able to stop the eviction. Many of the Ogichidaa had experienced significant losses which they were able to process and be held by the group.

All participants identified that the program has opened up many doorways for them including new knowledge of the extensive services offered by NCFST. Participants felt that the program helped them learn to trust NCFST and the work being done in the agency. It is hoped that new funding for this program will become available, given the positive feedback from participants. The community goodwill as well as the emotional and practical gains made by many of the Ogichidaa suggest that this is an important step in our efforts to continue to support the community on their healing journey.

### Martin Family Institute

NCFST has partnered with the Martin Family Institute to develop and deliver an Early Years community and staff training program designed to support individuals on their education and career journey, including opportunities to support in our Early Years programs. Materials and content were designed with community and staff to reflect who we are as Urban Indigenous people.

### First Nations Technical Institute

NCFST has partnered with the First Nations Technical Institute to host and support students enrolled in the Social Service Worker Program. We are pleased that eight community members connected to NCFST have received wrap-around support to attend the program, hosted virtually and at NCFST locations.







Evan Redsky and Amy Moore

## YOUTH SERVICES

### The Medicine Sisters

At first glance, The Medicine Sisters is a group of gifted, strong Indigenous Jingle Dancers showcasing culture at community events across the city and on the Pow Wow trail.

Digging a little deeper, The Medicine Sisters is a truly special program developed and led by Amy Moore, On the Land Program Worker. Grounded in the sacred jingle dance practice, program participants create and build regalia, rehearse, and perform regularly, while also sharing with one another what it means to practice traditional ways of being in contemporary contexts, working through identity and belonging, and developing a distinct sense of pride and place within the Indigenous community. Medicine Sisters came out of the need to mentor urban Indigenous youth who are on individual journeys to reclaim culture and identity. Originally developed to meet the needs of the Scarborough community, this group is expanding sites to reach across the city.

Along with the group aspect, Amy works individually with participants to identify personal goals and provide individualized mentoring. Amy's work with The Medicine Sisters truly honours the seven generations that came before and creates meaningful connections for the seven generations to come. Amy began dancing as soon as she could walk and gained her teachings from her family. Amy's vision of Medicine Sisters is passing on Jingle Dress teachings to youth who are confident and sustainable to teach upcoming generations. The program is open to Indigenous youth who have felt the call of the Jingle Dress and are prepared to undertake the commitment required to appropriately honour the role of Jingle Dancer. We look forward to seeing The Medicine Sisters sharing their powerful medicine at both internal and external cultural events!



The Medicine Sisters



# TRIBAL LANDS URBAN INDIGENOUS CLOTHING LINE

Tribal Lands is a contemporary Urban Indigenous clothing line designed and operated by youth at the Native Youth Resource Centre, supported by Evan Redsky, Youth Drop-In Worker. This ongoing project releases capsule collections of streetwear including t-shirts, hoodies, hats, and more.

“Tribal Lands – a team of Indigenous youth dedicated to creating streetwear that represents our Indigenous stories, history, and future. We hope to connect with individuals coast to coast and share our message of unity.”

Tribal Lands platforms Indigenous creativity and self-expression with clothing that truly reflects and celebrates who they are, while also providing training and mentorship in small business skills.

All proceeds go back into supporting the creative and entrepreneurial programming of native youth in the city of Tkaronto. The team designed a special edition Orange Shirt, with all proceeds after the cost of materials, going to the Indian Residential School Survivors Society

**Visit Tribal Lands at [www.triballands.shop](http://www.triballands.shop)**



Tribal Lands Clothing Line



# CHILD AND FAMILY WELLBEING

## **DAVID VAN OVERDIJK, DIRECTOR**

Past annual reports have focussed upon the pandemic and our ability to ‘pivot’ to provide continued support to our most vulnerable community members. As a mandated service, Child and Family Wellbeing, is required and has continued to provide in-person service to ensure child safety within the context of strengthening our family’s gifts and resiliency. This had held true for all our teams: Children’s Services/Resources, Family Finding, Tikinagan (pre-post natal), Family Supports/Access and all of our Child and Family Wellbeing teams.

It is upon this focus of resiliency that I would like to share and highlight just some examples of not only our families but also our youth and staff as we read here about their individual journeys.

As embedded within these amazing stories, it has been NCFST’s commitment to adhere to our original Service Model related to provision of ‘wrap-around’ services that has been instrumental to these successes.





Jadyn Hardie-Bardy

## THE VOICE OF OUR YOUTH

Jadyn Hardie-Bardy has been involved with NCFST since childhood. As a little girl she lived in NCFST's women's transition house, in her teens she spent time in care, and then made a full circle in 2020 returning to the transition house as a VYSA youth. Shortly after, Jadyn secured her own apartment and has been successfully living independently since that time. Jadyn is an extremely bright, beautiful, and resilient young person. Jadyn has a passion for art as a way of healing and expressing herself. With many intersecting identities, Jadyn describes herself as a "queer Mohawk and Jamaican poet and beader living in Tkaronto".

In her own words, here is more about her work:

*"Her work explores culture and land reconnection, destigmatizing monoliths and overcoming adversity. In Fall of 2020 Jadyn virtually took over the Roots Lounge stage in participation with Josh Watkis; Filter Through Skin, officially making her debut spoken word performance. Additionally Jadyn's poetry was featured in Poetry Inprint's In The Streets Project, reflecting on public safety. In 2021 Jadyn was featured at La Raza's open mic courtesy of Spin El Poeta and both Central Neighbourhood Housing's National Day of Remembrance & Action to*

*Stop Violence Against Women and International Women's Day; Breaking Bias' events as a spoken word artist. Additionally, you can find Jadyn's first self-published poetry book, "i am a wandering spirit" showcased on her Instagram and find Jadyn as a guest feature in Council Fire's We Are Strong podcast, discussing human trafficking, safety and setting boundaries in January of 2022.*

*"i am a wandering spirit" is a meditation on a Jamaican and Mohawk women navigating family trauma and identity by way of cultural relationships and estrangement. An exploration of parallels within family history and adversities faced leading to self-discovery.*

*Jadyn's goal is to connect with other young people using culture and art to support in their healing. She was just accepted into the RISE Edutainments Legal Activism Residency, funded by the Law Foundation of Ontario, which is a program that uses art to teach Black youth about their rights within the justice system. At 19, Jadyn is already making a huge impact on her community and I can only imagine where she'll go from here.*

*Miigwetch."*

# A MOTHER'S JOURNEY

“Having Claudine and the help from Native Child and Family Services of Toronto’s Tikinagan Team made the difference between us being confident as parents and us worrying if we could even provide. This photo is of Jakey in the seat that Sauvanne helped us get with Walmart gift cards and Jakey’s changing table and his stroller, everything a new parent needs came because of the Tikinagan team. Claudine, you are such a help and when this tired mama needs a shower or advice on when to introduce solids, you know.

I’m breastfeeding and eating more than I would normally so the grocery card means I can feed not only myself but baby Jake. Baby Jacob is learning about his culture and smelling medicines burned, honoring his ancestors and generations of Ojibway. We feel that he is part of his community even though his band is on the West coast of Canada. Neither Steve nor I drive so the help getting to appointments and from makes a huge difference between a 3-hour commute excluding appointment times for me or being gone for 2 hours total including the appointment so that I can have Jacob watched.

“Claudine is very knowledgeable about the culture which is important to us and teaches us traditions.”

Claudine is a reliable support and always fills in the gaps because we as new parents with low income don’t know or have the means to have everything we should. Claudine is very knowledgeable about the culture which is important to us and teaches us traditions. Homemade meals make the difference between me being hungry all night alone with the baby while my partner works. Or being able to eat and produce breastmilk.

Being able to stay in touch during the week also makes Claudine very personable not just a hi-bye sort of experience. She is a connecting link between us being random strugglers with a baby and us being community members. We wouldn’t be the parents we are without Tikinagan and our case manager who connects us to counseling, other resources we need.

Thank you, Native Child and Family Services of Toronto, and thank you Claudine!”

