



Annual Report

March 2023–
April 2024



Prepared By
Brandy Pilon

Table Of

Content

3 Vision & Mission

4 Our Board

5 Presidents report

6 Executive Report

7 Highlights

9 FamilyResource Network

11 Healthy Families

14 Child and Youth

16 Resiliency Team

20 Literacy

22 Grande Sunset Theater

23 Funders/Donors

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Vision & Mission



Vision

Collaborating to strengthen family and communities.

Mission

All families thrive:
Supported- Connected- Resilient

Values and Principles

We believe in families by:

- Delivering services in a culturally appropriate manner
- Supporting families and their diverse family structures
- Promoting and encouraging a healthy home environment to give children a strong foundation
- Building on parents'/caregivers' strengths and skills
- Fostering family connections

We practice the following core organizational values:

- Respect and integrity
- Accountability and ethics
- Collaboration and inclusivity
- Performance growth and excellence
- Workplace wellness



We are committed to strengthening families and community through:

- Advocacy
- Education and Training
- Home Visitation
- Programs

Our Board members



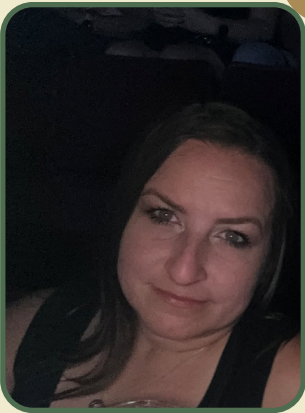
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01. Jolene Nellis

02. Margot Lambert

03. Mira Bolger

04. Andrea Lancaster

05. Denise Nowick

06. Veronica Donald

07. Bradi Baker-Bowen

President Report



This past year has been another remarkable chapter for the Family Education Society, marked by the launch of new and innovative initiatives and programs. We have continued our strong collaborations with community partners, ensuring that families in our area receive exceptional support and services.

We also welcomed new board members and extended our heartfelt gratitude to those who have completed their terms. Your dedication has been invaluable in advancing the mission of the Family Education Society. As we look ahead, we are excited about the opportunities for continued learning and growth, both as a board and as an organization.

A special thank you goes to Brandy, her leadership team, and the entire staff for their unwavering commitment to empowering families in our community. Your hard work and passion drive the success of the Society. We look forward to another impactful year!

Jolene Nellis



Executive Report



What a year! It has been a busy and exciting year at GPFES. We have increased the number of programs and sessions provided to families, have welcomed new team members and had to say goodbye to others and we even began a new fundraising initiative! I am proud of the work our team has been able to accomplish in a year.

GPFES has focused on remaining collaborative with our multiple partners in and around our community. Staying involved and actively participating in new initiatives and opportunities has kept us all busy this year. The amazing work being done in our community and within our organization is remarkable and I am certainly proud to be a part of it.



I am sincerely grateful to be part of such an awesome team. I would like to thank all of our staff and our amazing Board of Directors. I would also like to acknowledge all of our wonderful community partners who also work to support the well-being of families.



Brandy Pilon

Highlights

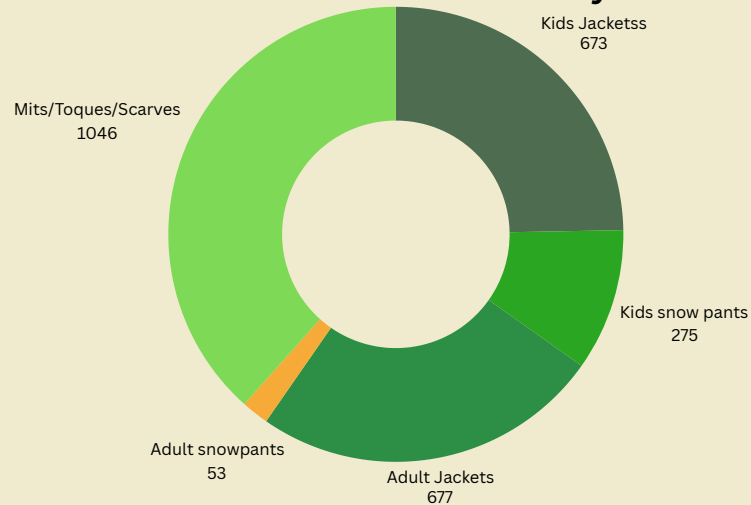
2023/24

1 Coats for Kids

In October of 2020, Grande Prairie Family Education Society became the distribution center for Crouse's Cleaners Merv's Coats for Kids program, and the 2023 year was the most successful we've had.

