



Simcoe Muskoka
Family Connexions

Connexions Familiales
de Simcoe Muskoka

Staying the course

2020-21

A pandemic
year in review

OUR VISION

**Safe Kids.
Healthy families.
Strong communities.**

OUR PURPOSE

**To build safety and well-being with children,
youth, families and communities.**

OUR VALUES

We honour **C**onnexions

We are **A**ccountable

Respect is essential

Equity is foundational



Children and Youth Safe and Well in their Communities

.....
PROTECTION

.....
RESOURCES

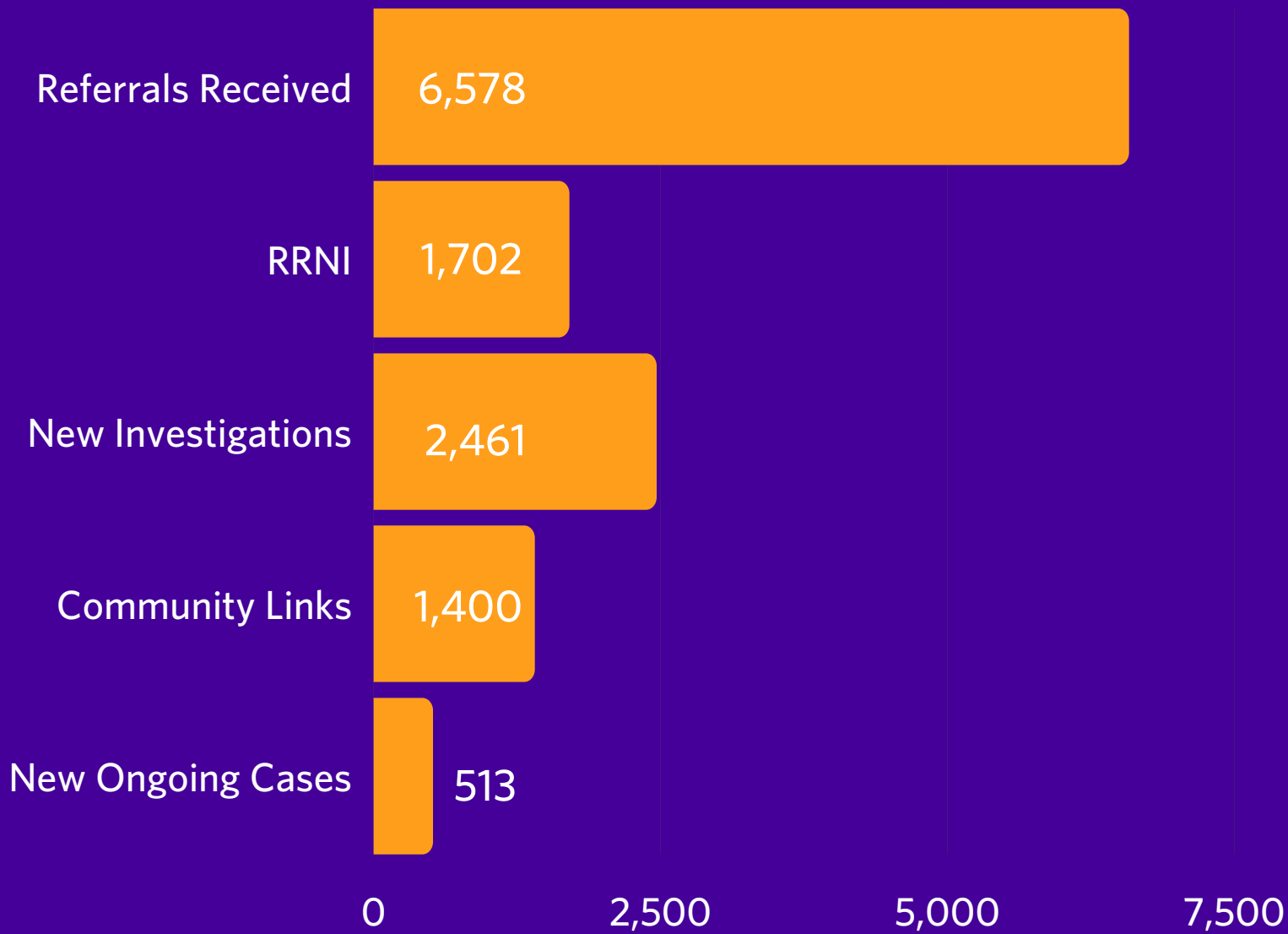
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CHILD & YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH



