Closer to Home has a new look for its logo. Late last year, our organization embarked on a process to refresh our logo to better reflect who we are and our work with children, youth and families. The new logo comes at a time of organizational growth and improved strategic directions, as we head toward our 20th anniversary in 2015. Within this fresh redesign, there are elements that reflect our past logos while emphasizing innovation and creativity to fulfill our mission and to meet the evolving needs of children, families and communities. The bold CTH lettering, our house symbol and yellow contour line embody Closer to Home’s commitment to families by bringing help ‘closer to home.’ Thank you to community members, staff and our Board of Directors who participated in the logo redesign process. Melodi Petrigo, owner of Savvy North Design, deserves special recognition for helping CTH design an identity that we are proud to carry forward.
Vision

Closer to Home is committed to contributing to a future where every child will belong to a family and feel valued and secure. Through the use of evidence-based practices and innovative solutions, CTH will strive to preserve, reunify and build stronger families who can care for their children and contribute meaningfully in their community. CTH will provide a broad array of strength-based and family-centered services that teach, coach and support families to create new possibilities and achieve better futures together.

Mission

Empowering Families to Stay Together

Strategic Directions

1. Expand organizational capacity to ensure that children and families have the services they need to successfully stay together.
2. Build an evidence-based organization that exemplifies excellence and delivers outcomes that meet the needs of children, youth and families.
3. Enhance the organization’s competence working within and from an Aboriginal worldview.
Message from the Board Chair and Executive Director

A mission to achieve, a vision to embrace with principles and values to guide us….at Closer to Home we are all in this work together. In preparation for growth and changing programs, this year marked a refreshing of who we are and what we want to achieve over the next few years. “Empowering families to stay together” continues to be the overriding mission and goal for every service we provide. Our collective job as an agency is to work towards the outcomes we believe in so strongly: keep kids at home with their parents or their own families whenever possible, rebuild families and reunify children who have been placed into care and, for children and youth who can’t go back home, find a place to call home and a new family to call their own.

We are ready to bring our vision into reality. We are committed to contributing to a future where every child will belong to a family and feel valued and secure. Through our practice we will strive to reunify and build stronger families and communities. And we will continue to build an array of strength-based and family-centered services that will create change and new possibilities for the children and families we serve.

As a Board and staff, we have carved out a strategic path for the future that will keep us focused on services that meet the needs of families in Calgary and Airdrie communities. It is critical that we continue to build early intervention responses for families to keep their children out of alternative placements. It is imperative that Closer to Home remain a vibrant and sustainable organization that continues to achieve our mission and outcomes. Closer to Home requires a long-term growth plan to continue to address the needs of Calgary and Airdrie families. To continue expanding our array of services to help families, children and youth, Closer to Home must build a sustainable program and operational service strategy that addresses all facets of the organization.
In addition, Closer to Home is committed to providing services that are grounded in evidence-based practices and has the desire to achieve excellence, and operate with integrity and accountability. The organization will stay true to its principles and commit to program fidelity and best practices for clients. Research and data will inform service delivery and the reliable measurement of client outcomes will inform program decisions and learning. Systematic processes will ensure that learning and development occur at all levels of the organization in order to achieve excellent outcomes for children and families. A continuous improvement culture will encourage and support service quality and innovation.

And finally, Closer to Home will enhance and further develop the Aboriginal services we provide by promoting more integrated learning throughout the organization and strengthening our knowledge and understanding of the Aboriginal worldview. Using the guidance and leadership of Aboriginal Elders we plan to develop an initiative that will impact all our services and build knowledge and respect for the traditions and cultures so important to the Aboriginal way of parenting and raising children.

All the work we do as an agency must continue to support better and ever-improving outcomes for children and families. We have to be creative and innovative as we flex and adapt our services to meet changing needs. We must carefully share and replicate our knowledge with each other and bring in new learnings from our field. And we must be champions and advocates for the children, families and individuals we serve to create new possibilities for their futures.

The staff and practitioners at Closer to Home are the talented and committed teams of professionals who exemplify the mission and vision of the organization. We see the positive impact of their work and hear the amazing success stories of change and new hope for children and families. Through their skill, persistence and dedication, our practitioners and staff make a difference every day.

Join us in our goal to reach out to even more families and children who need help and hope. Be a part of the Closer to Home family through your support and ensure that every family who needs a teacher, coach, or mentor to get through tough times can get the help they need, when they need it. Enjoy reading about the changed lives of children, youth and families who are featured in this year’s report.

Respectfully,
Karen Olivier, Executive Director            Kate Andrews, Board Chairperson
“The environment that gives opportunity to guide our lives forward in a positive direction.”

These words, provided by Elders during the program naming ceremony, embody the spirit of a new program established at Closer to Home this past year.

EE-DES-SPOOM-OOH-SOOP is difficult for some of us to say, but powerful in meaning. Creating an environment that gives opportunity is fundamental to this program but also fundamental to how Closer to Home works with all families and youth.
Closer to Home has provided a broad continuum of services to Aboriginal families and youth for many years. This new program provided the opportunity to extend that continuum even further and work with the most vulnerable and transient young Aboriginal families and youth, in the community, on their own terms. To allow them to establish their own path to heal, EE-DES-SPOOM-OOH-SOOP would provide the environment that led to an opportunity for participants to move their lives forward in a positive direction by developing a plan for change, participating in cultural activities and engaging with Elders.

