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**DISABILITY SERVICES**

**FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

COMPLETED BY

GATEWAY ASSOCIATION

May 1, 2022- March 31, 2023

# Key Impacts

Gateway Association opened its doors to the Family Resource Center (FRC) on May 14, 2021. The FRC continues to see an exponential impact on the community over the past 24 months. As found in the report below, the FRC has been celebrated by families, caregivers, individuals living with disabilities, professionals and disability service caseworker(s). The FRC instills a methodology of Enhancing knowledge through learning opportunities, Implementing knowledge through planning supports and Mentorship and Ongoing support through system navigation and community building. This holds the values of Gateway Association and allows a framework that empowers individuals and families alike. The FRC offers direct support to families across the lifespan and regardless of diagnosis or disability. The FRC proudly provides services with a pan disability lens.

To ensure continued success of the FRC, program evaluation processes are established and maintained to identify strengths, client satisfaction, measure deliverables and monitor feedback. Some key findings have resulted from this process which provide us with the opportunity to continually evolve and improve our deliverables.

The FRC sees direct impact that we have on families. We hear (formally and anecdotally) from the community that Gateway’s FRC increases the capacity of families and FMS administrators accessing FSCD and PDD; increases caregiver capacity and builds access to natural supports for children, youth, adults and their families. We continue to enhance involvement of community and civil society organizations to create opportunities to maximize the inclusion and independence of children, youth, adults; promote individual and family leadership, mentoring, peer to peer support; utilize innovative approaches and support strategies to promote inclusive lives for children, youth and adults living with disabilities.

Gateway Association has offices on both Treaty 6 and Treaty 7territories. Amiskwaciwâskahikan (Edmonton; on Treaty 6), Home of the Cree, Blackfoot, Métis, Nakota Sioux, Tsuu T'ina & Dene and Mohkinstsis (Calgary; on Treaty 7). Recognizing the land on which we live and work is a starting point in understanding and respecting the Indigenous communities that have been here for centuries. Reconciliation, to our organization, means prioritizing critical thinking about intersectionality and equity throughout all our work; continuous un-learning of oppressive thoughts/ideas/beliefs/actions; listening to (and believing) Indigenous peoples and their communities about their experiences; and making space for equity-seeking groups (of all kinds) to determine what is best for them.

**Hello my name is Sahana Parameswara, a Dravidan queer woman and settler in** [**Amiskwaciy-wâskahikan**](https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=cbcfc1ccda94e8caJmltdHM9MTY4MTk0ODgwMCZpZ3VpZD0yNWQ5ZDYxNS1kOWMxLTY1M2YtMjhiNS1jNDg5ZGRjMTZiNWYmaW5zaWQ9NTE5OQ&ptn=3&hsh=3&fclid=25d9d615-d9c1-653f-28b5-c489ddc16b5f&psq=amiskawacis+waskahigan&u=a1aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZWFsdC5jYS9pbmRpZ2Vub3VzLWNvbm5lY3Rpb25zLWJsb2ctbGlzdC9hbWlza3dhY2l5LXdza2FoaWthbi1lZG1vbnRvbi1oaXN0b3J5&ntb=1)**. Reconciliation and land back are my guiding principles.**

**I, Betty (she/her) am a white settler, second generation Canadian. I was born and grew up on the land of the Mohawks in Kanien’kéha, and currently live on Treaty 6 land on Amiskwaseewaskigun, the land of Cree, Saulteaux, Nakota Sioux, Blackfoot and the Métis Peoples. I acknowledge the seen and unseen privileges that have been afforded me, including use of the land, the educations system, the health care system and the employment opportunities.**

**I, Jacqueline, was raised as a white settler, both 16th and 1st generation Canadian. I was born and grew up in Fort McMurray, originally called Nistawâyâw, located on Treaty 8 territory, home of the Cree and Chipewan bands. I am the descendant of the Munsee Delaware tribe, also known as Lenni Lenape. Currently, I live, work, play, and raise my family on Treaty 6, Amiskwacî Wâskykan, territory of the Papaschase and homeland of the Métis, Region 4. I recognise the privilege I have had growing up as a white settler and while I acknowledge the land on which I reside rightfully belonging to those people who came before us, I am committed to doing the work of healing and DECOLONIZING by being a partner/ally, standing and speaking up, modeling this to my children, and by learning as much about my own ancestry as I can.**

**I, Kristina, am an agender (they/them) second generation Serbian Canadian settler in Amiskwacîwâskahikan on Treaty 6 territory. As a racialized white person, I recognize the unearned and unfair privilege I hold and am committed to prioritizing intersectional anti-racism in both my personal and professional lives.**

