

Q4 Executive Director's Report

GENERAL COMMENTS

The pandemic wave during the last quarter delayed the return to on-site office work and the implementation of the hybrid business model. It did however provide additional time to work through the policy, process and procedures required to safely and successfully implement the new workplace model.

Staff also continued to work through the two major agency wide initiatives of preparing for accreditation and implementing the electronic client record system.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Changing Lives Family Violence

At the invitation of the Policy Innovation Hub, a team in the Ontario Cabinet Office, the program director participated in a co-design process whose aim was to review the provincial governments approach to addressing the abuse of older adults. Participants in this workshop stressed the need for a robust prevention and intervention initiative. Pat's Place, FST' safe haven for older adults who are experiencing abuse, was cited as an example of one of the ways government needs to move forward.

The City is developing a gender equity plan, and reached out to the violence against women sector to participate in a focus group around this work. The program director attended this consultation.

Counselling Services

The virtual Walk-in Clinic (WIC) continues to be actively accessed by clients. WIC core team members provided presentations to various teams staffing the WIC on best practices in single session work. In partnership with SAU, WIC core team members produced a document on WIC processes for counsellors and SAU. A plan was created to have inter-team presentations beginning next quarter to assist staff in building expertise working with a range of populations and issues, as well as building inter-team collaboration.

David Kelley Services (DKS) participated in co-facilitating a PAR group and is building a relationship with HQ - <https://hqtoronto.ca/> DKS attended a Pride Roundtable for ASOs and has started intakes for an Emotional Skills Group. The Queer and Connected project's 2STNB group has had consistent full attendance.

The Families In Transition (FIT) team offered a very successful Mending Fences: Co-parenting Group, both in terms of attendance and positive shifts experienced by group members. The team continues to offer workshops on coparenting, and on supporting children through separation and divorce.

The Violence Against Women (VAW) team continued to provide individual and group counselling, including 3 webinars. VAW staff facilitated presentations in Arabic, Farsi and Tamil on issues related to gender-based violence to community organizations. Team members participated in and led various celebrations for International Women's Day and collected words from clients that represented women's empowerment and posted on FST's social media pages.

The Seniors and Caregivers Support Service (SCSS) team continued individual counselling, groups for seniors and the friendly chat program. The Caring for the Caregiver group restarted in February. Team members provided consultation to other senior supporting organizations on issues related to elder abuse. Pat's Place continues to house older adults seeking refuge from abusive situations and has housed 2 clients from January to March.

The Next Steps team continues to offer the partner assault response program virtually, with upwards of eight groups being offered at any one time. The courts are now functioning virtually, and the referral flow is increasing. Clients continue to experience challenges related to the pandemic which can make it difficult for them to complete the program. Staff are working with people individually to support them when this is identified as an issue.

Community Engagement

Community Engagement continues to strengthen and expand our work with the newcomer Afghan residents in Toronto. A team member shared her experience on what it means to be Afghan-Canadian in Canada and led a discussion on women's rights. Twenty-five newly arrived Afghans men and women participated in the discussion organized by the Policultural Immigrant Community Services. These 25 participants are a portion of the 800 Afghans who recently arrived in Toronto, who worked as translators and interpreters for the Canadian military in Afghanistan. They are all temporarily housed in a Mississauga Hotel where a few settlement agencies assist them with their needs to fully settle. Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) made the commitment to admit 40000 Afghani refugees. IRCC funds FST's Healthy Family Healthy Community program. We will be hiring two peer leaders from the newly arrived Afghani community in the coming fiscal year.

Social Action

This quarter, Campaign 2000 staff has continued to meet with elected officials, government policy staff and community organizations to share the key findings from the Report Card, including participating in a Budget 2022 roundtable with leading feminist from across the country with Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland on International Women's Day.

After many months of advocacy, the CERB Amnesty Campaign saw a significant success when the federal government reversed the clawback of all pandemic benefits to GIS payments for low-income seniors. They also introduced an amendment to the governing legislation in record time to ensure that low-income seniors GIS payments are not subject to clawbacks in this upcoming or future tax years.

A few highlights from the Localizing Canada's Commitment to the SDGs Project included a January meeting with the project's advisory committee; the project researcher's presentation at the first national SDG Action Networking Series, hosted by Employment and Social Development Canada; and research and planning are underway to prepare for the upcoming national in person conference and community conversations this summer and fall.

The program director presented at the 66th UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) event: Women and Economic Justice in a Post COVID Economy. Her remarks were noted and well received by the global participants.

Knowledge Building

Accreditation, accreditation, accreditation...getting to the finish line.

Building Inclusive Communities

The Passport program approved 292 people during this quarter. MCCSS announced updates to the Passport guidelines effective April 1, 2022. The PSW wage enhancement has been extended past the

March 31 deadline. The Passport claims team has been working on invoices with a quick turnaround time for client reimbursement. The Passport team co-facilitated 2 information sessions with ODSP and DSO to the TDSB in January.

PassportONE processed 116,155 claims and paid \$97.2 Million in Q4. The client payments team added 27 new Client Payment Administrators to address year end claim submissions. By the end of Q4, the average processing times was 1.7 days. The data team completed several major projects. The first project was data transfer to MCCSS, this was required due to changes to PHIPA legislation that allowed ministry to access PassportONE data. In a short time, team was able to design and set up an automated data transfer that will take place once a month. As a part of this project, PassportONE also introduced Power BI as its primary reporting tool. Power BI is a data analytics and visualization tool; this will make analysis of PassportONE data more efficient and will improve accessibility to data as it allows for real time dashboards to be created.

The Options Children's team has been participating in the San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety training in collaboration with the Coordinated Service planning program, to increase our knowledge and capacity in support Indigenous children and youth. The Community Networking Facilitators have facilitated a new group on Assertiveness, as well as the Chit Chat group. The groups have been well received and continue to grow. FST is leading the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) initiative of the APSW program to increase housing capacity. Participating APSW agencies include Community Living Toronto, Cota, Family Service Toronto and Woodgreen. FST has fulfilled its Short-term Case Management targets and has served 34 clients for 2021-2022. MCCSS has also extended this project for another six months until September 30, 2022 and FST will be serving twenty (20) clients.

CORPORATE SERVICES

Technology, Communications, Facilities

Technology efforts continued to focus on supporting staff working remotely as office closures and pandemic-related restrictions continued through the winter. Work was completed in January on the 2022-25 Technology & Information Management plan with recommendations submitted in January. Key recommendations centred around cybersecurity and staffing support for TREAT – our new Electronic Client Record System. Planning also began for IT support of staff returning to onsite work after more than two years of remote work.

Facilities began preparations for the Spring return of staff across all locations. It included the six-month assignment (April-October) of a Special Projects Manager (Facilities) to assist with acquisition and deployment of a space booking tool and the creation of a Welcome Commons in the former café space on the ground floor at 355 Church Street. The department also continued to work with our new Community Services Hub tenants at our Church Street location.

Communications continued key messaging for external communications relating to FST's virtual services resulting from pandemic operations.

Human Resources and Volunteers

No report.

Finance

Finance is working towards another successful year-end. The annual pre-audit work was completed and we're now preparing for the interim audit.