You might wonder what is innovative about a program like this. All CTH programs are individualized to meet the needs of the specific child or family and customized to address their unique challenges. The Teaching-Family Model, which we adhere to carefully, incorporates these elements by design. But, what if we never got the opportunity to engage with an at-risk Aboriginal family or youth? What if they had never been referred to us nor ever accessed our Community Resource Center? EE-DES-SPOOM-OOH-SOOP provides the opportunity to engage with these families, voluntarily, anywhere in the city to provide them the environment that gives them opportunities. The program enables us to offer non-threatening, non-intrusive, family/cultural activities across the city to help participants find a connection point and begin guiding their lives forward.

When families or individuals are vulnerable and transient it is especially difficult for them to focus on moving their lives forward positively. Day to day needs can be overwhelming and long held challenges such as poverty and addiction can drain the energy necessary to look forward. EE-DES-SPOOM-OOH-SOOP seeks to re-balance these life challenges by providing a touch point either in person or online as part of a virtual community. Connections with essential community resources can be made to address concrete issues and spiritual connections can be made with Elders through tradition and ceremony.

Again, you might say what is innovative about that? The answer is that EE-DES-SPOOM-OOH-SOOP also recognized the transiency of participants and implemented an online community using the popular online platform, Facebook. This helps to ensure participants can stay connected even at a distance and provides peer to peer support options where participants can share experiences. Finally to really concentrate on finding the best way to stay connected with participants, EE-DES-SPOOM-OOH-SOOP implemented a mobile phone and texting strategy. This strategy provided planned text messages from staff to participants at key times to support their personal goals. The program also provided mobile phones and texting airtime plans to those participants who could not afford their own, so they would not be excluded from participating in this valuable portion of the program.

Engagement, opportunity, the right environment, innovation, and moving forward in a positive direction. All of these concepts are embodied in this program and will continue to be as the program moves forward into the future. If you would like any additional details about the program please contact Kandi Santerno, Program Manager at ksanterno@closerhome.com.

Closer to Home would like to thank our supporters, Canadian Heritage, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, the Calgary Foundation and TELUS for their support of the EE-DES-SPOOM-OOH-SOOP program.
An Ending is only the Beginning of Something Greater

Closer to Home is committed to the most positive outcomes for those we serve and the Airdrie Specialized Community Support Program demonstrates a creative and individualized response to the needs of one young man, *Ben.

With no family connections and an adoption that broke down, Ben grew up in the care of Child and Family Services. He struggled with anxiety, depression and serious health concerns, leaving him feeling that life ‘was not fair,’ understandably. Ben was 17 years old when Closer to Home received the request to develop a specialized program for him to meet his unique physical, emotional and cognitive needs. Ben had been through multiple surgeries and these, coupled with his cognitive delays and ongoing health concerns, were barriers to his independence as he entered adulthood.

Closer to Home worked closely with Ben and together with support from Child and Family Services, developed an individualized plan to assist Ben towards his goal of independence. Brandy Bursey, Program Manager said “Ben was part of the planning process from the beginning. The plan was developed around what he wanted and needed personally. A collaborative and unique approach to program design was used knowing that success is created when people are the change agents in their own lives and when families, children and youth know what they need to build success, resiliency and healthy lives. It is remarkable to see outcomes that are created when professionals take the opportunity to listen and build supports around an individual.”

Ben moved into a home that was staffed 24/7. Now, he can live somewhat independently, in a safe and supported way. Using the evidence-based Teaching-Family Model, Closer to Home staff taught specific skills to help Ben manage his emotional and physical health. He secured employment, learned how to manage his home and pay his rent and bills. He learned how to coordinate transportation to attend his doctors’ appointments and how to access support and resources in the community. He also strengthened his social skills and developed friendships. Ben works hard to stay positive and focuses on what he can do instead of what he can’t.
As Ben gained independent living skills and consistently used them over time, staff supports were strategically and gradually reduced to ensure Ben could successfully increase independence with less professional supports. Ben rose to this challenge, maintained his skills and demonstrated his increasing ability to effectively and independently manage all areas of his life. “This program says something about our agency,” says Arlene Oostenbrink, Associate Director. “Closer to Home is responsive, adaptable and strategic. We are committed to great outcomes and worked in partnership with Ben and with Child and Family Services to make this happen.”

A Closer to Home program has closed, but this is a great success story with truly positive outcomes. At a time when Ben had no one in his life, Closer to Home worked with him and provided encouragement and opportunity to learn valuable independent living skills and to establish strong, supportive relationships that will be sustained well into the future. Ben has gained stability, mastery, and a sense of belonging that has equipped him for a positive future. Ben ‘graduated’ from Closer to Home’s program and has moved to an adult supported-living environment offered through another agency. “I know he will continue to be successful in any future endeavors” says Brandy.

*Names have been changed

Planning for Success:
The Evaluation and Outcome Framework

Imagine a person sitting in a car outside their house preparing to head to an important meeting. They have a clear picture of their destination and suddenly realize they are not sure how to get there. They pull away from their house but don’t know whether to turn left or right; their confidence wanes.

