

Thunder Bay Counselling and Children's Centre Thunder Bay Announce Priority Community Initiatives at Annual General Meeting.



Thunder Bay, ON, June 18, 2024 – Today, Thunder Bay Counselling and Children's Centre Thunder Bay held their respective Annual General Meetings in a unique and collaborative setting. The two community service organizations, united by their formal Strategic Alliance of 2021, came together at the Italian Cultural Centre to celebrate their partnership and discuss shared strategic priorities. Discussions centred on the performance of the Strategic Alliance in achieving its mandate, as well as priorities for future joint initiatives.

The Strategic Alliance is currently working in the following identified areas:

- **Continuous Quality Improvement for Client Safety and Care**
- **French Language Services Pathway**
- **Culturally Based Training, Education, and System Integrations**
- **Client Pathways and Entry Processes**
- **Gender Affirming Care**
- **Youth Engagement**

Says Thunder Bay Counselling CEO, Nancy Chamberlain; *“When we were determining which initiatives to focus on, it was important for us to assess each project based on the potential impact, feasibility, and alignment with our shared strategic mission, values, and goals. We gathered diverse perspectives and insights to ensure we selected initiatives that offered the most significant value while prioritizing quality.”*

Children's Centre Thunder Bay CEO, Diane Walker, adds; *“Our community is changing. As a result, we must continually adapt to the evolving needs of people, and work to meet the growing demand for services. The priority areas are selected to address the needs of underserved community members and groups.”*

The Strategic Alliance aims to select initiatives that create the best overall outcomes; those that streamline efforts, build a culture of continuous improvement, and fill the gaps in service.

Says Children's Centre Thunder Bay Board Chair, Tricia Murdoch; *“It's crucial for us to be able to identify which services are missing in our community so that we can work together to fill those gaps. For instance,*

when the Umbrella Clinic closed in February, our community members lost a critical service. The Strategic Alliance in partnership with our Ontario Health Team supported work to build a better more sustainable system of care through our Gender Affirming Care initiative. Our purpose is to adapt to the needs of the community, and to select initiatives with those needs in mind.”

The alliance between Thunder Bay Counselling and Children’s Centre Thunder Bay was created in 2021, and in that time, the two organizations continue to collaborate on many initiatives, including the Walk-In Counselling Clinic, which originally launched in 2007, prior to the creation of the formal Strategic Alliance. Both organizations have experienced improved client outcomes and service efficiencies as a result of their work together.

Says Rose Bakke, Board Chair, Thunder Bay Counselling; *“The Strategic Alliance allows us to better serve members of the community and provide more comprehensive services through collaboration. The more voices we can bring to the table when it comes to client care, the better. In terms of advocacy work, collaboration helps us to better identify client needs, discuss ongoing trends in the community, and provide one another with information gathered through our local work.”*

Leadership from both organizations expressed enthusiasm about advancing the Strategic Alliance and continuing to work together in the future.

The priority areas announced today are being funded through a grant from the Community Services Recovery Fund (CSRF), an investment from the Government of Canada to support charities, non-profits, and Indigenous Governing Bodies as they adapt their organizations for pandemic recovery.