



ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19



WE ALL HAVE A STORY TO TELL.

As I sail through the ocean of life I have faced many difficult times At times the ocean is calm and serene Then out of nowhere a torrent of storms appear The waves of despair try to overtake me And swamp me with pain As I try to keep afloat I get pulled down by the waves of pain and fear I have struggled with all my might To not drown in the waves of despair Spent my whole life trying To get to a safe port in this torrent of life Many times I thought I would drown At times I have capsized I managed to get upright again But the waves and storm Always seemed to find me Then one day A light guided my way out of the darkness To a place of light As I sailed towards the light I discovered the ports In this storm of life Filled with wonderful people That helped me through The pain and lost feelings I am grateful to my port in this storm Elpida East my safe port In the ocean of life

Peter, Catholic Social Services' Elpida program client



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Our Leadership1	
Our Calling to Serve3	
Our Mission in Action5	
Our People11	
Our Donor Impact13	
Our Donors18	
Our Finances 23	

"The positive impact that Catholic Social Services has on the lives of so many vulnerable Albertans is an inspiration to everyone in our great province." Rev. Richard W. Smith, Archbishop of the Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton

Here to Serve

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON



Nearly 60 years ago, Father Bill Irwin started Catholic Social Services with a vision of helping those most in need. The agency reached out and assisted some of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable members of the community, often daring to go where others feared to tread.

His legacy lives on today in a strong, vibrant, and responsive agency. We still tread unchartered waters, we still respond to unmet needs when we are called upon, and still endeavour to pioneer in the delivery of social services. From three staff in 1961, to more than 1,800 staff in 2018, Father Bill's ministry has become our mission.

As Board Chair, I can confidently say that it is an exciting time for Catholic Social Services and Sign of Hope. After extensive review and consultation with internal and external stakeholders, we are now implementing our 2019-2024 Strategic Plan, *Here* *to Serve*, which details how we will continue to serve the most vulnerable members of our community now, and into the future.

Drawing on our history, values, expertise, and capacity, we have identified three goals which will guide our work over the next five years:

- Lift people and families in lasting ways
- Strengthen community relationships
- · Sustain our efforts to serve well

In short: We will lift. We will strengthen. We will sustain.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to thank you for your support in making this work possible, and look forward to continuing to lift and serve alongside you.

Sincerely,

Carole Anctil-Michalyshyn Chairperson, Catholic Social Services

Catholic Social Services Board of Directors

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Lifting Lives MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



At Catholic Social Services we are honoured to have the opportunity to lift the lives of more than 20,000 people each year in 12 communities across Central Alberta. We provide services to people of all ages, all backgrounds, all cultures, all faiths, or no faith at all.

Despite the vastness of the services we provide, our 1,800 dedicated employees and 450 amazing volunteers are quite singleminded in their focus. In short, we want to get the world to curve toward compassion, and lean in to love. At the core of our mission, this is what we are really called to do.

Catholic Social Services believes in this mission, because you and I, and all the people we serve – the addicted, the abused, the newcomer, the neglected, the destitute, and the dying – we all belong to one another. As Mother Teresa said, "There is no us and them, there is only us." Because our agency is founded on this belief, we are committed to recognizing and meeting the needs of those living on the margins, those who are vulnerable, and those who are battling burdens too big to bear alone.

We are honoured to be called to serve those most in need, but we can't – and we don't – do this work alone. We are immensely grateful for our government funders, community leaders, stakeholders, volunteers, and donors to help change the status quo, and remind people that we are, indeed, one human family.

Throughout this report you will read stories of how Catholic Social Services is lifting lives and making the world a kinder and more compassionate place. You will also read stories of how Sign of Hope, our charitable arm, is enabling this work.

My hope is that reading this report will inspire you to lean-in and lift lives alongside us.

Yours Truly,

Dr. Troy Davies CEO, Catholic Social Services

Catholic Social Services Executive Leadership Team

Dr. Troy Davies Chief Executive Officer

Michelle Christie Chief Services Officer

Lenka Stuchlik Chief Financial Officer

Susan Rizzuto Chief Administrative Officer

Karen Murphy Vice President, Central Region Service

Chris Simonson Vice President, Children, Family & Community Service

Alice Colak Vice President, Immigration & Settlement Service

Charlotte McKay Vice President, Community Outreach & Disability Service

Sandy Morrison Vice President / Controller **For nearly 60 years,** Catholic Social Services has been caring for and bringing hope to those most in need. This mission has led us into many different areas of service as we evolve to respond to the most pressing needs of the communities in which we are active.

Today, we work in **three priority areas**: *serving people with disabilities, serving individuals, children and families, and serving newcomers to Canada.*

Each year, our programs empower and lift up more than 20,000 vulnerable Albertans across 12 communities, including Edmonton and Red Deer.



WHAT WE DO...



Serving NEWCOMERS

Catholic Social Services supports more than 14,000 newcomers to Canada each year as they settle in Edmonton, Red Deer and Lloydminster.

We offer a broad range of services that help newcomers to build their new lives by providing settlement supports and orientation to life in Canada. We also provide connections and assistance to navigate health, education, housing and community services, English language assessment, educational counselling, employment readiness and training, specialized services for refugees, counselling, community connections and volunteer opportunities.

