

# Children's Cottage Society

*Annual Report 2006 – 2007*



*Safe Children in Healthy Families*



CHILDREN'S  
COTTAGE  
SOCIETY

## Message from the Children's Cottage Society

Today, there are more than 285,000 families living in Calgary and the surrounding area. Of these, more than 14% or nearly 41,000 families raise their children as single parents. It is for this reason the Children's Cottage Society of Calgary has focused its work on stressing the importance of support to parents. Over the past 21 years of service, Calgarians have told us that crisis care and in-home family support have kept their families together, reduced the risk of harm to their children and given the parents hope—hope toward better parenting and their families' futures.

In 2006, we were able to help a total of 3,426 children from 2,378 families. The crisis and respite services saw 2,956 children from 2,098 families. The family support home visitation programs provided parenting education and referrals to 470 children from 280 families. We are encouraged by the impact we hear our services provide to families and we see the results of our work first hand in the families who call us for help.

The Society's future direction involves reaching out to strengthen even more families. Many have not heard of our services. We have committed to strengthen our communication to the public so that all families in need are aware of our resources.

Secondly, we will be exploring the community's ability to support the Society's decision to expand its services. Our intent is to respond to identified family needs by providing expanded services including support, respite, education and child care programs easily obtained by vulnerable families at one single location. We anticipate that a community vote of confidence will drive us forward to ensure the safety and well being of children and their families.

As your Board of Directors, we are confident that a prudent and effective transition program for Board Members will keep the enthusiasm and energy levels high. With Susan McWilliams taking over as your new president; the Board, management and staff continue to strive to fulfill our vision of: "Safe Children in Healthy Families."



**Ken Pattenden**  
President



**Patty Kilgallon**  
Executive Director

## Financial Standing for the Year Ended March 31, 2007

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our funders: Calgary and Area Child and Family Services Authority, United Way, the Family and Community Services (FCSS) and the numerous corporations, foundations, and individuals who support the necessary work of the Children's Cottage Society.

Operating revenues for 2006 – 2007 were up 13.6% at 2.1 million this year; compared to 1.9 million the previous year. Approximately 50% of these funds were provided through Calgary and Area Child and Family Services Authority. A further 4.5% of funds were provided through FCSS and 2.5% from the United Way of Calgary. The remaining 44% was provided through private donations, grants, and fundraising campaigns. In order to balance the budget, \$45,000 was drawn down from the Children's Cottage Fund.

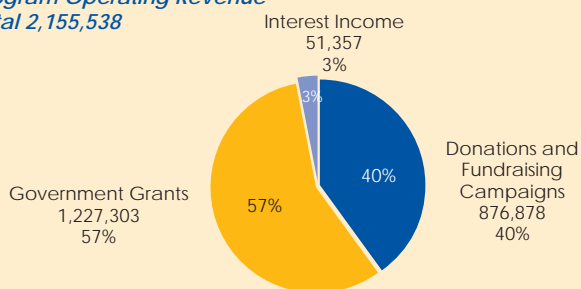
I am pleased to report that the Children's Cottage Society was able to contain operating expenses for 2006 – 2007 to a small increase. Expenses were up by 4% as compared to last year. Program Delivery Costs increased by 4% and administrative costs were down by 9%. Fund Development Costs increased by 32% relative to the costs of a full-time position and the costs of a direct mail campaign.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Board and the Staff for their efforts to ensure the contributions of our funders and donors are managed awisely.

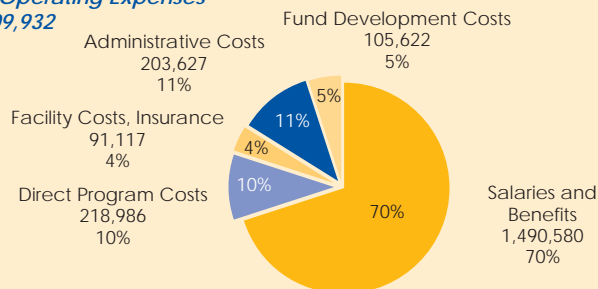


**Art Dyck**  
Treasurer

### Program Operating Revenue Total 2,155,538



### Program Operating Expenses Total 2,109,932



Complete April 1, 2006 – March 31, 2007 Audited Financial Statements are available upon request.