# AN AUNTIES’ STORY

*In October 2021, the mother had asked PL’s auntie to care for him for a short period of time. When his mother did not return to pick him up for several days, the auntie informed NCFST that he was staying with her and without hesitation that she would be willing to provide care for as long as needed.*

*PL’s aunt was supported by the Family Finding team to receive financial support, as well as assistance in applying for daycare so auntie could return to work. The Family Finder also connected auntie with other subsidies, programs, and help with finding counseling, as well as support in their area. The Family Finder continues to check in regularly and build a relationship with the family.*

*Over the last several months, PL has had the opportunity to develop bonds with his cousins, be a part of family events and keep his connection to culture. He is surrounded by his extended family and the kin family has access to the support needed to provide a safe and nurturing home for him. The kin family can provide him with a permanent home if mom is not able to resume care and because of this, being ‘in care’ will not be a part of PL’s story.*

## FAMILY FINDING

NCFST’s Family Finding team was developed within the past few years with the expressed purpose of attempting to secure alternative placements, for those children and youth that require such care.

Our goal has been to keep children/youth out of the ‘care system’, by providing concrete funding and actual support.

Family Finding has provided financial support to 81 ‘Out of Care’ children in this last fiscal year.

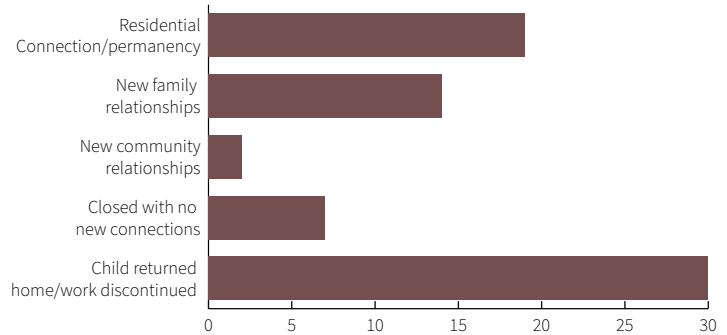
- 74 children were supported with a monthly per diem.
- 7 children were supported with ‘other’ costs when no per diem was required.

Of the 74 children supported with a per diem, the Kin families often also received funding in the form of a ‘Start Up’ to assist with the placement of the child. This could include gift cards, purchase of furniture, safety items, clothes, diapers, and formula. This Kin out-of-care financial support assists with maintaining placements and ensuring that Kin families have the resources needed to adequately care for the child(ren) for as long as required.

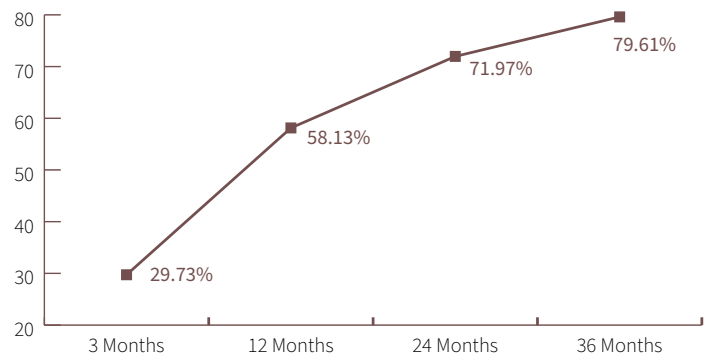
The Family Finding team assessed 42 Kin out of Care caregivers in the last fiscal year with many of these assessments resulting in children/youth being moved from ‘in care’ status to ‘out of care’ status, and for some children to be placed directly in the Kin out of Care homes.

FAMILY FINDING SUPPORT	
Total family assessments 2021	45
Total children supported with per diem/start up funding	81

Family Finding 2021 Files Outcomes



Percentage of children in care who no longer require alternative care within the first 3, 12, 24, 36 months of admission







Tisa, Miguel and Tisa's Son

# TISA'S STORY

*"I have been involved in programming with my son Jayden through Native Child and Family Services of Toronto since 2018. My son was an infant. I started off by participating in parenting programs and drop-in programs at the Scarborough Family Life Centre (SCFLC) and I really felt like a part of that community there.*

*During this time in my life, I was also experiencing abuse in my partnership and looking for ways to move forward but I was stuck. Miguel Torres became my Child and family wellbeing worker and I was assigned a Ninoshe at that time as well, Amanda Bourque. They both had helped me through some of my darkest moments and struggles both personal and with parenting my son and I am so thankful for that.*

*In 2020 I was connected to Ladonna Burke (Child and Family wellbeing) who I want to acknowledge also. All of these workers came from a place of understanding, non-judgment and were there to help encourage me and empower me because they believed in me.*

*I have made some tough choices, but they are for the best for myself and my son and I am not looking back because I am a stronger parent because of the things I went through. I did not give up, even on the days I wanted to I kept going. Now I am at a place where I want to close this chapter as I am no longer involved with Child and Family wellbeing but I want to show my gratitude and will be hosting a lunch and ceremony for the workers who have worked alongside me and impacted me and I want to show that I can now give back to them in some way.*

*I am working with Natalie DiQuattro now (Ninoshe) who is providing continued support. I hope this story can inspire other community members and I hope I can continue on my path being the best I can be.*

*Miigwetch"*

TIKINAGAN SERVICE VOLUMES	
Number of families served	133
Number of babies born within program	78
Total Spent in baby supplies	\$5,829

## DEVOLUTION

I would like to announce our agreement with Peel Children Aid Society related to the commitment to devolution; ensuring that all Indigenous families, children, and youth are serviced by an Indigenous agency and as exemplified by this partnership. More to come in next year's Annual Report!

## OUR STAFF

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our staff for the tremendous work and support that they provide to the community. Native Child and Family Services of Toronto has received a mandate to promote identifying Indigenous staff wherever possible and to this end, and while only one of many, I am proud to introduce you to Tanyell Dorrington, currently a supervisor on our Tikanagan team:

# TANYELL DORRINGTON



*Hello my name is Tanyell Dorrington, I identify as afro-indigenous and apart of the Métis Nation.*

*I am a sister, an aunty and soon to be mother of two. I have been working with Native Child and Family Services of Toronto for over 14 years in many different positions. My early and late teens I grew up living in Gabriel Dumont and being a part of the Kingston*

*road and Galloway community. When I was in my early teens, I didn't make some of the best choices. Those choices were leading me down a bad path. At the age of 13, I connected with Native Child and Family Services and recommended that I attend some programs that were being offered at Gabriel Dumont to help support me in making better decisions and being a part of the community.*

*At the age of 15, I met Charlene Avalos standing outside at Gabriel Dumont. I am not sure what made Charlene come to speak with me but she did. Charlene introduced herself to me and just asked me some questions and Charlene did know my mom and my aunties. I shared a little bit of my story with Charlene who just sat and listened. At the end of our conversation, Charlene said to me this is not the right path for me and I am meant to help people and my community and she would help me. That day, Charlene offered me a job to do summer day camp which changed my life. I would of never thought looking back today from that one conversation Charlene took the time to sit and talk to me, I would be where I am today. From that moment that I started to work at the day camp, I became more active in my community. I was part of youth council, I supported with Thunderbird dance group, I volunteered at head start and started work in breakfast club as well as the after school program. This was because one person believed in me and gave me a chance and I could never thank Charlene enough for not only what she did for me but what she continues to do for our community.*





*At the age of 20, I met Cathy Punnett, at the time she was the supervisor of the Aboriginal Early Childhood Development Team. I did an interview to cover someone who was on leave in the early years Centre at 30 College but I was not the successful candidate. A few weeks later I got a call from HR asking if I would be able to cover someone who was on leave for two weeks in the Early Years Centre. I agreed, what was only supposed to be two weeks ended up turning into 7 great years on Cathy's team. I started out in the Early years and Cathy believed that I would make a great Ninoshe, I was terrified I was only 20 years old, had no children did not have much experience with child development and crisis intervention, which families would want me to be a support to them when I had no experience? But Cathy believed in me and pushed me and took a lot of time to teach me. It was one of the best things that ever happened to me. Being a ninoshe I learned so much from the community, I built such great working relationships with not only the community but my fellow coworkers who also took time to boost my confidence and help me. Still to this day, I have a lot of community members that keep in contact with me. The best feeling is knowing that you helped support someone in doing things they never thought they could do.*

*Native Child partnered with Centennial College for staff to complete their Child and Youth work Apprenticeship. Cathy really*

