

communities
at work



ANNUAL REPORT

2021 - 2022



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Communities at Work acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and live. We recognise their continuing connection to land, water and community and pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

PRIVACY STATEMENT

Communities at Work respects the privacy and dignity of the people it assists, our members, volunteers and employees. For more information about how we manage privacy information please refer to our Privacy Policy.

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SECTION 1

OUR ORGANISATION



To enrich the lives of people in our community in life changing ways



Integrity • Respect for all • Progressiveness
Quality and Innovation • Sustainability



To be responsive to the needs of the community by delivering high quality services that support positive educational outcomes, assist in alleviating hardships, enhance the quality of life and lead to positive and social change.



ALAN GREENSLADE BOARD CHAIR

Notwithstanding the further impacts of COVID-19, I am pleased to say that Communities at Work, Canberra's largest not-for-profit community organisation, has increasingly been able to bring our services to the community back to more normal levels, adjusting and adapting as necessary.

The Canberra community in general has responded in a resilient way to the challenges of the last few years, which is a positive sign for the future. For example, our Christmas Appeal fundraising partnership with Transport Canberra and Mix106.3 saw a four-fold increase in donations and community awareness.

It is also pleasing that the commitment to excellence across the organisation is again reflected by Communities at Work being awarded the ACT Large Employer of the Year.

During the August–October 2021 COVID lockdown we kept our children's services open to support families who couldn't work from home. We also sought to be as adaptable and flexible in these circumstances. For example, we partnered with Aspen Medical and ACT Health to set up vaccination hubs at two of our facilities, and developed or participated in initiatives to improve the mental health wellbeing of our students, staff, clients and community.

While there are many achievements to celebrate, I might mention a few. We marked the 10th anniversary of our Tuggeranong community pantry, which provides access to food and other essential items to people in need. The pantry has grown considerably over that time, responding to increasing community need, especially over the last year. We were excited to open the Denman Community Centre, in partnership with Capital Estate Developments, to provide community groups a much-needed secure, modern facility in which to meet and connect.

Our major building works and expansion of Galilee School is continuing, with our inaugural group of Year 12 students enrolled in our Senior Secondary College in 2022. The first Year 12 Graduation will be a significant milestone for the students, who would not be attaining their Year 12 Certificates without the establishment of the College.

My thanks to all of Communities at Work's amazing employees and volunteers for their dedication and commitment to delivering our services, led by our CEO Lee Maiden. This was Lee's last Annual Report, having stepped down as CEO after over 30 years of service to the Canberra community. I wish Lee all the best for the future and welcome our new CEO Michelle Colefax.

I would also like to thank my Board colleagues not just for the professionalism and skills that they bring, but for their passion in contributing to the Canberra community. Brian Babington's term as Director and Deputy Chair ended in November 2021 and I would like to acknowledge his significant contribution to the organisation over the last few years.

Finally, we are grateful for the substantial and vital support that we receive from the Australian and ACT Governments, businesses, community organisations, sporting groups, schools and individuals.

I look forward to another year of investing in our community, and working together for a stronger, inclusive and brighter future.



MEET OUR BOARD

Communities at Work is a public company limited by guarantee and is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors.

Alan Greenslade | Chair

Alan has extensive experience in leading financial management and governance roles in the public and private sector, including the Department of Finance.

Karen Curtis | Deputy Chair APPOINTED NOV 2021

Karen was the inaugural CEO of the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), and has strong governance change management, service delivery, regulatory policy, representational and media advocacy skills.

Andrew Snaidero | Treasurer

Andrew has been partner of Hardwicks since 2013, with vast experience in finance, auditing, reporting and governance.

Bernice Ellis | Director

Bernice is a partner in a national law firm, specialising in commercial litigation and insolvency. She has a background in tax and commerce, and is a board member of a Canberra disability support-service provider.

John Runko | Director

John is the former CEO of the Independent Property Group and has been involved in most facets of the property industry in Canberra over the past 30 years.

James Selkirk | Director

James is a qualified Chartered Accountant with over 20 years' experience and is currently the Chief Financial Officer at Goterra.

Joanne Garrisson | Director

Joanne has led and influenced significant education reforms in her many and various roles within the ACT Education Directorate, and currently works for the ACT Association of Independent Schools.

Dr Brian Babington AM | Deputy Chair RESIGNED NOV 2021

Brian has been the CEO of Families Australia since 2005 and played a leading role in developing Australia's first-ever plan to address child abuse and neglect.



LEE MAIDEN CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

It has been another incredible year. Our lives have been disrupted in ways we will never forget. Many of us hoped 2022 would be the end of the pandemic. Yet after all the disruptions and social restrictions we struggle with “COVID fatigue”.

Last August no one imagined Canberra’s one-week snap lockdown would last 10 weeks. I am so proud of how we kept serving our community through that difficult time.

Our education and care services continued supporting vulnerable children and the families of essential workers. We also saw a huge surge in demand for our food pantries. Our staff rose to the occasion, filling the void left by our wonderful volunteers who were kept at home. I am incredibly grateful to countless people for their innovation and hard work in those uncertain times.

The safety of our staff, volunteers and clients has always been our highest priority. In October we introduced a Mandatory Vaccination Policy, even though most of our staff were already vaccinated. We were mindful that children under five and many others in the community were still unvaccinated.

There were many other highlights worth noting. Our educators now have a 95% discount on their child care fees with changes to the Commonwealth’s Child Care Subsidy. This is incredibly helpful in attracting and retaining qualified educators when we have worker shortages.

I am thrilled we won the Skills Canberra Large Employer of the Year for the fourth year in a row. This is a testament to our Centre of Professional Learning and Education. Their incredible team embody our focus in providing career pathways and skills development.

We are thankful for so many corporate partnerships in our community. One of the standouts is Transport Canberra and Mix 106.3 with the “Pack the Bus” Christmas Appeal. The bus travelled around Canberra for two weeks collecting food and gifts from our supporters to help those in need.

Communities at Work continues helping the Canberra community through some very trying times. The cost of living crisis is having a dramatic impact on many people and puts added pressure on our resources.

I would like to thank the Board for their contribution this year, and all our amazing staff and volunteers who give so much. And of course, thanks to the Executive Team who continue to do an exceptional job.

WHAT WE DO

Communities at Work is the largest provider of children's services in the ACT and the largest not-for-profit organisation in the region, with a proud 44 year history. We provide a range of community services across six program areas and pride ourselves on the positive contribution we make to the lives of our community.

We employ over 660 staff across six program areas, engage 70 self-employed Family Day Care and In-Home Care Educators and harness the dedication of at least 100 volunteers to profoundly enrich the lives of people in many ways.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

We are recognised as a leader within the children's services sector, committed to providing quality education for children. We do this through 12 Early Education and Care centres, 15 Out of School Hours Care services, 11 School Holiday programs and 70 Family Day Care and In-Home Care educators.

GALILEE SCHOOL

We run a registered, independent high school designed specifically for disengaged and vulnerable young people in Years 7-12 who have yet to succeed in mainstream schooling. We support students to re-engage with their education, family and community, transition into the workforce or further study, and find a sense of purpose.

SUPPORT SERVICES AND VOLUNTEERING

We provide essential community support such as food, clothing and accommodation to vulnerable and disadvantaged people. We have two community pantries, a clothing program, a pre-loved clothing store and eight transitional housing sites.

ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT

These six program areas rely on our 'behind-the-scenes' team to provide essential organisational support in human resources, information technology, digital transformation, financial management, quality assurance, marketing, infrastructure, facilities and administration. These employees provide the 'oil' to keep our 'engine' going.

DISABILITY AND SENIOR SERVICES

We provide community transport, in-home services for seniors, and recreational and skills development programs for seniors and people living with disabilities. This allows them to stay socially engaged, access health services and participate in community activities for their independence and wellbeing.

CENTRE OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND EDUCATION

Our registered training organisation specialises in delivering a nationally recognised Certificate III and Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care, a Certificate III in Business and ongoing professional development for the education and care sector.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

We partner with communities, individuals, agencies, local government and businesses to support the implementation of community-inspired initiatives to develop more connected communities.



CANBERRA'S LEADER IN CHILDREN'S SERVICES

National Quality Standard

The National Quality Standard (NQS) sets a high national benchmark for early childhood education and care and outside school hours care services in Australia. Services are assessed and rated by a regulatory authority against the NQS (see page 48 for more details).

E = Exceeding **M** = Meeting **WT** = Working Toward **NYA** = Not Yet Assessed



EARLY EDUCATION & CARE

Abacus (Parkes)	E
Appletree House (Wanniassa)	M
Capital Hill (Parliament House)	E
Greenway	E
Illoura (Wanniassa)	M
Isabella Plains Child Care & Education Centre	M
Isabella Plains Early Childhood Service	M
Narrabundah	WT
Ngunnawal	WT
Richardson	WT
Stirling	M
Taylor (Kambah)	M



OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS CARE

Amaroo	M
Bonython	M
Caroline Chisholm	M
Charles Weston (Coombs)	M
Emmanuel (Dickson)	NYA
Fadden	M
Gordon	M
Maribynong (Kaleen)	E
Monash	E
Mount Rogers (Melba)	M
Neville Bonner	M
Ngunnawal (Primary)	M
Palmerston	E
Theodore	E
Wanniassa Hills	M



SCHOOL HOLIDAY PROGRAMS

Amaroo	M
Charles Weston (Coombs)	M
Emmanuel (Dickson)	NYA
Fadden	M
Isabella Plains Early Childhood Service	M
Maribynong (Kaleen)	E
Monash	E
Mount Rogers (Melba)	M
Neville Bonner	M
Palmerston	E
Wanniassa Hills	M

Service	Total Number	Educators	Children
Early Education & Care	12	273	1,951
Out of School Hours Care	15	221	4,192
School Holiday Programs	11	221	2,128
Family Day Care & In-Home Care		70	433
TOTAL		564	8,704

OUR STRATEGIC PLAN | 2019-2022



PURPOSE

Communities at Work's purpose is to be responsive to the needs of the community by delivering high quality services that support positive educational outcomes, assist in alleviating hardship, enhance the quality of life and lead to positive social change.



