

Grasslands Regional
FCSS
2023 Report

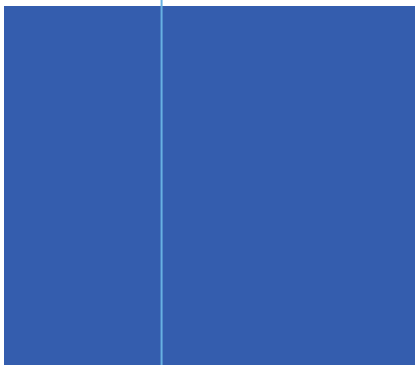
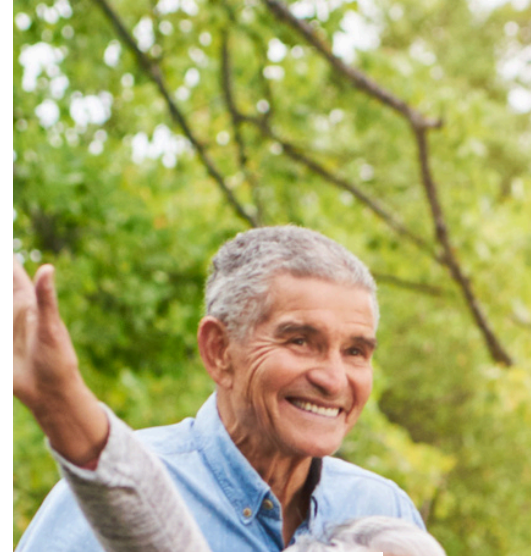


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A Message from the Board Chair

2023 marked Grasslands Regional FCSS' 19th year of operation as a regional organization. Board and staff members continue to recognize the benefits of this partnership between the four municipalities. The municipalities appoint two members to the Board - one from their Councils and a member at large from the community. We thank all Board Members, current and past for their commitment to FCSS and their communities!

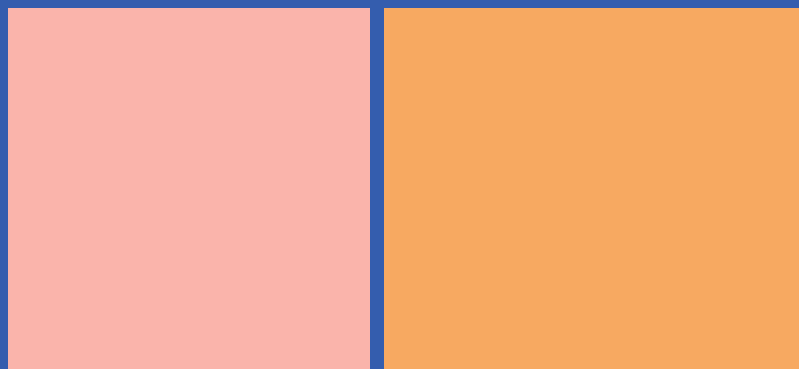
The Board acknowledges and thanks our MP Martin Shields for the support during 2023. We also thank our MLA Premier Danielle Smith and Assistant Heather Piggott for continued provincial financial support and the increase of funds to meet the inflationary pressures we all face. The Board would also like to thank the Councilors and Staff of our four partner municipalities – City of Brooks (Unit Authority), County of Newell and the Villages of Duchess and Rosemary. The municipalities continue to be partners in the work done by Grasslands Regional FCSS as we work on their behalf.

Looking forward to 2024 the Board of Directors along with Victoria are excited with all the new funded partnerships. The Board of Directors thanks Victoria and Tammy for all their hard work and dedication to Grasslands Regional FCSS. They are both a very integral part of Grasslands Regional FCSS.

On behalf of the Board of Directors I thank everyone for their continued support and look forward to the year ahead.

Tina Preston

BOARD CHAIR
GRASSLANDS REGIONAL FCSS



Meet our Board

City of Brooks



Marissa Wardrop
Councillor



Angela De Blasio
Member at Large

County of Newell



Holly Johnson
Councillor



Amanda Phillpott
Member at Large

Village of Duchess



Tina Preston
Councillor



Vienna Dahl
Member at Large

Village of Rosemary

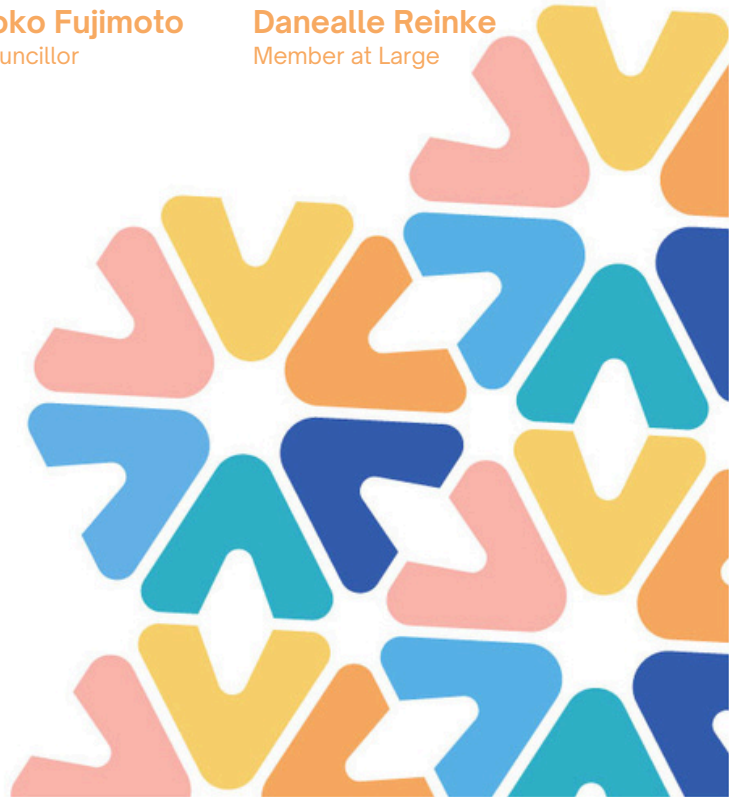


Yoko Fujimoto
Councillor



Danealle Reinke
Member at Large

Grasslands Regional FCSS is governed by a Board of Directors, whose members represent the municipalities that make up the Grasslands FCSS Service Region.



