



Building Better Futures
2020-2021 Annual Report



VISION

**Thriving children,
youth, families
and communities.**

MISSION

We build strength and resilience with infants, children, youth and families, by providing equitable, accessible, client-driven services, system leadership and advocacy.

VALUES

**Excellence
Collaboration
Respect
Courage**

A Foundation for Change

Across Canada, 2021 will be remembered as the year that required us to be more resilient than ever before to combat the impact of COVID-19. It will also be marked by the discovery of over 1,000 bodies of children buried in unmarked graves at residential schools in Canada, another stark reminder of why we must be more committed than ever before to addressing issues of racism, oppression and transparency.

At Strides Toronto we demonstrated our commitment to ending racism and oppression in many ways this year. Health equity and the social determinants of health are foundational concepts in our first strategic plan, requiring us to act at a system, policy, community and program level. The sector-wide Anti-Black Racism Task Force that Strides Toronto supports collaborated with partners to hold an educational and wellness event on Black Mental Health Day in March. The organization hired its first Director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion to support excellence in addressing these issues. At a board level, an extensive social media campaign was successful in supporting the board to further its goal of having a board that reflects the diversity of the city. We recognize that building a just society is a long journey and are committed to it continuing to deepen our knowledge and skills, and to taking action.

Internally, programs continued to find innovative ways to address the needs of our clients and communities during the pandemic. In our second year as a merged organization, we took steps to integrate departments to benefit from the strengths of each legacy organization and to ensure a consistent, coordinated approach to client service for young people from birth to age 29 and their families.

In our Lead Agency role, we launched the first year of a three-year plan to improve access to, and the quality of, child and youth mental health services in Toronto. As part of this plan, work has begun to redesign access to services to make it easier for young people and families to be linked to the services they need. Provincially, Strides Toronto and Hotel-Dieu Grace Healthcare led the Lead Agency Consortium's work to develop a provincial virtual walk-in service which received annualized funding from the Ministry of Health.

We are deeply grateful to our funders, partners, donors, staff and board for your continued collaboration as we work together to create a more just society and to improve services for young people and families across Toronto. Your commitment to excellence and doing what is right buoy our spirits and make us proud. Together, we are a powerful force for creating a society where our vision of thriving children, youth, families and communities is within sight.

Thank you.



Jordan Ross
President



Janet McCrimmon
Chief Executive Officer

Programs that Transform Lives



Strides Toronto provides high-quality services across a range of programs to meet evolving client and sector needs.

955

Infant and child mental health clients served this year

668

Targeted prevention clients

Prevention Programs for Children, Youth and Parents

Babies' Best Start (Healthy Babies Healthy Children)

For children and their parents, from prenatal to three years old, providing home visiting services through Ontario's Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program.

Growing Healthy Together Prenatal Program

Prenatal education, nutrition information, healthy snacks, one-to-one health and nutrition counselling, and peer support to pregnant individuals experiencing a variety of risk factors.

Growing Healthy Together Parenting Program

A free, voluntary program including family home visiting and parenting groups for families with children from birth to five years old who may be new to Canada, living on a low income, or may be feeling alone or overwhelmed.

Respect in Schools Everywhere (RISE)

An intensive youth-led, school-based violence prevention and mentorship program for grades 7 to 12.

Targeted Prevention

A collaborative program with both Toronto school boards to offer mental health services that meet specific needs identified by local schools.

Early Intervention for Children and Families

ADD/ADHD Seminars

A psycho-education-based seminar series for parents of children ages 4 to 12 years old with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

Child Care Consultation

For children from birth to 12. As part of the Every Child Belongs Program, our staff work with designated child care centres in Scarborough to ensure children of all abilities are fully included in quality child care programs.

Community Support Programs

For children from birth to 12 and their families. We work with community partners to develop and deliver flexible mental health services for unmet and emerging needs in the community. The programs include Ready Set Go, Helping Hands, and Community Parents Count.

Early Abilities Preschool Speech and Language

We provide programs to infants, toddlers and preschool children and their families. Program includes speech and language assessment, individual and group treatment, consultation and community outreach.

