As Local Families Continue to Struggle, Calgarians Can Help

Last year, thanks to the incredible support of Calgarians, Closer to Home was able to double the impact of our annual Adopt-a-Family initiative, supporting 876 individuals across 215 families.

As our city’s economy continues to recover, local families are still struggling. Research shows that one in ten Calgarians are currently living in poverty, and many worry about how they are going to pay for groceries or next month’s rent.

That was the case for Riva, a single mom of three children who received support through Adopt-a-Family last year. Riva was struggling financially, and was eventually forced to move into a smaller rental unit in a new community. With a helping hand from Closer to Home, Riva and her kids were able to make connections in their new community and get back on their feet.

Closer to Home’s West Central Community Resource Centre has seen a 32% spike in the number of clients served this year versus last year. While employment in the city has shown signs of stabilization, many are still struggling to find work, while at the same time facing financial insecurity as their severance packages or unemployment benefits run dry.

With need in the city continuing to rise, we will need our donors to rally behind us again this year.

You can make a local family’s Christmas bright by signing up to fundraise or shop for gifts with Closer to Home’s Adopt-a-Family initiative. Learn more and complete your donor registration form at www.closertohome.com/adopt-a-family.

Most Needed In-Kind Donations

Closer to Home is in need of some new items to support the children, youth and families we serve.

- Grocery gift cards
- Family/youth activity passes (i.e. Calgary Zoo, WinSport)
- Skates and hockey sticks
- Toques, mitts and gloves
- Thick socks
- Sleds/toboggans
- Helmets for youth
- Inflatable Christmas decorations
- Halloween decorations
- Winter apparel for youth (sizes 12 youth to men’s medium)
- Roasting pans for cooking turkey dinners

Should you have any of these items, please contact Jessica at (403) 543-0550, Ext. 250 or jmelnychuk@closertohome.com.
We are finally getting back on our feet after my husband lost his job a year ago. He is back working, but our budget for Christmas gifts will be tight this year. How do I manage my children’s gift expectations?

Christmas is exciting, but can be a tough time of year for many reasons, including financial struggles. In order to manage your children’s gift expectations, you may want to talk to them about the meaning of Christmas and the importance of being with family. Give them some guidance on what to put on their wish list. This can be a great way to help children keep their expectations reasonable. You could ask them to pick something they want, something they need, something to wear and something to read. Then, go through the list with them. If your children identify more expensive items like iPads, consider making a plan with them to save money so they can purchase it themselves.

This could be a great experience for you and your children, helping them learn to problem solve, have reasonable expectations, and appreciate taking care of their belongings.

- Megan, CTH Home Visitor

Do you have parenting questions for our staff? Send them to us at jmelnychuk@closetohome.com and you may be featured in our next newsletter!
Three years ago, Leo and his family were happy. They moved to Calgary, had stable jobs and were happy and healthy.

Then, Leo received an unimaginable phone call. He was told his teenage daughter had taken her own life.

With his wife and three other children – all between the ages of 8 and 18 – arriving home at any moment, he had to hold it together, but he couldn’t.

The family was consumed by grief and emotion. Not knowing how to cope, and with no network of support in Calgary, Leo and his wife turned to illicit substances. It numbed the pain. “But it made things really, really bad,” says Leo. “We lost our jobs and we lost our home.”

Then one day Leo overdosed. He woke up in the hospital. “It was the wake-up call I needed,” recalls Leo. “I could have died. So I quit cold, with medical supports in place, and have been clean since.”

After the overdose, the family was connected to crisis supports, moved to a shelter, and started to gain some stability. A few months later, Leo and his family were connected to Closer to Home.

As a service provider through the Calgary Homeless Foundation’s Adaptive Case Management program, Closer to Home is helping to stabilize families experiencing homelessness. The program, known internally at Closer to Home as Home Again, offers individualized supports and financial assistance to help families secure and sustain housing.

Leo was connected with a Closer to Home Family Support Worker who is part of the Home Again team. In less than three months, the family found a suitable rental home. The Family Support Worker worked alongside the family to help connect them with resources and provide basic needs referrals.

With a place to call home, the family is now starting to set goals. Knowing that his family is stable, Leo and his wife can work on their mental and emotional health. He is ready to accept counselling and grieve his daughter’s death in a healthy way.

Leo is also reaching his employment goals. In fact, he has recently found work that helps him contribute more towards their rent, allowing a small reduction in rent subsidy.

Reflecting on her work with the family, the Family Support Worker says their story is only one example of how life can quickly spiral out of control when the unimaginable happens - to any of us. “But with programs like this in place, I have no doubt we can help many more families climb out of crisis.”

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**THANK YOU, CALGARY**

_This summer, you raised almost $15,000 in support of Calgary’s Kids._

It’s crucial for kids to have a safe, fun and educational place to go during the summer. You’ve helped make that a reality. Thank you for supporting ‘Summer in the City’!

Special thanks to Birdies for Kids presented by AltaLink for their generous matching dollars!
Join Our Team

FOSTER PARENTS

Foster Parents’ primary objective is to provide specialized treatment-oriented, family-based care for children who may otherwise be placed in more structured programs, follow all legislative and agency mandated policies and procedures involved in the care of foster children, as well as participate fully in the process of family reunification, if appropriate.

DONATIONS SORTERS (Volunteer)

Volunteer donations sorters will work with CTH staff to organize gifts for low-income families during CTH’s annual Adopt-a-Family initiative. The volunteer will be based at the CTH office. Time requirement: 3-4 hour shifts during the 3 weeks leading up to Christmas (Dec 4 - 22).

GIFT SHOPPERS (Volunteer)

Volunteer gift shoppers will work with CTH staff to purchase gifts for low-income families during CTH’s annual Adopt-a-Family initiative. Time requirement: 3-4 hour shifts during the 3 weeks leading up to Christmas (Dec 4 - 22).

For detailed information or to check out more career and volunteer opportunities, please visit our website at www.closetohome.com.

Closer to Home would like to recognize our donors and supporters for the last quarter (July 1 - September 15, 2017)


I would like to make a **MONTHLY GIFT** of:

☐ $100/mth ☐ $25/mth ☐ $10/mth ☐ Other $ ____/mth

OR, here is my **SINGLE GIFT** of:

☐ $500 ☐ $200 ☐ $75 ☐ Other $ _____

Name ____________________________

Address ____________________________

City __________ Prov _____ Postal Code ______

Phone # ____________________________

Email ____________________________

☐ I would like to remain anonymous, please do not recognize my name in the Donor Recognition section of CTH publications such as this quarterly newsletter.

Please return your completed form to:

3507A 17 Ave SW Calgary, Alberta T3E 0B6

Or fax your completed form to (403) 246-6406

Questions? Contact us at (403) 543-0550 Ext. 250

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