



WOOD'S HOMES

WORKING FOR CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

SINCE 1914

2020/21
Annual Report

**Adapting
through
Innovation
in a
Global
Pandemic**



April 1, 2020 - March 31, 2021



As a children's mental health centre, **ADAPTING** is nothing new for Wood's Homes, and the global pandemic only underlines our agency's strength in that way.

We promptly adapted over this past year to the new 'normal'. We found ways to preserve and maintain connections with our clients, donors, funders and other stakeholders, despite the challenges of COVID-19.

And we continue to touch the lives of thousands of children, youth and families every year who are struggling with their mental health. Staying nimble, and with some **INNOVATION**, we are proud to say that no one has been left behind.

We hope you enjoy this annual Report to the Community – aptly named because we can't do the work we do without the loyal and generous support of this community. It is the community that keeps us strong!

If we could High Five each of you we would, but since COVID-19 may be with us for some time yet, please consider an elbow-to-elbow as our warm embrace.



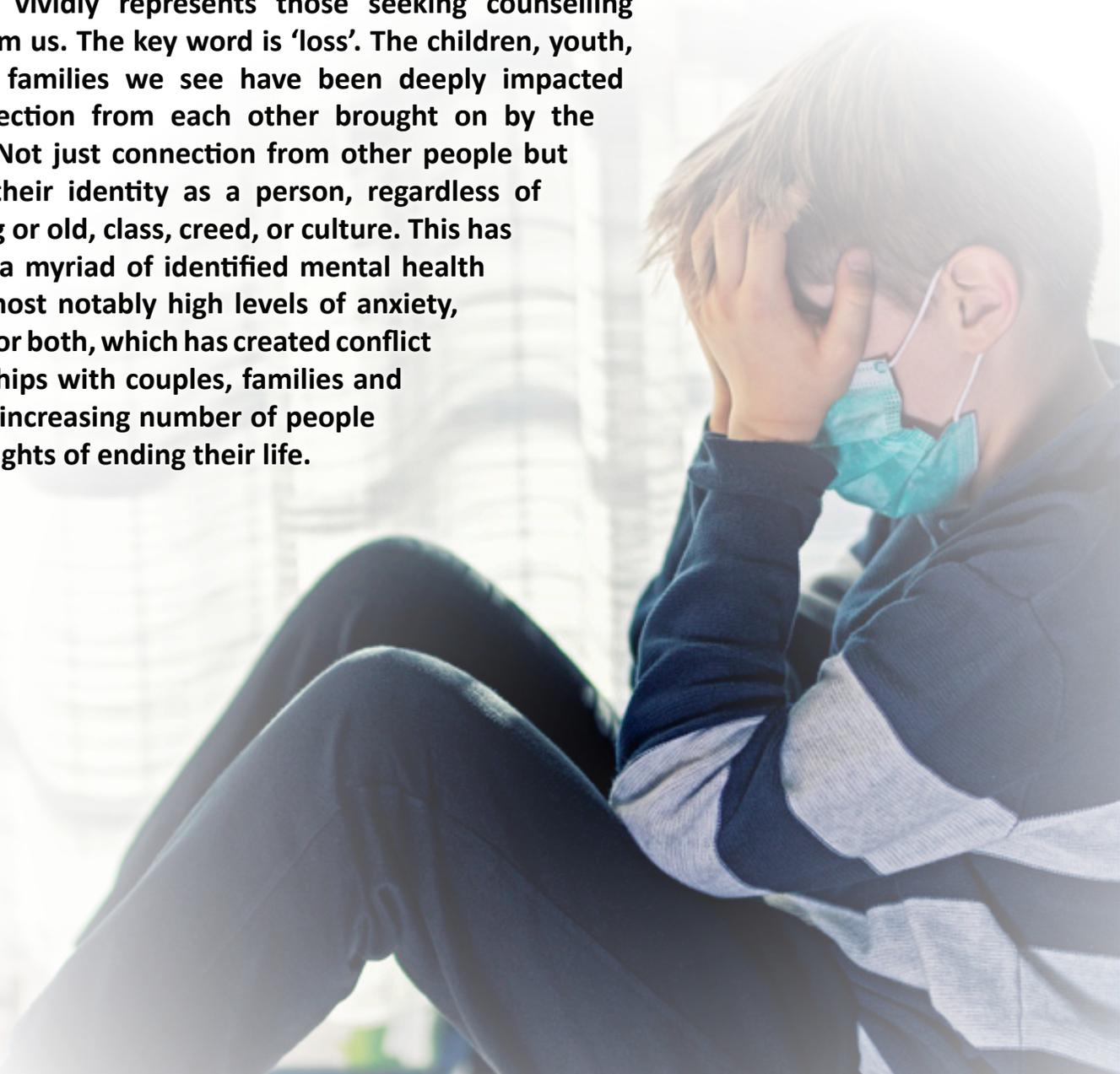
COVID-19 has created an unprecedented demand for our mental health counselling and treatment services. Many of us continue to struggle with the changes in the world that we have witnessed. Dr. Robert Neimeyer says:

“Change is, or is experienced as, loss simply because we human beings are wired for attachment in a world of impermanence. With the many unwelcome losses of life - of people, places, projects, and possessions in seemingly endless succession - we are called on to reconstruct a world of meaning that has been challenged by loss, at every level from the simple habit structures of our daily lives, through our identities in a social world, to our personal and collective cosmologies, whether secular or spiritual.”

(Neimeyer, Robert A., Dennis Klass, and Michael Robert Dennis.

*“A Social Constructionist Account of Grief: Loss and the Narration of Meaning.” **Death Studies** 38.8 [2014]: 485-498.)*

This quote vividly represents those seeking counselling services from us. The key word is ‘loss’. The children, youth, adults and families we see have been deeply impacted by disconnection from each other brought on by the pandemic. Not just connection from other people but also from their identity as a person, regardless of being young or old, class, creed, or culture. This has resulted in a myriad of identified mental health concerns, most notably high levels of anxiety, depression or both, which has created conflict in relationships with couples, families and for an ever increasing number of people having thoughts of ending their life.



"I will never forget my time working here at Wood's Homes during the pandemic."

By Jonathan Hutton, Program Manager

What I experienced personified the flexibility, determination and courage that Wood's Homes staff show every day in working with our clients.

March 2020 brought a whole new way of working in all of the programs on our Bowness campus with COVID-19 a stark reality. Keeping the clients safe both physically and mentally for everyone became a major daily task with numerous new processes and protocols from cleaning, to observing social distance and of course being aware of our own mental health along with others.

I was proud of my staff, the youth in the program and the sacrifices the families were making while having limited access to our campus as we maintained a 'safe bubble'. I will emphasize the word 'WE' now as this is the reason we were able to persevere, find our tears in times of high anxiety, look at each other in ways only humans can when all that is left to do is keep on going knowing that we would make it through what was to come.

On Dec. 1, 2020, three youth in one of the programs became ill and would soon test positive for COVID-19, along with two staff. The adjustment 'WE' needed to make as a program was instantaneous with no time to consider but to react, to contain a virus and a resulting experience that none of us will forget in our lifetime.

Following the positive tests, the youth were sent to their rooms with masks and staff were ordered to don Personal Protective Equipment immediately. Every routine in the program we took for granted such as a youth going to the washroom, sitting down for dinner, coming to the staff office door and playing with their beloved Lego in a communal area all had to be re-thought to contain further spread. The entire program's staff team was then placed on a 14-day isolation at home.