FCSS Overview

A community is a village, a town, a city, a neighborhood. A community is also more powerful than geography: it's people who are connected to one another. Grasslands Regional FCSS is in the business of building communities - *real communities*, not streets of houses to which people retreat after a day's work, as they age, as they struggle silently to raise children and make ends meet. Community is one of Alberta's most valuable assets and we join FCSS offices from across the province in working to transform government funding into social profit.

We like to think of ourselves as builders. We build Albertans.

Vision Statement

Grasslands Regional FCSS plays a key role in building safe, inclusive communities where all residents thrive; fostering pride, belonging and respect for diversity in all forms across the Region.

Mission Statement

Grasslands Regional FCSS collaborates with local organizations to foster an environment of social well-being for individuals, families and communities.





Serving the Region

since 2004

\$4.7M+

Funds Distributed

330K+

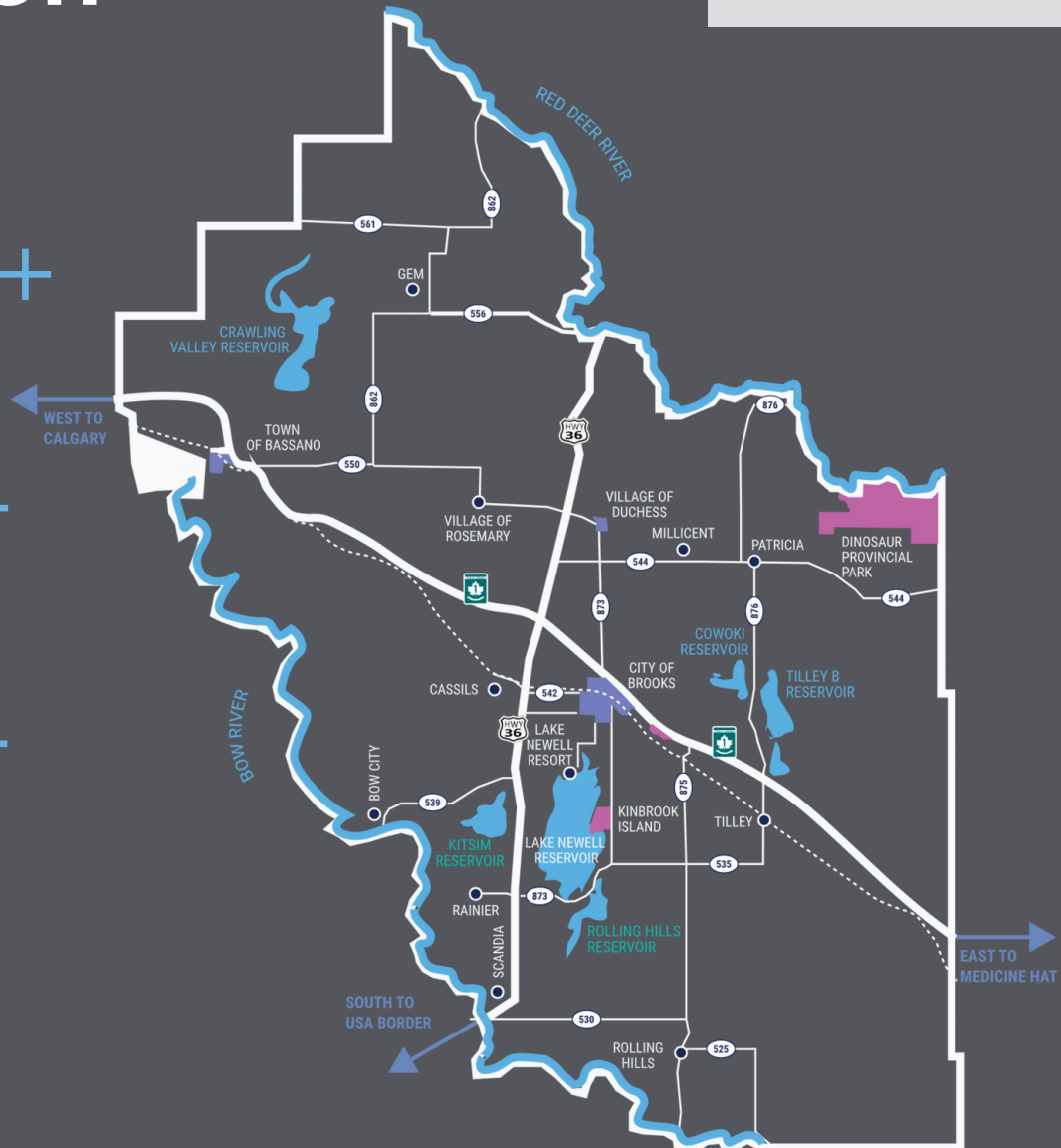
Individuals Served

305K+

Volunteer Hours

57K+

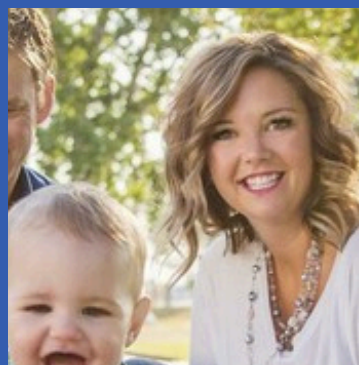
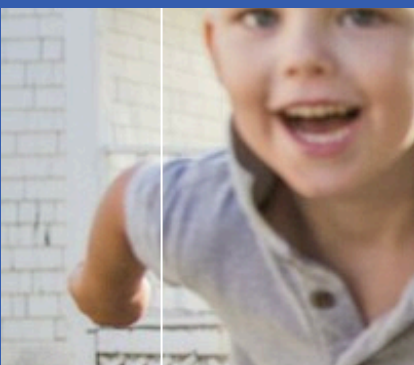
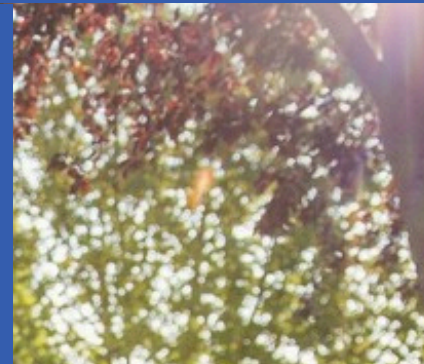
Meals Served



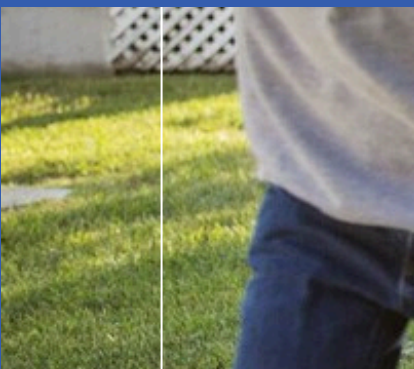
Our strategic priorities

1. FCSS Is viewed as a key organization in the communities it serves.
2. FCSS Provides increased supports and programs for families.
3. FCSS Is more directly involved in community programs.
4. FCSS Provides targeted mental health services.
5. FCSS Delivers and supports more programs in rural areas.

