



**Further Education Society**  
Lasting Change Through Collaboration  
Annual Report 2022-2023



**Further Education Society**  
Strengthening Communities

FESA acknowledges that the land upon which we work and call home is on the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksika, Kainai, Piikani), the Tsuut'ina, the Îyâxe Nakoda Nations, the Métis Nation of Alberta Region 3, and all people who make their homes in the Treaty 7 region of Southern Alberta.

We are grateful to work on the territory that situates Calgary, which is known as Mohkinstsis by the Blackfoot, Guts'ists'i by Tsuut'ina, and Wîchîspa by the Îyâxe Nakoda, as we endeavor to build a more literate and learning society allowing all to reach their potential.



## About FESA

Further Education Society of Alberta (FESA) has been building innovative partnerships, community capacity and strength-based literacy and essential skills curriculum for over 25 years.

We recognize that literacy has an impact on all aspects of family and community life from education to health, employment, finances, social welfare, and justice. Literacy is essential to personal empowerment and community engagement.

An important part of our work is collaboration. We work with a cross-sector of community to bring a voice to the needs of learners, to reach the most vulnerable learners and families, find new opportunities and to build strong foundations to sustain our programs.

**Our programs are built to grow,  
belong to and have a lasting impact  
in the communities we assist  
across Canada.**



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# CREATING Lasting Change

## Letter from our President, FESA's Board of Directors

### Donna Rapp

Change is inevitable. In my nine years serving on the Board of Further Education Society of Alberta, change has been a constant. Our Board. Governments. Donors. Programs. Offices. Collaborators. Supporters. Policies. Procedures. Priorities. Some fear change. But FESA has always embraced it, grown as a result, and achieved because of it. In fact, FESA's whole purpose is to create lasting change for the communities they serve to effectively address the ongoing needs of families, children and adults seeking literacy and lifelong learning.

FESA also has never shied away from community partnerships, collaboration, and consultation in order for that change to be profound. I've always been impressed with the fact that they work with communities and partners from a place of respect, listening and learning, and they give voice and power when developing sustainable programs.

This approach is hard work. But nothing truly rewarding or meaningful is easy. However, the hard work continues to pay off for FESA and, more importantly, for the communities and people served. This past year, engaged learners have increased 33%, and over 90% of learners gained confidence, new skills, and achieved their learning goals.

We can't ignore other numbers such as 66 facilitators trained, 39 partnerships delivering 122 programs, and 18 new resources and programs developed. Oh, and did I mention FESA 'gives it all away' to community organizations? This is intentional and has always been at their core.

This Annual Report elegantly profiles and celebrates our learners, programs, accomplishments, and supporters, but I will highlight a few standouts. The Pathways Project had a successful first year and continues to deliver Indigenous Workplace Learning Circle and Cooks with Stones programs...the latter having been invited by the High Commission of Canada to London, England to showcase their culinary skills and culture.

Our Financial Literacy work expanded to include a women's program, and FESA was awarded the HSBC Family Literacy First Fund for First Steps in Financial Literacy. Our Reading and Writing Circles responded to emerging community needs with new programs at three Mustard Seed locations and Women in Need Society (WINS), the latter supporting the influx of Ukrainian refugees. Our programs also addressed Resume Building and Stress Management, Leadership and Life Skills Training and an expanded Homework Club.

And if that's not significant enough, FESA moved back to in-person learning while still offering excellent online programming. This means FESA is even more flexible and accommodating to its learners and their communities.



None of this would be possible without leadership, compassion and good old-fashioned relationship building. Elaine Cairns, FESA's Executive Director, has a track record that has proven this out every day for the past 27 years. My pleasure has been to work with her, learn from her and watch impressed as she shares her knowledge and skills with others. It's reflected in her accomplished staff and facilitators, and the trust of Elders and collaborators. I also want to acknowledge and thank our dedicated Board of Directors. Besides ensuring FESA practices good governance, they also supported this year's Casino and our very first online 50/50 fundraising campaign. They've provided guidance through the many changes. Some members generously agreed to extend their terms, committing to lasting changes into the future.

Everyone has made my job much easier, great fun, very rewarding and truly unforgettable.

**“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”**

- Margaret Mead



**845**   
children reached through family literacy programs

**66**   
facilitators trained to deliver FESA programs in their communities

**18**   
new resources and programs developed



# Our Impact in Numbers

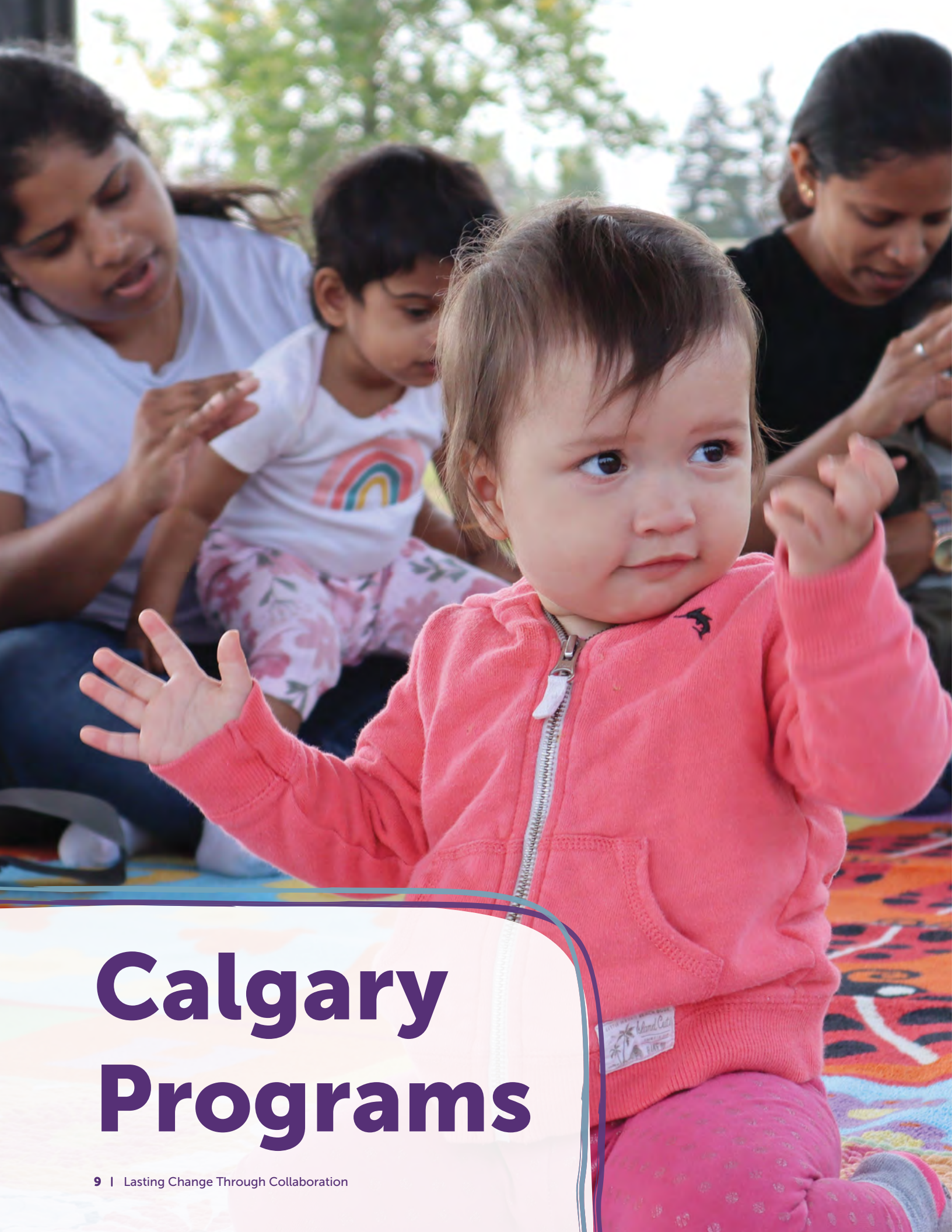
**1270**   
adult learners and families engaged in literacy and essential skills programs  
**↑33% increase**