> We served newcomers from more than **160 countries.**



Creating a New Life in Canada HELPING PUT THE PIECES TOGETHER

Susan Cambridge and her three young children arrived in Lloydminster, Alberta in 2012 from Trinidad and Tobago. They were planning to reunite with their family, but things didn't go as planned.

"Catholic Social Services helped me pick up the pieces. I had done my research before I arrived so I knew they were the help I needed," says Cambridge. "I used every opportunity they had to network, to find supports and resources to move us forward."

She relied on Catholic Social Services (CSS) immigration services in Lloydminster as she found a home, employment, and settled her children into school. As years passed, CSS helped her navigate the process to apply for permanent residence papers and citizenship.

"I have a lot of inner strength, but CSS was there when I needed an ear, and that was invaluable," she says. "I had no idea this is how life would unfold. But I believe God has a plan."

Cambridge began to volunteer her time with CSS. She has helped people navigate their own immigration journeys, worked with the Learning Resource Council, and serves as an advisory member of the Lloydminster Immigration Partnership Program. This year, she organized and hosted Lloydfest, a multicultural event she created through her organization, The International Festivals Lloydminster Society.

"You must have a focus and look for opportunity," says Cambridge. "I've worked hard, and with support from CSS, I'm back to myself again."

Links for Success CREATES CONNECTIONS

FOR CLIENTS

In 2018, Links for Success program participants contributed a combined 5,000 volunteer hours with 18 employee partners!

Catholic Social Services' Links for Success is a unique program for newcomers, which bridges the gap between their previous professional lives and new opportunities in Canada, by providing a chance to learn about Canadian culture, network, and give back. The program launched in 2018 and has already supported 47 participants on their settlement journey.

Crystal Gu came to Canada with a professional designation as an engineer. She had applied to many positions in Alberta, but had no prospects.

"I was nervous and disappointed. I thought I would have to give up on my profession and go back to school for training in a different field, and I didn't want to do that," says Gu, who is originally from China. "Links for Success calmed me down and built up my confidence. I could see that Catholic Social Services is devoted to helping people hit their targets."

Program participants need to be permanent residents of Canada, have a basic knowledge of English, and attend workshops that help them navigate the challenges of starting a new life, such as financial literacy, intercultural communication, career planning, and stress management.

The other component is a quintessential Canadian experience: volunteer work.

"Helping others is part of our culture, and we want newcomers to learn that. It's practical, too. Volunteering is a foot in the door. It's hard to find employment without a network or references," says Irit Shaposhnikov, Volunteer Coordinator for Links for Success. "We've had people leave the program because they found a job. That's thrilling for us."

Links for Success helps newcomers to share their experiences and reduces isolation, too.

"I'm farther down the road than a lot of participants, so they'd ask how I got through certain situations, which helped them with their own problems," says Gu, who is now working in her field as a project manager. "They found encouragement in my situation. There are obstacles, but they can be overcome." Crystal Gu, Links for Success Program Participant

Welcoming new Canadians

PROVIDING SUPPORTS FOR NEWCOMERS

Our diverse, multilingual and compassionate staff, with the support of generous volunteers, assist newcomers to Canada (refugees, immigrants, temporary foreign workers) to settle, adjust and integrate into Canadian society.

Immigration and Settlement Service offers a broad range of services in Edmonton, Red Deer and Lloydminster that help newcomers build new lives and strengthen families. Our services help newcomers deal with transitional challenges, manage language, cultural and other barriers and navigate the health, education, housing and community services.

"I felt lonely and didn't know what to do. I came to Catholic Social Services and they helped me with information about living in Canada, about jobs and apartments."

"When I have an issue, I go to my Settlement Counsellor. The Counsellor listens to my problem and guides me to a solution."

Serving INDIVIDUALS, CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Catholic Social Services works to lift children, individuals, and families to greater heights of stability and self-reliance. We work with people at all stages of life, to overcome social challenges, build resiliency, and achieve lasting change.

> In 2018, our Elder Abuse and Resource Supports program served **177 people.**

Caring for our elderly

ELDER ABUSE AND RESOURCE SUPPORTS HELPS ADDRESS RISK FACTORS FOR ABUSE



When Maria arrived at the Misericordia Hospital, staff realized her issues were more than physical. They called Catholic Social Services' Elder Abuse and Resource Supports (EARS) for help.

"Maria was dealing with diabetes, asthma, depression, and more. She'd been prescribed 16 medications, but was not taking them," says Gurjot Kaur, EARS team lead, who could see Maria was in a terrible situation.

"She was in severe pain but couldn't see the doctor, as her daughter was taking her money. She was yelling at Maria, too. The relationship had become abusive and Maria was suffering from emotional and psychological abuse."

Elder abuse is a very real and serious problem in Canada, where 766,000 seniors were abused last year. Alberta has the second highest rate of elder abuse in the country. Through its EARS program, Catholic Social Services works with hundreds of seniors each year who are experiencing, or who are at risk of, abuse and neglect.

The EARS team connected Maria with home care so her medicine could be administered consistently, and set up home visits from her primary care doctor. They also created a safety plan, which included securing her bank information, storing emergency numbers in her phone, and informing her of emergency housing and personal directives.

"Maria was relieved to receive support. She has learned strategies to set boundaries to reduce abuse," says Kaur.

