

Phoenix Human Services Association

Annual Report

2020-2021



ACCREDITED BY THE COMMISSION ON ACCREDITATION OF REHABILITATION FACILITIES



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OUR MISSION

We provide services to individuals and families
that create opportunities to
build skills, strengths and resourcefulness.

OUR VISION

Diverse individuals and families living
empowered and fulfilling lives.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



When we met this time last year, we all assumed we would be back to what was our previous year's normal. Nothing is the same yet. The 2020 Pandemic is perhaps now presumed to be an Endemic and patience with flexibility has to be continued for this situation.

We are grateful for our terrific Managers and staff for their continued dedication to our clients and each other. Compassion and empathy continue to be expressed in the way we provide services and interact day to day. Success comes from putting in the work and you all have done that.

The ED and Board of Directors have continued to deal with our committees actively searching for ways to rebrand and refresh our message, as well as investigating the possibility of relocating in the future. Strategic Planning will be continuing on the path we set in 2020 to move forward.

We wish all of our group good physical and mental health in the year to come. We can rely on and trust each other to continue the good work we do in our communities. We will be vigilant and adaptable to whatever challenges the next year will present us with.

We are still all in this together!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patti Faulconbridge'.

Patti Faulconbridge
Board President



2020-2021 Board Members

Patti Faulconbridge – President Susie Girling – Treasurer

Joanne Hurtig – Director Jack Watson – Director

Appointed Directors

Marshal McLernon Joe Cardle

Jessica Sidhu Alkarim Sunderji

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT



Coming into 2020-2021, we had such great momentum around our strategic planning process, board development, and team building to name a few, but such initiatives took a back seat as we worked through the COVID crisis that dominated this past year. That said, I am pleased to say we did manage to keep these priorities moving forward, resulting in several new Board members joining our team and two new committees to work on location-scoping and branding.

I am grateful that we had no serious COVID illness within our staff team nor any of those we work with. Let's count our blessings!

Through all the challenges we faced, I found it so inspirational to see our staff remain resilient and adapt to this ever-changing and sometimes frightening pandemic. We were all challenged, both professionally and personally. The families and individuals we work with continued to be our primary concern. Sometimes our services were modified, sometimes reduced, and sometimes they remained nearly the same, and we always found a way to make it work. I am very proud of the efforts of our staff. I hope they are proud of themselves as well. They should be.

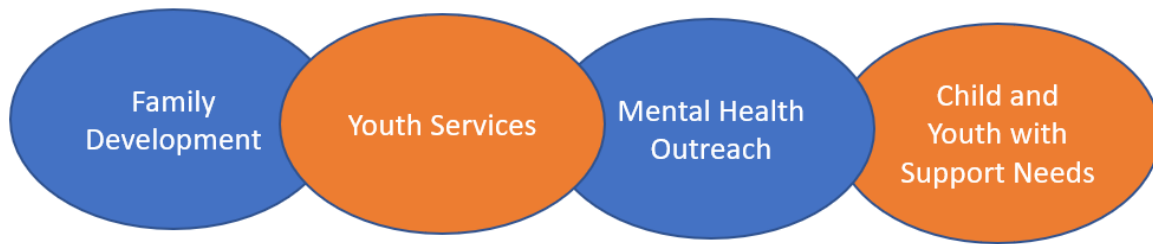
I want to thank our management team for their continued poise. They dedicated themselves to keeping everyone safe, yet still finding a way with their respective teams to continue services.

And, unbelievably, during a pandemic we managed to be accredited by CARF through a virtual accreditation process. Something to be very proud of, as it was a considerable effort by our team while operating in a pandemic.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Bradford". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Scott Bradford
Executive Director

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



It will come as a shock to no one to have it said that it was a challenging year at Phoenix. COVID 19 landed in earnest just prior to the advent of 2020-21 and Phoenix started the year in “shutdown mode”. Thanks to the diligence and commitment of its staff and managers, programing was able to slowly adapt and climb back into a position of relevance in the lives of many of the people and families we traditionally serve.

