



cedar  
CENTRE

# BUILDING RESILIENCY... TOGETHER

ANNUAL  
REPORT

21  
22



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## Resiliency: The Capacity to Recover Quickly from Difficulties

As I reflect on the pandemic-related challenges of the last year, I find myself searching for a word to describe how and why Cedar Centre continues to thrive during such uncertain times. The word that comes to mind is one that we speak of and witness often in our work at the Centre: *resilience*. The Centre's people, its place, and its community are all resilient in the truest sense of the word.

How else to explain the creation of two new programs this year? Our Anti-Human Trafficking Program and our Newcomers' Health and Well-Being Program supported 17 and 38 individuals, respectively, in their first full year of operation. Each one of them built on their strengths as they worked to move past difficult lived experiences. Our legacy programs, the Child, Youth & Family Program and the Adult Program, both continued to support those who needed us, with our reputation catching the attention of communities from as far as Nunavut. Our STAIR Coaching Program, which launched in 2020 as a solution to virtual group programming, is now a foundational component of our services and is operating with confidence in the face of unprecedented demand; and the iYoga Program is poised to expand with a unique offering for participants who have finished their time at Cedar Centre and are transitioning out of service.

And then there is the incredible progress that has taken place in developing the first Child & Youth Advocacy Centre (CYAC) for York Region. Together, with partners from Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child & Family Services, York Region Children's Aid Society, Jewish Family and Child Service – York Region, and York Regional Police, we have completed the CYAC's logic model for service and mapped the footprint of the Centre's operating space, complete with artistic renderings. We are now poised to further discussions with ministry funders and will launch a capital campaign to turn this exciting vision into reality.

Thank you to our committed community partners who joined with us to provide virtual service coordination, as well as to collaborate, share challenges and impart wisdom; to our resilient staff and members of the Board for dedicating yourselves to those who seek our services; and to our participants who put their trust in us every day.

Finally, thank you to our funders and donors, who kindly renewed their remarkable support of our work, remaining flexible and generous at a time when we needed it the most.

To be honest, our success and progress this past year begs the question, "Was Cedar Centre already resilient?" Perhaps. But organizational resiliency is not a trait — it takes work. Resiliency is the net sum of a set of learned behaviours, thoughts, and actions. And so, you see, Cedar Centre's resiliency is the product of all of us working hard to achieve our goals, *together*. This can only be described as an embarrassment of riches for which the only appropriate response is gratitude.

*Alison Peck*

**Alison Peck**

Executive Director



## ADULT PROGRAM

### Helping Adults Cope with the Impact of Childhood Trauma

Four years ago, Elena\* felt lost. She lived in an endless cycle of negative thoughts and traumatic memories, and she struggled with anxiety, fear and panic attacks, all of which affected her relationship with her kids and strained her marriage.

**"I didn't know how to handle myself when I was stressed and anxious. I didn't know how to handle problems,"** says Elena, adding that she often had difficulty managing routine daily activities. **"I tried therapy, but because it wasn't trauma-focused it wasn't helping as much as it could."**

Elena's struggles stemmed from a childhood experience, and what she goes through is quite common among survivors. Trauma-specific strategies are essential to helping adults deal with their past, and this forms the basis of Cedar Centre's Adult Program for people who have experienced interpersonal childhood trauma.

Participants start with our Skills Training in Affect and Interpersonal Regulation (STAIR) group, a 10-week program that offers practical skills to help them increase emotional regulation and build stronger relationships. Once completed, they move on to our individual therapy program to address specific themes related to their trauma. This includes how symptoms continue to impact the present.

Elena says the group program gave her important tools. **"I learned a lot about how to handle my emotions,"** she says. **"With trauma, you are never cured, but you can learn how to feel better and that's what the program helped me do."**

It was in the one-on-one therapy that she began to notice even bigger changes in herself: she was taking better care of herself and was using the coping strategies she learned to help her deal with situations or events that had previously induced stress and anxiety.

**"I began to feel so much stronger because I could talk to someone about my fears and problems. I finally felt like someone was hearing me,"** says Elena.

Today she feels calmer and more confident in herself and her abilities. She knows how to work through difficult problems or have tough conversations without getting overwhelmed or stressed. And her relationship with her family has improved.