*pushed me and encouraged me to do this. At the time I was not confident in myself that I would be able to actually go to College and succeed but Cathy believed I could and with the support of some of my co-workers who attended with me I graduated in 2016 with honors. This was one of the biggest accomplishments of my life. I was the first person in my family to do this and they were all so proud of me. Cathy really helped me build confidence in myself and not to settle for anything and I truly appreciate her for that.*

*I also spent some time working at our Women's transitional houses, where I was able to spend more one on one time with the Women in teaching them a lot of life skills and parenting. The women at the transitional house taught me a lot about ensuring to meet people where they are at and letting them be in control of their choices with you just being there to help guide them.*

*After leaving the transitional house I was given the opportunity to do a year secondment through Seventh Generation Midwives with the Baby Bundle research project. I was a Wellness Case Manager, my role was to do home visiting and support moms pre/postnatal and provide evidence base information that showed when moms have more support with transportation, food, rent, baby supplies and financial support they have better outcomes. It was a great opportunity for me and I also worked alongside Cathy Punnett who was the Manager. During our*

*time at Baby Bundle, Cathy was inspired to work with Native Child to try and get funding to have a program like Baby Bundle, which was successful.*

*Cathy became the Supervisor of the Tikinagan team at Native Child and I was hired on to be a case manager. I did case management on the Tikinagan team for about a year. The need for pre/postnatal services grew tremendously and so did our team. I applied to be a team lead on the Tikinagan team and was the successful candidate. I was then promoted to assistant supervisor and then promoted to Supervisor which is my current role. I never imagined I would be where I am today and it has taken a lot of trial and error to get here, it was not easy but I never gave up.*

*I had people who believed in me when I didn't believe in myself. I love what I do and will continue what I do to help our community. I share my story in hopes it can motivate others, it does not matter about your past or where you came from... your able to achieve anything you want! Some of us need encouragement and support and I found that being a part of Native Child and Family Services of Toronto. I continue to learn each day from my community and the Tikinagan team in order to help me be the best I can be, I am always open to learning new things and new ways to support the community. I am Tanyell Dorrington and this is just the start of my journey.*



## **FINANCE**

The Finance department started the process of transitioning to a new accounting platform as the current system is about to end. Our current version of the accounting software is archaic and no longer fit the growth of NCFST. The updated system will reduce time to close significantly. It will also provide real-time reporting for the budget holders. In the future, our new accounting system will save a lot of time to compile the various reports by using dimensional reporting. The new system will allow easy integration with Salesforce which will be implemented soon. It is very powerful and bring cloud computing to finance and accounting.

Last year, new training was provided to managers and directors to help them understand the financial processes better. Every program and service at NCFST has a budget to manage and requires funding to operate. Budget holders joined this training as they got walked through the 1,2,3's of financial management and fund development at NCFST. This was a great opportunity for both new and experienced staff to learn more about funding and finance related processes. In this training budget holders learnt more on how we work together to design a program, create a budget and prepare an application for funding.

In addition, the department has developed robust processes for budgeting and monitoring of salaries. Ontario Child Benefit Equivalent (OCBE) and Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP) allocations continue to be completed for the future of children in care.





## INFORMATION SYSTEM, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (ISIT)

The ISIT team has significantly reduced the technical debt in the last couple of years. We are planning to eliminate all IT debt by 2023 and move to larger cloud-hybrid solution. Support and ticket times to resolution have also improved while serving about 1000 requests per month. This is at the high end of capacity and consists of automated requests of mostly low to medium support levels.

With the new tools acquired and implement over the past year, our mobile user workforce was exposed to minimal vulnerabilities. This was achieved by automating transparent upgrades and encouraging on-net access to agency resources by dedicated private networks for all critical remote users. The SOHO solution better protects all community member information and agency assets while almost completely eliminating cross-platform security contamination isolating workspaces from any other kind of risk.

NCFST is moving towards a new cloud intranet document management system in more than forty areas or sites that encompass all aspects of service delivery that will eliminate duplication, optimize version control and enable centralized retention policy adherence. This supports more than ten distinct departments overseeing collaboration between teams leveraging a more efficient and cross-platform mechanisms to deliver more than 30 services and offerings.

Our technical leadership has been embraced by other agencies in establishing data governance practices as well as Network Automation, Data Governance, Telephony, and Cyber Security. NCFST is a leader on several multi agency forums and committees working with vendor peers while reviewing best practices to establish continuous improvements to our technology investment.

With so much focus on new emerging cybersecurity threats our organization has expanded their all-staff training throughout the year and seek to create recurring annual recertifications plus further enhanced programing. This has resulted in training all our employees on how to protect themselves from phishing and other scams. In addition, the Security Operation Centre is running full production and easily handling all growth and scaling requirements while also allowing for future mobile device coverage even with 20% year over year increases to device end user protection.

We are looking forward to return to work in a hybrid setting in 2022. For this reason, IT team growth and training was specially focused on preparation for returning to work plans resulting in direct consulting granting access to dedicated contract staff, technical training for all staff and the launch of a new cloud ITIL certified Service Desk and Change Management system for daily operations of multiple departments and data quality management.



Mount Dennis Aboriginal Child and Family Centre

## FACILITIES AND PROCUREMENT

Trauma-informed land-based practice has been shown to be one of the most cost effective and outcome rich ways to address the challenges faced by Aboriginal children and families. For thousands of years our Elders and Knowledge Carriers have understood the healing and transformative nature of interaction with land. Over recent years NCFST has been increasingly challenged by community demand for On The Land (OTL) programming. Over the course of the pandemic this demand has increased exponentially to the point where hundreds of families had to be turned away from opportunities for attend summer camps, day camps, and OTL programming developed mid-pandemic in attempt to meet this growing need. The capacity of our programming and Grundy Lake has long been unable to meet the demand of the community.

As a solution to these challenges, NCFST purchased a campground property located in Clarendon Station, Frontenac Ontario that will provide NCFST with the appropriate outdoor space, facilities, and cultural and recreational setting to deliver high-quality, year-round On the Land programming to greater numbers of Aboriginal children, youth and their families from Toronto. The campground offers many amenities and features that will enable us to operate the OTL program at full capacity on a year-round basis, including a well-maintained lodge with eleven cabins and upgrades, a short drive to a fishing lodge, a dining hall and large kitchen, direct access to a lake for cultural water-based activities.

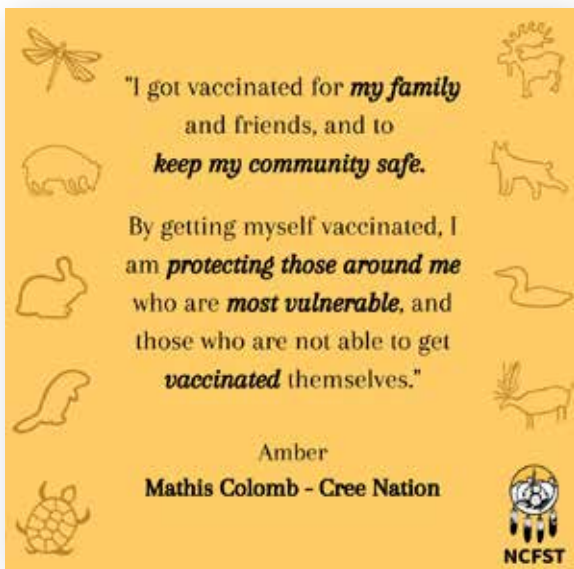
Mdewgaan Lodge has been offering a live-in healing experience for multiple women and their children for over two years. The lodge is located in Toronto in a former Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) building (note TCHC is owned by the City of Toronto). Recently, the City of Toronto has sold this property to NCFST for a nominal price.

Land ownership and land stewardship is a foundational aspect of Indigenous living and serves to cement the community's place in this large urban centre. Indigenous Mental Health and Addictions Treatment and Healing Centres form part of Ontario's response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Report and to priorities raised by Indigenous partners in Ontario. The purchase of this property allows NCFST to provide residential treatment to the urban Indigenous community indefinitely.