FCSS Strives to build healthy, safe, inclusive and engaged communities where people in our Region believe they matter. We know that through these prevention-based initiatives stronger people, families and communities are built.



When FCSS programming helps a person feel safe and healthy, they contribute to a stronger family.



When families are strong, they're a bigger part of their community.

When communities are healthy, we've built a stronger Alberta.



A message from the Director

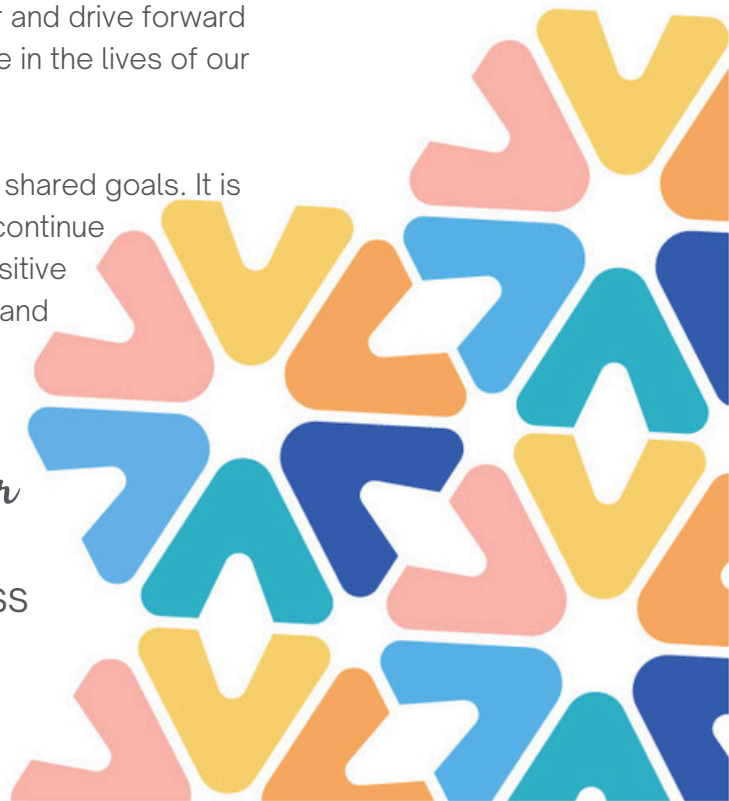
As we reflect on the past year, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude for the collective efforts that have contributed to another successful year for Grasslands Regional Family and Community Support Services. 2023 has been a year of significant growth and impactful service delivery, reinforcing our commitment to building stronger, healthier, and more inclusive communities within the Brooks-Newell region.

Together through our funded partner services we have continued to support the diverse needs of our community members. Our grant funding initiatives have provided critical support to numerous local non-profit organizations, enabling them to expand their services and enhance their impact. As we look to the future, I am excited about the opportunities that lie ahead. Our vision of creating safe, inclusive, and engaged communities remains at the forefront of our mission.

Together, with your continued support and collaboration, we will build on the successes of this year and drive forward initiatives that make a lasting difference in the lives of our community members.

Thank you for your commitment to our shared goals. It is through our collective efforts that we continue to turn the momentum of ideas into positive action, fostering a sense of belonging and pride across our region.

Victoria Muhlbeier
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
GRASSLANDS REGIONAL FCSS



2023 Highlights

In 2023, the FCSS Program received its first funding increase since 2015, providing an additional 4.5% to the Grasslands Regional FCSS budget. We are grateful for the continued support from the Government of Alberta and our local municipalities.

In 2023, FCSS served 15,538 individuals through direct programs and funded partner service delivery. We would like to thank our Funded Partners for their dedication and advocacy for FCSS. Without your tireless efforts, we would not be able to turn FCSS funds into the exceptional community support that you deliver throughout our region.