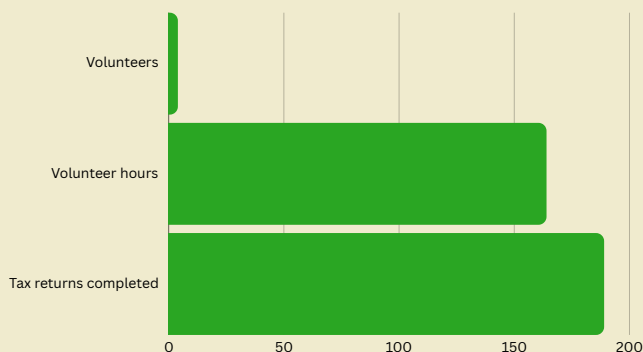
We had 524 families, which is a 50% increase from last year, come through our doors and leave with winter items!

Here's a breakdown of the warmth we've spread from all the generous donations from our community:



2 Volunteer Tax Program

We offer our volunteer tax program for low-income participants. We provide this service year-round to ensure families and individuals are able to receive their full benefits. As a Prevention and Early Intervention initiative we know that ensuring families have access to their full range of benefits can proactively decrease the financial burden and crisis that arises when individuals are not receiving their benefits.



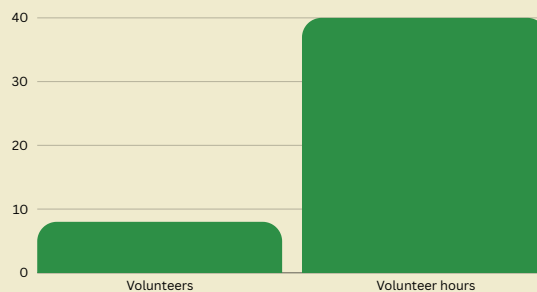
Highlights 2023/24



3 Holiday Event

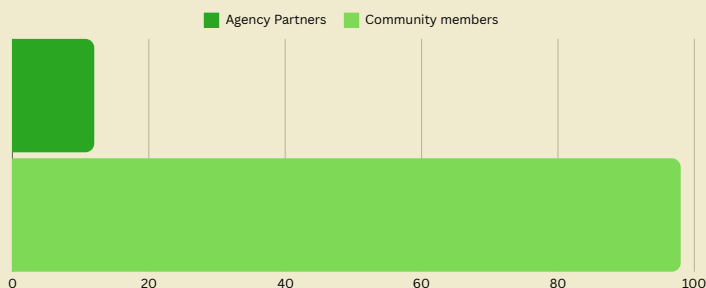
This year we decided to expand our Family Holiday event to include a special Santa's Gift Shop with the help of elves for the kids to shop. This provided children the opportunity to pick out and wrap a gift to take home for their caregivers. We wanted children to have the opportunity to feel the joy that comes from giving, not just receiving.

We could not have offered this event without the generous donations we received from the community and all the volunteers!



4 Agency and Family Fun Day

The Hub and Spokes hosted it's 4th Agency and Family Fun Day to promote FRN services and raise awareness of available services and supports in the community. This is an opportunity for local nonprofits to share information on their services and programs. There are interactive games and a free hotdog BBQ. This year, all supplies were donated by **New Horizon Co-op!** When caregivers are able to identify and access resources in the community during times of need, it helps to prevent the stress that sometimes precipitates child maltreatment.

