



Q2 Executive Director's Report

GENERAL COMMENTS

FST settled into virtual operations during the second quarter. Strategy Team continued to monitor the pandemic situation and decided to remain in virtual operations, with a very limited number of staff coming into offices to work.

FST welcomed its first tenant at 355 Church, Madison Community Services. Facilities staff managed the move with minimal disruption and Madison has expressed its appreciation. This move signals a fundamental shift in how FST is utilizing its 355 Church Street asset.

The FST electronic client record system is very, very old. It was built in early 2000 and revised so often that the program is no longer operating effectively. We have concluded the requirements phase of replacement and are now in the process of market review and RFP development. We anticipate going to market before year end with vendor selection in the New Year. The final phase will be implementation in the Spring.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Changing Lives Family Violence

During Q2, much of the work of the Director CLFV shifted from working with managers to facilitate work from home and the development/re-development of virtual programming to working with external networks/tables to develop/enhance coordinated responses to family violence issues. This includes co-chairing the Toronto Region Violence Against Women Service System Planning Table being developed by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. This table has been working on operationalizing its strategic plan and has struck a system wide pandemic response committee, designed to provide support to all VAW funded programs during the widely anticipate second wave of COVID-19.

In Toronto there are ten organizations, including FST, who provide Partner Assault Response programming. Because this work is done in groups, all organizations suspended their programming in mid-March. FST and many other organizations provided outreach supports to current clients and people who had been referred before the courts shut down near the end of March. Based on individual conversations with various providers, FST took the lead to bring together Toronto area providers to share experiences and to assist one another in the pivot to virtual work. Through this work, the Toronto Region providers have been able to proactively work with the funder, the Ministry of the Attorney General, to share concerns and to address issues. The Director, CL FV has provided leadership to this initiative and has also been meeting with a group of PAR providers across Ontario to compare what is happening and to problem solve.

Violence Against Women (VAW)

From July to September, the Violence Against Women team provided ongoing support to an increasing number of women who have experienced violence/abuse. The team served clients over the phone and

engaged in Zoom counselling with clients when deemed safe and appropriate. The team also facilitated a weekly webinar to promote mindfulness and positive coping strategies. In collaboration with the Assaulted Women's Helpline and the Red Door Family Shelter, a short-term project was initiated that focused on providing counselling to women who are in homeless shelters or hotels and have experienced violence/abuse. The project will run through March 2021. The VAW pilot law project, where team members received workshops on pertinent VAW law topics from a family lawyer, also continued.

Community Engagement

The Community Engagement program is partnered with Community Development, Centre for Community Partnerships, University of Toronto. Working in teams of six, students, in the "Introduction to Software Engineering" course, were asked to develop software projects, with the goal of solving a problem. The Coordinator of Senior's Community programs submitted the idea of 'developing an App', for the student's consideration, which would assist seniors to easily access three or four applications from their smartphone such as an internet browser, email, telephone and Skype or Zoom. The proposal had traction and two teams of students were assigned to work with us.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada are very interested in the Healthy Family Healthy Community (HFHC) program and want to show-case it as a unique, much needed program that stands out because of its trauma-informed, gender-based violence (GBV) framework. This framework is used in our newcomer programs, where participants are fleeing war and/or family violence.

The Neighbours, Friends and Families GBV, public awareness campaign, in the Latino-Hispanic seniors' communities, is nearing the end of its last and final third year. We are presently embarking on a project to create podcasts...stay tuned to online podcasts, in several languages, being available on FST's website. Seniors in our programs, are keen to do the podcasts. A Seniors Community Grant proposal has been submitted, which if approved, will provide funds for all Community Engagement staff to create podcasts.

Seniors and Caregivers Support Services

During this quarter, the Seniors and Caregivers Support Service (SCSS) focused on meeting the needs of Toronto seniors and caregivers, many of whom continued to experience isolation due to COVID-19. In collaboration with the Coordinator of Volunteer Resources, the SCSS team continued the Friendly Phone Chat program, where volunteers provide a weekly friendly call to check-in with FST clients. Thirteen volunteers made 170 calls to 26 clients over the 3 months. The team also provided a biweekly group open to community members called the Seniors Weekly Group Chat. The group provided seniors a place to connect, talk about their experiences and learn ways to manage their stress and anxiety. The team continued to hold Zoom groups and individual sessions for clients. Additionally, team members participated on the Scarborough Elder Abuse Network, the FST run Elder Abuse Consultation Team and provided consultation to other senior supporting organizations in the community.

David Kelley Services

The David Kelley Service launched a new project, Queer and Connected. This project works with queer and trans youth 16 to 29, using a peer support, community engagement model. A large outreach strategy is underway. This included social media, phone, network meetings and personal connections within the sector. The project will work closely with an advisory committee to create culturally specific content and through an evaluation process, work to ensure this content remains relevant to the audience. Two peer leaders from within the community will deliver peer discussion groups virtually.