The EARS program also works with family members and loved ones to support them in their role as caregivers, alleviating the factors which contribute to abuse.

"Her daughter received help, too," says Kaur. "She was caring for four children and her mother. Caregiver burnout is real and does happen. We can help to relieve some of that burden."

Foster care creates family

ALL CHILDREN DESERVE A LOVING, STABLE HOME

Each year, Catholic Social Services provides foster and kinship care to hundreds of children in need of safe placements across Central Alberta, ensuring vulnerable children and youth have the support and care they need to reach their full potential.

Evan has lived with his foster mother, Beth, in Red Deer since 2012. Beth says that when Evan walked through her door he looked into her eyes, smiled, and stole her heart. From then on, she was committed to loving Evan as her own.

When he arrived at her home as a three-year-old non-verbal boy, Evan did not yet have a formal diagnosis of autism but presented with many of its typical behaviours.

"He would fall to the floor, bang his head and cry hysterically. He would focus for hours on one puzzle, doing it over and over. He would not engage in eye contact or any type of play. He would fall to sleep anywhere at any time, he had no sense of bedtime or daytime routines," says Beth.

Fortunately, Beth works for a school district in Red Deer and understood the importance of setting up Evan with a team of professionals for his long-term success. Speech, occupational and physical therapists, pediatricians, educational assistants, and more have played a crucial role in Evan's progress.

"I had no idea what he had witnessed prior to coming to my home and so I took great care in moving him forward. I provided lots of love, food, routines, predictability, management and supervision," says Beth.

Evan is now a student in grade four. He has a full life with Beth's extended family, neighbours and friends, and even a new pet dog.

"He is a very happy and content young boy who has, and will continue to experience, many challenges and obstacles in his life. I want to continue to be Evan's provider, his connection, his advocate and champion through all that is yet to come," says Beth. "We are two peas in a pod."

If you or someone you know is interested in making a difference in the life of a child as a foster parent, **visit cssalberta.ca/fostercare** to learn more.

Catholic Social Services ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

Catholic Social Services supported **51 children** in foster homes in Edmonton and **102 more across Central Alberta** in 2018.

Serving PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Catholic Social Services supports thousands of individuals with disabilities, and their families, each year through its outreach and residential services. We help people live with dignity, find purpose, achieve independence, and participate fully in their communities.



Kelly, Veronica Villa Resident

Celebrating a Job Well Done KELLY AWARDED EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Kelly has lived at Catholic Social Services' Veronica Villa, a supported independent living home for adults with disabilities, since 2010. Munah Savice-Ricks, Veronica Villa Team Member, says 52-year-old Kelly has come a long way since she began working with her seven years ago.

"She values her independence and doesn't like being told what to do," says Savice-Ricks. "She would get frustrated easily when I first met her."

Over time, Savice-Ricks realized that like many people, Kelly learns better when coached and given suggestions, rather than directions. Using these strategies to support her, Kelly's independence grew.

"We worked with the team at Arch Enterprises and shared strategies that we found worked well for Kelly at home including showing her how to do a task instead of just explaining it. Kelly knew where she wanted to work and told us about the job she wanted," says Savice-Ricks. "She was hired as a dishwasher at a supported care facility for seniors here in Edmonton and she has worked there now for six years."

At first, Kelly required extensive hands-on support to do her job. There were many details to remember and tasks to be completed. Kelly struggled to follow direction. This is where her Veronica Villa team stepped in.

"We asked them to be hands-on with her. Instead of telling Kelly how to do the dishes, we asked them to show her," says Savice-Ricks. The coaching worked, and over time Kelly learned all of the "ins and outs" of her job. Two years ago, her employer decided she was ready to work without support. This means Kelly is now responsible to complete all aspects of her job alone.

For Kelly, who has struggled to find independence all her life, autonomy in her work is empowering. "It means a lot to her because she knows she is contributing to society," says Savice-Ricks. "Kelly loves her work and she shows up to every shift with a smile on her face."

Recently, her employer recognized her achievements, giving Kelly their "Employee of the Year" award. The Veronica Villa team and Kelly's roommates celebrated with cake and a small party.

"Kelly's award is hanging on her bedroom wall. It shows how far she's come and we're all so proud of her," says Savice-Ricks. Vicky, St. Marguerite's Resident

My Journey BY: VICKY BORYS

My name is Vicky Borys and I would like to tell you about myself.

I am 40 years old and grew up on a farm by Onoway, Alberta with my mom, dad, and brother. When I was in my twenties, like most young adults, it was time for me to go into the community.

There are many things that are hard for me to do. Sometimes I feel anxious or unsettled. When this happens I have a hard time controlling myself and can have extreme behaviour.

Twelve years ago, I was very unhappy where I was living. My mom thought it was best to look for somewhere new, where I could have a fresh start.

I moved into a small house in Stony Plain operated by Catholic Social Services where I lived with one roommate, which I liked very much. But, in the spring of 2013, my roommate moved to Edmonton. I worked with my mom and my support team to make the best decision for myself. The Team Leader suggested I move to Edmonton as well. She said she would help me through the transition.

The agency was kind and gave me several months to get prepared for the big move. You see, I had never lived or spent a lot of time in Edmonton so the idea made me very anxious and my behaviours increased for a while due to my anxiety.