Referrals, Investigations & Cases



22% reduction in referrals vs. 2019-2020

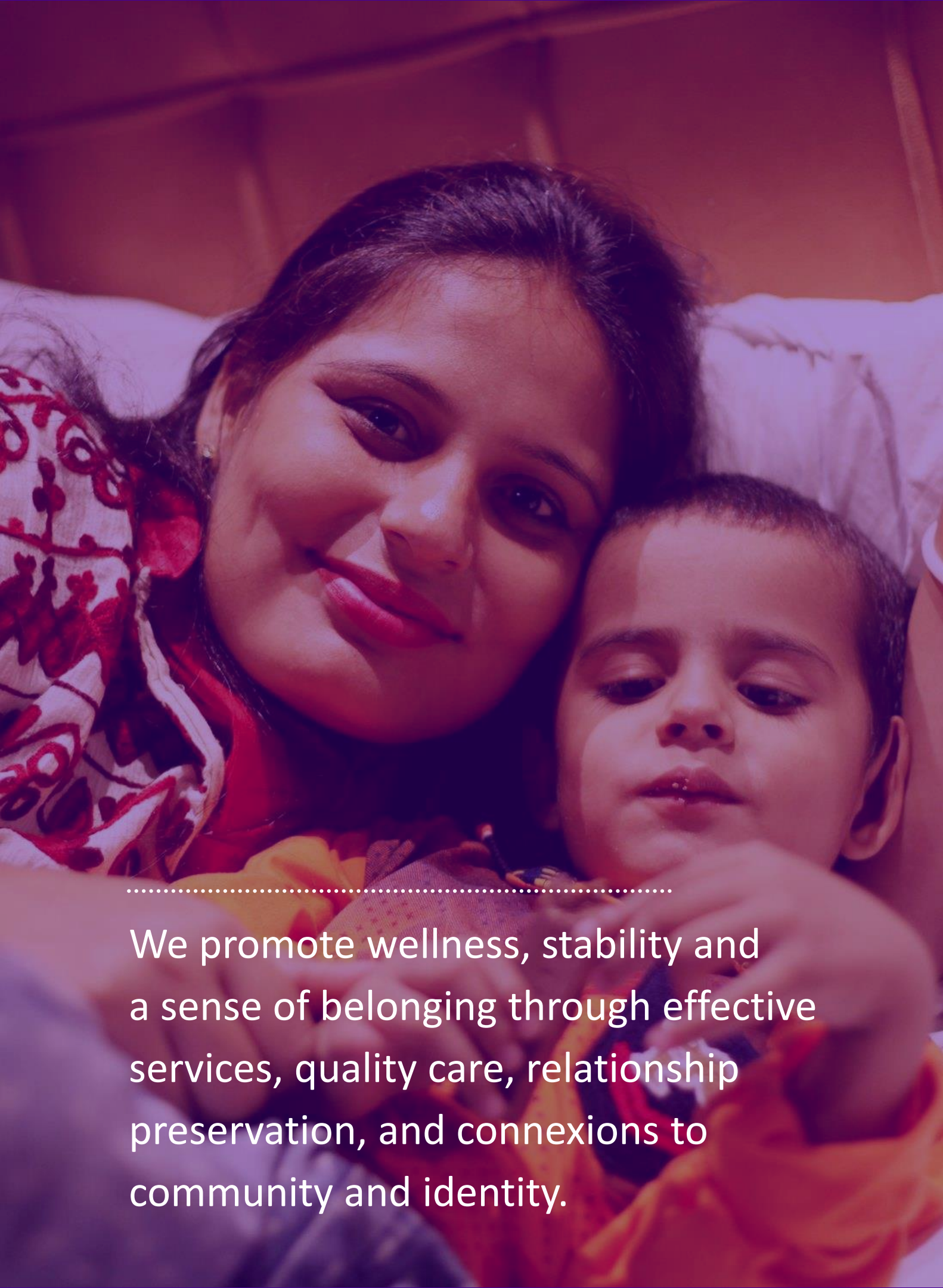


18% reduction in new investigations vs. 2019-20

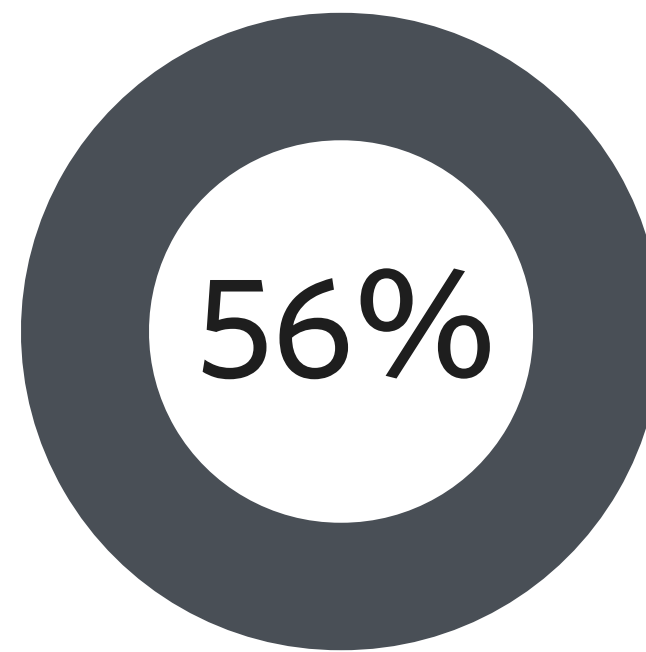


2 in 50

We served 6,849 families in the 2020-21 year.
With 187,107 families living in Simcoe and Muskoka, that translates to us working with approximately 2 in 50 families in our community providing a variety of services.



