

# 2023-24

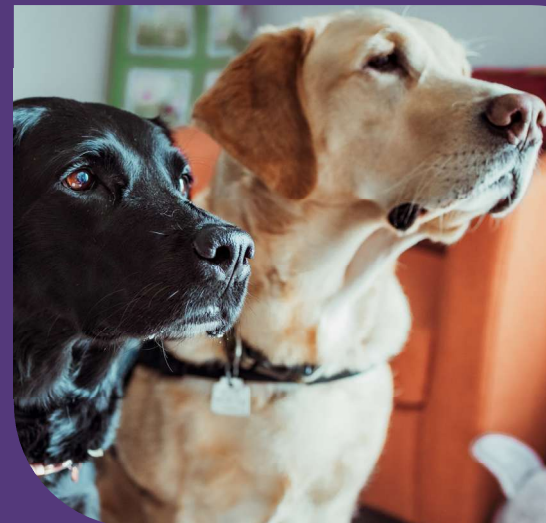
## Annual Report

Supporting Children,  
Youth, and Families through  
Trauma-Informed Care

Simcoe Muskoka



10TH ANNIVERSARY



# Vision

All children & youth feel safe, heard, and empowered in a community of hope.



# Mission

The **CYAC** provides a safe space and specialized care team for children, youth, and their families who have been impacted by abuse. This team is grounded in a trauma-informed approach, which works with investigative partners, and collaborative community supports, to advocate for and facilitate healing.



**Dawn MacDonald**  
Executive Director



**Val Gates**  
Board Chair

## Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we reflect on the past year, we are filled with gratitude and pride in the journey we have all undertaken together at the Child & Youth Advocacy Centre Simcoe Muskoka (CYACSM). Our mission to support and advocate for children and youth who have experienced abuse has never been more critical, and we are deeply moved by the progress we have made.

From our humble beginnings in a small office at Soldier's Memorial Hospital in 2014, we have grown into a beacon of hope and healing for countless families. Each step we take is driven by our unwavering commitment to providing a safe, nurturing environment where young survivors can begin their journey towards recovery. This year, we have had the privilege of serving over 350 individuals, guiding them through the complexities of the disclosure process with care and compassion.

One of our most significant achievements as an organization has been the ongoing expansion of our services to better meet the needs of our community. The establishment of our second physical center in Barrie in 2017 is a testament to our dedication to accessibility and support for all. These centers offer a sanctuary for children and their families, equipped with family-friendly spaces, interview rooms, and state-of-the-art medical facilities. Our collaboration with community partners ensures that our centers are hubs of comprehensive care, where families can receive the support they need under one roof.

Our work, however, extends beyond the walls of our centres. Recognizing the vast and diverse needs of the Simcoe Muskoka region, we have embraced a mobile approach to service delivery. By partnering with New Path

Youth and Family Services, we have been able to bring our trauma-informed support directly to the communities we serve. This initiative has significantly reduced barriers to access, ensuring that no child or family is left behind due to transportation or distance challenges.

A cornerstone of our approach is our Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT), which brings together experts from various fields to provide holistic support. This year, our MDT has continued to exemplify the power of collaboration, working tirelessly to minimize additional trauma for our young clients. Their dedication and expertise are the backbone of our success, enabling us to offer seamless, coordinated care that truly makes a difference.

Our Accredited Facility Canine Program remains one of our most cherished assets. Moose and Beacon, our incredible facility dogs, have provided immeasurable comfort and emotional support to children and families during some of their darkest moments. Their presence has been instrumental in creating a calming, supportive environment, and we are endlessly grateful for the unique healing they bring.

The heart of CYACSM is our Advocacy Support Program. Our dedicated Advocates offer consistent, personalized support to children and their non-offending family members, guiding them through every step of the healing journey. This year, we have also enhanced our Bridging Support to Wellness Program, ensuring immediate access to mental health and coping supports while families await long-term services. These programs have been crucial in reducing trauma and fostering resilience.

As we look to the future, our resolve remains strong. We are committed to expanding our reach, enhancing our services, and continuing to be a lifeline for children and families in need. Thank you for standing with us, for believing in our vision, and for helping us create a safer, more compassionate world for our children. Together, we have accomplished so much, and with your continued support, the future holds endless possibilities.