As a manager I felt my own anxiety as we were now to be placed into a 28-day program lockdown and with so many details to manage. I needed to make sure we had enough staff and that the youth and families could find a small place of solace to communicate over the phone or on video link. In less than 48 hours 'WE' managed to put together a small band of staff, including myself, who would work in the program. We would be in full PPE all the time, and worked hard to ensure that the clients would have every one of their needs met. We also had to try to manage the anxiety of their families. All of Wood's Homes came together to offer us support and from that moment I knew 'WE' would make it despite how difficult I thought it was going to be.

I worked 8-10 hours a day with two other staff and seven youth whose anxiety was palpable as they, in their own way, communicated how frightened they were.

The moment I started with full PPE on, I was witnessing humanity in a very different way. To see the youth through our face masks and face shields and for them to stare back at us with looks ranging from intense anxiety, to resignation, to hope, brought intense feelings for me that will always be etched into my mind. In between obsessive cleaning we sat with the youth and played games, told stories, ate lots of food (confined to their rooms of course). Furthermore, they continued their education online and staff ensured treatment continued to a high standard.

During that week I stayed at a hotel to keep my family safe. I would phone the quarantined program many times to see how clients and staff were managing.

The youth were amazing, by the way, considering the circumstances.



A photograph of a modern, two-story building with a prominent entrance featuring a large glass door and stone pillars. The building has a sign that reads "Annie Wood Centre". The sky is overcast, and there are trees in the background.

My 11-year-old daughter knew what was occurring and why Daddy was away, my five-year-old thought it was a vacation for me. Hearing their voices in my hotel brought joy but sadness at the same time, because I knew the youth in the program would not be going home for the holiday season because of the program lockdown.

The youth and their families felt profound loss here but were part of the 'WE' I have been talking about. By the end of the first week the lockdown was taking a toll. We still had so many days to go yet. We'd been wearing the full PPE every

day and there were huge fluctuations of emotions felt by all. Yet 'WE' never wavered in knowing that 'WE' would make it through this. As the month progressed the staff team gradually came back despite the holiday season being changed in a way that would leave an indelible mark on all of us.

One last thing about how 'WE' managed to get through this together; this was achieved by every person who believes in the power of the work 'WE' do at Wood's Homes!

"It was awe inspiring"



It Takes a Village

Last Winter, one of the programs on our Bowness campus in Calgary was affected by COVID-19. Staff and clients pulled together, however, to weather the storm while continuing to keep the youth engaged and in treatment. The Team Leader of the program expressed thanks to her colleagues with the following sentiment:

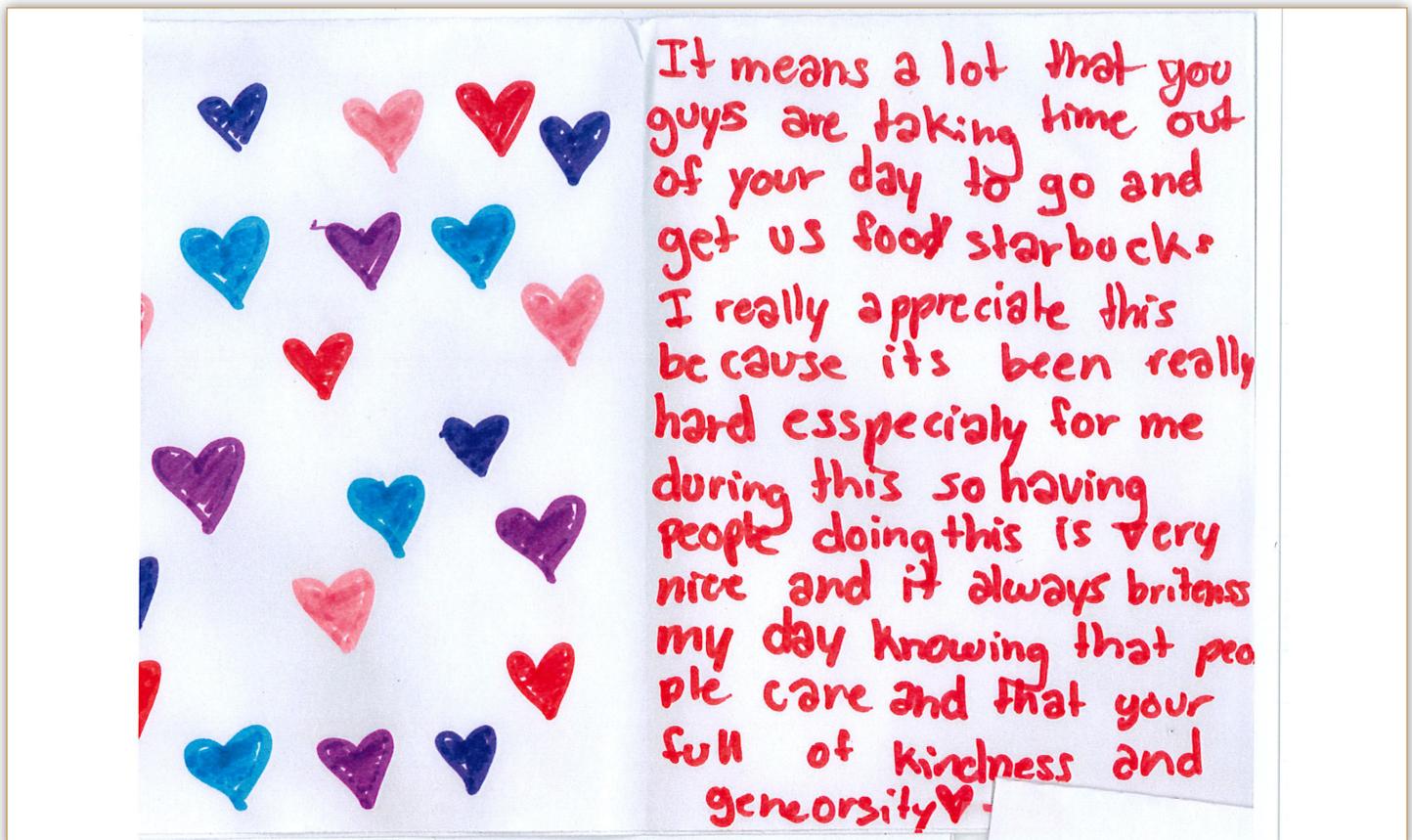
I cannot even begin to express the gratitude I have for all the overwhelming support from people throughout the agency. Thank you for:

- *Cooking & baking for us*
- *The multiple board games, crafts and new video games for the clients*
- *Grocery runs and Starbucks runs for staff*
- *Poetic tales of a dragon named COVID and how he was defeated by staff and clients*
- *Our fearless Nursing team – they were always just a phone call or text away*
- *Our onsite teachers who made sure school still happened virtually*
- *The amazing clinicians who made sure they were in it with us daily to connect and support*
- *To the staff, who without hesitation, stepped in to fill every shift to make sure those who needed to stay home and rest could*

We have never felt more connected to everyone in the agency than through this experience. It is truly such a testament to "It Takes A Village".

To everyone who is in the same boat – you've got this and we've got you!

Notes of Thanks: From our young clients



thank you for supporting
us in this covid/isolation
also for the gifts you gave
gave to us.