**95%**  
of learners applied their new skills outside of class

**39**   
partnerships delivering  
**122**  
programs

**94%**  
of learners showed increased confidence

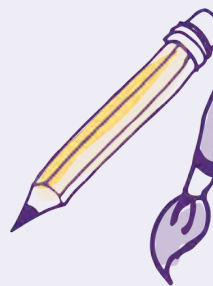




# Calgary Programs

Listening and understanding our learners has always been the catalyst to building success in our programs. This year we expanded our in-person programming, restarted and adapted old programs, and created new ones in response to the needs of our community. We worked in partnership to reach learners across Calgary from newcomers, to families and women in need, to Indigenous learners. Engaging our learners in a meaningful way, inspiring and bringing relevance to their learning and the community around them.

The following stories are just some of the ways our dedicated team have met learners where they are, collaborated and tailored programs to meet their needs over the past year.



## Engaging Families

Our goal is to create stronger communities where children and families can build the foundational learning and literacy skills they need to create beneficial and lasting change in their lives.

### Family Literacy Events and Outreach

We held fun-filled family events with our partner organizations to engage children and their families including celebrating:

- National Children's Day with Mount Royal University Child Care Centre,
- Family Day with Mustard Seed's Manchester Neighbour Centre, and
- a summer program with YW Calgary.

The events include art, sensory stations, crafts, beading, literacy based activities like interactive storytelling with puppets and props, singing and rhymes and family learning kits for everyone to take home.





**“It has let me and my kid get involved in the group and community.”**

**“My child, who is 2 and a half, made progress learning new nursery rhymes, communication and interactive skills. She actually sat down and tried to recite the songs and gained more confidence.”**

- Family Literacy Program and Event Participants



**Over 100 family learning kits gifted to families.**

Every year we give holiday gift baskets to our partner agencies to share with their clients and family learning kits to learners at our events and programs. Family learning kits contain educational materials, games and activities to help foster learning, literacy and numeracy skills at home.

## Responding to Community Need

Communities have changing needs. In response to these needs and requests from our partner organizations, we restarted Jumpstart and New Beginnings programs across Calgary with the Calgary Pregnancy Care Centre, Immigrant Services Calgary and Trellis Society.

Jumpstart is a program that celebrates and supports parents as their child's first teacher. It helps parents with their parenting skills and encourages parents to read to their children from an early age. New Beginnings is an award-winning family literacy program designed to help families who have been impacted by family violence.

**I just wanted to say thank you for making this program possible, it felt so good to talk with peers as their sharing really did warm my heart and I felt what a positive and caring environment where other mothers were so open and sincere and that means a lot to me so thank you. That was an amazing experience that makes me feel so good about pursuing further programs.**

- New Beginnings Participant

## Power of Reading

Jana is a mother of two children, a 5-month-old and a 5-year-old. She was eager to learn more about how she could support her children's literacy development and decided to attend our Jumpstart program at the Calgary Pregnancy Care Centre in February 2023.

Jumpstart is designed to help parents with babies up to 18 months old. The program covers topics like helping babies to grow and talk, as well as helping parents through parenthood.

Jana was engaged in the sessions from the start, often actively asking questions with answers that the rest of the group could benefit from as well. Jana was particularly interested in learning strategies to support her baby's speech and language skills. She learned the importance of talking to her baby frequently, even if the baby couldn't understand the words yet. She also learned the benefits of using a sing-song voice and exaggerating facial expressions to help her baby learn to communicate.

To Jana's surprise, she was able to apply the knowledge she gained from Jumpstart to support her 5-year-old's literacy development too. Her 5-year-old had been struggling in development and Jana wasn't sure how to help. Through Jumpstart she learned the power of reading aloud to her older child. In addition, she learned how to choose appropriate books according to children's ages and interests, and how to engage her older child in conversation about the stories they read together. She shared that by doing this, she was not only helping her child develop important literacy skills, but also fostering a stronger attachment between her and child.

By the end of the program, Jana reflected that she felt much more confident in her ability to support both her children's literacy development. She was grateful for the opportunity to attend the Jumpstart program and felt that it had made a real difference in her family's life.

- Jumpstart Program Facilitator



Learners in our family literacy programs saw a significant increase in the amount they **praised, hugged and laughed** with their children. - Family & Community Services Data Report 2022-2023



## Partnering for Holistic Support

Literacy and essential skills are life skills. Low literacy impacts our ability to live a full life and our learners often face many interconnected issues from finances, to health, relationships and housing.

We worked closely with our partners to expand our family literacy programs, and deliver our new Financial Literacy for Women program at women's shelters, pregnancy care centres, and recovery centres. We tailored our programs to complement and support the services offered by our partners, including offering combinations of Literacy and Parenting Skills, New Beginnings and Parent Child Mother Goose, single parenting and cross-cultural parenting programs and hybrid delivery models (online and in-person simultaneously) to meet learners' needs.

This year also marks a 10-year partnership with Calgary Remand Centre delivering an adapted New Beginnings/Literacy and Parenting program as part of a program called 'Treatment, Knowledge, Opportunity' or TKO. TKO was for inmates anticipating release to learn skills for a new more positive life. The FESA portion of the program involved life skills such as communication, cooperation, conflict management, healthy relationships and working with others effectively. This program was extremely well-received, although for reasons beyond our control the program has been paused, it has been the start of a growing partnership with Calgary Young Offender Centre (and Women's Remand). We have started offering a similar program tailored to female inmates' learning needs alongside our Financial Literacy for Women program at the centre.

We look forward to continue working closely with our partners across Calgary to better support learners navigating barriers and difficulties to find confidence, hope, and a way forward.

**She said that the class has been so good, especially how the other moms share so openly, and this has made her feel safe enough to be vulnerable. She said to me, 'It's not that I was expecting to have a negative experience, but I thought it was going to be more like a lecture.'**

**Clients in this course are taking it because they need to, and they are already feeling so vulnerable and judged by others in their world. Yet the space that has been created here is one of safety, non-judgement and the material has been valuable and useful.**

- Stakeholder

**We were able to make a huge change in the lives of many men. So many seeds were planted!**

**Our team beautifully complemented each other's skill set like a well coordinated dance. We delivered a great program that offered hope, challenge and insight.**

**Our participants were finally able to see their worth, many for the first time.**

- Stakeholder

## Finding Community

Sara is a mom of newborn twin infants, which means life has become a whirlwind of feedings, diaper changes, and sleepless nights.

Fortunately, Sara found a community at the Alcove Addiction Recovery Centre where she has been participating in a combined Parent Child Mother Goose/Literacy and Parenting Program since December 2022. Each week, she joined a group of moms and their children to learn songs, rhymes, and stories that help her connect with her infants and build their language skills, in addition to parenting strategies and skills to help her parenting journey.

Sara was nervous about singing when she first started the program. Soon she realized that everyone in the group was in the same boat. As she continued to attend this program, she grew more and more confident engaging in singing and rhyming with her babies.