**Miriam Ading (she, her) I identify as a black Canadian woman. I am grateful for the opportunity to live, work and experience Treaty 6 Territory - amiskwacîwâskahikan (Edmonton) - home of the Cree, Saulteaux, Blackfoot, Métis, Dene, and Nakota Sioux. I acknowledge the histories, languages and cultures that continue to enrich our shared heritage.**

**I, Stacy (she/her) identify as a third generation German Canadian, racialized white settler. I was born on the beautiful land of Treaty 4 within the traditional territory of the Metis. I had the gift of growing up, living and experiencing Treaty 8 Territory; the ancestral and traditional territory of the Cree, Dene, as well as the Métis and Treaty 6; within the Métis homelands and Métis Nation of Alberta Region 4. I currently continue to reside on Amiskwacîwâskahikan and acknowledge the many privileges afforded to me and I continue in my journey in learning and unlearning of inequities.**

**I, Yonique Ritch (she, her) I identify as a racialized Black Canadian woman. I am honored to live, work and play on Treaty 6 Territory – Amiskwacîwâskahikan - home of the Cree, Saulteaux, Blackfoot, Métis, Dene, and Nakota Sioux. I would like to continue to expand my knowledge on how I can support equity seeking groups in the community through my professional and personal life.**

**I, Fiona Wilson (she/her), am a white settler and a first-generation Kiwi-Canadian. I currently live in Treaty 6 territory in Amiskwaciwaskahikan (colonially known as Edmonton). The ancestral territory of the Cree, Saulteaux, Dene, Nakota and Metis homeland and Metis Nation of Alberta Region 4. I benefit from unearned privileges including the use of traditional land. I am grateful to all the Indigenous peoples, who presently live on this land, those who have spent time here, and like their ancestor’s hunt, gather and protect the land known as Turtle Island.**

* Formal Program Evaluation Process in place to track and collect data after **every** workshop, after **every** Individual Support Plan (ISP), and Informal Process to gather anecdotal feedback on general inquiries and within the community.
* The FRC facilitated a variety of workshops; a total of **47** were offered during the reporting year.
* Once again, we are thrilled to report there was a satisfaction rate of nearly **95%** (94.1%; last report 94.6%) of respondents that indicated satisfied to very satisfied with the workshop they attended.
* Similarly, once again the vast majority of respondents (**94%;** last report 92.3%) indicated they would recommend the workshop they attended to others.
* Nearly all of the respondents indicated that they plan on attending other workshops that the FRC will host and consistently, **96.5%** (last report 98.9%) of respondents indicated that they feel confident implementing strategies they learned in the workshop.
* Nearly all families **(89.5%)** also report that they have increased their confidence in navigating community resources, have increased ability to enhance inclusion strategies **(89.7%),** and feel they can apply knowledge learned from our FRC for planning for their family member **(94.8**%). This is a significant direct impact on Albertan families which speak to building families voices; their capacity and confidence and ability to help navigate the system(s).
* Families indicated that they felt supported by their learning at the FRC workshops **(97.5%)** and that their voice was heard **(92.1%).** These are integrals components of families ability to build their capacity, their connections and their confidence in helping their loved ones.
* The RDSP coordinators expanded their work by completing 170 family support calls. There were 28 community presentations for organizations such as CASA, Candora, Edmonton Public Library and Prosper Place.
* Program impact is shown not only quantitatively above; however also from numerous qualitative comments; feedback and anecdotally. *Families have felt heard. They have felt seen. They feel supported. They no longer feel alone.* They are appreciative of the growth they experienced personally after taking a workshop, the internal self reflection and growth they experienced and are able to apply to the individual they support.
* Other qualitative comments included families gratitude and appreciation for “hear[ing] stories and visions of local heroes” and the impact that the FRC team provided in their families journey. In addition to the above comments, there were dozens of qualitative comments on the impact that Gateway had with families across the lifespan. Here are a few examples:
  + “How our son can access…..support via CASA,PUF and FSCD. [FRC staff] were  
    exceptional in providing us support and guidance. We are very grateful as a family and look forward to working with them in the future…”
  + “[FRC staff] was exceptional. Managed the team of black squares wonderfully. I enjoyed that this was offered via Zoom and I could manage my life and still take part. Thanks for offering such great resources!”
  + “Thank you so much……It was such a roller coaster of emotions, but a great reminder to trust ourselves and keep pushing for the best. I look forward to all the great things to come with the help of gateway association. Thank you again….”
  + “….Thank you for following up with me…..You’ve been a tremendous help and source of information for us….”
  + “…It was great! I learned a lot and have so much to think about moving forward and planning my child’s future…”
  + “Thank you for tonight. It's always so amazing and needed. …..Looking forward to next week, I've been learning and growing so much since I've found Gateway and I really feel I'm ready to pour back into myself to best support my family, wherever that brings me! Thanks again…”
  + “….. I am so glad that I took…..advise with taking your workshop.  It was the best thing I did.  So thank you for all the support. …”
  + “….We look forward to being in regular touch and are hoping to continually benefit from your guidance in the future……Thank you for your love, compassion and understanding towards us!.....”
  + “….[FRC staff] were exceptional in providing us support and guidance. We are very grateful as a family and look forward to working with them in the future.”
  + “I can’t thank you enough through my journey.”
  + **“…..**now with all the support that all of you have given me I feel like a sense of belonging. I can not thank you enough. And I found myself paying that forward to another mom just the other day. It was so rewarding for [my child] to help a little boy struggling……”
  + **“**This was an amazing workshop. Gave me so much confidence advocating for my son.”
  + “I contacted……Gateway Association regarding services for my son. I feel more confident about navigating resources for him…..I am very happy and I just wanted you know because you have a hand in it!”
  + “….I have to tell you, our conversation last week was very helpful you helped frame some issues and concerns we were having but I didn't have a fully formed way to articulate it. Our conversation and your insight helped with that….”
* The FRC yielded over **574** inquiries over the past year (an increase from the past year). Inquiries came through social media (PDD/FSCD Facebook group, Gateway to Living Supports Facebook Group, Gateway Association Facebook Page, Instagram), our new website and the Gateway APP.

