

2024 Annual Report

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Families Matter

Learn • Play • Love

Welcome



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

USED WITH PERMISSION FROM THE CALGARY FOUNDATION

In the spirit of respect, reciprocity and truth, we honour and acknowledge Moh'kinsstis, and the traditional Treaty 7 territory and oral practices of the Blackfoot confederacy: Siksika, Kainai, Piikani, Stoney Nakoda Nations: Chiniki, Bearspaw, Goodstoney and Tsuut'ina Nation. We acknowledge that this territory is home to the Otipemisiwak Métis Government of the Métis Nation within Alberta Districts 5 and 6. Finally, we acknowledge all Nations – Indigenous and non – who live, work and play on this land, and who honour and celebrate this territory. This sacred gathering place provides us with an opportunity to engage in and demonstrate leadership on reconciliation. Thank you for your enthusiasm and commitment to join our team on the lands of Treaty 7 territory.

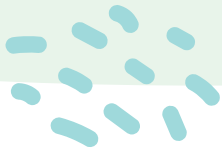


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Message from the Executive Director



Dear Families Matter Community,

It is my privilege to reflect on another year of growth and impact at Families Matter. From the moment I walk through our doors each day I can feel the magic of families, staff and community partners growing, learning, and connecting in ways that truly matter. This year, we went bigger and bolder, strengthening our programs, expanding our impact, and making sure every family we serve feels seen, supported, and valued.

This past year, we deepened our commitment to IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility), ensuring our services evolve to meet the diverse needs of individuals. We grew our community partnerships allowing us to offer rich experiential learning for our teams.

We also made great strides in operational efficiency by streamlining financial processes, ensuring our long-term sustainability. Our **Think Week** initiative, a week of professional development, connection and playfulness for our staff team, provided us with the opportunity to pause, reflect, and reinforce our organizational culture with the theme "**Belonging Begins with Us**". This theme

encapsulates the essence of our work, creating a space where families, staff, and partners feel valued and connected.

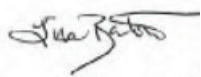
Our programs continued to make a significant difference in the lives of Calgarians. Our commitment to be a data-driven agency has allowed space for the planning and growth of new initiatives. We saw an increase in participation across all services, reinforcing the vital role Families Matter plays in building family resilience and strengthening protective factors within our community.

Looking ahead, we're dreaming big! Families Matter remains committed to innovation, collaboration, and equity for all. We will continue to explore opportunities for the co-creation of new initiatives. Our goal is to ensure that every family, regardless of their circumstances, has access to the supports they need at the times they need it.

I also know that none of this happens without **YOU**, our incredible staff, volunteers, funders, and partners. Your dedication, passion, and belief in the power of strong families fuels our mission every single day. Together, let's make the coming year one of even greater impact, connection and belonging.

From my family to yours we wish you all the best in the year ahead.

Lisa Barton
Executive Director, Families Matter



2024 Board of Directors List

Carla Marsh	Position Held:	Chair
Lindsay Hogan	Position Held:	Vice-Chair
Kelly Siemens	Position Held:	Treasurer
Jessica Brown	Position Held:	Secretary
Emily Zhang	Position Held:	Director
Chad Johnson	Position Held:	Director
Jordie Fraser	Position Held:	Director
Alyson Jenkins	Position Held:	Director
Allison Smith	Position Held:	Director
Jennifer Hammer	Position Held:	Director
Tom Hansen	Position Held:	Director



Message from the Board Chair

Dear Families Matter Community,



After yet another amazing year at Families Matter, I am delighted to share with you a reflection on the dynamic and impactful year we had. In 2024, we successfully implemented the first stage of our refreshed strategy, which aims to deliver best in-class programming, supported by an industry leading team and a resilient operating model. Here are some highlights as we put the first pieces in place to achieve this goal!

Best-in-Class Programming

As we continue efforts to elevate our programming to be best-in-class, 2024's focus was on advancing strategic partnerships and harnessing data-driven decision making. Our amazing partnerships expand our knowledge, extend our community and help us build capacity. With a focus on enhanced data gathering and tracking, we are gaining a better understanding of our program delivery. Together, strong partnerships and strong data are empowering us to really learn about our community and the impact of our programs.

Industry-Leading Teams

In 2024, Families Matter continued to invest in its people—our most valuable resource and the backbone of both our success and that of the community. We provided ongoing opportunities for professional development, collaboration, and innovation, both internally and with our partners. Additionally, we remained focused on enhancing our total compensation package to stay competitive in the industry and improve both retention and attraction. The progress we've made toward our strategic aspirations would not be possible without the dedication and talent of our incredible team. These amazing people bring their expertise, energy, and commitment to Families Matter every day, and I am immensely proud of their achievements this year.