She shared with the group that she had begun to use the songs and stories to increase the amount of time she spent talking to her babies, especially when she felt she had nothing to say. She found that the songs and stories they were learning in this program weren't just for entertainment. They were a powerful tool for building her babies' brains and helping them develop crucial language skills.

Sara was a dedicated learner, always showing up on time and trying to gain the most out of the program. She often wrote her thoughts down and patiently waited for her turn to share. She also took notes of information she thought was useful for her reference again in the future.

**Observing how her babies had grown and thrived during the time attending the program, Sara felt grateful for the support and guidance she had received from the facilitator and her fellow moms. She expressed that the skills she had learned would continue to serve her and her babies well for years to come.**

- Parent Child Mother Goose/Literacy and Parenting Skills Program Facilitator





# Financial Literacy

## for Women and Families

Financial literacy empowers people to make informed decisions about their finances. It is crucial to the realization of many of our long-term goals and contributes to overall well-being and stability. We also know that for some groups of learners, like women, there are gaps in financial literacy and confidence that need to be addressed to achieve economic empowerment.

This year, we developed and delivered a new Financial Literacy for Women program. The program consists of 10-sessions covering topics including: financial challenges facing women today and what financial independence looks like, budgeting, debt, credit and credit ratings, mortgages, planning for kids and teaching our kids good financial habits.

We launched the program in partnership with Calgary Pregnancy Care Centre in April and Nisa Homes in May, collecting feedback from participants, facilitators, and partner agency staff to modify the curriculum to better fit our learners' needs. Since then, we have partnered with Alcove Addiction Recovery for Women and Calgary Young Offenders Centre to start delivering the program in-person.

**The financial literacy program has not only benefited the clients but also the staffs as well. Staff found the sessions very informative and we always look forward to attend with the clients on days we are available just because there's always a new knowledge to take away.**

- Stakeholder

## Breakthrough Moments

The participants were initially immigrant women who fled domestic violence but didn't really understand how money and finance worked here in Canada. The other group at the Remand are women with addictions, who need to get their lives back on track and learning to manage their money effectively is a huge part of that.

This program is so vital as many women either haven't been brought up to look after money properly, or culturally it isn't expected that women are financially aware. It is also a program that anyone could take and learn something from and would work particularly well with grade 12 students or even those in the first couple of years at university.

The program was run in the full 10 weeks format for the women's shelter, but for the Calgary Women's Remand we selected topics that the participants would find most beneficial immediately upon release.

One thing I have learned from putting this program together then facilitating it is that everybody has completely different needs. Also, you need to meet the participants where they are and understand their predicaments so you can help them as much as possible.

There were many breakthrough moments. One lady at the shelter stated she now had the knowledge to build her credit rating independently and also would be changing her habits to teach her kids how to handle money more effectively. With the Remand ladies it is slightly more difficult, but the breakthrough for me was them being so grateful that we thought they were worth working with and teaching this to.

- Del Edwards, FESA Facilitator

## HSBC Family Literacy First Fund Winner 2023

Awarded for our **First Steps In Financial Literacy** program which is aimed at enhancing parents' confidence in basic money management for themselves and their families, with a focus on at-risk, low-literate, multi-barrier adult learners. The Award highlighted the program's non-formal, experiential, and interactive approach and the Family Learning Kits provided to further support literacy and numeracy skills within families.



# More than a Homework Club

This year we were presented with an amazing opportunity to deliver a Homework Club program when The Mustard Seed Manchester Community Impact Centre reached out. The 2-hour weekly evening sessions provided a safe place for school-aged children between the ages of 6 years old and 12 years old in the Manchester Neighborhood and fostered the development of children's literacy and social skills.

'The parents of children in this area of Calgary, are typically newcomers to Canada and are working to provide basic needs for their children. The club provides continuity between school and home by giving children time to finish their homework and engage in outdoor play, arts and crafts activities while parents finish work. Providing a caring, one on one, nonjudgmental space for children to ask for help with homework was the first objective. However, the program became so much more than that.

In the beginning, as I observed the children, I noticed lots of running around in the room with no structure and little for the children to do. I was doubting whether I would be able to get the kids to try anything new and begin to trust me. I introduced some interactive games at different tables and was able to get the children to become interested by being enthusiastic and inviting the children to play with me and the volunteers. As the weeks passed, I introduced more matching and interactive games and fun activities such as drawing with sidewalk chalk, making bird feeders, blowing bubbles and painting canvas for Father's Day (special someone day). I noticed the kids becoming more engaged and the number of children attending rise weekly, as well.

The children in this program became more and more excited to attend the program because they came to know that they would be doing exciting and fun activities. They came to the Homework Club less reluctant and more willing to participate as the weeks went by. One child who was very unwilling to cooperate and engage with the other children and myself became the class leader and helped set up snacks and some materials needed for activities. He also had a keyboard that he played at and put on a performance for all of us to enjoy.

Providing a safe, nurturing, partly structured and non-judgmental space for the children to engage in fun-filled activities, allowed them to grow and flourish in their abilities to interact with adults and the other children and also allowed them to explore their creativity.'

- Filomena Abdi, FESA Facilitator

For the last session of Homework Club, we held a simple ceremony where each child received a family learning kit to help with continuous learning during summer vacation and an individual certificate highlighting each child's strengths such as the most helpful, the most creative and the most thoughtful.



"Throughout the week, the kids would stop in the office and ask if they had homework club that evening because they loved coming to the program—it was always the highlight of their week! I am filled with so much gratitude that FESA was able to help us reach these kids in a new way and make a meaningful impact right here in Manchester." - Stakeholder

# Support for Newcomers

## When It's Needed Most

With Calgary being the fourth most common destination for newcomers to Canada the demand for immigrant services remains high. We worked with our partners to expand the delivery of our workplace and employment literacy programs and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs for learners facing long waitlists to access resources and English Language lessons.

Resume Building and Employment Preparation Workshops were delivered through Calgary Catholic Immigration Society's community outreach program to Ukrainian refugees and South American clients. We also responded to an increased demand for our ESL Reading and Writing Circles programs with our partners at the Mustard Seed and Women in Need Society. At the Mustard Seed the program now runs almost year-round and is delivered at three centres, and at two levels, one for beginners and the other for more advanced learners due to the high demand.

For organizations in the Gateway network we offered their clients workshops for parenting and dealing with the challenges and stress of migrating. Gateway is a collaborative of over 50 local partner agencies working together to provide newcomers with the best-fit services in Calgary. The success of these workshops mean we have now joined Gateway and will be able to receive referrals through the platform. We look forward to being a part of this initiative and continue expanding our programs with our partner agencies in the coming year.



"The Reading and Writing Circles program has emerged as an instrumental platform for skill development among our clients. It has provided a safe and supportive environment in which participants can express themselves in writing and receive personalized assistance with reading, writing, and conversational English. This approach has fostered an atmosphere of inclusivity and encouragement, enabling our clients to build their language proficiency and boost their confidence..."

Many participants who initially struggled with language barriers have made remarkable strides in their ability to communicate effectively. Beyond the linguistic advancements, participants seem to have an increased self-esteem, a deeper sense of belonging in our centres, and improved social integration." - Stakeholder

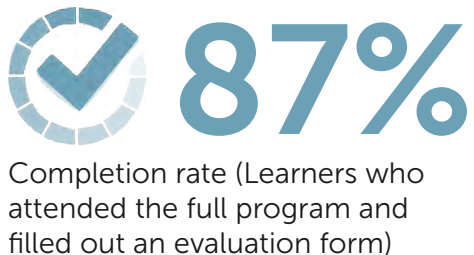


Pathways is a national multi-year project that brings together Elders, Indigenous youth and their communities, literacy and essential skills specialists, bridging organizations, and employers to create ways to meaningful employment for Indigenous youth in the Tourism and Government sectors.

