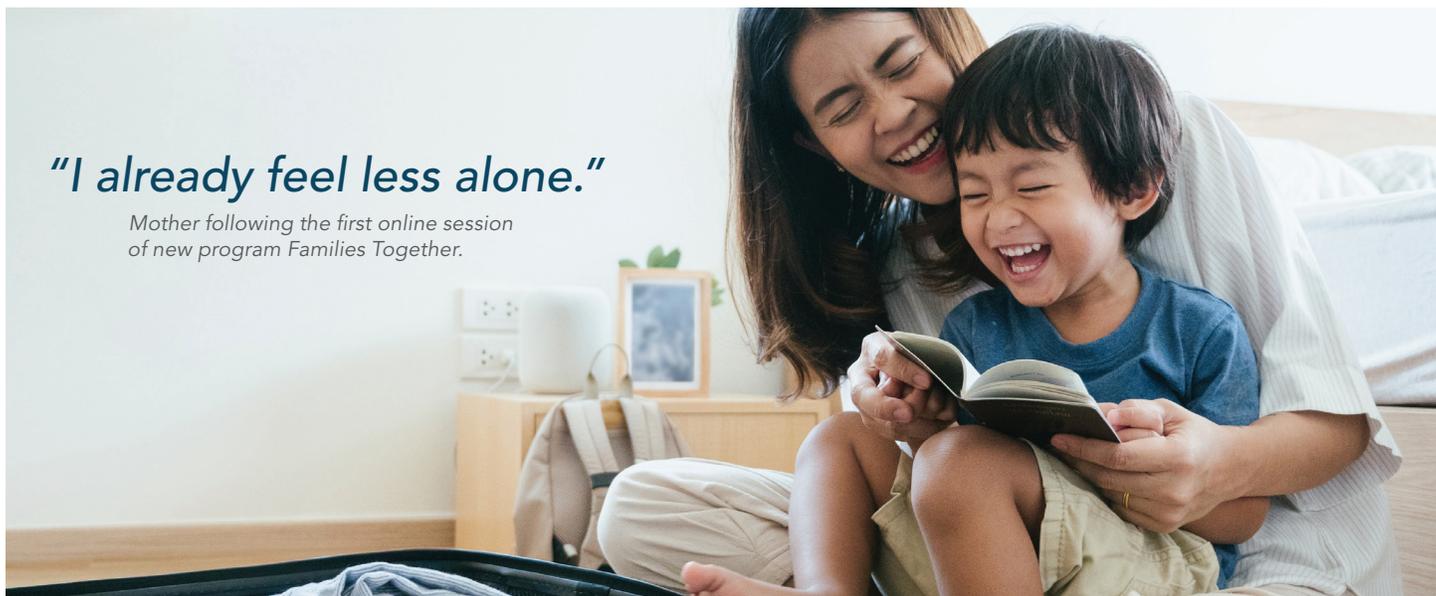


"I already feel less alone."

Mother following the first online session of new program Families Together.



CATHOLIC FAMILY SERVICE

Year at a Glance 2020: Families First



Families had it tough in 2020. One in five Albertans were facing mental health or addictions issues, available resources for social services continued to decrease, and Alberta was weathering year six of an oil bust.

Then came COVID-19. Close on the heels of COVID chaos was the 'shadow pandemic', a collective mental health crisis complicated by restrictions that reduced access to affordable mental health care.

Working Alongside Families to Meet Needs

Families retreated to the home, and when they could, went online. Catholic Family Service (CFS) shifted alongside them. An agency focus on 'being better in all we do' in 2019 helped smooth the transition. In the pages that follow, you will find highlights of how CFS worked alongside families to meet their needs in 2020.

Building a Resilient Community through Collaboration

Putting families first during COVID-19 accelerated a need for collaboration within the non-profit sector, within CFS, and as a community. In July, CEO Patricia Jones moved on to the Calgary Homeless Foundation. Her parting sentiments were kind and encouraging – her decision to leave was eased by her confidence in the strength of CFS.

