



BUILDING BRIGHTER FUTURES

**SIMCOE MUSKOKA FAMILY CONNEXIONS
ANNUAL REPORT - 2025-26**



Simcoe Muskoka
Family Connexions



Connexions Familiales
de Simcoe Muskoka

LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

Hello, Bonjour, Aaniin, Bonjou,

This year's Annual Report reflects our shared purpose—supporting children, youth, and families to thrive. It speaks to the compassion, resilience, and unwavering commitment of our staff, caregivers, volunteers, and Board of Directors.

Over the past year, we responded to rising and increasingly complex needs across our diverse communities. We saw an increase in child welfare referrals and supported children to remain safely with their families in 97% of cases. By expanding our internal foster care and staff-supported care, we reduced reliance on external placements and created more opportunities for children and youth to stay connected to their kin, culture, and communities.

We strengthened partnerships across the agency, with families and community organizations, recognizing that meaningful change happens through collaboration. Our redesigned Family Support program now delivers more responsive, evidence-informed services tailored to the unique strengths and needs of caregivers and their children. We achieved full licensing for four Staff-Supported Homes — a significant milestone that enhances stability, quality wraparound care, and local connections for youth.

Through the Child and Youth Mental Health Advisory, we are helping to shape a more connected and accessible system in Muskoka. In partnership with SickKids and others, we launched new pathways to support infant and early mental health, while also exploring governance hub models to advance a more integrated system of care.

Behind the scenes, our corporate services teams ensure strong, responsive operations that support everything we do.

Our board and staff steering committee collaborated to produce a stakeholder informed Strategic Plan to guide our work over the next four years. The new area of focus is people and culture which underscores our ongoing commitment to a safe and healthy workplace where professional growth, continuous learning, wellness, and belonging are fostered.

We reaffirmed our commitment to equity, truth, and reconciliation through a refresh of our strategy that will build a stronger foundation for service delivery improvements, learning, and meaningful community engagement.

Over the last year our staff have reached further into our communities than ever before—advocating, partnering, raising awareness and resources to ensure children, youth, and families feel supported, seen, and valued.

What gives us the greatest hope is the dedication of those who stand together in service to children, youth, and families. To our staff, caregivers, volunteers, Board members, partners, and ministry colleagues—thank you. Because of you, children are safer, families are stronger, and communities are more connected.

Together, we are shaping a brighter future.
Warm regards.

GISÈLE FORREST
Chair, Board Chair

GERALDINE DOOLEY-PHILLIPS
Executive Director



Our Vision

**Thriving Children & Youth.
Healthy Families.
Inclusive Communities.**



Our Values

Collaboration
Accountability
Respect
Equity



Our Purpose

Working together to build inclusive communities for the well-being and safety of children, youth and families.



Children & youth safe & well with families in their communities

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

Children & youth safe & well with families in their communities

Our child welfare and child & youth mental health programs responded to changing needs in the community. Most service volumes remained consistent with the previous year. We continue to serve families with significant complexity.

Highlights

9,144

child welfare
referrals received.

2,624

Total Investigation Cases served
Out of families served, **82** children came into
care (-19% from last year) while **97%** of
children and youth remained in their homes.

7,964

of families served in total.



749

Total Ongoing Cases served.

353

Total Children & Youth In Care
served (-7% from last year).



244

remained in out of home
placements at year end.



17

13 youth in care graduated from secondary school
and 4 graduated from post-secondary school.

Children & youth safe & well with families in their communities



4

new foster homes approved from ongoing recruitment campaign (events, media releases, radio & print interviews, Barrie Colts partnership, etc.).

This provided 6 additional placements and more children being able to remain within their community.



7

adoptions finalized.



101

kinship service placements, on average.

48% of children who are temporarily in need of alternative care remained with their kin.

Children & youth safe & well with families in their communities

Child & Youth Mental Health Services

287



454
sessions
completed.

brief service Counselling Clinic clients served by CYMH.



124 crisis assessment
/interventions to 70
individuals.

366

out of 473 children eligible for service presented
with **Complex Mental Health Needs.**

Child, youth & family therapy (176), intensive services (53) and youth served by the Youth Justice Program (26) remained consistent with previous years.