Together we're developing a holistic and comprehensive Employment Training and Mentorship model to remove barriers, build workplace literacy skills and self-confidence, and increase opportunities for work experience and mentorship. We're supporting Indigenous youth to find their space, and their voice, within their communities and the work environment.

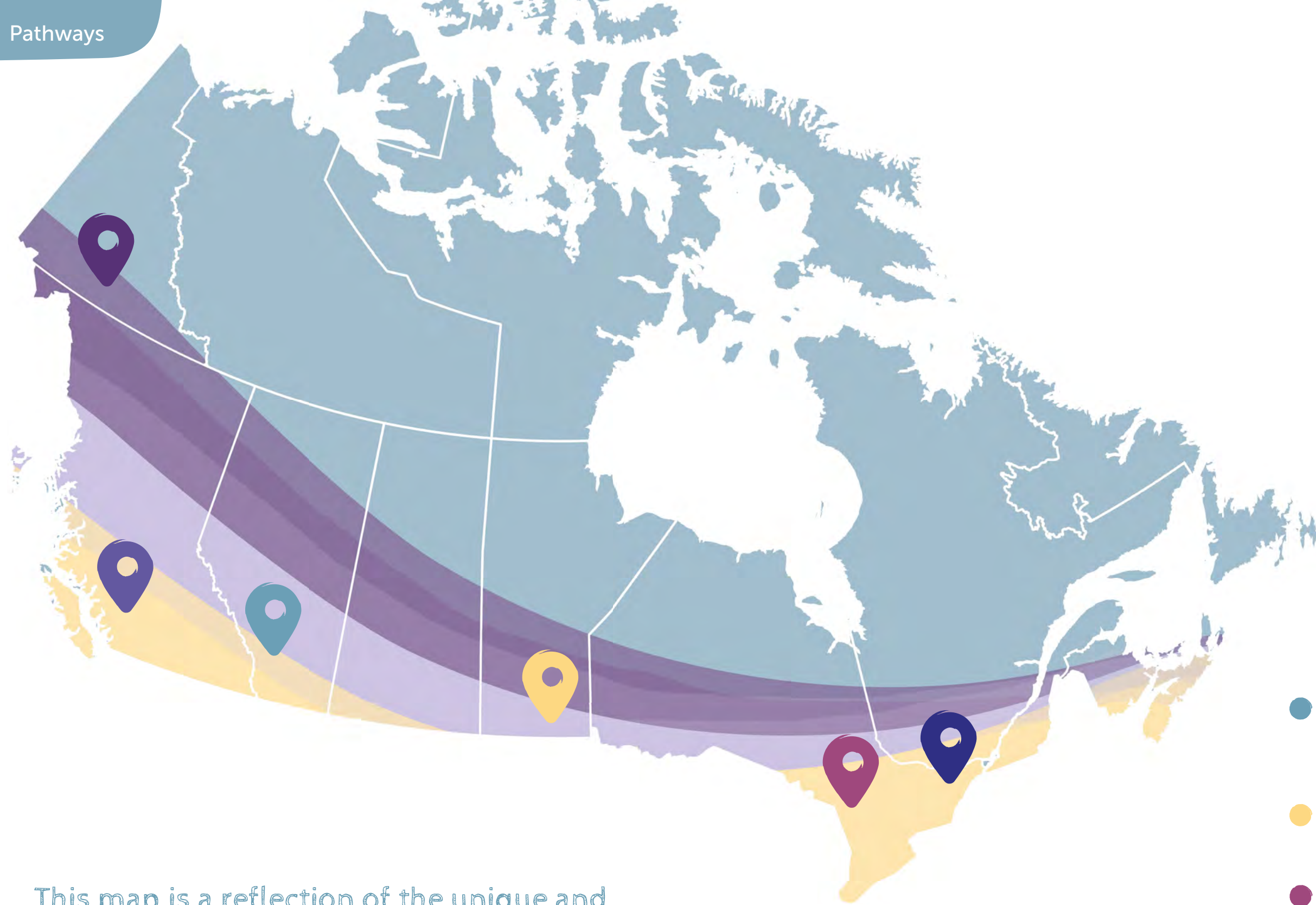
As we move into the second year of Pathways, we reflect on the milestones reached and relationships built so far. Relationship building will continue to be a priority as we work to maintain and establish partnerships that reflect a cultural understanding and respect for the unique communities and organizations we work with. It's from these foundations of trust and understanding we're creating innovative responses, new resources, tailored programs and trainings, and new opportunities for Indigenous youth across Canada. Take a look at what we've already accomplished.

### Pathways in Numbers (Since February 2022)



# Pathways

Funded in part by the Government of Canada's Sectoral Initiatives Program



This map is a reflection of the unique and invaluable contributions to Pathways from partners and communities across Canada. It's a celebration of an incredible journey so far.

- Indigenous Workplace Learning Circles, Cooks with Stones and Building Community Capacity (Calgary, Stoney Nakoda)
- Me-yaw-sin Micowin "Good Food", New Partnerships (Winnipeg)
- Youth Leadership and Governance (Saugeen)
- Pathways to Tourism and Government (Ottawa)
- Cooks with Stones in London (London, UK)
- Listening and Laying Groundwork (Yukon)
- Guided by a National Advisory Circle (Vancouver)

## Listening and Laying Groundwork (Yukon)

We visited the Yukon to explore new collaborations and partnerships. During the 4-day visit we had the opportunity to meet many amazing organizations and individuals including the Yukon Literacy Coalition, who helped us explore the communities there, Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association, Tourism Association of Yukon, Carcross Tagish First Nation Learning Centre and Long Ago Peoples Place.

In the coming years, we will continue to work regionally to determine how the tools developed and knowledge learned through Pathways can be adapted to other sites.

## Guided by a National Advisory Circle (Vancouver)

The Pathways National Advisory Circle (NAC) is now formed with 8 Indigenous members including Elders Vinnia Van Overdyk and Ningwakwe George, Chair of the NAC Ted Norris and three youth. An important part of the NAC is the mentorship and voice of the Indigenous youth members who are providing their perspective and insight on the project's vision, and the resources and programs being developed and delivered.

After a series of virtual meetings this year, the NAC gathered for an in-person meeting and a Cedar weaving workshop with Bill Davis in Vancouver.

We want to give a special thank you and acknowledgement to Elder Vinnia Van Overdyk for offering her wisdom and expertise as the Elder for Pathways. Vinnia has worked closely with FESA for many years, and her contributions have been immeasurable to our understanding of Indigenous culture and people and understanding how to work in any community Indigenous or non-Indigenous. She has personally helped deliver many of our Indigenous programs, learning technology during the Covid pandemic as we moved programs online, and recently journeying to the top of a mountain via Banff Gondola for our recent Cooks with Stones closing ceremony. Thank you, Vinnia!

**When I think about Vinnia, my mind goes to the session the NAC had in Vancouver in June of this year. Bill Davis was invited to lead the group in a Cedar Weaving Workshop at the end of our formal meeting. Watching Vinnia's concentration as she mastered the weaving was magical and her laughter at one of Bill's jokes was so infectious. She brings us all joy and warmth as well as a deep well of wisdom.**

- Ted Norris, Chair of NAC, Pathways



## Indigenous Workplace Learning Circles, Cooks with Stones and Building Community Capacity (Calgary and Stoney Nakoda)

Indigenous Workplace Learning Circles (IWLC) helps foundational learners, people new to the workplace and people returning to work. The program builds on learners strengths, incorporating traditional culture and language with employment readiness training to build their confidence and literacy skills.