The Team Leader and staff members worked on gaining my trust and slowly integrated me into the city. Prior to the move I got the chance to visit my new roommates. Along with the Team Leader and the Program Manager we painted and prepared my room. This was a lot of fun and it made me feel welcome.

Since moving to St. Marguerite's in Edmonton I have come a long way. I have a plan in place that staff use to help me regain self-control when I feel overwhelmed.

I have been able to take part in many group activities, such as trips away to Jasper, Calgary, Drumheller, Wetaskiwin Museum, and camping. One of the biggest successes is my ability to take part in Special Olympic bowling where I have not missed a week of bowling in the past five years. In the past I would not be able to go because of my anxiety.

I am proud of how far I have come. I have my job doing groceries for the house weekly, which I do 90 per cent independently. I am very happy because this has given me the ability to make new friends in the community. People now come up to me and want to talk and spend time with me. In the past people were distant and afraid of me.

The best outcome is that my relationship with my mother and family members is better. I have regular family home visits and see family members more often. I am very thankful for the staff that supports me and the new start that was given to me.

In 2018, CSS operated **124 properties** the majority of which

were used as homes for individuals with disabilities.

OUR EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS



Celebrating the big and small at St. Cecilia's

LITTLE MOMENTS CREATE A LIFETIME

St. Cecilia's is a home that has provided a dedicated blend of independence and care to people with developmental disabilities since 2006.

"It's a real family environment here. I've been with one of the residents since the beginning. We have such a rapport, and real history," says Team Lead Irene Norgard, who's been with CSS for 24 years. "We have an amazing team. They're so devoted, very low turnover, an incredible camaraderie. I'm truly humbled by it."

The eight residents who live here have different challenges and strengths. What they have in common at St. Cecilia's is a belief that they can accomplish their goals, with the help of 14 enthusiastic workers.

One of the residents works a weekly shift. One woman was never able to leave her home and is now seeing movies at the mall. Another resident independently handled a transaction with the cashier at a store, rather than through a staff member, and talked about her victory all the way home. At Catholic Social Services, we are honoured to have caring and committed employees who are passionate about the work our agency does. These people live our mission every day, lifting individuals, families, and communities in lasting ways.



In 2018, we had **1,825 employees.**



Nearly 90% of all employees work directly with clients.



Our employees come from many cultures, backgrounds, and faiths. More than **90 different languages** are spoken across our agency.



We are proud to have many long-serving staff. Nearly **50%** of all employees have been with the agency for **six or more years.**

"Little moments like that make up your life, and it creates change for everyone," says Bonnie Hain, who's also been with CSS for 24 years. "Hopefully that cashier will take that interaction into her staff room, and it will spread out. The residents will be seen and respected as valued members of society. That's powerful."

Both women say the triumphs and everyday moments have kept them motivated over the years.

"These women have their own home, and a sense of belonging," says Norgard. "To see them exceed expectations, overcome challenges and behaviours, to achieve a goal...I'm so excited to see what each new day will bring."

Catholic Social Services CEO, Dr. Troy Davies, also feels the difference that love and devotion can make in an environment.

"They have taken a house and made it a home," says Dr. Davies.

Supporting new mothers

GIANNA CENTRE HELPS VULNERABLE WOMEN

Whether applying their professional skills or leveraging their passions, volunteers at Catholic Social Services do what they can to lift up others.

Pregnancy can be a precious time, but it often creates physical issues, financial concerns and emotional worries. At Gianna Centre, which provides information, support, and resources for vulnerable pregnant women, Maureane Dupuis has volunteered as a doula and massage therapist for more than two years.

"I help them cultivate their dignity and potential through faith, hope and love," Dupuis says. She often joins women who don't have partners in the delivery room.

Other volunteers work with staff at Gianna Centre to provide parenting classes, maternity clothes and baby items and to help new mothers find housing options and income support.

"It is a great joy to give back," says Dupuis. "It gives us life being such an intimate part of people's lives."

Corporate volunteers spread joy

Many organizations in Edmonton and the Central Region support their employees in giving of their time and energy to causes that matter to them.

In the case of M.A.C. Cosmetics, employees were encouraged by their employer to volunteer at Kairos House, the only residence in Edmonton for people living with HIV and AIDS, on World AIDS Day in December 2018. They enjoyed their time together so much that M.A.C. employees now visit Kairos monthly.

"The residents are really happy when we come around. They say spending time together makes their day, but it's true for us, too. It feels so good to be there," says Ameera Nashman, the M.A.C employee coordinator.

Catholic Social Services' Kairos House provides medical and personal care, nutrition, social and spiritual support, and end-of-life care, as required, for up to four people at a time. Volunteers bring fun to residents, cooking dinner together, decorating for the holidays, and enjoying game nights.



Help us lift others

By volunteering with Catholic Social Services, you have the unique opportunity to lift individuals and families in direct and tangible ways. Volunteers are active in many capacities across the agency. They provide companionship to individuals with disabilities in group homes, help newcomers practice their English in libraries, provide friendship to the recently housed, and support administrative work in agency offices.

Catholic Social Services has volunteer opportunities for every age, ability, and interest. **To learn more, visit** *cssalberta.ca/volunteer*.