We continued to provide service through the Coordinated Service Planning Program to 53 children, youth and families with complex special needs.

Innovation, Accountability & Outcomes

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



Innovation, Accountability & Outcomes

Keeping children and youth in high quality care,
close to home through our fully licensed

Staff Supported Homes.



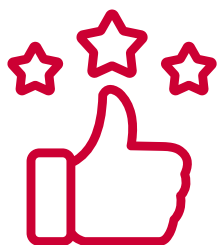
We created a **new logo**
for CYMH to promote access to
services.



Muskoka Child & Youth Mental Health
Family Connexions

Connexions Familiales

Santé mentale pour enfants et jeunes de Muskoka



We finalized the CYMH
**Client satisfaction
questionnaire.**

We finalized the Infant and Young Children
Mental Health Practice Guide and the Infant
and Young Children Assessment Framework.



In partnership with The District Municipality of Muskoka, the Simcoe
Muskoka District Health Unit and Sick Kids, we have launched an
infant and early mental health care pathway project.

Innovation, Accountability & Outcomes

We formalized and published **Service Manuals** for Child & Youth in Care, Care Provider and Kinship.



We updated our **Service Procedures Manual.**



We improved **Identity based data collection** and compliance with all service Standards.

We have started the **Housing and Food Insecurities Practice Leads group** to build better community support for poverty reduction for the families we serve.



Strengthened **Information Technology** through upgrades and enhanced security systems.

Continuous improvement and learning on **Privacy practices** and enhanced security policies.



Innovation, Accountability & Outcomes

We advanced the Bell Farm renovation project and welcomed **3 new partners:**



Between April 2025 and March 2026, we welcomed **29 new employees** to the organization.



Direct service staff participated in important **worker safety training** while enhancements to health and safety policies further strengthened organizational practices and supports.

Staff Social & Wellness Event

bringing employees together to focus on personal wellbeing and workplace wellness.



Innovation, Accountability & Outcomes

We initiated the development of a **staff mentorship program** scheduled to launch in 2026.

CUPE

In January 2026, we successfully ratified a **new collective agreement** with CUPE Local 5319.

We strengthened partnerships with community organizations and educational institutions, including Georgian College and La Clé, to enhance our visibility within local **Francophone communities**.

Initiated on-boarding of staff to new **performance management and evaluation system**

reinforcing our commitment to ongoing growth, development, and employee engagement.



Prepared for the Fall 2026 launch of a **Learning Management System** to enhance training participation and create new opportunities for learning and professional development.

Finalized 2026-2030 Strategic Plan



VISION

Thriving Children & Youth.
Healthy Families.
Inclusive Communities.

PURPOSE

Working together to build inclusive communities for the well-being and safety of children, youth and families.

VALUES

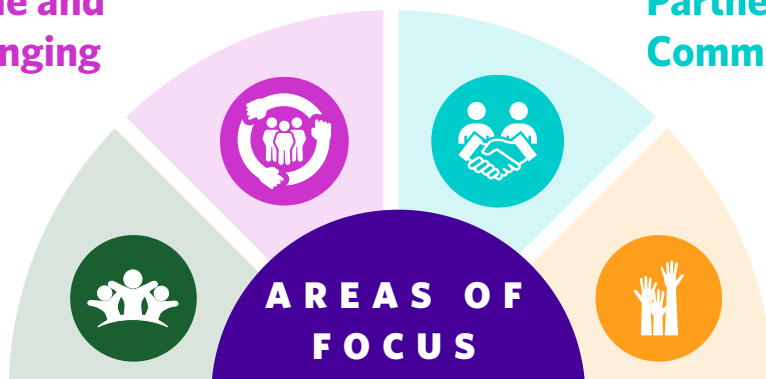


People and Belonging

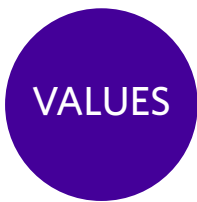
Partnerships and Community Engagement

Children, Youth and Families

Truth & Reconciliation and Equity



Your Child Welfare service provider in Simcoe Muskoka. Your Child & Youth Mental Health service provider in Muskoka.