Resilient Operating Model

In pursuit of building a resilient operating model, Families Matter focused on two key areas this past year: revamping its financial services processes, as well as devising a multi-year fund development plan. This transformation aims to deliver exceptional value and ensure long-term sustainability by leveraging advanced technologies for better reporting and to continue to ensure efficient fund usage. The fund development roadmap focuses on diversifying funding sources and pursuing high return on investment opportunities, allowing Families Matter to adapt to funding changes and consistently fulfill clients’ needs. These efforts aim to drive growth and stability, reinforcing our commitment to positively impacting families in Calgary.

In closing ...

On behalf of the whole board, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you – our staff, volunteers, community partners, and supporters. Your contributions make a tangible, meaningful difference in the lives of the families we serve and play a critical role in our success in 2024 and onward.

As I write this letter, I find myself filled with a mixture of emotions. After seven remarkable years with Families Matter, 2024 marked my last year as a board member and your Board Chair. My journey with this exceptional organization has been one of profound growth, for the agency, for the Board, and even for myself. The experiences and relationships I have developed here built me into a stronger person, parent, community member and professional. I am so proud of what this agency and board have accomplished since I joined in 2017, and despite feeling sad to leave, I am excited to see the continued growth and advancement of this wonderful, unstoppable, powerhouse of an organization.

Together, we are building a brighter future for Calgary families, and I look forward to witnessing all the team will achieve in the coming years.

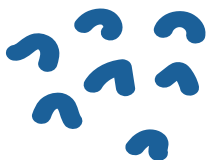
With warm regards,

Carla Marsh, Board Chair



Our Mission

TO EMPOWER FAMILIES SO THAT CAREGIVERS AND CHILDREN BUILD RESILIENCE AND THRIVE.



OUR CORE VALUES

We are an agency that lives its values in our work every day.

RESPECT RESILIENCE COLLABORATION PLAYFULNESS SELF-AWARENESS



Our Vision

A CONNECTED COMMUNITY IN WHICH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ARE NURTURED AND SUPPORTED TO BE HAPPY, HEALTHY AND RESILIENT.

“BRYAN’S WHY”

My “why” comes from a deep belief in the power of community and the need to uplift and support one another.

Growing up, I saw how much of a difference it makes when people have access to the right guidance, education, and encouragement.

I’m thankful that my work at Families Matter has given me the opportunity to connect with and support families in a meaningful way.

That’s what drives me. Whether it’s through mentorship, education, or just creating spaces where people feel seen and valued, I want to be part of something that makes a real impact for generations to come.

- Bryan Kibamba, System Navigator-Fathering for the Future

100% of staff report that the mission of Families Matter makes them feel their job is important



Your Generosity Makes a Difference



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de santé
publique du Canada

Thank you to our funders, donors, and volunteers for your support this year. Your generosity has helped us provide essential programs that empower caregivers, support child development, and strengthen families in our community. We couldn't do this work without you, and we're grateful to have you by our side. We look forward to another year of making a difference together!

159 moms attended Postpartum Support Groups in 2024



VOLUNTEER SUCCESS STORIES

“Volunteering for Families Matter has been so fulfilling. I cherish the time I get to devote to the babies entrusted to my care, and I am honoured to be a witness to the healing journey of so many strong parents.”

- **Kelly Machielse, Infant Holder Volunteer**



“I began my journey at Families Matter as a volunteer, eager to support the community of little ones and gain experience working with children. The environment at Families Matter fosters growth and provides unwavering support, making it a place I always looked forward to spending time at. I felt safe and supported throughout my experience. Building meaningful connections with the kids has taught me valuable lessons about my own life. The energy and resilience of the staff, guardians, and children are truly inspiring, reminding me of the profound impact that supportive relationships can have. It's amazing how small moments can leave a lasting mark, and being part of that process has been incredibly rewarding. I wholeheartedly encourage anyone seeking volunteer opportunities to consider Families Matter—it's a chance to grow personally while making a real difference in the lives of others.”

- **Dominika Soltys, Childcare Volunteer**

Over **450** volunteer hours donated to Families Matter last year

^^^
What We Do

FAMILY DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

The Family Development Centre is a warm and welcoming space where caregivers and children can learn, play, and connect. Our centres offer playful, hands-on programs that strengthen parent-child bonds and build community among families. By fostering connection and early learning, the Family Development Centre helps families feel supported and confident in their parenting journey.



EARLY LEARNING ACROSS CULTURES

The Early Learning Across Cultures (ELAC) program provides culturally inclusive learning opportunities for families with young children. ELAC is designed to strengthen family connections and foster a sense of belonging in the community. Parents also gain access to valuable resources and peer support on topics like positive discipline, stress management, and financial literacy. ELAC helps families navigate early childhood development while honouring their cultural backgrounds.



FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION

The Family Life Education (FLE) program offers parenting classes to help caregivers build confidence and support their child's development. Sessions focus on strength-based education, giving caregivers practical tools and strategies to navigate parenting challenges. To make participation easier, some classes offer free childcare support. FLE empowers families with knowledge, connection, and resources to create lasting caregiver capacity and resilience.

109 families participated in ELAC in 2024

HOME VISITATION

The Family Resilience Home Visitation program provides in-home parenting support for families with children ages six and under in Calgary's NE and SE communities. Through weekly visits, trained Home Visitors help caregivers understand child development, build parenting skills, and strengthen social connections. The program empowers parents as the primary caregivers, offering personalized guidance to support their family's well-being.

FATHERING FOR THE FUTURE

Fathering for the Future provides support and education for fathers and male caregivers in Calgary, helping them build strong relationships with their children. Through one-on-one coaching, group education, and interactive caregiver-child programs, participants gain parenting skills and confidence in their role. The program fosters connection, learning, and hands-on engagement in a supportive environment.



PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH

The Perinatal Mental Health (PMH) Programs provide support for parents struggling with depression, anxiety, isolation, or other challenges before or after the birth of a baby (up to 24 months old). The program offers four streams of care, including in-home visits, group support, and peer phone support, with a culturally informed option for the African/Caribbean/Black community. The PMH program helps parents navigate their mental health journey with compassion, connection, and understanding.



SUCCESSFUL YOUNG PARENTS

The Successful Young Parents (SYP) program provides free in-home support for families with at least one parent under the age of 23 in Calgary. Through weekly visits, Home Visitors help young parents navigate child development, build parenting skills, and strengthen community connections. The program focuses on empowering parents by providing education, resources, and opportunities to connect with other young families.

Data & Impact

2352

total families served

Perinatal Mental Health clients saw a **48% increase** in their coping skills after completing the program

10,000

hours of direct support were provided by Families Matter this past year.



1625

total children served (0-6 years)

99%

of caregivers felt better able to meet their children's needs after taking a Families Matter program in 2024

40%

increase in the number of caregivers served in the Postpartum Mental Health Peer Support Program compared to 2023

4361

total individuals served

408

PMH families served



1597

inquires to our Intake Team in 2024

98%

of families would take another program at Families Matter again



DIALOGUE WITH DADS FEATURING SHELDON KENNEDY



MEETING WITH THE CHAS FOUNDATION



HOSTING OUR FIRST BOOTH AT THE PRIDE FESTIVAL



CITY OF CALGARY'S RACIAL JUSTICE CONFERENCE



HER CONNECT INITIATIVE EVENT



NDP STAMPEDE BREAKFAST WITH NAHEED NENSHI

Families Matter in the Community



A SWEAT LODGE WITH MISKANAWAH AND KINDRED

In 2024, we had incredible opportunities to connect with the community and share the impact of our programs. From welcoming community partners for on-site tours to attending resource fairs and proudly hosting our first-ever booth at the Pride Festival, we were inspired by the enthusiastic response to our work. Our team was out in full force, engaging with over 750 professionals, agencies, and community members—helping to strengthen connections and raise awareness of the support we provide.