**"I feel like a completely different person and like I can have normal relationships. This program gave me back my life and my family,"** she says. **"And, I can't find the right words to say just how grateful I am."**

*\*Name changed to protect privacy*



## CHILD, YOUTH & FAMILY PROGRAM

### Supporting the Whole Family Through Trauma Recovery

When children experience trauma, it can impact the whole family. Caregivers may feel a range of heavy emotions or may not know how to recognize or respond to trauma responses. So we take a family-centred, strength-based approach in our Child, Youth & Family Program.

Kids and caregivers say it works. **“Our family has seen a tremendous benefit, and I truly believe our son’s quality of life and our relationship with him will forever be better because of Cedar Centre’s contribution,”** a parent shares.

The program provides up to 48 weeks of therapy for children ages 3-18 who’ve experienced physical, sexual or emotional abuse, domestic violence, or bullying. Supportive caregivers participate in the first six sessions to learn about trauma responses and how to best support their child. After that, we work with the child or youth one-on-one. Ongoing caregiver support and trauma therapy is also available. When the individual sessions are completed, we also offer family therapy with caregivers and siblings, if appropriate.

To reinforce support systems, we build on the strengths and resources of each child and family, as well as their environment, and this helps boost kids’ self-esteem. **“I thought, nobody understands, but my therapist understood me,”** says a youth

who participated in the program. **“I learned about my strengths and to live in the present, and I don’t have nightmares anymore.”**

Another youth explains that therapy has helped with reducing and managing trauma symptoms: **“I can recognize symptoms early and choose appropriate coping strategies. In addition, it has reduced frustration and misunderstandings between my family members and me.”**

Caregivers, meanwhile, are grateful for the progress they see and the high level of support we provide. **“The program certainly helped our child and our family,”** says one parent. **“I appreciated the counsellors’ care in ensuring we were doing okay at the end of each session and at the end of the program. We never felt like we were being rushed through a checklist.”**

“I truly believe our son’s quality of life and our relationship will forever be better because of Cedar Centre’s contribution.”

While every healing journey is unique, the goal is always to help kids and families move forward from trauma—and we have had a lot of success in this. **“I was able to discover my past and, with it, discover who I am right now,”** reflects a young participant. **“I learned to acknowledge it and move past it, and to not let it define me as an individual.”**



## ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING PROGRAM

### Helping Kids Heal from the Trauma of Sexual Exploitation

When Project Resiliency therapists Kendra Mills and Nicole Lessey begin working with kids and youth who are at high risk of sexual exploitation or who have been trafficked, they take it slow. Something as simple as a cool outfit or bold earrings can open the door to a deeper connection. **“You create a sense of safety, you build rapport, you build trust,”** explains Kendra.

Cedar Centre’s Anti-Human Trafficking Program supports kids and youth 18 and under with therapy for up to 48 weeks. Once a connection is made and a foundation of trust and safety is built, Nicole says that’s where true engagement begins. **“They actively seek out therapy, or actively tell me a problem. They’re able to reach out more,”** she says. **“That’s huge because silence is the power in human trafficking—and I’ve seen them take back that power.”**

Young people are at risk of being trafficked across Ontario, from big cities to small towns, regardless of socioeconomic status. They often don’t realize they’re being groomed or trafficked until they’re in the life and isolated from family and friends. Getting out can be difficult and some may take up to a dozen tries to do so.

At Cedar Centre, we take a self-led approach to

therapy so that the young people in our program feel empowered. Our anti-Black racism framework and focus on equity and anti-colonialism ensures everyone is listened to and heard, and we bring in consultants, such as Indigenous elders, as needed.

Together, we work through their experiences of sexual exploitation and help them develop skills in emotional regulation, communication, healthy relationships, setting boundaries, assertiveness, and more. It can be as fundamental as “How do you date and how do you have a healthy relationship?”

“Silence is the power in human trafficking — and I’ve seen them take back that power.”

**“The difference from beginning to end is huge,”** says Nicole. **“It’s like a metamorphosis over 48 weeks, watching them put up boundaries in current relationships—romantic ones, or friendships—that have nothing to do with the past, and watching them**

**being able to articulate their boundaries in their own ways.”**

The power of Project Resiliency isn’t limited to the kids we work with directly, notes Kendra. **“Kids talk. So, if we’re having an impact on one kid’s life, they might be talking to a friend who’s at risk or might already be in the life. When word gets out that there’s a place that helps, there’s a ripple effect.”**



## NEWCOMERS' HEALTH AND WELL-BEING PROGRAM

### Supporting Newcomers' Health and Well-Being

Every year, thousands of newcomers enrich our communities by choosing Canada as their home. Many settle here in York Region. Recognizing that some newcomers have lived through incredibly difficult situations, in 2021 Cedar Centre partnered with the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) York Region South Simcoe and the Welcome Centres of York Region to deliver a unique health and wellness program.