**SO THANK
YOU!!!!**

Altador,
ic2, el, Phoenix

we are family
and family
stick together.

we're in this
together!!!



lets

Staff
I Love
you all
And really
don't want
to leave!

the last five days
you guys made
me feel safe and
happy also loved
and that is the best
feeling ever. I am
really going to
miss being here
having all the
laughs and people
making me smile
and me making them
smile. I will
miss the little jokes
you all make I really
don't want to leave
-♥♥♥

thank you for all the people who
gave us all the gifts it's very kind
of you. thank you for everything,
i like how the people of Altador,
R, el, PhX, leJia, niLolle,
Steve, Keisley, new Horizons,
amy, Amanda, UR, Kirk,
School

they
All help us out even though
they could have not help
us out. i appreciate it.
idk if i got everyone
But i hope liked this letter
thank you all.

A message from Wood's Homes CEO, Bjorn Johansson

On May 1 of this year, I was privileged to celebrate my one-year anniversary as Chief Executive Officer of Wood's Homes. What a year it has been for us all - as individuals, families, communities, for this agency, and for the world. It is a time for the record books – a time we will never forget.

All health and human services organizations have been challenged to keep pace this year with ever-evolving public health policy and protocols. This, while maintaining focus on the effective delivery of our mental health services. Challenges within our sector have been even more striking as there is a need to maintain services, increase innovative practice and respond to new mental health challenges with less fiscal and community resources.

Despite these obstacles, I would not trade for anything the incredible experiences I have shared working alongside the staff and volunteers.

I am grateful to the more than 500 employees who arrive at all hours of the day and night, with nothing but courage and loyalty, each freely giving of their own hearts. They have been tenacious in their drive to support our mission despite the pandemic. They have all clearly demonstrated to me the definition of Adapting through Innovation.

I also want to say thank you to our clients – who adapted in a time when so many things were taken away from them. They exceeded our expectations with their understanding and trust in us. I'm proud to say there was never once a disruption in any of our 40+ programs and services – in Calgary, Lethbridge, Strathmore and Fort McMurray.

COVID has seen Wood's Homes spend the past 14 months adapting to a new virtual environment, and I'd like to thank the staff in our family support and school services for continuing to provide solid and consistent client support in a very complicated time. My thanks also go out to the crisis and counselling staff at Eastside Community Mental Health Services who stepped up to ensure that no client was left behind. The staff, very quickly, moved our walk-in counselling



services online so that those clients who were used to in-person sessions were able to get help immediately. Incredibly, they provided more than 14,000 virtual and in-person mental health supports over this past year. I know they are keen to get back to resuming walk-in services soon. At the time of this writing, we are close to transitioning back and pleased that these services are available at three locations including the Calgary Central Library in our new partnership.

This past spring, we launched our first and only private practice called Elbow Springs Counselling in Calgary's Mission community. An extension of our services, it allows for longer-term therapy and assessments – something many of our clients were requesting.

Wood's Homes has worked with Indigenous clients for many years and with thanks to Tye Rhyno, Program Supervisor of our Indigenous Cultural Services, we are able to provide this population with strong cultural and spiritual connections. During COVID, these clients were also supported virtually and although this was a challenge at times, we thank the Elders and Knowledge Keepers for getting us to a place where we are becoming more effective in our offering of cultural services across the organization.

Our hearts are hurting over the discovery of so many Indigenous children whose remains have been found. Wood's Homes extends our sympathy and solidarity to the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc, to residential school survivors and to Indigenous Peoples everywhere. Our thoughts and prayers go out to all who have been impacted and we join all Canadians as we come to terms with such a tragic, heartbreaking part of our history. We remain in prayer as we offer tobacco for these children who are no longer missing.

My thanks go out to the staff, funders, donors and this community - know that we appreciate your loyal support of the work we do.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'B' followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line that tapers to the right.

Being Exceptional About Safety

Over the past year, Wood's Homes has focused on improving our Health and Safety Management Systems. We are committed to becoming Exceptional About Safety and to significantly advancing our overall safety culture. Our commitment is driven by the tragic loss of our Staff Debbie Onwu at work in October 2019. The safety and wellbeing of all of our employees is critical to the work of Wood's Homes and we are taking all possible measures to prevent this kind of tragedy from ever happening again.

Significant accomplishments over this past year have included the strengthening of the Joint Health and Safety Committee system. Wood's Homes recognizes the contribution of CUPE Local 4731 in the renewal of our endeavours together. The participation of

our employees and the support of CUPE Local 4731 is critical to our success.

Considerable work has also been directed at increasing internal skill and capacity within the Health and Safety area. We have added resources with the hiring of two qualified safety specialists, and with the renewal of training efforts.

Guided by the Certificate of Recognition Audit standards established by the Alberta Association of Safety Partnerships, we are preparing for an external audit in 2022. Our intention is to meet and exceed rigorous standards within our Health and Safety Systems. Significant quality improvement is under way and the benefits to our organization are clear.



From David Arthur, Chair of Wood's Homes Board

As a proud community volunteer with Wood's Homes since 2009, it is my honour to address you for the first time here as Chair of the Board of this remarkable organization.

And what a year it's been!

I'd like to start by thanking my fellow Board members for helping guide me through this first year but also for your loyal contributions and support of this agency.

Secondly, it should be said that Wood's Homes would not be here today if it were not for our funders, whose commitment and trust in our work is never taken for granted. Without their support, we would not be able to offer the 40+ programs and services we provide in Calgary, Lethbridge, Strathmore and Fort McMurray. We are grateful not only for their ongoing financial commitment to the agency, but also for their emotional support over this challenging year. They have been alongside Wood's Homes every step of the way.

I would be remiss in not expressing thanks, on behalf of all the Boards, to the **500+** staff here. They have truly shown us what it means to sacrifice in the midst of battle. Each and every one is a soldier in their own right. Each has remained brave, loyal and determined to carry on our mission. And although there is light on the horizon, we know there is harder work ahead. I would like to take this opportunity to tip my hat not only on behalf of myself and my family, but on behalf of all the Board members and their families. We stand in admiration of who you are, and what you do to help all the children and their families in this community!

This global pandemic has brought with it many hurdles, including what is now being called a mental health pandemic that likely will be with us for some time to come.

But Wood's Homes is ready – the tireless efforts of the staff in helping people work through their mental health issues is commendable. They have been doing this work for more than 100 years and I am confident this agency will be around for yet another century!

As a nationally recognized children's mental health centre, Wood's Homes is fully aware of which programs and services are needed in our community. With thanks to the Research Department, they are fully aware of which programs not only meet demand, but offer highly successful outcomes.



This past year, the agency stepped forward to fill in two gaps in services in Calgary. The first being additional crisis counselling services in the form of private counselling, therapy and assessments. This is for a population that is able to pay for services and one that does not want to contend with lengthy waitlists. Wood's Homes is proud to announce Elbow Springs Counselling as its first and only private practice. Located in the Mission community, this service provides long-term therapy and assessments for a fee.

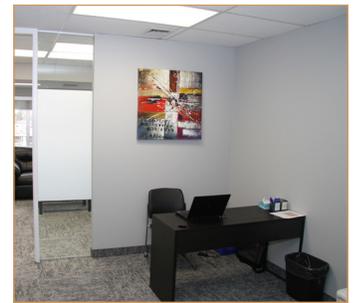
Another innovation this year is an idea that responds to a need to better serve young people facing multi-barriers when it comes to employment. In July, we are excited to be opening up a Social Enterprise called the Youth Culinary Arts Market. Here, clients from the Youth Culinary Arts Program will learn how to sell the quality meals they cook and prepare (under the guidance of a Red Seal chef). The students typically come from challenging backgrounds and the market will offer important life and employment skills. It will also offer first-time job experience for youth who may otherwise have been unsuccessful. These are but two examples of an incredible year as a result of this agency Adapting through Innovation.