Fathering for the Future

Highlight: Papa Bears

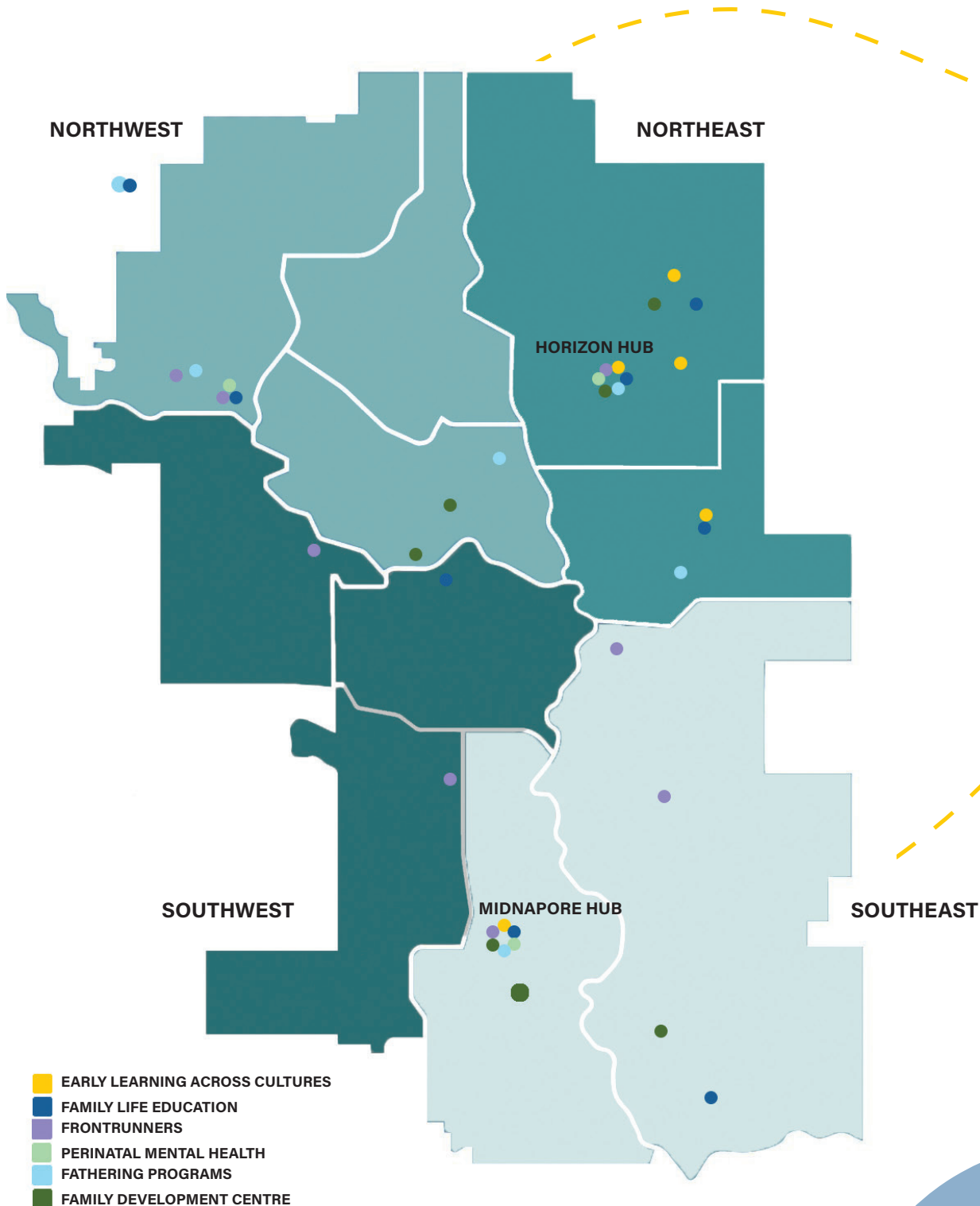


PAPA BEARS SUCCESS STORY

My entire family looks forward to Papa Bears on the weekend. My daughters both enjoy it, and my wife is able to get a lot done at home when we are away for a couple of hours. My oldest daughter has met some great friends her age and loves the dress up toys. My youngest loves all the songs during circle time. Having the opportunity to interact with other dads and bring both my kids has increased my confidence as a dad immensely. We feel very safe at Families Matter and the program leaders are excellent. I have learned about parenting skills such as Circle of Security which have helped guide me a lot in my parenting journey. Very few programs dedicated to dads exist in the city. I was never comfortable attending other programs in the community as I was typically the only dad there. Since attending Papa Bears, I feel more confident and connected to my children and have made many fond memories. I have connected with great

Parent Education

184 Family Life Education classes offered in 2024 across Calgary





A CIRCLE OF SECURITY JOURNEY

When I signed up for the Circle of Security class, I wasn't sure what to expect. I just knew I wanted to feel more confident as a parent. My son was eight months old, and while I loved being his mom, I sometimes found myself second-guessing how I responded to his needs. The fact that the class was virtual made it an easy choice—I could participate from home while keeping him close.

One evening, during a discussion about how children use behavior to communicate, I found myself asking a question I hadn't fully admitted was on my mind:

"Is he... trying to push my buttons?"

I had always assumed that when my son got fussy or difficult, he was testing me in some way. But as the facilitator guided the conversation, I started seeing things differently. She explained how young children don't act out to manipulate but rather to express something they can't put into words. It made me pause. By the end of the session, my perspective had shifted. I realized that instead of reacting to his behavior with frustration, I could try to see what was underneath it; what he was really asking for. It wasn't about control or testing limits. It was about connection.

That class gave me something I didn't expect: a new way of understanding my son. With that understanding came a little more patience, a little more confidence, and a lot less second-guessing.

