

IT'S ABOUT ABILITY

2020/2021 ANNUAL REPORT



OUR WORK



MISSION

Children's Rehabilitation Foundation raises funds to improve the lives of children who access services through the Rehabilitation Centre for Children and SSCY Centre.



VISION

For all children to have the support required to realize their abilities.



FOCUS

We are dedicated to helping children and youth with disabilities live as independently as possible.

Through the generous support of our community members we are able to re-invest funds into the Rehabilitation Centre for Children and provide life-changing programs, services and equipment for children and youth with disabilities.

FROM OUR CHAIR



In the past year, I have come to the conclusion anything is subject to change and change is as inevitable as time itself. Over the past 12 months far too many of the certainties in our lives have been tested, bent, or shattered.

Forget the COVID curve, it has been the learning curve that was and continues for some to be the toughest part of the last year. Who among us would have thought the simple task of buying groceries, getting a haircut, playing or watching our favorite sport, or just taking a walk in the park would be restricted and involve a risk assessment before walking out our front door? Such is the world that existed this past year. Such is the world

we continue to live in yet collectively we have learned to pivot in nearly every aspect of life.

Along with the rest of the world, the Board of Directors of the Children's Rehabilitation Foundation has also had to adapt to the concept of pivoting. In fact, it has been over a year since our last in-person meeting. The oversight of the foundation has taken place through the virtual world. We have rallied together to get the important work done because change forced our hand and we adapted to the change. Strangely, change has also brought us closer together. We have all inadvertently revealed in our Zoom backgrounds the books we read, the places we vacation, the names of our wandering restless pets, and our inability to control technology as much as we thought we could. Together we are closer and together we have adapted to the new reality because we had no choice. Our mission was and continues to be that important.

Change not only requires adaptation but also requires tough decisions. Unfortunately, change and the resulting

adaptations are not always universally pleasant. Change forces a review of the status quo and this can inherently upset the proverbial apple carts of those involved. Although difficult, the Board of Directors had to ensure the Children's Rehabilitation Foundation would not only be able to maintain its support of children in need during this past year but also for the years to come. Every aspect of our operation had to be examined. The executive team and dedicated staff of the foundation worked diligently and made many personal sacrifices to ensure as many children as possible would continue to be supported. More importantly were the adaptations made by you—event partners, corporate sponsors and private donors. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of the efforts made by you during these difficult times. Your continued support had direct life-changing impacts on many lives.

Perhaps the biggest change the foundation has tackled during the last year was the announcement of the resignation of our long-time Executive Director, Christine Schollenberg. Christine has been a part of the foundation's team for 20 years. The last ten of those years as our Executive Director. Christine guided the growth of the Foundation through her keen understanding of the needs of client families, her tremendous capacity for empathy, and her ability to motivate those around her. Although we were aware of Christine's desire to retire

well in advance, the inevitability of the change is just now being felt. Filling the shoes of someone who defines the caring and compassion of an organization will be tough. However, with Christine again guiding us in our search, we are confident we will find the right person to take the Children's Rehabilitation Foundation into the future.

As of the writing of this message we are continuing to negotiate through the challenges brought on by COVID-19. We have adapted to the concept of unexpected change being normal and we have been successful in flattening that learning curve. We are comfortable existing with the uncertainty of change and understand now more than before change brings opportunity. If managed properly opportunity can enhance the avenues by which you—supporters—can be connected to the many children with needs. At the end of the day that is the overall goal of the Children's Rehabilitation Foundation.

Thank you for your incredible generosity and compassion.

PETER GARAGAN
CHAIR, BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

When writing an annual report, where does one begin when you are retiring and have a multitude of things to share in your message. A few things come to mind. Sit back, grab a coffee or tea, because I have 20 years to share!

If you know me, I am always reading articles, books, blogs, columns to educate myself on fundraising. One statement I recently read resonated with me—what does accessibility mean? The author of the column stated “for people with disabilities, accessibility is a basic need and human right. It is such an integral part of the way that we live our lives. The meaning of accessibility can be quite personal, but generally, it's a concept of inclusion and a design principle that ensures people of all abilities are able to engage with and be involved in our world.” The light bulb went on and I realized we do this! We support our clients with equipment which assists them with inclusion and allows them to be a part of society. This is a very powerful statement that assists me in writing my last report.

How about we get the elephant out of the room. Wowza! This past year fundraising was challenging on all accords. This is where the fundraisers were separated from the fundraisers. We had to work smarter and change our way of thinking, re-invent, pivot, challenge ourselves and dig deep, and work long hours to figure it all out during zoom

call after zoom call. I do not think it was any different from any other business... or wait a moment, yes, it was, as we rely on the generosity of our great city and it was the fear of the unknown.