This is the experience of someone with a goal, but no plan to achieve it. The challenges of the journey will cause the person to question every decision, change direction unpredictably and spend much more time and energy getting to their destination - if they reach it at all.

Now imagine the same person sitting in their car outside the house again. This time they think of the destination and reach for a map. They locate the destination on the map, make a mental note of the turn necessary at each intersection, visualize the buildings near the destination and see themselves walking into the entrance. They pull away from the curb with a sense of calm and confidence, knowing that they will reach the destination successfully, on time, efficiently.

The difference between the two scenes? A simple map.

There was no difference between the capabilities or the intention of each driver. The best route to the destination was the same in both cases and the reliability of the vehicle was the same. Yet the second evokes a much stronger sense of purposefulness and competence. By now you are probably wondering if Closer to Home is in the business of making maps and, in a sense, the answer is yes.

It is not the type of map that helps you get from your house to an appointment, but the type that helps us work with a young person or family experiencing challenges. At Closer to Home, our goal is to be even more intentional and deliberate in our decisions and to make the most efficient
use of our resources - always being mindful of our mission and the best interests of the children and families we serve.

Obviously humans are much more complex than a road network and our map does not tell us what to do at every juncture, rather it tells us what to look for at every intersection.

Our map is called the Evaluation and Outcome Framework and this year Closer to Home devoted time and energy using an analytical, logical approach to identify the best performance measures to develop this map. This Framework will help us work more confidently to move children and families toward their goals.

Being an evidence-based organization, research in our field is essential to our decision making. As a common set of indicators across jurisdictions, the nationally adopted and researched National Child Welfare Outcomes Indicators Matrix (NOMS) is the foundation for our framework.

This Evaluation and Outcome Framework has identified four major outcomes for youth and families involved in our services. These outcomes are Safety, Well Being, Community and Family Connections and Permanence, which are consistent with the NOMS. Most importantly these are more than ‘nice’ concepts, they are actually identified as the elements for successfully mitigating child protection concerns.

The research has shown that if these four elements are addressed for families and children, they become more resilient and stable. Sounds simple. We know we want to get children and families fully united and we now have a map to that destination, so it should be easy. Not so. This map tells us what to look for at each intersection to help us understand in which direction to turn. For example, it tells us that helping children do well in school, contributes to their well-being, which in turn contributes to them doing well in life. It does not, however tell us how to help them do well in school. Closer to Home’s staff, who are highly skilled in implementing the Teaching-Family Model intervene at this point to determine what needs to be done on a day to day basis to get us from one intersection to the next. But the map is still very powerful. It guides our efforts toward those long-term, sustainable elements of success that we instill within families and children.

At this point you may wonder why we are highlighting this since it seems so logical. Society has well developed standards in terms of maps these days, we can navigate even the largest city with GPS or our smartphones. When working with children and families, we must build our own maps using the considerable research and practical knowledge that has been generated over the years.

Closer to Home has chosen to face this task head on, to understand the most important areas that we want to impact and measure. There are the things that really matter for those we serve; Safety, Well-Being, Community and Family Connectedness and Permanence.

Today, we continue to implement the Framework in all programs by training our staff, measuring progress, developing plans, collecting relevant data, and when asked or informed of new directions or funding opportunities, we do, and will continue to, evaluate these against the Framework.

We would like to thank an anonymous donor for providing Closer to Home with the opportunity and resources to complete this valuable work.

For more information, please contact Arlene Oostenbrink at aoostenbrink@closertohome.com.
Bringing Group Care Closer to Home

Like many youth in Closer to Home’s Group Care program, Lucas* has a simple goal: to maintain lifelong connections as he grows up.

“[I want] someone who will take me out to dinner on my 30th birthday.”

Establishing a sense of permanency for vulnerable children and youth is at the core of our services.

Closer to Home collaborates with Calgary and Area Child and Family Services and several other agencies to support children and youth who require a high level of intervention and personalized care throughout our Group Care program.

Through this partnership, Closer to Home has the opportunity to identify youth who may need services such as Foster Care, Specialized Community Supports, or Group Care (Community Teaching Homes).

Using the Teaching-Family Model of care, youth in the Group Care program live in an environment similar to a family setting. “Up until now, services for these children have always been in Group Homes,” explains Kandi Santerno, Program Manager. It is with great excitement that Closer to Home has developed a program for youth that would typically be referred to Group Care. Unlike Group Home settings, our new adaptation involves one youth who is placed with Family Teachers, a couple who lives in their own home in the community. Family Teachers collaborate with program staff to parent and teach to the youth individually, rather than splitting their time among four to five other youth.

“Hopefully,” says Kandi, “Family Teacher Homes will allow us to take those individualized plans and goals that a youth has identified and put them into practice in a more focused manner than we are able to do in Group Homes.”

Youth like Lucas are encouraged to identify important people in their lives as supports. “That’s one of the biggest goals he’s identified,” says Kelly O’Neil, Program Coordinator. “To have someone take him out to dinner on his 30th birthday. To have Christmas with him. That’s something that a lot of kids don’t have.”