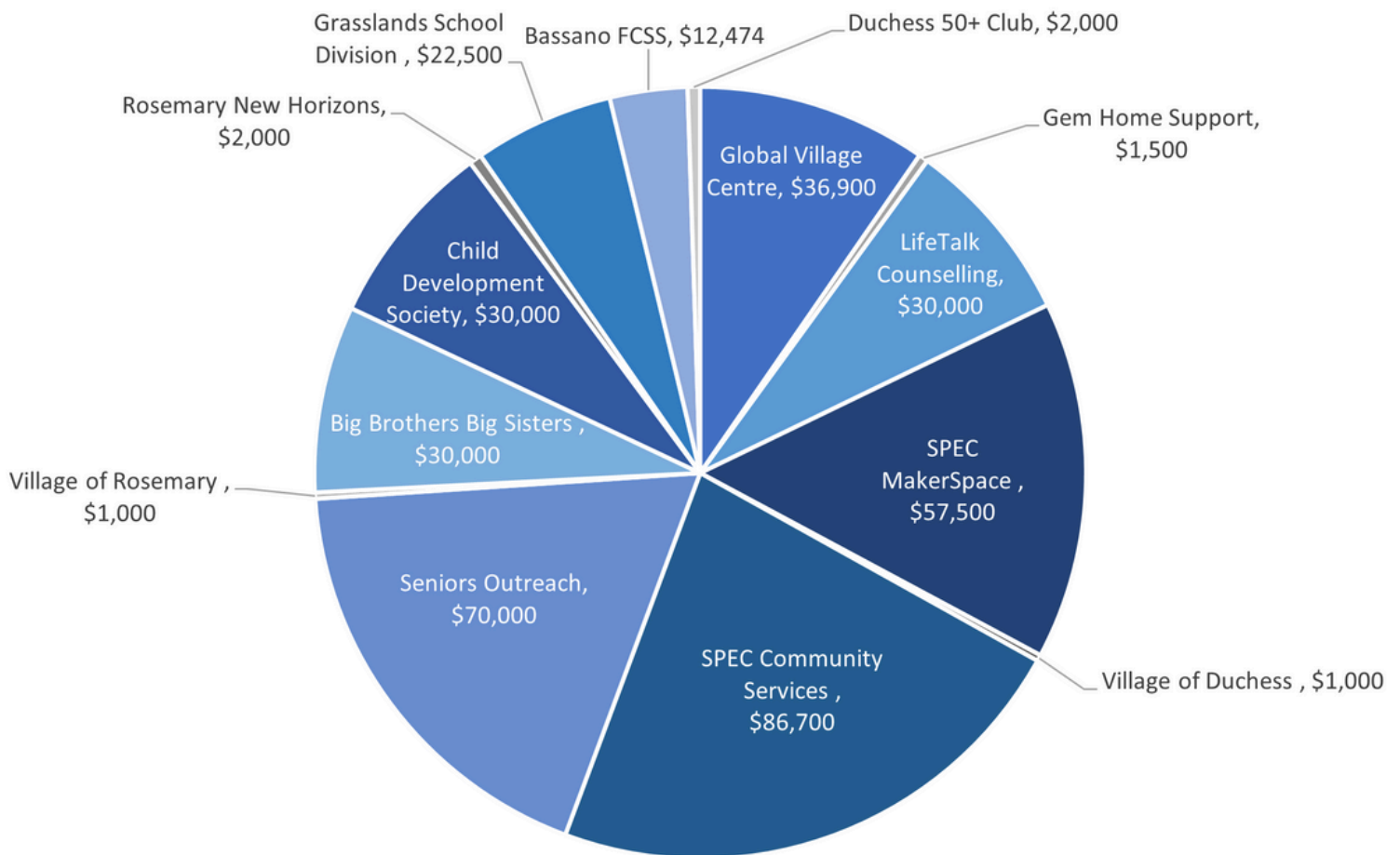
The Meals on Wheels program served over 4,000 meals in 2023. This achievement would not have been possible without the frontline efforts of the Newell Foundation, Seniors Outreach Society and their volunteers.

We look forward to seeing what 2024 brings!



2023 Funding Overview

Grasslands Regional FCSS allocated funding for direct program delivery to service provided throughout the Region, these providers are known as the Funded Partners for FCSS. The pie chart below outlines the funding distributed to our Funded Partners in 2023.



48%

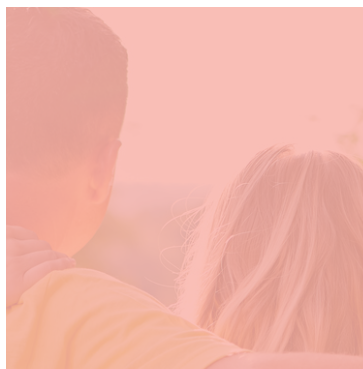
of the Regional FCSS funding was distributed to Funded Partners in 2023.



Financial Summary

Revenue

	2022	2023
Provincial Contributions	\$585,282	\$605,035
Municipal Contributions	\$189,986	\$189,986
Interest Income	\$1,317	\$2,022
Other income	-	\$885
	\$776,585	\$797,928

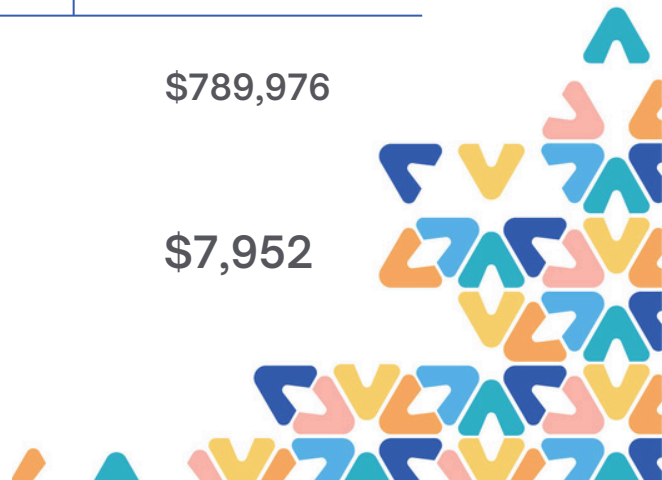


stronger together

Financial Summary

Expenses

	2022	2023
Funded Partners	\$368,274	\$381,574
Community Facilitation and Support	\$134,190	\$152,563
General & Administrative	\$90,986	\$118,387
Community Outreach Program	\$101,942	\$47,000
FCSS Projects	\$24,127	\$42,832
Voluntary Sector Support Program	\$14,649	\$18,586
Meals on Wheels	\$14,381	\$15,982
Summer Program	\$8,657	\$8,037
Home Cleaning Program	\$4,606	\$5,015
	\$761,812	\$789,976
Annual Surplus	\$14,773	\$7,952



HOW FCSS FUNDS MAKE A DIFFERENCE



AN OVERVIEW OF FCSS OUTCOMES

The overarching goal of all FCSS programs is enhancing the social well-being of individuals, families and communities through prevention.