867

Parents received community support

2,360

Early intervention clients served

Child and Youth Mental Health

Brief Services

For children from birth to 12 and their families, this short-term counselling service offers up to three sessions to families and a walk-in service for families when they need help.

Community Counselling

Focuses on helping youth 12–18 years old and their families/caregivers understand, overcome and manage personal problems and/or mental health issues.

Family Counselling and Therapy

We offer flexible, responsive counselling for children and their families, including general and sexual trauma assessment and treatment services.

Group Programs

Various goal-focused, evidence-based counselling groups for children from birth to 12 and their parents. Groups offered aim to support the development of healthy parent-child relationships, positive parenting skills and children's coping skills.

Infant Mental Health

A variety of family-focused mental health assessment and treatment services to support the healthy social and emotional development of infants by working with their families and communities.

Priority Access for Students

Counselling and case management for students aged 5-18 who are prioritized by social work staff in the city's two school boards as needing support.

Urban Tele-Mental Health

In partnership with Sick Kids Hospital, youth up to age 18, their mental health professionals and families can access psychiatric consultation, capacity enhancement for teams and formalized education via video conferencing from a location that is most convenient for them.

What's Up Walk-In® Clinic

A six-day-a-week mental health counselling walk-in service for infants, children, youth, young adults and families.

Whatever It Takes

Helps the service system respond to the needs of infants, children and youth birth to age to 18 who have complex clinical profiles and complicated service needs.

75

families used Urban Tele-Mental Health service this year

98

External professionals accessed services from community support

Lead Agency for Infant, Child and Youth Mental Health

Mental Health TO: Access for Infants, Children, Youth and Families

Mental Health T.O. (MHTO) is a free phone referral service to help connect infants, children, youth up to 18 years old and their families to mental health and addiction services in Toronto.

Provincial Youth Outreach Worker Program

Strides Toronto manages the community of practice, data and education associated with the Provincial Youth Outreach Worker (YOW) program, which supports approximately 200 workers and managers in 25 YOW lead agencies across the province.

System Planning

Strides Toronto coordinates system-wide planning across 26 agencies to improve the access, experience and mental health outcomes of infants, children, youth and families.

Autism and Developmental Services

Adults Achieving Independence through Motivation and Skill (AAIMS)

A full-day program that supports adults (aged 21-35) with an Autism Spectrum Disorder and/or developmental disabilities to develop life skills that enhance quality of life and independence.

Autism Services

Provides a range of parent and family supports for parents with children with autism, including support groups.

Autism Youth for Community Engagement & Socialization (AYCES)

Fun and informative programming for young people ages 12 to 18 with a diagnosis of High Functioning Autism.

Galloway After School Program (GASP)

A socialization, life skills, and activity group for adolescents (12-18) in East Toronto who have been diagnosed with Autism or a mild to moderate developmental challenge.

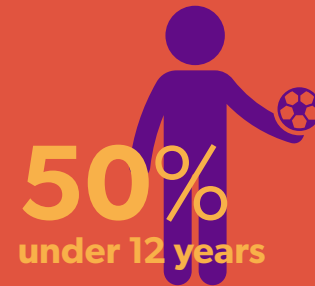
Galloway Respite Program

Offers a range of accessible respite services for youth ages 12 to 18 with a developmental disability or an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

1,646

youth participants in our youth outreach program

Ages of our clients



Intensive Services

Day Treatment

Staff support classrooms to provide individualized treatment for children and youth, aged 4-18, who are experiencing significant social, emotional, behavioural challenges in school. This program combines support for the clients' academic and treatment needs.

Intensive Child and Family Service

For children from 4 to 12 and their families, this is a short-term, intensive treatment program to strengthen children's ability to function effectively in their home, school or community and build their parents' ability to parent effectively and prevent home or school breakdowns.

Live-In Treatment – Ages 6-12

Betty's Place is a six-bed treatment program for children aged 6 to 12 who need out-of-home assessment and treatment for a variety of social, emotional and behavioural issues.