NCFST undertook a feasibility study to build an intentional, intergenerational community, serving Indigenous children, youth transitioning out of care, their caretakers/foster parents, and seniors/elders in the City of Toronto. Wiingashk Kaaning (*In Anishinaabemowin which means "place where the sweetgrass is"*) will unite these generations within community, while alleviating elder isolation and exposing children and youth to traditional Indigenous knowledge, ceremonies, and spiritual guidance needed for development and healing.

## VACCINATION PROGRAM

Our Administration Team lead the COVID-19 vaccination effort. Initially they made appointments for Community and frontline staff at external clinics. As vaccines become more available, partnerships were established with Anishnawbe Health Toronto, Toronto Fire, SafeHaven, and Unity Health to host vaccination clinics at our locations.



# 28

VACCINATION CLINICS  
HOSTED AT OUR  
LOCATIONS

# 1,411

DOSES ADMINISTRATED  
AT OUT CLINICS

# 20

INDIVIDUALS VACCINATED  
IN THEIR HOMES AS PART  
OF THE MOBILE CLINIC

# 400

COMMUNITY MEMBERS  
REFERRED TO EXTERNAL  
CLINICS

# 600

COMMUNITY MEMBERS  
SURVEYED ON VACCINE  
HESITANCY

# 6 WEEK

SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN  
CONDUCTED FOR VACCINE  
HESITANCY

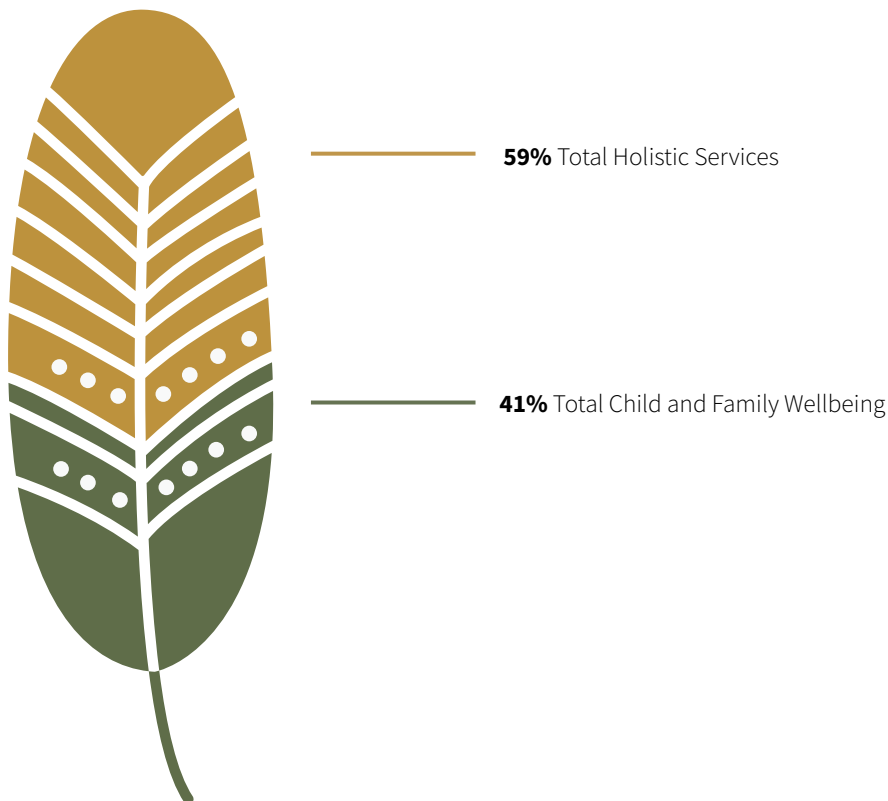


## FUNDING

Funding for fiscal 2021-22 increased by 4% compared to the prior year mainly due to the increased level of funding received from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), the City of Toronto, the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, Indigenous Healing and Wellness Strategy and COVID funding.

Total funding for fiscal 2021-2022 was \$55,216,858 that includes Child and Family Wellbeing funding of \$22,503,301 and Prevention funding of \$32,713,557. The comparative total in fiscal year of 2020-2021 was \$53,116,707 that included Child Welfare funding of \$22,405,852 and Prevention funding of \$30,710,855.

	% of Total Funding		
	FY 2020-2021	FY 2019-2020	Variance
Total Child and Family Wellbeing	41%	42%	-1%
Total Holistic Services	59%	58%	1%
	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>



FY 2021-2022

	Total Funding	Expenditures	Net Funding
Child and Family Well-being	\$22,503,301	\$21,999,723	\$503,578
<b>Total Child and Family Well-being</b>	<b>\$22,503,301</b>	<b>\$21,999,723</b>	<b>\$503,578</b>
Childrens' Mental Health & Family Wellbeing	\$ 6,690,644	\$ 6,690,644	-
Scarborough Enhancement JT, Mt. Dennis & Malvern Hubs	\$ 3,107,209	\$ 2,937,606	\$ 169,603
Organizational Enhancement	\$ 4,935,345	\$ 4,935,345	-
Pre & Post Natal	\$ 2,187,111	\$ 2,187,111	-
Kin Finding	\$ 1,155,945	\$ 1,155,945	-
Volunteer Drive	\$ 1,193,654	\$ 1,193,654	-
Jordan's Principle	\$ 55,291	\$ 55,291	-
Headstart	\$ 1,326,263	\$ 1,321,263	\$ 5,000
Indigenous Culture	\$ 345,516	\$ 349,495	\$ -3,979
Prevention	\$ 938,754	\$ 940,788	\$ -2,035
Scarborough Program	\$ 754,405	\$ 744,868	\$ 9,537
Day Care	\$ 1,361,631	\$ 1,362,077	\$ -446
Social Recreation	\$ 641,017	\$ 649,788	\$ -8,772
Transitional Housing	\$ 2,292,630	\$ 2,261,457	\$ 31,173
Youth	\$ 2,321,350	\$ 2,315,780	\$ 5,570
Admin	\$ 3,406,795	\$ 2,895,686	\$ 511,108
<b>Total Holistic Services</b>	<b>\$ 32,713,557</b>	<b>\$ 31,996,797</b>	<b>\$ 716,760</b>
<b>Total Child and Family Well-being and Holistic Services</b>	<b>\$ 55,216,858</b>	<b>\$ 53,996,520</b>	<b>\$ 1,220,338</b>

## OVERVIEW

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### CHILD AND FAMILY WELLBEING

Child Welfare revenue recognized has increased by \$97,449 in 2021-22. Program costs decreased by \$750,459 compared with 2020-21 due to a decrease in salary costs related to turnover and boarding costs.

### HOLISTIC SERVICES

Prevention funding increased in this fiscal year by \$2 million. Funding from Indigenous Services Canada Funding makes up almost half of this increase for infrastructure, Pre and Post Natal, Kin Finding, culture, and the volunteer drive program. The City of Toronto helped with increased needs due to COVID with shelter and hoteling supports and safe restart for our daycares and EarlyON programs as a result of COVID.

### CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH AND FAMILY WELLBEING

Total Children's Mental Health and Family Wellbeing funding increased by \$1,003,016 over the prior year due to increased fiscal funding from the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, Ministry of Health, and Indigenous Healing and Wellness Strategy. Total program costs increased by \$991,444 compared with the prior year due to increased staff and program-related costs.

### SCARBOROUGH ENHANCEMENT, MOUNT DENNIS AND MALVERN ABORIGINAL CHILD AND FAMILY CENTRES

Funding recognized increased by \$461,125 for the fiscal year 2021-2022 as the child and family centres became fully operational and as a result, the expenditures increased by \$274,316.

### HEAD START

Total Head Start funding for the fiscal year of 2021-22 decreased by 7% and direct program costs also decreased by 9% compared with the prior year due to lower programming costs.

### CULTURE

Total funding increased for Culture due to Indigenous Services Canada Funding for programming.

### PREVENTION

Funding recognized increased by \$116,153, due mainly to EarlyON sites being open for the full fiscal year compared to 2020-21 (due to COVID closures) and therefore programming costs increased by \$118,189.

### SCARBOROUGH

Scarborough programs funding increased by \$270,760 for enhancing learning development and capacity building, seniors, and on-the-land programming. Total program costs also increased by \$226,521.

### DAYCARE

The daycares received increased funding of \$381,058 due to also being open for the full fiscal year compared to 2020-21 (due to COVID closures) and therefore program expenses were higher too by \$250,747.