I'm excited to be a part of this and the next major project – which you will hear more about in the coming months...

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Arthur', written in a cursive style.

Introducing...

Elbow Springs Counselling



Our new private practice, with longer-term therapy and assessments, is an extension of our reputable mental health treatment services.

Elbow Springs Counselling is our first and only private counselling clinic and it is located in Calgary's Mission community – 2424 4th Street S.W. Elbow Springs was established after years of getting requests from the community for longer-term therapy and quicker assessments. And these requests have only grown in the past few months, as Calgarians continue to grapple with the mental health effects of COVID-19.

There was clearly a gap for this type of service in the community. So with some innovative thinking, Wood's Homes decided it was time to offer counselling services for those who are prepared to pay an hourly fee and who do not want to contend with lengthy waitlists. Elbow Springs Counselling is operated by our agency with clinicians and therapists who are qualified to offer mental health treatment services.

Elbow Springs provides support to children, adults, couples, individuals and families. Therapists are ready to help with a variety of different issues such as anxiety, depression, family conflict and difficult child behaviour.

We welcome you to take a tour of this warm and welcoming space by [clicking here](#).

To learn more or schedule an appointment, please visit elbowspringscounselling.ca or call **403-454-0166**.

COVID-19 tested parents: Tips to guide your dating teen

“They spend all day on their phone texting their boyfriend and I feel like they’re shutting me out.”

Over this past year, the crisis counselling team at our Eastside Community Mental Health Services received several calls from frustrated parents of adolescents and teens who are learning how to find their way in the world amid COVID-19.

There was an increased concern about their mental health due to the pandemic’s many social restrictions. And social connection is so important to young people.

Helping them to learn and understand the signs of healthy and unhealthy friendships/relationships builds a solid foundation for conversation around dating and romance.

Connecting with our teens about this is not impossible – it just takes a different type of conversation.

Stay calm, listen without judgement and remember to thank your teen for having these conversations with you.

A recent post on this topic on the Wood’s Homes Blog proved to be popular among our stakeholders.

Click [here](#) for some tips and ways to talk with your teen about these things.....



All About Our Clients

GENDER (%)

PROGRAM AREA	MALE	FEMALE	OTHER	Unknown
Crisis & Counselling Service	29.3	67.9	0.2	2.6
Housing & Hub Services	53.8	38.9	5.1	2.2
Health Programs: Parkdale	26.5	65.4	8%	0.1
Foster Care & CSD (Collaborative Service Delivery)	51	43	0.5	5.4
Learning Centres	51.6	42.8	5.3	0.3
Therapeutic Campus-Based Care	73.2	26.8	N/A	N/A
Community Group Care	53.1	41.5	5.4	N/A

AGE (%)

PROGRAM AREA	12 & Under	13 - 17	18 - 24	25 - 39	40+	Unknown
Crisis & Counselling Service	5.5	16.7	5.6	13.6	17.6	40.9
Housing & Hub Services	2.5	23.2	28.4	4.3	N/A	41.5
Health Programs: Parkdale	31.5	68.3	0.2	N/A	N/A	N/A
Foster Care & CSD (Collaborative Service Delivery)	77.7	21.2	1.1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Learning Centres	42.8	55.3	2	N/A	N/A	N/A
TCBC (Therapeutic Campus-Based Care)	37.1	59.8	3.1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Community Group Care	33.1	62.3	4.6	N/A	N/A	N/A

HERITAGE (%)

PROGRAM AREA	Caucasian	Indigenous	Asian	African/Caribbean	Other	Unknown
Crisis & Counselling Service	41.3	1.2	8.8	1.8	2.9	44
Housing & Hub Services	51.7	36.8	3.4	3.2	2.1	2.8
Health Programs: Parkdale	68.5	5.7	13.5	4.1	7.2	1
Foster Care & CSD (Collaborative Service Delivery)	55.5	17.9	3.1	8.5	5	10
Learning Centres	64.1	15.1	6.9	6.9	4.6	2.3
TCBC (Therapeutic Campus-Based Care)	46.4	42.3	4.1	4.1	3.1	N/A
Community Group Care	60.8	22.3	7.7	4.6	4.6	N/A

In 2020-2021 Wood's Homes Programs Served 18,407 Clients

PROGRAM AREA	Unique Clients	Served Clients
Crisis & Counselling Service	--	14,426
Housing & Hub Services	--	1,579
Health Programs: Parkdale	584	873
Foster Care & CSD (Collaborative Service Delivery)	753	814
Learning Centres	304	324
TCBC (Therapeutic Campus-Based Care)	97	233
Community Group Care	130	158

GUIDE

Crisis & Counselling Service: [Eastside Community Mental Health Services](#)

Housing & Hub Services: [Inglewood Opportunity Hub](#), [Lethbridge](#) & [Fort McMurray](#) programs

Health Programs Parkdale: Several programs offered in partnership with Alberta Health Services on our Parkdale campus, including [Acute@Home](#)

Learning Centres: To learn about our schools and educational programs, [click here](#)

CSD & Foster Care: [Family Support Network](#) & [Foster Care](#)

Community Group Care: Programs operating [Therapeutic Community Care](#) & [Therapeutic Campus-Based Care](#)

Maintaining connection in a pandemic

At Wood's Homes, we regularly host a number of events that enhance our cultural and spiritual connection, such as community gatherings, drumming groups, round dances, pow-wows and ceremonies. The Indigenous cultural connection we create supports us on our healing journey and helps our clients and staff stay well.

This past year we have observed fear and loss, and experienced many challenges with maintaining cultural connection during COVID-19.

Although this sense of connection has looked different, we remain hopeful and continue to do this incredibly important work. COVID-19 has forced us to postpone events or conduct them online in order to keep us safe. It's been hard for some of the children as they truly enjoy our gatherings. These limitations have also been difficult on our Elders and knowledge-keepers, as we have had to limit physical contact.

During a ceremony, we have an amazing physical and spiritual connection with living objects such as a talking stick. Normally, we would bring the talking stick around, hold it to

our hearts and feel a deep connection to the living object. But over the past year, we have had to sanitize it diligently, keep our distance and wear masks.

All this has forced us to ask: How do we preserve the specialness and sacredness of these living objects that are important for our cultural and spiritual connection? How do we continue these ceremonies without diminishing the sacredness of it through our COVID-19 practices? How do we maintain our cultural and spiritual connection in a virtual world? How do we wake up the spirit inside of ourselves and share it with those who need it?

“I do feel hopeful with what COVID-19 has brought, because we have found new, creative and expansive ways to connect. Learning about Indigenous culture virtually and online means that it is more accessible. This is a positive thing.”

-Tye Rhyno, Supervisor, Indigenous Cultural Services



Calgary hit record-setting temperatures on Nov. 2, 2020 – reaching 23.1 C – the warmest November temperature in history. Indigenous Cultural Services Supervisor Tye Rhyno took full advantage, taking this photo of the gorgeous skies over the Bowness campus horizon.

Proudly serving our Indigenous clients

42.3% of the young people we work with on the Bowness campus are Indigenous.

36.8% of the young people at our Inglewood Opportunity Hub are Indigenous.

22.3% of the youth in our community-based therapeutic treatment programs are Indigenous.

In Alberta 10% of the child population is Indigenous and yet they make up 69% of children and youth in care.



Our hearts are hurting over the discovery of the hundreds of Indigenous children buried on the sites of former residential schools. Wood's Homes extends our sympathy and solidarity to the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc, to residential school survivors and to Indigenous Peoples everywhere. Our thoughts and prayers go out to all who have been impacted and we join all Canadians as we come to terms with such a tragic, heartbreaking part of our history. We remain in prayer as we offer tobacco for these children who are no longer missing.

