



Q2 Executive Director's Report

GENERAL COMMENTS

Family Service Toronto is fully engaged in the human service sector, at multiple levels and arenas. Here is a quick summary of our external engagement during the second quarter:

- FST is trustee for the Toronto Non-Profit Network.
- FST is a member of the “Toronto Submission to Health Canada Workgroup” assisting Toronto Public Health in its submission requesting an exception under the criminal code to decriminalize drugs for personal use.
- FST is a member of the SafeTO Advisory Committee, supporting the City in the implementation of the Provincially mandated Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan.
- FST is a member of the Health and Social Equity Advisory Table recently established by the Toronto Medical Officer of Health.
- FST recently assumed the Chair of the Ontario Passport Agency Network (OPAN) for a 2 year term.

Staff at all levels of the organization are engaged in a myriad of system planning, service coordination, and advocacy tables. This continues a tradition of community and service system engagement as long as our history.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Changing Lives Family Violence

The Director, Changing Lives and Family Violence programs has been working on a number of internal projects, including the development of FST's new electronic client record system and preparing for accreditation. Town Hall meetings were also held with all counselling staff to introduce the Counselling Model review and to review the work that has been done during the pandemic and some early thinking of how counselling programs will be provided as we return to work. External work included continuing work with MCSSS around the Toronto Region VAW Coordinating Committee and System Planning table. Both of these venues are dedicated to coordinating work in this sector.

Violence Against Women (VAW)

The Violence Against Women (VAW) team continued to offer individual counselling and groups including an Expressive Arts counselling group, a trauma-informed yoga webinar and a webinar focused on breathing. The project with the Assaulted Women's Helpline and the Red Door Shelter to provide immediate, short-term counselling to women in high-risk situations ended. VAW counsellors received referrals from AWHL on a weekly basis and supported 104 women from November 2020-September 2021.

Next Steps

During this quarter, the number of referrals from the Courts and probation have increased significantly due to the fact the courts are now holding hearings virtually. FST continues to provide this program virtually and is working to increase the number of clients who start, while also working with staff to balance concerns around client's ability to connect to programming, the challenges and benefits of providing court-based programming virtually and implementing ongoing learnings.

Community Engagement
Stars are aligning at 355 Church! With the confirmation of new tenant-partners in the building, the Iranian engagement team has started to connect our work with Madison Community Services. The collaboration focuses on a two-way client referral initiative where Madison will refer their Farsi-speaking clients to FST to join the peer support group of Iranian women, seniors, and youth, while our Iranian team will refer clients to Madison who need mental health support and supportive housing. This is just the beginning, as the engagement team explores more the benefits of having access to our neighbor agencies that provide direct services, and the team will initiate more strategic collaborative work to expand the services and resources for residents and communities that we engage.
Seniors and Caregivers Support Services
The Seniors and Caregivers Support Service (SCSS) team continued individual counselling, groups for seniors and caregivers and the friendly chat program. Team members participated on the FST run Elder Abuse Consultation Team and provided consultation to other senior supporting organizations. Pat's Place continues to house older adults seeking refuge from abusive situations and received some updates (a new TV and newly installed grab bars) to improve the experience of those using the unit.
Counselling Services
During this quarter, the Counselling team and the David Kelley Services team have experienced some significant changes in staffing with resignations, leaves and pending retirements. Work has been ongoing to ensure that transitions are managed as best as possible with clients and hiring processes have started. Both teams continue to support the walk-in counselling program, with supports from other teams, as needed. Requests for supports continue to be strong.
Families in Transition
The Families in Transition (FIT) team offered virtual workshops for parents on topics such as parenting during change and coparenting and continued individual counselling with children/ parents. The FIT and VAW teams held a joint team meeting where teams presented cases for consultation and discussed opportunities for collaboration. Collaboration discussions and joint team meetings will continue.
Social Action
In this quarter, Campaign 2000 national office and provincial/territorial partners began the report card writing process, aiming to release 10 cards in total in the fall.
Following the recruitment of the project coordinator in August, the Localizing SDGs project established key project infrastructure including the project team, project advisory committee, workback schedules, and communications guidelines. In partnership with the advisory committee, the project team also began its preliminary research including developing a literature review and provincial and local policy map. Alongside the key project deliverables, the project team is also making connections within and across civil society, especially with other organizations working on the Sustainable Development Goals nationwide.
The director of Social Action is one of two staff leads on the Joint Board/Staff Working Group for Equity Diversity and Inclusion, the focus in this past quarter being to retain the external consultant to work with the organization on this process.
Knowledge Building
Quality Work:

- The KB team is working with all direct service programs to develop ‘the stories of their work’. This results in the development of a logic model, that provides a comprehensive summary of the work and is considered best practice. It includes a focus on outcomes.
- With both BIC and CL/FV we are conducting time studies with staff. They will support management decisions around resources utilization.

Evaluation:

We have developed evaluation tools in collaboration with staff in Community Engagement to understand settlement issues and capture program impact in the Nigerian Community

Accreditation:

Using the COA standards, a gap analysis has been completed to identify required changes in practice and policy development.

Electronic Client Record System:

KB staff will lead the training and implementation of Health Equity Demographics Data collection for program staff. This work aligns with the sector wide focus on understanding who we do and don’t serve.

ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES

Technology, Communications, Facilities

Technology efforts continued to focus on supporting staff working remotely as office closures and pandemic-related restrictions continued through the summer. Work began in July on implementation and deployment of a new Electronic Client Record System for about 125 staff providing direct service. Soft launch scheduled for December.

Facilities completed efforts to lease our second floor to five non-profit agencies as charter members of our new Community Services Hub at 355 Church Street. The department also supervised cleanup and repairs to our 2nd floor Sterling Road office space which received significant water damage as the result of a roof fire in late August.

Communications continued key messaging for external communications relating to FST’s virtual services resulting from pandemic operations. Planning was also underway for a virtual United Way staff campaign in October.

Human Resources and Volunteers

Highlights in Q2 included:

- Improvement of the recruitment process to respond to the current labour market, including the development of a streamlined procedure to reduce fill times, a recruitment and selection tracking system and the purchase of a LinkedIn Business profile to actively source potential new hires.
- Successfully recruited for 26 positions during this quarter (internal moves and external hires).
- The Volunteer Coordinator continued to keep volunteers engaged during the continued impact of COVID through newsletters, phone calls and Zoom meetings.