The outcomes of FCSS prevention based programs are measured in three ways, we look at how the program impacts the social well-being of an individual, a family or the community as a whole. When looking at how FCSS programs will benefit individuals, families and communities we consider the following factors:

Individuals

- Programming will support individuals in experiencing personal well-being
- Programming will support individuals in connecting with others
- Programming will support children and youth in developing positively

Families

- Programming will foster healthy functioning within families
- Programming will support families in developing & maintaining social support networks

Community

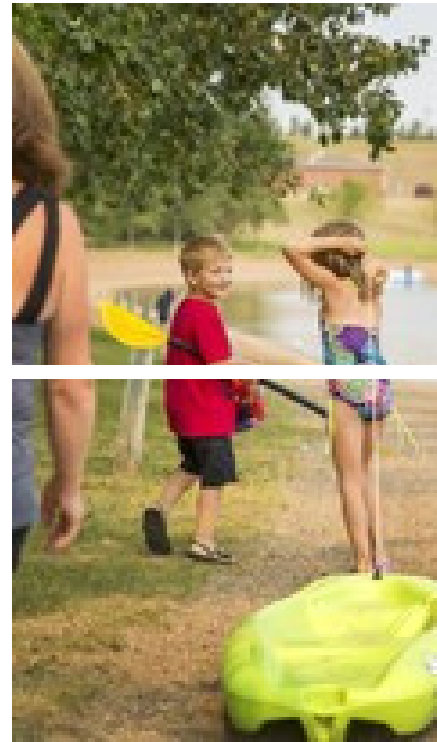
- Programming will support the community is being connected and engaged
- Programming will support the community in identifying and addressing social issues

FCSS Internal Programs and Projects

Grasslands Regional FCSS allocated part of their funding to support internal programs and projects.

During 2023 FCSS offered or partnered to offer the following direct services:

- Citizen and Junior Citizen of the Year
- Newell Regional Expo Celebrating Communities Dinner
- Youth Summer Volunteer Program
- Resiliency Day
- Home Cleaning
- Meals on Wheels
- Youth Mental Health Day
- Seniors Holiday Packages
- Grant Connect Database
- Community Outreach Support



Citizen of the Year



The Citizen and Junior Citizen of the Year award are designed to highlight the exceptional volunteer work done across the Region by dedicated community members.



In 2023 FCSS named Ross Annett as Citizen of the Year and Selma Abdul Kadir as Junior Citizen of the Year.



Ross is a dedicated auctioneer who's iconic voice has been heard echoing through the halls at many community gatherings. Ross has lived in the Brooks-Newell Region for over 50 years and has proven to be a true community leader who is always willing to lend a helping hand. Ross' hard work and commitment to giving back is a testament to his character and his community contributions are invaluable and truly inspiring.

Selma is a compassionate and well-respected student in Grade 12 at Brooks Composite High School. She is a quiet, natural, authentic leader who is never afraid to take the initiative to help others. Her highly motivated personality shows in her commitment to her academics and her desire to improve the community around her. Selma has helped create a more equitable environment in her school and this passion carries over to her greater community.



NEWELL REGIONAL EXPO CELEBRATING COMMUNITIES DINNER



FCSS worked with the Cassils Community to host the final Newell Regional Expo Celebrating Communities Dinner in June 2023. The dinners began in 2010, being hosted in communities throughout the Region. Dinners were hosted on a yearly basis and the hosting community would recognize and celebrate another community in the Region. The final dinner was an opportunity to celebrate the entire Region.





Meals on Wheels

Through a partnership with the Newell Foundation and Seniors Outreach Society, FCSS was able to provide Meals on Wheels throughout the Region. The Meals on Wheels program offers an income based subsidy and is available to individuals of any age, within the County of Newell, who require assistance with meal preparation due to age, wellness, mobility or other extenuating circumstances. During 2023 over 4,000 meals were served to individuals within the Region.

Home Cleaning

Through a partnership with Seniors Outreach Society FCSS was able to offer home cleaning supports to seniors within the Region. These services are designed to assist the aging population in aging in place. The home cleaning program offers an income based subsidy and most clients are eligible for up to 2 hours of cleaning per month. During 2023 40 clients were supported through the program.



Senior Holiday Kits

FCSS staff created 500 Seniors Holiday Care Packages to distribute throughout the Region. The kits included information about local resources like the County of Newell Mini Bus, City of Brooks Access Transit, Meals on Wheels, the Home Cleaning Program and Alberta Seniors Benefits. The kits also highlight local businesses, containing honey from Chandler Honey, lotion from T&B Bath and Body, Chapstick from Our Unique Scentz and keychains from the Prairie Palette.





Resiliency Day

FCSS was a planning partner in the 22nd Annual Brooks and District Resiliency Celebration. The Resiliency Committee was able to honor 60 adult mentors who have made a difference in the lives of children throughout the Region.

FCSS partnered with SPEC, Communities ChooseWell (AHS), McMan, the Drug Task Force, Brook Library, and other youth Serving Organizations to support youth wellness on Youth Mental Health Day. An end of year party was held for youth ages 12 - 17. The party provided a positive environment for youth to connect with one another. Over 100 youth attended the celebration.



Youth Mental Health Day

Youth Summer Volunteer Program



The Youth Summer Volunteer Program has operated for over 10 years in the Region, each summer FCSS employs a post-secondary student to deliver the program. The goal of the program is to engage youth from ages 11 -17 in volunteer work within their communities. The involved youth gain valuable knowledge and skills around the importance of taking an active role in your community while building skills that help them with future employability. The program is 4 days a week, three days are spent engaging with volunteer activities and the fourth day is spent taking the youth to enjoy a fun day and celebrate their accomplishments over the week.

During 2023 our Summer Student, Jasnoor Gill, operated the program out of the JBS Centre. Thank you to the City of Brooks for providing us with a free of cost host site for the program to operate out of! We would also like to extend a warm thank you to our volunteer host sites, including BAPS, Brooks Museum, Orchard Manor, Brooks Library, Brooks RCMP, Brooks Fire Department, Cantara Safe House and Brooks Housing Society.



54%

**of participating
youth reported**

they felt good about
themselves because
they helped others
through the
Volunteer Program.

GRANT CONNECT DATABASE

Grant Connect is a fundraising research tool designed to help you find new funding prospects and win more grants for your organization. Grasslands Regional FCSS offers FREE access to the Grant Connect software for non-profits in the Brooks-Newell Region. You can access the Grant Connect software remotely, at a location convenient to you. The funding opportunities found on Grant Connect are Canadian Based and can be easily sorted to find grants that support causes that matter to you!



COMMUNITY OUTREACH SUPPORTS

The Community Outreach Worker position ran from January - June 2023. This position aimed to assist funded partners and community groups in making their community ideas become a reality. The Community Outreach worker supported various multi-organization events and projects in the Region. The Community Outreach Worker also assisted the Grasslands Regional FCSS Executive Director in facilitating community discussions and groups such as the Community Response Committee. In June 2023 the duties of the Community Outreach Worker were absorbed into the Executive Director role.