### SOCIAL RECREATION

Total Social Recreation funding increased by \$174,259 and program costs increased by \$178,235 in support of our camp programs.

### TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

Total Transitional Housing funding for the fiscal year 2021-2022 decreased by \$66,029. Total program costs decreased by \$150,641 due to decreased pandemic pay and hostel expenses.

### YOUTH

Total youth funding for the fiscal year 2021-22 increased by \$49,714, mainly with support for employment skills training. Total program costs decreased by \$118,984 accordingly compared with the prior year.

### ADMINISTRATION

Total administration funding decreased by \$1,130,128. Total program costs for the fiscal year 2020-21 increased by \$823,450 mainly due to COVID related programming.



# PEOPLE AND CULTURE

## **RON HODGSON, DIRECTOR**

The People and Culture portfolio has shifted to include Human Resources, Culture, Events, Volunteers and Communication/Public Relations (PR).

The Agency saw significant changes to the way we do our work over the past year as we continued to navigate the global COVID-19 pandemic. As a team, we focused on how to keep our Staff and Community safe and engaged while still finding room for learning, development, and growth within our teams and as individuals. We grounded our work in our values and prioritized building new relationships and strengthening existing ones as we looked forward to coming back together in a hybrid working environment. This work in transitioning back to the workplace is not done and our team will continually be revisiting ways that we can collectively provide services and supports to Community in a way that is culturally focused and also balances our wellness needs.

Over the course of the year, we saw a shift within our own team that prioritized the People and Culture group as a support service to our Staff. We have actively refocused our team on how we can better create an environment that encourages autonomy and allows everyone in the Agency to feel more included in the decision-making process. The team took time to identify gaps and processes that could be streamlined or were no longer effective, with the goal of creating space so we could be less reactive, and more solutions focused.

We understand that strong leadership is imperative to the success of any organization, and family. In collaboration with the Senior Leadership Circle, we implemented leadership training that is grounded in our Indigenous ways of living. With the addition of some new roles in all areas of the People & Culture team, we have been able to review our internal policies, processes and practices and have actively begun developing goals and projects that will align with our strategic plans and prioritize clear communications/branding, recruitment, training, development, and succession planning of our Indigenous community and staff.



## OUR STAFFING STRUCTURE

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**356**

total number of employees

Overall

**49%**

self-identified as Aboriginal

Overall

**52%**

of management staff self-identified as Aboriginal

The staffing complement increased once again over the fiscal year by approximately 5.6% from 337 in 2020/2021 to 356 at end-of-year 2021/2022. Important areas that saw increases due to focused recruitment and staff planning this year included our administrative and cultural supports. Holistic Services additionally saw some impactful changes to its staffing to better support Community programming and development.

In total, 49% of staff self-identified as Aboriginal and 52% of leadership self-identified as Aboriginal. We, unfortunately, saw a slight decrease in overall staff who self-identify as Aboriginal but a slight increase in our leadership complement. Prioritizing the recruitment of Aboriginal staff will be a focus of the team this coming year and we are working on putting processes in place to ensure our success in this area.

## EMPLOYEE SNAPSHOT

The importance of a diverse and well-balanced workforce ensures we understand the needs of our community. It allows us to strategically plan and focus our work in ways that both support our values as an Aboriginal organization but also address intersectional nuances within our community. A diverse workplace will also affect employee morale (culture) and lead our teams to work more effectively and efficiently.

### NEW HIRES BY QUARTER

2021-2022 (Fiscal)	New Recruits per Quarter
April to June	17
July to September	26
October to December	24
January to March	29
Grand Total	96

- The Agency received 2,440 applications through our applicant tracking system (ATS) in fiscal 2021-2022.
- Average Number of Applications per month 203 applications

### TYPES OF EMPLOYEES

Job Class	Number of Employees in Each Job Class
Admin	23
Director	7
Executive Director	1
Manager	18
Professional/Worker	269
Supervisor	38
Grand Total	356

### GENERATIONS AT WORK

Generations	Percentage in the Workforce
Gen Z	11%
Gen Y/Millennials	47%
Gen X	31%
Baby Boomers	11%

### GENDER OF EMPLOYEES

Gender	
Female	81%
Male	17%
Non Binary	2%

### EMPLOYEES BY PORTFOLIO

By Portfolio	Percentage by Portfolio
Child & Family Wellbeing	32.6%
Executive	2.6%
Finance & Administration	13.2%
Fund Development and Strategy	1.4%
Holistic Service	43.6%
People & Culture	5.1%
QA & Decolonization	1.5%



## PEACEFUL RELATIONS

A priority for the Agency has been our work on Peaceful Relations and over the past two (2) years the Agency has undertaken numerous activities to lay the foundation for a formal process that was initiated in response to an act of racism that occurred at the Agency. We responded with Circles, a formal process led by an external consultant, the development of a report with recommendations, and a week of Cultural Renewal (on the land). The culmination of this work will be the formal creation of a Peaceful Relations Circle which is scheduled to commence with an initial gathering on May 25th, 2022. Native Child and Family Services of Toronto (NCFST) is dedicated to addressing violence, harassment and/or discrimination in the workplace. A focus will be placed on understanding what Peaceful Relations looks like within the Aboriginal Community/working environment and the work that will be done by the Peaceful Relations Circle will be to positively effect change within our Agency. This work will include building a restorative process that promotes open communication for all Staff to address racism in our working environment. It will also allow us to identify systematic issues and collaboratively recommend solutions, including developing processes that support Staff and dismantle inequities.

Based on the feedback and recommendations generated with Staff over the past two (2) years, the Peaceful Relations Circle will focus on the following:

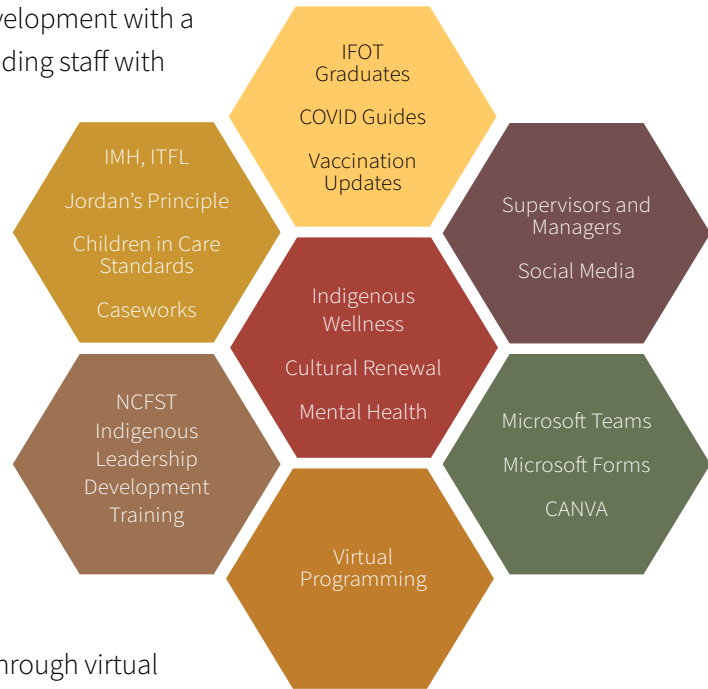
1. Sharing Indigenous teachings about how we honour diversity.
2. Beginning the pathway to defining what Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) and anti-racism looks like in our Agency, ensuring our work is grounded in Indigenous teachings, ceremony, ways of living and worldviews.
3. Making recommendations to the Senior Leadership/Directors Circles about how we can best share with Staff, including incorporating these recommendations into new hire orientation, annual training, online learning, internal processes etc.
4. Making concrete recommendations to the Senior Leadership/ Directors Circles around the development of policies and procedures that maintain a safe and supportive working environment for all Staff in their relationships, including providing clear direction for when that safety and support is breached.

## LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Agency continues to invest in learning and development with a focus on delivering culturally centric training. Providing staff with the right tools and key information at the onset and throughout their professional journey will provide for a more knowledgeable and culturally engaged workforce.

The Learning and Development team worked diligently this year on launching the Indigenous Pathways to Authorization training. They also worked collaborative on the creation of the Enyonkwa'nikonhriyo:hake (The Good Minds) Harm Reduction Training with two (2) University of Toronto students from the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology.