We continued delivering IWLC in partnership with Stoney Nation Job Resource Center to help establish a strong peer and cultural support network for Indigenous youth in the community. The IWLC program has incorporated a 'culture week' into the program that gives learners a chance to bead, and make drums and ribbon skirts.

This impactful part of the program is also a chance to discover and recognize all the literacy and essential skills, and talents they already have.

**They're learning essential skills, numeracy and documenting their culture by beading a hat or making a drum. They have so many skills they don't even know. Then they have an epiphany and realize the kind of skills they have that can be transferred to a workplace.**

- Shawna Linklater, FESA Facilitator

Building capacity is also a big part of our partnership with Stoney Nation Job Resource Center and we've been working with the employees by offering mentorship and training.

## Figuring out who I am as a person

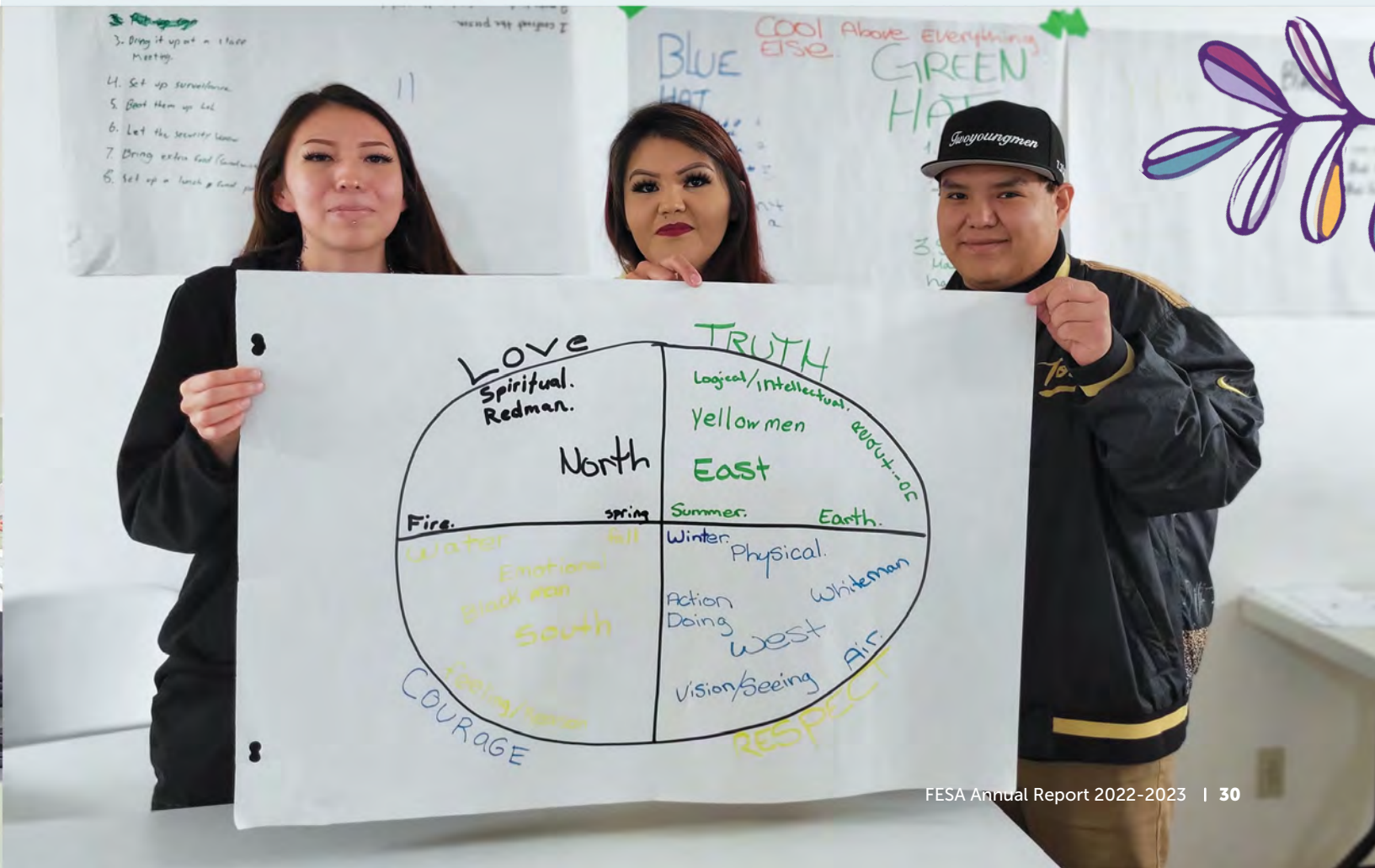
My favourite part about this experience is that I get to make new friends. I get to do activities that I probably wouldn't have expected here. Like, I never thought that I would be beading and making drums and stuff. I thought this would be like school, like work, we'd be learning by writing on paper all the time, not doing the exercises we do and the group activities that we do.

It helps you adapt to things better; I'm not scared to go out in public and talk to people now. When I see people I'm familiar with in public I would not talk to them.

I'd say 'Hi, hello' and just walk away. I wouldn't have a conversation with them, my anxiety is too high for that, I can't keep a conversation going with someone for long periods of time because I'm shy...

This program is helping me figure out who I am as a person, it's helping me discover more things about myself that I didn't know. When I first came here, I never thought I'd be here in this chair speaking publicly like this.

- IWLC Participant





### Skills for Success through an Indigenous Lens

Elder Ningwakwe George travelled to Calgary to lead a workshop called Skills for Success through an Indigenous Lens for facilitators and consultants in Pathways. The interactive workshop looked at the Skills for Success through storytelling, reflection and sharing. Each skill was explored through the real life journeys of youth from Saugeen, Ningwakwe’s community, followed by a time for reflection, and sharing on how participants have used or seen the same skills open doors in their lives.

The workshop will support Pathways facilitators to deliver similar content, incorporating stories from their own lives and community with discussion, in new and current programs.

**I just want people to realize they are very powerful, that they do have gifts, they just need to realize what they are, and we help them develop those gifts.**

- Elder Ningwakwe George, Member of the National Advisory Circle, Pathways

### Cooks with Stones

Cooks with Stones is an award-winning program combining a traditional knowledge and skills camp, workplace essential skills training, culinary training, mentorship, and job placements.

One of the highlights of Cooks with Stones has been the opportunity for mentorship with renowned Indigenous chefs. This year’s partnering chef was Chef Shane Chartrand from the Maple Leaf Banff and Banff Hospitality Collective’s Indigenous programming. He led workshops for the participating youth in Calgary’s Confederation Park preparing a wide range of dishes including spicy summer salads, Spanish-inspired paella and bison heart over an open flame.

**Really what it’s all about is just taking the Indigenous touchstones of information and sharing it with the youth so they can take over my position... At the end of the day, we’re all going to sit together as a family, as new friends, and eat the food that we’ve created. It’s pretty important and it’s pretty incredible.**

- Chef Shane Chartrand

### Cooks with Stones London (London, UK)

Cooks with Stones continued to evolve and grow, its profound impact being recognized nationally and internationally led to new partnerships and opportunities.