“

WE DON'T HEAR MUCH ABOUT PREVENTING DISEASE, SUBSTANCE ABUSE, CRIME, OR LONELINESS, BECAUSE WHEN IT WORKS IT LACKS DRAMA AND INTENSITY. AVOIDING A CRISIS ISN'T NEWSWORTHY, BUT IT'S INCREDIBLY VALUABLE AND THIS IS WHAT FCSS IS IN THE BUSINESS OF DOING.



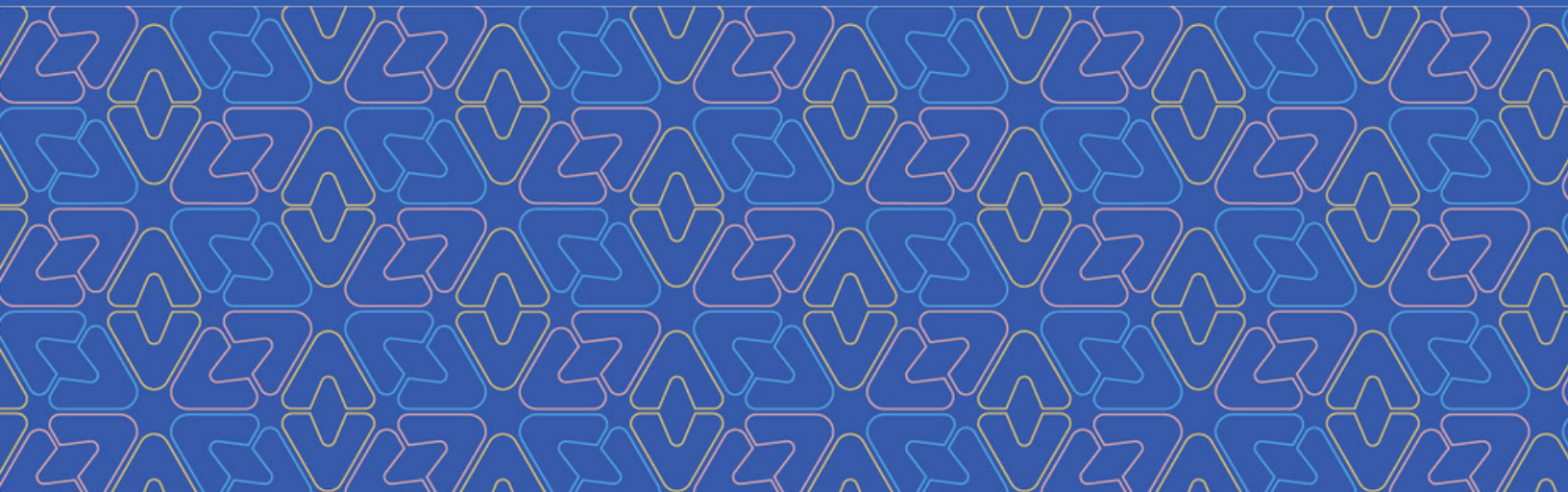
FCSS Funded Partner Programs and Projects

During 2023 FCSS funded the following groups to provide FCSS programming:

- Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Child Development Society
- Duchess 50+ Club
- Gem Home Support
- Global Village Centre
- Grasslands Public Schools
- LifeTalk Counselling
- Rosemary New Horizons
- Seniors Outreach
- SPEC Community Services
- SPEC MakerSpace
- Village of Duchess
- Village of Rosemary



FUNDED ORGANIZATION	VOLUNTEER HOURS	CLIENTS SERVED
Big Brothers Big Sisters	36	12
Child Development Society	1,458	286
Duchess 50+ Club	70	50
Gem Home Support	46	35
Global Village Centre	2,400	840
Grasslands Public Schools	30	3,141
LifeTalk Counselling	274	226
Rosemary New Horizons	263	80
Seniors Outreach	2,356	957
SPEC Community Services	158	195
SPEC MakerSpace	303	329
Village of Duchess	-	50
Village of Rosemary	-	100





Big Brothers Big Sisters

**Big Brothers
Big Sisters**
OF MEDICINE HAT
AND DISTRICT

**Big Brothers
Big Sisters**
OF MEDICINE HAT
AND DISTRICT

International
Petroleum
Corp.

Regatta

Welcome to Brooks, BBBS!



In 2023, we proudly welcomed the Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) program to our region! Starting in October 2023 with FCSS funding, the BBBS team began establishing their presence in our communities.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Medicine Hat and District offers a variety of mentorship-based programs, including their Traditional Match Program, In School Mentoring Program, Go Girls, Game On, and the Healthy Minds, Healthy Bodies program.

In 2023, BBBS hired a local staff member and focused on recruiting adult mentors, known as “Bigs,” for their programs. Six Bigs, along with program staff, received training. Soon after, efforts were made to build connections with local schools and implement programs in public schools throughout the region.

Several schools have established connections with BBBS, with programs set to launch in early 2024. We look forward to having BBBS in our community and are excited to see the impact of this partnership in the coming year!



“Every child is one caring adult away from being a success story”





Duchess 50+ Club

The Duchess 50+ Club is a “senior’s” organization available for everyone 55+. Meeting monthly they provide informative sessions, group activities and a way for the seniors in the community and surrounding area to connect and interact.

In 2023 Duchess 50+ Club had 50 members who attended the various events hosted through the Club.

Rosemary New Horizons

The Rosemary and District New Horizons group supports seniors in Rosemary with monthly meetings, featuring business discussions, lunch, and fellowship. Activities include games, visits, and an annual bingo with gift card prizes.

The group volunteers in the community, runs a jigsaw puzzle exchange, and hosts daily pool and coffee gatherings. The Chime group continues to play together and the crafters meet weekly for knitting, quilting, and other crafts - offering a social outlet for new and existing members.



Gem Home Support

The Gem Home Support Program uses contracted local service providers to provide:

- weekly light housekeeping for seniors
- a monthly noon meal for seniors.

In 2023, two local housekeeping service providers assisted 4 clients in their homes. Approximately 30 housekeeping visits were made for a total of 79 hours.

In 2023, our local caterer provided a hot noon meal 9 times in the Gem community hall. Senior attendance at each meal ranged from 18 to 29 seniors for a total of 215 meals.



Village of Duchess

The Village of Duchess receives FCSS funds to support community engagement and enhancement projects. These projects aim to engage youth and community members in taking an active role within their communities while enhancing over-all quality of life for residents in Duchess.