With heartfelt gratitude,

**Dawn MacDonald**  
Executive Director

**Val Gates**  
Board Chair

Child & Youth Advocacy Centre Simcoe Muskoka (CYACSM)

## The CYACSM Board

Valarie Gates

**Board Chair**

Christine Charman

**Treasurer**

Laura Rosati

**Director**

Jim Dykes

**Director**

Mandy Simcoe

**Director**

Korine Keyzer

**Director**

Jonathan Waugh

**Director**

## Welcomed new members in 2024

Kimberley Greenwood

**Vice Chair**

Marian Boer

**Interim Director**

Mohadeseh Bakhtiari

**Interim Director**

## Provincial Network

Child Advocacy Centres across Ontario are deeply committed to the CYAC model, which provides trauma-informed, child-centred services to young victims and witnesses of crime. Each Centre within our provincial network is dedicated to supporting children and youth as they navigate the complexities of the justice system, ensuring that their voices are heard, their rights are protected, and their needs are met in a safe and supportive environment.

This network fosters collaboration, sharing of best practices, and access to specialized knowledge and expertise across Ontario. The support offered strengthens their capacity to provide high-quality, comprehensive services to child victims and witnesses. As an active member of the Provincial Network, CYACSM has access to ongoing mentorship, resources, and expertise from other CYACs across Ontario.

By leveraging this provincial support, CYACs ensure that services are delivered with the highest standards of care and professionalism. Each Centre is deeply embedded in its community and works in partnership with law enforcement, social services, medical, and other key stakeholders to coordinate a seamless, multidisciplinary approach. These partnerships are critical in reducing the trauma experienced by child victims and witnesses.



# Statement of Operations and Changes in Net Assets

Year ended March 31, 2024

(In thousands of dollars)	2024	2023
	\$	\$
<b>Revenue</b>		
Annual Campaign	510	3,946
Community Groups	6,925	10,400
Foundations	48,065	152,750
Fundraising	-	57,622
Federal Government Funding	278,874	132,000
Individual Donations	3,694	6,991
Interest and Other Income	10,165	1,485
Municipal Government Funding	147,000	220,000
Provincial Government Funding	180,014	180,014
Service Agreements	20,000	20,000
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$695,247</b>	<b>\$836,344</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Administration	4,876	4,809
Advocate programs	32,186	48,947
Awareness and promotions	1,135	2,451
CEWs Repayment	111,284	-
Compensation	407,609	350,249
Fundraising	941	36,670
Occupancy costs	93,107	79,391
Office supplies and general	17,537	27,084
Planning	1,998	371
Professional development	22,151	4,189
Professional fees	32,531	7,409
Support, therapy and group programs	3,139	3,584
Technology and IT	20,313	29,756
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$748,807</b>	<b>\$594,910</b>
<b>Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses</b>	<b>(53,560)</b>	<b>241,434</b>
Surplus, beginning of year	497,157	255,723
<b>Surplus, end of year</b>	<b>443,597</b>	<b>497,157</b>

