

GRASSLANDS REGIONAL FCSS

ANNUAL REPORT

stronger together

2024





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FCSS Overview

In Alberta, community means more than geography—it's people, connected and empowered to care for one another. Family and Community Support Services is a uniquely Albertan model that invests in prevention and local leadership to build strong, resilient communities.

FCSS is a partnership between the Government of Alberta and municipalities that transforms provincial and local funding into front-line programs and services that prevent crisis before it happens. The outcomes aren't always dramatic—but they are deeply meaningful. Fewer visits to the ER, reduced crime, lower rates of substance use, and stronger social connections all begin with one thing: prevention.

FCSS enables local leaders to respond to local needs with flexibility and care. Our work is often unseen, but the impact is real. When Albertans are connected—to each other, to resources, to purpose—our communities thrive. FCSS doesn't just support people. It empowers them to support each other.

This is how Alberta builds communities. This is the work of FCSS.

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.

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

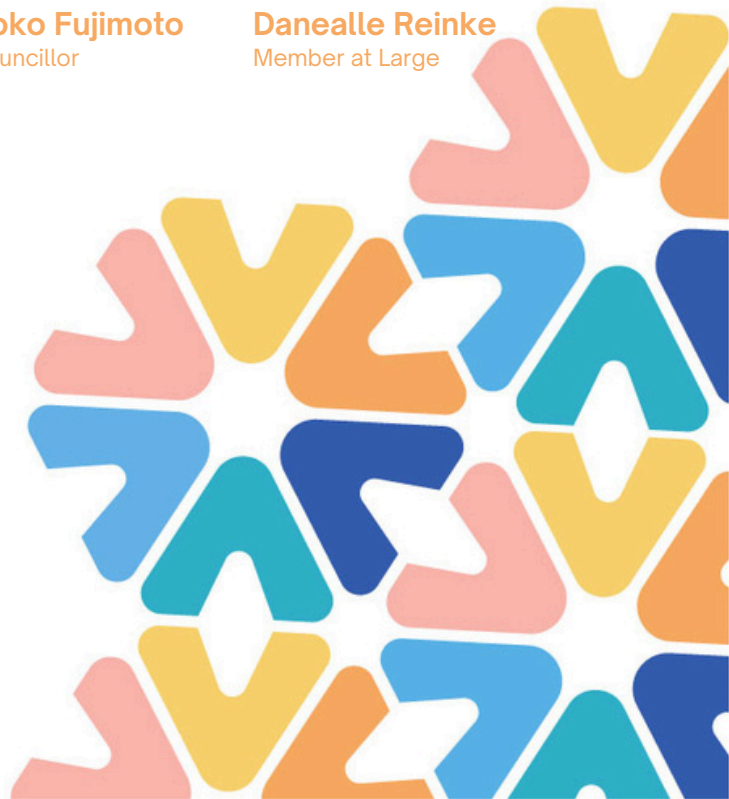


Yoko Fujimoto
Councillor



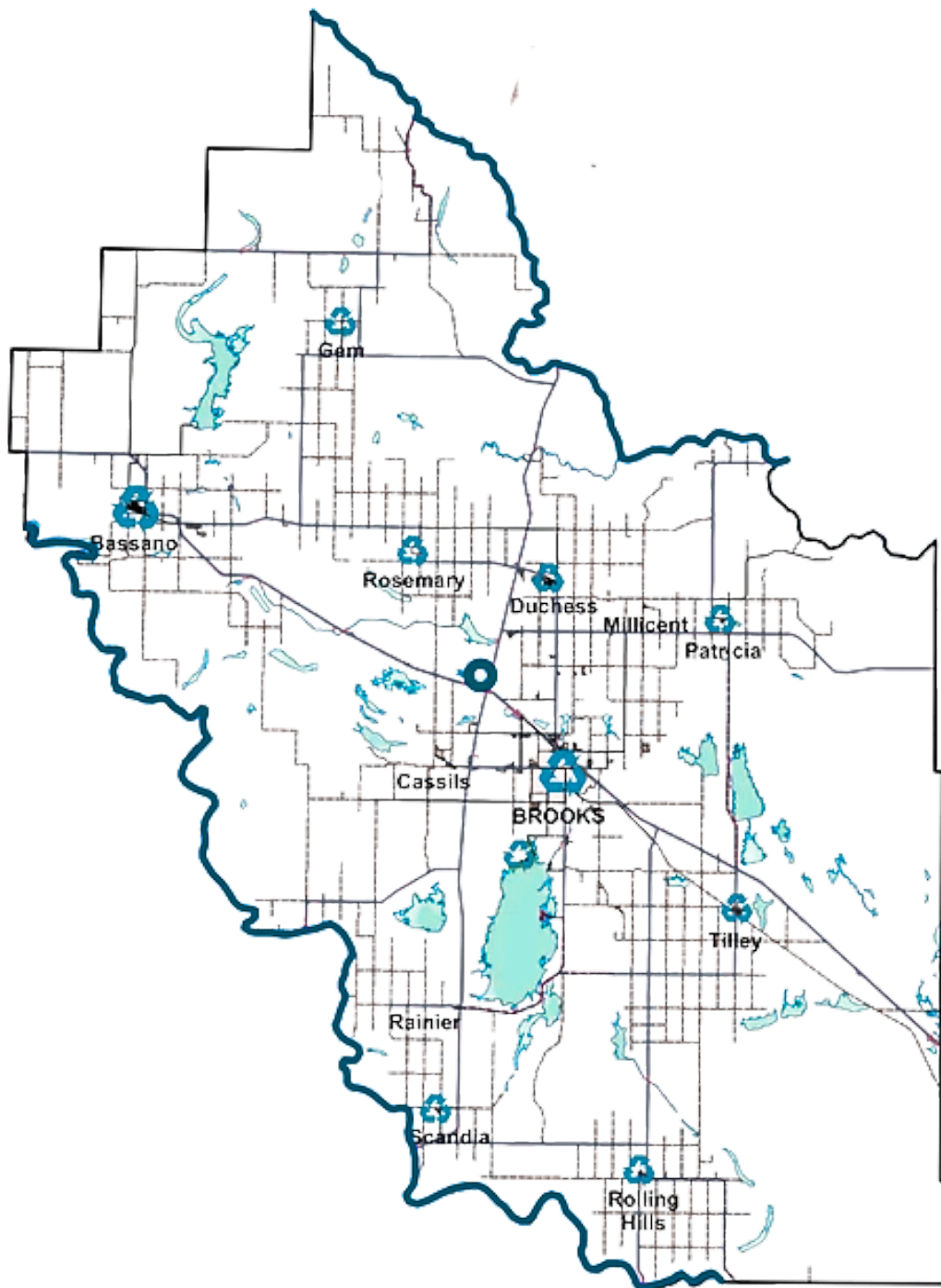
Danealle Reinke
Member at Large

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



Serving the Region

since 2004



\$4.7M+
Funds Distributed

340K+
Individuals Served

65K+
Meals Served

312K+
Volunteer Hours



2024 Year in Review

In 2024, Grasslands Regional FCSS continued to thrive with the support of the Government of Alberta and our local municipalities. We are grateful for this partnership, which allows us to build stronger communities across the region.

Individuals Served

In 2024 Grasslands Regional FCSS served over 11,000 individuals through direct programs and funded partner service delivery. In addition to this 4,670 meals were served through the Meals on Wheels Program.

Funding Allocations

55% of the Regional FCSS funding was distributed to FCSS Funded Partners in 2024. An increase of 7% (\$84,409) from the previous year.

Introduction of Micro-Grant Funding

In 2024 Grasslands Regional FCSS introduced Micro-Grant Funding. This funding stream allowed agencies ease when applying for smaller amounts of money.

Volunteer Contributions

In 2024 Grasslands Regional FCSS funding supported our partnering agencies and internal programming in helping over 450 volunteers to contribute over 7,500 volunteer hours directly to the Region, equivalent to over \$110,000 at minimum wage.