Overall, we served 572 people and families in the midst of the pandemic. We weren’t always able to serve them in the way we or they found most impactful and meaningful. Sometimes it involved running groups over Zoom; sometimes it was individual counselling check-ins by phone or socially distanced in a park; sometimes we transported people to appointments with all the windows down and everybody masked up; sometimes there were activities we just couldn’t manage to enact safely.

But safety was our watchword. Throughout, we strove to ensure both clients and staff could engage in ways that were helpful AND safe. We found ways to cope with the stress of the seemingly unending unknowns and, most importantly, to help the people we serve do the same. Here, by program, we will attempt to give a sense of the struggles and successes with which we engaged in 2020-21. Many of the challenges referenced are across programs and we have done our best to limit the repetition.

Family Development (FD)

Family Development provides support to families that are working toward keeping children safe. The aggregate families served by the 4 teams (Core Victoria; West Shore; Foundations Parenting; and Out of Care Support) was 194, with 116 new referrals. In total, the programs provided service interventions to enhance the lives of 201 children.

We faced many challenges with the onset of COVID 19. Family challenges included: suddenly not being able to have access to their children if they were in care of the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD); lack of access to basic amenities; lack of resources; home schooling children some with complex needs (Mental Health (MH) and Children and Youth with Special Needs (CYSN)); isolation; and fear. As the agency moved to remote services, the FD program quickly adapted services to do wellness checks and food deliveries to support families and to provide some in-person contact and opportunity to assess how families were facing the challenges before them. By July of 2020, the FD program started to transition to in-person services such as providing access visits in the community, meeting outside of family homes or in large

indoor spaces (e.g., St. Peter's Hall, Juan de Fuca Recreation Centre, Wale Road multi-purpose room) with stringent health and safety measures to keep staff and families safe from any potential transmission of COVID. Despite COVID 19 and restrictions, the FD program surpassed the target number of families served as well as new referrals in this reporting period compared to previous years and target expectancy.

During this time, the program also saw the impact of the Opioid Crisis on our families, both with persons-served experiencing overdoses and with the tragic death of family members, leaving families and staff devastated. This public health emergency will likely continue to impact this program as the incidents of overdoses have increased substantially across age groups, genders, and socio-economic backgrounds. Other FD program trends that were identified include providing service to more gender identified men and fathers in the single parent role. We have seen this trend in both supervised visits and in Family Development services. We continue to see an increase in referrals for families that are struggling with child and youth mental health issues and have worked in partnership with Anscorb House (Queen Alexandra Centre for Children's Health) prior to and during the COVID 19 pandemic to support families and our colleagues to implement identified treatments.

Another trend is the ongoing support to families that are caring for children with complex needs such as diagnosed Mental Health and CYSN designations. We have worked with MCFD-funded Behaviour Consultants to implement specific strategies for that population. These partnerships provide opportunity for better outcomes for families by offering additional support and consistent implementation of strategies to better assist families in a time of crisis. Overall, we are seeing an increase in referrals for families that are struggling with the stressors of caring for high needs children that often results in them coming to the attention of MCFD. However, this can be expected during the COVID 19 pandemic as family stressors are intensified by lack of services, resources, isolation, and lack of respite.

During this reporting year, the Program continued to liaise with MCFD personnel from the Core Victoria, West Shore, and Regional Domestic Violence teams. This ongoing communication assists in reducing wait times for families as MCFD prioritizes families that may require more urgent services. Rather than a "first come, first served" process, MCFD refers based on acuity of the situation. There continues to be an increase in requests for this service as indicated in number of referrals made and families that received service from this program. It can be anticipated that this trend will continue due to population growth and the impact of environmental and personal stressors on families (e.g., homelessness, addiction, mental health, poverty, isolation).