VALUES

COLLABORATION

We work with our community, care providers, volunteers and alongside our children, youth and families.
We promote culture, community and a sense of belonging.
We value effective internal and external communication.
We foster supportive relationships and partnerships.
We are collaborative, holistic and affirming.

ACCOUNTABILITY

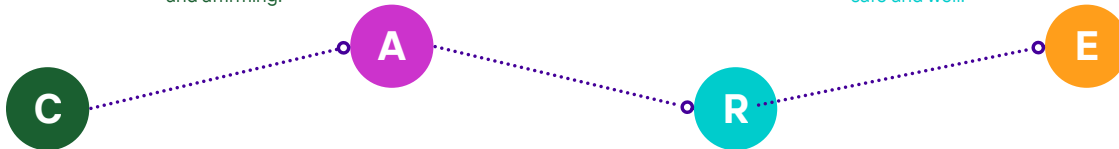
We think critically and eliminate assumptions.
We ensure transparency, consistency and privacy.
We acknowledge our weaknesses and continuously strive to do better.
We use resources equitably and creatively.
We support ongoing professional development.
We are financially responsible.

RESPECT

We listen, learn and seek to understand.
We recognize strengths, rights, and traditions of others.
We center the voice of the child and youth.
We are inclusive of all identities and their interconnectedness.
We trust in the ability of children, youth, families, kin and communities to keep children safe and well.

EQUITY

We honour Reconciliation.
We provide equitable services that are trauma-informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive.
We address issues of disproportionality, disparity, power and privilege.
We provide accommodations and eliminate barriers.
We ensure cultural safety and are inclusive of all human identities.



CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

Focus on safety, wellbeing, and prevention by recognizing the intersecting identities and experiences of children, youth, and families.
Strengthen family capacity and build resilience so children and youth can remain connected to and thrive within their communities.

PEOPLE AND BELONGING

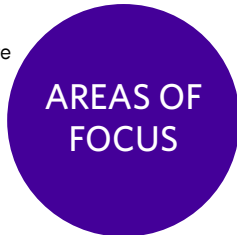
Focus on an environment rooted in trust, respect, innovation and inclusion.
Promote a culture that supports safety, wellbeing, belonging, accountability, and ensuring people feel valued, and connected.

PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Focus on enhancing partnerships and collaboration to support shared goals.
Work together to build healthy, resilient, accessible, and inclusive communities that promote connection, purpose and collective responsibility.

TRUTH & RECONCILIATION AND EQUITY

Focus on a shift in culture where every staff member feels they belong and every child, youth and family receive identity affirming care.
Focus on actively offering French Language Services and Honouring Truth and Reconciliation.



AREAS OF FOCUS

Truth, Reconciliation & Equity

The background features silhouettes of five diverse individuals walking from left to right. From left to right: a woman in a long dress, a man in a suit, a person in a wheelchair, a man in a t-shirt, and a woman in a wheelchair. The background is a warm orange gradient with faint, light-colored architectural drawings or blueprints overlaid.

We honour Reconciliation. We provide equitable services that are trauma-informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive. We address issues of disproportionality, disparity, power and privilege. We provide accommodations and eliminate barriers. We ensure cultural safety and are inclusive of all human identities.

Truth, Reconciliation & Equity (TRE)

The TRE team have been engaging in team-based conversations to help update our Truth & Reconciliation and Equity Plan.

Our agency engaged in the **OACAS SOGIE Initiative and pilot** to strengthen 2SLGBTQ+ service approaches.



We launched our **Affirming Services Consultation Panel** for Black Indigenous and SOGIE affirming services.

We started a pilot within the Midland Team where the team is providing **Indigenous Affirming Services Consultations.**



We implemented a **new consent** for children/youth to identify who their sexual orientation, gender identity and expression can be shared with.



Truth, Reconciliation & Equity (TRE)



We have developed
Key Performance Indicators
with respect to our Affirming Services.

We have started gathering data on
**Sexual Orientation, Gender
Identity and Expression.**



We facilitated
**7 Trauma-Informed Practice
Trainings** with 5 more scheduled.

We participated in the
**Confronting Anti-Black
Racism for Leaders training.**



Ontario Association of
Children's Aid Societies

We have partnered with Dnaagdawenmag
Binnoojiiyag Child & Family Services and offered staff
High Risk Infant Training.