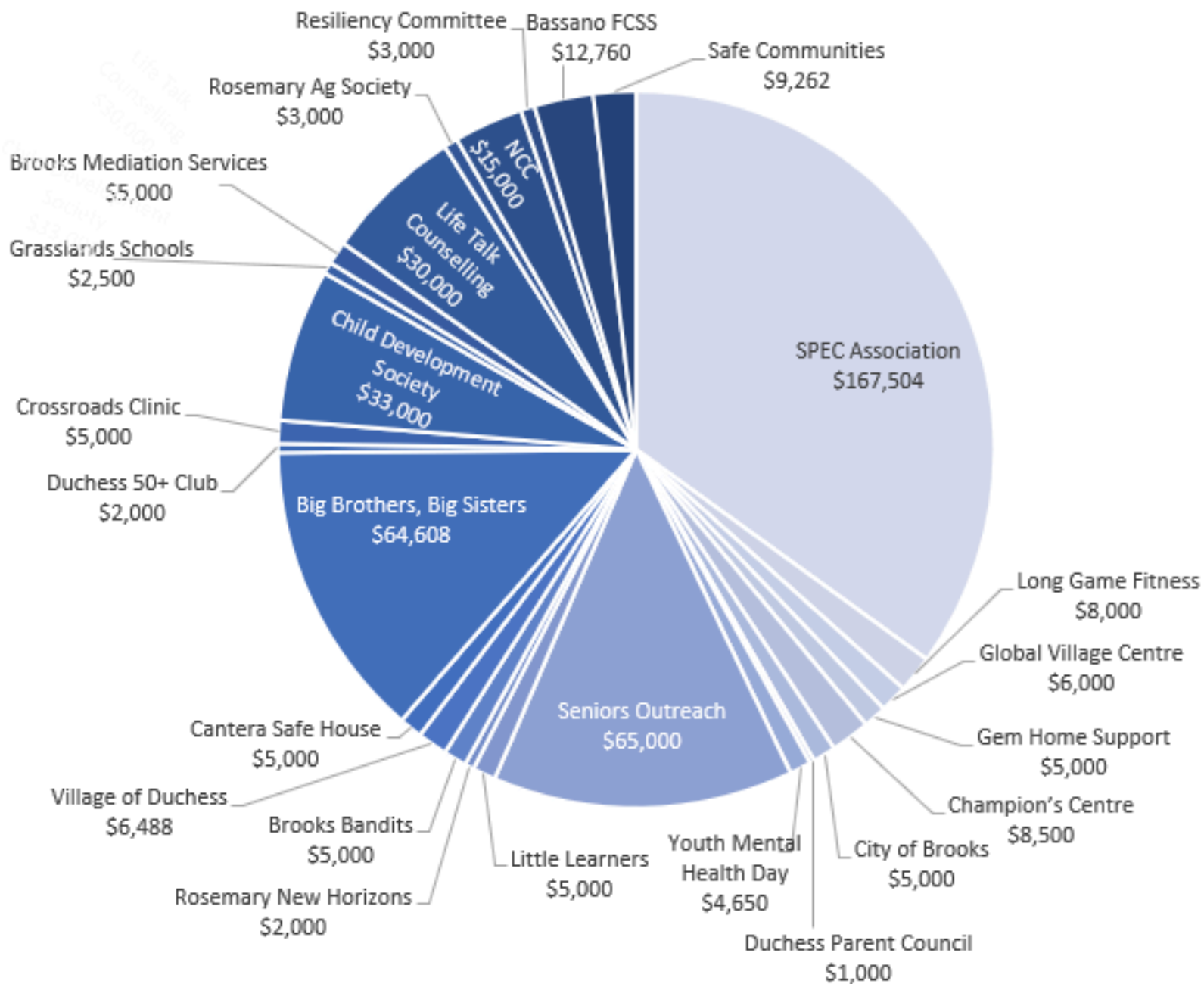


2024 Funding Overview

Grasslands Regional FCSS allocated funding for direct program delivery to service providers throughout the Region, these providers are known as the Funded Partners. Funded Partners include all agencies who receive Core Grant funding and Micro-Grant Funding. The pie chart outlines the funding distributed to our Funded Partners in 2024, agencies who received funding for multiple programs are listed once with total funding for all programs combined..

8 programs received
Core Funding totaling
\$380,872

28 programs received
Micro-Grant Funding totaling
\$98,400



Financial Summary

Revenue

	2023	2024
Provincial Contributions	\$605,035	\$611,620
Municipal Contributions	\$189,986	#196,570
Interest Income	\$2,022	\$5,000
Other income	\$885	\$2,040
	\$797,928	\$851,230



Expenses

	2023	2024
Funded Partners	\$381,574	\$466,383
Community Facilitation and Support	\$152,563	\$132,743
General & Administrative	4118,388	\$92,824
Community Outreach Program	\$47,000	-
FCSS Projects	\$42,823	\$50,589
Voluntary Sector Support Program	\$18,586	\$10,327
Meals on Wheels	\$16,982	\$18,767
Summer Program	\$8,037	\$12,480
Home Cleaning Program	\$5,015	\$13,920

\$789,977

\$789,033

Annual Surplus

\$7,951

\$17,197

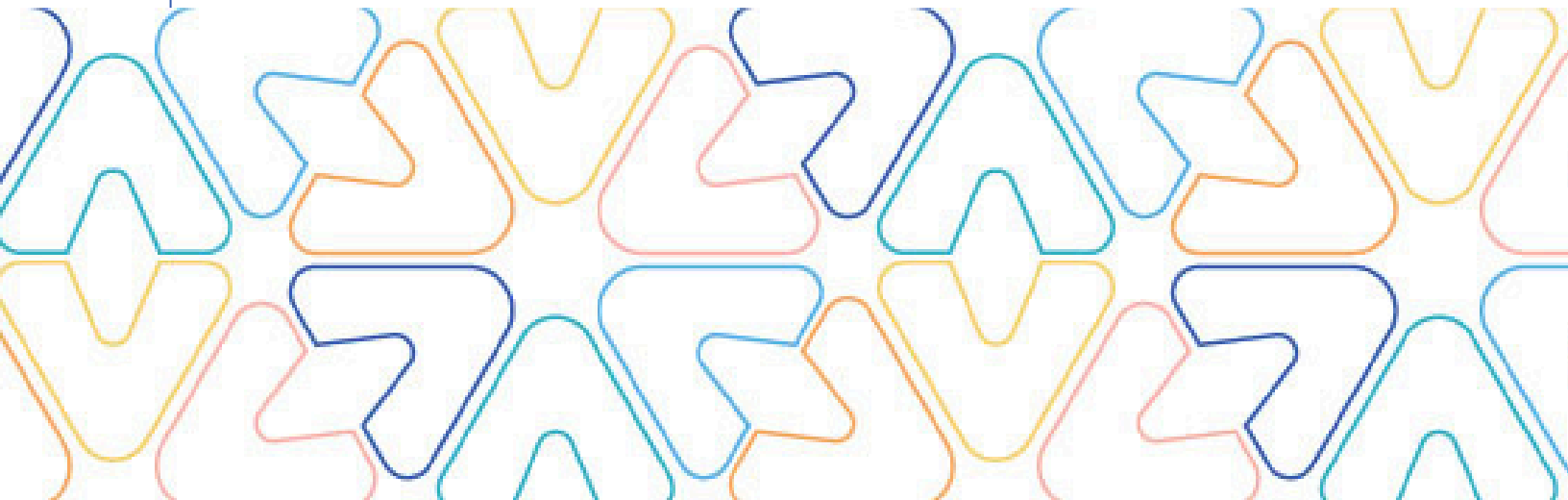


FCSS Internal Programs and Projects

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

During 2024 FCSS offered or partnered to offer the following direct services:

- Citizen and Junior Citizen of the Year
- Youth Summer Volunteer Program
- Resiliency Day
- Mental Health Week
- Seniors Week
- Home Cleaning
- Meals on Wheels
- Seniors Holiday Packages
- 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 2024 FCSS named Duane Perkins as Citizen of the Year and Zan Qi Tan as Junior Citizen of the Year.