We promote wellness, stability and a sense of belonging through effective services, quality care, relationship preservation, and connexions to community and identity.



increase in

Kin Service placements

This past year we saw an increase in the placement of children with kin.

33

youth remained supported by the agency due to the moratorium on aging out of care during the pandemic.



Milestone Tool Prototype

An online assessment and planning tool for youth in care (12-21 yrs) developed by foster parents Cyrese and Roger Samuels is being prototyped by MCCSS and tested by York University.

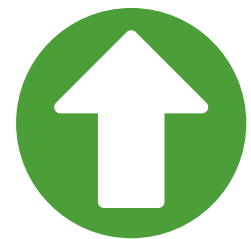
50



new foster homes are being sought with the foster recruitment project focusing on a more diverse set of caregivers and to reduce reliance on Outside Paid Resource homes.

53

Adoptions
finalized



96% increase vs. 2019-2020

238

children in care at the end of the year



19% reduction vs. 2019-2020

110

admissions to care



33% reduction vs. 2019-2020

.....
Every child and youth needs and
deserves permanent, long-term
relationships; there is no one answer
for every child.

Child & Youth Mental Health Services



268 Virtual Counselling Walk-In Clients



Only a 13% reduction over previous years when in person.

94 Crisis Assessment/Interventions



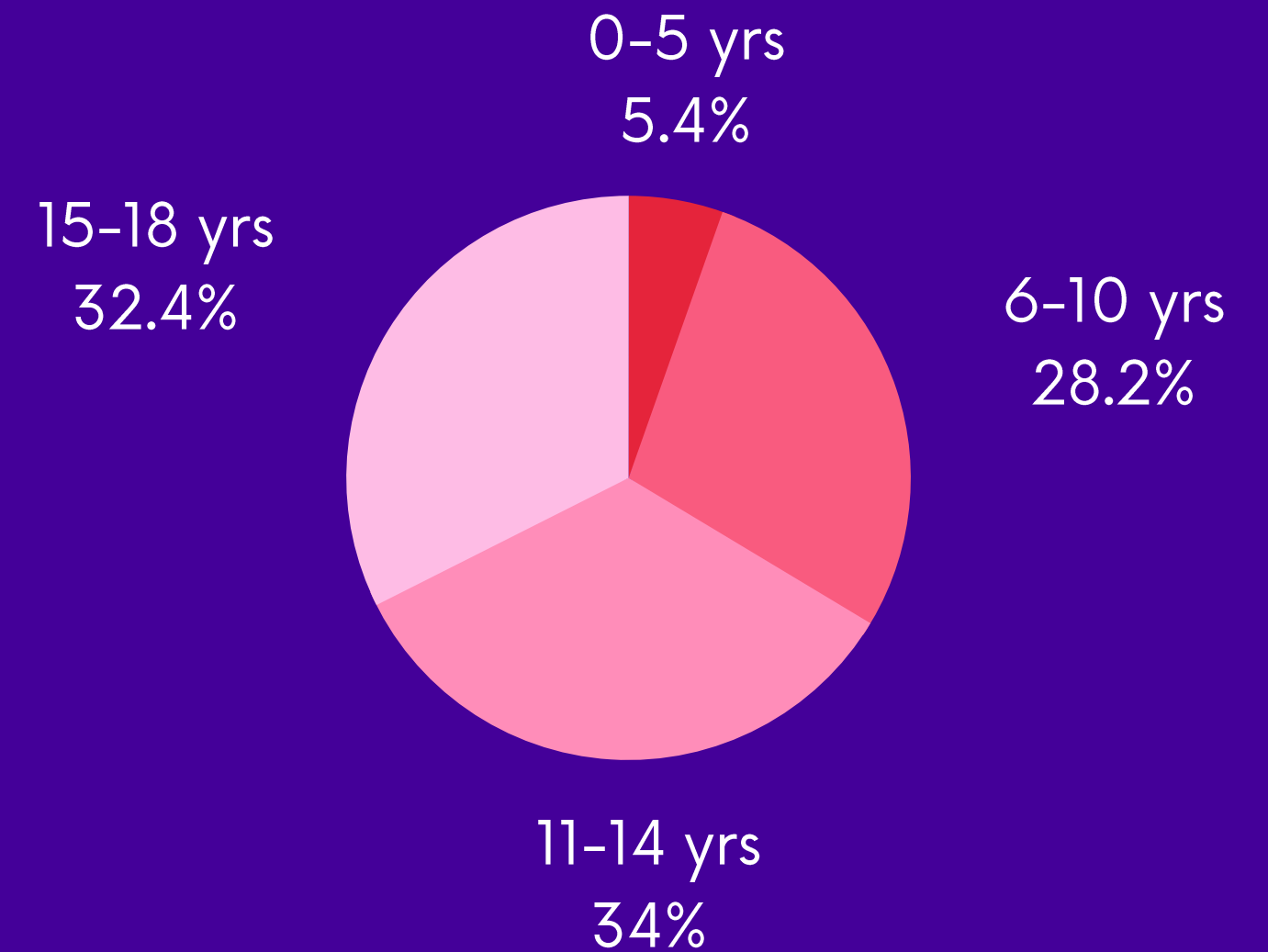
Only a 9% reduction over previous years when interventions could be done in person.