Our Outreach in Lethbridge

Working with vulnerable children, youth and families in a global pandemic created some challenges for clients and staff in our Lethbridge programs.

Our agency was forced to deliver essential services in new ways, while at the same time maintaining safety for everyone and aligning with essential public health guidelines.

When COVID-19 took hold, many people who live without a safe place to stay lost their means of support, employment and even social interaction. The places that these individuals typically frequent for a meal, counselling or educational services were forced to close their doors. This created a lack of safety and isolation for an already vulnerable population.

So Lethbridge staff promptly kicked into gear by providing mobile services - heading into communities to bring food, hygiene kits, clothing and other essentials to struggling young people and their families.

On-site staff was kept to a minimum but anyone who was able to come to our doors was provided immediate support. Along with mobile outreach, support was provided virtually.

The Family and Natural Supports program stayed connected with clients by phone, text and video conferencing.

Services at the shelter were limited; every other bed is closed to allow for distancing. Each youth is assessed on a case by case basis to determine if the shelter is the best option and if they have a safe day plan. But youth who arrive in need of help are provided basic needs support at the door, such as food and hygiene items.

Staff are in daily contact with vulnerable families and in-person deliveries of essential needs are being provided. These deliveries include grocery gift cards, educational activities, outdoor activity items, phones and phone minutes, household items, donated food and meals prepared by staff. Hot spots are identified on an ongoing basis with staff monitoring child protection concerns and increasing supports where indicated. This is in place for all families and foster homes and we continue to support placement stability in collaboration with Children's Services.

We invite you to learn more about the ways we help vulnerable populations in Lethbridge by [clicking here](#).



A Story that keeps us Inspired!

"I moved to Lethbridge with my son about four years ago – fleeing an abusive relationship.

I was scared and anxious as I didn't have a housing plan but knew moving was the best thing for us. I was transitioning into single parenthood and was unsure what the future would hold for us.

During this time of uncertainty, I was introduced to Wood's Homes Housing First Team and placed into the Stabilization Unit Program. Wood's Homes met our needs while we got on our feet. They did daily check-ins on us and during this time we began to build a trusting relationship with the staff. My son still recalls how kind they were to him and often talks up *"the nice lady who helped us"*.

It was scary living in a city away from my family and community, but with the support I received from Wood's Homes it was easier to keep moving forward. During this time, I was able to build confidence and the skills I needed to move out on my own.

I have been successfully housed for three years and within this last year with the help of Wood's Homes, I moved into Community Housing. During this time, they helped me connect and navigate community resources and with their continuous support I have been able to focus on healing from my past trauma.

I have become more confident as a mother and know we can make it through any situation that is thrown at us. I have been able to provide my son with the stability he needs and

in return, he is thriving and has even been able to make some neighborhood friends - something he struggled with in the past.

When I wanted to enroll back into school to complete my high school education, Wood's Homes was there to support and encourage me every step of the way. The staff have been there for me in ways that I didn't think were imaginable. When I tell my friends and family about Wood's Homes, I often explain them as the Family you never had. They are there to guide you through confusing and difficult times and will encourage you to get to the place where you want to be.

I have now graduated from their Housing First Program but I know they are always a phone call or text away if I need them. As my grandfather would say *"iikaakimaak"* meaning try hard and that's what I was able to do and continue to do now independently with the support of Wood's Homes. I can't tell you the feeling my son and I get waking up in our own home and seeing all the amazing things we accomplished over the past three years. This is just the beginning and I will not settle for anything less.

I want everyone to know that anyone can move away from toxic relationships, get the support and the help they need and get where they need to be. Wood's Homes is a great place to begin your journey."

"This is just the beginning and I will not settle for anything less."



The Voices of Clients Always Guide our Work

Wood's Homes has been providing crisis and counselling services at Eastside Family Centre since 1990. We were the first agency to offer no-charge, walk-in counselling in Canada. Since then, this service model has been replicated across the country.

The past three decades have seen some service reconfigurations, but this past year a merger took place. Eastside Family Centre and the Community Resource Team merged into **Eastside Community Mental Health Services**. Along with this, we refocused our service delivery.

Clients told us the mental health system can be difficult to navigate and they wanted help in doing so. They also want to speak with the same therapist for extended visits.

So today, anyone calling the new Eastside will immediately be connected with a counsellor who then will help steer the caller to the best mental health service.

Just call **403-299-9699**. Callers can also book their own **virtual therapy online**.

Northgate Mall, Calgary #255, 495 36 Street N.E.

We've been at this location since 1990. We're happy to announce that as we move past the COVID-19 pandemic, as of June 18, our in-person services have begun to resume. Call **403-299-9699** to book an appointment.



Our Inglewood Campus in Calgary 1008 14 Street S.E.

Our walk-in counselling services will also resume here as of June 18. Our agency has been working at this location, which we call the **Inglewood Opportunity Hub**, since 2018.



Calgary Central Library (Wellness Desk) 800 3rd Street S.E.

Eastside services are also available here via our new partnership with the Library. Visitors to the library are welcome to visit the Wellness Desk for no-charge counselling services.

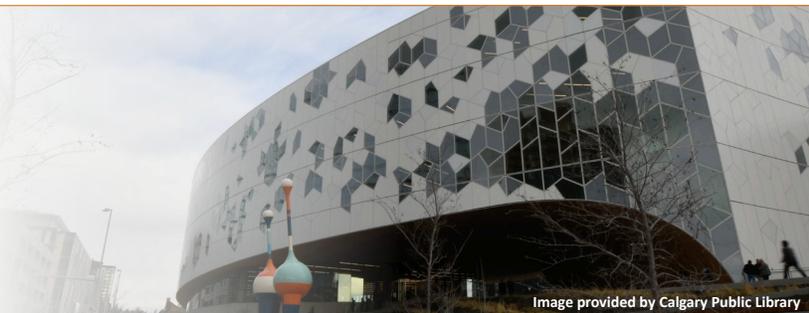


Image provided by Calgary Public Library

We invite you to learn more about **Eastside Community Mental Health Services** by watching [this video](#).

Eastside provided more than **14,000** virtual and in-person mental health supports over this past year. We are seeing the effects of COVID on the individuals, couples and families we

work with – people who were already facing extraordinary challenges. We are here to help.

There are many different ways to receive counselling: **Phone, Text, LiveChat or e-therapy**.

Research: Pros & Cons of the Virtual World

All health and human services organizations – including Wood’s Homes – have been challenged to keep pace with evolving public health policy and protocols over the past year. This, while maintaining focus on the effective delivery of our mental health services.

Challenges within our sector have been even more striking as there is a need to maintain services, increase innovative practice and respond to new mental health challenges with less fiscal and community resources.

The innovations within our 40+ programs and services have produced much knowledge and learning.