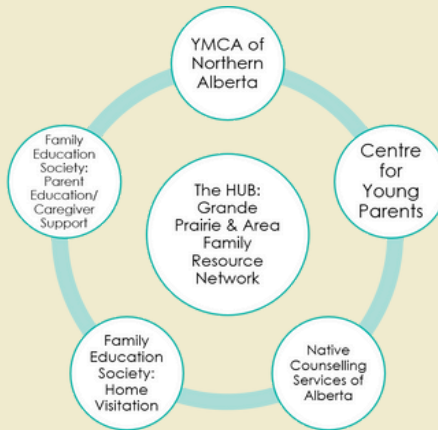




Family Resource Network

Provincial Family Resource Networks (FRNs) deliver high quality prevention and early intervention services and supports for children aged 0 to 18. Networks provide a range of services and supports that focus on strengthening parenting and caregiving knowledge, social support, coping and problem-solving skills, access to community supports and resources, improving child and youth development, building resiliency and fostering well-being. Through a 'hub and spoke' model of service delivery, Networks (hubs) will coordinate the prevention and early intervention services in all geographic areas and in various cultural communities across the province - either directly or through collaborative partnerships with qualified service agencies or providers (spokes).

Hub provided
307 Information Referrals
269 Supported Referrals



LOCAL COMMUNITIES SUPPORTED:

- Beaverlodge
- Grande Prairie
- Grande Prairie, County No. 1
- Hythe
- Rycroft
- Saddle Hills County
- Sexsmith
- Spirit River
- Spirit River No. 133
- Birch Hills County
- Wembley

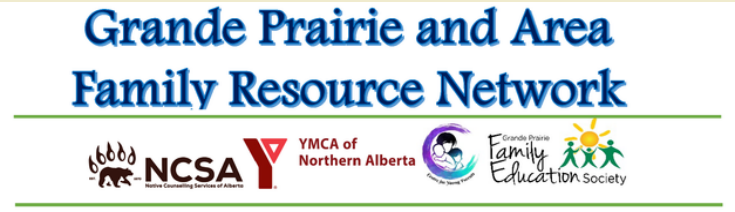
The Family Navigator supported referral included helping with forms, assistance with the food bank or other food insecurity programs, and multiple community organizations.

The Family Navigator supported **34** families

610 Referrals received into the HUB

Comment from participant

"I can't tell you how appreciative I am to have a place I could walk into with zero judgement and be welcomed with open arms. In a time where we had lost everything the staff stepped up and jumped into action to help us source whatever was available to help meet our current needs. All with a smile and hugs to go around. Coffee and snacks for the kids. The whole experience has been tough but thanks to this place and its staff I can breathe again"



Thank you to our partner's! It takes a COMMUNITY!

Healthy Families



Home Visitation is voluntary and FREE and supports families with children pre-birth through 6 years of age in a variety of ways that meets families where they are at in their parenting journey, thereby helping children develop to their full potential. Our Healthy Families Program strives to increase caregiver capacity to build skills including positive parenting, strengthening attachment and positive parent child interactions, child development and healthy brain development, connection to community and natural supports as well as healthy family functioning. Research regarding brain science and the use of the resiliency scale is embedded into our practice and we are proud to say that all staff have completed Brain Story certification.

Direct
Client Hours
1240.25

What Families Say

Total Visits
843

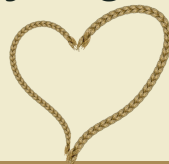
“It has made a huge difference having someone check in and talk with me weekly. I love getting new strategies and ideas to try. I feel supported and validated”

“It has transformed my relationship with my son. Our relationship improving has also had a positive impact on how he is doing at school”

“I was scared at first but because of this program I feel more confident as a parent”

“It makes me aware of things I do well and things I can work on. It helps be accountable and I know I can help others be accountable for thoughts and feelings”

“It’s helpful to have someone come along side you and help support and remind you of your goals”



Highlights From Home Visitation



Total families served 73
(including 127 children 0-12)