Sick Kids research reported in February 2021 showed that 70% of school-aged children (6-18 yrs) and 66% of preschool-aged children (2-5 yrs) reported a deterioration in their mental health during the pandemic. The study found those with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) reported the greatest deterioration in depression, irritability, attention span, and hyperactivity.

Virtual CYMH Services



The majority of planning, support and therapy sessions were conducted virtually. Even with its inherent difficulties, staff were able to effectively deliver services to hundreds of families throughout this exceptionally difficult time.



229 children, youth and families received therapy from Child & Family Therapists

78 children, youth and families received intensive support and service

41 children, youth and families with complex needs were supported in navigating systems, developing plans of care and service coordination



Service Initiatives

The Youth in Transition Program

The YIT Program has transferred from Hands the Family Help Network and will now be delivered by our staff to youth in Muskoka, Parry Sound, and North Bay.

Service Delivery Framework

Across the service teams, work was done to finalize the Service Manual, implement training and a sustainment plan for the new framework. With the change to an all-inclusive boarding rate, a Caregiver Quality Standards Framework was also developed to build capacity within our residential services system.

Human Trafficking Interventions

Working together on the research and implementation of a specialized model of care for child and youth survivors of human trafficking as well as a human trafficking early intervention assessment tool.

Anti-Human Trafficking Practice Leads

Members of the group have been active in local tables, developed protocols with community agencies, attended training, and are actively connected with provincial colleagues working in the area of human trafficking.



Effective Communications & Partnerships



Community Supports

2,419 individuals supported through the Pandemic Basic Needs Fund



\$176,000

raised in Pandemic Basic Needs grants

Top 5 Social Determinants Applicants Experienced

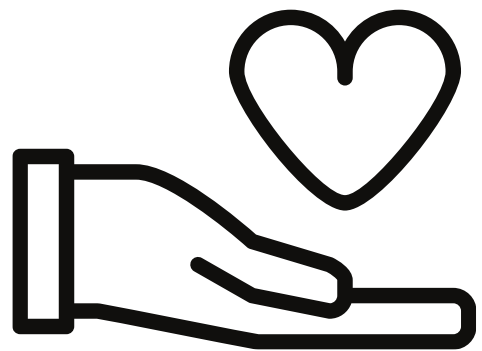
- Income Insecurity
- Food Insecurity
- Lack of Access to Mental Health Services
- Housing Challenges
- Family Violence/Emotional Harm

With the supports from many donors including the Home Depot Foundation, 100 Women Who Care of Muskoka, The County of Simcoe, Children's Aid Foundation of Canada, Second Harvest, and Canadian Women's Foundation, we fulfilled 759 requests for basic needs. We also provided 450 backpacks for school and 40 Camp in a Box to keep kids busy over the summer.

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We hear and value the voices of children, youth and families; partner with communities, colleagues and stakeholders to build networks; and advocate.

693

Families
Supported



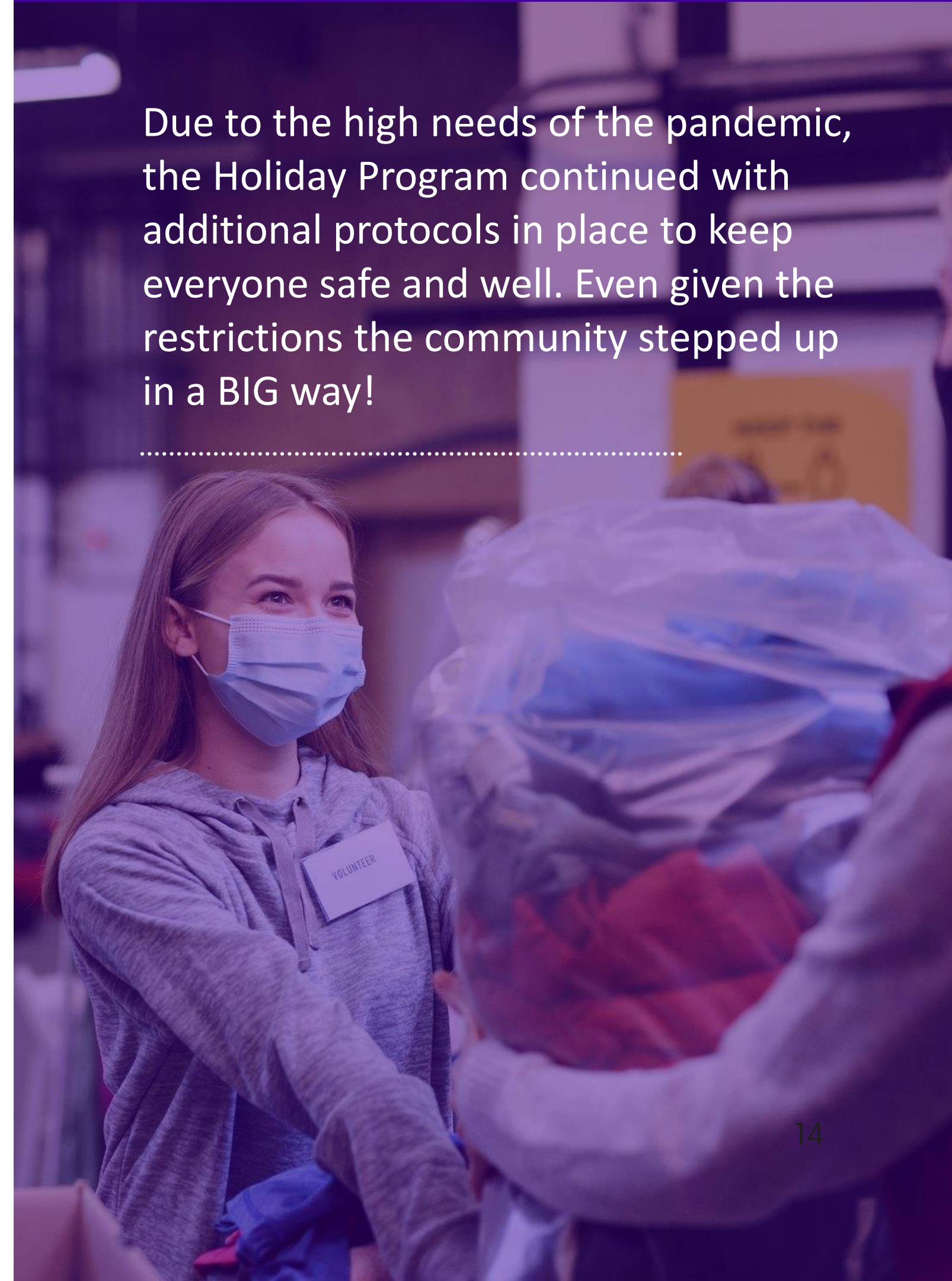
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Independent youth sponsored