A project, designed by our Research Department, was initiated to document 2 things:

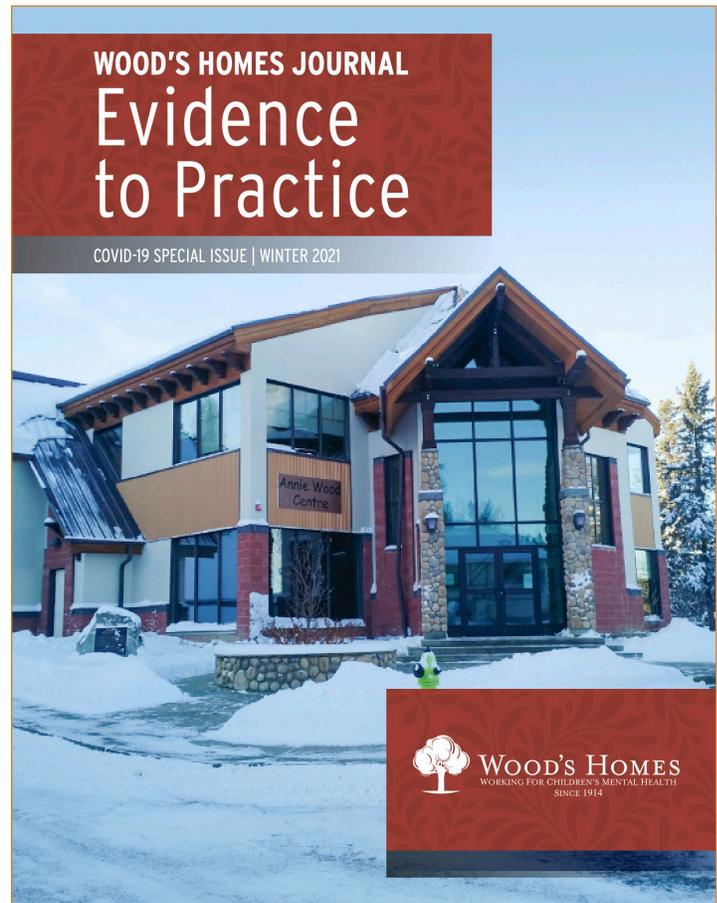
1. **What our staff learned about innovations to service delivery during COVID-19.**
2. **How Best Practices would be informed by these innovations in the future**

The findings were published in a special issue of the **Wood’s Homes Journal – Evidence to Practice** which documents the experiences of clinicians, frontline staff, managers and Centralized Services staff. **The issue:**

1. **Showcases the innovative work happening within our agency.**
2. **Provides frontline staff with access to best practice literature.**
3. **Makes a contribution to the emerging knowledge, and assist other children’s mental health organizations, in both private and not-for-profit realms, with this critical work in Canada.**

In the end, virtual training and engagement has seen considerable integration within Wood’s Homes. As we are now starting to see a lift of restrictions (at the time of this writing), we will need to ask ourselves to what extent we would like to keep our virtual means of training and knowledge-sharing.

The impersonal nature of virtual communication is one that does not seamlessly integrate well into services with foundations in building connections and relationships.



We invite you to read the Journal by clicking [here](#).

[Visit our Research Department online!](#)



However it cannot be denied that the ease of access, ability to maintain services in unexpected circumstances, and the comfort of remaining in familiar environments are all important benefits that should be embraced where and when appropriate.

There is always hope that lessons learned in these unprecedented times continue to grow our ability to adapt to changing circumstances.

Research in a time of COVID-19



Dr. Angelique Jenney was about to launch a new research project on the use of simulation in teaching clinical skills, just when COVID-19 struck. It forced all classes to move online.

Eager not to lose momentum, she worked quickly with her team to pilot the use of simulation within an online learning format. Dr. Jenney says the students were remarkably receptive and this component of her courses was a great success.

In a time when so few students were able to practise their skills in real life practicum experiences, having the chance to meet with a client (played by an actor) online in real time and receive immediate supportive coaching and feedback was a welcome change for students. Many of them had reported experiencing Zoom fatigue among other mental health issues when they lost the opportunity to interact in-person with other students and faculty members.

Last year alone, **138** students had the opportunity to interact with a simulated client scenario. Part of this project has

been designed to understand what is defined as **procedural competencies** – what complex practice behaviours actually look like.

Through this research, Dr. Jenney says they have been able to identify expected levels of practice for students at the BSW and MSW levels in order to inform curriculum design and training needs for professionals.

In July 2021, professionals from across Canada are being recruited to participate in the simulation scenario (our data collection process has now been refined for an online environment). This is to collect further data of what such behaviours look like with experienced practitioners – again, lending to the development of further training resources for students and researchers alike.

Wood's Homes staff have also had an opportunity to experience simulation in a training session and more are planned. Dr. Jenney is working closely with staff to bring this into everyday practice for training purposes in models of intervention. This would include single-session therapy at [Eastside Community Mental Health Services](#), and the integration of the Three Pillars models in the live-in treatment programs on the agency's Bowness campus.

About the Children's Mental Health Simulation Project

This involves creating a simulation lab for social work students to help them practise the skills they need to work with clients and families. This project is made possible through the generous financial support of one our agency's

longtime Board members and his spouse. It is a partnership between Wood's Homes and the University of Calgary's Faculty of Social Work.



Moving to Virtual Work

COVID-19 forced many of the staff to move online in their work supporting clients and their families.

The challenge? Are we able to maintain our standards of excellence with a shift to working virtually?

Our ever-curious Research Department began distributing monthly surveys (October, 2020 - March 2021) to approximately 30 Wood's Homes staff who care for clients in various programs to find out what they appreciated most about connecting with their clients online and what, if any, the barriers were.

Results of the survey demonstrated:

- Close to 50% of staff said virtual technology allowed them to see and support more clients than previously.
- Virtual platforms were used mostly by staff who visit clients in the home; and provide support with interventions and safety.
- Staff who support students in our schools, who train other staff or who provide support with interventions and safety planning, indicated that working virtually provided the same or better outcomes pre-pandemic.

