

*IMPROVING THE LIVES OF CHILDREN*



# **Annual Report**

**2015—2016**

## Report of Executive Director and Board Chair

The Program Directors have reported on our well established program areas later on in this report and so we will concentrate on new and developing initiatives here.

We have been working with the Surrey School District, the Ministry of Child and Family Development, Simon Fraser University and the City of Surrey to develop a Centre of Excellence for Childhood Neurodevelopment. We have a design team formed and concept paper developed. Our goal is to create a provincial centre that will develop and increase our understanding of brain development as influenced by early childhood experiences, how it affects a child's behaviour and what we can do to improve the lives of those children with complex needs. We are currently developing a funding model for the program. Lisa Lowe, Program Director is heading this initiative.

With the support of the Ministry of Children and Family Development we continue to develop the Centre for Domestic Peace. We see this program area as preventive by reducing the trauma for children associated with high conflict between parents. Helgi Remmelg and her team are working on proposals to increase funding to the project. Led by our Clinical Director, Stephen Hockey we also continue to develop the Thetis program which matches children who are unable to live at home with caring, skilled caregivers.

We are pleased to have developed the capacity to conduct pediatric and psychological assessments for children with complex needs through our Heartwood Assessment Clinic. We have done assessments for Sunnyhill Hospital for Children as well as assessments for children in our programs such as the Alderwood Family Development Centre, Cedarwood Family Therapy Program and Kennedy House Receiving Home. Our goal for the coming year is to more fully develop this service.

In October 2015, we initiated training for all staff in the Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics through the Child Trauma Academy based in Houston, Texas. Thirteen of our Masters level clinicians will be trained in this model over the course of a year. This will culminate in a site certification to conduct assessments for children and who may have experienced trauma. This area of study and service has become increasingly viewed as leading edge and provides opportunities for developing more effective support and intervention for children with complex needs.

The lease at our Surrey facility expires in September 2017. We have conducted a review of our needs and a market survey of options available in the Surrey area. We have identified the newly evolved Surrey city centre as the place we wish to locate and are in the process of negotiating a possible purchase at the City Centre 1 building across from Surrey Memorial Hospital. This would position us at the epicentre of the health and technology innovation initiative in Surrey known as Innovation Boulevard. The location will help consolidate and extend our work to become a best in class provider of assessment and treatment for children with complex needs and support for their families. Our board member Steven Mah is the project lead for this exciting development and has spent countless hours working on it. Thank you so much Steven.

The Board has established a Communication and Marketing Committee this year. Ably chaired by board member Barbara Constantine we are solidifying our branding approach and preparing for the organization's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2017. Membership on the committee is composed of board, staff and a coach from Vancity. We also initiated a direct mail campaign to let individuals in the community know of our cause and offer an opportunity to participate through a donation. There is much energy and excitement for the work of the committee and we look forward to an exciting year in this area.

There are several additional directions for the future that have had their genesis in the past year.

The Program Directors have initiated program reviews for many of their programs. This is in line with our efforts to continually improve the services that we offer. For instance, efforts have been initiated to develop a common intake for the Alderwood Family Development Centre, the new Heartwood Child Assessment Team and the Key Worker Program. The Program Directors collectively are also working to increase our understanding and become a trauma informed and sensitive organization.

We are blessed with an amazing place to help children at our Vancouver site. This coming year we will be launching an initiative to review our use of this site and to make a long term plan for its development in support of children throughout Vancouver and the Lower Mainland.

Very often the resources of many organizations are required to effectively meet the needs of children with complex needs and their families. To this end, we have often found ourselves in the role of "backbone" organization for various projects and initiatives. This role is to facilitate the bringing together of other organizations and convening the meetings and mechanisms to work collaboratively toward a common purpose. We will continue to respond to this call for convening and coordinating the work of many organizations.

In closing we would like to thank the many organizations, funders, donors, board, staff, interns and volunteers who together are deepening our ability to help children with complex needs on the road to success in adulthood. In particular, we extend a deep and heartfelt thank you to the Ministry of Children and Family Development for their funding support and for fostering an excellent working relationship for the benefit of vulnerable children. All can share in the successes of this year.