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| **Partnerships & Collaborations** | | | | |
| Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital | Edmonton Food Bank | Children’s Link | Ethiopian and Eritrean (Autism Parent Group) | Candora Society |
| GRIT (Getty Ready for Inclusion Today) | Stollery Children’s Hospital | Regional Provincial Advisory Committee (RPAC) | Autism Alberta FRC | Childrens Autism Collab Team (CACT); Under 18 Interagency HUB |
| Metis Nation of Alberta (MNA) | Medically Complex Fragility Inclusive Support Parent Working Group | Canadian Mental Health Association | CHIMO Youth Retreat Center | Connecting CommUnity (Red Deer) |
| Multicultural Health Brokers (MCHB) | St. Albert Mental Health Youth HUB | Edmonton Public Library | Two Pillars Financial Solutions Inc. | IG Wealth Management |
| Africa Center | Edmonton Public School Board | Bissell Centre | Cohesive Communities (Parkland County; Tri Region) | Edmonton Catholic School Board |

* GRIT and the FRC collaborated once again for a successful visioning and planning full day with GRIT families and alumni. Families were appreciative and grateful for this day of capacity and connection building.
* FRC staff also held **12** Understanding Disability sessions over the year both at Gateway Association and MNA (Metis Nation of Alberta). The satisfaction rate for these sessions was nearly **95%** (94.5%) with **89%** of the respondents indicating they plan on attending future Gateway Association workshops and **89%** recommending these sessions to others. Participants expressed their gratitude for these sessions “Thank you for your presentation. It is really helpful”; “Perfect inclusion. Thank you for the time!”; “Very informative as we start this adulthood transition.”.
* The FRC began asking families during workshops and presentations what was the most common language their family chose to speak at home. The majority of participants/families indicated English, however, many families indicated a variety of other languages: Korean, Arabic, Spanish, Hindi, French, Chinese, Filipino, Bisaya, Mandarin, Hindi and Tagalog. This speaks to the necessity for a diverse team as well as a diversity in what is offered by Gateway Association and how it is offered. Funding for interpreters, translators and cultural brokers are necessary and non negotiable to ensure that Gateway is not only providing supports to families but is also impacting capacity of organizations that serve diverse families.
* The FRC also asked workshop participants if there was anything that the FRC could have done to help them feel more comfortable and included with respect to race, disability, culture, gender, religion, age and/or sexual orientation. All respondents that chose to answer this question indicated that there was nothing further and that they were comfortable, that they felt welcomed and included.
* FRC staff attended and participated on **20** committees (last report 14) that span across a great deal of community intersections and crossroads.
* **22** Families Forward (FF) meetings and events were held and brought various families together monthly across the lifespan (FF under 18 years; FF over 18 years; FF I have an ISP, Now What?).
* External workshops were customized and held at organizations such as GRIT, MNA, Center for Autism and the Multicultural Health Brokers staff.
* **All** FRC staff underwent Anti Racism Organization Course (AROC) 12 week training in 2022. The process is of our AROC work is ongoing. The AROC process encompasses 1.Assessing readiness (by identifying strengths, weaknesses to address racial equity), 2.Building capacity (develop shared language and context), 3.Centring equity seeking voices (listen to impact of racism on internal and external stakeholders to guide processes), 4.Articulating power, permission and authority (how must power shift), 5.Identifying funding & resources to support equity work (equity line in operational funding) and 6.Planning for interdepartmental coordinators (shared language, policies & practices). The training was based on a process undertaken by a Calgary not-for-profit called Community Wise Resource [Center](https://communitywise.net/learning-from-aroc/).
* AROC is a part of Gateway Association’s strategic planning moving forward.
* The FRC increased capacity to work with MCHB and ASSIST to help more families. As a professional translator relayed to us “…[the family] asked me to a pass a thank you for your support…thank you so much [FRC staff] for providing me with all those valuable information……you are so kind and very professional…….I really appreciate all your support and efforts….great job!...”
* In addition to organizations, the FRC team collaborates with various professionals and professional bodies and schools across the regions.