With free services including specialized counselling, health education, and health care from a nurse practitioner, the Newcomers' Health and Well-Being Program provides vital support with a focus on each participant's unique needs and circumstances, including their language, culture, and community.

**"Trauma is different for different people and trauma services need to look different for newcomers. It's not just about language, it's also about respecting cultural values,"** says Brenton Diaz, Coordinator for the Newcomers' Health and Well-Being Program at Cedar Centre.

The program is available for participants ages 12 and up and, through an interpreter service, is offered in dozens of languages, including Farsi, Cantonese, Spanish, Russian, Kurdish, and Ukrainian. Participants' traumas may span their entire life; some have lived through horrors such

as genocide, war, or being the target of political violence because of sexual orientation or gender identity.

**"Cedar Centre has been a pivotal partner of the Canadian Mental Health Association York Region South Simcoe in providing high-quality and effective services to our newcomer clients with a history of trauma,"** says Jun Maranan, Director of Services for CMHA York Region South Simcoe.

"Trauma is different for different people and trauma services need to look different for newcomers."

In addition to individual services, the program offers group sessions on topics such as stress management, conflict resolution, dealing with grief and loss, and family and caregiver concerns.

Designed to help newcomers build on their strengths, the program is having a meaningful impact, says Jun. **"Our partnership with Cedar Centre is a**

**testament to how community-based organizations can collaborate and deliver innovative and evidence-based services to often marginalized and underserved groups."**

Adds Brenton: **"As Canada continues to welcome newcomers from around the world, the need for these services will continue to grow. People are really grateful for the service, and they're grateful to have a chance to talk to somebody about the traumas they've lived through."**



## YORK REGION'S FIRST CHILD & YOUTH ADVOCACY CENTRE

### Taking a Big Step Forward for Child & Youth Advocacy

Just over three years ago, we launched Project Hope, a plan to build York Region's first Child & Youth Advocacy Centre (CYAC)—a safe space for young people who have experienced physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect. Today, we're excited to share that we are on track to launch a pilot element of the program this fall.

Our goal for the CYAC is to provide a place where child protection, mental health services, and criminal justice are fully integrated under one roof, with multi-disciplinary teams to ensure processes do not cause further harm. Everyone will be dedicated to making sure the right resources are in place to help children, youth, and their families begin to heal from the trauma.

Working closely with project partners York Region Children's Aid Society, York Regional Police, Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child & Family Services, and Jewish Family and Child Service - York Region, we are committed to creating a space that feels safe and respects the diversity in our region.

**"Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child & Family Services is proud to help inform the design and creation of York Region's first Child & Youth Advocacy Centre,"** says Alexandra Crawford, Senior Services Manager - Central Region for the agency. **"It is imperative that we, as a sector, not only recognize the over-representation of Indigenous children and youth in our systems like child welfare, justice, and human trafficking, but that we come together to reduce the negative impacts these systems cause."**

