



RENEWAL **REFRESH** **REVITALIZE**

ANNUAL REPORT
2025 - 2026



MISSION AND VALUES

OUR MISSION

Our purpose is to improve the quality of life for infants, children* and adolescents within their family** and community environments serving the people living in the City and District of Thunder Bay.

We provide quality services and take actions that:

- Improve children's mental health.
- Strengthen and support children's developmental potential.
- Strengthen and support the family's capacity to parent children.
- Build our diverse community's capacity to positively support the health and well-being of children and families.

OUR VALUES

Furthermore, we will:

- Be respectful, honest, compassionate and fair.
- Stand up for diversity, equity, inclusion and justice.
- Collaborate relentlessly.
- Be responsible and accountable to ourselves and our community.
- Pursue continuous learning and excellence.
- Lead with courage in the service of others.

* the word children includes infants, children, youth, adolescents and young adults age birth to 21

** the word family is diverse and includes what a person would call or define as their family

BOARD CHAIR & CEO MESSAGE

This year marks a meaningful time of renewal for the Children's Centre—a time to reflect with pride and look ahead with confidence. As a new CEO and Board Chair, we are grounded in a strong foundation and a shared commitment to continuity while embracing fresh perspectives for the future. The progress captured in this Annual Report reflects our Mission and Strategic Plan in action, guided by strong values, trusted leadership, and a deep commitment to improving the lives of infants, children, youth, and their families.

Renewal at Children's Centre is rooted in our people. This year's achievements reflect the collective efforts of our people: a dedicated and compassionate team whose commitment continues to shape the impact we have across our community. Together, staff have advanced key organizational priorities such as strengthening access to services, embedding equity into practice, enhancing client-centred care, and building stronger system partnerships. This includes progress such as launching early intervention supports for families, advancing equity-focused initiatives and community partnerships, evolving our counselling and therapy model to better match service intensity to client need, and strengthening data quality to support more informed decision-making.

This past year has also been a time to refresh our systems and partnerships. Through strengthened partnerships, modernized systems, and evolving service models, Children's Centre is building capacity for a more responsive, inclusive, and sustainable future. At a systems level, our teams have also contributed to expanded integrated service delivery through initiatives like the Youth Wellness Hub and increased collaboration across district partners.

Revitalization is ultimately measured by impact. The progress highlighted in this Annual Report reflects a collective effort to improve outcomes for children, youth, and families across our region. This work is strengthened by the dedication of our Board of Directors, whose governance, commitment to learning, and focus on sustainability continue to guide the organization with care and integrity.

As we look ahead, we do so with optimism and momentum. With gratitude to our dedicated staff, valued partners, the Foundation, our committed Board of Directors, and most importantly the children, youth, and families we are privileged to serve.

Miigwech, Merci, Thank You,
Jackie and Terra



STAFF SERVICE

40 Years	Brenda Budge Kevin Turner
35 Years	Michelle Kooistra
30 Years	Karen Stevenson
25 Years	Kristy Bodnar Martha McClelland
20 Years	Andy Meisner Laura Meisner
15 years	Jennifer Waite Tanya Carreiro Tracey Dowling
10 Years	Amy Killen Candice Cameron Jayme Lee Elsey Jessica Bird Kristy Puurunen Michelle Locke Olivia Lehto Veronika Manning

Board of Directors

Jackie Park, Chair
Allane Danchuk, Secretary-Treasurer
Maxime LeBlanc, Co-Vice Chair
Julia MacArthur, Co-Vice Chair

Kristen Anderson, Director
Alice Colquhoun, Director
Crystal Edwards, Director
Monica Hemeon, Director
Kayla Levata, Director
Amanda Walberg, Director



Retirements

Debbie Gignac
Diane Walker
Elizabeth Lemieux
Joni Nelson
Judy Kay
Laura St. Jacques
Lorrie Peltola
Tuula Miettinen-Daigle



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

For the People We Serve (clients, customers)