* Staff database (FRC deliverable) is ongoing and has been stalled due to lack of movement. Gateway has reached out to GoA for support to progress this to the next steps. ERAPs is not interested at this time in collaborating to develop a staff database thus creating a standstill with this outcome. Gateway has hence, created an alternative method that addresses the intent behind this database, which is, to connect FMS families for shared staffing/housing supports via Facebook. With GoA support and intervention, Gateway is willing to recommence these conversations with ERAPs.
* **120** inquiries regardingBrokering; Housing; Staffing were supported (last report 20 families).
* We indirectly supported **40** families with Guardianship/Trusteeship application process and formally supported **6** families with Guardianship/Trusteeship Applications Process.
* Despite extraordinary circumstances, dozens of ISPs were successfully completed with families online. There were several factors playing a contributing role in ISPs including referrals, contact with families, COVID and Zoom fatigue and meeting with individuals when specific accommodations were challenging (individuals that are non verbal, or live with a visual or hearing disability). The past 3+ years has provided incredible challenges, specifically, for those that are already vulnerable, marginalized and immunocompromised. The lack of digital literacy and discomfort with online planning has also impacted a families willingness and ability to meet online. Caseworkers are contacted regularly to assist with planning dates and procuring accurate contact information (often missing in the referrals). Despite extraneous efforts, the impact of COVID remains and presents as a barrier to the number of planning sessions.
* Over the past year, over **49** ISPs (last report 43) were done for over 18 years old, and **50** ISPs (last report 32) were done with under 18 years old as well as **8** FMS ISP renewals were completed.
* We continued to survey families and gather information from them regarding their ISP experience. Families indicated that they found the process of the preparation for the ISP helpful with respect to their introduction to Gateway, the questionnaire the family is asked to complete, the follow up call and intake call along with setting up the meeting, the accessibility specifics and having the ability to ask questions ahead of the meeting. As one family commented “The chart/[ISP]map was outstanding. It was awesome….when [child] was young we had these regulation charts….and what [FRC staff] built was like this…..this amazing chart which was literally exactly [child]. This chart was so much better than anything I’ve seen before. It really spoke to me because it was what we had when [child] was younger……I was super impressed with it. Loved it!”.
* Families indicated that the ISP meeting itself (along with the goal setting) reinforced what they wanted as a family, offered new ideas and was very helpful as they were not thinking this way. The ISP meeting and goal setting “…..help[ed] our thinking about planning for the future.”.
* When families were asked if they felt they received adequate support from the FRC team member with their ISP, the majority of respondents (**79%;** last report 92%) indicated they agreed to strongly agreed with this statement.
* When families were asked to provide qualitative feedback with how the ISP will help their family going forward, families indicated that they were grateful for the dignity that was respected in meetings, the way the questions were asked, the empathetic nature of the meetings and the insights found. They also commented on happiness with the goals received and appreciation for support given.
  + “…Thank you for chairing a most illuminating, empathetic, comprehensive, caring and encouraging meeting on [individual’s] future choices and possibilities…”
  + “The chart/map was outstanding. It was awesome and SO [my child]! Back when [my child] was young we had these regulation charts from our psychologist and what [FRC Staff] built was like this and [FRC staff] was able to create this amazing chart which was literally exactly [my child]. This chart was so much better than anything I’ve seen before. It really spoke to me because it was what he had when [my child] was younger. A different outline, but similar and I was super impressed with it. Loved it!”
* Consistently, the majority of respondents (**78.6**%; last report 92%) also indicated that they were satisfied to very satisfied with the overall ISP experience.

In closing, the impact of the FRC can be summarized by words from a family member that stated: “…[FRC staff] were exceptional in providing us support and guidance. We are very grateful as a family and look forward to working with [FRC staff] in the future.”

AGM 2022 Report:

<https://gatewayassociation.ca/agm-2022/>

The ultimate goal of our Family Resource Centre is to enhance each family’s expertise on their own children and provide concrete resources that can ease the journey as the family navigates the next steps. Our FRC team is made up of families, neurodiverse individuals, and multiple ethnicities that have varied experiences. The team partners with various organizations to continually increase our diversity of thought and capacity to work with all families.