Elizabeth Demner  
Chair of Board of Directors



Dennis Dandeneau  
Executive Director

## Program Highlights and Achievements

### Alderwood Family Development Centre

Alderwood Family development Centre, in collaboration with the Vancouver School Board and Vancouver Coastal Health continues to provide dynamic services to children and families. New learning best describes activities at Alderwood this year. A focus on self-regulation has resulted in the addition of a dedicated sensory room to assist in the development of children's self regulation skills. Several staff joined into the Canadian Self Regulation Roundtable to enhance our understanding of and response to our children's needs.

We also committed to deepening our understanding of our children's attachment needs and understanding the impact of trauma on children's development. We have been in a consultation process with Sonya Vellet, a Circle of Security trainer. She has helped us deepen our attachment focus in our educational environment as well as with our family work.

Challenges faced this year include one to one staffing demands. In addition, recruitment for front line work remains a challenge.

Finally, our team has also begun the Child Trauma Academy training. This will be a two year process and will result in several staff being certified in the Neuro Sequential Model of Therapeutics (NMT).



### Key Worker Parent to Parent Support Program

The Key Worker program continues to provide innovative services to the community. Our work with Sunny Hill Hospital during the CDBC Assessment phase has increased this year. Our Key Workers have been more actively involved supporting families both before, during and after the assessment process. This collaborative approach with Sunny Hill has resulted in an increase in families served. Having our Key Workers involved in the assessment phases has also enhanced the working relationship and resulted in a greater understanding and response to the needs of the child and families.

Challenges remain with staff retention. Over the past year we have had 100% staff turn over. Over the past 10 years, our staff retention average is 26 months.