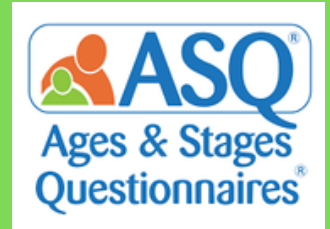
- Grande Prairie: 55
- County of GP: 12
- G5 Area: 3
- Sexsmith: 2
- Wembley: 0
- Beaverlodge: 1



Information referrals
369
Supported referrals
47

ASQ-3

**44 children received
76 screens**



ASQ-SE 2
**25 children received
28 screens**



**Time spent traveling for
visits 495 hrs**



39

**Family Violence Screens
complete**

Parent Education & Caregiver Supports

Programs offer support to families to build parenting capacity through hands-on experiences, whether through parent/child play programs like “Baby and Me”, “Power of Play”, etc. or via parent education programs such as “Circle of Security” and “Love and Logic”. Programs, workshops, support groups and parent play groups provide positive parenting techniques and inform parents/caregivers about development, appropriate expectations and strengthens relationships between infants, children, youth and parents.

What Families Say

“I am a more present parent and focus on the needs of my son beyond the behaviours. I feel more confident in my parenting and am excited to continue putting these skills into practice”

“This program has proven weekly that it is so needed in our small community and more often. The skills and knowledge obtained have been put into place at home often which have helped me with my child’s development and to better understand who to do in certain situations. This program is beyond valuable. The ASQ has been eye opening on areas we need to focus on and I wish I knew this earlier to put them into practice.” (Same parent continued...

” Funding for an organization such as this should not even be able to be decreased or eliminated. Our children are the future and with the craziness in the world we need all the support we can get”

“I have more understanding and patience with my children when meeting their needs which has resulted in better connection with my kids. Less tantrums. Less battles”.

“Our relationship has begun to repair from previous parenting habits. We are closer and my son is more comfortable confiding his feelings”

“I have changed the way I respond to my daughter acting out or just not doing what I want. I focus on my emotion and keeping myself calm and in return, my daughter copies me and is calm herself”.



Highlights From Parent Education & Caregiver Supports

Programs for Kids:

Empathy Project in schools:

Spirit River 16

St. Gerards 39

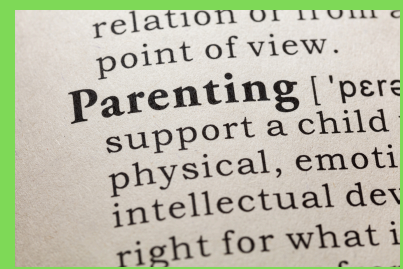
Empathy Project during Parenting Young

Youth: 19



Kimochis: Wembley Daycare 12

Wee Care Daycare 17



Total Parenting Programs in G.P. :

10

Attendance **107 adults 38 children**

Total Parent/Child Programs G.P.

7

Attendance **53 adults 82 children**

Developmental Kits Provided

26



13 Home Visitation,
8 Parent Education,
5 PCAP

Rural

Programming

Total Parenting Programs
rural 1

Attendance 8 adults 4 children

Total Parent/child Programs Rural 14

Attendance 77 adults 136 children

Hours of training

for all staff

337 hours



Child and Youth Programming



- **Roots of Empathy-** We are proud to have been in 6 classrooms this year. We are currently growing the program for the future, reaching out to deliver more content and be in more classrooms

- **Empathy Project- Community based-** 4 variations of the empathy project were used this past year, meeting the needs of kids aged 5 - 17 years old and above, as well as running the program alongside a parenting program so caregiver and child are learning together.
- **Empathy Project- School Based-** We take school staff requests and go into the classrooms to facilitate the Empathy Project. We facilitated groups of 50-60 children at a time to ensure we are able to extend our reach as this is a popular request.



- **Rainbows- Grief and Loss Groups-** (Sunbeams, Rainbows, Spectrum, Prism, and Kaleidoscope) ages 3-99+. As we hold space for the entire family to gather, our community supports, converses, laughs, cry's and starts to heal at a table with a small group of peers.