We adopted a collaborative leadership model. As we stepped into Co-CEO roles, we found that the CFS culture of collaboration – at the sector, agency, staff, and leadership levels – was also well-suited to the CEO role, where we work as a team. We are grateful for the bravery, work, and resilience of our clients and staff, our volunteers and Board members, our funders and donors, our agency peers and supporters – and the ever more people who join us each day.

If it takes a village to raise a child, as the saying goes, then it takes a community to build strong families. Thank you for walking alongside us in 2020 – we are grateful for your company in 2021.

Byron Chan and Jessica Cope Williams,
Co-CEOs



Putting the needs of **FAMILIES** first by Enhancing Mental Health and Well-Being

COVID-19 created a surge in family needs for services while accelerating a few key trends non-profits have faced for years: challenges in revenue generation, sectoral isolation due to a lack of transformational partnerships, and implementation of technological infrastructure. To address family needs during this crisis, CFS moved quickly to collaborate across the sector to design services that were easier to find, access, and afford – and all supported by mental health grants, donations and COVID-19 related funding.

Here are some of the ways CFS sought to reduce mental health care barriers in 2020.

- Community Connect YYC: Launched at the end of August 2020: 840 sessions were attended across all partners.
- Rural Rapid Access Counselling: August to December 2020: 98 attended sessions, booked from 17 Alberta communities outside of Calgary.
- Rapid Access Counselling: 1735 attended sessions.

Seeking Counselling for COVID-19 Anxiety through Rapid Access Counselling

A client sought strategies for managing anxiety related to COVID-19. Anxiety was interfering with her life.

In a Rapid Access Counselling session, a CFS counsellor worked with the client to identify coping strategies, including exercise, deep breathing, and meditation. After receiving education on the body's stress response, the client was relieved to learn anxiety is normal, and experienced by most people.

At the end of the session, the client reported feeling more capable in using strategies to manage her stressors.



A young boy with short, dark, curly hair is smiling broadly, leaning his head against a woman. The woman, who has dark hair pulled back, is also smiling and has her arms around the boy. They are both wearing white t-shirts. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Community Connect YYC

Transforming the norms of access to affordable counselling and beyond: CommunityConnectYYC.ca is the one-stop website for Calgarians seeking supports.

A pre-COVID-19 project that CFS pioneered in 2019, CommunityConnectYYC.ca is a collaboration of non-profit agencies providing essential social services. Calgarians visit the site, click on a service, and book an appointment. It is that simple. This site eliminates the burden of navigating a complex system scattered among many agencies when seeking help in a time of crisis.

In August, CFS launched CommunityConnectYYC.ca, alongside four agency partners. By December, 10 agencies offered 16 services and Calgarians had attended 840 appointments.

More than just a new program or service collaboration, CommunityConnectYYC.ca is contributing to a new mental health care system in the city. The project is detailed in the 2021-2023 Calgary Mental Health and Addiction Community Strategy and Action Plan.



Putting the needs of **FAMILIES** first by Empowering Parents

Parents had to deal not only with their own stress, anxiety, and work or studying issues, but also those of their children. Many parents shared a need for connection. CFS sought to meet family needs by redesigning programs to go online. In some cases, this helped more than one parent or caregiver attend a session, and relieved the stress of travel for evening programs.

Ways parents were empowered in 2020:

- To help families connect and reduce stress during the pandemic, Families Together was piloted in the fall of 2020. Families Together drew on the in-person programs Families & Schools Together (a family skills program recognized by the United Nations) and Crew (a mentorship program that matches student-athletes from universities with youth).
- 26 families attended Families Together between September 2020 and November 2020.
- Programs serving young parents at Louise Dean Centre also went online, including Parenting Together (a parenting skills program), Youth Fair Gains (a financial literacy skills group) and Fathers Moving Forward.
- In 2020, Louise Dean Centre pursued new collaborative partnerships. These include The Alex, CUPS, The YW, St. Vincent de Paul – Central Council, and Miskanawah. These, together with our longstanding partnerships with CBE, AHS, and Commons Church, ensured that young parents continued to receive the supports they needed throughout the rapidly evolving year.