# Celebrating



**2007**

**the concept of developing a child and youth advocacy centre was initiated**



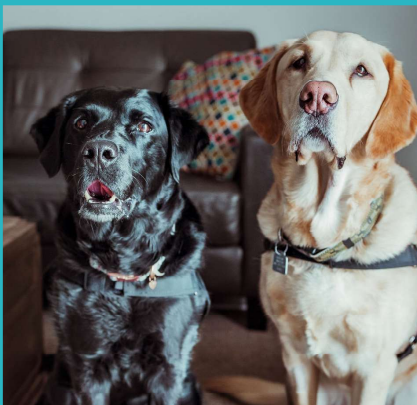
**2009**

**multi-disciplinary partners convened to explore the feasibility of opening an advocacy centre in Simcoe Muskoka**



**2011**

**the Child Advocacy Centre of Simcoe Muskoka officially incorporated and established a board of directors**



**2018**

**Beacon and Moose joined the team as accredited C.O.P.E. facility dogs**



**2020**

**the first Common Ground Youth Group 2021, first Mobile Investigation**



**2022**

**the first Indigenous Advocate was hired**

# 10 Years:



**2014**

**the Child & Youth  
Advocacy Centre  
officially opened for  
service**



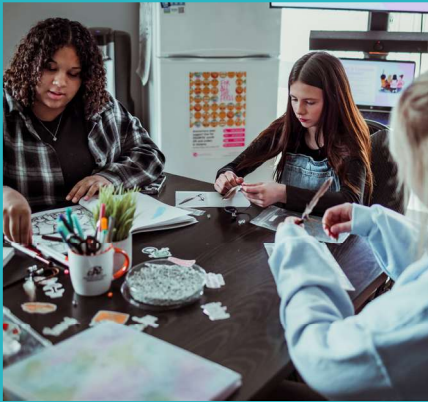
**2015**

**the first full-time Abuse  
Prevention Coordinator  
was hired**



**2017**

**the second centre in  
Barrie opened**



**2023**

**Common Ground  
evaluation/  
redesign**



**2024**

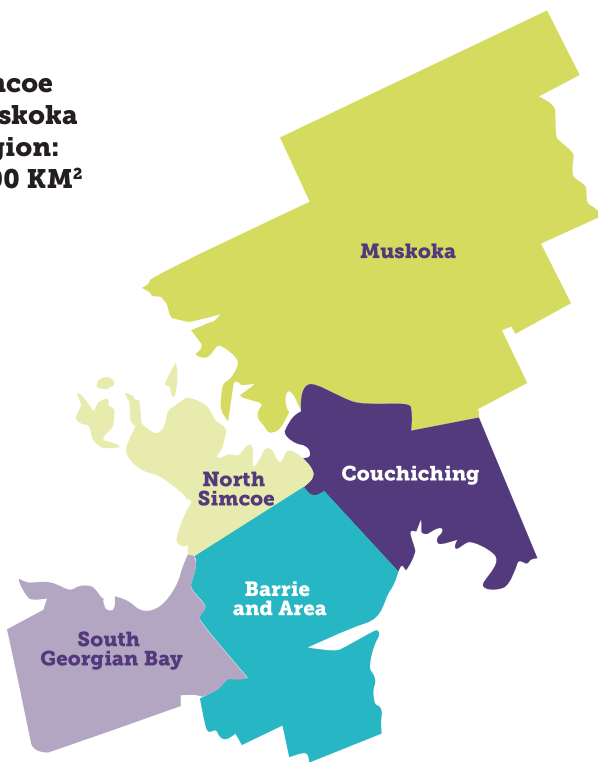
**the Bridging Support  
to Wellness pilot**



# CYAC Simcoe Muskoka

As an internationally recognized, best practice model to address child abuse, a CYAC brings multiple sectors, within a community (capacity), together using a trauma-informed, community assets lens. Trauma-informed, (ensuring minimal re-victimization through a healing model) community capacity building is a framework that creates and encourages resilient healing for the child or youth and their families within their own communities. How effective the supports are to the child and family often determine how well the family heals and remains a productive member of a healthy community.

**Simcoe  
Muskoka  
Region:  
9000 KM<sup>2</sup>**



## Multi-Disciplinary Team

The Child & Youth Advocacy Center Simcoe Muskoka relies on a robust Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) approach tailored to the needs of children, youth, and their families. The MDT team is comprised of community partners that include child welfare, police services, medical care, mental health services, victim services and justice partners, with specialized skills and expertise crucial for effective intervention and support. In the 2023-2-24 year 251 forensic interviews were conducted.

These relationships have been further developed by implementing quarterly meetings, where MDT members collaborate, foster cohesion, and ensure a comprehensive approach to cases. Regular case reviews allow for nuanced analysis and continuous improvement of strategies. Additionally, initiatives like “Morning Muffin and Coffee Conversation Thursdays” will provide informal spaces for MDT members to connect.

### Clients spread across our geographic region:

**46%** from Barrie and area

**36%** from Orillia and area

**18%** Mobile Locations- Bradford, Cookstown, Collingwood, Alliston, Midland, Bracebridge

## The Advocate

The core member of a CYAC is the specially trained Child & Youth Advocate who provides children/ youth and their non-offending family members with specialized age-appropriate, trauma-informed support. Some key roles of the Advocate are, first to provide a single point of contact for the family amongst the many helping professionals they encounter and to conduct a personalized intake. Next, they coordinate with MDT and community partners on behalf of the child, youth and family to provide information about the investigative process, to help keep children/youth and their families up to date on next steps in their case, complete service referrals, and finally to make and follow-up on appropriate community support services available to promote healing.

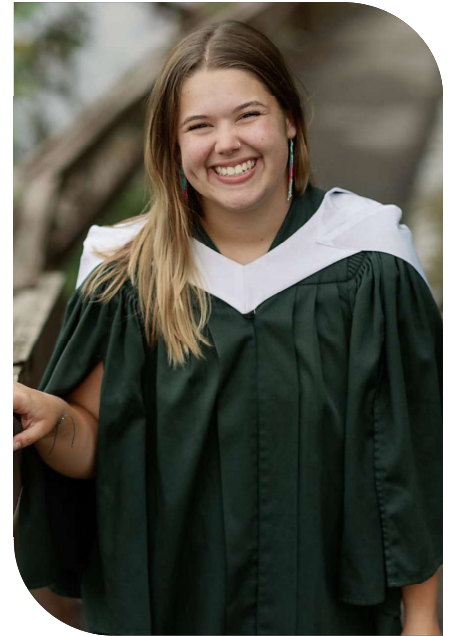




# Diversity Equity & Inclusion

Twenty-five percent of the children, youth, and caregivers that come through the centre identify as Indigenous. At the CYAC, there is a constant effort to ensure the unique needs of all individuals served are met. In 2023, an Indigenous Advocate was hired, enabling the implementation of culturally based and sensitive programming at the foundational level. Cultural supports for families are not an afterthought to the Advocate Program; they are foundationally built into the overall functions and development of the Advocacy Program. Resources and age-appropriate materials have been secured and routinely utilized during investigation support.