- **Girls Matter-** meeting the needs of our 8-13 yr old pre-teen girls where they are today. Topics of learning are social media, friendships, and puberty. They complete the program feeling comfortable and proud to be, their true selves.
- **Boys Matter Too-** giving space and content that allows 8-13-year-old boys to communicate and support each other through their transition to the teen years while discovering what it is to actually "Be a man."
- **Caregiver and Sibling Support Group-** A safe and welcoming place for any caregiver and their youth who have a sibling with exceptionalities that may include a mental health diagnosis and/or any developmental challenges. – sessions run on the second Tuesday of every month. Registration is required to ensure we have enough program materials and food. This is a partnership program with the Resource Center for Suicide Prevention.

Child & Youth Program numbers- Total

Numbers of participants- 552

Number of volunteers- 22

Number of volunteer hours- 360

Child and Youth program Feedback



Rainbows

“Amazing program! Helped me and my child learn & understand and deal with grief and loss”

Girls Matter

-“She has become more confident in herself and always talks about things she learnt from Girls matter”- caregiver- post questionnaire.

-“I have learnt there are a lot of things that are worth discussing with my daughter, no matter how small it is, that it is important to try to answer them”. - caregiver- post questionnaire.



Empathy Project

“I loved the Empathy project, all the videos, art, and fidgets, playdoh. Please come back”- post questionnaire- student

Roots of Empathy

+ + - “As a two-time Roots mom, it is incredibly comforting to have my baby in such a warm, encouraging and mutually beneficial environment. The education we receive about our child’s development is certainly important, but the feeling of support and acceptance is critical for parents when postpartum can be such a difficult and confusing experience. I looked forward to seeing our classroom friends every month and I could not wait to share Matilda’s accomplishments with them - their excitement for her touched me in a way that only a mom can understand. The room full of people genuinely happy to see her, the inside jokes we shared, their observation of her nuances - these are things I will carry in my mommy heart forever. We are so grateful”.



Family Resiliency



The Family Resiliency team was created as a merging of the FASD team, the Literacy team and the newly formed RFJS Initiative. These teams are solely focused on creating resilience for individuals and families through building skills, connecting to necessary community supports and navigating the challenges of life. In addition to building skills and increasing abilities, resiliency is built through reducing toxic stress and increasing supportive people, places and experiences in our lives. The Family Resiliency team has placed a strong emphasis on the benefit of “group work”, including grief and loss groups, literacy and life skill groups, addiction recovery groups, social and emotional skill building groups and groups designed for fun and play. This parallel learning environment is ideal for people who have learning challenges, life experiences where they feel that they “don’t fit” in other group settings, and traumatic situations that have caused them to need extra supports to learn and grow.

- **FASD Youth and Adult Life Skills Group - Bi-weekly on Wednesdays since September 2023**
- **FASD Youth Group in Collaboration with PARDS: Aug. 8-11, 2023 Horse Camp**
- **Women’s Recovery Group: October 11th 2023 – March 27th 2024**
- **Kid’s Club (Women’s Recovery Group Childminding) October 11, 2023 - March 27, 2024**
- **FASD Youth Group: Tuesdays – 3:30 pm- 5:00 pm**
- **Caregiver-Child: Home Alone Safety Course**

Resiliency referrals :

Numbers of support community referrals
371

Number of information referrals
363

Collaborations with
other
organizations/agencies:
251

Total number of GROUP participants:
69 unique participants

Home Alone Safety Courses – 2 courses –
18 participants

FASD Youth Group total participants
33 Youth

Volunteers:
Recovery Group/Kids Club – 31.
Home Alone Course: 1

*In total, the Resiliency Team staff spent
914 hours in group preparation and
facilitation*



FASD Programming

The FASD Programming at GPFES is designed to support individuals and families who are impacted by, diagnosed or suspected to have Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), and to support women who are living a lifestyle that could result in a pregnancy in which the unborn child is exposed to alcohol and/or substances in utero, resulting in an FASD for that child. All the programs are tailored to meet the needs of the people in the program – there is no “one size fits all” within our programming!

In the last year, we have offered services to:

129 individuals and families through our Navigation program

13 women through the PCAP program

26 families through the Family and Caregiver Support program

38 individuals through the Youth and Adult program

... that is 205 unique individuals and families!