Citizen of the Year Runner Ups were Joan Christensen and Sharon Reid

Duane Perkins

Duane Perkins is a dedicated volunteer whose contributions have greatly impacted the Brooks community. Since moving to Brooks in 1980, he has been involved in organizations like the Oilmen's Association, where he helped grow the "Oilmen's LobsterFest" into a major fundraiser. Duane also volunteers at the food bank, known for his hands-on approach, and serves on the city's Recreation Board. He played a key role in developing a bike park and led the Plus 55 Alberta Summer Games. Duane's selfless commitment and "can-do" attitude make him a valuable asset to the community!



Zan Qi Tan

Zan Qi Tan is an exceptional young leader whose dedication to his community sets him apart. As a volunteer with the SPEC organization, he has made a lasting impact by supporting newcomers and helping them feel at home. Zan excels in academics, music, and STEM, and his passion for helping others is evident in his leadership, creativity, and tireless work ethic. His genuine kindness, combined with his strong communication and collaboration skills, make him a true role model!



Youth Summer Volunteer Program



The Youth Summer Volunteer Program engages youth ages 11–17 in meaningful volunteer work while helping them build valuable life and employment skills. In 2024, 25 youth participated in the program, led by Summer Student Edma Fully at the JBS Centre. Thank you to the City of Brooks for generously providing the space for the program.

83%

of participating youth reported

they believed they made a difference to their community through work done in the Program

A photograph of three women posing for a photo. The woman on the left is wearing a pink hijab and red butterfly-shaped sunglasses. The woman in the center is wearing a purple tiara, glasses, and a denim jacket over a black and white striped shirt. The woman on the right is wearing a silver tiara, rainbow-colored sunglasses, and a red hijab with a colorful flower lei. They are all smiling and standing in front of a background of silver tinsel streamers.

Resiliency Day

FCSS was a planning partner in the 24th Annual Brooks and District Resiliency Celebration. The Resiliency Committee was able to honor 79 adult mentors who have made a difference in the lives of children throughout the Region.

A photograph of an elderly woman with short white hair and blue-rimmed glasses. She is blowing into a silver party horn and has a playful expression. She is wearing a black jacket with colorful floral embroidery over a grey sweater. The background is a light blue wall decorated with colorful tassels in orange, green, pink, and gold.

Seniors Week

FCSS partnered with the City of Brooks and Seniors Outreach to facilitate a day filled with activities for Seniors in the Region to celebrate Seniors Week! A morning bingo session was offered for seniors followed by a free lunch at PD's Bistro in the JBS Centre. 107 Seniors attended the lunch and **85% reported that the celebration made them feel a sense of belonging to their community.**



Meals on Wheels

Through a partnership with the Newell Foundation and Seniors Outreach Society, FCSS provided Meals on Wheels throughout the Region in 2024, serving over 4,670 meals. The program is available to individuals of any age in the County of Newell who need help with meal preparation due to age, health, or mobility challenges. While the program is open to all, the income-based subsidy is available to seniors. In 2024, we also expanded delivery service across the County, offering frozen meal delivery in partnership with the County of Newell Mini Bus.

Home Cleaning

Through a partnership with Seniors Outreach Society, FCSS provided home cleaning support to seniors across the Region in 2024. These services help support aging in place and include an income-based subsidy, with most clients eligible for up to two hours of cleaning per month. This past year, we expanded the service to include communities outside of Brooks by covering mileage costs for the cleaner to travel throughout the County. A total of 214 seniors accessed the program—182 in Brooks and 32 in the County—and nearly \$10,000 in cleaning costs were subsidized.





MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

For Mental Health Week 2024, FCSS supported community wellness by distributing 500 Mental Health First Aid Kits to businesses across the Region. These kits were designed to offer practical tools and activities to help individuals manage a range of emotions and support their mental well-being. By placing the kits in local workplaces, we aimed to make mental health resources more accessible and encourage conversations around mental wellness.



HOLIDAY KITS

FCSS created 60 Holiday Care Packages for adults, seniors, and families throughout the Region. The kits included personal care items, family activities, and small gifts to help brighten the holiday season. Distribution was made possible through the help of community partners including Crossroads Clinic, SPEC, The Legion, The Champion Centre, County of Newell Mini Bus, and Newell Christian Chaplaincy.



FCSS Core Funded Partner Projects

During 2024 FCSS funded the following groups to provide FCSS programming:

- Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Child Development Society
- LifeTalk Counselling
- Newell Christian Chaplaincy
- Seniors Outreach
- SPEC Community Services
- SPEC MakerSpace





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FCSS IS ABOUT BUILDING STRONG, CONNECTED COMMUNITIES BY INVESTING IN PEOPLE. WE BELIEVE THAT WHEN INDIVIDUALS ARE SUPPORTED, THE WHOLE COMMUNITY THRIVES.

FUNDED ORGANIZATION	VOLUNTEER HOURS	CLIENTS SERVED
Big Brothers Big Sisters	23	131
Child Development Society	2,450	222
LifeTalk Counselling	219	185
Seniors Outreach	1,979	750
SPEC Community Services	164	380
SPEC MakerSpace	342	354
Newell Christian Chaplaincy	389	380



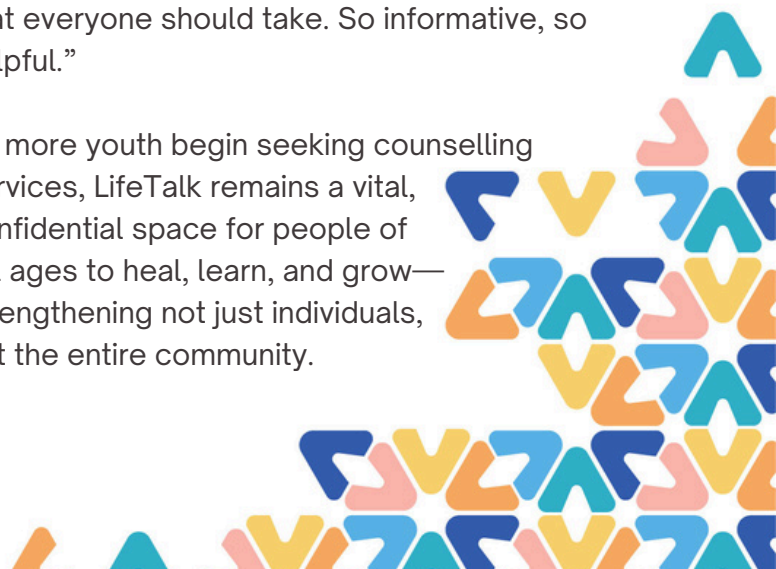
Funding Allocation: \$30,000

With support from FCSS, LifeTalk Counselling provides short-term, subsidized counselling for individuals who may otherwise be unable to access the help they need. Using a sliding income scale—and a commitment to never turn anyone away—LifeTalk supported 185 individuals last year with emotional, relational, and mental health challenges.

Programs like Anger & Its Many Faces continue to make a meaningful difference, with participants sharing how the course has improved their relationships at home and at work.

As one attendee said, “This course is something that everyone should take. So informative, so helpful.”

As more youth begin seeking counselling services, LifeTalk remains a vital, confidential space for people of all ages to heal, learn, and grow—strengthening not just individuals, but the entire community.





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.”

100% *of individuals surveyed state that*
As a result of counselling, I feel better about my ability to overcome life’s challenges.