## Honorary Patrons

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## Crisis Nursery Program

Child maltreatment occurs when parents lack the resources or coping dispositions to alleviate their situations. The Children's Cottage serves as a critical community service component to Calgary and the surrounding area, preventing harm or neglect from befalling young children.

The Crisis Nursery provides isolated parents with a safe shelter for their children during an emergency. At any one time, 12 children who are newborn to eight years of age become our guests as their parents resolve the issues that made them unable to care for their children.

### Crisis Nursery Services Provided in 2006

Total # of children cared for.....	1,189
Total # of families supported .....	741
Total # of hours of child care provided.....	58,479
Average length of stay in hours .....	52

### They came for help because they were alone and:

- Exhausted and stressed ..... 34%
- Emotionally or physically ill..... 19%
- Needed to go to court, school, work, funeral, doctor, counsellor..... 13%
- Were facing housing, homelessness, or financial difficulties ..... 12%
- Were wanting protection for their child as they were losing patience..... 8%
- Were having difficulty with a fussy baby or a child's behaviour..... 7%
- Needed child care due to domestic violence..... 7%

### Still, 1501 children from 893 families were turned away in 2006!

Parents were asked what they would do if the Crisis Nursery did not have space. Some of their answers concerned us, like:

- "suffer at home"
- "nothing I can do"
- "keep calling"
- "freak out"
- "call Child Welfare for help"
- "try to manage"
- "miss work"
- "go crazy? I don't know"
- "cope by myself"

**We experienced successful outcomes!** Parents who received help from the Crisis Nursery shared their success through our evaluation process. They told us:

- That the care provided helped them to work on their problem..... 98%
- That the Crisis Nursery protected their child from danger..... 39%
- That they thought they could be a better parent upon the discharge of their child..... 78%

Other significant outcomes parents experienced relate to stress and hope. We asked parents questions that addressed their level of stress and hope before and at the end of their children's stay. The results show that the relief from child care during a crisis enables a **decrease** in the level of stress and an **increase** in their feelings of hope.

The Crisis Nursery provides an opportunity for parents to cope with stress, have positive feelings toward life events and expect more positive outcomes in times of crisis. It is these reductions in unsuitable feelings that the Cottage seeks. They promise to prevent child maltreatment by the parent, and ensure the Cottage vision of keeping safe children in healthy families.



### Profile of parents who used our services in 2006:

- 75% of parents helped were parenting on their own
- 88% were living below the poverty line

Families represent a wide range of ethnicity:

- 53% English Canadian
- 30% First Nations
- 17% include families who are Afghan, African, Chinese, East Indian, Pakistani, Sudanese, Korean, Slovak, Phillipine, Mexican

- 95% of children who utilized the Cottage were discharged into the care of their parents
- Only 5% of children went into the care of Children's Intervention Services

### Parents commented on what important difference the respite period gave them. They told us:

- "I was able to get through an anxiety attack that my daughter did not have to witness"
- "I was able to go to a 12-step program"
- "I was able to find new housing"
- "I was very depressed and tired, having a break helped my son not to see me so emotionally upset"
- "Talking to a staff member at a resource centre about options was the most important thing. It gave me a clearer plan for my future"
- "Regain my composure to be able to parent my child"
- "Focus on what I can do in the future to control my anger"
- "That I was able to admit that I needed help and you all were here. Thank you for your support."

## Community Respite Care

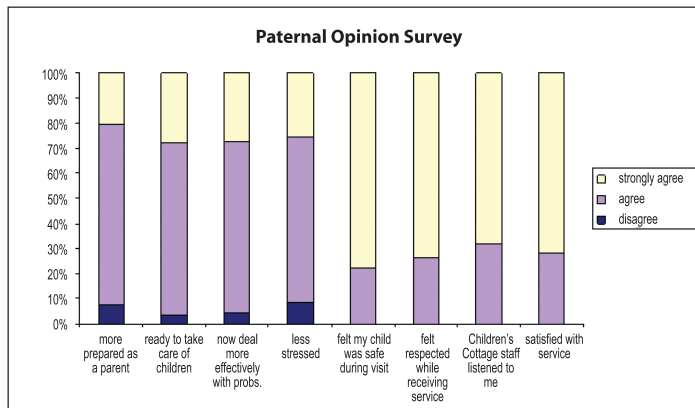
Parents who have no one to turn to and are experiencing post partum depression, are run down due to multiple births, or must attend court due to family violence are some of the people who have used the Community Respite Program. The following three programs allow for short-term planned relief to support parents before they become overwhelmed.