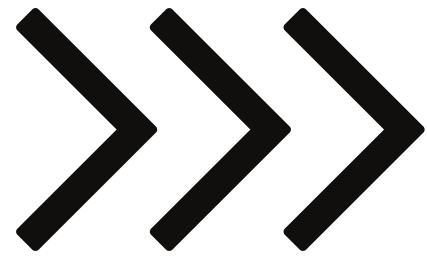
\$346,656 gift in kind donations including
holiday hampers, basic needs,
gift cards, toys and gifts

\$206,705 financial donations supporting basic
needs and holiday supports

Due to the high needs of the pandemic, the Holiday Program continued with additional protocols in place to keep everyone safe and well. Even given the restrictions the community stepped up in a BIG way!



Partnerships



Francophone Situation Table

Les organismes offrant des services en français s'unissent et travaillent en collaboration pour servir la communauté francophone.

Il s'agit de la Table d'intervention de Simcoe et Muskoka.



MBTT - MacKenzie Health

Partnership with the Centre for Behaviour Health Sciences, New Path Youth & Family Services, and Kinark Child & Family Services which offers intensive treatment services or parent support training for children presenting with challenging behaviour and a mental health concern.



Shak's World

Shak's World Community Centre is a youth-led urban community development project in Barrie that uses basketball, innovation, and mentorship as a bridge to youth employment, education, and training.



"Empowering Youth To Stay Humble And Kind"

The Shak's World Motto

Partnerships



CYMH Lead Agency

The partnership with Hands TheFamilyHelpNetwork.ca continues to develop in the areas of child and youth mental health. Improved collaboration was seen in a variety of ways including the work on an online youth chat program called safespot.ca.

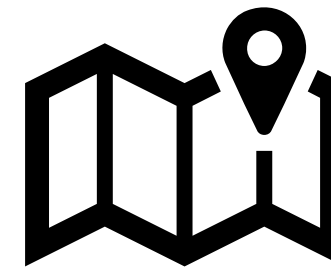


Simcoe County Coalition Campaign

In summer 2020, we helped lead a community awareness campaign for the public to know that all the child, youth and family services agencies were “Here to Help” and still available regardless of physical spaces not being open for service.



CYMH Strategic Engagements



Actions from this year’s CYMH multi-year plan built capacity to serve 0 to 5 clients and their families, provided family therapy, and youth and family engagement. We increased our involvement with the Muskoka and Area Ontario Health Team and Ontario Health Team for Specialized Care and mapped out the service pathways in support of the MAOHT.



Innovation, Accountability & Outcomes



Accountability

The Privacy Team worked diligently to support the implementation of Part X including:

- Information & Privacy Commissioner oversight and reporting
- Individual right to access to information
- Working from home and in the community
- Privacy Manual and care provider training
- Email and texting consent and security
- Breach management and prevention



We provide evidence-informed services and maximize resources through a commitment to continuous improvement, privacy and accountability for outcomes.

Human Resources were busy recruiting, onboarding, and managing position changes throughout the year for a variety of reasons including leaves, retirements and resignations. Meanwhile mentors stepped up to support new staff and others.