MAKING SERVICE OUR FIRST PRIORITY

- Be child-focused and family-centred
- Advance equity and inclusion through creating culturally safe inclusive spaces
- Generate positive outcomes through high quality evidence-informed interventions
- Improve access, reduce wait times and eliminate barriers
- Increase our outreach and improve transitions
- Prioritize interventions earlier in children's lives
- Support the adults who care for and parent children

For the People Who Work for Us (employees, students and Board)

DEVELOPING AND SUPPORTING OUR PEOPLE

- Have the right people for the right job
- Increase our diversity through equity and inclusion
- Actively engage in succession planning for today and tomorrow
- Develop our people's skills, knowledge, talent and capacity
- Create safe, accessible and respectful spaces to work and learn within

For Our Organization (culture, practices, processes, policies and assets)

PURSUING EXCELLENCE

- Deepen continuous quality improvement practices
- Engage meaningfully and communicate effectively
- Mitigate and manage organizational risk
- Leverage information & technology to improve processes
- Integrate an equity and inclusion lens into problem solving & decision making
- Utilize our resources wisely in the service of our mission

For Our Community (the shared space and places we live in)

ADVANCING COLLECTIVE ACTION

- Build more responsive client-friendly systems of care
- Improve access, outcomes, equity and inclusion
- Assertively champion anti-racism, anti-oppression and social justice
- Support positive community change through collaboration and shared leadership
- Address identified service gaps at the local, district and regional level

FOR THE PEOPLE WE SERVE

Black Youth Mental Health

CCTB has continued to prioritize addressing Anti-Black Racism and improving supports for Black youth, families, and communities. Highlights from our work this year include:

- Partnered with Tamarack Institute to complete an equity audit for our organization, which included community town halls, staff focus groups, policy & document reviews, and surveys
- Held two Anti-Black Racism & systems change trainings for staff and community partners
- Held staff training on Afro-Indigenous Identity

Ongoing community collaboration with:

- KWETU Youth Hub
- Northwest Black Collective
- Sisters for Canadian Black Community

Supported initiatives:

- AfroVibe Fest 2025
- Community events
- School supply drives
- Black History Month reading initiative
- Engagement with local Black and BIPOC youth groups

Preschool Speech and Language Program Modernization

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services updated its guidelines to implement a tiered service model focused on earlier, consistent supports (universal intervention, small groups, caregiver consultation, collaboration, and specialized care as needed). In response, Children's Centre Thunder Bay developed the Connect with Me group to support early social interaction and caregiver connection. Caregiver survey results are also guiding the design, timing, and location of universal drop-in supports. To date, 19 families have taken part in this new group.

Family Therapy for Gender Diverse Youth

Our family therapy for gender diverse youth pilot project, funded by the Knowledge Institute is well underway and continuing until October, 2026. This project seeks to improve mental health outcomes for youth by increasing levels of family support and acceptance through an adapted family therapy model.



FAMILY THERAPY FOR GENDER DIVERSE YOUTH

TO SELF-REFER PLEASE CALL CHILDREN'S CENTRE'S INTAKE AT:
807-343-5046.

FOR QUESTIONS SPECIFIC TO THE PROGRAM CONTACT AMY DIDEMUS BY
PHONE 807-343-5087 OR EMAIL ADIDEMUS@CHILDRENSCENTRE.CA

How we hope to help

- 9 families participated in the project
- Preliminary feedback from families is positive
- Youth and Caregiver Councils established
- New staff being trained to expand capacity

- Barriers to service reviewed regularly and addressed
- Ongoing adjustments to the model based on participant, council, and clinician experience
- Active participation in community partnerships and projects that support the work

Counselling and Therapy Service Delivery Management System (SDMS)

Based on information gathered through staff listening sessions, the Systemic Barriers project, and with support from CQI program evaluations and data, we embarked on a project to adjust our SDMS model for our Counselling and Therapy program. The project aimed to build a more client-centred and accessible model, ensuring the frequency and intensity of services offered matched not only client need, but also readiness, availability and wishes.

Updates to the model include:

- Assess readiness and availability at intake
- Service matched to client need and availability including: brief services, standard and modified counselling & therapy services, & in-active/as-needed services
- Flexible involvement for clients with higher risk behaviours or difficulty engaging
- Better alignment with Ministry reporting requirements (BI data)

We will continue to evaluate how these updates impact client outcomes and experiences.