MISSION

To enrich the lives of people in our community in life changing ways.



VALUES

INTEGRITY

We uphold the highest standards of integrity in all our actions.

RESPECT

The exercise of dignity, equality, fairness and thoughtfulness towards others. Respect recognises differences of opinion, and the right for individuals to be heard and responded to.

PROGRESSIVENESS

We are adaptive and agile in pursuing the mission of Communities at Work with a proactive approach to change and progress.

QUALITY AND INNOVATION

We are committed to excellent service delivery, underpinned by continuous quality improvement

SUSTAINABILITY

We ensure our services are relevant and appropriate as we build our capacity for a sustainable future.



Our Clients and Services

1. Expand our footprint with increased services that reach a wider section of the community.
2. Create positive social impact in our community and measure how social change has occurred.

We will participate in research and activities that guide the development and evaluation of programs to ensure our client journey is efficient, seamless, appropriate and positive.

We will focus on positive social change with ideas and actions that are driven by everyday life issues.

Feedback from clients indicates life changing outcomes have resulted from their interaction with our organisation.



Our People

3. Attract, develop and retain people who contribute to the organisation's exceptional culture.
4. Our people are engaged and passionate about what we do and those we serve and demonstrate exceptional practice.

We will develop a workforce strategy to help meet desired goals, maintain long-term success and prepare for the future of our workforce.

We will measure and improve our employee satisfaction and clearly demonstrate our values to staff and volunteers.

We have a high retention of employees and positive feedback from satisfaction surveys.



Organisational Excellence

5. To secure a prudent and profitable financial base to adapt to market changes and reinvest to improve the lives of people in the community.
6. To exceed all standards set in the quality and regulatory frameworks that underpin our operations.

We will identify and pursue business and enterprise development opportunities and make sound financial decisions.

We will continue to roll out our internal audit process across the organisation.

We will engage and collaborate with the community, the sector and government to better serve the region and our clients.

We have made a positive contribution to the community and have evidence to demonstrate the impact.

Our Strategic GOALS

Strategies to ACHIEVE the Goals

SUCCESS Measures

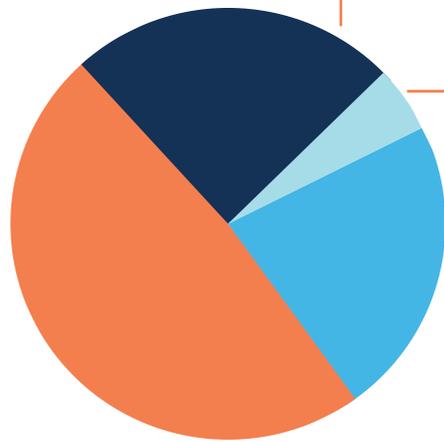


SECTION 2
OUR IMPACT

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

8,704

children in total attended our Children's Services



2,128

children attended our 11 School Holiday Programs across 1,472 families

433

children attended our 70 Family Day Care & In Home Care services

1,951

children attended our 12 Early Education and Care centres

4,192

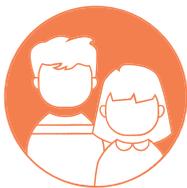
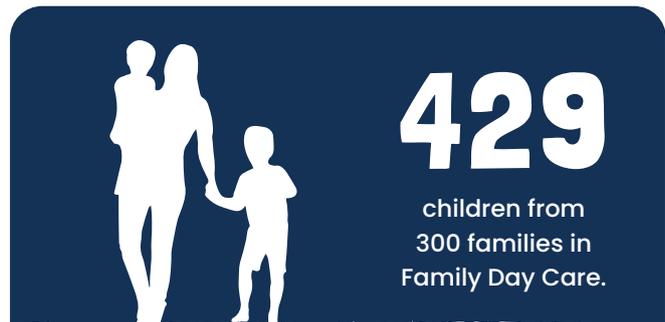
children attended our 15 Out of School Hours Care services



We supported

564 EDUCATORS

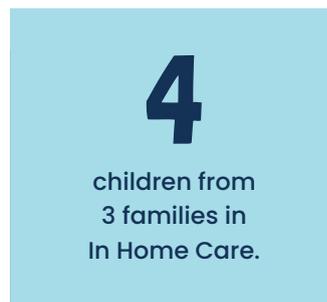
to provide education and care across our Children's Services



We supported

66 VULNERABLE CHILDREN

to access free quality early childhood education through the 3 Year Old Initiative (up from 33 in 2021)



We supported

74 VULNERABLE CHILDREN

to access quality early childhood education through the Children's Services Program



CENTRE OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND EDUCATION (CPLE)

WINNER
2019 • 2020 • 2021 • 2022

ACT LARGE
EMPLOYER OF
THE YEAR

ACT TRAINING
AWARDS 2022



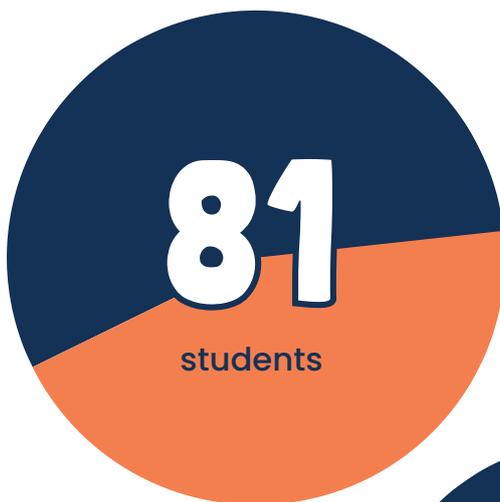
27
STUDENTS

enrolled
in Ascend
traineeships



48
STUDENTS

completed
their courses



45 through User
Choice Traineeship

36 through Skilled
Capital/JobTrainer



294 in Mandatory Reporting
Update sessions

99 in First Aid sessions

165 in other PD
calendar sessions



2%

of our organisation's
annual payroll
invested in training.



12

partnerships with
organisations to
deliver training to
our staff

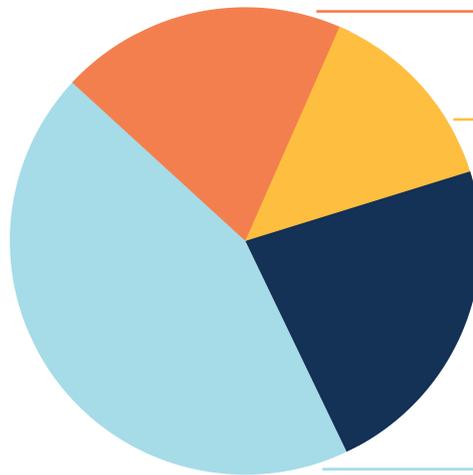
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



Supporting the development of
2 MEN'S PEER SUPPORT TABLES
with 2 more tables planned.

66
PEOPLE

attended our
Window into
Wellness series



13 people attended
1 nature weaving

9 people attended
1 basket weaving

15 people attended
4 Wellness through
Watercolour workshops
(3 more scheduled)

29 people attended
3 nature walks



We continued to support

4 COMMUNITY LED ACTIVITIES



We organised

5 COMMUNITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES

in partnership with Capital Estate Developments



33 COLLEGE STUDENTS

and 7 teachers attended 2022 Tuggeranong Youth Forum.



We supported

8 NEW COMMUNITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES

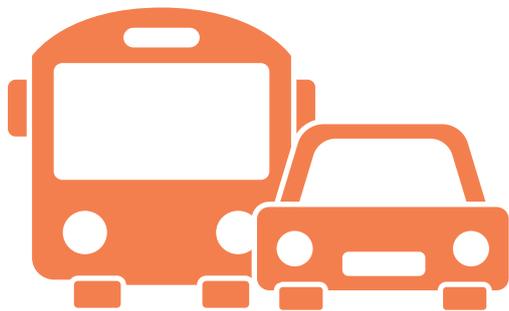
in partnership with Capital Estate Developments

DISABILITY AND SENIOR SERVICES

Our transport team drove the equivalent of

13 TRIPS AROUND THE WORLD

(or 519, 236 kms over 24,259 trips and 19,869 hours) to help clients get to medical, social and community appointments.



Our clients were transported by

26 DRIVERS

AND A FLEET OF 12 VEHICLES

(8 cars, 2 vans, 2 minibuses)



We gave

4,732

hours of domestic assistance to 121 seniors clients



We gave

1,365

hours of individual social support to 59 seniors clients



We gave

8,558

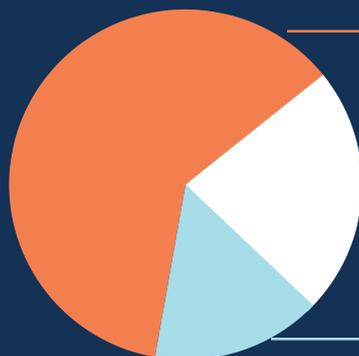
hours of group-based social support across 6 seniors social groups to keep seniors connected

We improved the life skills of

83

CLIENTS

through 17,200 hours of client support



51 clients in our 2 full-time day programs.