More than **330** individuals

generously give hope year-round through Sign of Hope's Monthly Giving Program!

Mark, Kairos House resident



35 Years of CREATING HOPE

Father Bill Irwin created Catholic Social Services (CSS) with the philosophy of meeting and addressing needs as they arose. Living this philosophy meant the agency needed to be flexible and innovative in its approach to social service delivery. Sign of Hope was created to empower CSS to do just that.

While much of the agency's activity is government funded, Sign of Hope has enabled CSS to address community needs above and beyond what our core funding provides.

Today, as many as 20 CSS programs are fully funded by Sign of Hope, and donor dollars provide supplemental funding to enhance the delivery of countless other programs. Sign of Hope funding touches nearly every area in which we work and every community in which we are active. In 2018, Sign of Hope celebrated 35 years of bringing hope to those in need by raising **\$2.2 million** to support CSS programs. Amongst many other things, those funds:

- Provided art therapy in the form of weekly Youth Creativity Workshops for youth in our care.
- Enabled as many as **74%** of the **532 clients** Mercy Counselling worked with to access their psychological services at a subsidized rate.
- Created winter recreational opportunities for
 75 newcomers to Canada, through the Outdoor Wellness Program, which helps newcomers embrace Canadian culture.
- Helped **138 youth** living with a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) access supports and services through the McDaniel Youth Program, which helps youth navigate everyday life with an FASD diagnosis, while also building friendships and a sense of community.

- Purchased exercise equipment for adults with disabilities living in our group homes.
- Allowed us to provide counselling services to individuals and families in need in Red Deer and Rimbey.
- Helped **29 individuals** in recovery from addictions through our Alpha House, which provides accommodation and support services.
- Provided supported living options, through Kairos House, for individuals living with HIV/AIDS, helping them to regain control of their health.
- Provided a safe place for more than 100 women and their children in crisis through three shelters in the Edmonton-area.
- Provided tuition and books for two students in the CORE Skills Program, a Health Care Aide training program for newcomers.

Friends of Sign of Hope

When Sign of Hope (SOH) was first created in 1984, it relied heavily on volunteer support to meet its goals. This is still true today. In addition to the many volunteers who donate their time mailing letters, making phone calls, and writing thank you notes, Sign of Hope is fortunate to have the expertise of community leaders who donate their time and energy to ensure the success of SOH's annual fundraising efforts.

The Friends of Sign of Hope serve as enthusiastic ambassadors for Catholic Social Services, while working within their professional sector and personal networks to raise funds for Sign of Hope. They champion, monitor, and provide general coordination of fundraising efforts within their networks, while sharing ideas and best practices with each other and Catholic Social Services development staff to ensure ongoing success.

2018/19 FRIENDS OF SIGN OF HOPE COMMITTEE

Bea Salmon	Joe Spelliscy
Bruno Mercier	John Liston
Carole Anctil-Michalyshyn	Ken Mark
Dr. Brant Alfaro	Paul Givens
Dr. Dennis Bedard	Peter Murray
Father Mike McCaffery	Peter Ouellette
Graham Hicks	Dr. Ramona Kearney
Jeananne Kirwin	Shawn Haggarty
Joan Carr	

Since its inception, Welcome Home has supported more than **160 participants** and **97%** of those involved have remained off the streets and are rebuilding their lives.

Welcome Home creates connections

MOVING FORWARD WITH NEW FRIENDS

So often, we believe the only solution to homelessness is housing.

While stable housing is a crucial part of new beginnings for the vulnerably-housed, social connection and friendship are important, too, if people are to remain housed.

Since 2012, Catholic Social Services' Welcome Home program has been matching newly-housed participants with two volunteers to create healthy relationships. It aims to build self-confidence, develop meaningful connections, and reduce feelings of isolation.

The program is entirely funded by Sign of Hope donors.

"We're normal people with aspirations, hopes and dreams, just like everyone else, but we've managed to screw it up for ourselves," says Frank, who's been a Welcome Home participant for six years. "A lot of us are trying to get back to normalcy. I'm more or less there now. Every step forward helps."

Frank meets with his current volunteers every couple of weeks. They usually meet for coffee, but sometimes change things up. Recently, they visited a museum together. "I'm a recovering addict, so these visits put me back in touch with society, and keep me away from sliding back into bad habits. And I think it's good for them, too. They're learning about so-called disadvantaged people, that we're not the scary people society thinks we are."

Frank, Welcome Home program participant

Frank has lived in his own apartment with subsidized rent for about eight years. After a decade of sporadic homelessness, it's an appreciated change.

"I have my privacy when I need it. I can cook when and what I want, I don't have to share a bathroom," he says. "It's a lot easier to stay sober with my own place."

Frank recently appeared as a presenter in a university social justice class, and was pleased with the reaction from students. He appreciates the opportunity to educate others on the root causes and social issues that contribute to homelessness, and how we can work together to address it.

"More people should be aware that the problems are bigger and farther ranging than addiction and homelessness. Everyone is vulnerable. This can happen to anyone at any time. We're all interconnected."

Defying all odds

THE GIFT OF COMMUNICATION

Sometimes the trajectory of an entire life can be changed with one simple purchase.

Peter was a three-year-old boy who had been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder and was non-verbal when he arrived with his mother and sister at La Salle, a second-stage shelter for women and their children who are fleeing domestic violence.