100% *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



BRYCE LECHULT
COUNSELLOR





CHILD DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY

**Funding
Allocation:
\$33,000**



100% *of individuals surveyed state that*

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



For 45 years, the Brooks Child Development Society has been supporting local families through play, connection, and early learning—with FCSS funding behind them every step of the way.

The Toy Library provides families across the region with access to a wide range of educational toys and resources, making at-home learning more accessible and engaging. One parent shared how their homeschooling experience has greatly improved thanks to the extra resources they can borrow and use. The Parent and Tot program, offered twice weekly, gives families with young children a welcoming space to play, socialize, and build lasting friendships.

As one staff member noted, “It’s so nice to see the moms visiting and resting while the kids are learning to play and socialize together.”

In 2024, 222 families accessed these valuable programs—proof that small moments of support can lead to big impacts in early childhood development and community connection.



100% *of individuals surveyed state that*

As a result of the parent and tot program my child is better at playing cooperatively with other children



SPEC MakerSpace

Brooks & Region
MakerSpace

Funding Allocation: \$76,830

2024 Program Highlights

- MakerSpace has hosted various field trips for ESL students within the school systems.
- MakerSpace has continued to offer the Mini Makers program for younger children who are not old enough to attend regular MakerSpace programming.

99%

of participating
youth reported

As a result of
MakerSpace I
have learned new
skills that will help
me in the future



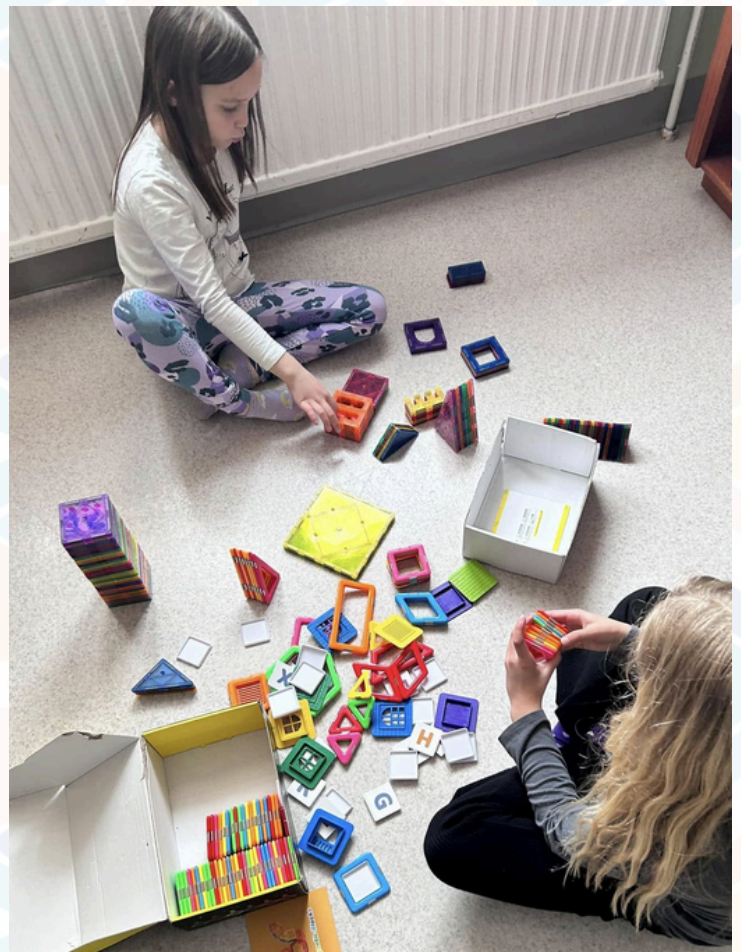
The MakerSpace program at SPEC Association offers youth aged 7–17 a place to explore, create, and connect. Through hands-on STE(A)M-based activities—ranging from sewing and art to 3D design and coding—MakerSpace helps young people build skills, friendships, and a stronger sense of belonging in their community. In 2024, the program served 354 youth across the region.

With more STEM-focused activities and direct outreach at Parent-Teacher Nights, MakerSpace continues to adapt to youth interests, helping them feel heard, valued, and excited to participate. By combining creativity with mentorship, MakerSpace is sparking curiosity and connection—one project, one conversation, and one young mind at a time.

“**MakerSpace is more than just a place to build and create—it's where youth find confidence, friendship, and a sense of belonging. Every project sparks curiosity, and every connection builds a stronger, more resilient community.**”

More than just a creative outlet, MakerSpace is a trusted space where youth feel safe, respected, and supported. One young participant's journey highlights the power of that environment. Referred through a school wellness counselor, he arrived feeling isolated and frustrated, often unable to finish activities. Over time, with consistent encouragement and relationship-building, he began showing up regularly, making friends, and growing in confidence. Today, he's thriving—both at MakerSpace and at school.

This year also marked the launch of MakerSpace's first independently hosted event—a Halloween Party that brought youth together in celebration and connection.



BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS

**Funding
Allocation:**
\$59,608

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Medicine Hat and District provides life-changing mentoring relationships to children and youth across southeastern Alberta. Through one-on-one and group mentoring programs, the agency helps young people build confidence, develop healthy relationships, and feel a stronger sense of belonging. Their continued presence in the Grasslands Region supports long-term positive outcomes for youth and strengthens our communities through the power of connection..

Through the Healthy Minds and Big Possibilities programs, Big Brothers Big Sisters continues to make a meaningful impact in the lives of youth across Brooks and the surrounding area. Delivered in partnership with schools throughout the Public Schools —and with the Big Possibilities program hosted at SPEC—these mentoring programs supported 131 youth in 2024.

The programs provide structured, small-group mentoring sessions focused on self-esteem, stress management, and social skills. In Rolling Hills, upper elementary students explored topics like bullying and self-confidence by creating superhero characters and engaging in interactive “minute to win it” games. Even sibling conflicts brought from home became opportunities to learn and grow in a safe, supportive space.

At Griffin Park School, the Go Girls group met weekly over lunch. Initially hesitant to branch out, participants were encouraged to form new groups with different peers each week.

100% of youth surveyed state

My mentor at the Big Brothers Big Sisters program has helped me feel good about myself.

Over time, this sparked meaningful conversations, new friendships, and noticeable growth in communication and conflict resolution skills. By the final week, students were collaborating with confidence and embracing the diversity of the group.

Programs like Healthy Minds and Big Possibilities are helping youth build resilience, strengthen peer relationships, and develop the life skills they need to succeed—in school, at home, and beyond.





Newell Christian Chaplaincy

Funding Allocation:

\$15,000

With the help of FCSS funding, the Newell Christian Chaplaincy Support Program continues to bring warmth, connection, and companionship to seniors living in care facilities across Brooks.

Last year, they served 380 individuals—nearly doubling their expected reach after hiring a second chaplain to meet the growing demand.

Through one-on-one visits, group gatherings, book readings, and even informal piano concerts, the chaplains create meaningful moments that help reduce isolation and foster a greater sense of community.

One chaplain shared the story of a woman who once kept to her room out of fear her health would limit her. Today, thanks to ongoing encouragement and support, she's one of the most socially engaged residents.

Even with only two part-time chaplains, the program continues to make a profound impact in local lodges—reminding us that connection, care, and community are essential at every stage of life.



“

FCSS EMPOWERS PEOPLE TO GROW, BELONG, AND
THRIVE—BECAUSE HEALTHY COMMUNITIES BEGIN
WITH HEALTHY INDIVIDUALS.





SPEC Community Services

Funding Allocation: \$88,674

The Community Services Program at SPEC Association continues to be a vital support for individuals who don't qualify for other programs but still need help navigating life's challenges. Through one-on-one support and group programming—including dedicated sessions for men and individuals with disabilities—the program served 380 people in 2024.

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.

Programs like this are about more than forms and applications—they're about restoring dignity, building trust, and walking alongside people through life's most difficult transitions.