While most Family Teachers would like to continue a relationship after a youth turns eighteen, they work with their Program Coordinator to help youth identify supportive relationships, such as aunts, uncles, or teachers. “At some point it may be that those are the people in a youth’s permanency plan,” Kandi adds. “That could be the person who steps up and takes on a caregiver role into adulthood.”

“Unfortunately, not having close, involved and committed adults can be very stressful for youth who reach that age and don’t have outside supports. That’s why I think it’s important for us to do what we do,” says Kelly.

And the outcomes prove it. Closer to Home structures all our programs to reflect a family environment. “We are aware that if kids don’t grow up in a family setting they have great challenges building their own families successfully,” Kandi explains.

“That is ultimately what we want for all of our youth – for them to be successful and achieve their personal goals and aspirations.”

*Name changed.
Becoming a Family Again

After everything they experienced, nothing matters more to Angie and Dylan* than being together as a family again. Strained by stress, Angie and Dylan’s relationship spiraled last year and their addictions were out of control. Things quickly went downhill for their family. While Angie and Dylan had faced challenges before, this was the first time in their lives that they were separated from each other and their two children.

“It was really hard,” Angie says. “We lost everything.”

Fast forward one year. Newly settled into their warmly decorated apartment, Angie and Dylan describe their family’s journey from loss and separation toward healing and reunification. Both are grateful for the help they received at Closer to Home’s Pekewe Family Reunification Program (Pekewe House). They firmly believe it was the key to their family’s success.

Pekewe House offers an opportunity for Aboriginal parents to reclaim their children who are currently in the care of a Delegated First Nations Authority. Through cultural teachings, parenting supports and daily goal-setting, parents are prepared for successful re-entry to the community with their children in their care.

“I have no idea if there is anything like Pekewe. I know there are family shelters in Calgary, but nothing like it,” Angie explains.

While in their court-ordered treatment programs, Angie and Dylan began searching for family reunification options in Calgary. Angie was encouraged to move in with her grandmother and two children. Other family members offered their homes, but there would be no space for Dylan until they could afford an apartment together. “It would have been the three of you and just me alone,” says Dylan.

“I said we need to be together,” Angie remembers.

Angie heard about Closer to Home and the Pekewe Program through a family member and thought that it would be a good fit for their family. Angie advocated for her family, finally convincing her Social Worker that the program existed. “She didn’t know anything about the place… until she looked it up and clicked on ‘Closer to Home’.

Their kids were excited. Pekewe was where the family could be together again. A safe place. A place where Angie and Dylan could get back on their feet again.

Dylan moved in twenty days after Angie. “Coming out of treatment and knowing that my family was set-up,” he says, “I was so anxious to get out and be with my family again.”

Angie describes her feelings of hope and relief when the family reunited at Pekewe House, “it was unbelievable. After everything we had gone through in that six-month period to the time that we walked in through those doors,” she pauses to explain, “to know that we were a family again. That was the big thing that was amazing about being there.”

Dylan agrees that connecting with Closer to Home was a positive experience for the family. “It was a good way to gain trust for one another. Without Pekewe it would have taken us a lot longer. We’d be living with family… but it definitely would have slowed us down.”

Angie and Dylan worked with their Support Worker at Pekewe House to identify weekly goals and review progress. They participated in counselling, parenting supports, budgeting and career building classes. Their focus was on strengthening their family.
“They have big family values,” Angie explains. “Everything about Pekewe is helping a family get back together. It’s not only from the basics of getting back together and how to make this work but they go about it by building communication with each other. It’s not just the essentials of finding a home and a job but they approach it from a spiritual perspective too.”

Angie recalls a very special experience their family had with an Elder. “Leonard came in and did a ceremony for our family alone. It was nice that it was just us. We did that before and it was with the entire family - a lot of people - and this was just very intimate.”

Within months, Dylan found his current job in landscaping. He beams with pride when describing how it makes him feel, “I actually enjoy it. I have experience in it.” He adds with pride, “I’m sore from it today.”

Today, Angie and Dylan talk about how they have regained control over their lives. They both work full-time and are helping their fifteen-year old son plan for his future. “Right now [he’s] talking about joining the Calgary Police Department,” Angie says.

Asked what factor contributed to their family’s success, Dylan and Angie agree that it was their determination to be together as a family. “We had to work at this and at the same time we knew that we basically put ourselves in that position so [the help at Pekewe] was a way out.”

They credit their Support Workers for motivating and supporting them through their transition. “You can feel it.” Angie explains. “You can feel it from each and every one of them. All they want is for a family to be stable again.”

Reflecting back on their experience at Pekewe House, Angie and Dylan acknowledge the unconditional support that helped their family face their challenges and remain open to new possibilities.

Angie encourages new families to be open about their issues.

“Pekewe staff will do their best to [provide] support and families will get positive outcomes like strengthening their family after they leave.”

Dylan’s advice for families is to have patience. “And on some days, have some more patience.”

*Name changed.

“To know that we were a family again. That was the big thing that was amazing about being there.”
The Practitioner of the Year Award is most certainly well deserved. Melody McCann is an extraordinary practitioner with Closer to Home Community Services who brings her outstanding work ethic, knowledge, and supportive nature to all of the roles she has fulfilled over the last four years.