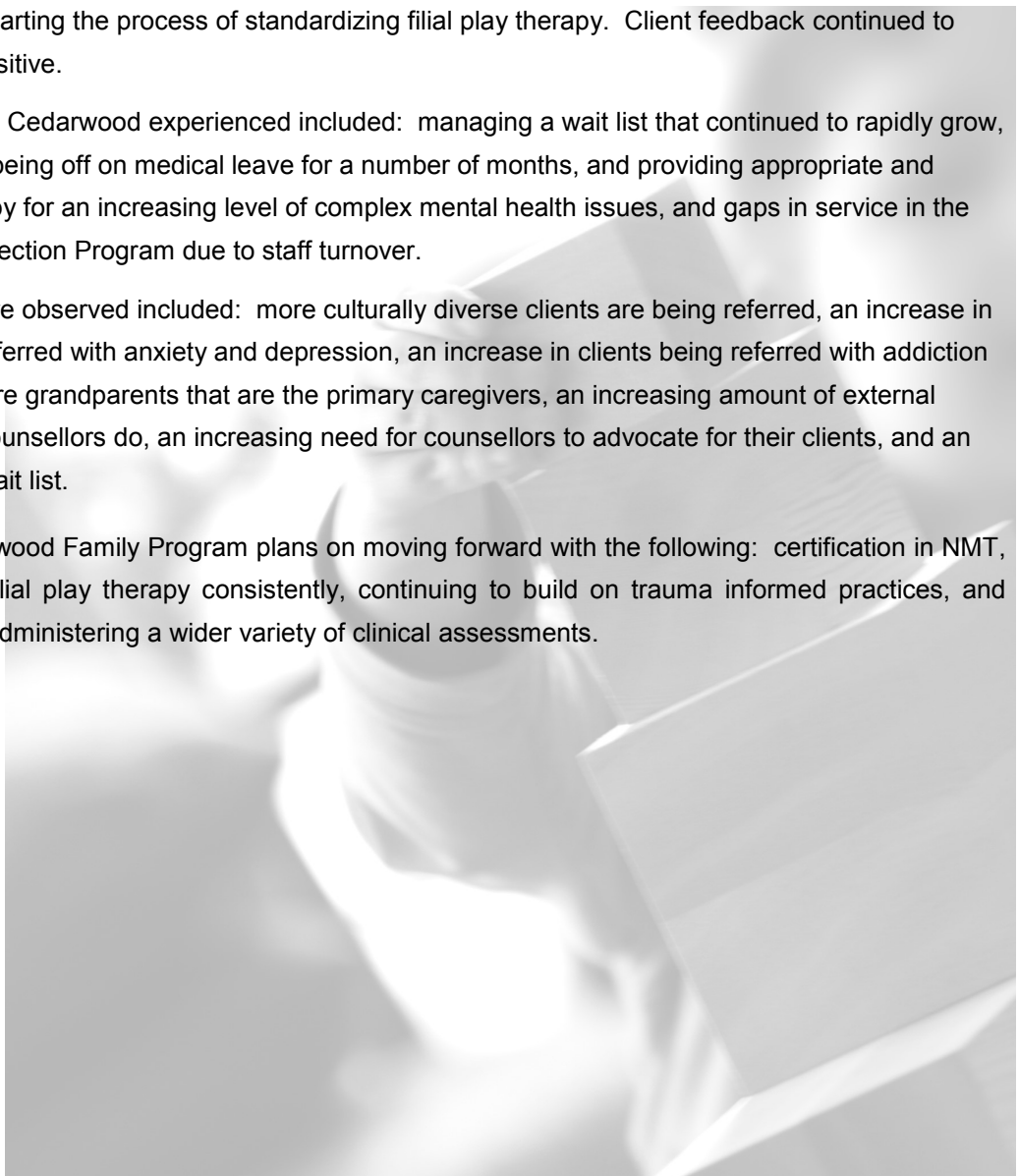
### Cedarwood Family Program

The Cedarwood Family Program has continued providing a range of excellent counselling services to children and families in the communities of Surrey, Delta, Langley, and White Rock. 2015 was a successful year for the Cedarwood programs, highlighted by: adding new parenting groups, welcoming three new Master's level practicum students, building on evidence based practices, attending high level trainings (including beginning certification in the Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics), building on trauma informed practice, having fathers become more engaged in services, and starting the process of standardizing filial play therapy. Client feedback continued to also be very positive.

Challenges that Cedarwood experienced included: managing a wait list that continued to rapidly grow, the supervisor being off on medical leave for a number of months, and providing appropriate and sufficient therapy for an increasing level of complex mental health issues, and gaps in service in the Four Star Connection Program due to staff turnover.

Trends that were observed included: more culturally diverse clients are being referred, an increase in clients being referred with anxiety and depression, an increase in clients being referred with addiction challenges, more grandparents that are the primary caregivers, an increasing amount of external referring that counsellors do, an increasing need for counsellors to advocate for their clients, and an ever growing wait list.

In 2016, Cedarwood Family Program plans on moving forward with the following: certification in NMT, implementing filial play therapy consistently, continuing to build on trauma informed practices, and adding to and administering a wider variety of clinical assessments.



### Communities Caring for Children

Communities Caring for Children offers the Right from the Start(RFTS), COPEing with Toddler Behaviour (CWTB) and Triple P Positive Parenting Program (TripleP) to Surrey Families with children 0-6years of age. All programs are open to all community members and are self referral with no cost to the participants. Childminding and bus tickets are offered to those that need it with refreshments served at every group.

These groups are offered three times a year; Spring, Fall and Winter, at various locations in Surrey. We are able to offer these programs in various venues because of the partnerships we have developed over the years with the Surrey school district and the City of Surrey. Due to the vastly growing community of Clayton Heights and the very limited community space, we have been successful in securing venue space with community business, such as Bright Path Daycare, to offer the parenting programs.

The enhancements that we made to RFTS last year continues to grow in a positive direction. The feedback we have received has confirmed the need for the additional resources and has helped us engage other community professionals to come share their expertise with our participants.

We are having continued success with our partnership with Guilford Rec Center and the 'My Zone' program in providing Parent Education for families with children in the 'middle years', 6 – 12 year olds. Through the 'My Zone' after school programs we invite the parents to participate in a monthly session where the families have dinner together and then discuss topics of interest that pertain to parenting issues. With the success of the Guildford program we have expanded to the Newton Rec Center My Zone program.

Another initiative currently being worked on in partnership with Surrey/White Rock Children First and the Langley Early Childhood Development Committees is the development of the "First Stop" website catering to first time parents.

Some of the challenges we are facing and working on:

- Updating our resources. Changing technologies in the schools where we host many of our programs has made it difficult for us to use our current resources, such as DVD's and videos.
- Coordination between TCF and the Surrey School District to place the parenting programs in the communities where it is most needed has become a little more difficult due to the position of a Community/School Partnership liaison being eliminated.
- The CCC program is overseen by the Surrey Early Childhood Mental Health Collaborative. One of our priorities this year is to bring new organizations and new members to the table.

A common theme in our feedback survey's is that not only do parents learn valuable information in regards to evidence based parenting strategies and learn about the importance of attachment they have also appreciated the opportunity to make lasting friendships, connecting with others who struggle with the same challenges of parenting. In one of our fall classes, a group of parents organized themselves to go on a 'Christmas light' tour of the city!

