You Made a Difference!

Thank you to our generous donors, volunteers and partners for your support of Closer to Home’s holiday events and activities.

This year, with the support of local businesses, schools, community groups and individuals, Closer to Home was able to provide over $58,000 in donations to 90 families (including 240 children!) through the Adopt-a-Family initiative. We would also like to give a special thanks to the presenting sponsor, McQuistion Executive Wealth Group.

The annual Children’s Christmas Party held in November was another wonderful event for children and youth in Closer to Home programs such as Foster Care and Group Care. Santa entered as everyone sang “Here Comes Santa Claus” and handed out a new toy to every child at the party. There was a full brunch buffet, cookies, and arts and crafts led by two very talented volunteers. This annual gathering was possible due to the support of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP.

Also, thanks to the talented members from the Alberta Handicraft Guild – High River Branch, 36 children in Closer to Home Teaching Homes and Foster Care received hand-made blankets and quilts. These members lovingly made the quilts to help provide comfort and warmth for children to last a lifetime.

The true success for these holiday activities is measured by the smiles on children’s faces. We would like to thank everyone who was involved this year.

The Families Are Grateful To You Too...

We present below a collection of snapshots taken from Thank You Cards written by children and families who received gifts during the past Christmas season from generous Closer to Home donors. These notes represent families and children who were able to celebrate the holidays and who will be forever grateful for the support received.

Philanthropy has deep roots at Calgary Academy

This year, students, teachers and parents at Calgary Academy filled a twenty-foot truck with new toys, household items and gift cards for children and families who needed extra help for the holidays! It’s apparent that the culture of philanthropy has deep roots at Calgary Academy. Sarah Hoag, Junior High Academic Dean, remarked that “the Calgary Academy family is committed to give back to the community.” Thanks Calgary Academy, for being cool kids!
JOB OPPORTUNITY

Family Teacher - Full Time

This live-in position in your own home is ideal for an individual or couple looking to have a positive and lasting impact on children and their families. Living and working in your family home environment with one youth, the Family Teachers' primary objective is to encourage youth to develop to their maximum potential and enable them to successfully integrate back into their families and communities.

About You: As an individual or couple, you possess the desire to serve your community and connect with individuals needing support. One individual has the ability and desire to be the primary caregiver and work solely in this program. You have verbal and written communication skills and the ability to effectively communicate with and relate to people of all ages. You are compassionate and caring individuals with a positive and empathetic approach. In addition, you are eager to learn and carry out the principles and philosophy of Closer to Home and the Teaching-Family Model.

Experience working with vulnerable children and families or the willingness and ability to develop your knowledge and skills is required.

You must be willing to provide day to day care for one youth, attend meetings and respond to crisis. The successful candidate(s) must also have current and valid Standard First Aid/CPR, valid Alberta Driver’s Licenses, adequate and current insurance and be willing to provide driver’s abstracts upon hire. In addition, a SAFE Assessment, a Police Information Check and an Intervention Record Check must be completed and approved upon hire.

For detailed job descriptions and to apply please visit the Career section on our website at www.closertohome.com

Witnessing Transformation: An Employee’s Perspective

My name is Amandeep and I am one of the Family Support Workers at Closer to Home’s West Central Resource Centre. I work directly with children and families living in southwest Calgary who are facing various challenges and help them by providing support to meet their basic needs including baby supplies, and assisting with employment, parenting support, or referrals to other community resources.

Many families who come to West Central are initially nervous about what to expect out of our meeting. Sometimes their children are curious about our space, or they may feel unsure about using the toys and books in the Kids’ Corner. That’s when I invite them into what I call our ‘living room’, where parents can sit comfortably on oversized chairs without the barrier of a desk or computer station between us and their children can play safely nearby.

We are fortunate to have this space to welcome people immediately upon entering West Central. In this home-like setting, we hope to learn more about families and their unique situations. We say, “You are welcome here. This is your community. This place belongs to all of us. You are brave to ask for help.” But mostly, we listen.

As a family support worker at Closer to Home, I work to make the strength and resilience of families noticeable to themselves and the people around them. I want these qualities to illuminate the very space we sit together in and shine through in the quality of their interactions with family and friends.

Over time, trust begins to unfold and positive changes take root. A mom who used to worry about rent has asked for a budget sheet. A dad is willing to try new parenting skills. A grandma brings cupcakes to share on her granddaughter’s birthday so they won’t have to celebrate alone. We say, “You are welcome here. This is your community. This place belongs to all of us. You are brave to ask for help.”

I recently met with a mom in the community. I could see her confidence shine as she talked about her family. We remembered our first meeting in the ‘living room’. We smiled and reminisced about our conversations on those large chairs.

“Today I’m thankful,” she says. And I am too. We are fortunate to have this space to welcome people immediately upon entering West Central. We are fortunate to have this space to welcome people immediately upon entering West Central.