Live-In Treatment – Ages 12-18

Megan's Residence is a live-in treatment program offered for youth with psychiatric, emotional, and/or behavioural challenges who need out-of-home assessment and treatment.

Priority Access for Child Welfare – Aged 4-12

A family-based intervention program for families involved with child welfare that aims to reduce the use of physical force as a disciplinary measure and to support developing healthy behaviours in children.

Priority Access for Child Welfare – Aged 12-18

Youth and family-based intervention that supports youth who are at risk of being placed out of home.

Community Engagement and Outreach Services

East QREW Group

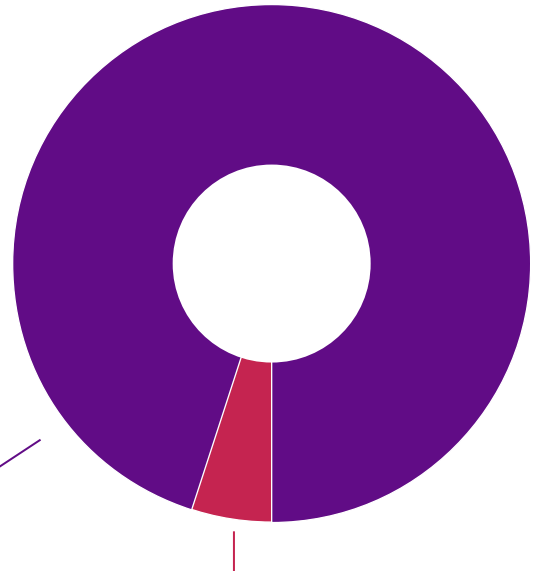
A safe and supportive queer and trans drop-in youth program offering interactive activities.

Gender-Based Violence

Provides trauma therapy, community supports and service connections for survivors of domestic human-trafficking, sex workers who need help exiting safely, and people who are victims of sexual exploitation on the internet.

Internet Child Exploitation (ICE) Counselling

Offering short-term, immediate counselling sessions (8-12) for children and youth who are victims of internet sexual exploitation and to their immediate family members.



95%
of our clients live in Scarborough and East Toronto

5%
of our clients live in other parts of the city or outside of Toronto



Volunteer Readiness Group

Focuses on youth obtaining community service hours while gaining employability skills and knowledge through hands-on experience and workshops.

Youth in Transition

Helps support youth aged 16 – 24 who are transitioning from the child welfare sector into adulthood.

Youth Outreach Worker Program

For youth aged 12 to 24 and their families, we meet youth where they are at and connect them to such services as employment, housing, counselling and food banks.

The Zone Youth Space Drop-In

A safe, enhanced youth space where youth can create, connect, learn and inspire. Offered in partnership with Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation.

LIKE Program

LIKE (Leadership, Integrity, Knowledge, Empowerment) is a four-week group program focused on building relationship skills in youth involved with the criminal justice system and referred by Scarborough’s Youth Court.

New Mentality

A youth-led group focusing on the promotion and awareness of mental health in the community.

Newcomer Youth Engagement Program

This program for immigrant youth aged 12 to 21 who are permanent residents or conventional refugees includes free activities every month, volunteer opportunities, sports events, workshops and trips around Toronto.

Studio 2 Multimedia Program

Supports youth to develop multimedia skills and social skills, with an emphasis on media literacy, employability and mental health.

1,358

Youth mental health clients

5x

more youth participants in Respect in Schools Everywhere (RISE) this year. 6,000 more than anticipated, as a result of the program being offered virtually.

1,000+

viewers of Strides Toronto’s livestream videos

Laying the Groundwork for a Strong Future

The first few years after an amalgamation are critical in shaping the processes, strategies and culture of an organization.

In the best of cases, this is an intricate endeavour. For Strides Toronto, it was further complicated as a pandemic developed and work-from-home measures took effect soon after our merger. Despite these obstacles, this year we took several important foundational steps to build a cohesive, integrated and productive organization focused on helping children, youth, families and communities thrive.