**Community Support Program**

The Community Support Program currently provides one to one community-based support in Abbotsford. This CLBC contract continued to provide excellent support to a young man through its very dedicated and creative Community Support Worker. This supportive and facilitative relationship just completed its second successful year at the end of 2015, and is continuing in 2016.

Challenges experienced included the following: linking community resources that are developmentally appropriate for our client, creating a multi-disciplinary team for our client, and facilitating communication between our client and community partners.

Successes included the following: facilitating the development of our client's social and emotional growth, developing social skills and self-regulation skills, increasing community inclusion, and completing employment training.

**Educational Transition Centre**

The Educational Transition Centre provides support services in collaboration with the Surrey School Board. The focus this year has been on redeveloping the referral process. This refocusing on the referral process has resulted in full utilization of all the available spaces and serving more children in the targeted 6 to 12 age range.

Additionally, we are deepening our infra structure to the program. A pre and post assessment has been added, and as a team, we are deepening our sense of purpose through a development of clear and transparent program values..

### Family Care Support Program

The Foster Care Support Program has seen good results this year with the change in working together as a team. All three components of the program, Family Counsellors, one to one child care counsellors and the therapeutic day program staff along with the foster parent form a team to work towards individual goals. This concerted effort has proven effective for making positive change within the home. Where appropriate we have also included the child as part of the team to give them voice and choice about what they would like to see changed.

Some of the trends we are seeing that have made it challenging for foster placements is the number of children placed in a home, the complex needs of the children and the many commitments they have in their daily lives, whether that be working outside the home while taking care of their children and trying to accommodate appointments and activities and/or attempting to work on learning new strategies and building effective routines and structures to provide safety, security and predictability for the children.

This upcoming year the Foster Care Support Program will pilot the Foster Parent Connect Program, an attachment based parenting program designed for foster parents. While the foster parents attend the 10 week parenting program the children will be attending the Zones of Regulations program as improving self regulation is an overwhelming area of focus for most of our clients. This will also support the foster parent as there is no need to find someone else to care for their children while they attend the parent group thus removing one of the barriers to service. In efforts to make attendance less stressful given their busy schedules we will also provide dinner prior to the groups.

The Therapeutic Day Program offered the Saturday program 22 times throughout the year, 28 days through the summer, 3 days during Christmas Break and 4 days during Spring Break. The program can accommodate up to 16 children with four staff. The days consist of community activities and skill building in the areas of peer relationships and self regulation.

The Residential Support Worker program continued working with the children individually on self regulation and social skills, developing individual strategies with each of the children. These same strategies were then replicated in the family home. The families and the children have reported positive change in all environments, home, school and community.