-A Circle of Security Participant

“

AFTER COMPLETING THE CIRCLE OF SECURITY CLASS, I FEEL MORE CONFIDENT IN SUPPORTING MY CHILDREN AND BEING

PRESENT FOR THEM THROUGH EVERY STAGE OF THEIR DEVELOPMENT

”

Five Year Peer Anniversary

In 2019, Families Matter received a one-time, two-year grant from Alberta Health Services, allowing us to launch our **Volunteer Perinatal Mental Health (PMH) Peer Support Program**. This initiative was designed to complement the work of our dedicated PMH team, which, at the time, consisted of just 2.5 staff members supporting families exclusively within Calgary. Recognizing the growing demand for support, we set out to create a program that could extend our reach and provide much-needed assistance to more families.

Research shows that **peer support**—connecting with someone who has lived experience—**plays a crucial role in recovery**. Many new mothers expressed how powerful it was to speak one-on-one with someone who truly understood their journey. This ability to empathize is what makes peer support so impactful, and families often cite it as the most valuable aspect of their healing process.

In October 2019, we trained our first cohort of Peer Support volunteers, who began providing phone-based support. In just the first year, we increased the number of families served by 216%, **expanding beyond Calgary** to reach families across Alberta. Since the program's inception, we have trained five cohorts of Peer Support volunteers and now have 35 active Peers providing compassionate, judgment-free support. Among these groups was a specialized cohort trained through our **Mental Health of Black Canadian Families** project, which recruited volunteers from African, Caribbean, and Black communities to offer culturally informed support. To date, our Phone Peer Support Program has supported over 400 families across Alberta, providing more than 10,000 hours of peer-led support.

Families Matter remains deeply committed to growing peer support and ensuring **no parent feels alone** in their journey. We thank all our partners, funders, and passionate staff for making this program such a success over the past **5 years**.





“

I DIDN'T BELIEVE I HAD A VOICE OR THAT I COULD BE HEARD. I WAS SO DOWN I ALMOST COMMITTED SUICIDE.

NO ONE WAS LISTENING TO ME. MY PEER SUPPORTER MADE ME REALIZE I MATTER AND MY OPINION AND FEELINGS MATTER. MY PEER SUPPORTER HELPED ME FIND MY VOICE. NOW NOT ONLY DO I HAVE A VOICE,

I CAN NOW STAND UP FOR MY CHILD AND MYSELF.

”

Success Story – Peer Support for the Black Community

Kaia immigrated to Canada from the Caribbean, navigating the challenges of motherhood in a new country with little support. When she reached out to **Families Matter** for postpartum support, she was enrolled in the **Perinatal Mental Health Peer Support program for Black Canadian Families (MHBC)**. With a newborn, a two-year-old, and four-year-old twins, Kaia was overwhelmed.

Though her partner was home on EI, helping with their children, she felt like she was constantly on high alert, struggling with anxiety and exhaustion.

Through one-on-one Black Peer Support, Kaia found an anchor. Kaia's Peer Supporter was instrumental in guiding Kaia to resources that were appropriate for her. They prioritized establishing relationships/partnerships with other community Black-Led and Black-Serving organizations and programs to ensure that our wrap around care allows for credible consistency. She was also referred to **Melanin Mama Circle**, a culturally safe space where she learned coping strategies for intrusive thoughts, self-esteem struggles, and the weight of postpartum depression. The tools she learned were effective and culturally informed. The social inclusion of the **one-on-one Peer Support** and Melanin Mama Circle was pivotal for Kaia because she no longer felt isolated and helpless as an overwhelmed parent and newcomer to Canada.

Kaia's postpartum depression score dropped significantly from intake to closure; showing the impact of culturally relevant care. Today, Kaia is applying to become a Black Peer Supporter herself, carrying forward the wisdom and care that helped her heal. Her journey embodies the proverb "each one, teach one." Kaia's success story is one of transition to the other side of the Peer table.





“

I DON'T HAVE FAMILY HERE, SO THE PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM HAS BECOME PART OF MY VILLAGE IN RAISING MY FOUR CHILDREN, ESPECIALLY MY YOUNGEST. MY PEER SUPPORT PERSON PROVIDES A SAFE SPACE TO ASK QUESTIONS, EXPRESS FRUSTRATIONS, AND FIND REAL SOLUTIONS. I FEEL SEEN, HEARD, AND VALIDATED. AS A BLACK CARIBBEAN MOTHER, MY PEER SUPPORTER UNDERSTANDS MY UNIQUE STRUGGLES. SHE'S THE SURROGATE AUNTY I NEED—OFFERING ACCESS TO PROGRAMS I WOULDN'T HAVE KNOWN ABOUT AND ALWAYS FINDING ANSWERS.