We conducted a strategic planning process that included multiple online engagement opportunities for staff, youth, families, and community partners to contribute their thoughts and guide our future. Through surveys, interviews, focus groups and planning sessions with parents, partners, staff and board members, we explored our clients' and communities' needs, possible directions for our services, our leadership role in the sector, and how we can ensure a thriving organization.

Our strategic planning consultants consolidated the input and developed a strategic plan centred around five key areas to guide Strides Toronto over the next five years:

- Outreach, visibility and equity
- System leadership and advocacy
- Accessible services and connected pathways
- An empowering learning organization
- An efficient, technology-enabled organization

Approved in December 2020 for an April 1, 2021 launch, our teams have since been developing plans and implementing initiatives to bring the strategic plan to life in our day-to-day operations.

This year, we also launched our Becoming One Strides TO Culture Initiative—an intentional step forward to foster a healthy organizational culture that supports the aspirations, activities and success of each member of our passionate and caring staff. Through this consultative process we identified internal priorities that will help us engage and empower our people and create a seamless client experience.

We also recognized that we need a unified client information system if we are to achieve our strategic goal to be an Efficient, Technology-Enabled Organization. Working with a technology consultant and client-facing staff and managers, we identified the information we

need to support clients, meet our reporting needs, and produce quality data to meaningfully measure outcomes and identify opportunities for improvement. We also launched a consultative process to develop an IT Strategic Plan, which will help us build a technology infrastructure at Strides Toronto that not only meets the needs of staff right now, but also positions the organization to seize and support opportunities well into the future.

With these foundational pieces in place and more to come in the years ahead, Strides Toronto is creating a work environment that offers staff the greatest potential to improve the health, well-being and success of our clients, their families and our communities.



Centering Equity at Strides Toronto

Societal inequities adversely affect individuals, families and their mental health. Marginalized groups are more likely to experience poor mental health, yet they often face barriers in obtaining appropriate care and support (e.g., culturally sensitive, affordable, convenient). Strides Toronto recognizes that we must help to “level the playing field” by actively examining our own biases and working to combat them. We must also be vocal champions for equitable systems and services and involve people with lived experience of marginalization as we develop strategies to remove the barriers they face.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) were organizational cornerstones at our legacy agencies, and in Strides Toronto. We established an EDI Committee of staff and management who together work to ensure that equity, diversity, and inclusion are alive in all aspects of our organization and work. The committee is focused on how it might support our strategic plan in five core areas: client care, training and modelling, research, cultural competence and workforce. Building on established best practices, we are committed to ensuring equity, diversity and inclusion are reflected in our staff, clients, service and advocacy.



In December 2019, Strides Toronto formed an Anti-Black Racism (ABR) Task Force to ensure we apply an ABR lens to all aspects of our work. Since then, the task force, which includes Black staff and allies, has been hard at work identifying ways to prioritize ABR across our organization. We held collective care sessions for Black staff in the wake of anti-Black violence incidents in Toronto and the US, and is exploring how Strides Toronto can offer clients specific access to Black therapists at the What’s Up Walk-In clinic. The group is also developing two online ABR resource libraries for staff and for clients and families.

As Toronto’s Lead Agency for infant, child and youth mental health, Strides Toronto is also supporting systemic equity changes. We collaborated with Central Toronto Youth Services to purchase training for our core service partners to cultivate practices, policies and alliances that challenge, disrupt and combat systemic anti-Black racism.

We also recruited a Director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, a new position that continues to prioritize and strengthen our equity focus and performance.

Partnering for Impact

While Strides Toronto is proud of our ability to meet the needs of our clients and their families diverse and unique, we also know there are opportunities for greater impact when we share expertise and resources with other agencies and community organizations. We therefore strive to develop partnerships that support improved access to high-quality services and to be a skilled, engaged and valued partner.