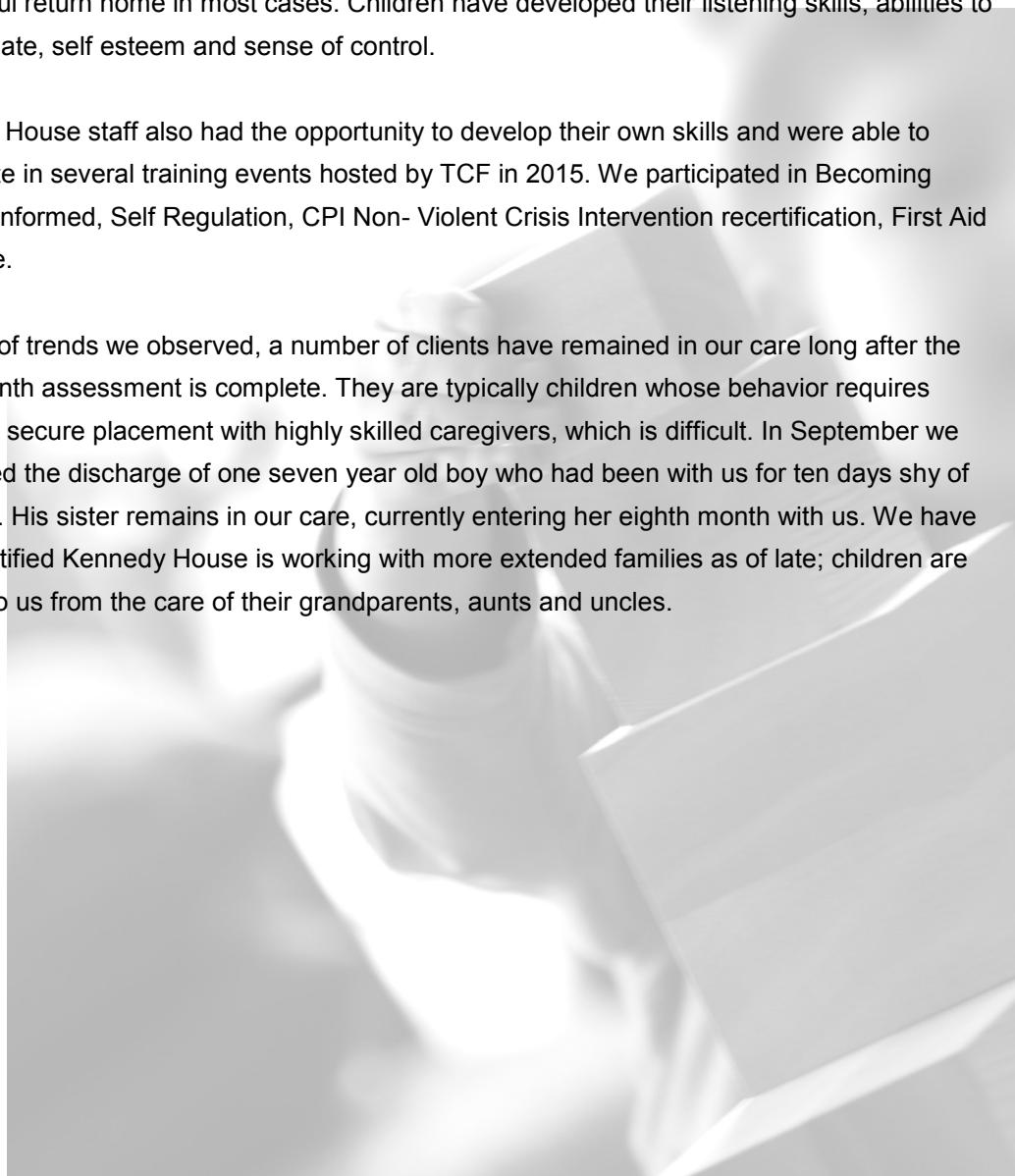


### Kennedy House Assessment Program

Kennedy House is a six bed residential program for children 6 to 12 years. We provide assessment and stabilization services. The staff at Kennedy House have continued to show a high level of commitment to their clients, demonstrated by the gains clients have made and their successful return home in most cases. Children have developed their listening skills, abilities to self regulate, self esteem and sense of control.

Kennedy House staff also had the opportunity to develop their own skills and were able to participate in several training events hosted by TCF in 2015. We participated in Becoming Trauma Informed, Self Regulation, CPI Non- Violent Crisis Intervention recertification, First Aid and more.

In terms of trends we observed, a number of clients have remained in our care long after the three month assessment is complete. They are typically children whose behavior requires MCFD to secure placement with highly skilled caregivers, which is difficult. In September we celebrated the discharge of one seven year old boy who had been with us for ten days shy of one year. His sister remains in our care, currently entering her eighth month with us. We have also identified Kennedy House is working with more extended families as of late; children are coming to us from the care of their grandparents, aunts and uncles.



### Out of Care Support Program

The Family Support Worker for the Out of Care program works with “Kith and Kin” families, whether that be grandparents, aunts & uncles or family friends. These families are adjusting to life raising their grandchildren and/or nieces/nephews. First and foremost is putting into place everything to meet the children’s’ needs. We have found that we support these families through our Make a Difference Fund for the basic needs i.e. food, beds, linens, clothing, and housing as often times family finances are stretched to the limit already.

Along with providing support to navigate the systems whether that be the ministry, schools or medical services and managing behaviour one of the biggest areas of support is helping develop healthy boundaries and relationships with the biological parents.

One of our greatest success stories comes from helping a family reunite. The children were living with their grandmother. Part of our service was reuniting the grandmother with her own daughter and helping them establish a positive relationship with healthy boundaries, clear expectations and strategies on how to co parent. They worked hard at coming together as a team. By putting their past grievances aside they were able to demonstrate a united front and move forward to the point where the children moved back to live with their mother full time. Eight months later the grandmother is enjoying her supportive role, she is so proud of what her daughter has accomplished and best of all is seeing her grandchildren so happy and thriving.