It is clear to everyone at Closer to Home that Melody is an exceptional Family Specialist who draws upon her experiences as an artist to create a context of support for families in crisis situations. She exemplifies resourcefulness, creativity and skill in demonstrating her passion for children and families.

Melody has developed a broad knowledge base, having worked in various programs throughout the years. Melody began with Closer to Home in the Specialized Community Support Program in Airdrie at its inception. Melody then became a part of the staff team at the Airdrie Teaching Home, where she developed a solid foundation in the Teaching-Family Model and proved to be an excellent teacher. For the past two years, Melody has thrived in her role as a Family Specialist in the Family Matters Program, based out of Airdrie.

Melody does meaningful work in her role as a Family Specialist. The Family Matters program is a short-term, intensive in-home support program for families in the Airdrie and Bow Valley Corridor region. This program receives referrals from Child and Family Services and aims to improve
family functioning and minimize protection concerns. Families come to this program to work on parenting skills, connect to resources, learn crisis management strategies, communication skills and much more.

Melody approaches each family she works with from a collaborative and professional stance. Melody is able to engage children and parents through her ability to be non-judgmental, easy to talk to, and an active listener. Melody is able to quickly develop trusting relationships with her families, which makes her work even more effective. She is skilled in adapting the Teaching-Family Model to fit families’ unique needs, which helps her develop effective and meaningful plans to create positive change.

When asked what she enjoys most about her role, Melody says the most rewarding aspect is, “being able to be a part of helping families achieve their goals, and to witness their successes.” She expressed that she learns every day in this position and that “each interaction with a family is a learning opportunity…not only do I help families learn new skills, I learn a lot from them.” When asked what it means to her to be named Practitioner of the Year, she says “it affirms that I am doing the job I am meant to be doing, and that I am using my skills, strengths and knowledge.”

Congratulations on your hard work, dedication, and excellent outcomes, Melody! Closer to Home is proud to recognize you as Practitioner of the Year.

“...it affirms that I am doing the job I am meant to be doing, and that I am using my skills, strengths and knowledge.”

**Certifications**

We celebrate the exceptional commitment and perseverance of our Practitioners who have achieved certification and are recognized by the international Teaching-Family Association.

April 1, 2013 – March 31, 2014

**First Annual Certification**
Henri Giroux (Family Support Worker)
Kelly O’Neill (Alternate Teaching Parent)
Marion Redwood (Home Visitor)
Melody McCann (Family Support Worker)
Michelle Horvath (Program Support Worker)
Teri & Eric Broome (Foster Parents)

**Second Annual Certification**
Bisola Aina (Foster Parent)
Cathy & Cory Fair (Foster Parents)
Jennifer Bradley (Program Coordinator)
Katie McArthur (Family Support Worker)
Marsha Hanson (Family Support Worker)

**Fifth Annual Certification**
Jim & Koral Evans (Teaching Parents)

**Tenth Annual Certification**
Betty & John Mostert (Foster Parents)
Lori & Don Snell (Foster Parents)
Margaret & Walter Stockton (Foster Parents)

**Twelfth Annual Certification**
Gwen Stewart (Foster Parent)
Volunteer of the Year – Lara Buchman-Duck

Twenty little hands rise in the air when Lara Buchman-Duck leads Homework Club in Shaganappi. After months of practice, homework, and games, kids in grades 1-6 see remarkable improvements in subjects such as English and Math.

“She makes it fun,” says Ashley O’Reilly, Family Support Worker at the West Central Resource Centre. “In the beginning, kids wouldn’t ask for help because they felt frustrated or embarrassed but Lara is good at making Homework Club fun. By the end, all the kids had their hands up and wanted to talk to Lara.”

Since 2012, Lara has supported Closer to Home as a volunteer. She discovered Closer to Home after researching volunteer placements online, intending to use her experience to prepare her for a career in elementary school teaching.

“The number one reason I love volunteering at Closer to Home and the Shaganappi Homework Club is because the [program staff] make it a terrific experience!” Lara explains. “I have gained so much by getting to know the individual children that come to Homework Club for help… I know their stories and backgrounds which, in turn, helps me understand their needs as students and as children.”

Children in the Shaganappi Homework Club often struggle with low literacy skills. “We see kids in grade three reading at a kindergarten level,” explains Ashley. “Lara is good at working with kids on subjects such as English and Math. She helps them develop skills in reading and writing. Her approach is gentle, calm and loving. Kids find it easy to come to her for help.”

Lara is passionate about helping elementary school children learn. After completing her undergraduate degree in Political Science and History, Lara hopes to pursue a post-graduate program in Education in order to become an elementary school teacher. She is confident that volunteering at Closer to Home has solidified this goal.

“I have gained a better understanding of the struggles facing new Canadians in communities such as Shaganappi. I can only hope that by helping the children of Shaganappi with their homework once a week that I can also make a difference in their education.”

Minoush Rafie, Program Coordinator, describes a moment at Homework Club when she overheard students talking about
their “favourite” volunteer, “the true gauge of one’s impact on the lives of children and youth is recognized when the individual leaves the program and there is still positive talk about what that person taught them. I was a witness to this when I overheard students talking about [Lara’s] lessons for the day.”