The David Kelley team continues to see clients both individually and in group.

Counselling Services

The counselling team continued to see clients virtually for individual and group sessions. The counselling team emotional skills group was piloted and is now running in a six-session cycle, with three weeks between each group of sessions.

The virtual walk-in continued to serve many community members with the team offering 10 spots daily, Monday to Friday. This service allows community members to access a single session model counselling experience. The virtual walk-in focused on single sessions, information and referral, and continued to serve as a vital contact point for many community members who rely on FST for ongoing support.

The virtual walk-in will become a centralized intake point for David Kelley Services, Families in Transition and will continue to serve as the intake for the Counselling Service. The Service Access team and the walk-in team will work collaboratively to ensure that community members needs are met quickly, and that potential clients are directed to, and are aware of all appropriate services.

Families in Transition

Families in Transition piloted a successful “Coparenting During Covid” group that was well attended and received great feedback from its participants. The group will be re-launched in November after incorporating feedback from participants and be offered in an ongoing manner while the pandemic continues to impact community members. The team is in the process of developing a series of stand-alone workshops to address many of the issues that clients report they are dealing with. These include, parenting, coparenting and co-parenting with blended families.

The team continues to see both children and parents virtually.

Social Action

The political landscape continued to shift dramatically and frequently. Social Action and Campaign 2000 have been monitoring and responding accordingly. This quarter, in response to concerns we heard from low-income individuals and their service providers from across the country, we started a new campaign calling for CERB Amnesty. The Canadian Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) was a lifeline for many in a time of crisis. Many people accessed this benefit (over 8.5 million people), many who were on low incomes and later deemed ineligible for the benefit. We convened partners together to call on the government to not make anyone living on low-incomes repay this benefit and we submitted our rationale with recommendations to two federal cabinet committees convening on Canada’s COVID response plan. In August, Campaign 2000 also submitted a pre-budget submission to the federal finance committee with recommendations to make ending poverty a key part of the federal COVID recovery plan. In September, ahead of the Speech from the Throne, we released our principled approach to a basic income, including a set of infographics for social media. All of these documents are available on our website at www.camapaign2000.ca. We met with Ms. Jo Anne Roberts (Interim Leader of the Green Party), MP Michelle Rempel Garner (Conservative MP), MP Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Liberal MP and Co-Chair of the All Party Anti-Poverty Caucus, met multiple times) and MP Adam Vaughn (Liberal MP and Parliamentary Secretary for Families, Children and Social Development) this quarter regarding these issues.

We continued to support local, provincial and national campaigns that align with our mission, such as Just Recovery Ontario, Defend Disability, Child Care Now, Status for All, among others. We co-organized a national meeting with YWCA Canada ahead of the speech from the throne to convene feminist activists and policy thinkers, presented at Canada Without Poverty’s roundtable Poverty Watch, launched this year’s Dignity for All Campaign for which we are a co-lead, and participated in UNICEF

Canada's report card 16 launch moderating a panel with Dr. Cindy Blackstock, Dr. Kate Bezanson, and Dr. Miles Corak. We convened several leaders from diverse Indigenous and Northern communities, including the Dene Nation, Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition, former Mayor of Iqaluit Madeline Redfern, Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada and Alternatives North to discuss and coordinate efforts to end poverty in these communities. We have now turned our attention to the annual report cards and will have a report card for the North West Territories, which will be the first northern report card produced for Campaign 2000.

Building Inclusive Communities

Options

After six months of home-based/virtual work, Options continued to support clients and engage in new services and opportunities. Staff participated in the Forensic Dual Diagnosis Specialty Conference, facilitated by CAMH on September 24th, 2020. This training crossed multiple sectors (Developmental Disabilities, Mental Health and Justice) and was an excellent learning opportunity for all.

FST was granted funds from United Way to launch a series of psycho-educational sessions and peer support groups for caregivers and adults with Developmental Disabilities. Celia Saunders will be leading the project in her role as a Facilitator, along with Peer Facilitators, that will be provided training and support. Although we are in the early stages of implementation, there are some fabulous ideas and sessions to come. FST also has partnered with the Toronto Public Library to provide Wifi through Hotspots to clients/families without access. Staff facilitated several referrals and delivery of the Hotspots to support families in staying connected virtually.

On the Option Children's team, staff have supported families in navigating the new normal in returning to school, whether this be in person or virtually. It has not been without hurdles, but staff continued to provide engaging and pivotal support during the transitions. In the Options adult program, despite COVID's challenges, we continued to provide short term case management to clients.

All BIC staff also had the opportunity to come together for a 'Check In' and meet and greet. This gave a great opportunity to see all our colleagues and meet the new members of the BIC team.

Passport

The Passport team welcomed new staff in September and provided onboarding using MS Teams.

The team continued to work from home and connect with clients and their caregivers. We have seen an increase in invoice submissions and the Coordinators connected with people to resolve issues. We also continued to fund new clients and have approved 82 people during this period.