”

In Home 1:1 Highlights

CELEBRATING THE HEART AND IMPACT OF OUR TEAMS

"I just wanted to take a moment to acknowledge how grateful I am for the Home Visitation and Successful Young Parents Team and all the hard, meaningful work you all do. What stands out the most is the compassion, kindness, and empathy each of you shows towards your clients. It's not just about getting the job done but about making a real difference. Your heart, your skills, and ultimately the impact you have on families is so important. I feel so incredibly lucky to be part of this team and thank you for all the amazing work you do every day, that makes Families Matter stand out!! Thank you, all."



-Jenaya Doiron, Supervisor of In-Home Supports

"One of the most powerful reflections we hear is: "This program saved my life. I am a better parent and a better person because of the support I received." These words are a testament to the difference our team is making. Your dedication, compassion, and unwavering commitment to the families you serve do not go unnoticed.

You all lead with your hearts, consistently embracing challenges with curiosity and empathy, and providing a safe, supportive space for clients to explore their journeys.



Thank you for all that you do. I am beyond grateful for the opportunity to work alongside each of you, and I am continually inspired by the work you do and the lives you touch."

-Lisa Farrell, Supervisor of Perinatal Mental Health Programs

2120

Number of home visits provided in 2024

46

male caregivers received 1:1 support from a Fathering Coach in 2024

After completing the Home Visitation program, 100% of caregivers were able to engage with their child in a positive way

SYP caregivers reported a 42% increase in their knowledge of community resources after working with a SYP Home Visitor

“

HAVING SOMEONE TEACH ME WITH COMPASSION AND UNDERSTANDING MADE A MEANINGFUL DIFFERENCE. THROUGH THESE VISITS, I LEARNED ABOUT MYSELF IN ORDER TO BETTER UNDERSTAND MY CHILD. BY HELPING MYSELF, I BECAME BETTER EQUIPPED TO SUPPORT MY CHILD. THIS EXPERIENCE HAS EMPOWERED ME TO BE THE MOTHER I ASPIRE TO BE, FOSTERING A DEEPER CONNECTION WITH MY CHILD WITHOUT SELF-DOUBT. I NOW APPROACH MOTHERHOOD WITH GREATER COMPASSION FOR MYSELF AND A MORE POSITIVE PERSPECTIVE.

”

FrontRunners Farewell

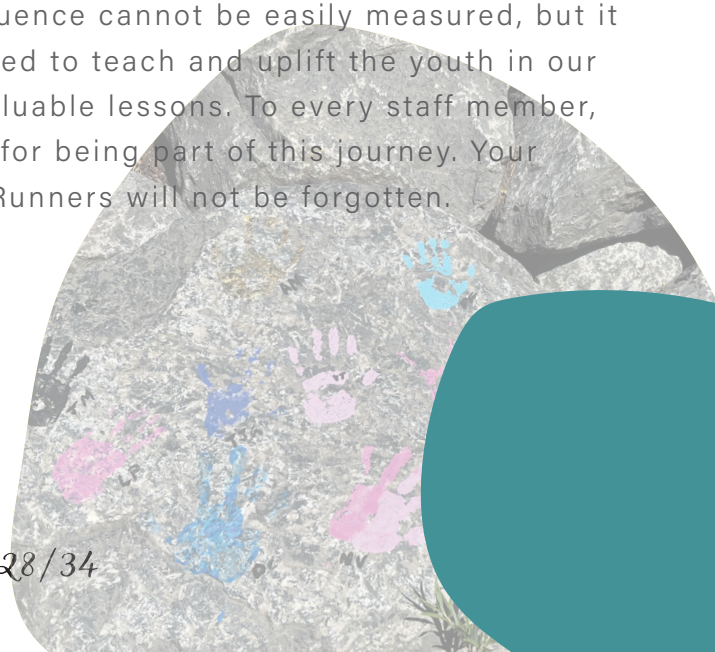
FrontRunners, originally named Fun Ventures, was created in 2009 as part of the City of Calgary's Afterschool Initiatives. Over the next 15 years, Fun Ventures evolved—changing names, adapting to new formats, moving through different locations, and welcoming many dedicated staff—all while keeping Calgary's youth at the heart of its mission.

Throughout its years, FrontRunners offered a wide variety of programs, including (but not limited to): girls' empowerment programs, sports programs, youth drop-in & tutoring, mindfulness programs, yoga, Canvas Kids, Chef on NStep, 60 Minutes, Muay Thai, Youth Writers, Youth Scientists, Nature Kids, Kids Have Stress Too classes, providing wellness kits during the pandemic, and countless after-school programs across the city. The program also hosted special summer initiatives and community outings, creating lasting experiences for the youth it served. At the heart of all of FrontRunners' offerings was a desire to foster social and emotional resilience, leadership skills, self-esteem and self-confidence in the youth the program served.