This year, Indigenous youth and chefs from the program were invited by the High Commission of Canada in the United Kingdom, in partnership with Rainmaker Global Market Access to showcase Indigenous cuisine at Canada Day London on June 29, 2023.

This once in a lifetime opportunity was the culmination of their time in Cooks with Stones, and a chance to inspire an international audience with their new culinary skills at a VIP reception at Canada House and festivities in Trafalgar Square.

In the months before, the students trained and prepared menus with Chef Scott Iserhoff of Pei Pei Chei Ow and Chef Dean Herkert of Bistro on Notre Dame. They also received training and support for travel preparations, passports, completing food safety tickets and confidence to meet and greet people at the events.

When Canada Day London arrived, the menus they had curated with their mentoring chefs took centre stage. Under the direction of Canada House Executive Chef Gavin Sayer and Chef Dean Herkert, they delighted the VIP audience at Canada House with a menu of venison, wild rice, berries and Chaga tea.

**It’s an honour for all of us to serve the guests of Canada House Indigenous cuisine rooted in traditional food sources. Our dishes showcase how the Indigenous Youth have applied traditional cooking methods in a modern context with authentic, delicious results!**

- Chef Dean Herkert

In Trafalgar Square, the group greeted the public and shared Cooks with Stones from a marquee tent in the Indigenous People of Canada feature at the festivities. Next to the tent was a Food Truck featuring a venison shin poutine they created with Chef Scott Iserhoff which had been inspired by the incorporation of potatoes in the First Nations’ diet.

**It feels like a special opportunity to show everyone our skills. I’ve never been out of the country before. It seems like a great opportunity to show everyone our catering skills and what we can do in a different country.**

- Cooks with Stones Participant

This incredible opportunity to build culinary skills, network and explore another culture was the result of hard work, support, and many partnerships. We want to give a special thanks to our corporate supporters, Dig Insights, Timko Developments Ltd and Air Canada, to everyone who purchased 50/50 raffle tickets, and the many others that supported Cooks with Stones London.



Lasting Change Through Collaboration





“Only In My Dreams”  
Did I think I’d be where I am right now

## Micowin "Good Food", New Partnerships (Winnipeg)

The International Indigenous Tourism Conference (IITC) in Winnipeg was an incredible opportunity to connect with Indigenous tourism operators around the world. We met industry leaders and innovators, toured local Indigenous experiences and businesses, and enjoyed a "Taste of Turtle Island" with Indigenous chefs from across Canada.

A particularly meaningful partnership that's been built this year is with Chef Dean Herkert, owner of Bistro on Notre Dame (BoND), who mentored and guided the Indigenous youth from Cooks with Stones in their journey to London. Planning is now underway with Chef Dean to create the Me-yaw-sin Micowin "Good Food" program in Winnipeg. The program will focus on supporting Métis youth in the area, and we are exploring partnerships with key learning and community based organizations.

## Pathways to Tourism and Government (Ottawa)

In Ottawa we continued to grow our partnership with Indigenous youth organization Assembly of Seven Generations (A7G). We supported and connected with youth and community at their annual round dance and delivered training at Adaawewigamig, a storefront and social enterprise that supports A7G in Ottawa's Byward Market. The 2-day workshop explored the strengths and challenges of running the store, developed skills and selling techniques and was an opportunity to highlight the abilities they already have and the power of storytelling for products in the store.

We're continuing to explore pathways and opportunities in tourism for youth with A7G, as well as in government as we begin developing pre-employment training for Indigenous youth interested in the Government sector.

## Youth Leadership and Governance (Saugeen)

Together with Elder Ningwakwe George and the Coady International Institute, we explored youth leadership and governance in Saugeen First Nation. We spoke with Elders and knowledge keepers, youth, community members, and past and present elected leaders about what makes a good leader. Ideas for how youth can become leaders, Indigenous youth leadership programs, and assessing the needs and challenges for aspiring youth leaders were topics of discussion.

The knowledge and suggestions gathered from the interviews will shape and guide proposed Indigenous Youth Leadership and Governance Programs. Four elements that emerged as foundational to leadership were:

- Understanding Identity—who we are and where we come from
- Future Generation/Seventh Generation Thinking
- Living in two worlds
- A deep understanding of oral history



## New Resources and Programs from Pathways

The invaluable contributions from all of our Pathways partners have also helped develop new tools to support confidence, skill building and employment for Indigenous youth.

One highlight is our new 'Your Place in the Circle' eLearning program which is designed to reach Indigenous learners who experience barriers to digital literacy and to bridge Indigenous traditional knowledge into today's online learning environment. The program utilizes interactive storytelling to explore traditional talking circle teachings and the 7 Sacred Teachings.

The program was created collaboratively and ethically by Elders, FESA, Pathways consultants, and local Indigenous community members with a decolonized approach that respects the transfer of knowledge through protocol and ceremony.

An opening and closing ceremony was led by Elder Vinnia Van Overdyk and Elder Darryl Brass. The purpose being to bless the work and ensure it moves along in a smooth and ethical manner. Also, to ensure the teachings are passed down properly, well received and benefit as many learners as possible in a good way.

Other tools developed this year include: 'Community Warriors', an Indigenous Men's Leadership Training, an online resume builder, life skills pre-employment curriculum and 'Strength in Relationships' an Indigenous and holistic intake and assessment tool that we have started piloting in Cooks with Stones.

In the coming year, we will be developing eLearning content for our life skills curriculum and continue to work with our partners on tools and resources to support Indigenous youth on their career journeys.



### Train the Facilitator

An important way we build reach, community capacity and sustainability for our literacy programs is through our Train the Facilitator Workshops. It was exciting to connect again in-person with our Calgary and Pathways partners and communities.

**"Absolutely amazing strategies that don't make you uncomfortable. They were fun. I will incorporate it into many of the other sessions I facilitate."**

**"I will use it in many groups and 1:1 with the moms I support. I will tailor it for their needs, pulling from both programs and outside sources."**



# Celebration of Learning Awards

Every year we like to celebrate the dedication of our learners and the commitment and contributions of our partners to literacy and learning.

## Marjory Jove

### 2023 Celebration of Learning Award for Outstanding Learner

Marjory Jove is one of the participants in my Reading and Writing Circles Program at the Mustard Seed Manchester Community Impact Centre. She immigrated from Columbia to Canada two years ago and although she has a solid educational background and work experience she has been experiencing language and employment barriers as a newcomer.

Marjory has been attending the weekly program since November 2022. Her strong motivation to learn English and high commitment to this program are evident in her consistent attendance. She often seeks opportunities during session time to improve her reading skills by volunteering to read aloud the comprehension worksheets. She actively asks questions, seeks clarification, and participates in discussions. Marjory's positive learning attitude and active participation have contributed significantly to the overall dynamics and vibrancy of this class.

Marjory consistently supports her fellow learners in this program with kindness and patience. She purposefully engages those participants who are low in English proficiency and confidence to speak out into English conversations and positively encourages them to express themselves.

Marjory's willingness to help others extends beyond encouragement. Whenever needed in session time, she provides translations to the participants who speak the same native language as hers so that they can better understand my instruction.

Marjory has also taken on the role of an aunt to the young children who are attending the program with their parents, interacting with them during the session break time through fun play and interesting conversation. Marjory's kind and patient nature makes her an invaluable asset to the group, fostering a welcoming, supportive, and collaborative learning environment for everyone in this program. Her continued learning and progress are highly anticipated.