Fathers Moving Forward

Serving Young Fathers Essential (not Optional) in Building Strong Families

Young fathers are an underserved population, as supports often focus on young mothers. Louise Dean Centre began serving young fathers in 2015 through the Fathers Moving Forward program.

Learnings from five years of running Fathers Moving Forward has led to a greater understanding of the needs of vulnerable young fathers, challenges they face, and their deep love for their children. Serving young fathers is essential in building strong families, and Louise Dean Centre is working to change deeply entrenched beliefs about fathers in the lives of their children – challenging cultural narratives that cast young dads as optional.

This work has broadened who is served at Louise Dean Centre with young fathers work being integrated into broader supports: 29 young fathers were supported through individual counselling and parenting support, and 25 clients were served through co-parenting groups, including 16 young mothers and 9 fathers. Between the Counselling and Social Support team and the Fathers Moving Forward program, 151 referrals were made to external agencies. This includes over 100 external agencies such as Awo Taan Healing Lodge, Calgary Housing, Calgary Food Bank, Women In Need and The Alex.





Putting the needs of **FAMILIES** first by Nurturing Children's Healthy Development

Carrying on with school and work was a challenge before COVID-19, but more so during the pandemic. At Louise Dean Centre, supports are provided to young pregnant and parenting high school students, as well as parents under 26.

During the pandemic, students went online in the spring. Parent and Tot Zoom Sessions were held three days a week for five weeks during closures due to COVID. Each session included songs, books, activities, finger plays, and some sign language words that accompanied the books and songs. These sessions were designed to coach families on how to support their child's development at home. There was also a Q and A session where families were encouraged to ask any questions that they might have around child development, play, parenting, and more.

How healthy development in children was nurtured:

- 95% of young mothers at Louise Dean Centre reported increased knowledge of positive child development.
- 100% of respondents in two virtual Parenting Together Groups run by Louise Dean Centre reported an increase in understanding how their child's brain develops.
- 136 pregnant and parenting adolescents from Louise Dean Centre received nutrition consultations with the dietician.
- The Parent-Child Learning Centre at Louise Dean Centre offers an enriched learning environment for infants, toddlers (age six weeks to 35 months) and young mothers (age 20 and younger) who are registered at the Louise Dean Centre.

Pantry to Plate

Every Thursday, students at Louise Dean Centre can take part in Pantry to Plate. They are provided with a recipe, non-perishable items from the pantry and a gift card (for produce and protein).

Gemini has been faithful in making all the recipes. Along with her sister and father, she is learning new cooking skills. The family cooks together on Thursday nights, and have made fiesta chicken and rice bake, meatloaf (at Gemini's suggestion), and her favourite, Thai coconut curry with shrimp.

Gemini hopes her family will be able to cook more when she has her baby boy.





Putting the needs of **FAMILIES** first by Enabling Success in School

Though schools shut down in March 2020, learning did not - and the pandemic certainly complicated things. In 2020, 19% of registered clients at CFS reported they had challenges at school.

Working with families, CFS strived to make learning changes as seamless as possible, including:

- The Never Too Late (NTL) GED program missed not one day of classes – shifting online within one week. To enable online learning, a donation of laptops was loaned out to 21 students.
- 72 NTL students obtained their GED (High School Equivalency). The program also held two outdoor, socially distanced graduations in August, in the parking lot of Beltline neighbour Grace Presbyterian Church.
- In September, Louise Dean Centre reopened along with the Parent-Child Learning Centre, where students could bring young children.

Analysis from the Basic Functional Life Skills survey showed significant positive change on a number of survey items. At post-test, 98% of parents had a bank account, 85% bought groceries regularly, and 76% stayed up to date on current events.

◦ **Isabella, Youth Fair Gains Participant**

“I definitely see a change with budgeting since joining Youth Fair Gains. I no longer tend to impulse buy; I think about the reason I’m making a purchase before I buy something.

I’m feeling a lot less stressed because I actually follow my budget so at the end of the month I’m not struggling with not having enough money - I have money left over at the end of the month!