28 New Hires
10 Resignations
3 Retirements

Debt reduction

**of \$4.2 million since
end of FY 2018-19**

through effective
expenditure management

Crisis Management Team

18-member team representing service, IS, Finance, HR, H&S, Legal, OE&A, Admin, CYMH, Property, DEI, and Comms met regularly throughout the year to discuss and make decisions pertaining to the pandemic. The Crisis Management Team (CMT) updated the agency frequently.



Health & Safety

Regularly keeping on top of all health unit and provincial regulations and informing the CMT on needed precautions as well as making regular updates to the Pandemic Recovery Plan, our Health & Safety Specialist was a key part of the team. Our property team worked diligently to keep a steady stream of PPE, Hand Sanitizer and ensured cleaning protocols were adhered to.

20

**All Agency
Webinars Held**

2,427

Information Services Tickets received

The information services team kept busy supporting the pivot to remote working and also managed numerous projects including deployment of new laptops across the agency.

“Challenge and adversity are meant to help you know who you are. Storms hit your weakness but unlock your true strength.”

-Roy T. Bennett

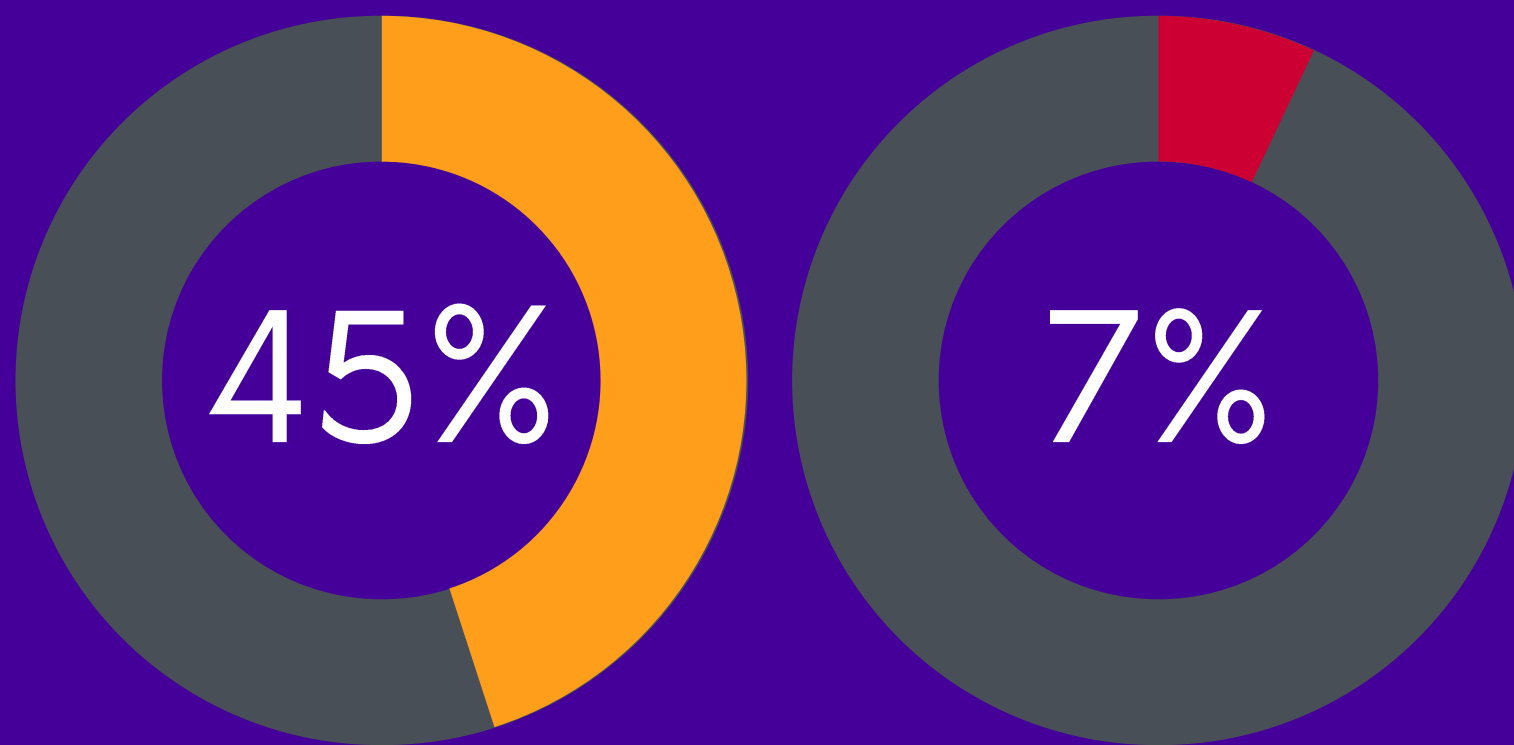
“This pandemic has magnified every existing inequality in our society – like systemic racism, gender inequality, and poverty.”

-Melinda Gates



Equitable Practices





A report in early 2021 from the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit showed that visible minorities were disproportionately represented among COVID-19 cases in the Simcoe-Muskoka region. 45% of confirmed cases reported being a visible minority where they represent just 7% of the region's total population.



25

organizational/sectorial representatives from local government(s), law enforcement, health, education, and business came together to create the **Simcoe Muskoka Black Community Development Council**

Equity Plan – Year One

One Vision One Voice (OVOV) strategy

Launched a three-year OVOV agency-wide work plan based on the 11 Race Equity Practices.