Northwest Peace FASD

FASD Navigation is like an “active waiting room” for the referrals to the other FASD Programs. The FASD Navigator will provide contact on a quarterly basis to all of the referrals as a “check-in” while they are waiting for programming. If a need is identified, the Navigator will provide support, ensuring that the need is met according to program standards and to the best of the ability of the Navigator. Many processes are started in navigation and carried on in programming as referrals move to their respective programs. The navigation program has proven to be a critical service for individuals and families who are struggling.



FASD Programming

FASD Family and Caregiver Supports is a program designed to offer intensive support to families who are caring for children with suspected and/or diagnosed FASD. We usually offer support for families with children up to 13 years of age, but the trend appears to be that more intensive family support is required as the children are moving through adolescence. Therefore, our strategies to support families have followed the need and our supports are being felt at the High-Risk Youth Table, in school meetings, with Children's Services and at the Sunrise Youth Shelter. The bulk of the individualized support within this program is offered through family scheduling and structure, social emotional learning opportunities and through FASD education and advocacy.

The **Parent-Child Assistance Program (PCAP)** is an evidence-based program designed to support women who are at-risk of becoming pregnant and having a child who has been exposed to alcohol and other substances while in utero. This is a 3-year, voluntary program offering women the opportunity to build life skills, access support for appointments, engage in education opportunities around health, addictions, personal growth and safety, healthy relationships and natural support building as well as birth control options and support.

**3 babies born in PCAP –
2 babies were born free from exposure to alcohol or substances in utero**

FASD Youth and Adult Program is a skill building program for individuals who have been diagnosed or are suspected of having FASD. Because of the temporary nature of the supports offered through this program, we offer opportunities for building skills and abilities, creating good life habits, securing safe living situations and accessing community resources for ongoing supports. Due to the number of individuals waiting to receive program supports, our focus is working on presenting needs, building skills and security and moving individuals through programs in a timely manner, with the understanding that individuals can attend the groups offered through the program and can always be referred back to the FASD Navigator for supports as needed. When there is space and when they need another round of more intensive support, they can come back into the program.

Comments from participants

PCAP

I learned "how to ask for and accept help when I need it. How to truly trust - my worker held my faith and instilled confidence and trust in me every step of the way." My mentor offered "true, genuine kindness and consistency supporting me. She never let me fall; her advocacy and pure authentic heart full of support never wavered." "I cannot speak highly enough of my worker and Family Education Society. Anyone blessed enough to access these programs will thrive with this team!" "I learned about FASD, how to set healthier boundaries, and how to say no." "I have learned that I am capable of being the good mom I always wanted to be. I have learned how strong and resilient I am." My worker helped by "supporting me, encouraging me, helping me make well informed decisions/choices; challenging me and my self-development in a positive way."

Womens Recovery Group

"I am proud of all the hard work I've done. I'm growing each day." "I realized how much I needed to work on myself and my trauma because of how much it affects my life." "This group was great. I grew mentally and I developed stronger bonds with the workers and with peers...I grew closer to my son because we had something to look forward to together (each week)" "My experience was great - they helped me have better control over my life. (Before being in group) I felt my temper would take control over my mood. I would make my kids cry and they wouldn't want to be around me".

Home Alone course

"Really interesting and fun to do!"
"Very helpful to do with my mom!"
"I learned a lot!"
"I am definitely ready!"

FASD Family Support

"I have learned to be more regulated and non-reactive to his escalations and that I need to adjust to his brain function."
"I am stronger now than I was before - having patience goes a long way. Their needs change as they grow."
"I understand my child better - I have better ways to handle his outbursts and that I can talk calmer to my child."