19 teens in our Teen After School Program and Teen School Holiday program

13 children in our Malkara School Holiday Program

SOCIAL PROGRAMS AND VOLUNTEERING

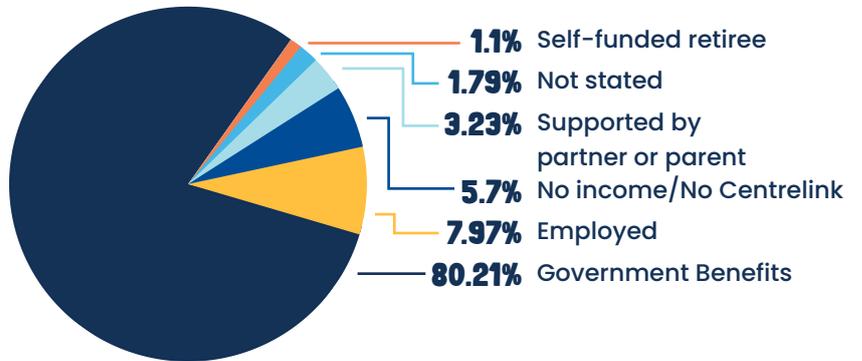
COMMUNITY PANTRIES

We helped
1,456
CLIENTS

access our community pantries 13,478 times for food, hygiene, and household items (an increase of 148% on the last year)

Pantry clients' income source*

(*based on primary household member)



We purchased
183 PALLETS

and 43,802 kgs of food from Foodbank to stock our pantries.



We received

388

Foodbank cards from 16 other organisations, expanding the number of clients we could help.



FOOD RESCUE

WE SAVED
43,000 KGS
OF FOOD

from going to land waste through our Food Rescue service. That's 16 trolleys of food per week to stock our food pantries. (*based on 50kgs/trolley)

Our food rescue van drove over 17,000 kms to pick up food this year



CHRISTMAS APPEAL

We raised
\$17,738
DONATIONS
through the Christmas Appeal.

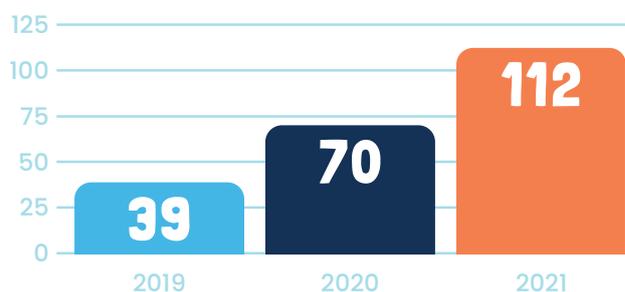
337 CLIENTS

visited our Christmas Caves to select gifts and food for their families.

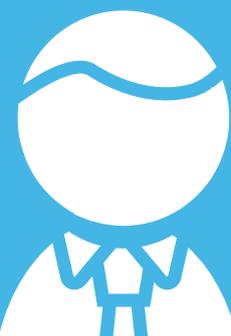
9,891

gifts and food were donated to our Christmas Appeal. Thank you!

Our Christmas Appeal Giving Tree Hosts

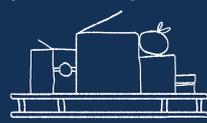


BEST DRESSED STORE



We saved
**2,400 KGS
OF CLOTHES**
from going to landfill by recycling 12,000 items through our Best Dressed Store

Sales from our Best Dressed Store helped us to purchase
**100 EXTRA
PALLETES OF FOOD**



REACH HOME

We provided
**34 HOMELESS
ADULTS AND CHILDREN**
with a secure roof over their heads through 12,217 nights of accommodation in 8 homes.




30%
of housing families identify as Aboriginal



CRISIS SUPPORT



**WE HELPED
1,001 CLIENTS WITH
CRISIS SUPPORT
5,626 TIMES**

(a 146.4% increase from last year)

VOLUNTEERS



**101 VOLUNTEERS
DONATED 4,700 HOURS**

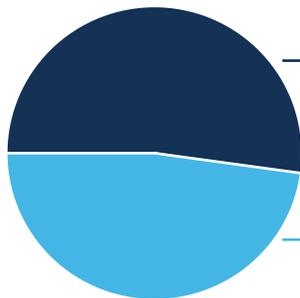
to help run our services. That's the equivalent of \$203,000 in-kind volunteer hours
(Volunteering ACT website calculator)

GALILEE SCHOOL

We welcomed

46
STUDENTS

into our Senior
Secondary
College in 2022



24 students in our first
Year 12 cohort

22 students into
Year 11



In 2021 we celebrated the graduation of

24 YEAR 10 STUDENTS

22 YEAR 10 CERTIFICATES
2 HIGH SCHOOL RECORDS

18

of these students
continued into our
Year 11 program
in 2022

1

student moved into
an apprenticeship

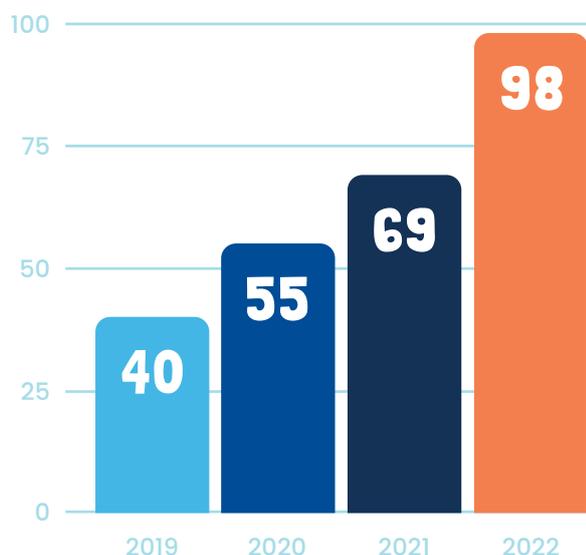
2

students moved
to mainstream
colleges

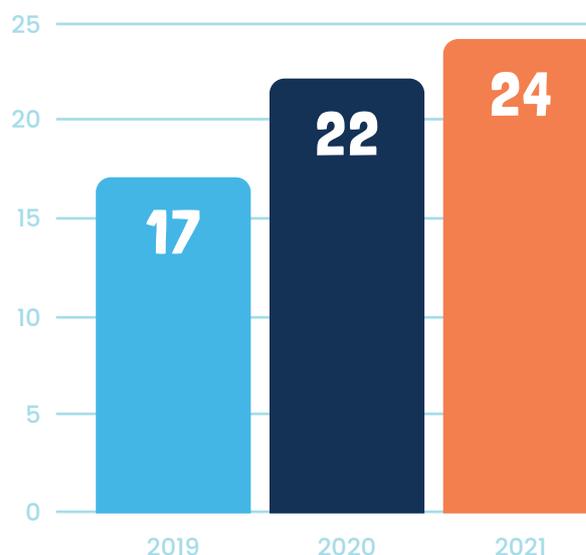
3

students moved
into full-time
employment

TOTAL STUDENT ENROLMENTS



TOTAL YEAR 10 GRADUATES





SECTION 3
OUR CLIENTS

STRATEGIC GOAL 1

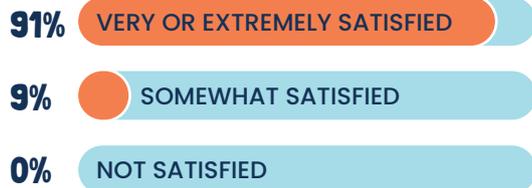
Expand our footprint with increased services that reach a wider section of the community.

Expanding our Secondary School Services

Inaugural Year 12 class: In 2022 our Galilee School extended its Senior Secondary College (which opened in 2021) to welcome its first cohort of Year 12 students. The new senior College is enabling young people to continue on their pathways of success within the school and attain their ACT Senior Secondary (Year 12) Certificate.

Extending our learning spaces: We continued our major capital works program at our Galilee School Kambah campus by significantly expanding our learning spaces and opening new educational and recreational opportunities for our young people.

Parent survey: Galilee School parents were asked 'How satisfied are you with your child's experience at Galilee School?'



Greater Accessibility to Early Education

Three Year Old Initiative: After seeing the positive impact of quality early education and care, we doubled our support for vulnerable children and their families. The number of vulnerable children we helped under the ACT Government's Three Year Old Initiative grew from 33 placements in 2021 to 66 in 2022.

Children's Service Program: Through our partnership with the Office for Children, Youth and Family Support (OCYFS) we supported 74 children to access quality early education and care at our centres. This program provides temporary early childhood funding for families experiencing vulnerabilities.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

Ishan was a shy boy with autism who came to one of our early education and care centres in December 2020. When he first arrived, he was non-verbal, did not make eye contact and preferred to play independently, refusing to engage with other children.

Using sensory materials, art activities and puzzles, our educators patiently supported Ishan to gain confidence to participate in parallel play and interact with his peers. When he became overwhelmed within the room, Ishan loved to go outdoors in the centre garden, grounding his senses.

As Ishan became familiar with the routine of the room, he joined in more frequently and began following simple instructions with the help of visual aids. Ishan's parents were delighted with his progress and very grateful for the support that we gave him, as it enabled him to have the confidence to transition to a specialist school in June 2022. We're happy to hear he is progressing well.

Expanding our Community Transport

After the August-October 2021 COVID lockdown, much of the community were keen to re-connect with others, particularly those who couldn't drive or did not have family in the area. Our transport team began supporting three community groups to meet on a regular basis, allowing them to keep in contact culturally and maintain friendships.