How did we stay afloat? By writing any and every grant known to man-kind, spent many long hours strategically re-inventing what we do, and to support all the events that have gone virtual. We accomplished many amazing goals: funding children's equipment, maintaining funded programs, and keeping the lights on as one would say. Through hard work, passion and dedication!

Many years ago, I shared at a donor recognition event I was destined to be a fundraiser, as I use to observe my Grandma bake for Sir Hugh John Macdonald fundraisers. My grandma was the President of the Catholic Woman's League (CWL). I would assist her in boxing up the baked goodies and yes, I did eat some along the way. Philanthropy, Fundraising was in my blood, I was setting my path for many years later.

I will illustrate my time at the Children's Rehabilitation Foundation in the best way I know how. I will paint a picture of some highlights of the past 20 years that are most memorable to me.

Bike presentations—over the course of my 20 years I have done thousands of bike presentations. From the first one to one of the last ones pre-pandemic, I still get very emotional when attending bike

presentations. My tears are of pure joy and the excitement of witnessing a child riding that bike for the first time. When you leave a bike presentation, you most certainly are leaving a smile on a child's face. One piece of equipment can mean a difference in a child's life.

Families and volunteers—friendships, valuable lessons learnt, the resilience of our clients, smiles, big hearts, challenges, grateful, advocates, the glue of our organization.

Rehabilitation Centre for Children staff—as a family centered facility with the importance of community they are skilled and dedicated, caring, brilliant minds, and committed, with incredible leadership, grateful, advocates, passionate and enthusiastic. Always precisely knowing and identifying the equipment needs of their clients.

Donors—as a fundraiser you began your career as an acquaintance with donors. Then you develop a friendship through their generosity, kind souls, big hearts, commitment, dedication, compassion, and inspiring ways of supporting the purchasing of equipment for our clients. You have paved your way as you are only as strong as your donors.

Mentors—executive directors are both the ambassador and the fundraiser and one cannot grow without the other. Throughout the years everyone and anyone I met and who shared sage advice with me, I was a sponge and took it all their words of encouragement, kindness, teaching to heart. It took me a while to understand; however, I know they always meant well.

Children's Rehabilitation Foundation dedicated staff—amazing and caring individuals with big hearts. Through laughter, many tears, gratitude, brilliant minds, bringing good ideas each week, we are able to learn from each another and make us better fundraisers and people.

Board of Directors—caring, commitment, resilient, big hearts, generous souls, great listeners, advice givers, knowledgeable, dedicated, philanthropists, amazing individuals I can call my friend.

My family—Twenty years of being 'voluntold' to assist, they stepped up in any way they were requested. From early mornings to late nights, security, cheerleaders, mascots, cooks, assembling crew, moving boxes, many rubber chicken dinners, always up for the challenge to assist in any way asked of each one of them.

I read an article recently (okay here I go again) that asked the question of when you leave a position that has been a big part of your life, have you left a 'legacy?' It made me ponder—did I do this during my years? Did I do what I set out to do when selected for this amazing opportunity 20 years ago? I do know one thing, the great Dr. Mayo Angelou once said "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

These are my words of gratitude for this opportunity for the past 20 years of the most rewarding and the most challenging career. It has been my honour to be a big part of The Children's Rehabilitation Foundation's growth and path. My heart is full for the opportunity that was bestowed on me.

CHRISTINE SCHOLLENBERG
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

YOUR GENEROSITY

COVID-19 has been one of the biggest challenges the Children's Rehabilitation Foundation has ever faced.

Despite the cancellation of many of our fundraising events, your unwavering dedication helped us raise **\$948,113** to support children living with disabilities.

Winnipeggers flocked to Tim Hortons to purchase their Smile Cookies. This year's campaign was our most successful yet, raising \$175,297.

The A Night of Miracles gala was canceled, but the need for equipment remained. Our volunteer organizing committee created the 'Halloween at Home' gift boxes, bringing in \$91,547 for children living with disabilities.

From one local company's virtual bike race, to the young brothers who shoveled sidewalks on their street, the creativity of our community to fundraise during a pandemic blew us away.



YOUR IMPACT

Your generosity allowed the foundation to allocate funds for:



Specialized Equipment
\$268,653

From custom-built bikes to communication iPads. Each piece of equipment gives freedom and opportunity.



Recreation Programs
\$172,444

Activities including summer camp and cooking clubs provide inclusive spaces to make meaningful connections.



Specialized Communication Resources for Children
\$32,021

Over 700 books in the Rehabilitation Centre for Children's Specialized Communication for Children Adapted Book Library are modified for children who use iPads to communicate.



