



PROVIDENCE

HEALTH • EDUCATION • THERAPY

Annual Report



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*At Providence,
we know. We care.
We help.*

Providence has been supporting children with disabilities for over 70 years. We are proud of our tradition of caring and compassion and equally proud of what we are today: a dedicated team of skilled teachers and therapists supporting families in a warm caring environment where most children reach 90% of their education and therapeutic goals.

Families often come to Providence at a challenging time – wanting to do all they can for their child with a disability, but not knowing what the options are or what the future holds. We understand – and we can help.

A recent survey of our kindergarten graduates' parents told us the following:

- 90% of parents felt their child was well-prepared for Grade One.
- 93% felt their recommendations and suggestions were included in their child's individual program plan.
- 98% felt the teachers and therapists understood their child's needs
- 100% would recommend Providence to others for early education.



Message From The Board Chair and President

The 2014-2015 year was very interesting in terms of the world around us.

The steady decline in the price of oil over the year affected many of our families, as well as many of our corporate sponsors. The change in provincial government in May did not cause any immediate changes for Providence, however we did receive word that planned enrolment caps would be removed for the upcoming 2015-2016 school year. This allowed us to continue to move forward with our growth plans to meet the increasing demand for our services.

Thankfully, none of the challenges of the outside world affected what was happening inside our classrooms or our community programs: we continued to deliver high-quality, accessible therapy and education to more than 1,300 children with disabilities.

A recent statistic from the Calgary Foundation's 2015 Vital Signs Report says that 27% of Calgary children experience difficulty in one or more areas of development* by age five. That's approximately 20,000 children, and it explains why we had lengthy waiting lists at each of our six locations and in our community programs this past year.

In response to this demand we finalized plans to expand our McKenzie Towne school to accommodate 70 more students. Enrollment is set for September 2016. We continue to look for opportunities to expand in the far northeast, another area of particularly high demand.

Thank you to all of our dedicated staff, volunteers and donors who remain passionately committed to ensuring each of our children have the opportunity to reach for and achieve their full potential.

Sincerely,



Mark Josefchak
Board Chair



Rhonda Conway
President and CEO

* *physical health and well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language and thinking skills, communications skills and general knowledge.*



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Who We Are

Providence combines experience and expertise with caring and compassion to provide exceptional therapeutic and educational services to young children with disabilities.

What We Do

School-based services:

Providence operates six preschools across the city, with 525 students in the 2014-2015 school year. In our classrooms, each child has a direct, daily, intensive therapeutic and educational program delivered by a team of certified teachers, speech-language pathologists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, psychologists and educational and therapeutic assistants who work right in the classrooms with the children.

Our low child-to-staff ratios allow for individual and small group support when necessary, while at the same time developing children's skills in a social, play-based program.

Community-based services:

Providence's Community Services team of speech-language pathologists and occupational and physical therapists visited nearly 100 different locations across the city last year. They provided timely assessment and treatment to more than 800 young children through partnerships with childcare facilities; as a partner agency in the provincial Regional Collaborative for Service Delivery (RCSD); and through contracted services to independent, charter and private schools.



Support for Families

Providence also offers education and support for parents outside of school hours to help them best support their child. Information sessions include topics such as Picky Eaters and Toileting. Other sessions offer helpful strategies on reducing anxiety, building confidence or encouraging learning through play.

Our therapists also work with students and families outside of the school setting. Therapy is usually provided at the student's childcare facility.



HEARTSTRINGS PROGRAM

Providence's unique Heartstrings Program was developed by our own psychologist and behaviour specialist.

The program brings together small groups of parents to develop strategies when dealing with their children's challenging behaviour.

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a red long-sleeved shirt and blue jeans, is sitting on a blue patterned rug. She is looking down at a tablet computer held by a young boy. The boy has Down syndrome and is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt under a grey knit vest with a black and white geometric pattern. He is also wearing blue jeans and is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is slightly out of focus, showing a yellow and blue patterned wall.

"My son gets an individualized program specific to his needs."

So Much More Than a School



It has been quite a journey so far for Vasili and his mom, Anna. Vasili, who is now in kindergarten, was born with Down Syndrome and a number of other health issues. As a newly single parent, Anna faced the diagnoses – and their implications – alone.

When Anna needed to return to work, Vasili started in Providence’s Outreach Program, where he received speech therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy at his daycare. Several of his Providence therapists also came to Anna and Vasili’s home to make recommendations on adapting their home to make it easier as Vasili grew.

Anna researched a number of different options for her son and chose Providence when it was time for preschool. “It’s so much more than a school,” shares Anna. “The teachers and therapists at Providence are really invested in Vasili and his progress. He gets an individualized program that is specific to his needs.”

Anna describes a particular moment when she knew Vasili was in the right place and that there was hope for the future: “Vasili had been unable to feed himself. I wasn’t aware how hard his teacher and therapists had been working with him at school to master the art of using a utensil to get food from the plate to his mouth. We were at a restaurant with family and Vasili just picked up a fork and starting eating. Everyone at the table stopped to watch - and then everyone started crying! It was an incredible moment.”

And the future is looking bright for both Vasili and Anna. Just recently, Anna re-married, and her new husband is adopting Vasili. And, he has a new baby sister!

Highlights of the Year - By the Numbers

1300

1300 young children with disabilities were served through our school and community programs.

1000+

1000+ hours of specialized support was provided by teachers and therapists outside of school hours for parents on topics such as Picky Eaters, Positive Discipline, and Toileting.