These community projects help to engage individuals in taking an active role in developing their community foster a sense of pride in the town they call home.



Village of Rosemary

The Village of Rosemary receives FCSS funding to enhance their yearly Canada Day celebration.

Funds provided by FCSS benefit children and youth programs for the event, with the goal of encouraging families to get out and build connections with others in their community.

SENIORS OUTREACH



100% *of individuals surveyed state that*
Attending Seniors Outreach events helps them maintain relationships with people from their community.



Seniors Outreach has been in Brooks over 30 years providing support and assistance to seniors in Brooks and the County. Support is provided in many ways including Teas; completion of paperwork; income tax preparation; Meals on Wheels; Home Cleaning; Bus trips and much more.

They often help seniors socially through the teas; trips and other gathering. Since the pandemic they have implemented telephone visiting; helping when individuals are lonely, providing food security and

many other supports depending on the individuals need.

Since COVID helping seniors connect with their community is a more important job than ever before.

Staff at Seniors outreach say “the joy on Seniors faces as a large group attends the Rosebud theater or the child like laughter when Santa Claus visits during Christmas Tea makes all the work worth it.”

There has been a steady increase in interest in teas and over 80 people are attending on a monthly basis.

GRASSLANDS SCHOOLS PREVENTION & EDUCATION PROGRAM



**The Innovations
Wellness team
is in 118
classrooms,
serving over
3,000 students.**

Grasslands School Division is a public school district with 13 Schools, grades K-12, throughout the City of Brooks and the County of Newell.

FCSS funded programming provides social emotional learning classroom presentations to all students K – 9. Programming is centered around evidence-based programs including Kids in the Know, Worry Woos, Go Zen & Second Step. These programs promote children and youth to feel confident and empowered to make healthy choices, protect themselves, talk about their feelings and educate them on where to seek help if needed.

SPEC COMMUNITY SERVICES

100% of individuals surveyed state that

As a result of working with the Community Worker I know how to access the community resources I need.

2023 Program Highlights

- There was a 25% increase in unique clients, this surpassed the programs unique client goals by 11%
- Groups for clients with disabilities were increased 123% over the year, through a partnership with REDI and MakerSpace
- Outcomes data was collected from 81% of clients who received services

SPEC Clients have said the following about the program:

“

I was going through a hard time and the longer it went on the more I felt like there was no way out. Someone told me I should go to SPEC and I met with the Community Service Worker. She helped me sort out my situation and was even able to help me get emergency support to get my heat turned back on. I am so glad there is somewhere like SPEC that could help me. ”

The Community Services Worker position provides direct client service to adults, age 18+, from the City of Brooks and within the County of Newell, who are needing supports unrelated to parenting and family issues, who may be facing barriers such as, health or mental health challenges, unemployment, lack of housing, language barriers, education levels, literacy, financial issues, and/or addictions.

General information and advocacy are also available to assist individuals to connect with existing community and/or government resources. Program supports endeavor to help individuals deal with life's challenges by building on existing strengths and increasing personal resiliency.



“

I have a long term disability and I was having trouble applying for AISH. My Community Services Worker helped me organize my paperwork and submit the required documents for my AISH application. After being denied, she came with me and supported me when I had to talk to the appeal panel. Finally I was approved for AISH and I am relieved to have a steady source of income. ”



CHILD DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY

The Brooks & District Child Development Society has been in operation for over 40 years providing families with Parenting materials, developmental material and social opportunities.



100% of individuals surveyed state that

As a result of attending the Parent and Tot program I meet new people from my community.



The Brooks Toy Library lets families, schools, day homes, daycares and grandparents have access to resource material such as toys, educational toys, movies, puzzles, games and parenting material.

The Child Development Society also hosts a weekly Parent and Tot program at the JBS Centre, focused on developing connections between family members while building connections with individuals in the community.

100% of individuals surveyed state that

As a result of participating with the Toy Library my child has more opportunities to make simple choices



SPEC MAKERSPACE



Makerspace offers a variety of learning opportunities, programs, and workshops where youth learn to integrate STEM activities while developing meaningful relationships assisting them in dealing with life's challenges by building on existing strengths and increasing personal resilience.

In addition to social and emotional skill building youth also have the opportunity to develop the soft skills and universal competencies such as empathy, persuasion, creative problem solving, decision-making, & team work.

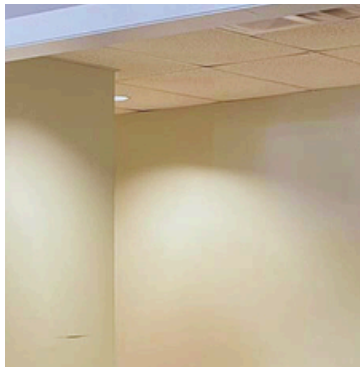
An exciting development at MakerSpace this year has been the partnership with the BCHS ESL program. There were some concerns that newcomer students (specifically girls) may not feel comfortable checking out MakerSpace, especially since the majority of participants are boys. This resulted in visits, during class time, for female newcomer students to come over to the space with teachers and/or support staff to see what MakerSpace is all about. This has resulted in more youth having the opportunity to connect with others in a safe and fun environment and increase their community engagement.

90% of youth surveyed state that
As a result of attending
MakerSpace I feel supported
by the adults in my life.



GLOBAL VILLAGE CENTRE

Global Village Centre works to provide programming that increases the understanding of Canadian culture for newcomers within the Region.