Extending the Reach of our Christmas Appeal



2,045 GIFTS
donated directly



1,350 FOOD
donated directly



6,396 GIFTS
from 'Pack the Bus'



100 GIFT CARDS
donated directly

9,891 TOTAL GIFT AND FOOD DONATIONS
\$17,738 FINANCIAL DONATIONS

Community support: Our annual Christmas Appeal is our most important community fundraiser. We are always grateful for so many people's support. In 2021, 112 local businesses, schools, community groups and individuals donated almost 10,000 gifts and food, raising a record figure of almost \$18,000. This means we were able to bring joy to more people experiencing hardship.

We displayed the donated gifts in 'Christmas Caves' set up at our Tuggeranong and Gungahlin Community Centres where clients selected suitable items for their families.

Staff and client support: Not only did the Canberra community support our Appeal, but our Communities at Work family did too. Our Children's Services hosted Giving Trees, staff volunteered in the Christmas Caves and pantries, and our whole Community Development team managed the Christmas Caves. As always, more hands make light work. Thanks team!



PACKING THE BUS WITH CHRISTMAS DONATIONS

In 2021 our Christmas Appeal received a massive boost through the very successful **Pack the Bus** fundraising drive. This helped us reach more donors and ultimately support more people in need. This drive was a joint charity initiative by Mix106.3 and Transport Canberra, funded through the generosity of eight local businesses.

A brightly coloured Transport Canberra bus drove around Canberra for two weeks collecting a staggering 6,396 donations from 77 businesses, workplaces, shops and schools.

Staff from Mix106.3 and Transport Canberra said it was very rewarding to drive around the city, meet happy donors, and know they were helping make a meaningful difference in people's lives.

Both Mix106.3 and Transport Canberra were delighted with the campaign result and keen to make **Pack the Bus** even bigger and better in 2022. We are too! Thanks Mix106.3 and Transport Canberra for a fantastic community initiative.



Building the Denman Community

Our Community Development team partnered with Capital Estate Developments to open the new Denman Community Centre in March 2022. This Centre, managed by Communities at Work, offers community groups a secure, modern facility in which to meet regularly, and provides residents with much-needed wellbeing and social connection opportunities. Thanks to our Community Development team for being instrumental in getting these community groups established.

Our busy Community Development team have also worked closely with Capital Estate Developments to develop numerous events to create a close-knit family environment and bring Denman residents together.



STRATEGIC GOAL 2

Create positive social impact in our community and measure how social change has occurred.

Crisis Support

Through our crisis support program (also known as emergency relief) we assist clients from all walks of life and lived experiences. We provide food from our pantry, pay for medical scripts, assist with transport, and provide information and referral to other support agencies both within Communities at Work and the community.

We also work closely with 11 other community partners and the Canberra Relief Network and NSW/ ACT Emergency Relief Sub-Committee to meet the needs of joint clients and learn from each other's experiences.

In 2021-22 we supported people in crisis with:



3,467 BUS TICKETS



1,551 PAID MEDICAL SCRIPTS



5,396 PANTRY SHOPS



LIVING WITH A DISABILITY: HELEN'S STORY

Through life circumstances, Helen* and her two children with a disability found themselves homeless and living in their car. When Helen first came to Communities at Work, we organised for her family to regularly access our pantry food and showers and a laundry service from our partners, Orange Sky.

Helen enjoyed popping in regularly, grateful to have someone to talk to about her struggles but also about the things she was able to accomplish thanks to our help. By thinking out of the box and sharing things we had learnt through other homeless experiences, we were able to help Helen access cooking facilities, stay warm and tap into other useful services.

One day she came in, bursting with excitement. "I have some news, and I have no one to tell, so I am here telling you!" She had keys in her pocket to accommodation that had been offered to her and was on her way to view the property. "I wouldn't be able to do this if you hadn't been there for me. This wouldn't be happening," she told us. "Because of you we have somewhere to sleep that is safe, food in our bellies and a community I can rely on when I need to. Before you I had nothing and no one".

Helen returned the next day to pick up bedding for her children and household items and to tell us about her new home. She is profoundly grateful for our help in getting her life back on track and supporting her family.

**Name changed to protect client identity.*

Community Pantries – Feeding the Hungry

Our community pantries, located in Gungahlin and Tuggeranong, allow individuals and families to access food, hygiene and other essential household items. The pandemic and rising living costs have forced some clients to access support for the first time, while others are re-engaging with us after some time. As well as being a regular, familiar and stable source of food and other items through uncertain times, our pantries are also an essential source of social interaction and connection to the community.

Thanks to Foodbank cards, we were able to support an even wider section of the community by offering access to our pantries to clients from other community organisations who show a Foodbank card. These cards can be swapped for food and other important items and introduce new clients to our services. In 2021–22 we supported clients from 16 community agencies to access our pantries 388 times.



FEEDING THE HUNGRY FOR 10 YEARS

In May 2022 we proudly celebrated the Tuggeranong Pantry's 10th anniversary. Back in 2012 we set up our first community food pantry, starting with one donated domestic fridge and freezer, a few baskets of donated food each week and a space a little bigger than a laundry.

Fast forward ten years and we now have 13 commercial fridges and freezers (including walk in fridge and freezers), two pallets of food delivered each week, a space that's the size of a small corner grocery store AND a second community pantry in Gungahlin. This achievement is largely due to the many generous community donations and to the valued partnerships we've formed with local organisations, businesses and government departments over these years. Thank you!

"The name may have changed but the principles that we had ten years ago are the same. And that's been the nice thing." As Graeme, a pantry volunteer, observed: "It's still about providing quality food at much cheaper prices. And giving our clients a powerful feeling of self esteem, being able to come into a shopping area, do a full shop as though they'll going to Woollies. But doing a shop with dignity. That's really important."

“

I don't know where I would be without your pantry. I don't have to choose anymore between having my meds or eating, so without you I would probably be in hospital or worse. I was always the person who gave to others. It took a long time for me to ask for help and now I tell everyone they should come to you.

”

(Pantry client)

Food Rescue – Saving Excess Food from Landfill

Our food rescue service does just that: it 'rescues' excess food from shops and businesses that may otherwise have thrown it out and redirects that food to stock our community pantries. A win for clients and our environment! A big thanks to our key food rescue partners for their ongoing support.

During the year we drove 17,000kms to save 43,000 kgs of food from going to land waste. That's the equivalent of 16 shopping trolleys a week* that we re-diverted to our food pantries! The money we saved in food purchases was used to pay for crisis support and other essential resources.

(*based on 50kgs/trolley)



How can you stay with me after I get my own place? I couldn't have done this by myself. I have learnt so much. It feels so good to know that I'm getting on with things and not just overwhelmed and giving up. I know what it's like now to have good things happen to me and it feels great!

(Reach Home client)



Building Life Skills and Independence

Our Life Skills Educators supported 83 clients living with a disability (from primary school to adults) to improve their life skills and empower them to pursue their own goals independently.

Young adults and adults: We helped clients learn new skills, engage in community, maximize their potential through development activities, maintain their independence, and establish friendships in the programs. We focused on themes like respect for everyone, who am I, seasonal changes, self-care, health, movement, and mental health and wellbeing. We also assisted clients to embrace the value of relationships.

Teens: Our Teens After School Program and School Holiday Program improve the life skills of teens living with disability by building their social skills and peer networks, and helping with their NDIS goals in a fun and engaging way. On our popular 'Master Chef Mondays' for instance, all teens participated in cooking competitions, enjoying lunch together and appreciating each other's skills and efforts.

Malkara School: During the school holidays we supported children living with disability to develop everyday living skills through meaningful theme-based activities tailored to individuals' needs and personal goals and interests. We also focused on interpersonal skills using visual aids, body gestures and storytelling.

Reach Home – Providing a Safe Roof

Through our Reach Home Program we help people stay off the streets by providing transitional accommodation and case management to families who are at risk or are experiencing homelessness. We meet weekly with these families to assist them in finding a long-term housing solution. This includes coaching, breaking down barriers, exploring options, learning from mistakes and celebrating achievements.

In 2022 we added an eighth home to our available housing, so we were able to assist an additional family with a safe roof over their heads. We're pleased to report that we were able to help *all* our clients in our Reach Home program get on the Housing ACT priority list.



Empowering Others to Give Back

Educators across our children's services encouraged children to organise a wide range of fundraisers throughout the year. This instills the importance of giving back to the community and enables children to develop organisational and team building skills.

After researching causes, children often chose to support other children less fortunate, such as those in hospital or in foster care. As Alyssa from Gordon OSHC said: "I want other families to have special things like me."

Our Greenway Early Education and Care Centre, for instance, helped provide learning resources for more than 1,000 children in foster care by raising over \$800 for the Pyjama Foundation.

Students at Galilee School cleaned bricks for the school building works at Holder, socialised dogs at the Domestic Animal Services pound, assembled handbags of essential items for women in need, and raised \$1,540 for the Black Dog Institute's 'Mullets for Mental Health'.

SUPPORTING AT RISK CHILDREN: FOSTER CARE FUNDRAISER

When the children at Ngunnawal OSHC voiced their desire to help children less fortunate, educators invited Barnardos to visit and explain how the organisation protects at-risk children from abuse and neglect and finds safe homes for them through foster care.

The Ngunnawal children then organised a fundraiser, selling cupcakes, playdough, cookies and stress balls to their families and friends, and proudly raised \$314.

One grandparent was so impressed by her granddaughter's experience she wrote: "I want you to know how very happy (and impressed!) I am to learn how you channelled my granddaughter's initial money-making ideas and led her through the steps to raise money for a good cause. This has given her invaluable real-life experiences in research, planning, practical preparation, and marketing. It also reinforced to her that she can actually carry through to the end one of her many creative ideas. When I hear of something like this, I am encouraged that she's receiving such positive experiences at OSHC. Thank you so much for caring for her."