From Shaganappi Village to virtual Zoom sessions, and from small intimate groups to large community gatherings, FrontRunners has done it all! A special thank you to all the staff, practicum students, and volunteers who brought their passion and dedication to this program.

Over the years, more than 16 dedicated staff members led the program, with additional support from volunteers and practicum students who made a meaningful impact.

The ripple effect of FrontRunners' influence cannot be easily measured, but it was deeply significant. Just as we aimed to teach and uplift the youth in our programs, they, in turn, taught us invaluable lessons. To every staff member, volunteer, and participant—thank you for being part of this journey. Your contributions and the legacy of FrontRunners will not be forgotten.







Families Matter Culture

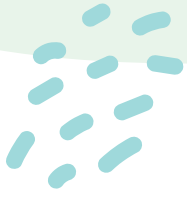


This past year, we've had so many great moments as a team—both in and out of the office. Our quarterly social events brought us together whether it was singing along with dueling pianos at Aussie Rules, getting our green thumbs out creating terrariums at Plant, or enjoying a Hitmen game with our families. We also continue to invest in our development both personally and professionally at our annual Think Week, where we come together as an agency for one week to connect, learn and grow as a team. Here's to another year of working hard and having fun together!

100% of staff feel they are able to do what they do best every day at Families Matter

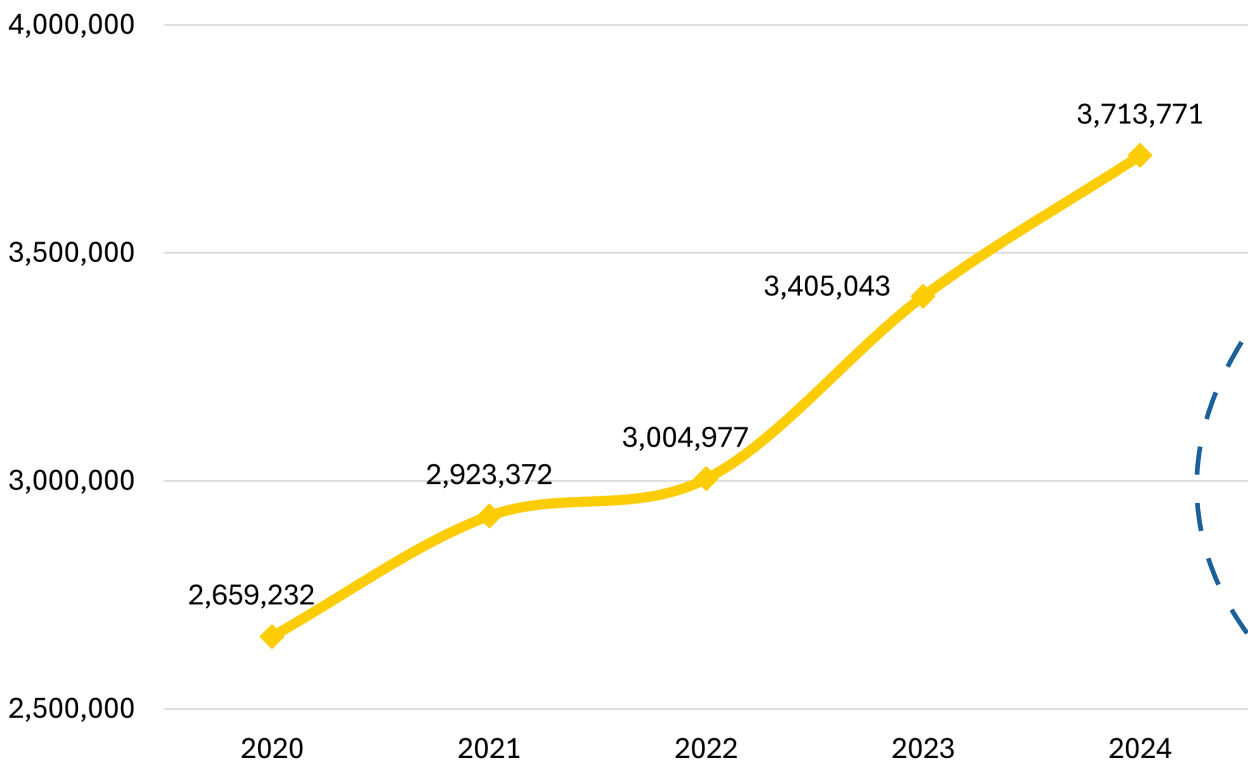
Our staff engaged in **891** hours of professional development in 2024





