



FAMILY SERVICE
THAMES VALLEY
RENEWING HOPE. TRANSFORMING LIVES.

Annual Report

2021

2022



Relationships and Belonging

Relationships play an essential role in our mental health.

Happiness, life satisfaction, psychological well-being, and physical health are all impacted by positive relationships. By taking away our connections, the pandemic reminded us of the value of engagement with family and friends to celebrate, play, school, hold a loved one, or mourn a loss. We all felt lonely, disconnected, and stressed to some level throughout the pandemic.

As we continue to move through the pandemic, our healing needs to be intentional by rebuilding positive relationships for our own mental health and for our families, friends and community. We need to purposely reconnect with the activities that bring joy to our lives and give us something to look forward to day to day. It is within our power, each of us, to take the initiative to build and rebuild positive relationships and activities for ourselves and those we care about.

Relationship building might benefit from a little help from time to time. Our compassionate team of counsellors are trained to work with families, couples and individuals to be intentional on building better relationships, better mental health and better lives.

A sense of belonging is also important to well-being. An adult living with a development disability faces unique barriers to inclusion in life that were only exacerbated by the pandemic. While our Community Integration team provides case management and advocacy support to assist with housing

issues, medical care and other life matters, it's through our Passports program that our clients are empowered to participate in programs and activities that they identify interest in, to be included, and to belong.

Finally, a recent mass shooting in Buffalo reminds us how elusive a sense of safety and belonging can be for racialized community members. Often seen as a problem removed from Canada, we know too well of the Afzaal family killed in a hate crime while out taking an evening walk and the River Road arson to displace an Indigenous-led winter shelter, both in our community in the last year. Our social justice value and strategic plan speak to the hard work ahead on diversity, equity and inclusion. We know we don't have all of the answers. We know that our mission calls for us to be part of the solution.

It's been a year of renewal for Family Service Thames Valley. A strategic review and renewal of our mission and vision ensures continued alignment with community. A decision to move into a new home will right-size our space needs and provide clients with bright and fresh counselling spaces.

We look back with many thanks to our supporters, our Board, and our dedicated and resilient team serving clients with compassion and care. We look forward with renewed hope to maintain our reputation of empowering people to live better lives within our community as we build on our 83 year legacy.

Kim Fraser
Acting-Chair, Board of Directors

Nicola Memo
Executive Director



Journey to Belonging

Real Life Challenges

Imagine not being able to read or write and you receive an eviction notice. Without knowing the directives or deadlines, you're about to become homeless. How would you navigate that journey?

Imagine, at 32 years old, you've never known another home other than your grandparents. Your grandmother has passed away and your grandfather is moving into a nursing home. In addition to grieving a huge loss, you are about to become homeless. Finding suitable housing seems like an impossible task. Where would you turn?

Imagine you and your wife both rely on the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). You've lived in your apartment for 15 years, making the rent affordable. Suddenly, your landlord wants you out. Finding an appropriate place to live at 2022 rates is not feasible on your limited income. Standing up to your landlord to keep your apartment seems daunting. What would you do?

These are just some of the scenarios our Development Services team at Family Service Thames Valley (FSTV) has helped to resolve as we relentlessly pursue the best possible outcomes for our clients.

Affordable Housing Shortage

In recent years, the housing situation has changed significantly. In fact, finding affordable housing is nearly impossible. There is an added layer of complexity when you factor in the vulnerability of our clients. Often landlords require first and last month's rent and a co-signer. Even if we are successful in finding an affordable rental unit, these additional requirements may result in a roadblock.

There are so many people in need of housing and with limited availability, they often end up at a motel or renting a room at a boarding house. This is not a safe location for vulnerable people dealing with a disability. In some instances, FSTV is not contacted until they've already been evicted and are living on the street or in a tent city.





Collaboration and Innovation

Family Service Thames Valley collaborates with agencies working for the same cause. Collaborative problem-solving builds relationships within the network as it finds creative solutions for people. When a need arises, calling on a personal connection leads to more successful outcomes. It is not uncommon for a client to have multiple needs. Our relationships help us connect clients with the right supports and agencies seamlessly.

“

I think we're really good at being persistent. We are like a dog with a bone. We're not letting go until all resources have been exhausted. We don't give up on people.”

Pennie Rasmussen,
Family Service Thames Valley
Adult Protective Service Worker

Inclusion

Journey to Belonging: Choice and Inclusion lays out the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services long-term vision for developmental services in Ontario, where people with developmental disabilities are supported to fully participate in their communities and live fulfilling lives. Our Development Services team actualize that vision in their work every day.

- ▶ They listen and reassure.
- ▶ They advocate tenaciously.
- ▶ They work their contacts.
- ▶ They find solutions.
- ▶ They provide hope when the situation seems dire.
- ▶ They make sure that their clients are heard and feel that they belong in our community.