800

Supported 800 children in 93 different facilities (childcare centres and independent schools) through our Community Services programs.

525

Registered 525 students in six Providence preschools across the city.

250

Thanks to our friends at TELUS, Nexen, and the Progress Club of Calgary Downtown, 50 Fine Motor Development Kits were created and distributed, and approximately 250 childcare workers each completed two hours of training on how to use them.

50

As part of our school Nutrition Program that serves nutritious snacks to 525 students every day, 50 children with complex, specialized dietary needs were accommodated.

6

Interactive SMART boards were added to six classrooms, including specialized age-appropriate software. SMART boards provide new ways to engage students and get them excited about learning.

5

Completed a successful pilot project with five participating daycares, loaning interactive literacy kits (with extra-large books, puppets and costumes) developed by our therapists.

4

Families were invited to participate in four research projects last year, three involving autism spectrum disorder and one international study gathering data to improve diagnosis of syndromes in young children.

"Before coming to Providence, we were at a loss for how to help our son. We are now more confident and stronger advocates for him! Thank you."





New Research Supports Our Work

An emerging body of research on the science of early brain development is proving what we knew all along – that experiences in the early years lay the foundation for a number of skills and abilities. In order for children to acquire these skills and abilities, they require consistent, stimulating and nurturing early interactions with parents and caregivers.

Building Better Brain Architecture - Early experiences build brains

Contrary to popular belief, the structure of our brains as they develop in early childhood is determined by more than just our genes. The experiences we have in the first years of our lives also affect the physical architecture of the developing brain.

Because brains are built in stages, with more complex structures built on simpler structures, it's crucial to get the early years right. Just as a house needs a sturdy foundation to support the walls and roof, a brain needs a good base to support all future development.

Building better brains is possible by exposing children to positive, nurturing interactions at a young age. These positive experiences are the bricks that build sturdy brain architecture, leading to improved learning and behaviour as well as better physical, mental and social wellbeing throughout life.

- From the AlbertaFamilyWellness.org

Grade One Ready

Brain science and economics show that intervening to help children when they're very young is more cost-effective than waiting until they're in school. That's the conclusion of a new report from the Bridgespan group and the Pritzker Children's Initiative (out of the US).

One of the claims in the report is that when a young child leaves kindergarten ready for school, there is an 82 percent chance that child will master basic skills by age 11, compared with a 45 percent chance for children who are not school ready.

“ Three of my children graduated from Providence and I'm very thankful for all the support, understanding and caring. Providence really made a difference in their lives – and mine! ”



*"I have never
felt that
much emotion
in my life
- one word..."*

"You Are My Friend Now"



It was the first day of Grade One this past fall for Max. As he stood waiting with his mom for check in on his first day, most of the children were meeting for the first time. Max noticed one boy who was standing outside the little circle. No one was talking to him - he looked a bit different. Max let go of his mother's hand, went to the little boy, and said "I'm Max, M-A-X. You are my friend now. Come with me." He brought the little boy to the circle.

"The look in his mother's eyes as my son reached out to him said it all," shared Max's mom, Lindsay. "It was truly heartwarming!"

Max graduated from Providence kindergarten last June, after attending Providence for the last three years. Originally assessed in the lowest percentile range for expressive and receptive language, he entered a regular Grade One class at his community school this past fall, reading and printing at a Grade Two level.

Lindsay remembers fondly one particular moment when she knew Max was in the right place. "I took Max to Providence McKenzie Towne school before he started and he saw the bus he would be picked up in....he called it "OO BA" for school bus. It was 2 months and 4 days into his time at Providence when I picked him up at daycare and he yelled, "BUS." He had been trying to say that word for a couple weeks and he said it clear as day... "BUS." I have never felt that much emotion in my life....ONE WORD, "bus."

Max included his new friend on his first day of Grade One because of his experiences at Providence, where he learned everyone is the same, just facing different challenges. Likely, throughout his life, he will recognize those who are different and make them feel welcome.

2014-2015

Where The Money Comes From



Where The Money Goes



Complete audited financial statements are available by calling 403.255.5577 or by sending a request to general@providencechildren.com



Early Intervention. Waiting Lists.

These two things just don't go together.

And yet, more and more often we are faced with telling families our schools are full and the wait lists are long. That's why we are committed to increasing our capacity to accommodate more children. We want to ensure we are doing everything we can to get children with disabilities the support they need NOW – when it matters most.

Phase One of our plan is a \$1.9 million expansion of our McKenzie Towne school. Construction has just begun to add three new classrooms and a therapy room, which will enable us to accept 70 more students for September 2016!

Providence has committed \$600,000 toward this project, and community support has already brought us to \$1 million. But we need the community's help to reach the \$1.9 million target and proceed to the much-needed Phase Two – which is to serve more children with disabilities in the fast-growing NE quadrant of our city.

Please contact Maureen O'Connor, Director, Resource Development and Community Resources for more information on sponsorship opportunities and the many ways to get involved in helping to make sure EVERY child has the opportunity to reach for and achieve their full potential.

moconnor@providencechildren.com
(403) 255-5577



We believe every child should have the opportunity to reach for and achieve their full potential.



CONTACT INFORMATION

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PROVIDENCE SCHOOLS

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(Main School and Administration)
5232 – 4th St. SW
Calgary, Alberta T2V 0Z4

Beddington School
183 Bedford Drive NE

Falconridge School
116 Falsby Way NE

Hawkwood School
555 Hawkwood Blvd NW

McKenzie Towne School
325 McKenzie Town Link SE

Midnapore School
14707 Bannister Road SE



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