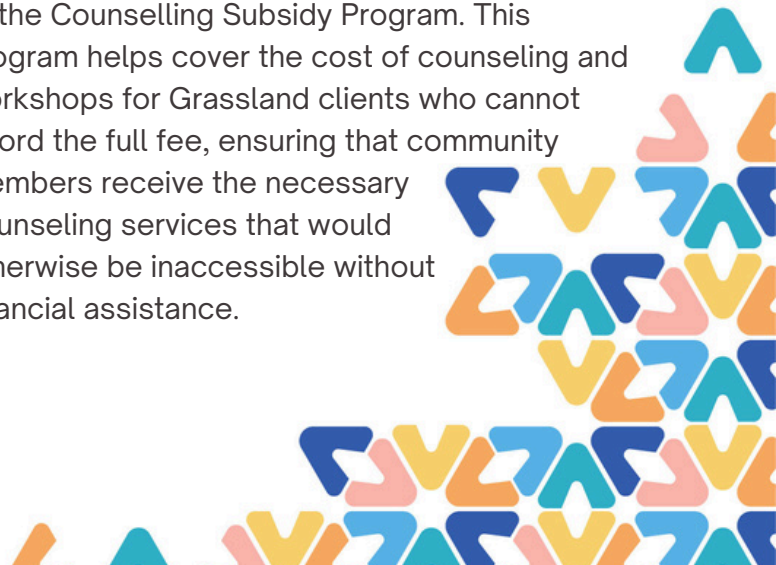
In addition to direct services for newcomers Global Village also works collaboratively to develop and organize research projects surrounding newcomer needs. Global Village provides cultural capacity building programs to non-newcomer individuals within the Region to help non-newcomers gain a deeper understanding and respect of other cultures.

LIFETALK COUNSELLING



LifeTalk enhances Brook's social safety net by offering mild to moderate mental health counseling. This service is ideal for those who prefer the privacy of an independent agency, with the assurance that the counseling staff have a Christian orientation—although clients are not required to share this orientation. Lifetalk supports individuals, couples, and families as they work through personal, emotional, and relationship issues.

FCSS collaborates with LifeTalk by funding part of the Counselling Subsidy Program. This program helps cover the cost of counseling and workshops for Grassland clients who cannot afford the full fee, ensuring that community members receive the necessary counseling services that would otherwise be inaccessible without financial assistance.



LifeTalk Clients have said the following about the program:

“I have been through the most trying time of my life. I have had a number of therapists over the years and none come close to the compassion and understanding shown by LifeTalk that is, in my opinion, irreplaceable.”

93% of individuals surveyed state that As a result of counselling, I feel better about my ability to overcome life's challenges.

90% of individuals surveyed state that As a result of counselling, I feel better about my ability to take action towards improving my life.

“I don't know what I would do without my counsellor and this service. I would be very lost. I just thank you for your ongoing support and for your agency. This service in Brooks is so needed.”

MURRAY DENOUDSTEN,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



ROXANNE JACKSON
COUNSELLOR

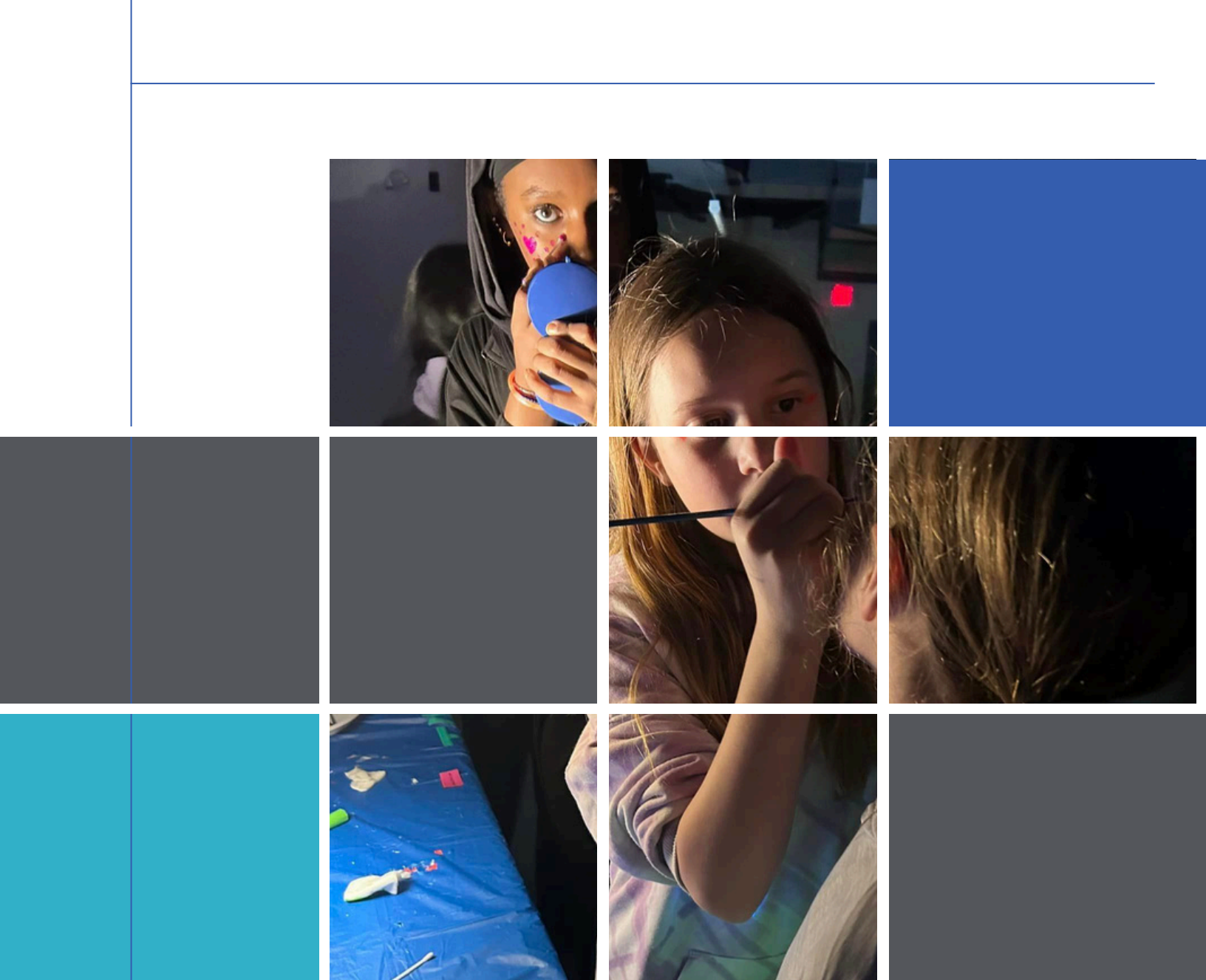


CARA PEDERSON
COUNSELLOR



BRYCE LECHULT
COUNSELLOR





Thank You

for being part of FCSS, we are

stronger together

 403-362-4549

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 www.grasslandsregionalfcss.com