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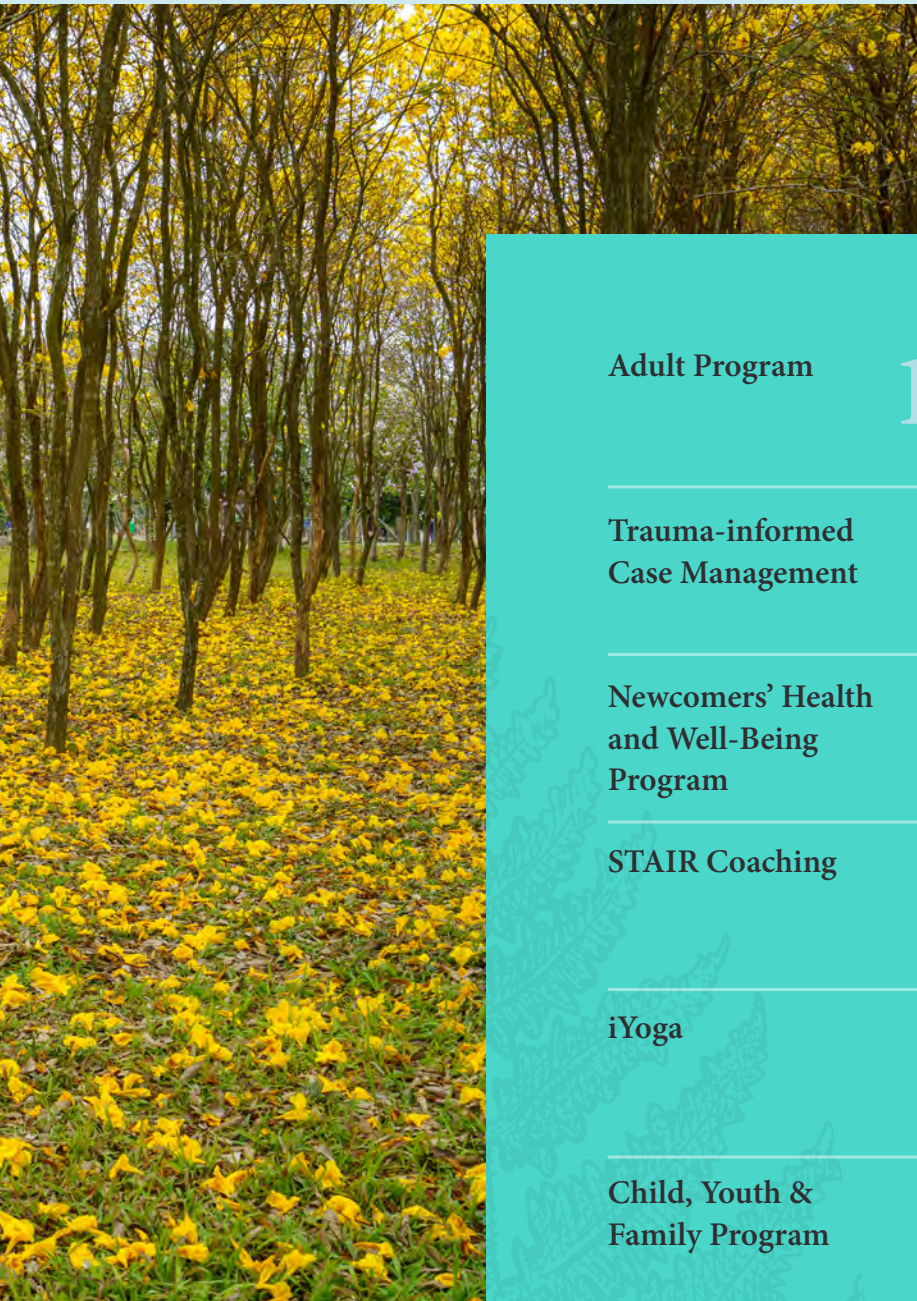
**"Indigenous voices must be present and heard, especially when it comes to how best to serve our children and youth. Chi-miigwetch to Cedar Centre for being a great partner!"**

Our pilot has been designed to improve coordination between core service providers so that children, youth and their families have a better overall experience

as they navigate these difficult, sensitive situations. Throughout 2023, we'll be collecting data and assessing the outcomes of the pilot to inform adjustments as we continue to move toward opening the CYAC in 2025.

## 2021/2022 Program Stats

At Cedar Centre, we provide a unique and holistic approach to therapy, education, and advocacy for those who have experienced trauma. Despite this global pandemic, the need for our therapy services has not slowed; 2021/2022 was a busy year and the majority of our work with participants was conducted virtually.



### Adult Program

134

participants worked one-on-one with a Cedar Centre therapist

### Trauma-informed Case Management

30

participants worked with a specialized Trauma-informed Case Manager to build resiliency

### Newcomers' Health and Well-Being Program

38

participants received therapy and support through this new program

### STAIR Coaching

80

participants joined our Skills Training in Affect and Interpersonal Regulation (STAIR) 10-week program

### iYoga

42

waiting list participants benefited from our effective and innovative iYoga groups

### Child, Youth & Family Program

73

participants (40 children and youth, and 33 supportive caregivers) benefited from our family-centred, strength-based service