The housing crisis is but one more challenge our team confronts every day.





Core Services

Community Integration Services

The Community Integration team supports the social inclusion of persons with Developmental Disabilities in our community. They develop an Individual Support Plan (ISP) based on the principles of self-determination, social inclusion, citizenship and choice. They case manage and coordinate community resources, liaise with other service providers, and advocate for clients in fulfilling the plan.

Passport

Passport, a provincial program, provides self-directed funding for adults with a developmental disability to participate and belong in the life of a community. The funds can be used to attend community events or toward activities of daily living. Family Service Thames Valley provides the administrative supports for clients to manage and utilize their individual support dollars.

Counselling Services

Our Counselling team empowers people to meet life challenges through individual and counselling supports. Families, couples and individuals receive assistance to deal with life's transitions, grief and loss, impact of trauma, emotional and psychological distress, and other challenges in personal, couple and family relationships.

Ancillary Services

Trauma Support Services

Customized trauma support is available to employers for staff who may regularly bear witness to trauma. Critical Incident Response, group debriefs, and access to individual counselling treatment is available to front-line staff.

Employee Assistance Plans

We provide counselling services to local employees whose employer holds an Employee Assistance Plan through Family Service Canada's network of FSEAP providers. Family Service Thames Valley is an affiliate of FSEAP. FSEAP contracts are managed regionally for Southwestern Ontario through the Family Counselling Centre in Sarnia.

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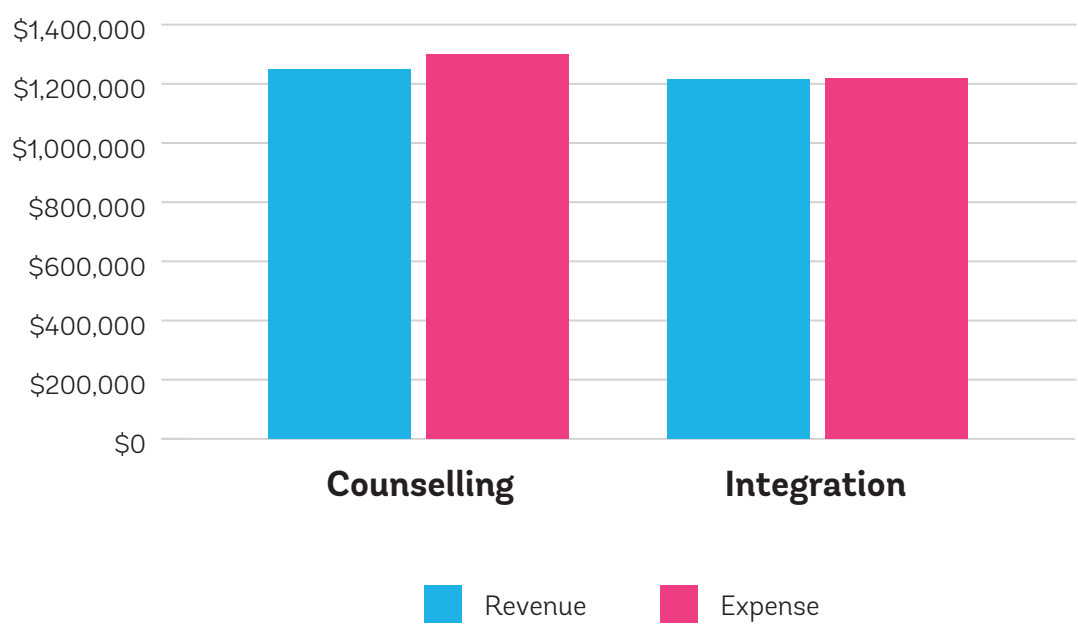
Karen Van Ryn





Financials

Revenue and Expense by Program





Community Impact

We know the impact of our services extend beyond the individuals we serve.

The burden of care for adults living with a developmental disability often falls on an aging parent or siblings. When we secure housing for a client, arrange medical care, or help them connect with activities of interest, not only do they benefit, family and other caregivers do as well.

There is a similar multiplier effect for counselling services. Improved mental well-being and coping skills for an individual also positively impacts on a partner, parents or children, brothers and sisters. It also impacts on friends, co-workers, and employers. It can divert care required for other services up to and including emergency room visits. We know this.

**BY THE NUMBERS, FAMILY SERVICE
THAMES VALLEY PROVIDED ALMOST**

30,000

hours of care to

2,974

clients in the last year





Our Funders

Thank you to our funders who have supported us over the last year. With your dedication and support we will continue to promote services that provide a welcoming, culturally appropriate, high quality, and seamless experience.



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