In addition, the FD program continues to represent our agency across a variety of forums. We are represented on the Camosun College Community, Family and Child Studies Advisory Committee, the Greater Victoria Shared Assessment Committee, Children's Foundation OSH and Tenancy meeting, the Wale Road Community Kitchen Committee, and the Parking Lot Committee at the Children's Foundation.

The FD councillors who work in this program continue to be a strong and skilled team that demonstrates leadership and mentoring both within the program and as community partners.

Youth Protection and Guardianship Services

The Youth Services Program works with youth who have been referred from the Ministry of Children and Family Development, both from the Protection and Guardianship Stream. The team consists of three full time Family Counsellors and a Program Manager.

The focus for families from the Youth Protection referrals is on parental skill development to support increased stability in the family, facilitate reunification efforts, and to provide general support for the youth in the family environment. For youth in the Guardianship stream, the focus is on independent living skills, providing support for educational and vocational development, and successful aging out of the Ministry system.

The Family Counsellors worked with 25 youth/families over the past year. Of these files, 10 files transitioned out of service (two for Youth Guardianship, eight for Youth Protection). There were eight new referrals; one from Youth guardianship and seven from Youth Protection.

The complexity of the files remains high, with many youths regularly staying away from the family home due to conflict often exacerbated by youth/parental mental health issues and substance use. The arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic affected the program in all areas of service delivery. For a few months, there were strong guidelines in place from the local health authorities, including no in-person visits for non-essential services. In response, service was provided primarily through phone support and video conferencing and as restrictions eased, gradually more in-person service was resumed. For some of our youth, especially those who were not attending school, the restrictions on social gatherings greatly affected their overall wellbeing.

Connections with professionals from our community partners were also affected due to the same restrictions in place. Thanks to introducing video conferencing in service delivery, the same technology could be used for integrated case management meetings to facilitate wraparound services for high risk youths.

Mental Health Outreach Team (MHOT)

The MHOT is an experienced team of Family Counsellors who are dedicated to providing stability, resilience, and opportunities for growth through an approach of kindness, empathy, and skill development. The service model is an outreach service that traditionally goes to where the client is. So COVID required a radical shift in our service delivery. Additionally, with the shutting down of schools, families were under reduced scholastic demands, resulting in several families no longer feeling the need for support. However, the MHOT provided services to 49 youth and their families over the course of the year.

On our caseload this year, most of our children/youth presented with anxiety and mood disorders followed by Attention Deficit Disorder and trauma-related conditions. We continue to see a trend in increasing numbers of youth avoiding school, especially in the middle school age group. Youth refer to issues in the social peer group as a major contributing factor in their school avoidance.

Children and Youth with Support Needs (CYSN)

Overall, the CYSN programs have met all proposed objectives through the year in areas of efficiency, effectiveness, access, and satisfaction serving 140 people.

CYSN continues to see that there is a need among our participants for mental health services. A significant portion of new referrals coming to us have an identified or suspected mental health diagnosis. However, there are limited mental health resources available to many of our participants. Our staff often support participants and their families to connect with mental health experts who provide service to children and youth with co-occurring diagnosis and who can evaluate the individual's needs.

We are also seeing an increase in participants with complex life events such as caregivers with substance use and/or mental health issues, family breakdown, children in care, and children living in poverty. We expect this to continue to increase significantly due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. When able, our staff will provide support to the family to access resources in the community to address some of these complex situations.

COMMUNITY LIVING SERVICES FOR ADULTS



Employment

Like all community services, the Phoenix Employment Program experienced significant impacts this year during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Many clients experienced loss of employment and a decrease in financial security with city-wide business closures, the elimination of many entry-level positions, and a variety of industries being heavily affected. Yet, during this period we also witnessed our clients' resiliency and adaptability.