Doctors believed Peter would never speak.

"He had serious difficulties, and he'd been witness to domestic abuse," says Holly Taylor, La Salle Program Supervisor. "Imagine his frustration. He's had many outbursts and extreme behaviours."

Taylor and her team were desperate to help Peter. They knew many of his challenges were rooted in his inability to communicate. So, they began looking for technology to support his development, and borrowed a communication device from a local school.

When they had to return the device, they were able to use Sign of Hope funds to purchase a new iPad and software that allows Peter to communicate by pointing to pictures, and encourages him to use his own words.

"That communication technology was such a great gift. His mother was really overcome, just sobbing, and so grateful," says Taylor. Peter is now able to speak about six words, including "Hi Mom," and "I'm hungry," and staff expect him to continue to improve. His entire life has changed course, thanks to the support of Sign of Hope donors.

"Peter's story is a true testament to the power of community support. Not only does Sign of Hope allow Catholic Social Services to fund La Salle's operations, donor dollars also empower us to change lives by responding to the needs of those we serve when they need us most," says Dr. Troy Davies, CEO, Catholic Social Services.

While Peter progressed, his mom was working hard, too. She increased her fluency in English, found permanent employment, and transitioned her family out of La Salle and back into the community.

Today, Peter is happy, healthy, and thriving.

"He's a kind, loving kid, smiling all the time. He's just so happy now," says Taylor. "The odds were against him, and he's overcoming them. The future is so bright."

La Salle Program Supervisor, Holly Taylor & Child & Youth Care Worker, Rania Dabbagh

PAGE 16





Aya Wright, Team Lead, St. Joseph's, holds a photo of Leslie as a young child

Care and compassion to the end

SPIRITUAL CARE TEAM OFFERS PEACE TO ST. JOSEPH'S CLIENT

At the heart of Catholic Social Services' mission is a deep respect for the intrinsic value and dignity of every human being. From this comes the desire to care for, and bring hope to, those most in need.

Hope can mean different things to different people. For some, hope means physical healing. For others, it may mean overcoming obstacles and barriers. But when healing is not possible, hope can mean finding comfort, peace, and resolution at the end of one's life.

Leslie was 54 years old and terminally ill when he came to Catholic Social Services' St. Joseph's Home, which provides endof-life care for the homeless or vulnerably-housed.

"He was so appreciative of having a place to call home for the last days of his life," says Team Lead Aya Wright.

"He had pain but tried not to let it show. He was a bit of a soldier," Wright says. "He had a kind, sensitive heart. He always asked about the other residents and showed concern for them."

As Leslie became weaker during the month he spent at St. Joseph's, he had a desire to explore his spirituality.

Catholic Social Services' Spiritual Care team is available to all CSS clients, of all faiths, and provides a listening ear, a compassionate voice, and prayers and blessings to meet every need. Wright contacted Spiritual Care to request support for Leslie.

Leslie met with Deacon Randy several times, who provided guidance and care as he explored his understanding of life and death. Leslie found so much comfort in these meetings, that he decided to be baptized and receive anointing of the sick at the hospital before he died.

Wright was honoured to be able to facilitate his request and help Leslie find hope in his final days.

"The residents have lived hard lives, and they often believe they've made mistakes," says Wright. "When Leslie's family wasn't willing to reconcile, it was important to have the Spiritual Care team there for him. With Deacon Randy's help, he was able to receive forgiveness. It was heartwarming, and it brought Leslie so much peace."

Sign of

Terry Mahon

CREATES HOPE FOR THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST

Terry Mahon grew up in Dublin, Ireland, where he met and married the love of his life, Noreen. Shortly after their wedding in 1958, Terry and Noreen travelled by boat to Canada, where they landed on the east coast and ventured west to settle in Edmonton. It was here, on October 19 of the same year, that their son, Terence, was born.

It was also in Edmonton that Terry began his career in the insurance industry. He worked his way up to branch manager, before opening his own business, Security Insurance Brokers, in 1982.

Terry founded his business on the value of "local" – local people providing a local service in a location that was easy to access. As the community supported him, he supported the community, ensuring his business gave back in the communities in which they operated.

In 2005, at the age of 46, Terence unexpectedly passed away. Terry and Noreen, determined to see hope come from their loss, created the Terry Mahon Foundation, which operates with the same philanthropic philosophy as their business: supporting local needs in the community, which may otherwise go unmet.

"It truly gives me a huge amount of satisfaction knowing where the money is going and the good it is doing," says Terry, who has supported Sign of Hope for more than a decade, among other local charities.

"I look for programs that may not otherwise get donor support, the outsiders," says Terry, who donated \$250,000 to CSS' Welcome Home program.

It was also through his generosity that St. Joseph's Home, CSS' end-of-life residence for the homeless, was able to open its doors in 2017.

On a recent visit to St. Joseph's, Terry was able to meet a client named Lynda, who shared what it meant to her to have a safe, home-like environment to spend her final months.

Terry felt a great sense of inner peace seeing the difference his contributions made for Lynda and others, who have called St. Joseph's their home.