Improving Mental Health and Wellbeing

Since the pandemic the number of people struggling with mental health and isolation has been on the rise. To assist our students, staff, clients and community improve their wellbeing, we developed or participated in various initiatives.

Student mental health programs: Galilee School implemented a wide range of initiatives to help students develop a sense of belonging, be thankful for the good things in their lives, build digital intelligence, explore relationships, social media and online safety, and learn anger management techniques.

Therapy dogs: Rainbow Paws therapy dogs had such a positive impact on Galilee School student engagement and wellbeing, that the school was inspired to invest in its own therapy dog, Halle. Halle quickly became a popular 'student' as she settled into school life on both campuses.

Staff mental health training: Staff developed a 'Suicide Postvention Strategy', participated in comprehensive mindfulness-focused activities and attended Mental Health First Aid training. These activities helped them to develop skills to support work colleagues, students and families.

Healthy living for seniors: Our new Healthy Living seniors' social group educated our seniors clients on health and nutrition, growing vegetables, and maintaining mobility.

Community wellness workshops: Our Community Development program developed a very successful 'A Window into Wellness' series of workshops. Local nature and art therapists facilitated nature walks, nature weaving, basket weaving and watercolour sessions. These popular sessions encouraged self-awareness and mindfulness techniques to use in self-care in the future. (Thanks to Landcare ACT, Sacred Space Arts Therapy and Meditate and Create).



ESTABLISHING A MEN'S PEER SUPPORT NETWORK

As part of our focus to create mental wellbeing opportunities for the Canberra community, we saw an opportunity to partner with The Men's Table to establish tables here in the ACT. Over monthly dinners, The Men's Table creates a unique environment for a group of men to share openly about their lives and to build meaningful male friendships in a confidential and non-judgemental space.

"We know that belonging to a Table positively impacts men's emotional and mental wellbeing," said The Men's Table ACT regional host Michael Collins. "It has a ripple effect into other relationships in their lives that can strengthen the resilience of the whole community."

The overwhelming interest shown by community led to the first two Tables launching in Gungahlin in August 2022, with more planned in late 2022.



GIVING YOUTH A VOICE

In May 2022, our Community Development program partnered with the Tuggeranong Community Council to co-facilitate a Tuggeranong Youth Forum. The forum provided 33 students from 7 schools and colleges in the Tuggeranong region an opportunity to speak directly to ACT Government representatives and other organisations that design or deliver services used by young people.

Students discussed topics such as education, environment, mental health and wellbeing, safety and crime, transport, youth engagement and future opportunities. Service providers included Erindale College, Southern ACT Catchment Group, ACT Health, ACT Policing, Transport Canberra, Headspace Tuggeranong, and Communities at Work.

The students' ideas will be collated into a summary report and distributed to schools and relevant ACT Directorates to inform planning of future priorities for young people within the Tuggeranong region.

Keeping People Safe and Connected Through COVID

Prioritising client safety: As Canberra came out of lockdown in October 2021, we introduced a policy requiring all our employees, volunteers, and educators to be fully vaccinated for COVID-19. This was essential for reducing the risk of serious illness or death for the thousands of young children enrolled in our children's services who hadn't yet been vaccinated, along with over 3,000 vulnerable seniors and disability clients.

Providing vaccination hubs: We partnered with Aspen Medical and ACT Health to set up vaccination hubs at our Holder office and at Galilee School. These hubs gave our organisation and the wider community an increased sense of strength and safety by providing additional vaccination opportunities.

Connecting families during lockdown: We held regular online meetings, 'check in' phone calls and online weekly playgroups. Families said that staying connected during difficult times made a huge impact on their children's happiness and ability to transition back into the centres after isolation and illness. Essential workers reported that having a safe place for their children to connect was vital for their children's development and wellbeing.

Delivering essential supplies: During the COVID lockdown our transport drivers helped the charity Roundabout to deliver essential supplies such as clothes, cots and nappies to vulnerable families who had no support network in Canberra.

Measuring our Social Impact

Communities at Work has over 44 years' experience delivering a range of high-quality services and programs that provide a significant benefit for the community. We are dedicated to continually improving our programs and services and understanding our social impact.

Since 2019, we have been working with the UNSW Centre of Social Impact (CSI) to develop our Social Impact strategy. This strategy is committed and aligned to the ACT Government's "Commissioning for Impact" strategy.

To ensure that social impact evaluation is embedded in all our programs in a sustainable way, we created a dedicated internal Social Impact role. Many program areas have now developed their theories of change.

In 2022-23, we will continue to invest in our social impact strategy, with the goal of releasing our first impact reports.

Thank you so much for organising the Teams catch-ups. My child has really enjoyed singing, dancing and seeing familiar faces. It has made such an impact on his happiness as we have been stuck in the house for weeks.

(Family at Abacus Child Care and Education Centre)



PROVIDING A LIFELINE TO TRANSPORT CLIENTS

There are many moving parts to managing and coordinating transport services for our many clients. This story portrays teamwork and organisational values in action.

During one particular scheduled transport pickup, our transport driver noticed one of our long-term clients was distressed and not themselves. Reporting his concern to our office, a seniors team member phoned the client to assess the situation and provide support. Concerned that the client refused an ambulance and had no emergency contact or loved one in Canberra, we arranged for a second driver to check on her. Following that visit, we arranged for the client to be transported to hospital.

Lucky we did. We later learned she'd suffered a stroke. We then followed up with the hospital to make sure the client had a social worker. The client is now at home and has contacted us to say how thankful she was to everyone for virtually saving her life.

Because of the procedures we had in place, and the skills of our Lifestyles team, we were able to provide a client with vital support and give her the lifeline she urgently needed.



Our Reconciliation Journey

Communities at Work is committed to promoting and supporting reconciliation. Our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) provides a road map for our reconciliation journey, detailing how we will build strong relationships and ongoing respect between cultures.

As part of our journey, we engaged in numerous activities throughout the year so employees, children, clients and wider community could connect with First Nations culture.

Creating sustainable Reconciliation Gardens to connect communities.

Developing a bush tucker cook book and cooking meals with family and friends.

Making dot paintings on recycled canvas to represent family and unity, inspired by traditional art forms.

Creating unique Acknowledgement of Country at each early childhood service and performing it daily.

Attending the Connections exhibit at the National Museum.

Participating in Thunderstone Language Workshops.

Inviting First Nations People to read Dreamtime stories and share their culture through activities.

Partnering with First Nations Peoples to incorporate their art into our building signage and branding.



SHARING CULTURAL AWARENESS THROUGH ART

A brick wall outside our Illoura Child Care and Education Centre has been transformed into a colourful piece of Indigenous art. With support from our Community Development team and funding from the ACT Government's Graffiti Program, our wall provided a platform where local First Nations artist Steven Kennedy from Killara Art could share and celebrate his culture.

Steven used ideas from the Illoura families and children as his inspiration for the design to represent "the journey, from young person's guardians, meeting and flowing into the welcoming space of Illoura".

For him, the mural is all about community and reflects families coming together in a meeting place (the early learning centre), where adults share their wisdom with the younger generation. The children's handprints down the wall symbolise their growth and learning journey as they prepare to go out into the world.

We are delighted that our former brick wall is now an inviting entrance that will inspire conversations and cultural awareness for many years to come.



WEAVING FIRST NATIONS INTO OUR BRAND ARTWORK

We engaged a local First Nations artist Bradley Mapiva Brown, to develop customised brand artwork to reflect who we are. His 'Waterhole Dreaming' artwork symbolically tells the story of the land Communities at Work calls home.

Waterholes signify progress and sustainability for all Aboriginal peoples - a shared core value of Communities at Work.

We have used elements of Bradley's artwork in our corporate stationery and outdoor building signage to communicate this important story from a Ngunnawal perspective.

Our new Denman Community Centre houses Bradley's 'Waterhole Dreaming' artwork, and the centre's function room names use Ngunnawal language.

Reducing Energy Bills

To reduce our energy costs and carbon footprint, we will be installing solar panels at our Holder community centre.

Sustainability Action Plans

Many of our children's services developed sustainability action plans to expand knowledge and sustainability practices within their centres and local communities.

Recycling and Food Waste Workshop

Our Community Development team partnered with ACT No Waste to educate ACT Housing Aged Care Unit residents on recycling packaging, composting and reducing food waste.

Becoming More Sustainable

Communities at Work is continually improving our sustainable practices and helping our clients and the wider community with these challenges. While these opportunities are mainly around preserving our natural environment, sustainability is also about creating sustainable social and economic systems.

Minimising Landfill

Our Food Rescue service collected excess food from local businesses saving 43,000 kgs over 12 months from ending in landfill as food waste. Our Best Dressed Store recycled 12,000 items of clothing, saving 2,400 kgs of fabric from ending in landfill.

Caring for our Natural Environment

We helped children develop responsibility for their natural environment through activities such as creating and maintaining environments for tadpoles, then releasing them into the wild, or by building aquariums.

Moss Garden

Children at Amaroo OSHC created an indoor moss garden, gaining an understanding of indoor air quality improvement, energy saving practices and low maintenance gardening methods.

Reconciliation Garden

Isabella Plains Child Care and Education Centre developed a Reconciliation Garden. This also taught children that care for the environment and sustainability begins first within the service.

Wellbeing Garden

Appletree House Child Care and Education Centre refurbished its outdoor garden for restorative and mental wellbeing. Educators taught children how to plant seeds, look after produce, save water, reduce waste, save energy, sort out the waste, and use recycling material.

Seniors Garden Beds

We worked with residents of two Housing ACT Aged Persons Units to reactivate their communal gardens. With improved safety and donated seedlings and netting residents could use the beds to once more grow fresh nutrient-rich produce to share within their complex.