FASD Youth and Adult

This program has "helped me focus and given me hope for my future."
"I understand my FASD better"



Life Skills and Learning Support

In April of 2023, the Literacy Program became the “Life Skills and Learning Support Program” and merged with the Family Resiliency Team. This shift occurred due to the growing number of learners who identified that their basic needs for support and advocacy were a barrier to their learning. The joining of these programs created a free flow of information and referrals to resources, enhancing the experiences of the learners within the programs. Collaboration between the Life Skills and Learning Support Mentor and the FASD programs increased dramatically as they offered programs, groups and learning opportunities together. The emphasis on meeting basic needs and creating more opportunities for connection enhanced the learning of each learner who engaged in programming!!!



Collaborations included: Odyssey House, Blue Heron Support Services, Healthy Families-Home Visitation, PCAP, FASD Youth and Adult Program, United for Literacy, Pregnancy Care Centre, Sunrise House Youth Shelter, Senior’s Outreach, Centre for Young Parents, Centre for Newcomers, Centre for Lifelong Learning, Mountain Plains and South Peace Region Community.

These created better learning and connection outcomes for many learners!!

Group Learning became a highlight this year!

Buzz on Budgeting group (registered -13 learners)

LAPS (registered – 6 learners),

Reading with our Children (registered -5 learners),

FASD Adult Skills and Support (drop in)

Parent-Child Home Alone Safely course (registered -18 learners)

The parallel learning environment is a great way to build natural supports and enhance the learning experience for all learners.



Reforming the Family Justice System

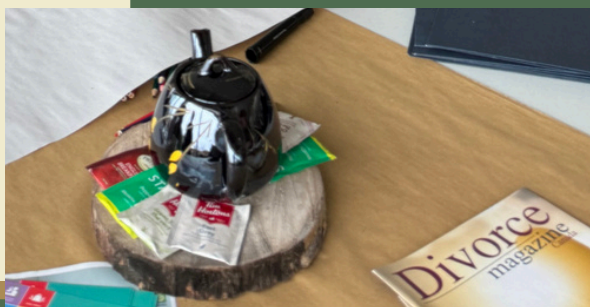


The RFJS has taken on a life of it's own in the past year! We are in the second year of a four-year funding grant from the City of Grande Prairie FCSS and the first of a two-year funding grant from the County of Grande Prairie FCSS. We have also just received a one-year grant from the Alberta Community Justice Fund through the Government of Alberta. All these funds are largely designated to support community capacity building within the city and county of Grande Prairie, as the King's Bench Court Pilot gets ready to launch in the fall of 2024.



Symposium

In February 2023, the RFJS hosted the first RFJS Symposium: a collection of conversations over two days of meeting, learning, networking, and honouring the good work that is already being done to advance the collective mandate to reduce the ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) for children and families as they move through restructuring their family situations. Collaborations with the Alberta Family Wellness Initiative/Palix Foundation, 100 Families/Hope Hub (Arkansas), the City and County of Grande Prairie, The High Conflict Institute (New Ways for Families), Odyssey House and Alberta Restorative Justice Association (ARJA) all contributed to the huge success of the symposium. Hosted by King's Bench Court Justice Rod Jerke and Diana Lowe, KC, around the power of sharing your story (as outlined in Harold Johnson's book "The Power of Story"), the symposium told a story of different outcomes for families – stories of change that leads to thriving families and healthy communities. The powerful challenge that came from this gathering is to "get ready!!" – change is coming and the community needs to be ready to receive the families who need support through the changes of life.



It's ALL about the Children!





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GPFES had an opportunity this year and we jumped on it! We had been hoping for a fundraising initiative that would help to bring in extra revenue while at the same time be something that would align with our value of "Connection". Then we were able to purchase the Grande Sunset Theater. We are ecstatic to be able to provide a fun, family friendly activity that creates core memories; all while earning donations to help support families in the community.



Thank you to our private bookings

*International Paper
Canadian Natural Resources CNRL*



Grand Total Revenue:
\$11,280



A BIG Thank You to
Bexson Transport for their
donation of a popcorn machine

THANK YOU!



Funding Provided By



With can not do what we do without the Support



Thank you to
Dirty Few Country
Steel Vixens
Dag's Welding
Enercorp
Kinetic Energies
Co-Op Horizon
Country Pump Out



THANK YOU!!!!