On March 1, 2021, to mark Black Mental Health Day in Toronto, Strides Toronto hosted an all-day virtual event with the sector Anti-Black Racism Task Force and CAFCAN Social Services. This free event included professional and personal sessions focused on Black wellness. Attendees learned about evidence-based strategies for supporting Black youth mental health, the RITES program at Central Toronto Youth Services, and assessment and treatment considerations when working with Black youth. Other interactive programming during the day explored the cultural traditions of storytelling, drumming, movement and song as instruments of healing and wellness. The event was well attended, with participants actively engaged in the programming.

Michael Garron Hospital's Child and Youth Mental Health Outpatient Services partnered with Mental Health TO (MHTO), a service managed by Strides Toronto, to develop a pathway to connect hospital patients with community-based mental health services where suitable. Primary care physicians can now refer their patients for services through an e-referral system that is received and managed by MHTO. The partnership will increase efficiency, reduce wait times and enhance system navigation for patients and families.



Toronto's Lead Agency for Infant, Child and Youth Mental Health

Building a Roadmap for System Change

As Toronto's Lead Agency for infant, child and youth mental health, Strides Toronto coordinates system-wide planning across 26 agencies to improve the access, experience and mental health outcomes of infants, children, youth and families. In early 2020, we began developing a new strategic plan to chart the next three years for Toronto's children's mental health sector. We prioritized a collaborative process, developing many avenues for youth, children, parents and our partners to share their thoughts and ideas to inform the plan. The process allowed for challenging discussions about equity, bias, and how to change a system with intention to meet the needs of our communities, especially those who are marginalized. Then the pandemic brought about unexpected and dramatic changes for our clients and sectors, compelling our core service partners to find new ways to meet the growing demand for our services and inspiring us to incorporate those innovations into the new strategic plan.

Our 2020–2023 strategic goals centre around three priority areas: entry and navigation, resources and capacity, and innovation. Improvements in these areas will enhance the experience for all clients, partners, and stakeholders.

Modifying the entry to mental health care will give children, youth and parents/caregivers a centralized pathway to find our services more easily. They will be able to obtain multiple services across the sector and move through the system seamlessly, with navigation support, as their needs demand. Our second priority, resources and capacity, focuses on improving our services, knowledge, and skillset to equitably serve diverse demographics and underserved communities. One of our mandates in the upcoming years is to consciously build awareness of the biases and misguided perceptions we might hold, to then intentionally work towards bettering our approach. Our final priority, innovation, inspires us to continue working with technology and data specialists to provide operational efficiencies that will improve the delivery of our integrated services to make us accessible and effective.

Working with our core service partners and guided by our strategic goals, we are building a better tomorrow for Toronto's infant, child and youth mental health sector.

2020–2023 strategic goals centre around three priority areas:



Entry and Navigation



Resources and Capacity



Innovation

Launching Walk-In Services Provincially

This year we received \$2 million in funding from Ontario's Ministry of Health to create a virtual walk-in counselling program across the province. Strides Toronto coordinates the What's Up Walk-In, a drop-in therapy service that is currently offered by six of our twenty-six core service providers. Since the pandemic, the walk-in has been offered virtually and the province recognized our expertise in delivering virtual care.

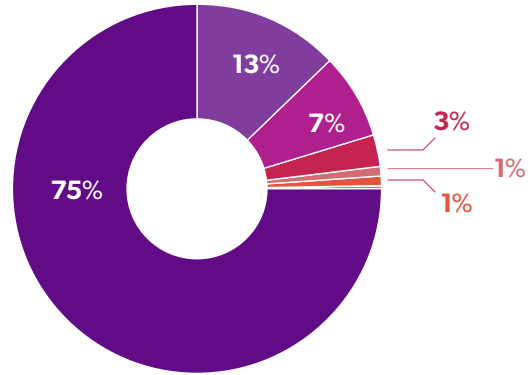
With the increase in mental health challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a greater demand for mental health support for youth in the past year. Service providers often referred youth to services like Kids Help Phone, which is tailored to acute mental health crises, instead of services better suited to meet their ongoing needs.