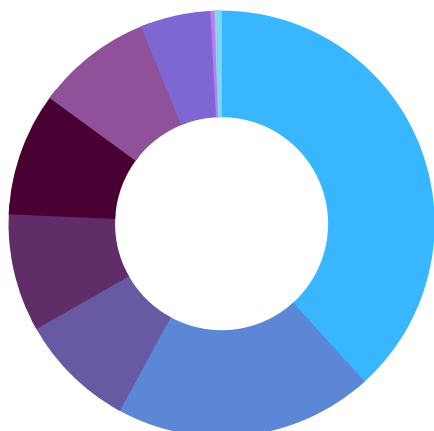
### Anti-Human Trafficking Program

17

participants received individual and specialized therapy to address themes related to sexual exploitation

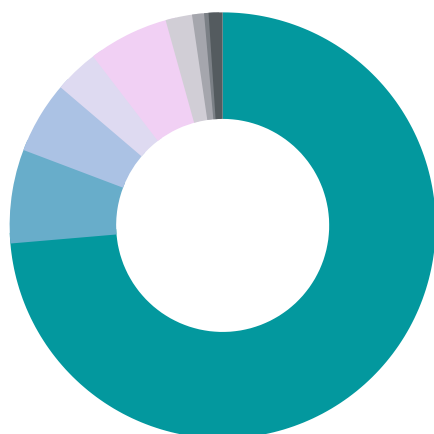


# Financial Summary Year End March 31, 2022



## Revenue

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care	\$ 679,738
Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services	348,616
United Way Grant	157,100
Department of Justice	158,590
Donations and other sources	165,863
Government assistance	155,829
IRCC program revenue	94,864
Net fundraising	5,299
Fees for services	7,555
Less: Unspent AHTCS funds	(84,635)
	<b>1,688,819</b>



## Revenue Allocation

Salaries and benefits	1,044,307
Fees for services	100,870
Occupancy costs	77,616
Education, courses and seminars	47,574
Office and general	86,432
Professional fees	28,566
Insurance	12,869
Transportation	1,582
Therapy dog	4,808
Amortization	13,392
	<b>1,418,016</b>

For complete audited financial statements, please visit [cedarcentre.ca](http://cedarcentre.ca)

## Letter from the Treasurer

Cedar Centre had a busy year operating under various pandemic restrictions for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022. The Centre had revenues of \$1,688,819 (compared to \$1,484,631 for 2021) and expenses represented 84% of revenues or \$1,418,016 for the year (in 2021 expenses accounted for 81.4% of revenues or \$1,208,227). The organization had a surplus of \$270,803 (in 2021, the organization had a surplus of \$276,404).

While operating under COVID-19 restrictions, Cedar Centre qualified for a number of COVID-19 government subsidies and programs to assist it in meeting its financial obligations and continue to deliver its programs. The organization's majority of funding for delivery of programs is obtained from government sources; however, donations and a variety of fundraising initiatives undertaken by the organization form an integral component of the overall funding activities. The organization greatly appreciates the multiple groups of volunteers who devote their time and effort to the raising of these funds.

*Abby Kassar*

**Abby Kassar**  
Treasurer, Board of Directors

We are forever grateful for the generosity of all of our donors and funders. It is because of you that we are able to improve the lives of those who need us the most.



**United Way**  
Greater Toronto



Department of Justice  
Canada

Ministère de la Justice  
Canada



## Vision for Tomorrow

It is because of generous funders and donors like you that Cedar Centre has been so resilient in the face of this global pandemic, operating with confidence as demand for our trauma-specific therapy never slowed. We take our leadership role in the field of trauma treatment and recovery seriously, and have never wavered from our commitment to improving the lives of our participants.

Last year, we introduced two new support programs and we have no intention of stopping there. As community needs change, and new ones emerge, we will continue to develop the highly-specialized, innovative solutions and programs that provide the best possible support to children, youth and adults who have experienced childhood abuse-related trauma. And, we will do so while continuing to grow capacity within our legacy programs, working diligently to shrink our wait list.

Our plan for York Region's first Child & Youth Advocacy Centre is a first step toward tomorrow's vision. In collaboration with community partners, this comprehensive, integrated, and co-located response to children and youth in our region who have experienced childhood interpersonal violence will be a place where everyone is dedicated to ensuring the right resources are in place as they begin to heal from trauma.

This is just the beginning. Resilience is the process and outcome of successfully adapting to difficult or challenging life experiences, and at Cedar Centre our strength lies in building resiliency, together.

## Join us!



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