Safety can be an issue as in some our cases a bio parent has threatened to harm the caregiving family. In two cases we have successfully helped the families feel safe for the first time in years. This was accomplished by helping them navigate the system to secure name changes and relocate to a safer, unknown neighborhood. With feeling safe the family is able to focus on daily living; providing structure and routine, learning about how best to support children with special needs and developing a support network.

As with many of our other programs the referrals to the Out of Care program are becoming far more complex. Complex because of the needs of the children and making the major adjustment to becoming full time caregivers once again.

### Pacific Counselling

Pacific Counselling is a private, fee-for-service, clinical counselling program for individuals and families. The Clinical Counsellor group has expertise in a range of concerns including trauma, attachment and adoption issues, and anxiety and depression. Pacific Counselling also helps families experiencing conflicts in the couples or parenting relationships. Features of the program include: flexible hours and no wait list. Fees are on a sliding scale depending upon capacity to pay.

## Respite Program

The Children's Foundation Respite Program provides weekend respite services to families who are caring for children and youth with Autism and other significant developmental challenges. A second level of respite is also offered using Child Care Workers to provide one to one. This service can be in combination of the weekend respite or stand alone for those children and families who need weekly support and will receive 4 – 8 hours per week, taking the child into the community to gain some life skills and receive some recreational time, using community amenities.

The clients who are referred to the Respite program often come with complex needs but the one common element is that they are committed families who are in desperate need of a break from caring for their special needs child. This gives them an opportunity to recoup their energy, spend time with friends and family and for many they use this time to give the needed attention to the other children they have.

We currently have 17 families and 19 children who are receiving services through our Respite program. These services are a combination of 48 hour weekend once per month, (at this time there is two children who are receiving 2 weekends (96 hours) per month), and some who receive only the services of a Child Care Worker, usually 4 to 8 hours per week. With those children who require extra support sometimes it is a combination of both a child care worker and the weekend respite.

We have many successes throughout the year. These successes are often the result of the committed Respite Caregivers (RCG) that we contract and their willingness to work through challenging behaviour and be open to trying new methods and/or getting support. When placing new clients into Respite Caregiver's home, the transition can be very difficult both on the family and the child being placed.

With one of our families; despite anxiety and hesitation of the family, working slowly, the willingness of the RCG to schedule many shorter visits, and letting the family transition at their own speed, resulted in the RCG and family building trust and a strong relationship. This ensured the successful transition into full 48 hour weekend respite for the family. Once the process was complete and the trust was built, the family took the time to let us know that this service has helped them cope and strengthened their own family's relationships.

We have experienced some challenges; our referrals are becoming more complex and children's behaviors far more demanding. We have received several referrals with compounded complex needs. Often these referrals are older children, mostly male, who are pubescent, large and very aggressive who have very limited capacity and are non verbal. Recently we have agreement with MCFD to work within our program budget to use extra resources to support the potential respite caregiver and be creative with the hours so not to over burden the respite caregiver and still give some relief to the family.

Overall the Respite program is operating at full capacity, with very committed caregivers, skilled Child Care Workers and appreciative families.

### Surrey Family Preservation Program

The Family Preservation Program continues to receive positive feedback from the clients about the services that the staff offer. There has been an increase in the number of referrals with clients who are struggling with significant mental health issues adding to the complexity of the work with the families. The Program has been able to involve interns in the services offered to the families either by co-facilitating sessions or supporting the children with Expressive or play therapy sessions. There is also an opportunity for Family Preservation clients to access parenting groups offered within the Agency. We have worked collaboratively with other programs to access child care workers where additional support may have been needed and have transferred clients to the Out of Care and Cedarwood Family Programs for on-going support (where appropriate).

The collaboration between Options, Family Services of Greater Vancouver and TCF continues by providing facilitators, child care, and room space for the groups for couples in high conflict relationships. Two groups serving fourteen couples have been offered in this current fiscal year and the new group started in March 2016. We are developing a curriculum for children's group which will mirror the adult curriculum so that both parents and children are gaining understanding of how domestic violence affects them. The Centre for Domestic Peace initiative is to provide services to clients who are experiencing domestic violence or who want to learn how to disagree in a more healthy way. The Centre will also provide services to clients who wish to separate in a Peaceful separation clinic.

### Thetis Program

Thetis is a program that started this fiscal year. It is a fee-for-service, specialized foster home service, working across the lower mainland, using a family care model. Caregivers succeed because they are carefully selected, trained and can quickly access intensive agency supports. A clinical counsellor is available 24/7 and is in almost daily contact.