FOR THE PEOPLE WHO WORK FOR US

Training

In addition to the standard yearly training completed through HR, the Center has invested in multiple training initiatives that involved staff from all areas of our organization.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

- Anti-Black Racism: Trainings with the Tamarack Institute
- Unlearning Anti-Black Racism in Pediatric Health Care Series: Online learning
- School of Indigenous Learning: training with the Board and Senior Leadership
- Similarities and differences of cultures - Shujun Quin: Ongoing training
- Decolonizing the Workplace: Provided by Rick McLean
- Where our Roots Meet, Afro Indigenous Training: Provided by Kristin Murray

Clinical

- ARC: 12 staff trained through the Provincial Training Institute (PTI)
- COS-P: 2 staff completed the COS-P program through the PTI
- TCI: Increased our capacity of TCI trainers by 2
- ASIST Suicide Intervention: 11 staff completed the ASIST training
- F-Words training: Provided to the PSL team
- Trauma Informed Practice: PSL-specific training by George Hull Institute
- Gender-Affirming Care Family Therapy Training: 4 staff completed, with 3 underway

Lunch and Learns

- FASD - It's complicated: Presented by RJ Formanek
- Interwoven Connections & Aggression Towards Family/ Caregiver in Childhood and Adolescence (AFCCA): Presented by Erin Perron
- IEP and IPRC Process: Presented by Maggie Frederickson
- Complex Transition Fund: Presented by Jo Allison



Leadership Training

- Strengths-Based Leadership for Management Team with Amanda Bjorn
- Strengths-Based Leadership for Supervisors with Amanda Bjorn

Continuous Quality Improvement

- Three new Green Belts completed; two more are underway

FOR THE PEOPLE WHO WORK FOR US



Our People and Workplace Culture

At the heart of the Children's Centre Thunder Bay is a team of dedicated, experienced professionals who bring both skill and heart to their work each day. In 2025, this commitment was reflected in our continued stability, with very low turnover and a workforce that remains deeply connected to our mission and to one another.

Supporting the well-being of our staff continues to be a priority. In a field that carries significant emotional demands, we have focused on ensuring employees feel supported – not only through enhanced access to mental health resources, but through a workplace culture that values balance, flexibility, and care.

Throughout the year, staff came together in ways that strengthened connection and morale – from wellness challenges and group activities to shared meals and celebrations. These moments reflect a culture where people feel valued, supported, and proud to be part of the work we do together.



FOR OUR ORGANIZATION

Leadership Transition and Board Engagement

The past year marked a significant transition for the organization, as we welcomed new leadership and began a thoughtful evolution of our Senior Management Team. This shift reflects a “changing of the guard,” moving from a long-standing leadership group to a new team – one that continues to bring deep organizational knowledge and tenure, while stepping into new and expanded leadership roles.

Throughout 2025, the Board of Directors played a critical role in supporting this transition, including their involvement in the successful recruitment and onboarding of the new Chief Executive Officer. This process was approached with care, integrity, and a strong focus on continuity, ensuring the organization remained steadfast in its values while positioning itself for the future.

As part of strengthening relationships and establishing a shared foundation for this next chapter, members of the Board and senior leadership participated in a retreat at the School of Indigenous Learning (SOIL).



This experience provided an opportunity to step outside of the day-to-day work and connect in a meaningful way, grounded in learning, reflection, and relationship-building.

Through teachings, shared experience, and time on the land, the retreat helped to reinforce a collective sense of purpose and accountability as we move forward together.



As the organization continues to evolve, this period of transition represents both continuity and renewal – honouring the strong foundation built over many years, while embracing new perspectives and leadership as we look to the future.

FOR OUR ORGANIZATION

Efficiency - Make it Better Boards (MIBB)

A committee regularly reviews the MIBB submissions. As of May 14, 2026, 41 have been addressed, 12 are actively being worked on, and 7 remain in the idea phase.