When Lara volunteers at Homework Club, children who were once shy demonstrate signs of confidence and motivation in difficult school subjects. “Children are attentive and interested in Lara’s presence,” Minoush explains. “This is exhibited by their focus, questions, and comments throughout her time there. Her strong and warm attitude is particularly effective.”

Lara’s hope for the children she helps is that they will develop confidence in their ability to learn. “I hope they will go on to reach their individual learning and life goals,” she says.

Minoush and Ashley encourage Lara to do more in the education field and especially for the families and children that Closer to Home serves. Ashley agrees, “We’ve seen huge improvements and, at the end of Homework Club, the kids always want to know if Lara is coming back.”

Not only does Lara bring unique skills to the Shaganappi Homework Club but she has taken it upon herself to learn about the Teaching-Family Model. Lara uses these skills throughout her interactions with kids. “She praises kids for following instructions or asking for permission. She models corrective teaching and, because of her level of knowledge of the Teaching-Family Model, we developed a reward system for kids’ positive behaviour,” Ashley says.

Lara has truly made a meaningful difference to children and staff at Shaganappi Homework Club. She exemplifies the values of Closer to Home through her creativity, kindness and commitment to young children. She is truly appreciated by program staff and especially the children she has supported over the years.

“We could not have asked for a more competent, kind, nor a more committed and industrious volunteer,” Minoush says.
The family has supported Closer to Home through a variety of volunteer and donor opportunities over the past fourteen years. “One thing led to another,” explains Marilyn, “and I ended up joining the Board of Directors. Geoff supported me in whatever I did.”

“It seemed like a great organization and Marilyn was so excited about it,” Geoff says. “I thought it was great.”

When their children were young, their family connected to Closer to Home through the Adopt-a-Family initiative. Marilyn and a friend enthusiastically coordinated the initiative at their children’s school and eventually adopted families on their own for the holidays.

These experiences helped instill important values in their children’s lives. “The kids saw how they can make a difference. It gave us the opportunity to talk with them about how people are in a difficult situation, and look at what they’re doing and how hard it is to be working through these things – but they are still having joy, and they are loved,” says Marilyn.

Through her volunteer involvement, Marilyn became close with a grandmother in the community. “She was working two jobs… and trying to raise a teenage daughter, a young grandchild, and a newborn niece – in three different age groups,” she explains. “There are so many obstacles when you’re put in that situation.”

They credit Closer to Home for helping families in similar situations overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles. And they are convinced that their donations help make this possible. “The results speak for themselves,” Geoff says. When someone asks how they can help, Geoff and Marilyn are quick to describe programs at Closer to Home. “A lot of people that we work with… don’t have the support that you or I might have,” Marilyn explains. “Imagine your little son has red cheeks and he is four months old. Your mom, best friend or sister might say, ‘Oh, he’s teething,’ but some moms who come to Closer to Home for help don’t have that support. We help with those basic things in the [Healthy Families] program.”

“I also try to make a definite point about the professionalism at Closer to Home,” Marilyn adds. “We want the organization to be here for a long time.”

Looking ahead, Geoff and Marilyn hope to see Closer to Home recognized throughout Canada. “Right now Closer to Home is consulting in New Zealand and the United States. I’d like to see that the Teaching-Family methodology is seen and used throughout Canada and the world.”
That Marilyn and Geoff are recipients of the Donor of the Year Award is no surprise to those who know the couple, although there are few instances when the McMillans agree to public recognition for their philanthropy.

“[Recognition] is nice but we don’t look for any of that. If it inspires others to do the same thing, to help out, then that’s great,” Geoff says.

Marilyn agrees. “Sometimes that’s the case. People see that you do believe in it that much and that this is the number one place that you donate to, then that lends credibility to Closer to Home. That’s why we’re doing this.”

These values have always been in their awareness. Their children, now adults, found that as part of their upbringing. “We’re from the generation where our parents were in the Rotary, the church, the Legion, and so on. So for us, it’s automatic that we participate in the community,” Marilyn says.

“There is more to this world than you. There is more value in doing things for others than yourself. Those are values that we want.”

Accreditations and Memberships

Accreditation
Teaching-Family Association (TFA – Accredited Sponsor Site)
Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF – Accredited)

Memberships
Alberta Association of Services for Children and Families (AASCF)
Alberta Home Visitation Collaborative
Foster Family-based Treatment Association (FFTA)
Child Welfare League of Canada (CWLC)
Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (CCVO)
Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs (FRP)
Calgary Learns Association
Child and Youth Care Association of Alberta

“There is more to this world than you. There is more value in doing things for others than yourself.”
Fund Development

Closer to Home is grateful for support from our primary funders including Calgary & Area Child and Family Services (CFS), the City of Calgary’s Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) and HomeFront totaling more than $5.1 million.

In addition to these funders, we are thankful for fundraising revenue generated from many individuals, organizations and community groups, government, foundations and corporations.

*Fundraising Revenue:  
$351,999.51

35.05%  Corporations
4.92%  Individuals
1.40%  Organizations & Religious Groups
29.59%  Government
29.04%  Foundations

Fundraising Revenue (in-kind):  
$115,416.70

29.26%  Corporations
31.97%  Individuals
23.09%  Organizations & Religious Groups
0.35%  Government
15.33%  Foundations

*Does not include CFS, FCSS and HomeFront.
Improving Youth Well-Being - Days of Caring
Imperial Oil Limited and its crew of volunteers pulled together to renovate Closer to Home’s Achievement Place One Community Teaching Home, a home where youth reside while working to reunite with their family. It is not an easy situation for these youth, but they cannot help but feel a little better being in a new, comfortable and safe environment and knowing that people in the community care.