Additionally, Indigenous community partners have been consulted to evaluate and add insight to the Common Ground Youth Group and Bridging Support to Wellness programs. Efforts continue to deepen connections with Indigenous partners by holding engagement sessions, visits with Elders, presenting at Rama Social Services meetings, sitting on the Biinoojinsag committee table, and attending Community Circles.



## Facility Dogs

Moose and Beacon are Accredited Facility Dogs of The Child & Youth Advocacy Centre Simcoe Muskoka. These canines are integral to every investigation, interview, and meeting involving children, youth, and their families, alongside Advocates or MDT partners. They provide emotional and relaxation support, deep pressure therapy, and unconditional love, helping to calm emotions and improve thinking and wellbeing.

In 2023-2024 Moose and Beacon supported 290 interviews and 45 hours of Common Ground. They also participated in the Bridging Support to Wellness program and community outreach.



# Common Ground

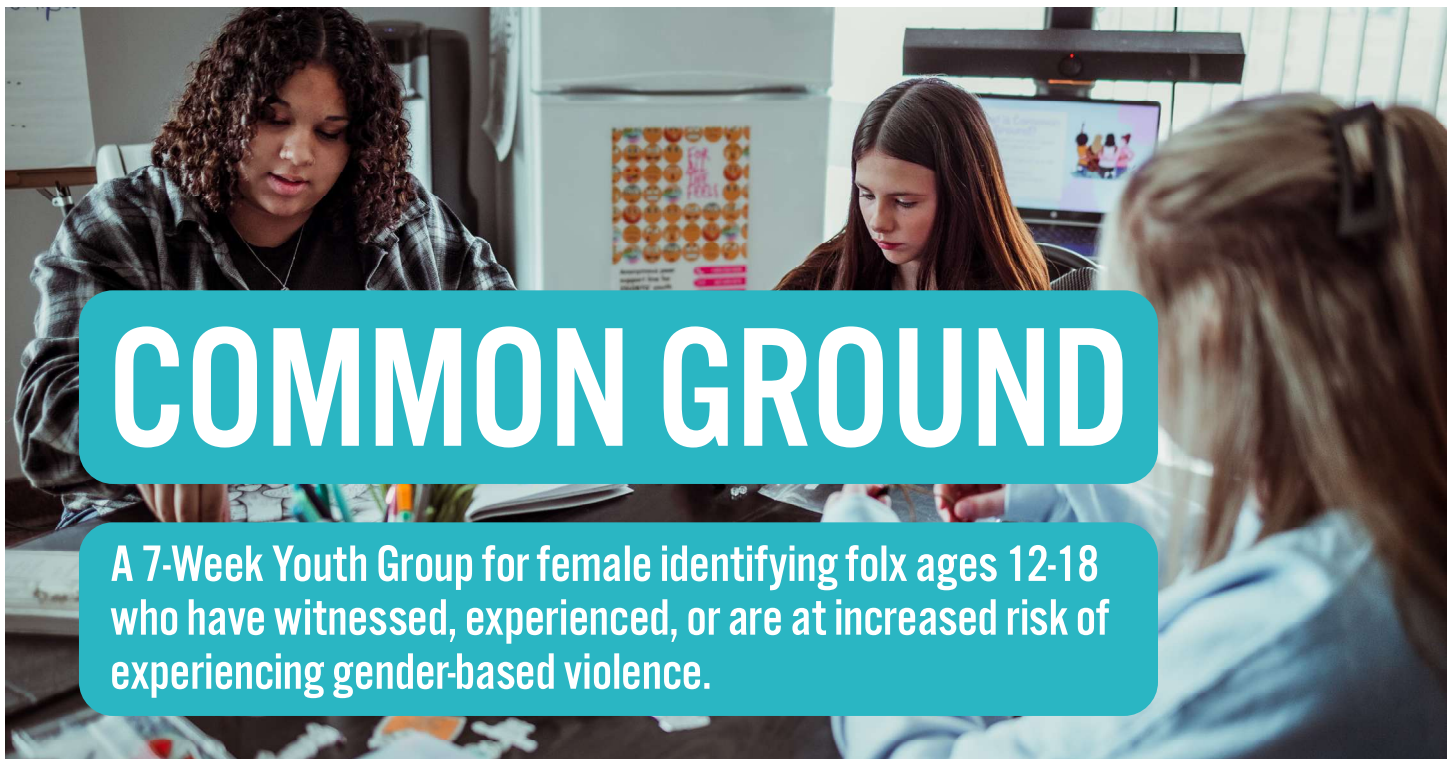
This fiscal year, we successfully ran five Common Ground Youth Group sessions, with three hosted at the Barrie centre and two at our Orillia centre. Each 7-week, 2-hour session covered a variety of topics including Healthy Relationships, Social Media Safety, Consent and Boundaries, Human Trafficking, and more. Thus far, our Common Ground Youth Group has reached 40 female-identifying youth aged 12-18. While most participants reside in Barrie or Orillia, we've also welcomed youth from Midland, Wasaga Beach, and Edgar. Additionally, 20% of our participants identify as Indigenous.