Throughout this past year, the Employment Program supported 38 individuals with a developmental disability to attain and maintain employment and/or to achieve goals related to skill development. An additional 29 individuals with individual barriers to employment were served through Phoenix's Rise Up program. While a portion of clients were required to remain in isolation due to COVID-19, Vocational Counsellors and clients worked together to continue some form of connection to pursue skill development and maintain access to the community. Some examples include: going on walks, visiting "on-hold" places of employment to maintain contact, and utilizing Zoom to work on skill development.

As the economy was highly affected during this period, Vocational Counsellors demonstrated their creativity and persistence to pursue and successfully attain safe job placements for clients. Due to the program's flexibility, Vocational Counsellors have been able to continue job development and in-person job coaching to ensure client success and to maintain strong employer relationships.

Community Living Services (CLS) - Community Outreach

CLS Adults offers one-to-one support for adults with diverse abilities to help develop daily living skills. People can be served either through an Outreach model (where they live independently with itinerant supports) or a Community Inclusion model (where they live with family or a caregiver and we provide supplementary support). Goals are developed collaboratively and are unique to each individual. They include ability to access community resources, health, fitness, meal preparation, developing social and communication skills, personal safety, employment, and volunteering. Sessions may also focus on money management, use of leisure time, care of self and home, housing, and developing community and social supports.

Over the past year, CLS supported 65 individuals, 85% of whom sustained or developed their individual skills in the context of the pandemic.

Day Programs (CATS; Extensions; Stormont)

With great success, staff continue to incorporate old and new non-segregated activities with the support and direction of the participants of the programs. Phoenix's Day Programs continue to increase meaningful opportunities for community inclusion that will enable individuals to build relationships with others in the community, create a greater sense of belonging, and facilitate positive experiences for those we support. The focus will continue to be on maintaining the level of services provided and the quality of services delivered.

In 2020-21, Day Programs served a total of 33 individuals despite the Day Program building being shut down due to COVID for several weeks. Wherever possible, we try to facilitate activities that take place in the community that provide opportunities for broad social interaction including sporting and cultural events and locations. On a more limited basis, we will often provide recreational and craft activities on site at Joan Crescent that provide entertainment and social interaction leading to skill development.

We gratefully acknowledge our managers who have helped prepare this information.

Laurie Hill, Family Development

Cheryl Sanders, Program Manager, CYSN

Sabine Vanderispaillie, Mental Health Outreach Team & Youth Services Team

Jenny Forth, Employment

Beth Cowin, Community Outreach

Fran Rowley, Day Programs

Aviv

Here's Aviv. Although Aviv has been laying low since COVID, she is very eager to return to work at Adriana's The Whole Enchilada. Adriana is an amazing employer who provides a fun, inclusive work environment for her employees. A shout out to Adriana and if you're in the Keating Cross Road/ Brentwood Bay area, stop by for some delicious authentic Mexican food!

Photo - Aviv with her employer, Adriana



PHOENIX SUPPORTS NEW GRADUATES!

We are so pleased to provide two financial bursary awards through the Camosun College school of Health and Human Services



James Guthrie Memorial Award

Presented to a student with a deep resonance for issues pertaining to social justice especially in regards to those involved in the disabilities world. An eloquence in both writing and speaking. A fullness of personality (i.e. gregarious/outspoken). A passion for 'improving the system' to make this a better world for all.

Eligibility Full-time Education Assistant and Community Support students

Process Faculty/staff nomination

Donor

With thanks to the **Phoenix Human Services Association** for donating this award.

Phoenix Human Services Association Award

Presented to a Community, Family and Child Studies Diploma graduate who came through the Education Assistant and Community Support stream and who demonstrates a passion for the field, practices from a strength-based approach, demonstrates exceptional caregiving skills, and works well with diverse groups/circumstances.

Eligibility Full-time Community, Family & Child Studies students

Process Faculty/staff nomination

Donor

With thanks to **Phoenix Human Services** for donating this award.



IN PROUD PARTNERSHIP