Maintaining Family & Community Connections - Adopt-a-Family
Closer to Home is touched by the generosity of community members who step up to support families in need with Christmas gifts and essentials. This initiative assists families in their ability to access supports in times of stress thereby maintaining family relationships and increasing their resilience as a family.

Providing Safety & Stability - Calgary Herald Christmas Fund
Funds from the 2013 Calgary Herald Christmas Fund supported Closer to Home’s partnership with the Domestic Conflict Response Team (DCRT). The Team works with families to address unresolved domestic conflict situations.

Families are Forever - Special Initiatives
Partners, like Sponsor Energy, empower community members to easily support Closer to Home in our work to keep families together, by allowing customers to select Closer to Home as a recipient of a percentage of profits on energy usage.

Welcoming Change - Continued Support from Donors like You
With new strategic directions in place, Closer to Home, its donors and funders are committed to supporting families. Please join us. Your support is welcome and appreciated.

1. Aboriginal Services - Helping Aboriginal families to stay together and transition successfully into the community.

2. A Permanent Home - Closer to Home is working to acquire a new, sustainable community resource centre, including expanded program space to improve accessibility and visibility.

3. Recreational and Community Activities for Youth - Providing youth with opportunities to learn important values and life skills including self-confidence, teamwork, communication, inclusion, discipline, respect and fair play.

“It warms my heart and brings tears to my eyes knowing that there are people like you in this world. I thank you for everything.” – Adopt-a-Family Recipient 2013
YES! I would like to help Closer to Home keep families together.

I would like to make a MONTHLY GIFT of:
☑ $50/mth ☐ $30/mth ☐ $15/mth ☐ Other $____/mth

OR, here is my SINGLE GIFT of:
☑ $250 ☐ $100 ☐ $50 ☐ Other $____

Name ____________________________________________________________

Company __________________________________________________________

Address ____________________________________________________________

City ___________________________ Province _______________ Postal Code __________________

Home Phone ___________________________ Work Phone ___________________________ Email ___________________________

Payment Method Options:

☑ My cheque made payable to ‘Closer to Home Community Services’ is enclosed.

☑ I prefer to pay by Credit Card. For credit card donations, we will call you to verify information and complete your donation through the CanadaHelps website (www.canadahelps.com)

☑ Closer to Home may recognize my name in the Donor Recognition section of CTH publications such as the quarterly newsletter and Report to the Community.

☑ I would like to receive email communications from CTH such as the quarterly newsletter.

Please mail your completed form to: 3507A 17 Ave SW | Calgary AB T3E 0B6
Or fax your completed form to (403) 246-6406.

Questions? Contact the Fund Development Department at (403) 543-0550 ext. 235.

Thank you!
### Balance Sheet

**As at March 31, 2014**

#### ASSETS

**Current assets**
- Cash: $661,918 (2014), $42,762 (2013)


**Capital assets**

Total assets: $1,959,726 (2014), $1,841,589 (2013)

#### LIABILITIES

**Current liabilities**
- Deferred revenue: $33,461 (2014), $37,310 (2013)
- Current portion of mortgages payable within one year: $339,401 (2014), $63,827 (2013)
- Current portion of mortgages payable after one year: $- (2014), $667,238 (2013)


**Mortgages payable**

**Deferred capital contributions**

**Deferred contributions**


#### DEFICIENCY OF NET ASSETS

**Unrestricted**

Total deficiency of net assets: $1,959,726 (2014), $1,841,589 (2013)

The attached financial information is extracted from the March 31, 2014 audited financial statements. A complete set of audited financial statements is available upon request.
Statement of Operations and Changes in (Deficiency) Net Assets
For the year ended March 31, 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2014 ($)</th>
<th>2013 ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revenue</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract and service fees</td>
<td>5,120,676</td>
<td>5,470,865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants, donations and donations in kind</td>
<td>256,436</td>
<td>158,464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rental</td>
<td>6,205</td>
<td>12,730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>5,846</td>
<td>6,380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5,389,163</td>
<td>5,648,439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program expenses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salaries and benefits</td>
<td>3,203,777</td>
<td>3,266,763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsellor per diems</td>
<td>627,490</td>
<td>802,754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service delivery</td>
<td>442,948</td>
<td>503,082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility</td>
<td>311,121</td>
<td>301,450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4,585,336</td>
<td>4,874,049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Administrative expenses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salaries and benefits</td>
<td>476,626</td>
<td>467,781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office and other administration</td>
<td>177,860</td>
<td>169,168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle</td>
<td>65,862</td>
<td>74,207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>720,348</td>
<td>711,156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss on sale of capital assets</td>
<td>3,910</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amortization</td>
<td>86,602</td>
<td>84,278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital campaign expenditures</td>
<td>142,439</td>
<td>59,069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>232,951</td>
<td>143,347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenses</strong></td>
<td>5,538,635</td>
<td>5,728,552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deficiency of revenue over expenses</strong></td>
<td>(149,472)</td>
<td>(80,113)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Deficiency) net assets – Beginning of year</strong></td>
<td>(4,442)</td>
<td>75,671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deficiency of net assets – End of year</strong></td>
<td>(153,914)</td>
<td>(4,442)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Statement of Cash Flows
For the year ended March 31, 2014