Thetis aims to provide permanency and normalization. The Thetis program is designed to provide a family care home for as long as the referred child needs it. Thetis specializes in caring for children and youth with a range of complex developmental and behavioural conditions. Each home is limited to one child and at least one of the foster parents must be home full time.

The program features: close collaboration with MCFD, Mental Health, Schools and other involved professionals; individualized Treatment & budget plans; skilled Caregivers Matched to Child Caregiver Relief and Support.; on-call support and consultation 24/7; emphasis on social educational and vocational success with self regulation; emphasis on providing a stable nurturing environment; Child Asset development; youth counselling support; transition planning – concurrent planning will be supported at MCFD's request.

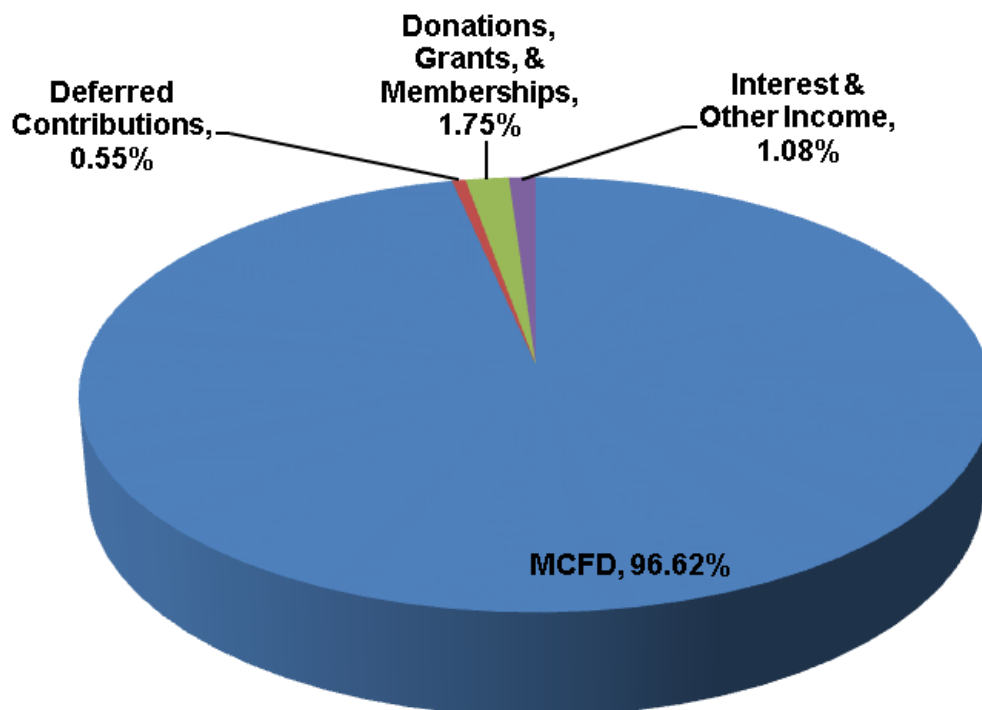
In our experience, children grow, develop and have the best chance of success when they live in a stable long term home. When the original family can't provide, we can provide long-term caregivers.

## Program Statistics

	Case Referrals	Case Openings	Cases Served	Clients Served	Case Closings	Withdrawals
Alderwood Day Treatment	27	14	46	111	22	14
Cedarwood Expressive Therapy	36	35	63	87	35	19
Cedarwood Family Program	123	69	112	250	62	53
CEDARWOOD GROUP Case Service	43	43	54	59	36	0
Cedarwood Langley Family Therapy Program	6	6	20	82	10	0
Communities Caring For Children	N/A	N/A	N/A	251	N/A	N/A
Community Support Program	0	0	1	1	0	0
Couples in High Conflict Relationships GROUP	14	14	24	57	24	0
DV Intake, Assessment & Research	39	39	41	84	32	0
Educational Transition Centre	18	18	29	41	19	0
FCSP - Fraser South	25	24	43	75	20	0
FCSP - Vancouver Coastal	10	10	20	35	12	0
FCSP GROUP Case Service	22	22	25	34	3	0
Kennedy House	N/A	15	35	35	14	0
Key Worker Program	48	40	40	81	24	7
OCSP GROUP Case Service	0	0	1	1	0	0
Out of Care Support	9	9	20	40	14	0
Out of Care Support/After Care	25	25	25	25	20	0
PACIFIC Counselling	1	1	2	6	0	0
Respite Program	7	7	26	26	6	0
RSW Program- Fraser South	21	21	35	59	12	0
RSW Program Vancouver Coastal	4	4	12	21	6	0
SFPP Expressive Therapy	7	7	7	9	4	0
Surrey Family Preservation Program	117	108	144	318	109	68
Thetis Support Program	7	3	4	9	3	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>609</b>	<b>534</b>	<b>829</b>	<b>1546</b>	<b>487</b>	<b>162</b>