99%
of participants
reported

As a result of the
program I am
better equipped
to deal with any
challenges I face

99% *of individuals surveyed state that*

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

2024 Program Highlights

- The program exceeded its unique client target by 111% and increased overall client contact by 95%
- A multi-lingual part time support staff was hired to support the program.

SPEC Clients have said the following about the program:

“I don't know where my father would be without this program. For years, Marlys has helped him—through disability applications, financial support, and now finding housing so he can be closer to us. It was so hard because we couldn't support him the way he needed, as we didn't understand the process ourselves. Without this help, we wouldn't have known what to do. Having someone guide him through these complicated steps has made all the difference. Programs like this need to be available long-term, not just for a short time, to truly support families like ours.

”



Through partnerships with REDI Enterprises and MakerSpace, the staff continued group programming for clients with various developmental disabilities.

This growth has strengthened connections to community resources, promoting personal well-being and greater independence.

In 2023, staff facilitated 29 sessions for these participants, and in 2024, that number grew by 40%, totaling 41 sessions. These expanded opportunities have been invaluable in deepening clients' engagement with their community, learning about available resources, and fostering relationships with peers who share similar interests.



“Having my brother reunited with us is a miracle. For years, he struggled alone,, and we felt hopeless being so far away. The support he received - from access to financial assistance to the dedicated team that worked to reconnect us - made all the difference. We are beyond grateful for the program and the people who never gave up on him.

”

SENIORS OUTREACH



**Funding
Allocation:
\$65,000**

Since its establishment in 1986, Seniors OutReach has been dedicated to promoting healthy lifestyles and independence among seniors through a variety of meaningful programs and services.

With a strong volunteer base of approximately 130 individuals, the organization ensures that seniors have access to the support they need to enjoy their lives and remain independent for as long as possible. The society's commitment to enhancing the well-being of seniors makes it an invaluable resource in the community .



Seniors Outreach in Brooks continues to make a meaningful difference in the lives of older adults through their Seniors Social Support Program. From monthly teas that encourage social interaction to community outings that help seniors stay active and connected, the program reached over 750 individuals in 2024.

In addition to regular programming, Seniors Outreach stepped up in a big way this past year by taking over the Seniors Christmas Gift Campaign, which was previously run by Orchard Manor and at risk of being cancelled.

With generous support from Shoppers Drug Mart, they coordinated the distribution of over 100 wrapped gifts to seniors in the Brooks area, including festive mugs with small comforts delivered directly to nearly every lodge and care home in the city.

They also continue to offer one-on-one support for seniors who need help accessing community resources, navigating challenges, or simply finding a listening ear. Seniors Outreach is building a more connected and caring community for our aging population.



FCSS Micro-Grant Funded Partner Projects

- Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Brooks Bandits
- Brooks Family Mediation Services
- Cantera Safe House
- Champion Centre
- City of Brooks
- Crossroads Clinic
- Duchess 50+ Club
- Duchess School Parent Council
- Gem Home Support
- Global Village Centre
- Grasslands Public Schools
- Long Game Fitness
- Little Learners
- Youth Summer Kick Off Committee
- Rosemary New Horizons
- Rosemary Ag Society
- Safe Communities
- SPEC
- Village of Duchess





From Small Starts to Strong Communities

We're proud of the impact our Micro-Grant program continues to make across the region. These small but mighty grants are designed to support local initiatives that build community, strengthen connections, and promote well-being. From youth leadership workshops to senior socials and cultural events, micro-grants have helped spark meaningful change in Brooks, Duchess, Rosemary, Tilley, and beyond.

We're excited to see the creative and impactful ways local groups have used these funds to make a difference. The reach of the program continues to grow, and we can't wait to see what our community dreams up next!

BROOKS FAMILY MEDIATION SERVICES

Funding Allocation: \$5,000

In 2024, FCSS funding supported Brooks Family Mediation Services in making trauma-informed, affordable mediation accessible to families in our community—many for the first time. Previously only available in Medicine Hat, these services are now locally available thanks to a \$5,000 microgrant. The funding allowed five families (supporting 10 individuals) to access an average of 10 hours of mediation, including intake assessments, structured mediation sessions, and administrative support.

These services helped families navigate separation and custody agreements in a safe, respectful, and cost-effective way—avoiding adversarial legal action. Importantly, 88% of participants reported improved communication within their families as a result. FCSS funding removed financial barriers for low-income families and those experiencing domestic violence, helping reduce emotional strain, promote co-parenting, and build long-term resilience.



Duchess School Parent Council

Chase the Good Presentation

Funding Allocation: \$1,000

The Chase the Good presentation, hosted by the Duchess School Parent Council, brought together 150 students from Duchess and Rosemary schools for an inspiring session on positivity and self-reflection. The event featured Brett Gardiner, a renowned Canadian professional rodeo announcer and motivational speaker, known for his engaging storytelling and ability to connect with audiences of all ages.

Brett's message resonated deeply with attendees, offering practical tools for personal growth and emphasizing the importance of checking in with oneself at any age.

The Chase the Good presentation marked a meaningful step in fostering a culture of positivity and self-awareness among youth in the community.



86%

of participating youth reported

The presentation has helped me feel that I am better at handling whatever comes my way



Safe Communities

Youth Self Defense

Funding Allocated: \$5,000

Youth self-defense facilitated by Safe Communities aimed to help foster a safer and more confident generation. Offered free of, the course combined hands-on self-defense training with classroom instruction on situational awareness, changing routines, the bystander effect, and the role of empathy in decision-making—especially for young women.

A total of 84 teens participated, with 96% reporting they felt better equipped to handle challenging situations after attending. The program's success has sparked efforts to integrate self-defense education into the high school curriculum through a continued partnership with Grasslands Public Schools.



Teen Driver Week

Funding Allocated: \$4,285

National Teen Driver Safety Week helped bring an important and often overlooked conversation back to the forefront—driving under the influence. For the first time, all high school students across the County of Newell were brought together for a presentation focused on the consequences of impaired driving.

A total of 1,205 students attended the event, which delivered a powerful and honest message about the risks and responsibilities of being behind the wheel. Of those who heard the presentation, 91% reported a better understanding of how their choices can impact their lives and the lives of others. By ensuring rural students were included this event helped create a lasting impression on youth throughout the entire region.



Brooks Bandits

**Funding
Allocation: \$5,000**

FCSS was proud to support the Brooks Bandits' 2024 Hockey Hooky Game—an exciting, no-cost event that welcomed over 2,400 youth from across the Region for an afternoon of hockey, fun, and community spirit. By offering free admission, the game ensured all students, including those from low-income families, could participate. The event promoted mental wellness, school engagement, and social connection, with **100% of surveyed youth reporting that it helped them feel a stronger sense of belonging to their community.**



GAME ON PROGRAM

Funding Allocation: \$4,500

In 2024, FCSS funding supported the launch of the Game On youth group, hosted at the Duchess Recreation Centre. This new program provided youth in the Village of Duchess with a positive and inclusive space to connect, build social skills, and engage with their community. By offering a healthy outlet for recreation and relationship-building, Game On helped create a stronger sense of belonging among local youth and encouraged meaningful, community-focused participation.



YOUTH SUMMER PROGRAMMING

Funding Allocation: \$1,988

In 2024, FCSS funding supported youth summer programming through the Village of Duchess by enhancing local Farmers Market days with fun, engaging activities for children and youth. These added elements encouraged families to attend, connect with others, and enjoy the market as a community gathering space. A total of 25 individuals participated in the programming, helping to create a welcoming and family-friendly atmosphere throughout the summer.

Long Game Fitness



Girls Who Run

Funding Allocation: \$2,500

Girls who Run is a confidence-building initiative that combined physical activity, goal-setting, and mentorship for girls and their caregivers. With 27 participants, the program created a supportive space where girls could build resilience, try new things, and work toward completing a 5km run—many for the very first time.