### CASH PROVIDED BY (USED IN)

#### Operating activities
- Deficiency of revenue over expenses: $(149,472)$, $(80,113)$
- Items not affecting cash: $3,910$, $-$
- Loss on sale of capital asset: $86,602$, $84,278$
- Amortization: $(58,960)$, $4,165$

#### Changes in non-cash working capital
- $256,847$, $16,777$
- $197,887$, $20,942$

#### Investing activities
- Proceeds on sale of capital assets: $1,500$, $-$
- Purchase of capital assets: $(8,805)$, $(47,508)$
- Sale of short term investments, net: $331,263$, $46,279$

#### Financing activities
- Deferred capital contributions: $-$, $5,740$
- Repayment of mortgages payable: $(58,912)$, $(62,128)$
- Increase in deferred contributions: $156,223$, $10,802$

#### Increase (decrease) in cash for the year
- $619,156$, $(25,873)$

### Cash – Beginning of year
- $42,762$, $68,635$

### Cash – End of year
- $661,918$, $42,762$
# Donors

*Thank you to all of our 2013/2014 donors who directly contributed to positive outcomes for children, youth and families.*

## Individuals

- Barb Henning
- Melissa Hicks
- Nicole Jordan
- Kane Family
- Terry Koch
- Linda Kolner
- Randy Korver
- Rhonda Lacroix
- Chris Larsen & Shea Stiles
- Roxanne LeBlanc
- Eric Lumsden
- Lyons Family
- James D. Lytle, P. Eng.
- John & Laurie Maher
- Jytte Maleski
- Geoffrey & Marilyn McMillan
- Andrew McQuiston
- Bonnie & Rick Muir
- Kaitlins Nelson
- Julie O’Brien & Family
- Erin O’Reilly
- Karen Olivier
- Parsons Family
- Pohl Family
- Kim and Matt Pumphrey
- Rae Family
- Minoush Rafie
- Joanne Rawlinson
- Michelle Ribeiro
- Karen Shelton
- Sarah & Campbel Sinclair
- Susan Smith
- Connie Sorensen
- Vicki Stinson
- Shawna Tiefenthaler
- Stuart Turner
- Julie Vy Huynh
- Daniel Washbrook
- Jim Washbrook
- Lauric-Anne Wilson
- Elmien Wingert
- Lora & Terry Wyman
- Angel Yeung
- Drive for Zoe
Organizations and Foundations

The Anglican Church of the Good Shepherd
Calgary Academy
Calgary Currie Constituency
The Calgary Foundation
Calgary Inter-Faith Food Bank
Cenovus Employee Foundation
Emmanuel Christian Reformed Church
GiftFunds Canada
Glamorgan Church of God
The Excellence in Literacy Foundation
Kids Up Front Foundation
Mission Possible Recovery Foundation
PricewaterhouseCoopers Canada Foundation
Robert Warren School
Rosscarrock Community Association
Samaritan Club of Calgary
Scarboro United Church
United Way of Calgary, Donor Choice Program
Queen Elizabeth High School

Clean Air Services Inc.
Crystal Glass Employees
Deerfoot Carpet
Forward Level Marketing
Glamorgan Bakery
Greco’s Pizza and George’s Lounge
H2Safety Services Inc.
Hays Specialist Recruitment
Imperial Oil Limited
John L. Stewart Architects Ltd.
Kelliher Developments Ltd.
Nikos Enterprises Ltd.
OrionHealth
Point & Feather
PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP
Re/Max Complete Realty
Rocky Mountain Soap Company
Shaw Communications
Sheldon Psychology Group
Simon Lift Systems
Sponsor Energy
Sport Chek Shawnessy
Stantec
Stone Source International
Voodoo Lounge
WinSport

Corporations and Businesses

ATB Financial
Employees of ATCO Power
Baxters Welding
Calgary Herald Christmas Fund
Cargill Limited
Cenovus Energy Inc.

Board of Directors

April 1, 2013 – March 31, 2014
Kate Andrews, Chair
Cristin Forbes-MacFarlane, Vice Chair
James Lytle
Jan Huska
Marilyn McMillan
Danial Thomas
Justin Senft, Treasurer

...and those donors who wish to remain anonymous.
**Funders**

Thank you to Closer to Home’s primary funders:

![Funder Logos]

**Grants**

Thank you to the following organizations for their support of the EE-DES-SPOOM-OOH-SOOP Program:

![Grant Logos]

**Credits**

Thank you to the staff and volunteers of Closer to Home Community Services who helped compile this year’s Report to the Community.

Also, a special thank you to Melodi Petrigo of Savvy North Design for developing Closer to Home’s new logo.

Closer to Home  
Community Services  
3507A – 17th Avenue SW  
Calgary, Alberta T3E 0B6  
Phone: (403) 543-0550

Fax: (403) 246-6406  
Email: info@closertohome.com  
www.closertohome.com