- Victoria Lepa, FESA Facilitator



## The Mustard Seed

### 2023 Celebration of Learning Award for Outstanding Organization

We are proud to have collaborated with The Mustard Seed the past year, working together to address the unique challenges faced by newcomers to Canada and those with limited English and literacy skills. In partnership we've delivered 74 sessions of Reading and Writing Circles at three of The Mustard Seed Community Impact Centres, started the new Homework Club program at The Mustard Seed Community Impact Centre and held community family literacy events.

Thank you to The Mustard Seed for your ongoing support, partnership and dedication to empowering learners, families and Calgary's communities.

**Heartfelt thanks to Sydney Pronyshyn, the site lead, and her staff! Without Sydney's outstanding leadership, excellent communication, and dedicated support, our programs at these three locations would not be so successful. We look forward to continuing our strong partnership with The Mustard Seed Community Impact Centre and delivering more FESA programs collaboratively in 2024!**

- Beibei Lu, Program Coordinator FESA



# Ningwakwe George

## 2023 Celebration of Learning Award for Outstanding Individual

Ningwakwe has a long history with FESA. She is one Canada's most respected experts in Indigenous literacy and has mentored and supported FESA's staff and work over many years. First connecting with FESA after we had just launched our Indigenous Literacy and Parenting Skills program and training and continues to guide us today on the National Advisory Circle for Pathways.

All the messages from FESA staff and colleagues show just how admired and deserving Ningwakwe is of this award.

**Ningwakwe has an aura of peace and calmness around her. You can feel it as soon as you meet her. You never feel any judgement, only guidance and support. She has been invaluable to me over many years. Her early support was critical to FESA's success in Indigenous communities, it opened doors for us.**

**When Ningwakwe talks, people listen. One can only admire her support for her community and the special connection she has bridged with Indigenous youth in Saugeen.**

- Elaine Cairns, Executive Director FESA

**You are always willing and ready to pass on your knowledge to the younger generation. Your work with the youths is a testament to how gracious and generous you are.**

- Elizabeth Ojei,  
Assistant Project Manager FESA

**Ningwakwe, your bright beaming light has always been a north star for so many who are finding their way. I am so grateful our paths crossed so many years ago and continue to cross to this day. Your kindness, wisdom, generosity, and genuineness is so refreshing and inspiring. Thank you for teaching, simply by being yourself.**

- Sade Auger, Regional Community Facilitator Pathways

**I want you to know how much I appreciate your hard work and dedication. You don't know it yet, but your guidance as my mentor has made a significant difference in my life. Congratulation on your award!**

- Shawna Linklater,  
FESA Facilitator and Trainer

**She is the light that shines through the clouds and touches earth. Ningwakwe has many superpowers. She is curious. She listens. She supports. She's a gem finder. A champion of youth. A community builder. Congratulations Ningwakwe. Thank you for being the light!**

- Pamela Lamb, FESA Facilitator

**Ningwake loves her community and goes out of her way to make sure everyone is comfortable and feels accepted.**

-Kraig Brachman, Communications/Social Media Specialist FESA

'Ningwakwe,

The news of your Learning Award for Outstanding Individual has greatly inspired me. It's not every day that I get to celebrate someone as deserving as you, so I was eager to send my warmest congratulations!

This award echoes what many of us have long recognized—your unwavering commitment to improving educational pathways and uplifting Indigenous communities, especially our youth, is truly extraordinary. Our work with FESA and Saugeen has allowed me to learn and grow from your wisdom as a supporter of emerging leaders. You are a shining example of someone who sees, hears and values every person's gifts, talents and strengths. You are a powerful community connector and advocate for learning.

Reflecting on our time working on projects over the last few years, I remember your incredible leadership. Your ability to assemble a remarkable group of community members or your talent for seamlessly integrating Indigenous wisdom has made the projects successful and contributed to everyone's growth and success.

While this award is a high honour, it's merely a formal acknowledgment of the worth we've always known you possess. It's gratifying to see your dedication and passion receive such prestigious recognition. As we move forward, I'm thrilled to join you in many more impactful initiatives.'

- Karri-Lynn Paul, Coady International Institute, St. Francis Xavier University





# Ted Norris

## 2023 Celebration of Learning Award for Outstanding Individual

Ted has been a champion of Indigenous literacy, education, culture, employment and social justice issues throughout his professional career. He joined FESA as the Vice-Chair on the National Advisory Circle (NAC) of our Going the Distance Project and is currently Chair of the NAC for Pathways. His passion for the work on both projects has been immeasurable. He's guided us, built key connections, and successfully bridged partnerships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups.

It's clear from everyone's messages how impactful he's been for FESA's work and on everyone individually.

What I have come to admire is his quiet strength, that everyone who meets him notices. People remember meeting Ted – all feel welcomed, valued, and respected. He has a strong belief in doing the right thing in the right way, something FESA has always tried to do. He has a gentle but firm leadership style that is helpful in all kinds of tricky situations and always comes to meetings bearing gifts for whoever he is meeting whether honey, syrup, or Metis apron it is always a thoughtful gift.

- Elaine Cairns, Executive Director FESA

Ted Norris is an extraordinary person who demonstrates his commitment to the Indigenous community through supporting people and projects that have a lasting impact on First Nations, Métis, and Inuit in Canada.

We have been so pleased to get to know Ted. He is a visionary. He is an excellent diplomat, community organizer and facilitator. We have learned a lot from him.

There is no one more deserving of this award!

- Celeste McKay and Chef Dean Herkert

You are so deserving of this award and I admire your dedication, passion towards helping Indigenous communities. I feel blessed to be part of this work with you, and to sit in your circle. You are an inspiration to many!

- Sade Auger, Regional Community Facilitator Pathways

We have a picture of Ted eating poutine from our Cooks with Stones London trip. He is wryly smiling at the camera as he pulls a cheese curd from the pile. Whether he is trying to get Elaine to wear a silly hat, wheeling and dealing for FESA in Ontario, or supporting all things Cooks with Stones by retweeting things, Ted is a passionate, fun-loving, energetic chair of the NAC who shows his dedication through his hard work.

- Kraig Brachman, Communications/ Social Media Specialist FESA

You have inspired me to reach more of my potential, to be brave in new situations ("London"). I also want to thank you again for the way that you handle tough situations with a smile and can-do attitude. It is incredibly encouraging. I am happy we got to see the world together. Ekosi- Thank you

- Shawna Linklater,

It is an honor to work alongside you. Your sincerity and thoughtfulness with people and relationships have taught me so much and your passion for serving and uplifting the Metis and Indigenous community has made an impact on lives of those around you.

Heartfelt congratulations on winning the Celebration of Learning Award! I hope this award reminds you of the incredible difference you continue to make in our workplace and within the wider community. I am fortunate to have you as a colleague and friend.

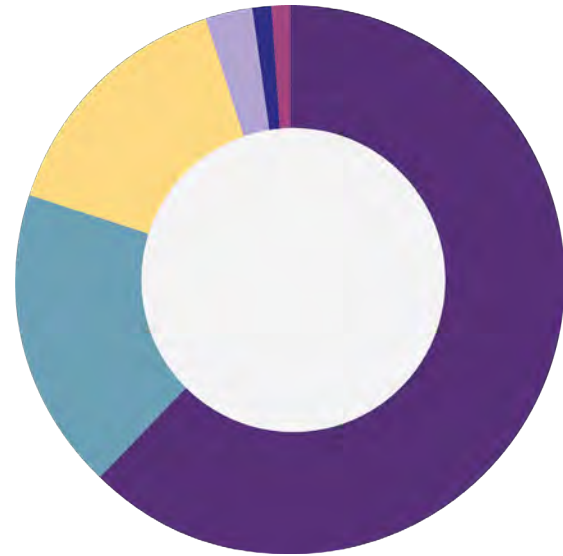
- Teal Dratowany, Senior Manager FESA

Congratulations! Your contributions have made a significant impact on FESA's work and the individuals we support. You are genuinely so kind and caring, and very deserving of this award.