Repurposing Materials

Our children's services reused and repurposed materials to create Indigenous gardens, outdoor spaces, or even self-watering systems for their vegetable gardens.

TEACHING RESPECT FOR OUR ENVIRONMENT

Family day care educator Courtney is a strong advocate for the land we walk on. She is so passionate about instilling respect for our environment in her young charges that she formed a Junior Landcare Group.

Courtney says the purpose of her Junior Land Care program is to inspire young Australians and educate them on the importance of taking care of the reserves they explore and enjoy. This helps young children build a sense of belonging and an appreciation for the place where they live. It also allows them to give back to the land that gives them so much.

Every day Courtney's group walk through reserves, stopping to splash in a puddle, throw rocks down the hill, draw in the dirt, collect rocks, fish with sticks, play in the waterfall, pull out weeds, collect rubbish on the way, and say the Acknowledgement to Country.

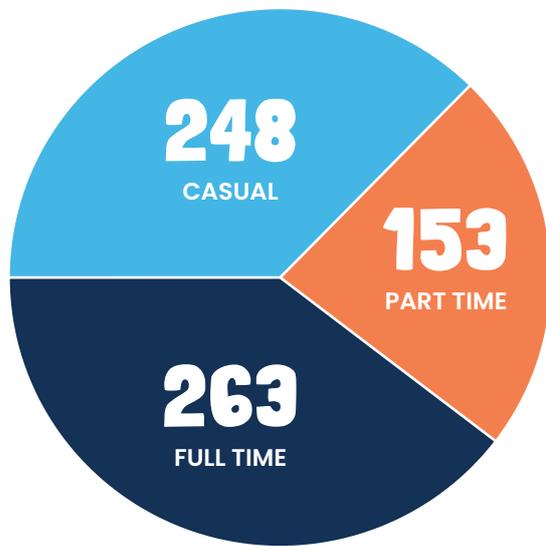
"Children have memorised our Acknowledgement to Country," says Courtney. "We say it every day after our walk. They know how to say Ngunnawal and Ngambri – that's very special. I've also noticed the children's calmness once we're back from our walk. It's a real marker for how our day is set. They have been in nature playing freely. That's great for their soul."





SECTION 4
OUR PEOPLE

OUR WORKFORCE

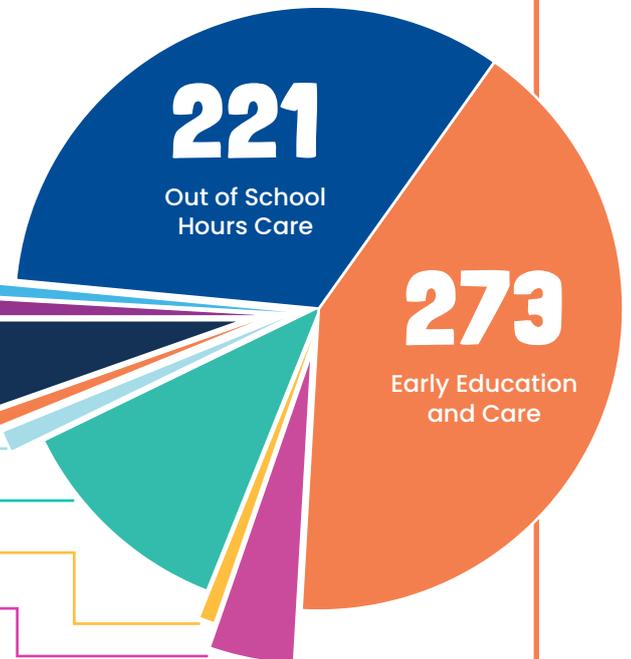


BY WORK TYPE

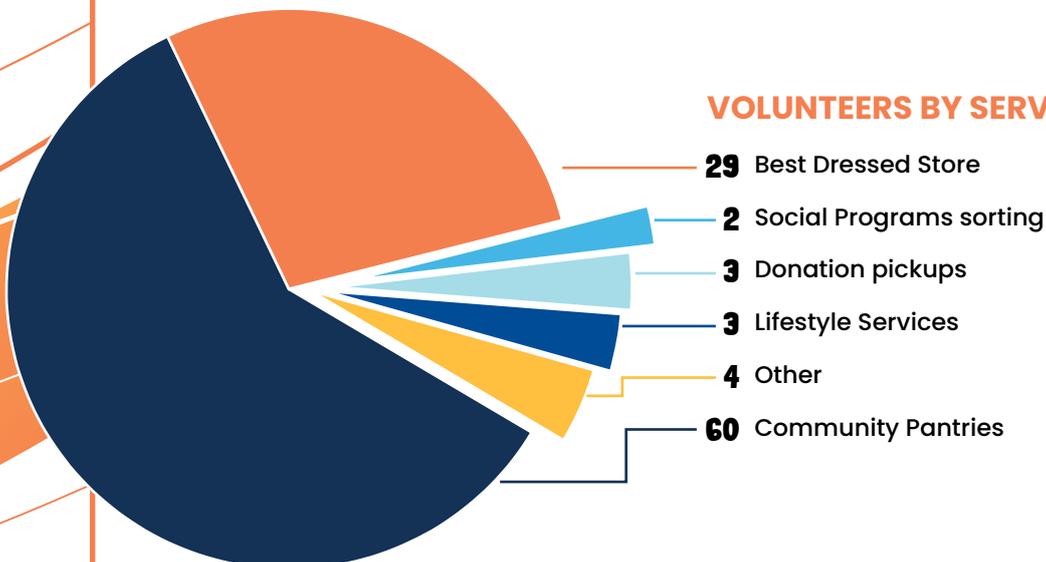
We have 664 employees.

BY PROGRAM AREA

- Children's Services Enrolments Team **4**
- Family Day Care Coordination Team **6**
- Organisational Support **36**
- Community Development **5**
- Social Programs **7**
- Lifestyle Services **78**
- CPLC **5**
- Galilee School **29**



VOLUNTEERS BY SERVICE AREA



STRATEGIC GOAL 3

Attract, develop and retain people who contribute to the organisation's exceptional culture

Addressing the Educator Workforce Shortage

95% discount on childcare fees subsidy: To help our organisation attract new educators to the sector and retain qualified educators, we began offering a 95% employee discount on childcare subsidy gap fees for our educators (from March 2022).

This followed changes to the Child Care Subsidy rules announced by the Australian Government. Communities at Work had been actively advocating for this change and we offered the maximum discount allowed. To date 35 of our educators are currently receiving the 95% discount.

ELACCA educator recruitment campaign: We participated in an ongoing national educator recruitment campaign, *Big Roles in Little Lives*, to attract more early childhood educators. By partnering with the Early Learning and Care Council of Australia (ELACCA) and 15 other education providers across Australia we hope to address the workforce shortage.

Phase 1 of the campaign (Feb-Jun 2021) targeted school leavers, retail and hospitality professionals and parents. Phase 2 (Sept-Nov 2021) targeted high school students and schools. Phase 3 (Sept-Oct 2022) will target school leavers and career changers. The campaign generated 266 submissions over Phase 1 and 2, with Phase 1 leading to 27 trainees recruited, 3 OSHC educators recruited, and 18 students enrolled in our Ascend program.



Such an amazing gift to the educators trying to have both a family and career at the same time.

(Educator)



I am definitely more comfortable financially to be able to stay in my position and not think that in the long term I am going to have to leave if and when I plan to grow my family.

(Educator)



Investing in our future educators – Ascend:

Ascend has been our solution to providing a qualified workforce in a climate of significant skills shortages. This unique user-choice traineeship combines theoretical knowledge (gained through a Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care with our RTO) with practical paid experience working in our children’s services. During 2021–22, 27 students enrolled in an Ascend traineeship.

Not only has the Ascend program been beneficial to our workforce planning capabilities but has also assisted us in retaining highly qualified educators. At least one-third of our Ascend graduates have gone on to pursue a second qualification with us through the Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care.



“

The training program is absolutely amazing! The trainers are very capable and always willing to lend support. The opportunity to study for free and have employment at the same time has given me the best of both worlds. The opportunities provided by this organisation are a life-changer.

*(Mecheeko Deloso,
Ascend trainee)*

”



CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR GALILEE STUDENTS

Through a new ASBA partnership between Galilee School, our Registered Training Organisation (RTO), and our Greenway Child Care and Education Centre, we were able to help a Year 12 student pursue a career in early education and care.

This exciting new initiative is providing the framework for future partnerships between the school and the RTO. It could open up a whole new world of professional options for Galilee School students and potentially change lives.

In November 2021 Kaitlyn, then a Year 10 student at Galilee School, started work experience at our Greenway Child Care and Education Centre one day a week. The Centre Manager quickly realised Kaitlyn was a very good fit for the role and suggested she become a trainee through our Ascend program.

However, as Kaitlyn was not yet 18, she was not eligible for the full-time traineeship. The school, early education centre and our RTO decided to set up an ASBA traineeship so she could begin her Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care.

In December 2022 Kaitlyn will finish Year 12 at Galilee School and begin full-time work as a Ascend trainee educator at Greenway.

Thanks to the collaborative partnership between the school, RTO and Greenway, Kaitlyn was able to pursue her dream and begin her career journey.



Investing in our Staff

Our focus is not only to attract and retain high quality employees, but also to invest in, develop, and nurture them to widen their skill sets and capacities and expand the organisation’s capability.

Vocational training: Our own Registered Training Organisation (RTO 88148), the Centre of Professional Learning and Education, provides high-quality vocational education and training. We offer Certificate III and Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care, a Certificate III in Business and an annual Professional Development calendar with a wide range of workshops, to upskill educators and others.