We continued to offer much of our programming through virtual learning including Indigenous Tools for Living (ITFL), Indigenous Leadership Curriculum, and Duty to Support (Report).



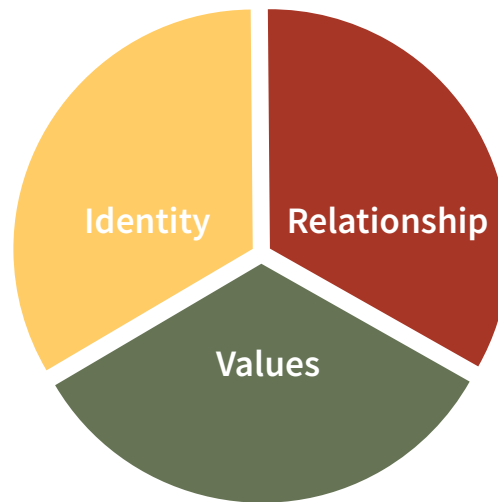
## CULTURE AND COMMUNITY GATHERINGS

The team is honored to provide Cultural supports and gatherings for Community Members, Agency Staff, and partners. Fiscal 2021-2022 saw tremendous growth in the team with the addition of Cultural Resource Workers and the creation of an Indigenous Language Program (Teacher).



## **BUILDING BUNDLES WITH BINOOJIIK**

As part of the growth of the Culture and Community Events team, an opportunity to create a new role emerged, the Cultural Resource Workers. This group collaborates with our Children Service Workers to provide direct Cultural support in the home setting as well as connecting with children and youth who are attending our camping programs. The Cultural Resource Workers are also present at our Culture Nights and during land-based Sharing days. The program was developed in response to the ongoing need for children in care to have strong connections to their Cultural identity, Ceremony, and practice. As the program was being developed, three (3) areas of importance were acknowledged: Identity, Relationships, and Values.



The Cultural Resource Workers will work with children to affirm their Indigenous identity as well as other intersectional identities (i.e. heritage, race, gender, and sexuality). A child with a sense of pride in their identity is a child that is more equipped to thrive in society. Relationships are highlighted by making connections to the child's First Nation, Inuit, and/or Métis (FNIM) Community, local Elders and Knowledge Carriers, and the FNIM community here in the city of Toronto. The work is grounded in Indigenous values, specifically the Seven Grandfather Teachings, which will provide those we support with a framework for success. The program continues to develop in its life journey and our Cultural Resource Workers are excited to be partnering with our Children Service Workers to begin home visits also. We will continue to collectively review these supports, identifying gaps and expanding into different age groups and placement settings as the program grows.



## **INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE PROGRAM – NEHIYAWAK**

Funded by Heritage Canada, this three (3) year Indigenous language program has been developed to provide Indigenous Language instruction to children, families, and Staff. The program emphasizes interactive, land-based, and child-led learning. Currently, we are in the infancy stage of this multi-year plan, with our focus being on recruitment and on-boarding of Language Speakers. We have really enjoyed the experience of collaborating with the EarlyON, Head Start, Cultural Camps, and On-the-Lands program teams as we strive to prioritize language reclamation and the connections that language has to Ceremony and the land. The following is a breakdown of our planning for this important work:

### **PHASE ONE (January 2022 until June 30, 2022)**

1. Program Development.
2. Hiring / On-boarding.
3. Awareness Event / Program Launch.
4. Outreach and Relationship Building.

### **PHASE TWO (July 2022 until January, 2024)**

1. Program Activation at the Head Start/EarlyON level – the Indigenous Language Program (ILP) will bring Indigenous Language instruction to children, families, and staff in the following ways:
  - a. Direct Cree language instruction at Head Start and EarlyON sites one (1) day every two (2) weeks.
  - b. Self-directed / play-based learning via the purchase and creation of books and other language resources that reflect the Indigenous languages of this territory and the nations represented in the community.
  - c. Workshops and immersive experiences.
  - d. On-going outcome evaluation for continuous improvement.
2. Program Activation at the Community level – in-person Indigenous language instruction at Culture Nights at our 30 College, Malvern, and Mount Dennis Aboriginal Child and Family Centers:
  - a. Language instruction at Cultural Camps.
  - b. Virtual Language instruction via podcasts and social media channels.
  - c. Workshops and immersive experiences.
  - d. On-going outcome evaluation for continuous improvement.
3. Program Activation for Agency Staff:
  - a. Staff with strong beginner/intermediate language skills to work directly with the Indigenous Language Teacher/Mentor to enhance their language skills with the goal of building fluency. This opportunity to receive enhanced language skills training will support the Agency in continuing to provide language instruction to our children, families, and community after the funding for this program ends.

### **PHASE THREE (Last six months of current funding agreement)**

- Assessment and Evaluation.
- Re-apply for continued funding.







## NORA AND LOUISE'S STORY

Louise, a 14-month-old baby from Nunavut, was flown into Sick Kids Hospital to have complex brain surgery in an effort to control seizures and manage paralysis that they had been experiencing.

Sick Kids Hospital reached out to our Agency to provide support and address some initial concerns. Our Child & Family Wellbeing team referred the case to the Tikinagan team who immediately visited the mother (Nora) and Louise at the hospital. Saya Holden (Case Manager, Pre/Post Natal), sat with the family and listened to Nora's needs. Nora shared that she felt isolated from her family and was afraid for her baby's

health. She also shared that Louise came from a long line of drummers. Saya reached out to the Culture and Community Events team, who quickly arranged to visit the family at the hospital to sing and Smudge with Nora and Louise.

Initially, the hospital had concerns about the visit. Louise had undergone a ten (10) hour brain surgery and her recovery was not going as well as had been hoped for. She was sleeping more than expected and had not regained full consciousness. There was a possibility that she would need another, emergency, surgery. Saya advocated for the family, teaching the hospital staff

about why the drumming and Smudging was important to the family, and the hospital allowed the visit to proceed.

Saya brought Rollin Baldhead (Indigenous Language Teacher) and Sharon Black (Cultural Resources Worker) into Louise's room and Rollin began drumming. As Rollin was singing, Louise began to wake up and open her eyes. Louise started moving her body and raised her arm up and waved to Rollin. This brought Nora to tears, she hadn't seen Louise like this since before the surgery. By the time Rollin finished, Louise was moving more than she ever had before; she was even moving the leg that was previously paralyzed! Sharon



assisted the family with smudging and provided medicines. Nora was so moved and could not thank Sharon and Rollin enough. The next day when Saya arrived for her daily visit, Louise was passing every exam with flying colors and was surprising the medical staff with how well she was doing. Nora shared: “Rollin brought my baby back to life” and said although the Inuit culture is different, there was something that sounded so familiar to her while Rollin was drumming.

The following week, our team returned for a follow-up visit. Sharon gifted Louise a drum, and Nora and the team Smudged together. Rollin started to drum and sing in Cree to Louise and Sharon placed the hand drum on her lap. Louise picked up the drumstick and started to hit the drum when Rollin started to sing to her, she really liked her drum and played along

with Rollin; at least when she wasn’t putting the drum stick in her mouth.

After two (2) weeks in Toronto, during which time Saya visited every day, the family was transferred to the Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) in Ottawa where Louise would receive further treatment. On the last visit, Nora looked at Saya, Rollin, and Sharon and said, “Do you guys know what you did for my family, I can’t thank you enough”. This experience reflects on how much Nora and Louise needed access to Cultural supports to heal. Through great collaboration across internal teams, and advocacy at the hospital, Saya, Rollin and Sharon were able to be more than workers to Nora, they were able to be family to her and Louise in a time that they really needed it. The Social Worker at Sick Kids shared that the unit staff saw this family transform

with the work Native Child and Family Services of Toronto was able to provide. She explained that Louise is doing far better than the doctors could imagine. The Social Worker thanked the team for helping her learn more about Indigenous Culture and shared that the staff at Sick Kids were unaware that there were teams at our Agency beyond Child and Family Wellbeing. They want to continue this relationship with us because they also provide care to many Indigenous families. Sick Kids now understands the many services and supports that we offer and will be contacting the Agency more often.

Most importantly, Louise continues to do well on her healing journey. Her spirit is strong, and we were grateful for opportunity to nurture and support her during this time.