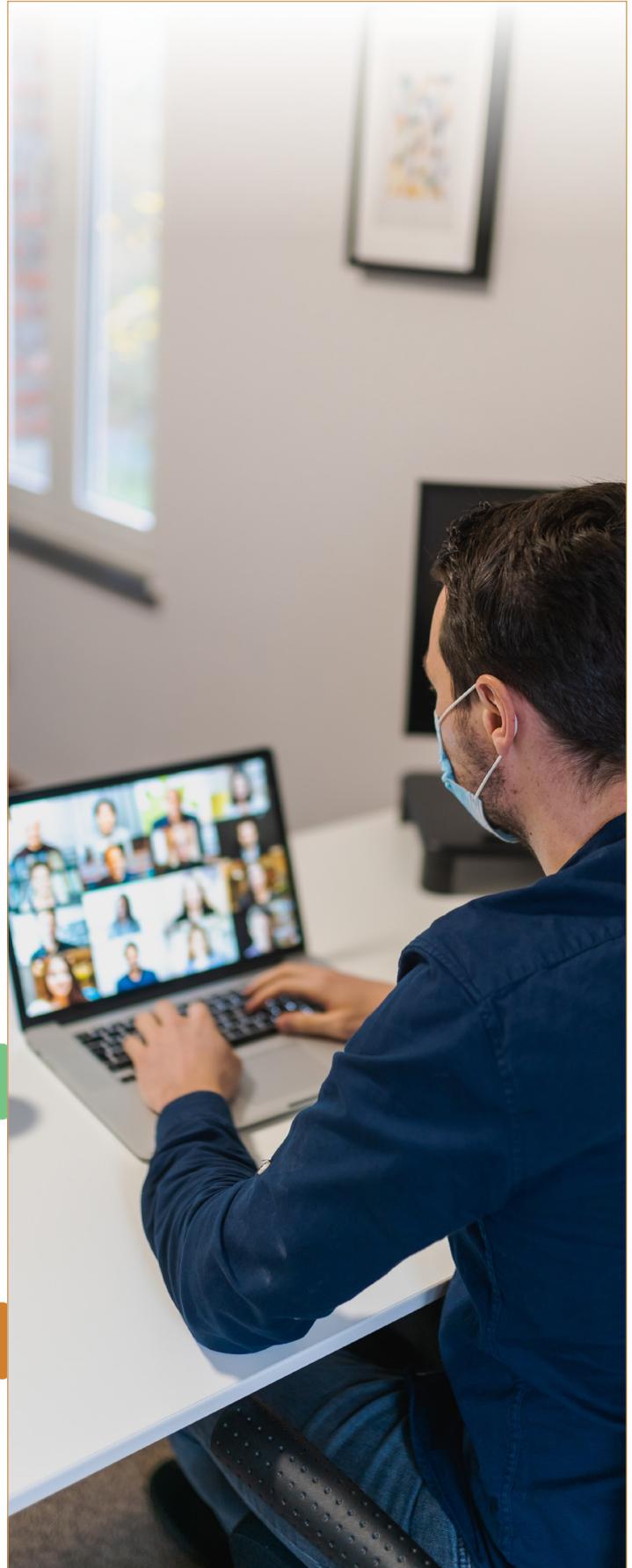
THUMBS UP

- 82.3% of staff indicated they felt they were saving time by working with their clients virtually
- 63.2% felt more accessible to families (transportation not an issue)
- 61.7% appreciated being able to share content over a screen with their clients



THUMBS DOWN

- 78.7% of respondents said there were challenges with technical barriers between them and their clients
- 61.8% indicated difficulty in gauging client affect, body language



This project and the Special Issue, were made possible through public donations to the Wood's Homes Foundation by community donors who were interested in understanding the impact of COVID-19 on service innovations to children, youth and families at Wood's Homes. Funding was also made available through [Frayme](#).

Inglewood Opportunity Hub

Mental Health | Housing | Employment

Wood's Homes has a history of working with homeless youth – dating back to 1990.

Our agency was among the first in Alberta to provide shelter to multi-barriered youth, many of whom are living on the street for various reasons. Today, we work with this population in Calgary, Lethbridge and Fort McMurray.

In the last year, our Calgary services, which were relocated to Calgary's Inglewood community in 2018, have been reconfigured to better meet the needs of these youth.

They are mostly looking for help with their **mental health**, **housing** and **employment support**. These are now our 3 primary areas of service focus. The building and these services are referred to as the **Inglewood Opportunity Hub**.

Among the services provided in this 30,000-square foot space is temporary accommodation for 11 vulnerable young people in the second-floor apartment units. 24/7 staff provide help with mental and physical health, addictions counselling, employment and housing.

When the pandemic first began in March 2020, the program was forced to temporarily suspend walk-in access to our Inglewood campus, where vulnerable young people typically arrive looking for help.

But staff there were determined not to leave our clients out in the cold with no supports. So they headed out in the program van three times a week to deliver food hampers (in accordance with safe practices). More than 350 hampers, 90 hygiene kits and 50 first aid kits were distributed to our clients in the downtown core and surrounding areas. Between April and August, 352 youth were provided with crisis and social support. And help continues to this day in various ways – including virtually.

Wood's Homes is no stranger to challenges, and with thanks to our loyal staff and our community of supporters, we are well able to continue our mission to help children, youth and families with their mental health needs.

[Click here](#) for an incredibly inspiring story from a client named Dez at our Inglewood Opportunity Hub.



Supporting Youth through a Winning Recipe



Our Inglewood Opportunity Hub (located in Calgary's Inglewood community since 2018) is also home to our popular [Youth Culinary Arts Program](#) (YCAP) which we started in 2012.

In this program, vulnerable young people interested in working in the hospitality sector receive training under the guidance of a Red Seal Chef – training that prepares them for work in the culinary field. A counsellor works alongside to help with any mental health challenges including addictions.

Over this past year, YCAP decided to act on an idea. Why not start a community market? And so we are incredibly proud to announce that the market will open in July!

The culinary students will soon be selling their quality, homemade food and goods to the public which has already fully embraced this exciting Social Enterprise.

The YCAP Market will give clients experience in customer service, budget and time management. It also encourages independence and accountability to the culinary team. And clients earn an income as part of Wood's Homes commitment to job placement for these vulnerable youth.

We couldn't be more excited and anticipate customers lining up for the ever-popular Butter Chicken, homemade pickles, pies, jams and soups.

For a look at one client's journey from a challenging life, to his time at Wood's Homes and the YCAP program, to his now promising future, [Click here](#).

A chalkboard sign on a wooden stand, leaning against a wall. The sign has handwritten text in various colors: "Welcome" in white cursive at the top, "To a" in pink, "Tasting of the" in purple, and "YCAP Menu!" in green. There are also white decorative flourishes, including a leafy branch and a chef's hat.

Welcome
To a
Tasting of the
YCAP Menu!

Understanding & Supporting Culture

Wood's Homes [Foster Care Network](#) has gained a solid reputation for its training and support of foster parents who provide temporary safe placement for more than **150** foster children every year.

More than **95%** of our foster parents are from the Philippines, program manager Camella Magulike, says each of them are "incredible and patient caregivers".

Indigenous youth make up approximately **60%** of the children in our foster care program, so cultural support is very important and is actually an expectation of Alberta Children's Services.

Smudging is part of Indigenous practice but is sometimes not fully embraced by our Filipino foster parents as it does not align with their own religious beliefs.

Wood's Homes reached out to our friends at [ActionDignity](#) for advice, to support our understanding around this,

through an ethno-cultural lens. Rubirose Ong, Program Co-ordinator for INDIE (INitiative for Diversity, Inclusion & Equity) for Alberta Nonprofits shared her experience as a Filipino parent, and her professional insights working with diverse communities at ActionDignity. Ave Maria Beltran, Wood's Homes Community Engagement Co-ordinator also shared personal experience on what it was like growing up in a Filipino-Canadian household.

While their personal and professional experiences do not fully represent the diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences of our foster parents, the conversation did highlight the importance of using an ethno-cultural lens to ensure services and engagements are effective and of course, equitable.

The Foster Care Network found the sharing of this important conversation incredibly helpful. The staff shared their takeaways and next steps:

- **Do not to make assumptions about the culture as homogenous, as it looks different in households.**
- **Organize other opportunities for connection such as a virtual cooking activity or sharing of recipes.**
- **Although we are always working with our foster parents to maintain the cultural connections for our clients, it is also important to continue to learn how these expectations fit with our foster parents' culture, as well as support their learning.**
- **Ask more questions, be curious and learn more about them and the important values they uphold.**
- **Review SAFE assessments (this is a thorough assessment they completed to become foster parents) which speaks to their experiences.**
- **Connect with foster parents and ask for ideas around what else we can be doing to support them in their journey as foster parents.**



Financials

Wood's Homes operations and capital spending are financed in a number of different ways. We receive government funding, operating grants, fee-for-service arrangements, fundraising activities and donations.

Detailed financial reports can be found [HERE](#).



■ Alberta Children's Services - 53.9%	\$21M
■ Alberta Health Services - 14%	\$5.5M
■ Fee-For-Service - 9.7%	\$3.8M
■ Other - 7.3%	\$2.9M
■ PDD - 7%	\$2.7M
■ Ministry of Health - 3.7%	\$1.5M
■ School Boards - 2.6%	\$1.0M
■ Wood's Homes Foundation - 1.9%	\$0.7M



■ Salaries & Benefits - 77.7%	\$30.3M
■ Direct Client - 8.3%	\$3.3M
■ Facility - 6.5%	\$2.6M
■ Administrative - 4.4%	\$1.7M
■ Amortization - 2.6%	\$1.0M
■ Interest Expenses - 0.3%	\$0.1M

Our Mission

We create and provide quality mental health services that promote and restore the well-being of children and families who struggle with problems big and small.