Developing workplace supervisors: Our RTO partnered with Australian Forensic Services to upskill 11 service leaders in a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. This will provide our VET trainee employees access to workplace supervisors who can offer authentic learning and assessment opportunities.

OSHC Team Teach: To better support children through a behavioural crisis, members of our OSHC Inclusion Team became accredited Team Teach trainers – a de-escalation and restrictive practice training framework. So far they have trained approximately 50 fellow OSHC educators. This has helped strengthen our partnerships with schools, increased our internal training capability, protected our educators, and provided a higher quality of care for children.

DURING 2021–22:



227 EMPLOYEES

completed 1,012 courses through our eLearning system PeopleStreme. (55% of our non-casual workforce)



WE SPENT \$85,000

on staff training, development and conferences.



WE RAN OVER 180

training or conference events

Investing in our Leadership Team

Executive leadership training: To strengthen our executive's leadership, strategic skills and innovation capability, we funded their Professional Development sessions and ongoing individual coaching. This also helps them mentor and coach their teams in these important skills.

Strategic development: To develop our strategic and business directions for the organisation, we created a new position, Chief Strategic Officer (CSO), with a focus on strategic innovation.

Managers' development program: To expand our future capability and leadership, we invested in monthly training for all managers across the organisation, delivered by an external provider.

Youth Advisory Board: Our Youth Advisory Board participate in projects such as staff acquisition and retention, innovation, gender diversity and problem solving to build their strategic and leadership skills.

Expanding Training Opportunities

Collaborating with other training partners: We actively collaborate with diverse organisations to provide a range of learning opportunities for our employees.

Training opportunities for minority groups: In 2022 we partnered with a migration agent and an Indigenous recruitment agency to target 50% of the Ascend traineeship placements to the migrant and Indigenous communities.

Mandatory reporting: To help make our training more accessible to educators and teachers in the broader community, in November 2021, we transferred our signature Mandatory Reporting training workshop to online. Since then, 182 ACT educators have completed this course.



STRATEGIC GOAL 4

Our people are engaged and passionate about what we do and those we serve and demonstrate exceptional practice

Results from the Communities at Work Staff Survey (May 2022):



What our Employees said:

"Communities at Work is one of the best community organisations in Canberra. It brings me great pride working for an organisation that prioritises my community."

"The culture of the team that I work within are incredibly supportive and caring. I've never worked with a better team in my whole career, to be honest."

"Communities at Work motivates me to work harder. I am enjoying my job and would love to stay here until I retire!"

Results from the CPLE Annual Quality Indicator Student Survey (June 2022):

Student satisfaction with our RTO training:

98% Communities at Work trainees

89.1% National Average*

How likely students are to recommend us to others as a training provider:

98% Communities at Work trainees

84.7% National Average*

*ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/vet-student-outcomes-2021





Recognising Exceptional Employees

Communities at Work is proud to attract and retain high quality employees and see their exceptional work ethics and practices recognised and rewarded by our sector.

Excellence in Family Day Care –

Regional Winners: Once again, our Family Day Care educators won the ACT regional awards at the 2021 Excellence in Family Day Care Awards. Congratulations to Ayesha Durrani, Northside Winner and Trish Graham, Southside Winner. The Educator of the Year recognises the delivery of high quality early childhood education and care.

Excellence in Family Day Care – Perpetual

Star Winner: Trish Graham's long years of service were recognised with the Perpetual Star Award. This award honours an educator, coordinator or service that has contributed to the family day care sector for 15 years or more.



Meeting Client Needs - Thanks to our Volunteers

Our group of 101 committed volunteers generously gave 4,700 hours in 2021-22 to help run our community pantries, Best Dressed Store and other vital community programs.

Volunteering is important to the economic and social wellbeing of local communities. We are most grateful for our volunteers' selfless support, courage and commitment to help us meet clients' needs.



Impact of volunteering with us: Volunteers have a higher level of life satisfaction than non-volunteers – a sentiment our volunteers wholeheartedly agree with. They find it very rewarding to give back to our local community, build social networks in retirement and enjoy being a regular point of contact and communication for our many clients who experience social isolation.

Volunteering





WHY I LOVE VOLUNTEERING: GRAEME'S STORY



I love volunteering because it's an outlet for me. It allows me to give back to the community in a really positive way.

One of the things I really enjoy as a volunteer in the food pantry is the engagement with our clients. I do remember one gentleman used to come in every Thursday morning - the first person on the doorstep. He would come in from Gungahlin on buses, and he would only ever get one or two items. But that wasn't the reason he came. He came to have a yarn with me. There were very few people at nine o'clock in the morning, so we'd have half an hour uninterrupted.

They're the things that really make a big difference for me as a volunteer - when people want to come and just talk. Yes, we can give them help with food. But it's also about that positive relationship that you're developing with them and how you make them feel really safe and empowered to do their shopping in our environment.

It's also a great way to meet other people in the community. As a retired person, sometimes you can be distanced a little from the community if you're used to working in a team in an office. And this is just another team that you're working with, but a very positive team of volunteers and community workers.





SECTION 5

OUR ORGANISATIONAL EXCELLENCE

STRATEGIC GOAL 5

To secure a prudent and profitable financial base to adapt to market changes and reinvest to improve the lives of people in the community

Improving our Internal Operations

Reporting

We upgraded our internal reporting system (Business Central) so that managers could see real-time information on their financial performance across each month of trading. Financial reporting and analysis are no longer limited to month-end reviews but are communicated in real-time, allowing managers to align their expenditure to budget more easily.

Incomes

Incomes across all our programs were down 5% compared with the previous financial year while expenses were up 2.5%. It is worth noting that Government COVID assistance in the previous financial year (in the form of JobKeeper and Early Childhood Relief package) contributed 7% of the income in that year.

Forecasting

We implemented a forecasting analytics tool (Modano) to provide us with the ability to quickly forecast the short-to-medium term impact of COVID and other unplanned events. This integrated tool provides forecast information to the Executive and Board to improve decision-making during times of economic uncertainty.

COVID

The COVID pandemic brought numerous disruptions to our services. During those times we kept all staff employed and implemented innovative strategies to service the most vulnerable members of our community.

Capital Expenditure

Capital expenditure during 2021-2022 continued as planned, with over \$1.5M invested into infrastructure for the Galilee School's Kambah campus and into upgrades to our community pantries.

ICT Systems

As part of our ongoing quality improvement, we implemented several new systems including choosing a new ICT managed service provider, migrating our ICT infrastructure to Microsoft Azure and adding asset management and archive management to our systems.

Cleanliness

We maintained the highest levels of cleaning and sanitation across all our sites, despite the underlying cost pressures with such a strategy. Prudent fiscal management of back-office costs meant that front-line services were not disrupted in any way.

STRATEGIC GOAL 6

To exceed all standards set in the quality and regulatory frameworks that underpin our operations

Improving the Quality and Compliance of our Children's Services

Our internal auditing program, unique to Communities at Work, is designed to self-assess the quality and compliance of our Early Education and Care and Out of School Hours Care services. The program measures how these services meet the National Quality Standard. This includes the Seven Quality Areas of the National Quality Standard and the implementation of our Quality Management System.

Since the internal audit program began in 2019, 11 of our 12 early education and care services increased their quality rating, achieving a 6% increase in compliance. Our OSHC services achieved a 14% increase in compliance (on average), with one service (Palmerston) achieving an 'Exceeding' rating.

Our internal audits help new managers and coordinators strengthen their knowledge of their regulatory requirements and provide guidance on what quality improvements to prioritise.

As Farah Junaid, Taylor Early Education & Care Centre Manager, said:

"When I was a new employee, the audit process gave me a clear insight about the current compliance status at my centre. It helped me identify improvements and prepare for WHS compliance and CECA compliance checks which occurred a few weeks after the audit.

Most importantly, it helped me gain a better understanding of the organisation's standards, prepared us for the Assessment & Rating process, and improved our quality/compliance systems."



SEVEN QUALITY AREAS

In the National Quality Standard

- Quality Area 1** – Educational program and practice
- Quality Area 2** – Children's health and safety
- Quality Area 3** – Physical environment
- Quality Area 4** – Staffing arrangements
- Quality Area 5** – Relationships with children
- Quality Area 6** – Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
- Quality Area 7** – Governance and leadership





EXCEEDING QUALITY STANDARDS IN EARLY EDUCATION

The hard-working team at Palmerston OSHC were delighted to be officially recognised for Exceeding National Quality Standard (NQS) by going above and beyond in service delivery.

The families at Palmerston OSHC, were thrilled with the result. "This is very well deserved," said one parent. "You provide a very engaging and safe environment for the children and the educators are fantastic, with a genuine interest in my child's needs." Hearing that the fundraisers they were part of had contributed to the overall rating of the service, encouraged families to come forward with more ideas for community involvement.

"Going through the assessment and rating process and receiving an exceeding rating has had a huge positive impact on the service," said Matisse McNair, Program Coordinator at Palmerston OSHC. "It set a benchmark so we can strive for greater service development in all quality areas moving forward."

One assessor observed: "It was evident that the work undertaken around children's rights has impacted on both the behaviour of the children and the educators. Relationships were seen as a focus in all of the programs. Children were actively engaging in activities acknowledging and building understanding of difference, promoting inclusion and equity. Educators used strategies to encourage children to take a leading role in designing the program and routines."

"We've already used the feedback from the assessment to make significant changes to children's safety, children's input into programming, families and community engagement and input, and our staff's active supervision and understanding of their tasks and responsibilities," said Matisse. "We can't wait to make an even bigger positive impact on the children's lives!"