Research
\$40,147

Research and evaluation at the Rehabilitation Centre for Children supports clinicians in providing the best possible care for children and families.



KYRIE'S STORY

Tammy Brinkman and her husband John were heading out the door for vacation when they got an unexpected phone call that changed their lives.

"We were minutes away from leaving to Disney World when we got the call that she was born ten weeks early," Tammy recalls about the day her daughter Kyrie was born. "We had to decide whether to go through with the adoption or not and we just decided 'let's jump in. Let's do this.'"

Kyrie was 18-months-old when she was diagnosed with spastic quadriplegia cerebral palsy. Despite her physical limitations, Kyrie is a busy and bright four-year-old.

"Kyrie is goofy and sassy. She's the type of kid where you tell them not do something, and they'll go ahead and do it," laughs Tammy.

With the help of specialized equipment funded

by donors, Kyrie can cruise down the block on her custom-built bike and go sledding with her brother, Everett, with the help of a portable support seat.



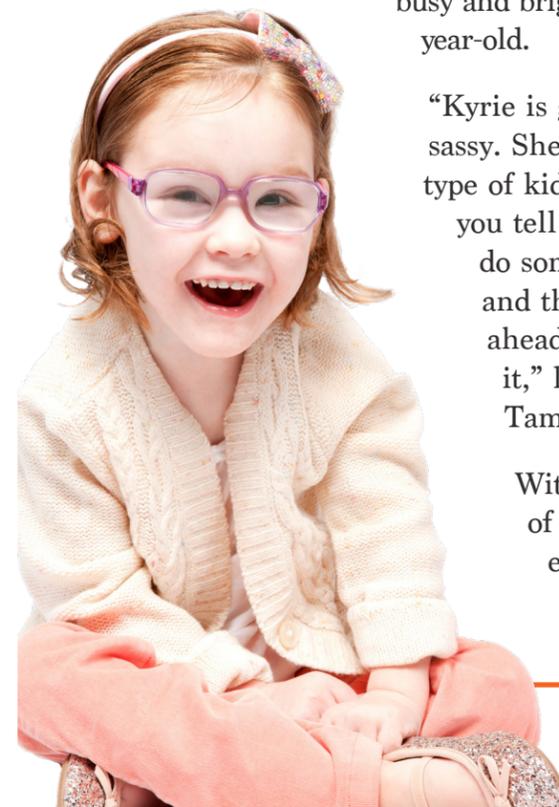
Kyrie's iPad is equipped with augmentative and alternative communication apps that build language and communication skills.

"When we put her in the sleigh you should see her smile. She'll shout 'GO!' and Everett will start running while pulling her behind him. To see them play together means everything."

Most recently she received a communication iPad. For the first time she is able to express feelings like "I love you" or "this snack is yummy!" She especially loves telling stories about her cat, Sabrina.

"Her iPad has helps us understand what she wants and needs," says Tammy. "She is able to show us what kind of meal she would like, what toys she wants to play with or where she would like to go."

As the Children's Rehabilitation Foundation's Ambassador, Kyrie and her family represented the thousands of children who receive life-changing equipment every year thanks to donors.



A PANDEMIC LIFELINE

Logging in to Saturday Night for Teens on his computer is a big change for Daniel. Normally he'd be walking into the SSCY Centre with 15 of his closest friends for the bustling, parent-free hangout. Yet Daniel is just as excited to chat with friends from his living room because these few hours provide a crucial break from the isolation of this past year.

"The [virtual] programs have been a lifeline for us because we're keeping him at home. It's the only time he can see friends," says Daniel's mom, Cathy.

COVID-19 has greatly disrupted the lives of children living with disabilities. Social isolation has been particularly hard on the children we support.

"Daniel has Down syndrome. We made the heartbreaking decision to take him out of school and he has not been back," explains Cathy. "It has been tough mentally on him, but if he didn't have this [program] it would be awful and I don't know where we would be at."

Since the early days of the pandemic, Rehabilitation Centre for Children LIFE Program coordinators have worked tirelessly to ensure Saturday Night for



Daniel at Rehabilitation Centre for Children LIFE Program's summer camp. It was the last in-person recreation program he attended before moving to virtual events in the fall. The online programs have been a lifeline ever since.

Teens and other recreation programs—from music classes to yoga sessions—are available to families virtually. Your support has helped make this possible.

"We've learned a lot in terms of how to provide quality programs to as many participants as possible while maximizing the interactive piece," explains Carol Kehler, a physiotherapist with the Rehabilitation Centre for Children.