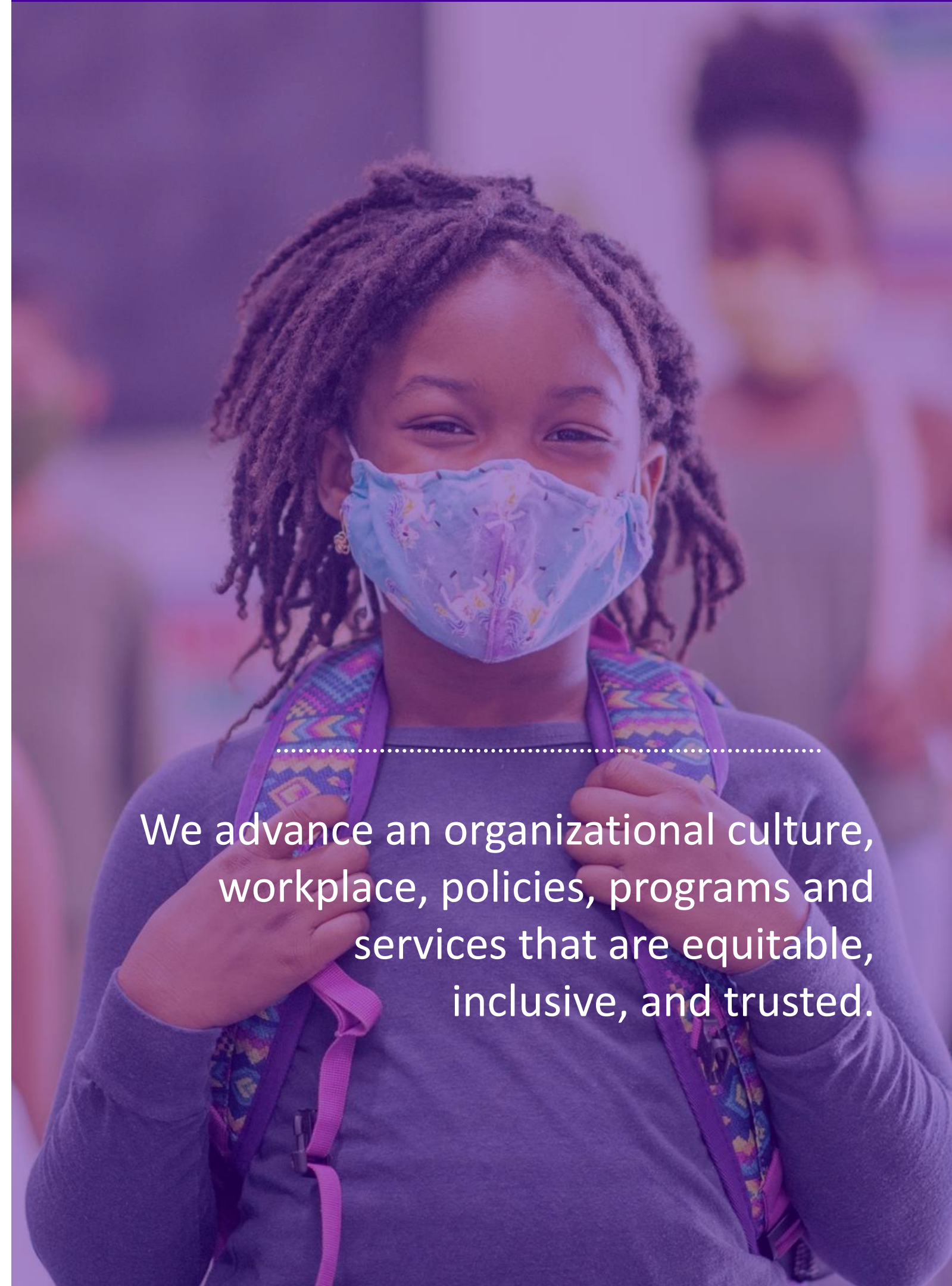
Afri-CAN Carib Connexions

This group lead by Michelle Guy and Adrian Graham was instrumental in bringing forward many important initiatives for Black children, youth and families as well as supports and mentorship for Black staff.

Agency-wide Anti-Racist / Anti Oppressive (AR/AO) Strategy

AR/AO Committee advised on organizational practices, policies, and services towards equitable outcomes with a three-year agency-wide workplan.

We advance an organizational culture, workplace, policies, programs and services that are equitable, inclusive, and trusted.





Equitable Outcomes



French Language Active Offer

Work is continuing with our service, communications and property teams, and in consultation with our French Language Services Team to further our active offer of service to the community.

Francophone Staff Advisory

After a report prepared by an independent consultant and feedback from and in consultation with Francophone staff, an action plan has been devised to be overseen and reviewed by the Francophone Staff Advisory.

Learning and Development

A variety of equity and diversity training has been provided to staff across the organization including Unconscious Bias & Socialization, Identity Based Data Collection, LGBTQ2S+ Safer Spaces and Hiring for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

Disproportionality in Child Welfare

Partnering with other child welfare agencies in the central zone, we consolidated data to analyze and understand trends in numbers of Black families served.