Delivering Excellence in Vocational Training

We were very proud to be named the ACT Large Employer of the Year in the 2022 ACT Training Awards for the fourth consecutive year in recognition of our excellence in the provision of 'nationally recognised training' to our employees.

We view our commitment to the professional development and training of our people and the wider community as essential in addressing the skills shortages and in achieving our employees' lifelong learning and career goals.

Providing Award-Winning Service in Early Education

Our early childhood services were once again recognised for their outstanding service delivery with Capital Hill Early Childhood Centre being named an ACT Finalist in the KindiCare Excellence Awards 2022. These awards recognise and celebrate the top-performing early childhood education and care centres across Australia. This recognition follows our success in last year's awards, where Abacus Child Care and Education Centre was an ACT Finalist.

In addition, our Palmerston OSHC service received an 'Excellent' rating in the KindiCare Excellence Awards 2022, placing them in the top 10% of early childhood education and care services nationally.

Providing Quality Teaching at Galilee School

In 2021 two of our Galilee School teachers achieved national industry recognition for their quality teaching through the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) accreditation processes.

We were proud to see Head of Teaching and Learning, Lisa Hivers, achieve national recognition as a Lead Teacher, and Melissa Smith achieve national recognition as a Highly Accomplished Teacher.

Embedding a Strong Workplace Safety Culture

We launched a WHS compliance audit program to embed a strong safety culture within our organisation and increase the safety of our staff, clients and children in our care. This involved conducting over 30 internal audits in the second half of the financial year.

As a result, our WHS compliance improved greatly. Managers understand what constitutes non-conformance and have improved their overall knowledge of WHS. We are now proactively managing WHS risks and compliance through regular internal audits, risk management plans and raising awareness of risks throughout all our locations.

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f Service - Stand Clear



SECTION 6

OUR SUPPORTERS

THANK YOU!

Thank you to all our generous supporters. Together we are making a genuine difference in the lives of disadvantaged people in our community.

Government Supporters

- ACT Community Services Directorate
- ACT Block Grant Authority Inc
- ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies
- ACT Education Directorate
- ACT Government - Health
- ACT Government Property Group
- ACT Sexual Health Centre
- Department of Education, Skills and Employment
- Department of Finance
- Department of Health
- Department of Home Affairs
- Department of Parliamentary Services
- Department of Social Services
- Services Australia
- The Treasury

Business and Community Supporters

- Aldi Weston, Belconnen, Kippax, Gungahlin, Amaroo
- All Homes
- Ainslie Group
- Amanda Horn Pty Ltd
- Association of Independent Schools of the ACT
- Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Australian Institute of Sport
- Australian National University
- Bradley Allen Love Lawyers
- Bunnings Warehouse
- Burns Club
- Calwell Shopping Centre
- Canberra Baptist Church
- Canberra Metro
- Canberra Relief Network
- Canberra Toyota
- Capital Airport Group
- CCS Group Canberra
- CDC Data Centres
- Coles Gungahlin
- Commonwealth Bank Gungahlin
- Cooleman Court
- Costco
- Country Valley
- Country Women's Association of Gungahlin
- Daana - Indian Restaurant
- Embroiders' Guild ACT
- Ernst & Young
- Exhale People
- Face2Face Recruitment
- Families Australia
- Foodbank
- Grill'd Woden and Gungahlin
- Gungahlin Marketplace
- Gungahlin Village
- Hands Across Canberra
- Hardwickes
- Hip Pocket Workwear
- Icon Water
- IMD Electrical and Maintenance
- Impact Church
- Katy Gallagher
- Koomarri
- KPMG
- Leidos
- Lifeline Canberra
- Lions Foundation
- Luton Tuggeranong
- Menslink
- Mills Oakley
- Mix 106.3
- Morgans Group
- Munns Sly Moore
- Modern Teaching Aids (MTA)
- National Disability Services
- OPC
- OzHarvest
- Parbery Consulting
- Proact Security
- Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PWC)
- Rainbow Paws
- Roadmaster
- Second Bite
- Share the Dignity
- Sneddon, Hall and Gallop
- South.Point
- St Andrews Canberra
- The Canberra Highland Society and Burns Club
- The Green Shed
- The Property Collective
- The Snow Foundation
- TPG
- Transport Canberra
- Tuggeranong Arts Centre
- Veolia
- Westpac
- Wilde & Woollard Lawyers
- Woolworths Group Limited
- Woolworths Dunlop
- And of course, all our **Christmas Appeal Supporters!**

FINANCIAL DONATIONS

Every donation makes a difference. We are grateful for our amazing donors who gave over \$85,000 during 2021-22 to help us with our community services.



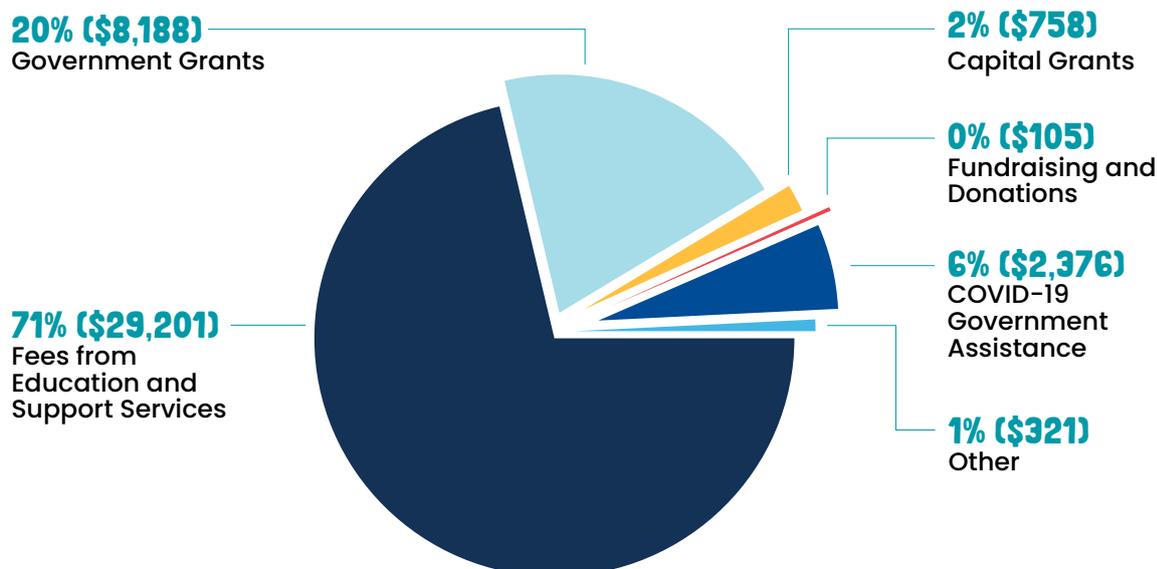
\$85,652

TOTAL DONATIONS

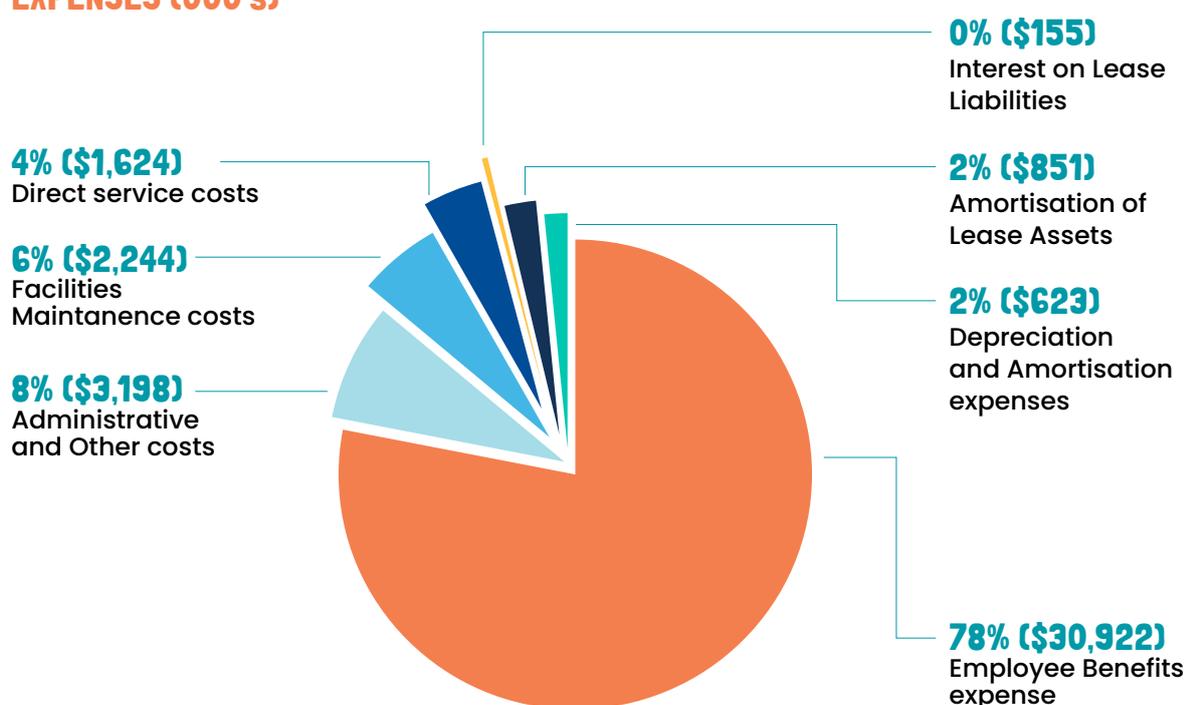


SECTION 7: FINANCIALS

REVENUE (000's)



EXPENSES (000's)



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