Terry and Noreen spent more than 64 happy years together before Noreen passed away in 2017, at the age of 80. Terry believes they were fortunate to have had the opportunity to explore the world together, travelling to Asia, Egypt, Antarctica, Vietnam, and Kenya. Today, Terry enjoys golfing, tending his garden, and spending time with friends. In 201

"God is still very good to me," says Terry. "I feel good knowing that I can give back and share with those in need. And I want to see the difference my contributions are making while I am still here."

In 2018, donors provided **\$420,000**

through Sign of Hope to fund compassionate end-of-life care for the homeless or vulnerably-housed at St. Joseph's.

Catholic Social Services ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

Marion Cecilia French

LEAVES A LEGACY OF HOPE FOR MOTHERS AND CHILDREN

From a young age, Marion Cecilia French had a strong sense of being unwanted. In the 1930s, postpartum depression was not well understood, and so her mother, who was deeply affected by the illness, went untreated.

Marion described her childhood as somber. Fortunately, as the youngest of six siblings, she had older sisters to care for her. Marion credits her sisters with raising her and for teaching her to read and write. She became a voracious reader, collecting newspapers and magazines and reading everything she could on world events.

In the 1950s, she left her home in Toronto and travelled west to settle in Edmonton. Marion worked at the Edmonton Journal as a type-setter, invested in a property, and travelled. Those who knew her describe Marion as well-informed, witty, and humorous. She could entertain her friends for hours with anecdotes.

Marion's upbringing inspired her to leave a legacy that would help mothers and their children. She named Catholic Social Services' the sole beneficiary of her estate when she passed away, with proceeds designated to the La Salle Shelter for mothers who are fleeing domestic violence.

In her passing, Marion brings hope and compassion to those in need, and Catholic Social Services is grateful for her legacy gift. She will be remembered always for what she has enabled us to do for mothers in need.





Tim Spelliscy PROUD TO BE A LONG-TERM SUPPORTER OF CSS

Tim Spelliscy has been supporting Catholic Social Services' (CSS) Sign of Hope for nearly 30 years, giving of his time, energy, and talents.

The former broadcast media executive is a committed community advocate and philanthropist, having worked with many organizations as a speaker, fundraiser, board member, and media advisor. His contributions to Sign of Hope are extensive and far-reaching. Tim volunteered on the Sign of Hope Committee in the 1990s and was one of the driving forces behind the creation of the CSS' Evening at the Mac event.

"Sign of Hope is a vital source of funding for CSS and through its donors is empowered to help thousands of vulnerable Albertans each year," says Tim. "I'm passionate about the work Sign of Hope does because I have seen firsthand the impact of funds raised and I'm excited to see what we are able to make possible."

In 2019, Tim reprised his role as Evening at the Mac MC. When asked what inspires him to continue to support Sign of Hope, Tim says, "Being a long term donor is a source of pride for me. I have always believed in the values and goals of CSS and am confident that my donations are really making a difference."

"Catholic Social Services offers a wide range of much needed services and programs that aren't offered anywhere else," says Tim, who has developed a great respect for the staff and volunteers he has met over the years.

"It's an incredible group of very dedicated and passionate people and I feel compelled to do more to support them."



INSPIRED BY KAIROS RESIDENT, ST. FX STUDENTS RAISE MORE THAN \$50,000 FOR SIGN OF HOPE

Every year, one of the most anticipated events at Edmonton's St. Francis Xavier Catholic High School is their 24-hour Bike-a-thon to raise funds for local causes.

"It gives the students the opportunity to get involved, to raise money, and be part of something bigger than themselves while supporting those in need," says Tara Watson, teacher at St.Francis Xavier.

Prior to the event, Catholic Social Services' Kairos House resident, Tina, spoke to students at a school assembly. She shared her personal story of struggle, and how through Kairos, she had found strength and hope for a better life.

Her testimony inspired students, and this year, they raised a record-breaking \$102,000 in total donations, \$50,000 of which was donated to Catholic Social Services' Sign of Hope.

On the big day, 330 students and 40 teachers, staff, and supporters racked up miles on stationary bikes in the school gym for a full 24 hours.

"We have an incredible student body, and anytime there is a tragedy in the world, we have students asking how they can step up," says Watson. "This event provides an awesome opportunity to contribute to a social justice cause." Catholic Social Services is proud to have many school partners. Over the last three years **138 schools** from across 4 school districts raised a combined **\$410,000** for Sign of Hope. Some students chose to collect items, such as clothing or toiletries; others joined in prayer or made cards of encouragement for clients who needed kind words. Every dollar donated, item collected, or act of service is truly appreciated and makes a profound difference in the lives of those we serve.

EVERGREEN SCHOOL DIVISION STUDENTS UPLIFT VULNERABLE ALBERTANS

During a team visit to Boyle Street to promote the Catholic Social Services' Uplift Day event, staff were approached by a few of the centre's guests told about the need for socks and underwear. Often overlooked, these items are absolutely crucial to maintaining health and hygiene while living on the street.

After presenting this need to the Evergreen School Division's social justice clubs, the schools created a competition to see which school could collect the most socks and underwear. One of the schools, St. Marguerite, penned the theme "Soles for Souls" to encourage participation. Together the Evergreen School Division collected an incredible 7,338 pairs of underwear and 791 pairs of socks, which were distributed to individuals in need at Uplift Day in September 2018.