I tried saving in the past but it didn’t work out. I’m now following my budget instead of just writing it out and this is the first time I’ve saved consistently! I use the ‘stop, look and listen’ card and it helps me to not overspend.

I’m feeling so much better now that I’m a bit more financially stable. I had a goal at the end of this program – to purchase assets for my son and I, and I’ve accomplished that!”

Isabella has purchased the following assets for herself and baby: a car seat, a toddler bed and mattress, and she has opened a TFSA for emergencies.





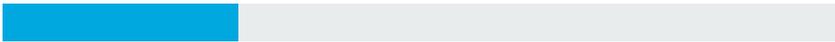
Putting the needs of FAMILIES first By the Numbers

Demographics 2020

10% Indigenous; 42% Indigenous young mothers at Louise Dean Centre



28% clients born outside of Canada



51% of clients reported household income [less than \\$45,000 per year](#); 9% between \$45,000 and \$59,000; 21% between \$60,000 and \$100,000 or more (not all clients report income)

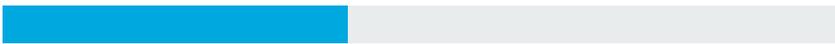


Top Concerns 2020

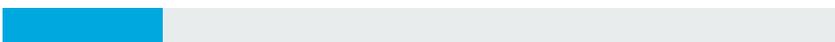
52% Emotional Distress



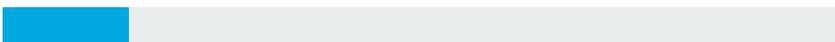
41% Family Relationships



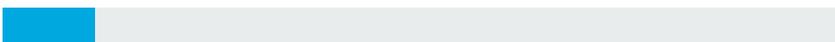
19% Challenges at School



15% Domestic Violence



11% Employment



Total unique clients served: 4,036
(223 children; 523 youth 13-17)

Number of unique families: 848
(some in-person services interrupted by COVID restrictions)

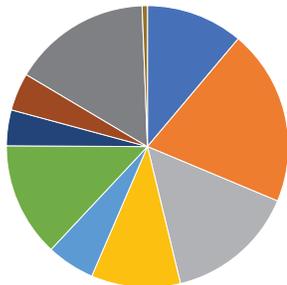
Number of volunteers: 448

Number of employees: 84



2020 Financial Snapshot

Funding Sources



- Provincial Government
- Family & Community Support Services
- United Way of Calgary and Area
- Federal Government
- Donations
- Other funders
- Provincial Daycare Subsidies & Grants
- Fees
- Children's Services
- Other

23%

DONATIONS
TO CFS

\$179,102

58%

DONATIONS
TO UP

\$443,605

19%

UP & AWAY
CHARITY GALA*

\$144,405

\$767,112

Total donated to Catholic Family Service and UP in 2020 to help build strong families.

Significant Supporters

CFS acknowledges Children's Services, Calgary Board of Education, Calgary Catholic School District, City of Calgary Family & Community Support Services, Government of Alberta, Public Health Agency of Canada, and United Way of Calgary and Area for their significant contributions to building strong families in 2020.

For a full list of our funders and supporters, please visit www.cfs-ab.org/give/donors-supporters/.

How You Can Help put Families First in 2021

Contributing to Catholic Family Service and the Unlocking Potential (UP) Foundation will allow us to continue building strong families today and into the future. Funds will help us support your loved ones, friends, and neighbours and ensure we're here for you if you need us. Consider a one-time, monthly, or legacy donation and visit www.cfs-ab.org/give/donate/.

*Despite the cancellation of the 2020 UP & Away Charity Gala, many of our wonderful sponsors and ticket buyers generously donated their purchases in lieu of attending the event.

The totals listed above include the market value of in-kind donations, such as goods and services. As a result, these numbers may be different from totals reported elsewhere, which only include monetary contributions and/or net totals.



The Unlocking Potential (UP) Foundation is the fundraising arm of Catholic Family Service of Calgary. UP ensures the sustainability of innovative programs that build strong families and have a positive impact on future generations.



Building Strong Families

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