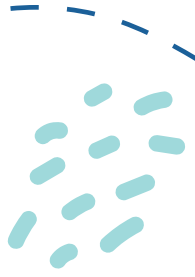
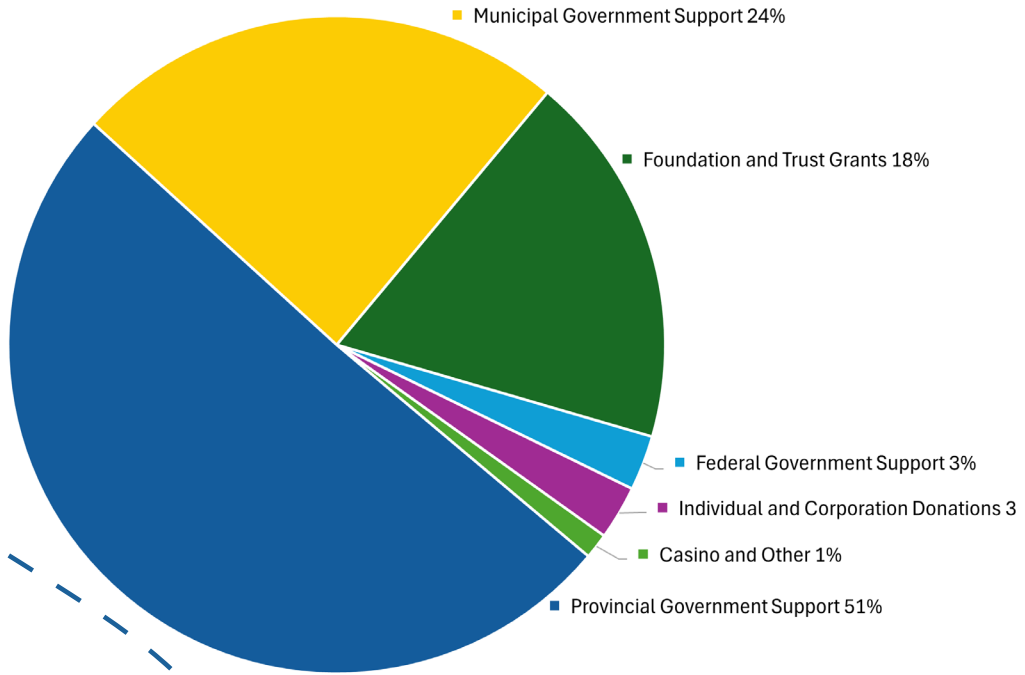
Financials

FUNDING REVENUE BY YEAR

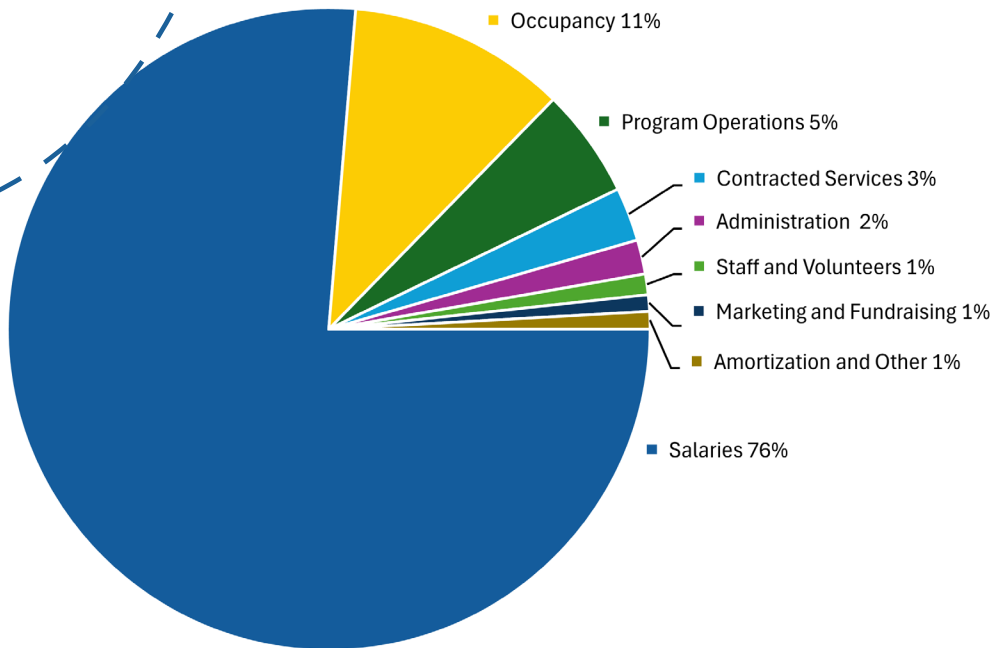




FAMILIES MATTER 2024 REVENUE



FAMILIES MATTER 2024 EXPENSES





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