Completed MIBB suggestions were related to the following areas:

Administrative - 4

Staff Wellness - 5

Building and/or Maintenance - 21

Technology - 2

Programs and Services - 9

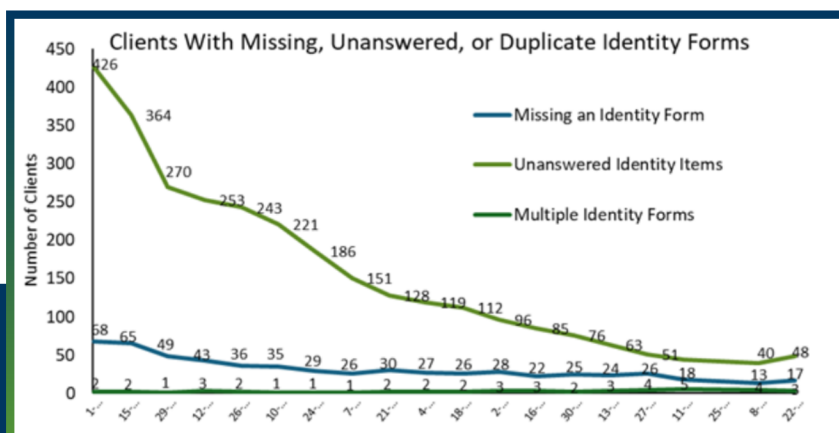


Data Clean Up

Over the past year, the CQI team has focused extensively on improving the quality and accuracy of existing data, while also developing new processes to support consistent and correct data entry moving forward. The primary areas of focus were Identity Data and Business Intelligence (BI).

With respect to Identity Data, significant effort was dedicated to supporting staff in the collection of identity information and recognizing gaps where data was missing, incomplete, or duplicated. The following graph highlights the progress made in reducing these data quality issues.

The CQI team also worked closely with clinicians, managers, and administrative staff involved in outpatient Counselling and Therapy to align the new SDMS with ministry reporting guidelines. We corrected historical data issues and put processes in place to support more accurate data entry for more precise decision making. This also strengthened the organization's ability to report ministry-mandated information more effectively and efficiently.



FOR OUR COMMUNITY

District Community Work

In March, Children's Centre hosted a two-day Rural Symposium in Schreiber and Terrace Bay. The event brought together partners from across the district to create a shared space focused on service coordination, access, and the lived realities of families in Northern Ontario. In partnership with district service providers, CCTB remains committed to addressing barriers, strengthening collaborative care, and enhancing service pathways for children, youth, and families living in the district.

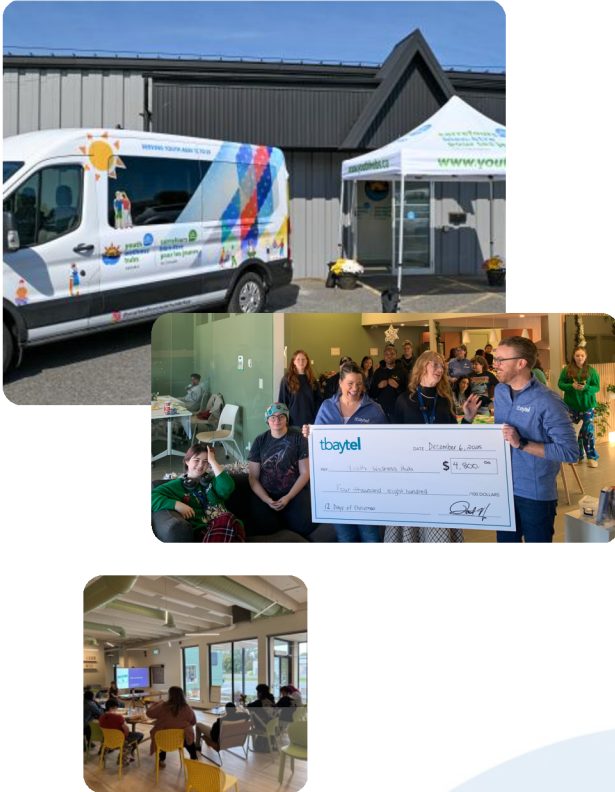


FOR OUR COMMUNITY

Youth Wellness Hub

On September 19, 2025, the City and District of Thunder Bay Youth Wellness Hub celebrated its official Grand Opening!