The program emphasized persistence and progress, with 96% of participants surveyed reporting they were more willing to try again if something didn't work out.

One family, a mom and her two daughters, joined the program with the goal of simply finishing the race. Not only did they achieve that, but the daughters went on to excel in their school track events, inspired by their experience and new-found confidence.

Girls Who Run is more than just a running group—it's a powerful tool for building confidence, connection, and healthy habits that last.

Girls Who Lead

Funding Allocation: \$2,500

Girls Who Lead is a confidence and leadership-based initiative for girls ages 5 to 12. With a focus on building self-esteem and communication skills through physical activity and movement, the program provided 31 young participants.

Sessions included hands-on leadership opportunities, with junior coaches leading activities that reflected their own self-care practices. From glow stick dance parties and nail care lessons to plant potting and superhero art, the girls explored self-expression while learning valuable life skills.

Parent feedback spoke volumes about the impact of the program, with one noting, "I saw a huge confidence boost—starting with going in with her to check in, then it transformed into dropping her off and her not even looking back, just going straight in, head held high." Girls Who Lead is helping shape the next generation of confident, capable young women in our communities.





Women in Movement

Funding Allocation: \$3,000

Girls Who Lead partnered with the City of Brooks to host the Women in Movement event—a community-wide presentation focused on resilience, confidence, and movement for life.

Designed for girls ages 6 and up, the event highlighted female role models and encouraged leadership, self-belief, and trying new things.

The event featured inspiring talks from Olympian Sage Watson and national-level coach Jennifer Oakes, who reminded attendees that growth comes from stepping outside your comfort zone and embracing failure as part of the journey.

Women in Movement was a powerful day of growth, connection, and inspiration for the next generation of strong, confident young women.





Duchess 50+ Club

Funding Allocation: \$2,000

The Duchess 50+ Club provides social support for older adults in the Village of Dutchess, offering a welcoming space for connection, engagement, and learning. Through bi-monthly lunches, group activities, and presentations on healthy aging, the program supports seniors in staying active and connected to their community. In 2024, the program served 30 individuals, with 100% of surveyed participants reporting stronger relationships with others in their community as a result of attending.

Rosemary New Horizons

Funding Allocation: \$2,000

Rosemary and District New Horizons is a seniors club dedicated to reducing social isolation and strengthening community ties among older adults in Rosemary. The group offers a range of activities, including morning coffee gatherings, card games, monthly lunches, community outings, and access to a lending library. Members also enjoy smaller interest groups like the “Men’s Chat” group, a choir, and weekly crafting sessions. In 2024, 60 people utilized the service and 100% of participants surveyed said they felt a stronger sense of belonging to their community as a result of the program.



Gem Home Support

Funding Allocation: \$5,000

The Gem Home Support Program supports seniors in the Gem area by offering light housekeeping services and regular social gatherings. These services help seniors age in place while staying socially connected to their community. In 2024, the program served 44 individuals through a combination of in-home support and community events, such as monthly noon meals at the Gem Community Hall.



SPEC Association



Parent and Tot Program

Funding Allocation: \$1,000

The Parent and Tot program, delivered by SPEC and hosted at the White Barn Fun Farm, offered free, family-friendly programming for parents and children under 8. Designed to strengthen family connections and build social bonds among parents, the program provided a welcoming space for families to grow and connect through shared experiences. In 2024, the program served 280 individuals, with 99% of participants surveyed reporting that their family felt closer as a result of attending.

The Mezz

Funding Allocation: \$1,000

The MEZZ program, delivered by SPEC at the JBS Canada Centre, provides youth with a safe, welcoming space to spend time and build positive relationships. Designed to support healthy decision-making and social development, the program offers drop-in activities, food, and engaging experiences for local youth. In 2024, FCSS funding helped enhance the program by supporting supplies, snacks, and additional activities. A total of 221 youth accessed the program throughout the year.



LITTLE LEARNERS RESOURCE FAIR



94% *of individuals surveyed state that*

As a result of the Resource Fair I am better able to access resources for my family when we need them.

Funding Allocated: \$5,000

In 2024, Grasslands Regional FCSS was proud to support the Little Learners Resource Fair—a collaborative event focused on increasing awareness of local supports for families with children under six. With over 400 people in attendance and 23 community organizations participating, the fair gave families a one-stop opportunity to explore early-years programs, services, and resources available in the Brooks Region.



Comments like “I didn’t even know we had a Toy Lending Library in Brooks!” were common throughout the day, highlighting just how valuable the event was in raising awareness and connecting families to supports they didn’t know existed. The enthusiasm and energy throughout both planning and delivery reflected the deep commitment of our community partners, whose collective efforts made the event a success.



Thanks to FCSS funding, partners were able to bring this vision to life and lay the groundwork for increased family engagement in early childhood development—helping build a stronger, more connected community from the very beginning.

Grasslands Public Schools

Funding Allocation: \$2,500

The Peace Pit at Brooks High School was created as a calm, welcoming space where students can decompress and access mental wellness resources during the school day. **Since its launch, the space has supported 160 youth, with 92% of those surveyed reporting that it helped them gain new information on how to better manage their stress.**



Beyond offering a place to reset, the space itself has become a hands-on learning tool. By immersing students in an environment that supports self-regulation and mindfulness, the Peace Pit allows them to explore these strategies naturally—learning what works best for them and sharing those approaches with peers. For many students, it's not just a place to decompress—it's a space where they feel seen, supported, and better equipped to return to class with a clearer mindset.

Youth Summer Kick Off

Funding Allocation: \$4,650

The Youth Summer Kick Off Party is a vibrant, multi-organizational event that welcomes youth ages 10–18 to enjoy an afternoon of free, fun-filled activities. The event features snacks, lawn games, sports, messy art, a Zen Den with mindfulness activities, obstacle courses, and this year, a bouncy castle foamer and a massive water fight. Local RCMP officers, fire departments, and other special guests joined in the fun, helping foster positive connections between youth and community role models.



Now in its third year, the event has seen remarkable growth. From fewer than 20 youth in its first year, to 100 in year two, this year's event saw over 250 youth in attendance—despite cool, rainy weather.

Notably, 16% of attendees were newcomer youth who connected through the SWIS program. The Youth Summer Kick Off continues to grow as a powerful kickoff to summer that builds connection, fun, and community pride.



Rosemary Ag Society

Funding Allocation: \$3,000

The Rosemary Ag Society's Canada Day celebration drew an impressive crowd of 2,500 people, bringing together community members and visitors from across the province and beyond. The event offered a full day of family-friendly fun, rooted in community pride and small-town charm. Attendees return year after year, making it a meaningful tradition that strengthens community bonds.

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with 100% of surveyed attendees stating they felt more connected to others in their community after attending. Events like this highlight the power of rural gatherings to create lasting memories and meaningful connections.

City of Brooks

Funding Allocation: \$5,000

The City of Brooks Canada Day celebration welcomed over 2,000 attendees for a day filled with community spirit, entertainment, and family-friendly activities.

Families and friends gathered for photos at the face-in-the-hole enclosure, while a roving entertainer added to the festive energy by engaging guests throughout the venue. From the Fieldhouse to the Flexhall, every space buzzed with activity and connection, creating lasting memories and a strong sense of community pride.





Crossroads Clinic



Rooted, a bi-weekly support group offered through Crossroads Clinic, provides a safe, welcoming space for single mothers to build parenting skills, access resources, and form meaningful connections. Designed to reduce isolation and empower moms, the group offers mental health support, peer connection, and a child-friendly environment where both mothers and children can grow.

One participant, a first-time mom who joined the group late in her pregnancy, found vital support and friendship through Rooted.

With no close family or social network, she began attending regularly after her baby was born and has since flourished—both emotionally and socially—alongside her now 9-month-old daughter.

Beyond parenting support, Rooted is helping women build hope and confidence for the future. Several moms have started working toward new career goals, with three participants now pursuing or preparing for post-secondary education.