This provincial virtual Walk-In will act as a bridge, providing immediate support and connecting children and youth to the network of services that exist to support children, youth and their families. Those who use the walk-in service can call in and get connected to a single session of counselling service, and where warranted, can be directed to a navigator who can connect them to local services in their area. It is our goal to implement this pilot program within eight to ten agencies by the end of 2021.



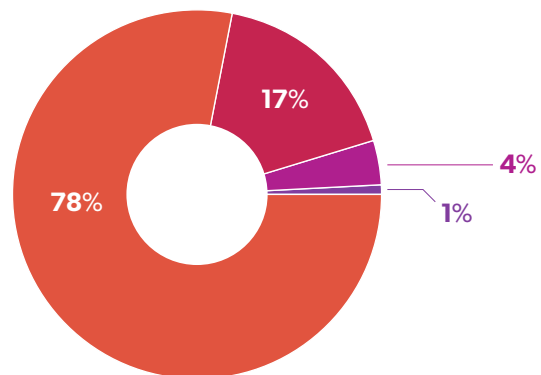
Financials

Revenue Sources



- Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services + Ministry of Health
- City of Toronto
- Special programs funding
- Public Health Agency of Canada
- Fee for service
- Other
- Investment income (not shown, less than 1%)
- Donations and fundraising (not shown, less than 1%)

Expenses



- Salaries and employee benefits
- Services
- Supplies and equipment
- Transportation and communication

Revenues	YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2021	THREE-MONTH PERIOD ENDED MARCH 31, 2020
● Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services and Ministry of Health	\$19,369,717	\$5,582,169
● City of Toronto	\$3,294,311	\$926,089
● Special programs funding	\$1,925,317	\$473,232
● Public Health Agency of Canada	\$696,082	\$215,425
● Fee for service	\$213,053	\$216,946
● Other	\$193,897	\$75,113
● Investment income	\$45,713	\$41,510
● Donations and fundraising	\$25,661	\$55,404
	\$25,763,751	\$7,585,888

Expenses

● Salaries and employee benefits	\$20,045,609	\$5,149,088
● Services	\$4,453,735	\$2,043,886
● Supplies and equipment	\$964,237	\$269,950
● Transportation and communication	\$207,418	\$97,118
	\$25,670,999	\$7,560,042

Excess of revenue over expenses before other items	\$92,752	\$25,846
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Other items

Unrealized gain (loss) from investments	\$ 87,029	\$(82,358)
Amortization of property and equipment	\$(800,178)	\$(214,853)
Amortization of deferred capital contributions	\$745,437	\$201,281
Amortization of lease inducements	\$50,834	\$12,709
	\$83,122	\$(83,221)

Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses	\$175,874	\$(57,375)
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Thank You to All Who Support Strides Toronto!

Funders

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

Children's Aid Society of Toronto

City of Toronto

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

Malvern Family Resource Centre

Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services

Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries

Ministry of Health

Native Women's Resource Centre of Toronto

Public Health Agency of Canada

Royal Bank of Canada

Springboard

United Way Greater Toronto

Women and Gender Equality Canada

YWCA Toronto

Donors

\$1,000 TO \$9,999

Donna Chow

CHUM Charitable Foundation

Timothy Eaton Memorial Church

Vernon Henry

Judy and Paul Huyer

Paul Koren

Janet McCrimmon

Amanda and Scott Sinclair

Vancouver Foundation

\$500 TO \$999

Jason Pilz

Lois Sinclair

\$200 TO \$499

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and Alfred Pui-Yau Chu

The Clorox Company

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Fabio Michelucci

Omar Quashem

Nancy Schmidt

Rita and Mark Sinclair

Rodeen and Steven Stein

UP TO \$199

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Rita and Mark Sinclair

Hakam Singh

Peter Sit

Gabrielle Vandekas

Michael Wang

IN-KIND DONORS

Dr. Mark Hanson

Our Board of Directors shares our vision for a Toronto in which children, youth, families and communities thrive.

We are grateful for the diverse perspectives, unique insights and dedication to excellence that each member brings to our organization's governance. Thank you for your excellent, unwavering support of our work.

STRIDES TORONTO:

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Helping children, youth
and families thrive

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