LIFE Program's Spa Day, held annually at SSCY Centre, was revamped into a gift box and delivered to households. Fun in the Kitchen classes over Zoom embraced the chatter around cooking a meal, discussing everything from the shape of their cookies to inventive toppings and add-ins that

make their creations extra special. "We're sharing ideas and thoughts. It's more work to facilitate but it's all the same stuff we do in person," says Kehler. "Relationships are essential to everything we do. It would be hard to imagine delivering programs and not keep that a central component."

Nineteen-year-old Brett has attended LIFE Programs for close to a decade and that hasn't stopped during the pandemic. His mom Cheryl says the virtual programs have not only given him something to look forward to, they've also helped support his independence during an unpredictable time.

"A huge piece is the growth in him being a bit more mature and independent to do

these classes on his own. I used to have to be beside him, but he really has matured and he focuses on these calls. I think it's because it's all his. It has nothing to do with me," she says.

The LIFE Program is preparing for the return of in-person programming, welcoming campers back to Sun and Fun Day Camp under current public health orders. With the success of virtual programming, specifically the increased accessibility for families, it will continue and even grow.

"Our population, many of them struggle with meaningful relationships, so it's important we facilitate that," says Kehler. "Our hope is that they can navigate a world that is always changing and relationships contribute to that."



Brett (right) bakes biscuits at LIFE Program's Fun in the Kitchen class. He's been attending the program virtually this past year.

RESEARCH

Research, evaluation, and quality improvement at the Rehabilitation Centre for Children (RCC) and SSCY Network is conducted with an aim to continue learning about the issues that are important to children, youth, and families; improve the care and services families receive; and improve quality of life for children, youth, and families.

Led by Dr. Wittmeier (Director of Research) and Dr. Hammond (Research Associate and Evidence Informed Practice Coordinator), and together with the SSCY Research and Evaluation Committee, the Research Department supports these aims in a variety of ways, as outlined below. Both Research Department positions are held by physiotherapy clinician researchers (Dr. Wittmeier, Dr. Hammond), with funding for these positions generously provided by donations to the Children's Rehabilitation Foundation (CRF).

In addition to their roles in the Research Department, Dr. Wittmeier holds the Dr. John M Bowman Chair in Pediatrics and Child Health, is affiliated with the Children's Hospital Research Institute of Manitoba (CHRIM), Children's Hospital, and University of Manitoba. Dr. Hammond is affiliated with the Research Institute of Oncology and

Hematology (RIOH) at CancerCare, CHRIM, and the University of Manitoba. Both Dr. Wittmeier and Dr. Hammond are part of the ENRRICH (Excellence in Neurodevelopment and Rehabilitation Research In Child Health) Research Theme executive team (see ENRRICH Annual Report); a provincial research collaborative funded by CHRIM with in kind support from the CRF. These affiliations support collaboration, partnership, and community development to enable a coordinated approach to child development and rehabilitation.

The research department has had an exciting and busy year strengthening the research processes and improving research access strategies. We have revamped our research application and review documents, refined research recruitment strategies and data access processes at RCC/SSCY Centre, and developed safe data storage procedures in collaboration with the Privacy Officer and Information Technology Specialist. We are trialling the use of rapid review methodology to answer clinician-identified practice questions. This process engages clinicians in small, applied research reviews will inform best practice. Two reviews are underway. Our monthly seminar series, Breakfast at SSCY, has moved online, facilitating increased attendance (70-80+ attendees).

Attendance is also supported by a strengthened relationship with CHRIM to cross promote education opportunities. In turn, CHRIM Research Rounds are shared throughout RCC/SSCY. Recent Breakfast at SSCY presentations have included:

- Disrupting the Intergenerational Transmission of Mental Illness and Developmental Inequalities
- Is Research a Four-Letter Word? Advice for Rehabilitation Clinicians
- Evidence Based Optimal Support for Transgender Youth
- Life after Preterm Pre labour Rupture of Membranes at Previability
- Remembering Together: Supporting Personal Storytelling in Children with Autism
- Social Robots for Kids: Potential Applications and Opportunities
- Living Labs for Child Health: Bringing the lived Experience of Families into Research and Care

Some of the exciting new research projects happening at SSCY include:

- F Words Implementation project at SSCY Centre led by CanChild
- Videoconferencing study evaluating rehabilitation service delivery changes during the pandemic
- Recruitment support requests for the Hearts and Minds Lab to understand the needs of Parents and Caregivers and support family wellbeing
- Retrospective reviews related to CP, FASD, and Neonatal Follow-up Clinics

We are grateful for your continued support of the RCC/SSCY Research Department.

Elizabeth Hammond

BMR(PT), MSc (rehab), PhD

Research Associate,
Rehabilitation Centre for Children



THANK YOU

We are especially grateful for your support through these uncertain times. Your unwavering generosity continues to bring joy to the lives of children when they need it most.

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