Truth, Reconciliation & Equity (TRE)

We celebrated with a **Black History Month** event to honour partners serving the Black community.



We joined in the **Reimagining Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, & Belonging Conference** in collaboration with the Simcoe Coalition and key partners.



**Muskoka
Almaguin**
ONTARIO HEALTH TEAM

We participated on the **Trans and Non-Binary Task force** through the Muskoka Almaguin Ontario Health Team.

In partnership with the District of Muskoka, we facilitated the Community Engagement Panel at the 2026 **Hate Free Muskoka Symposium.**



We strengthened our relationships with Indigenous partners and communities.

An abstract painting of several hands in various colors (yellow, pink, blue, purple, orange) reaching towards the center, symbolizing partnership and communication. The style is expressive with visible brushstrokes.

Effective Communication & Partnership

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

Effective Communication & Partnership

Fundraising and donations

Fundraising and donations through community partners and local businesses help fund our programs throughout the year to support families. This includes basic needs, summer camps, back-to-school and holiday assistance.

\$737,853

total in donations
(financial & in-kind)



\$138,442

collected through Holiday
donations

\$347,818

gifted through in-kind donations

\$244,199

given through other programs



5,146

total requests filled* for
families & individuals*

*Some of the individuals are counted within
the number of families

106



volunteers

124

independent youth supported
during the Holiday Program

316,266

KMs driven

Effective Communication & Partnership



We welcomed a new **Fund Development and Engagement Coordinator** to meet the growing needs of the community and strengthen our donor relations.

We received financial support through **10** community grants to enhance our community programs. This included grants for our camp program, basic needs program, clothing and bedding needs.

We continued to receive major support from multiple community businesses to enhance our community programs and serve even more community clients.



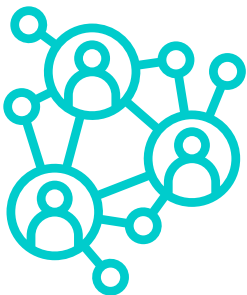
We celebrated another successful Holiday Program thanks to our ongoing **CTV Toy Mountain** partnership.

Effective Communication & Partnership



We strengthened our partnership with the **Barrie Colts** who offered financial & in-kind support on multiple community programs.

We participated in the **community safety wellbeing plan** for Simcoe and Muskoka.



We are a partner of the **Simcoe County Youth Network** whose goal is to strengthen integrated services for transitional aged youth.



We prepared **359 backpacks** during our Back-to-school program.

Effective Communication & Partnership

We completed **75** Camp-in-box requests to offer alternative experiences for children who couldn't attend camp in person and continued partnering with many local camps across Simcoe & Muskoka and the GTA to provide various and diverse options to children through our **Camp Program.**



We offered **21** duty to report presentations to community partners to educate them on child welfare and their responsibilities.

We participated in **Pride Events** in Barrie, Collingwood, Midland and Bracebridge to celebrate to show our continued support to the 2SLGBTQ+ community.



We organized our first **Steps for Safety** event to fundraise for our Anti-Human Trafficking initiatives.

FINANCIALS

STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENSES

For the year ended March 31

2026

2025

Revenues

Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services

\$ 54,700,418 \$ 53,424,574

Ministry of Health

\$ 2,429,856 2,336,756

Other

\$ 3,843,022 4,267,395

Gross Revenues

\$ 60,973,296 60,028,726

Expenses

Administration and other

\$ 17,992,185 18,451,476

Boarding rate payments

\$ 16,256,226 13,179,999

Salaries and wages

\$ 27,246,700 28,394,059

Gross Expenses

\$ 61,495,111 60,025,534

Excess of revenues over expenses for the year

\$ (521,815) \$ 3,192

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2025-26

BOARD CHAIR:

GISELE FORREST

VICE CHAIR:

KENNY MACDONALD

TREASURER:

MARY-ANNE DENNY-LUSK

SECRETARY:

DEBBIE OPOKU-MULDER

CARLYNNE BELL

MATTHEW DURAND

LAURA FERRIS

MELISSA KILPATRICK

STEPHANIE MARTINEZ

HANS MUNTZ

TAMARA OBEE

JOHN WALLER

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www.familyconnexions.ca



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