- Aimee Lo, Executive Assistant FESA

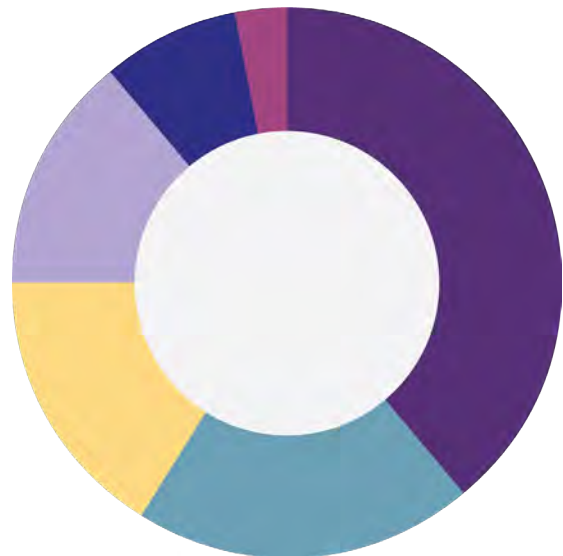


# Our Finances 2022-2023



**Income - 1,582,789**

- Grants Special Project 63%
- Grants Calgary Programs 18%
- Fundraising 15%
- Casino 3%
- Training Revenue 1%
- Other 1%



**Expenses - 1,581,943**

- Special Projects Delivery 39%
- Program Development 20%
- Calgary Programs Delivery 14%
- Facilitator Training 16%
- Administrative 8%
- Fundraising 3%

# Our People



**Donna Rapp**  
President



**Jenna Truong**  
Vice President



**Janine Rogan**  
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**Alesia Fieldberg**  
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**Judy Everson**  
Director

**Thank you**  
to our **volunteer Board** whose commitment to the organization is important to our success.



# Thank you

The Further Education Society would like to express our heartfelt thanks to our funders, partners and the many committed individuals who support our work by making generous contributions to help achieve our purpose.

## Funders

Alberta Lottery Fund (AGLC)  
Bears paw Benevolent Foundation  
Calgary Foundation  
City of Calgary - Family and Community Support Services  
Government of Canada - Skills for Success  
Government of Canada - Sectoral Initiatives Program  
HSBC Family Literacy First Fund  
Mackenzie Investments  
Shaw Birdies for Kids presented by AltaLink  
TC Energy

## Donors

Aimee Lo  
Angie Wisk  
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Charles Cotton  
*in honour of Sierra Hood*  
Cheryl Cohen  
Christine Sparrow  
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*in honour of Catherine Monica Pears*  
Donna Rapp  
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Teal Dratowany  
Ted Norris  
The Holy Spirit Catholic Women's League  
The Blue Spruce Investments Ltd  
The Blue Spruce (2018) Trust  
Tianna Melnyk  
Timko Development Ltd  
Virgil Smith  
West Fraser Mills Ltd

## In Celebration of Trevor Freeman

Trevor had a profound impact at FESA, and it was an honor and privilege to share time and work with him over the last three years. His expertise became a guiding light for us as we navigated the uncharted waters of eLearning during the pandemic. He led and contributed to many of our programs including, the online version of our Indigenous Workplace Learning Circles, Online Meeting Basics, Your Place in the Circle and Community Warriors, an Indigenous men's leadership training.



**"During Trevor's time at the Further Education Society he worked with many of our staff and project consultants. To work with Trevor was to get to know Trevor, to sit with him and listen to his stories of his family, his experiences and to solve the worlds problems together. His leadership in eLearning program development was marked by encouragement, reassurance, and a touch of humor."**

- Teal Dratowany, Senior Manager FESA

**"Trevor made us smile every time we met with him. Even during his illness, he would come to the office and make jokes about his condition or inability to do something. He was an incredibly special man. And we will always smile when we think of him, remember the good times we had with him, and how blessed we were to have him in our lives."**

- Elaine Cairns, Executive Director FESA

## In Celebration of Nipper Guest

We would also like to give a special thank you and acknowledgement to Nipper Guest who passed this year and his support for family literacy and our Parent Child Mother Goose program.

**"Nipper Guest was a remarkable man who always came into our office with a twinkle in his eye and a story to tell. His face would light up as he talked about his wife's love of the Parent Child Mother Goose program and how he was supporting it in honor of her. The Guest family's generosity has allowed us to help hundreds of vulnerable Calgary families experience the joy of learning and singing nursery rhymes, the importance of reading together and connecting every day. What a wonderful man; a life well lived. Our sincere condolences to the Guest family on his passing and our thanks for their many years of support."**

- Elaine Cairns, Executive Director FESA



## Partner Organizations

### Calgary Programs

Alcove Addiction Recovery for Women  
Calgary Remand Centre  
Calgary Young Offender Centre  
Calgary Catholic Immigration Society  
Calgary Pregnancy Care Centre  
Calgary John Howard Society  
Centre for Newcomers  
Immigrant Services Calgary  
Mount Royal University  
MRU Child Care Centre  
Nepalese Community Society of Calgary  
Nisa Homes  
City of Calgary Community Social Workers  
- Marlborough and Southwood Community  
The Mustard Seed Community Impact Centre  
- Manchester, Marlborough Park &  
Shaganappi Trellis Society  
- Trellis Commons Southwest Calgary,  
1000 Voices Community Hub at Genesis Centre  
Women In Need Society  
- Beltline and Dover  
YW Calgary

### Pathways

Aboriginal Futures  
Assembly of Seven Generations  
Bistro on Notre Dame (Chef Dean Herkert)  
Coady International Institute,  
St. Francis Xavier University  
Dig Insights Inc  
Maple Leaf Banff (Chef Shane Chartrand)  
Pei Pei Chei Ow (Chef Scott Iserhoff)  
Pursuit Banff/Jasper Collection  
Rainmakers Global Market Access  
Saugeen First Nation Employment and Training Centre  
Stoney Nakoda Consultation  
Stoney Nation Job Resource Center  
Stoney Nakoda Resort and Casino  
Sweet Spot International Inc.  
Tourism HR Canada  
Wise Resources Inc.  
Workforce Educational Consulting  
Xpan International Inc.

Thank you to the Elders and Knowledge Keepers who shared their wisdom and expertise and helped plan and deliver programs this year including:

Vinnia Van Overdyk  
Ningwakwe George  
Ted Norris  
Darryl Brass  
John Wesley  
Barry Wesley  
Lowel Wesley  
Paula Smallboy

Thank you to all our volunteers who made invaluable contributions to our resources, programs and events. It was because of you our casino, 50/50 raffles, Birdies for Kids fundraising campaigns were a success and we were able to give our Cooks with Stones participants a once in a lifetime opportunity to showcase their talents in London, UK.

This year through **Shaw Birdies for Kids presented by AltaLink** we raised **\$21,553.50**. Thank you to everyone that donated, supporting our programs and opportunities for children and families in Calgary.

# Connect With Us



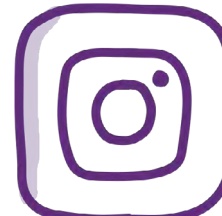
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