## Revenue Sources for the Year Ended March 31, 2016

	<u>March 31, 2016</u>	
MCFD	5,353,630.00	96.62%
Deferred Contributions	30,334.00	0.55%
Donations, Grants & Memberships	97,039.00	1.75%
Interest & Other Income	59,732.00	1.08%
	<u>5,540,735.00</u>	<u>100.00%</u>

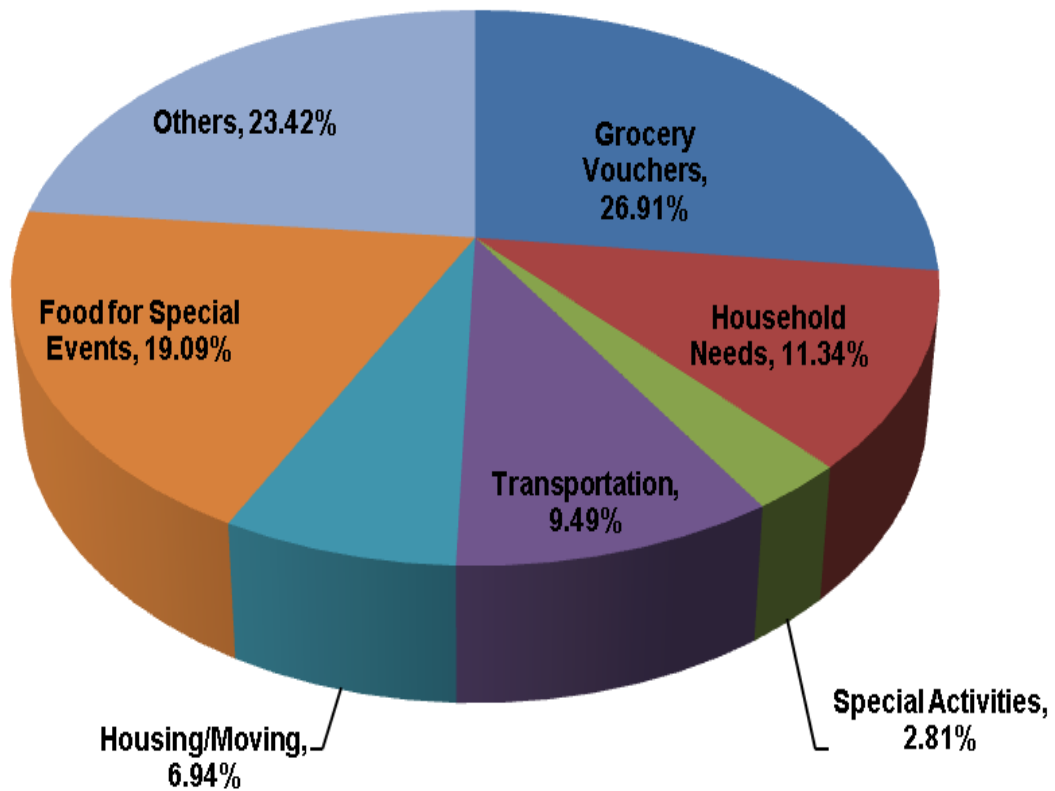


## Make A Difference Fund Spending

April 2015 to March 2016

Thank you to those donors who supported our **Make A Difference Fund**, a resource that enables us to assist financially disadvantaged client families with urgent needs such as food, housing and childcare.

The following chart shows the distribution of Make A Difference Funds during the past year:



## Board of Directors

Elizabeth Demner, **President**

Steven Mah, **Vice President**

Donovan Plomp, **Secretary**

Simon Chen, **Treasurer**

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Barbara Constantine

Emily Larsen

Danny Lee

Costel Serbea

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Marsha D'Angelo

Vashti Singh



## THANK YOU

*to all of our donors whose financial support helped make a difference in the lives of children and their families.*



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