Throughout the year, Common Ground has undergone a comprehensive review and revision process, continuously updated based on feedback from youth and addressing emerging challenges. In January, the program underwent an exhaustive review that included community partners such as police officers, nurse practitioners, child protection service workers, mental health leads, social workers, educators, and advocates. In February, a further evaluation was conducted with members from Indigenous Community Partners, who provided invaluable insights on incorporating an Indigenous lens into the program. Furthermore, post-program surveys completed by



participants inform ongoing program enhancements, ensuring the delivery of the best possible experience for all involved.

Looking ahead, we are committed to building on the success of Common Ground. Plans for the upcoming fiscal year include holding five 7-week sessions and establishing drop-in groups for past participants at each center during the summer. Our new Youth Ambassador program and Youth Advisory Group will be driven by Common Ground alumni, ensuring their voices continue to shape our initiatives. The lessons learned from our experiences with Common Ground will inform and strengthen our future prevention education programs.



## COMMON GROUND

A 7-Week Youth Group for female identifying folx ages 12-18 who have witnessed, experienced, or are at increased risk of experiencing gender-based violence.

# Program Pilot: Bridging Support to Wellness

The Bridging Support to Wellness pilot program is a six-month initiative, running from January to July 2024. This timeframe allows for six one-hour counseling sessions per participant, enabling a thorough evaluation of the program's effectiveness.



The program aims to bridge the gap between initial disclosure or need for support and the availability of long-term services. It addresses immediate support barriers like long waiting lists, ineligibility for existing services, or depleted resources. The target group includes children, youth, and families needing immediate psychoeducation or secondary prevention, even if they don't qualify for extended programs.

Referrals come exclusively from the CYACSM advocacy program, targeting children, youth, and families involved in the investigative process or Common Ground youth group. Participants engage in six counseling sessions offered flexibly (weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly) through in-person, virtual, or telephone mediums. The program accommodates diverse demographics, primarily focusing on youth and involving caregivers to extend support beyond sessions.

The pilot has received 28 referrals, with 20 engaging in services. Positive feedback highlights the program's success in offering immediate support and smooth transitions to long-term services. Participants have reported empowerment through acquired skills, reducing the need for further services. Feedback indicates clients felt comfortable, respected, and supported, with counselors effectively addressing their concerns. Facility dogs have also positively impacted the participants' experience.

The program's early successes and client satisfaction underscore its impact, suggesting valuable insights for future iterations and potential expansions.

**The Child & Youth Advocacy Centre operates as a non-profit organization dedicated to providing essential support to children who have witnessed or experienced abuse and their families. Through the dedication and generosity of volunteers, funders, and supporters, the CYACSM is able to provide essential support to children who have witnessed or experienced abuse and their families. The shared belief in the mission fuels the organization's efforts to provide a trauma-informed and person-centred services for the children and youth of Simcoe Muskoka. On behalf of those we serve, thank you for your commitment and partnership.**



Bell Lets Talk  
Canadian Women's Foundation  
City of Barrie (Barrie Police)  
City of Orillia  
Community Foundation of Orillia  
Community Recovery Fund  
Department of Justice  
Dunkley Charitable Foundation  
Jackman Foundation

Justice Canada  
Ministry of Attorney General  
Mr. Saunders  
Ontario Trillium Foundation  
Orillia Community Foundation  
Severn Township  
St. David Anglican- Lutheran Church  
TELUS



10TH ANNIVERSARY



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