**1. Volunteer daycares and day homes** partner with the Society to provide temporary daytime and overnight care for children whose isolated parents are having a problem that prevents them from caring for their children.

**47 children from 34 families received 351 hours of child care relief.**

**2. In-Home Infant Respite Program** provides support in a family's home to assist with newborns up to the age of six months or more when parents are identified as high risk.

**1618 children from 1323 families received 3738 hours of in-home child care.**



*The illustration above shows significant program outcomes. The majority of parents expressed that they were feeling more prepared as a parent, more ready to take care of their children, more ready to deal effectively with problems and were feeling less stressed after receiving in-home respite care for their infant.*

### 3. Child Care Respite Program

The purpose of the program is to provide childcare to children whose families may be experiencing a crisis or may be at risk of needing more intense children's intervention services. The goal is to ensure that a child's developmental concerns are identified, addressed, and that parents receive support to ensure that their family remains intact.

**102 children from 64 families received 2502 child care days or about 20,016 hours of care.**

Parents reported that as a result of the program they were more patient with their children and able to complete programs knowing that their children were in safe settings.

- 85% of families remained united
- 35% attended counseling or parenting programs while their child received care
- 30% of homeless parents in the program found housing

## Parents told us of the value of child care when they were in crisis:

- "When my partner passed away, I did not know where to begin. Starting with planned child care gave me the time to re-organize my life."
- "Thank you for being there for us. With my wife in hospital, I would have lost my job, had I not got help from you."
- "With the support of the program and child care I was able to find housing and a job in the daycare my child was placed at."

## Family Support

Dedicated Family Liaison workers meet with families who have accessed the Crisis Nursery or the In-home Infant Respite Program to provide support to parents who have used these services. Most parents wanted to become less isolated and more familiar with community support services. They also wanted hands-on information around child development and parenting.

**79 children from 60 families received support.**

Parents who received one-on-one support in their homes showed improvements:

- 50% showed an improvement in their parenting skills
- 33% were more connected to community support services

### They told us:

- "I have learnt to appreciate myself and believe in my role as a mother and believe I am the person who needs to nurture him. Before the support of the Family support program, I thought he would be taken care of better by someone else, now I know better"
- "Family support provides me with the information that I request"
- "The best part is to have the family support in my home helping me to solve my problems"

## Healthy Families

This program follows the Invest in Kids model of home visiting to provide support and education to parents of newborns in a effort to help parents have healthier children and to strengthen families.

**391 children from 220 families received support.**

Parents receiving home visitation services experienced improvement in how they interact with their children and increased their knowledge on how to raise healthy children.

- 63% had more meaningful involvement when spending time with their children
- 85% found that their children were meeting developmental milestones

### They told us:

- "My home visitor helps me when I am depressed"
- "She helps me to feel confident as a parent"

## The Value of Volunteers

150 Volunteers donated 6,635 hours of service.

The cash value of their time equaled an astounding \$99,525!!!

The Society values the presence of volunteers who play with children, bake cookies, clean, garden, maintain our building, knit, quilt, assist with fundraising, and provide expertise in areas ranging from financial, legal, and programming.

We know that their time, skills, and energy ensure that our program staff are able to provide quality support services to children and their families.



## Thank You!

We would like to express our sincere thanks to all who donated to the Children's Cottage Society over the last fiscal year. With your contributions and gifts-in-kind we are able to continue caring for vulnerable children and families experiencing crisis. Due to space limitations we can only list donors who contributed over \$500, but each and every gift is appreciated.

### Cottage Benefactors

(+\$50,000 per year)

Alberta Government Community  
Facility Enhancement Program  
(CFEP) (Alberta Lottery Fund)  
Allan Markin  
Estate of Molly Mae Mueller

### Cottage Patrons

(\$25,000 to \$49,999 per year)

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(\$10,000 to \$24,999 per year)

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(\$1,000 to \$2,499 per year)

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(\$500 to \$999 per year)

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We wish to acknowledge support from our funding partners, including:



Special thanks to our Cottage Benefactors and Cottage Patrons:



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