Our Vision

A world that values and nurtures the mental health of all people and when needed, ensures quality, timely help for all.

Our Values

Wood's Homes values human beings and the place they occupy in the world at any given moment. In doing so, we uphold the following principles and is guided by them in all of its moment-by-moment interactions:

Commitment

An unwavering persistence even in the most difficult situations, guided by a call to service and expectations of excellence.

Respect

An appreciation of differences and cultural diversity a belief in the inherent good of each and every individual.

Belonging

Acceptance and encouragement of the very basic human need to be connected with others and the development of a collective and inclusive organizational culture.

Responsibility

Combining the courage to be accountable with the power of vulnerability and forgiveness.

Leadership

Strive for excellence, work with others and lead by example.

Trustworthiness

Tell the truth with compassion; be honest, open and dependable.

Trailblazers

Over the last year, Wood's Homes was faced with positive COVID-19 cases in our live-in programs. Dealing with this challenge, senior leadership put out a call to all staff looking for 'trailblazers' - frontline workers who were prepared to join Wood's Homes Pandemic Team and who were able to commit to working (up to one month) in a program where there was a positive COVID-19 case.

The callout was seen as a rather unique opportunity – both challenging and emotionally provoking. It was also a good example of how the agency was looking to learn more about managing staffing and client care in times of a pandemic for future generations.

Ibrahim's Experience

"When I first saw the email that invited staff to join Wood's Homes Pandemic Team, I was a little apprehensive. If I raised my hand, I was worried about the risk posed to my family should I get infected. I was also apprehensive about working in full (and often uncomfortable) PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) for 12-hour shifts.

But after taking a day to think about it and discussing it with my family, I decided to step forward – and was able to have a great and valuable experience with other members of the Pandemic Team.

When I walked through the doors of the program, I was happy to see that the Team Leader was among those on the team. That alone reassured me about the kind of support that would be available to me and the rest of the staff. Moreover, my worry about wearing full PPE for 12 hours was lifted when I heard that we were only scheduled for nine-hour shifts with an overlapping rotation. The PPE was a little uncomfortable, but I became used to wearing it within my first shift.

The Wood's Homes family was more supportive than I could ever have imagined. The united efforts and wonderful spirit of the staff was extremely evident in the love and support we received every day – from cooked meals to the positive messages we regularly received. Adjacent programs spared no efforts in making us feel supported, which encouraged us throughout the entire process. They expressed their care by sending treats, food, drinks, any gear we needed and a variety of thoughtful items to help pass the time. Additionally, having Team Leaders both inside and outside the program made sure that all of our needs were met in a time-sensitive manner.

It was such a great experience and if I were to be called back for duty, I would seriously consider doing it again. I would encourage all front-line staff to volunteer, just so that they get to experience all the love and support from the Wood's Homes family that we did."

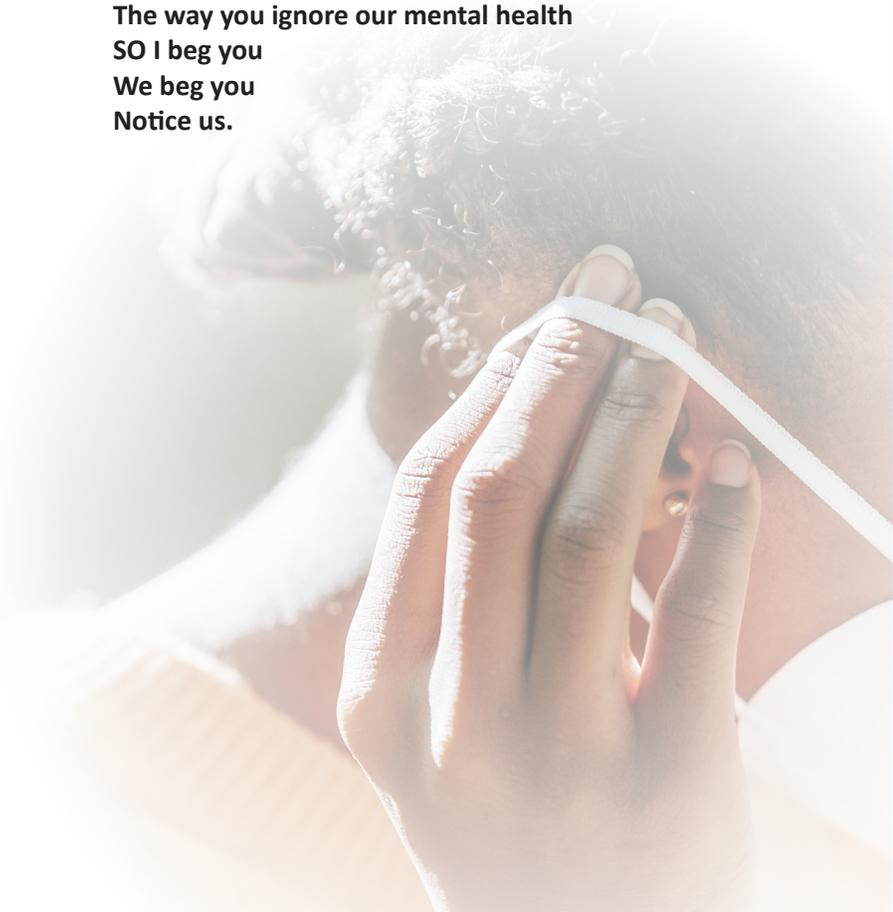


Notice Us...

Written by a William Taylor Learning Centre student

"I know, I'm anxious too"
Mental health is subjective
But during corona, it's a choice
That is what they are thinking at least
Stay inside,
We want you to isolate yourself
Words like lemon juice in a papercut
Inside my room
Inside my head
Inside my insecurities
"It will all be over soon"
But it wasn't, the issue is ongoing
Work restrictions
Sports restrictions
Social restrictions
Our distractions are taken away
But the economy is crashing so make the sacrifice
Money is the anthem of success
Money trump's mental health
We are hurting but we are ignored
Thrown between online learning and in-person learning
like children passing a ball for fun
But this is not fun
We are not laughing
We are dying to be noticed
"Leave it to the adults," they say
The statistics are growing
Growing
Growing like our fears
We are losing our childhoods
We are losing our family members

When will things get better?
When will you notice that illness is not just physical?
Corona is not the only illness killing
Scared to speak up
Scared to feel judged
Loneliness.
When in isolation your thoughts are overcoming
Feelings are numbing
But everyone is struggling
With money, love, health
We all have demons
We need to escape this never-ending hell
Covid is like a sleeping pill
Sleep is inevitable
But the pill speeds up the process
No one wants to admit they are not okay
Less power they say
You cannot be accepted for who you are if you do not fit
society's standards
But do things change when the pandemic is damaging
society's youth?
If we are not heard
If we keep getting deferred
Our futures will be blurred
The pandemic is extensive
But it's getting offensive
The way you ignore our mental health
SO I beg you
We beg you
Notice us.



Do you, or does someone you know need to talk?

Call: 403-299-9699 / 1-800-563-6106

Text: 587-315-5000

LiveChat: [woodshomes.ca/LiveChat](https://www.woodshomes.ca/LiveChat)

Email: etherapy@woodshomes.ca

[woodshomes.ca](https://www.woodshomes.ca)



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