# QUALITY ASSURANCE AND DECOLONIZATION

## **MARK ATANASOFF, DIRECTOR**

Established in 1986, by Elders, Knowledge Carriers, grassroots leaders, and community members, NCFST has been supporting Indigenous children and families in Toronto for close to four decades. In 2004 NCFST was directed by the Indigenous community to accept a child welfare mandate to decolonize Indigenous child welfare in the City of Toronto. With this mandate came an inherited colonial system built on a worldview fundamentally different from that of the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island.

NCFST acknowledges that the provincial child welfare mandate the agency accepted in 2004, is a colonial mandate informed by colonial values reflected in its standards, assessment and eligibility tools, legal framework, and funding priorities. However, NCFST has used its provincial mandate to take control of child welfare services for Indigenous families from mainstream agencies. In doing so, NCFST has significantly mitigated the harms of mainstream child welfare by bringing Indigenous values and culture into our decision making, providing holistic culture-based prevention services, and bringing hundreds of children and youth back into the embrace of the Indigenous community. However, accepting the mandate was just the beginning of a long journey. Colonial systems are not designed to be easily changed. Our collective journey has not been easy, and it is not complete.

Like many other Indigenous organizations, we have a great deal of work to do in our collective journey to devolve services to Indigenous institutions and communities. The Quality Assurance and Decolonization (QAD) team is here to support this work by going beyond the traditional scope of quality assurance, building new internal capacity to plan, understand, monitor, and evaluate our decolonization efforts. Additionally, we champion the remaking of these inherited structures and processes in ways that acknowledge, respect, and include Indigenous worldview, knowledge systems, values, and approaches. Finally, the journey of decolonizing and reimagining requires a commitment to reconciliation, reciprocity, and healing. We are pleased to report that our Quality Assurance team has made significant progress in (1) community engagement (2) community-based research (3) continuous improvement in programs and services using evidence-based practices and (4) made commitments to the child welfare reform process. Please read on for more details.









## **DECOLONIZATION COMMITMENTS**

On September 30th, 2021, Canada's first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Native Child and Family Services of Toronto (NCFST) launched an initiative to continue the work of decolonizing Indigenous child welfare services in the city of Toronto. This initiative was launched in the context of the ongoing broader national movement for Indigenous child welfare reform. The Calls to Action of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society's fifteen-year fight with the federal government over the findings of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal respecting discrimination against Indigenous children in the funding and provision of child welfare and prevention services on reserve have driven the movement for reform over the past decade.

Native Child and Family Services of Toronto has committed to prepare and deliver, beginning on September 30th, 2022, an annual report on the progress of our efforts to reform child welfare services. To meet these commitments, we have invited representatives of Indigenous people in Toronto who have worked with us either as service partners or as recipients of our services to join a Community Advisory Circle to help us examine our practices and identify priorities for child welfare reform. We have turned to the advice and guidance of those with wisdom and lived experience to help us succeed in the reform of Indigenous child welfare services in the city of Toronto. The community advisory circle has been meeting monthly since its establishment this year and has been pivotal in providing experiential approaches to reform. In addition, we have also launched a bi-monthly Decolonizing Child Welfare Learning Series for community and partners devoted to explaining and examining the Child and Family Wellbeing services that the agency provides to Toronto's Indigenous community

The Learning Series began with an overview of the current state of Indigenous child welfare services in Toronto, including a review of the challenges and opportunities for redesign in the context of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, the enactment of Bill C-92 and the Child Welfare Redesign initiatives in the province of Ontario. Development of the Learning Series modules has required Native Child and Family Services of Toronto to undergo a critical examination of our child and family wellbeing services, including standards, service eligibility criteria, assessment tools and current practices. The purpose of this critical examination is to identify priorities for reform to reduce the number of Indigenous children in care and ensure that all Indigenous children in care are placed with extended family or, at minimum, in their communities with strong connections to their families. From our initial Webinar held on Sept 30th and the subsequent episodes of our bi-monthly Decolonizing Child Welfare Learning Series there have been a total of 1,900 participants. We hope to see on September 30th, 2022, for our community report back gathering and welcome your feedback and questions to our upcoming September 30th progress report.

## **NATIONAL FORUM ON ABORIGINAL CHILD AND FAMILY WELLBEING REFORM**

In September of 2019, Native Child and Family Services of Toronto (NCFST) hosted a national forum on urban Aboriginal child and family services in response to Bill C-92 (An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis Children, Youth and Families). This forum led to a position paper and multiple conversations across Canada about the role of mandated urban Aboriginal child and family service agencies in supporting First Nations, Inuit and Métis jurisdiction and service reform. The announcement this year of the federal government's \$40-billion-dollar agreement in-principal for compensation and long-term reform of on-reserve First Nations child and family services prompted this group to reconvene in 2022 and to invite others to join the discussion.

On February 8th, 2022, representatives from thirty-eight (38) First Nations, Inuit, and Métis (FNIM) child and family services agencies, advocacy organizations, community leaders, Knowledge Carriers, youth, and representatives from Ontario's Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services gathered virtually to discuss the potential impacts of the recent Agreements-in-Principle (AIP) authored by Assembly of First Nations, First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, the Chiefs of Ontario, the Nishnawbe Aski Nation, and counsel for the Moushoom and Trout class actions, and the Canadian Government.

### **The primary purpose of the forum was to**

1. Promote united support for on-reserve compensation and reform (pursuant to settlement of CHRT litigation);
2. Discuss substantive equality within the context of provincial/territorial funding for urban/off-reserve mandated Aboriginal child and family services agencies;
3. Understand how funding for Bill C-92 coordination agreements can support the off-reserve implementation of Indigenous laws;
4. Share resources for the analysis of urban Aboriginal child, family and community needs (demographics and needs assessment); and
5. To discuss and share ideas related to the reform and implementation of services and funding to enable a holistic cross-jurisdictional service framework to support the safety, wellbeing and prosperity of Aboriginal children, families, and communities across Canada.

The session was informative with the group wanting to reconvene to continue the journey of reform together. A full report of the forum findings can be found on our website with many of the ideas informing our upcoming September 30th, 2022, community report back.

### **EVIDENCED-BASED TRANSFORMATION:**

With funding accessible through Indigenous Services Canada, QAD took on various leadership activities during the year. In August 2021, QAD accepted a leadership role in Child Welfare Transformation involving a multi-year community and staff consultation and data collection process which will facilitate the development of a quality improvement plan for the practice of child and family well-being services at NCFST. The first phase of transformation, the "where are we now?" phase,

launched in the fall of 2021 with four levers of data collection and consultation: 1) development of a community advisory; 2) development of a staff advisory; 3) staff feedback collection through a survey tool; and 4) staff feedback collection through focus group meetings. To support this work, as well as our many other projects, our team has expanded to seven permanent members: four senior analysts, one child welfare consultant, a manager, and a director. Each year of work will be marked with a report to community documenting efforts and the status of deliverables.



## **SUPPORTING STUDENTS:**

QAD ventured into student supervision in the 2021 fiscal year. For the first time, we partnered with the Mitacs Accelerate Program, the support through which allowed us to hire an Indigenous graduate student from Trent University for 16 weeks. With our relationship connections in the Indigenous university sector, we were able to find someone whose subject matter expertise and skills matched what we needed. The intern researched land-based pedagogies and conducted community consultations to determine the need for community gardens. Their concept paper and subsequent research has been helpful in the development of the On the Lands Manualization that will be shared with our partners.

The second student we supervised came to us through Laurentian University's School of Indigenous Relations (BSW program). In this case, the student approached us for their practicum and had specific learning goals. The student's assignment was to design a dashboard template for Holistic Services. The student's comprehensive research listed, categorized and identified key performance indicators of all Holistic services being offered to community. This Holistic Dashboard will eventually form the basis of an information system that will provide an at-a-glance view of the services, staffing, and funding of the Holistic Department.