Global Village Centre

HEALTHY WORKERS PROGRAM

Funding Allocation: \$3,000

The Healthy Workers Program, offered by Global Village, focused on equipping frontline responders with practical tools to manage stress and PTSD. Serving 26 participants, the program provided valuable strategies—such as mindfulness techniques—to support mental well-being and resilience in high-stress roles.

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with 87% of participants reporting they felt better able to serve their communities as a result of the program. Beyond individual impact, the program fostered a strong sense of community and mutual support among those who give so much of themselves to help others.



CULTURAL ENLIGHTENMENT PROGRAM

Funding Allocation: \$3,000

The Cultural Enlightenment Program offered by Global Village Centre provided community members and leaders with valuable insight into Canadian customs, cultural awareness, and accessing local resources. A total of 28 participants took part in the program, which created a safe space for open conversations about mental health, stress, and self-care.

The workshop sparked meaningful dialogue and helped participants feel more connected and informed, with 93% stating they now better understand how to access community resources. One attendee shared that the program opened their eyes to the importance of mental health, while others appreciated the chance to reflect on their well-being. By combining cultural learning with personal growth, the program encouraged stronger, more inclusive community engagement.

Champion Centre

OUT TRIPS

Funding Allocation: \$3,500

The Champion Centre Client Out Trips Program was designed to reduce isolation and strengthen social connections among residents through local, community-based activities. In 2024, the program served 33 individuals, with **94% of participants reporting stronger connections with others in their community** as a result.

The program revealed that nearby outings—like attending a Brooks Bandits game—were more meaningful to participants than more elaborate trips. These local experiences provided comfort, familiarity, and a stronger sense of belonging. The success of the program highlights the power of small moments in bringing people together and fostering a supportive, connected community.



ALONGSIDE SUPPORT

Funding Allocation: \$5,000

The Alongside Support program at the Champion Centre offers system navigation for adult men (18+) facing housing instability, social isolation, and other life challenges.

Through this initiative, the Champion Centre Manager meets with men who walk through the door or call for help—averaging 12 contacts per week. These individuals are often disconnected from family and support networks, unsure of where to turn. Rather than turning them away, the Manager offers relational care—listening, validating their experiences, and helping them navigate next steps through systems.

Alongside Support enables the Manager to dedicate time to walk alongside those in crisis, providing hope, direction, and a sense of dignity. The program helps men feel seen, supported, and empowered to take positive steps forward.

CANTERA SAFE HOUSE

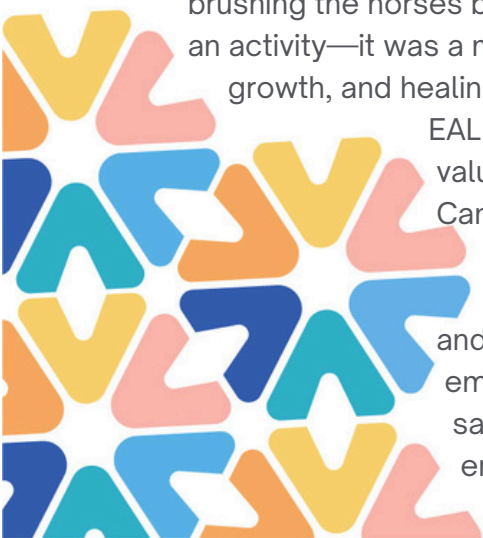
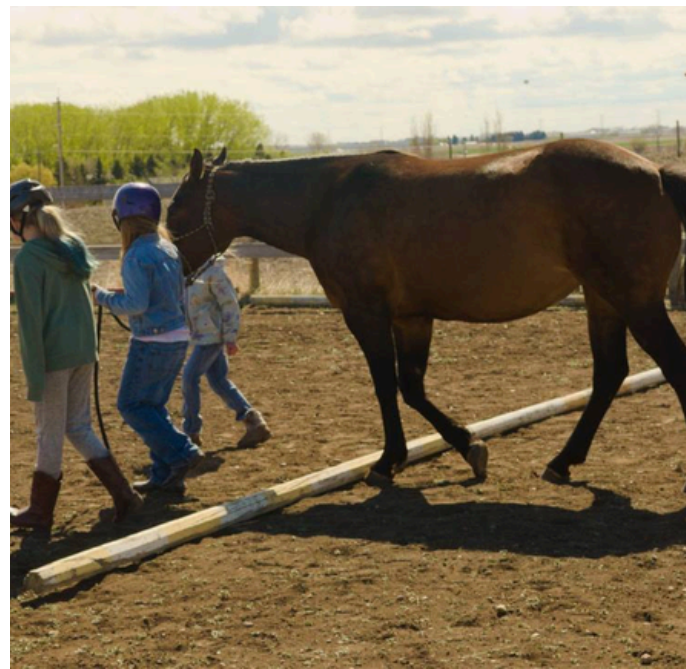
EQUINE ASSISTED LEARNING

Funding Allocation: \$5,000

The Equine Assisted Learning program, offered through Cantara Safe House in partnership with Stronger Life Connections, provides a unique and powerful way for clients to build emotional resilience, self-awareness, and social skills through guided interaction with horses. In 2024, the program supported 14 outreach and in-house clients, with **71% reporting they felt better equipped to handle life's challenges as a result of their participation.**

Many participants entered the program with little or no experience around large animals. In one session, three male clients—living with learning disabilities, ADHD, schizophrenia, and bipolar disorder—learned how emotional regulation influences not only themselves but also their ability to connect with others, including the horses. As they competed to stay calm and focused, they discovered the therapeutic impact of mindful presence, noting how relaxing and stress-reducing the experience was. Feeding and brushing the horses became more than just an activity—it was a moment of reflection, growth, and healing.

EAL continues to serve as a valuable tool in helping Cantara Safe House clients strengthen their well-being, gain confidence, and build healthier emotional responses in a safe, supportive environment.





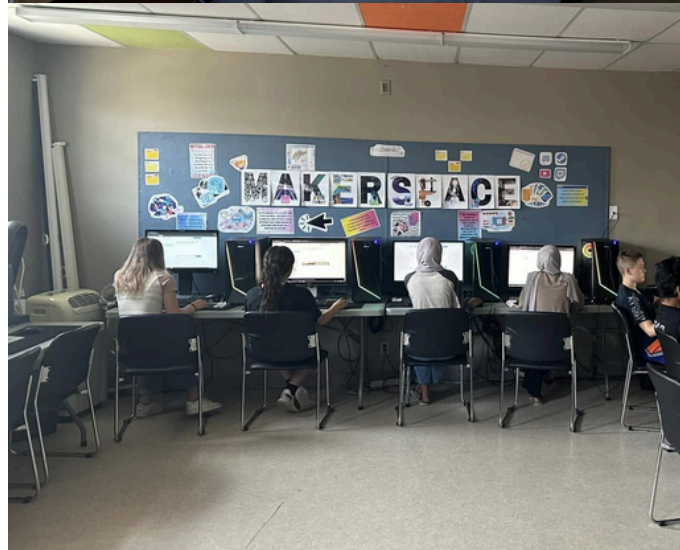
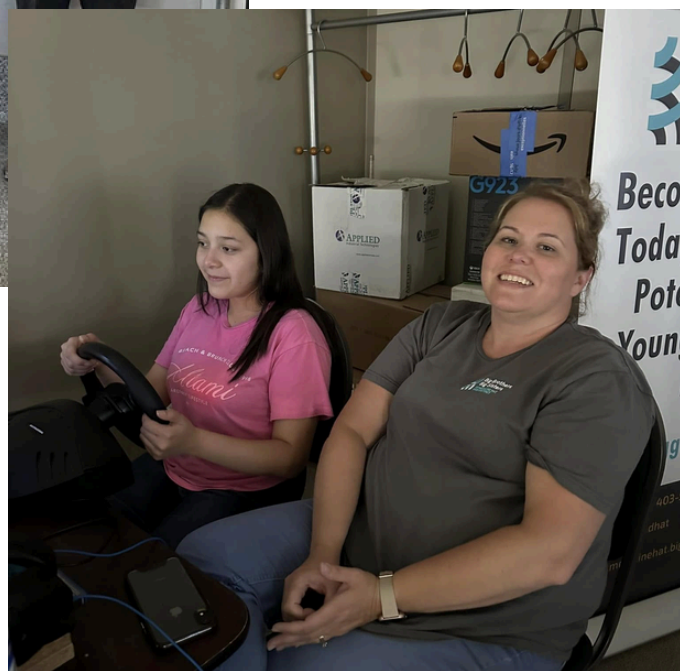
BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS

Funding Allocation: \$5,000

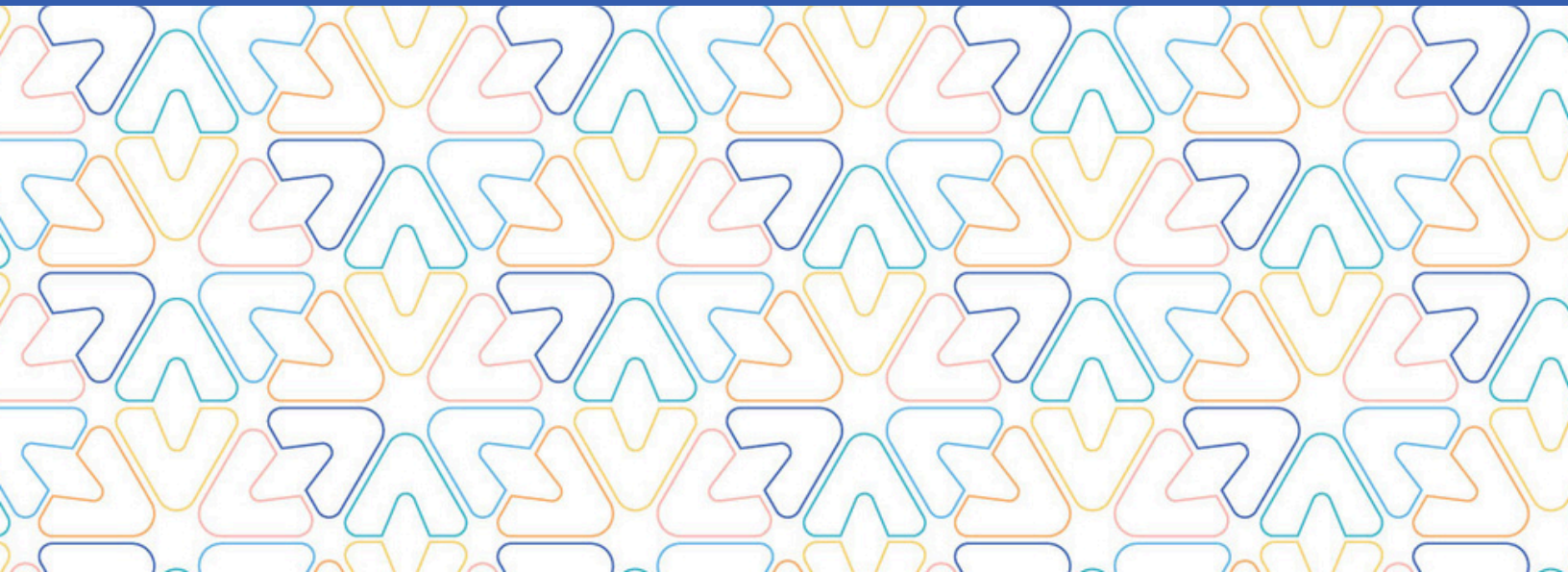
The Big Possibilities program, delivered by Big Brothers Big Sisters, empowers youth ages 13–18. Designed to promote safety, responsibility, and community engagement, the program specifically supports youth in rural communities including Brooks, Rosemary, Duchess, Tilley, and Rolling Hills.

In 2024, 25 youth participated, with **96% reporting a stronger sense of belonging in their community** as a result.

With a focus on life skills and emotional growth, Big Possibilities is helping rural youth gain the tools and confidence they need to navigate independence and build strong connections within their communities.



FUNDED ORGANIZATION	VOLUNTEER HOURS	CLIENTS SERVED
Big Brothers Big Sisters - Big Possibilities	30	25
Cantara Safe House - Equine Assisted Learning	-	14
Brooks Family Mediations Services - Subsidy	-	10
The Champion Centre - Client Out Trips	130	33
The Champion Centre - Alongside Support	-	624
Youth Summer Kick Off	6	250
City of Brooks - Canada Day	120	2,000
Crossroads Clinic - Rooted Support Group	72	9
Duchess 50+ Club	75	30
Duchess Parent Council - Chase the Good	4	150
Gem Home Supports	140	44
Global Village - Healthy Workers	50	26
Global Village - Cultural Enlightenment	50	28





FUNDED ORGANIZATION	VOLUNTEER HOURS	CLIENTS SERVED
Grasslands Public Schools - Peace Pit	60	160
Little Learners - Community Resource Fair	90	400
Long Game Fitness - Girls Who Lead	22	42
Long Game Fitness - Girls Who Run ent	17	27
Long Game Fitness - Women in Movem	158	31
Rosemary Ag Society - Canada Day	200	2,500
Rosemary New Horizons - Seniors Support	600	60
Safe Communities - Self Defense	20	84
Safe Communities - Teen Driver Week	2	1,205
SPEC Association - Parent and Tot	-	280
SPEC Association - The Mezz	15	221
Village of Duchess - Youth Programming	14	100

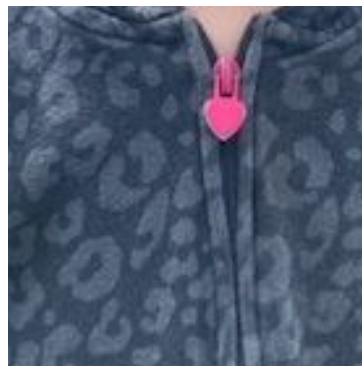
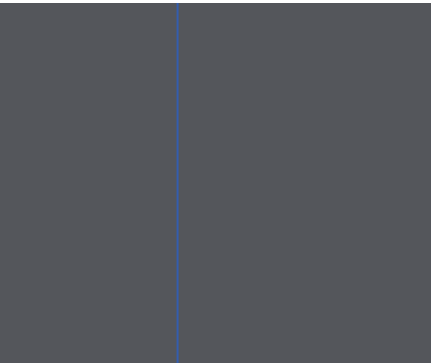
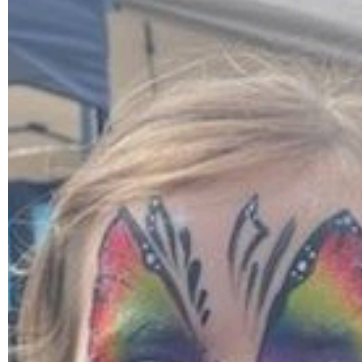
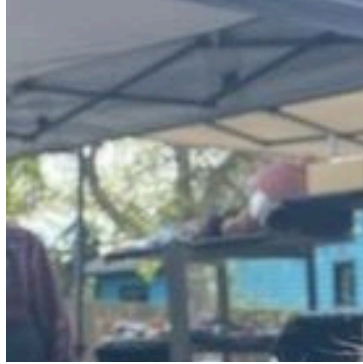


Thank you for helping us build a region
where people feel connected, supported,
and empowered.

Through local partnerships and
community-driven projects, we've seen
neighbors come together, youth step into
leadership, and individuals of all ages find
a stronger sense of belonging.

**Together, we're creating lasting change
—because we are truly**

*stronger
together*



Thank You

for being part of FCSS, we are

stronger together

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