"We are privileged to have such strong partnerships with school divisions in the communities in which we work. These allow us to make a difference in the lives of those who need it most," says Dr. Troy Davies, CEO, Catholic Social Services. "Without these partnerships, many of these individuals' needs would go unmet."

NIB Trust Fund Helps Create Connection to Culture and Community for Indigenous People

To create lasting change, it is crucial to have meaningful connection to community; for Indigenous populations who are experiencing the ongoing impacts of residential schools, this is particularly important in supporting their resilience.

In 2018, Catholic Social Services Children, Family and Community Service (CFCS) hosted a series of cultural activities for Indigenous children, youth and families with the support of a grant from the NIB Trust Fund. The grant allowed CFCS staff to consult with our indigenous advisors, traditional knowledge keepers, and community members to develop and deliver programming deeply rooted in promoting and sustaining Indigenous cultures.

Knowledge keepers from across central Alberta facilitated workshops on traditional medicines, rites of passage, storytelling, and ribbon skirt making, and worked with attendees to create family trees which traced their kinship systems back to their traditional lands through an event called Wahkotowin (Meaning: We are Family). For many individuals this was one of their first opportunities to access such a breadth of traditional knowledge, leaving them empowered to embrace ownership of their culture and their own place within it.

"The NIB Trust Fund grant allowed us to bring teachings to clients and community members in ways that were accessible," explained Samantha Yutzy, Program Manager. "Participation in activities tripled this last year - it's something kids still talk about to this day, which tells me how profoundly impactful these activities are."

In 2018, Sign of Hope received an incredible **8,320 donations** from generous individuals, businesses, and granting agencies!

Catholic Social Services ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

Servus Credit Union Continues a Legacy of Lifting Lives

In 1989, Servus Credit Union gave their first donation to Catholic Social Services (CSS), beginning a 31-year tradition of helping build strong, resilient communities and lifting lives throughout Alberta.

"We share a lot of common values – it's one of the reasons we've continued to give every single year," says Caroline Ziober, Chief Member Experience Officer at Servus Credit Union. "We really believe that by supporting good causes like the Sign of Hope, we can make a difference in the lives of people we serve and help to build thriving, prosperous communities."

Servus continually goes above and beyond in their support of CSS, matching payroll deductions from employees and encouraging creative fundraising initiatives. Staff at branches across the province host events from barbeques to bake sales to raffles, raising money to strengthen communities and showing their commitment to upholding Servus' core values. As someone who knew Catholic Social Services' founder, Father Bill Irwin, Ziober reflected on the importance of helping carry out his legacy.

"He was someone who had a passion for changing people's lives, making them feel that there was hope, and giving them dignity when they had no place else to turn to. It gives us a tremendous feeling of pride to know we are making a difference."

From providing shelter and safety to youth experiencing homelessness to supporting newcomers navigating the anxieties of resettlement, Servus' support has been critical in honouring the vision Father Bill had for the agency nearly 60 years ago.

For more than three decades, Servus Credit Union's corporate support has helped transform the lives of tens of thousands of Albertans. As we continue to seek out and uplift those most in need, it is a privilege to have longstanding partnerships with organizations like Servus, who truly embody the shared core values of caring for others with compassion and respect.

Civic Service Union 52 Creates Space to Build Community

Each year, Catholic Social Services Caring & Sharing program for adults with disabilities hosts monthly social activities, regularly bringing together close to 100 individuals across our Community Outreach & Disability Service. The monthly events make space for people with disabilities to create community, enjoy food as they share stories, and celebrate life with music and dancing. For several years, Civic Service Union 52 (CSU52) has generously supported the event.

"Marginalized individuals are often excluded from what many consider 'normal', including things like sharing in meals and music together," explains Brandi Thorne from CSU52. "We happily support Caring & Sharing because it embodies many of our shared values, like believing in the dignity of each person and their inherent right to participate in society fully."

"I cannot say enough how much our individuals love going," Team Leader Irene Norgard emphasizes. "I've received so much positive feedback from numerous residents that the event is their favourite part of the month."

Home Depot Canada Foundation Supports Vulnerable Youth

Catholic Social Services (CSS) Safe House Program provides much-needed respite to youth experiencing homelessness, sexual exploitation, and those engaging in high-risk activities in Edmonton. Each year, more than 100 youth come to Safe House for shelter or outreach services. In 2018, a grant from the Home Depot Orange Door program enabled CSS to renovate our Safe House residence, giving youth a brighter, more welcoming place to call home. Walls were repainted, new flooring installed, and the building gained a new roof and repaired foundations. As finishing touches, landscaping, repaired fencing and a new walkway transformed the yard, ready to welcome youth into a supportive home to heal and grow.

"We are honoured to support organizations that are addressing every aspect of youth homelessness," says Emily Rowe, Home Depot Canada Foundation.

"Everyone wants to live in a house they are proud of, that's 'aesthetically pleasing', and the Home Depot Foundation grant enabled just that!" says Renee Sullivan, Team Lead, Safe House.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS 2018/19*

Thank you to all of our funders!



*Complete audited financial statements are available at cssalberta.ca

**Services provided in communities outside of Edmonton.

OUR AGENCY MISSION...

As a Catholic social services agency, we are guided by faith to care for and bring hope to people in need with humility, compassion and respect.



cssalberta.ca

2018/2019