Since that date, we have had over 1000 visits from over 300 individual youth. Through the collaborative work of over 25 Network Partners, the Hub has offered a range of structured programming, drop-in activities, and clinical services. The Hub continues to work with partners in the district to bring the Integrated Youth Services (IYS) model to rural and district youth.



VIBE

Voices Inspiring Better Engagement (VIBE) is a youth-led collaborative in Thunder Bay, created in partnership with three Uturn agencies—Children's Centre Thunder Bay, Thunder Bay Counselling, and St. Joseph's Care Group. The group brings together youth aged 16-24 who are passionate about creating meaningful change in their community, with a core purpose of ensuring that youth voices are actively included in decision-making processes, guided by the principle "nothing about us, without us." Since its inception, VIBE has established a strong foundation by developing a terms of reference, creating leadership roles, creating its name and logo, and recruiting nine youth members from 2024 to the present. The collaborative has contributed valuable feedback on existing policies, procedures, and documents, while also co-developing and delivering presentations on topics such as substance use health for youth in grades seven and eight through the "Youth Injury Prevention Program" and supporting families in understanding gang involvement and youth risk through Thunder Bay Counselling. In addition, VIBE has engaged with teams and community providers to raise awareness about its work and continues to lead several ongoing projects that amplify youth perspectives and promote more inclusive, responsive services.

SUMMARIZED FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Year ended March 31, 2026 (with comparative figures for 2025)

Revenue

	2025/2026	2024/25
Advances from MCCSS	3,626,842	3,818,877
Ministry of Health	7,239,795	7,230,144
District of Thunder Bay Social Services Admin Board	1,723,742	1,553,600
Youth Wellness Hubs Ontario	899,500	807,792
Ontario Intensive Treatment Pathway	268,000	205,000
Other	1,573,769	1,528,967
Donations	10,814	30,996
Interest	80,320	136,103
Recoveries	<u>232,733</u>	<u>176,376</u>
	15,655,515	15,487,855

Expenditures

Salaries	9,613,639	9,211,823
Employee Benefits	2,669,473	2,593,326
Travel	215,794	173,538
Staff Training	151,120	89,253
Building Occupancy	665,544	633,312
Purchased Services - non-client	164,008	233,873
Program Expenses	269,871	158,535
Professional Fees - Client	874,631	1,244,021
Promotion and Publicity	18,187	69,123
Office Administration	665,609	579,220
Capital Acquisitions	174,082	197,911
Other	<u>163,610</u>	<u>145,841</u>
	15,645,568	15,329,776

Excess of Revenue over Expenditures for Year

9,947 158,079

Net Assets, beginning of year

1,112,153 954,074

Net Assets, end of year

1,122,100 1,112,153

Audited financial statements are available upon request.

MESSAGE FROM CHILDREN'S CENTRE FOUNDATION

This year marked another successful chapter for Children's Centre Foundation, made possible through the unwavering dedication of our Board of Directors, the generosity of our donors, and the commitment of our volunteers. Their leadership, service, and philanthropy have strengthened our ability to invest in essential programs and services that benefit children and families throughout our community and district. Through the Foundation's support, funding has helped enhance preschool speech and language, occupational therapy, day treatment, outreach services, and educational programming. These investments provide critical resources and opportunities that help children and families thrive.

As a proud partner charity supporting the Jaida Project and Youth Wellness Hub, the Foundation continues to expand its reach and impact, helping to address the evolving needs of young people and families. These partnerships, together with our ongoing investments in essential services, have elevated Children's Centre Foundation standing within the community and reinforced our reputation as a trusted champion for child and youth well-being.

We extend our sincere gratitude to all who contributed their time, expertise, and resources to advance our mission and help ensure the Children's Centre Foundation's continued success. Together, we are creating meaningful opportunities, fostering positive outcomes, and building a stronger, healthier future for the children, youth, and families we serve.

Dayna Pupeza
Foundation Manager





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