The following is a breakdown of voice mail messages left for the team during this period: July 2020: 1516; August 2020: 1677; September 2020: 1729.

PassportONE

PassportONE continued to work remotely and processed over 76,000 claims for which 42,400 were paid in the amount of \$38.02M (this includes 29,000 processed via the TPA Portal). The temporary changes to the Passport guidelines introduced by the Ministry in Q1, which expanded the admissible expenditure list, are still in effect. The advance payments of over \$70 million granted to over 32,500 recipients in Q1 are being reconciled against the invoices submitted. PassportONE has reconciled 27,500 claims which is approximately 50% of the advance at September 30. Along with providing the

monthly investment reports, quarterly reports, and ad-hoc reporting to Ministry and Passport Agencies, the Data team met the new reporting requirements owing to introduction of the temporary changes.

We successfully completed the enhancement projects of the Transfer Payment Agency portal in August. To ease claim submissions and improve claim processing time, Passport eClaim has been introduced as the new submission source. Passport eClaim is a fillable PDF document that the Person Managing Funds (PMF) can use to complete and submit their Passport claims without needing to email or fax in their claims. This submission source will be available to the clients in mid October. PassportONE is actively implementing the marketing strategies to promote the use of eClaim. PassportONE appointed a new Manager Systems, Data Reporting in September and filled the vacant Business Analyst and Data Analyst in July as well two vacant Data Coordinator positions in September. Active recruiting continues for six vacant Client Payment Administrator positions due to attrition and movement and one Data Analyst position with the plans that all positions will be filled the end of Q3.

Knowledge Building

Evaluation

The report titled “What we have learned about FST’s resilience work and our clients’ resilience” has been provided to the Resilience Implementation Team. The team will review and consider next steps for implementation both during and post pandemic. Programs and projects working on evaluation include Options team United Way funded project, HFHC annual programming, and the City of Toronto TUHF ‘Queer and Connected’ project.

Research

A second manuscript for the Caring for Caregivers study on study results is underway. FST continues to be involved in COVID related studies in the sector: a needs assessment for people with developmental disabilities and their care givers; a multisector study on the effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic Response for People who are Marginalized (MARCO); the impact of the pandemic on children with developmental disabilities who are black. The needs assessment has been accepted for a plenary presentation at the 7th Biennial Conference on Developmental Disabilities

Grant Submissions and Contributions

We completed an application to retain City funding, that is matched, in part, by the province. This funding is critical to the operation of our two Seniors Active Living Centres and engagement with newcomer communities. We applied to receive \$80,000 from the ON Ministry of Seniors Affairs for a podcasting project for seniors by seniors with radio promotion to build virtual community and expand SALC virtual activities.

Students

Five students started practicums with FST in September. Students are working with the Director of CLFV, Knowledge Building team, DKS team, and SCSS team. Two more students are expected to join FST by January 2021.

Strategic Work

We are now working on operational plans for the 2021-2022 implementation of the Strategic Plan 2021-026: Open Hearts, Healthy Minds, Strong Communities.

Reporting

We have submitted the annual accountability reports for the UWGT and the City of Toronto. BIC has recruited clients, parents, and caregivers for Stakeholder (advocacy) consultations. KB-led conversations will take place in October and a full report will be submitted to MCCSS.

Other activities

We supported the requirements mapping for the new Electronic Client Record System (ECRS); provided communication support for various initiatives; provided weekly summary reports to CL/FV on program activities for staff who did not have access to AIM and FST systems.

ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES

Technology, Communications, Facilities

With continuing office closures and pandemic-related restrictions, our technology efforts over the summer focused on supporting staff working from home. This required the purchase and deployment of additional laptops and weekly onsite support at Church Street for resolving hardware issues as well as daily remote support. In July, we configured and deployed a new device to replace end-of-life hardware for nightly cloud-based data backups and processes supporting our business continuity strategy. The department also participated in high-level discussions relating to the initial requirements phase for a new Electronic Client Records System and continues to play a key role in this initiative.

We continued to work with the Executive Director on activities relating to the future of the 4th floor at 355 Church and the leasing and design of additional space at Sterling Road (Suite 100) to meet the growing needs of PassportONE. Facilities work accelerated over the summer with renovations to the suite and the move of Madison Community Services and Reconnect Community Health Services to leased space on the 2nd floor at Church Street.

The department began early development of a new collaborative Intranet site through the work of the Employee Engagement Work Group and continued key messaging for external communications relating to FST's response to COVID-19.

Planning was also underway for a virtual United Way staff campaign in October.

Finance

No report.

Human Resources

During this period HR continued to support staff in their transition to home-based work and maintain various committees using ZOOM; revised *Physical Distancing and Healthy Practices Guidelines* to include input from Joint Health and Safety Committee and updated information from external public health authorities. Volunteer Resources continued to provide support to new and ongoing volunteers and the programs that engage them.