# PROTECTION OF PRIVACY AND PERSONAL INFORMATION

## **PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT**

QAD has taken on the complex task of developing NCFST's first comprehensive privacy program involving policy development, enhanced training modules for specialized and auxiliary staff (i.e., foster parents, finance staff). The goal is for NCFST to develop and implement interconnected policy that governs information use prioritizing both community standards and governmental regulations. Currently, we are reviewing what the Crown requires of us under the Children, Youth, and Families Services Act (CYFSA) Part X and the Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA). At the same time contrasting these expectations with Indigenous principles of information management such as those expressed under OCAP®. A new suite of privacy policies and procedures will be developed and implemented. These new policies and procedures will fully reflect Indigenous teachings, while also keeping and harmonizing any complementary Crown regulations.

# EVALUATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

## **WAAKEBINESS-BRYCE INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH ON INDIGENOUS HEALTH:**

The QAD team conducted 17 group interviews with 28 NCFST supervisors and management to gather stories to assess the impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on NCFST programming and services. Tracing the pandemic through the 9-month timeline, the research team asked, how did staff at NCFST experience the pivot from providing in-person to virtual services? How did you innovate? What were the ways in which working from home affected the work/life balance of staff? What lessons learned from the first wave have helped during the 2nd wave? With the aid of new qualitative data analysis software, QAD was able to gain valuable insights on successes, gaps, and challenges that will inform future disruptions to working conditions and take advantage of new pathways to deliver services to community. This pandemic response project was funded by a subgrant from the Network Environments for Indigenous Health Research (NEIHR) in partnership with the Waakebiness-Bryce Institute for Research on Indigenous Health, led by Dr Suzanne Stewart.

## SENIORS' PROGRAM

During the year we developed an evaluation framework to measure the effectiveness of the 55+ program, the "Seniors Program", as it is affectionately called, provides holistic supports and programming for older adults at the Malvern Hub and beyond. The logic model for this evaluation explores inputs, outputs, and impacts. The goal of the Seniors Program is to increase social connection, secure intergenerational relationships, and cultural transmission, and improve the health and wellbeing of Indigenous seniors. Expanding this aim is the goal of strengthening Indigenous families throughout each generation so that children can be raised in the communities of their kin. The Seniors' Program will enhance capacity to Indigenous older adults and their caregivers to support customary care.

Participants filled out an online survey, and a discussion circle provided program feedback. Questions were plotted on the medicine wheel and explored themes about connection to spirit and culture, healthy relationships, access to local resources and physical wellbeing through food and exercise, and improved mental and emotional health through decreased social isolation.

Upon starting the Seniors Program, the mental health score was 37/50. Improvements to mental health after six months in the program improved mental health ratings 48/50. The evaluation has found that programming effectively incorporates the Four Directions on the Medicine Wheel: Spiritual, Emotional, Physical, and Mental. Each aspect of the programming nurtures the four quadrants in a balanced way for all participants. One survey respondent said they are now *"Feeling more stimulated, focused, upbeat, less isolated, more culturally engaged!"*

# RESEARCH

## SUPPORTING EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS:

The newly formed Research Subcommittee consisting of representatives from QAD, Service, and a member of the Board of Directors meet monthly to review new and existing research requests. The mission statement of the subcommittee is to implement a Decolonizing and Indigenizing Research Ethics Policy and Protocol for all internal and external research projects involving staff at NCFST and/or the community we serve. The Research Sub-committee is continuously assessing its approach to decolonizing the process to evaluate research applications that is grounded in Indigenous research methodologies, the Principles of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP®) and Indigenous principles and Teachings. During the year the Agency's Senior Leadership approved the terms of reference for this group which supports the continued decolonization of research methodologies and the inclusion of community in all stages of the research process. During the year the research subcommittee reviewed 11 projects and approved 4 new partnerships bringing our active research caseload to 7.

## ON THE LANDS: ADDRESSING INEQUALITIES

A new partnership with Termerty Faculty of Medicine, Factor Intenwash School for Social Work, Sick Kids Hospital, and the local community. This new research initiative will be focusing on land-based practices for promoting wellness in Indigenous children and youth. This project is being co-designed in consultation with the Malvern community. We are in the early design stages but look forward to this partnership to explore the intersection of research and traditional approaches to service delivery.

## INDIGENOUS EYE CARE PILOT (vaccine infrastructure)

Partnership with St Michael's Hospital, University of Toronto, and Sick Kids Hospital to examine the needs of Indigenous children and their families in Toronto, by identifying: the prevalence of vision and eye disorders among Indigenous school-age children; the economic, social, and cultural barriers Indigenous children face to accessing care; ways to provide culturally safe, comprehensive eye examinations and follow-up care. Clinic pilot will be held at various NCFST sites.



“A world where all Indigenous children, youth and their families experience Purpose, Peace, Joy and Love.”

*Andrew Wesley, Cree Elder*

**KENN RICHARD, DIRECTOR**



**INDIGENOUS SPIRIT AWARDS RECIPIENTS**



Now in its third year of operations, the Indigenous Spirit Fund (ISF), the philanthropic arm of Native Child and Family Services of Toronto (NCFST), is broadening its impact and commitment to building sustainable philanthropic relationships with individuals, corporations, and foundations to work in solidarity and reciprocity toward Reconciliation.

With the onboarding of a manager and administrative support in late 2021, the ISF is now fully-staffed and can dedicate itself to expanding its online and in-person engagement, educational initiatives, and fundraising events to support its signature programs including the Honouring the Indigenous Spirit Awards, On the Land Camps, and Cultural programs.

One of ISF's most-anticipated annual events, The Honouring the Indigenous Spirit Awards, a celebration of the spirit and resilience of Indigenous youth, was live-streamed in March. Five awards were handed out to youth whose endeavours have contributed to breaking down personal and systemic barriers to achieving their full potential. The award ceremony offered a traditional program with cultural components and featured guest speakers

including this year's Waskabis Award recipient, Valerie McMurtry, President and CEO of Children's Aid Foundation of Canada.

Through fundraising initiatives held this year such as the Kiwanis Club of Casa Loma 100th Anniversary Service Gala in support of the ISF, The Rotary Club of Toronto 'Miinawaa Eyiizh/And — Both' fundraising event, Chris Li Golf Tournament, the Circle of Friends Rooftop Event, and various peer-to-peer fundraisers, the ISF is able to serve its mandate of supporting cultural programs and services offered by NCFST while also transforming the traditional relationship between Philanthropy and Indigenous communities.

Rooted in the principle of relationship-building, the ISF continues to cultivate partnerships with community organizations, service clubs, and corporate entities in various sectors, exploring opportunities to make a sustainable impact on the lives of Indigenous children, youth, and families in Toronto.

The ISF aspires to serve many more children with many different needs and is building the fund over time and will report on the progress next year.



# THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS

- Aboriginal Labour Force Development Circle Funding (ALFDC)
- Association of Native Child and Family Services Agencies of Ontario (ANCFSAO)
- Aubrey and Marla Dan Foundation
- Canada Council for the Arts (CCA)
- Canadian Heritage
- Canadian Institute for Health Research administered by the Waakebiness-Bryce Institute for Indigenous Health (WBIH)
- Canadian Roots Exchange (CRE) Creation Grant
- Catherine Donnelly Foundation
- Children's Aid Foundation of Canada (CAFC)
- City of Toronto
- Daily Bread Food Bank
- Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)
- Family Services of Peel
- Help For Children (HFC)
- Heritage Canada
- Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)
- Indigo Love of Reading Foundation
- Kinark Child and Family Services
- Makonsag Aboriginal Head Start (AHA) Ontario Aboriginal Head Start Association (OAHSA) - Mastercard Project
- Ministry for Women and Gender Equality
- Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) Child Welfare Allocation
- Ministry of Health (MOH) Strides Toronto
- Ministry of Indigenous Affairs (IAO)
- Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development
- Ministry of the Attorney General (MAG)
- Miziwe Biik
- Miziwe Biik Development Corporation
- MLSE Foundation
- Nike Foundation
- NPower Canada (via Metcalfe Foundation)
- Ontario Trillium Foundation
- Rexall Care Network
- Save The Children - The National Reconciliation Program
- Scotiabank
- Second Harvest
- Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council (TASSC)
- The Toronto Star Fresh Air Fund
- Tippet Foundation
- Toronto Arts Council and Ontario Arts Council
- Toronto Biennial of Art
- Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network (TCLHIN)
- Toronto Foundation
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- United Way Greater Toronto
- Walmart Canada Corp









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