Truth & Reconciliation





60's Scoop Reconciliation Process

Taking lead from the Rama First Nation community and survivors of the 60's Scoop, we have supported the healing journey they have begun to return home. In partnership with Durham CAS, we completed the "Bringing them Home" reconciliation process that included healing, supportive events, education, a documentary film, and the creation of a commemorative space to be unveiled in fall 2021.

Truth & Reconciliation

Honouring the 9 Commitments

Focusing on the 9 provincial commitments, important and critical work remains ongoing with Indigenous communities and staff including Indigenous cultural safety training.

Indigenous Staff Advisory

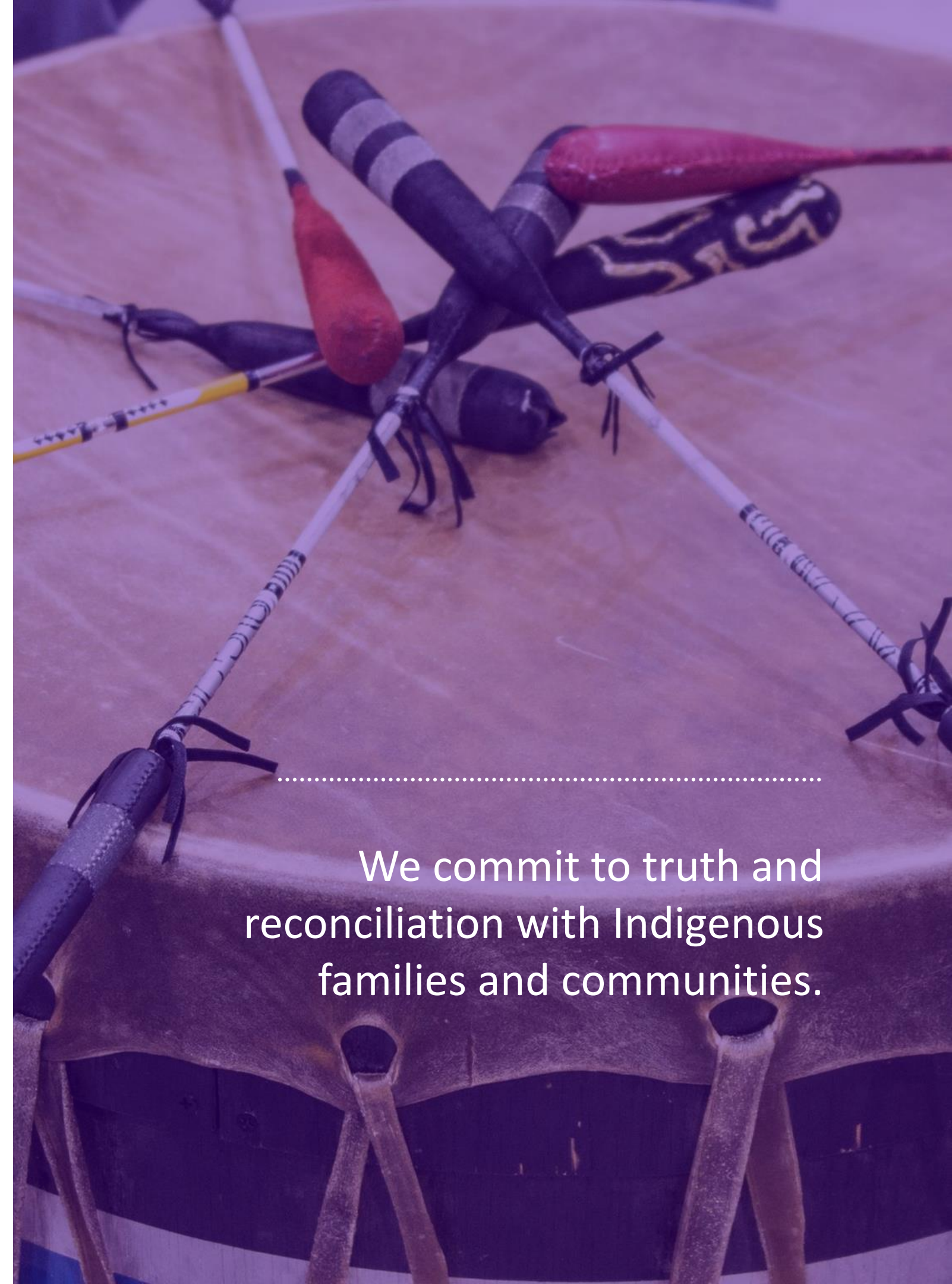
After consulting with Indigenous staff at the agency, it was agreed that an Indigenous Staff Advisory would be formed to support staff and service to Indigenous families and communities.

Partnership with DBCFS

The collaboration and partnership with Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child & Family Services continues to grow and is now supported by a seconded manager in place. Focus is on finalizing file transfers.

Partnership with the MNO

We have created a partnership with the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) in order to support Métis people in our region.



We commit to truth and reconciliation with Indigenous families and communities.