Message from CEO and Board Chair

This past fiscal year continues on the theme of last year—complexity. Life for our clients. The social climate of our community. Our need to become increasingly strategic about how we use our resources. Striving to have the greatest impact for those to come to us and make a noticeable difference in community. Community partnerships. And taking care of our employees to the best of our ability.

While year after year the complexity rises, we continue on our 87 year trajectory about being strategic about how we do the work entrusted to us by our stakeholders.

The Board of Directors has approved our 2015 - 2018 strategic priorities. You will read about these priorities later in this report, but we believe they encapsulate what our stakeholders have tasked us to do. We set the bar high to deliver services second to none. We take care of our employees while they take care of those who come to us at a challenging time in their life. We are prudent and responsible with how we allocate the financial resources of this agency. And this is all with a view to helping people create brighter tomorrows in the most impactful way possible in our community.

In addition to the strategic plan, we also looked at our core values, and assessed whether they still rang true. We discovered the essence of our values has wholeheartedly remained the same, but the articulation of those values required re-working to ensure we could truly and fully live them. These values guide our decision making and practice. They live within all of us. You will see these new values on the following page.

Our Board of Directors has invested countless volunteer hours executing the strategic oversight for this agency. These 14 people have day jobs and families and responsibilities. Yet they chose Family Services to contribute their time and expertise, and serve this organization faithfully. While the contributions are plentiful, of particular note this year is the animation of the Family Services of Greater Vancouver Foundation. The goal of this undertaking is to bring stability to our financial platform, and create the financial means to leverage our funding in the most efficient way possible. This will continue to move forward in the coming year. We are grateful to the Board for their dedication and leadership.

As we move into the 2015|2016 fiscal year, we are reminded of our abundance. To the people we serve, your courage inspires us to do our best work. To our donors, funders, and partners, your confidence in us pushes us to reach even higher. To our volunteers and students, your generosity and goodwill helps us fulfill our mission. And to our employees, your steadfast commitment, dedication, and resiliency allows us to achieve great things. We truly are surrounded by some of the best people on earth.

We remain firmly committed to creating brighter tomorrows for the people and families in our communities. We encourage you to check out our video annual report at: https://vimeo.com/141142249.
Our Vision

Brighter tomorrows in which all people are resilient, confident, and filled with hope.

Our Mission

We work to inspire and support those in our community who need help to reach their full potential: children are nurtured, youth find optimism, adults feel empowered, and parents make choices that build strong families.

Check out our video annual report at: https://vimeo.com/141142249
Our Values

Diversity: Everybody matters.

Integrity: We do right by people.

Optimism: Change is ever possible.

Innovation: We dream. We have courage. We respond.

Excellence: It’s where we start.

Check out our video annual report at: https://vimeo.com/141142249
Our Strategic Priorities

We have designed this plan to move us closer to the vision for Family Services of Greater Vancouver and serve as a cornerstone of the agency’s planning framework. It is driven by the leadership team of the agency, but greatly informed by staff at all levels from across the agency. This plan has been approved by the Board of Directors.

Set the bar high
We will provide exceptional experiences for everyone who comes to Family Services. Our business systems will be efficient. We will extract information that helps us effectively manage the agency and guide our decision making. Our ambitious goals will stretch us to exceed performance standard benchmarks. We will constantly evaluate that we are doing what we have said we will do.

Be the best place to work
We will attract, inspire, and keep the best and the brightest talent. Our people care passionately and their fires are stoked by working and learning with and from one another in the pursuit of excellence. Curiosity, creativity, and continuous learning fuel change. We will keep our people’s wellness at the forefront.

Invest in today for tomorrow
The needs of tomorrow drive us to find new and innovative ways to secure a sound financial future. The Family Services of Greater Vancouver Foundation will become a vital tool to maximize our donors’ interest and investments. Our contracted services will be driven by our focus on enhanced outcomes for people. Transparency and accountability serve as our guiding principles.

Make the ultimate difference
We will have clarity as to why Family Services truly matters to the people and communities we serve. Our focus on emerging needs will ensure relevancy to our mission to drive change. We will seek out and foster collaborative solutions to address crucial social problems.

Check out our video annual report at: https://vimeo.com/141142249
We believe...

When Shehbaz Ahmad and his wife came to Canada from Dubai, they came with a lot of optimism and positivity. Despite the fact that both their families were based all over the world, they chose Canada because they felt it was a very liberal and welcoming country for immigrants.

“It was not a well planned move,” he admits. “I think you can never prepare enough for immigration. We had some savings, but no job, and no family or friends in the new city. There was no option to go back either.”

He and wife were no strangers to international moves. They moved from their native Pakistan to Dubai. That move was much easier: he already had a job – he’s an accountant – and his new employer helped with the relocation.

In Vancouver, Shehbaz first registered with an immigrant settlement service and began taking courses to help his job search. His wife focused on improving her English skills and began volunteering. But as time went on, he found his biggest challenge was not the tasks associated with finding a job or even financial pressures – he became overwhelmed with the many negative messages he was receiving.

“It’s going to be very difficult to survive in Vancouver. The economy is not growing. There are 500+ applicants for a single job. You don’t even have a Canadian education or experience.” Someone suggested he get a job in a grocery store. “I became lost in the advice,” he says. “My mind kind of got frozen. I couldn’t even apply for a single job.”

But then he claims a miracle happened. He was walking on Davie Street and saw a sign board that said, ‘are you looking for work?’ He walked upstairs to the Vancouver City Centre, WorkBC Employment Services Centre run by Family Services of Greater Vancouver, and “could instantly feel the warmth and a feeling of care in the air.”

He registered for a job information session and was assigned a case manager. “She did not talk about the things that people usually talk about – your degree, your qualifications, and your skills. She immediately understood what I needed: “What I needed was motivation, to clear my mind, and to gain confidence. That was my turning point.”

Shehbaz definitely appreciated his case manager’s strengths-based approach. “She listened without any rush and then said to me what I still remember: ‘Forget whatever negative things people have told you’. She reminded me of what skills I already have and how many years of international, professional experience I came to Canada with. She put things into perspective and made me believe that there’s no need to feel panicked if I couldn’t find a job in just two months after landing.”

Careful not to duplicate the job search courses he had already taken, Shehbaz enrolled in the ESC’s Workplace Culture and Social Media workshops. He also updated his LinkedIn profile, a move that would prove fruitful. A few days later he received a message from a large recruitment firm interested in talking to him about a contract position with one of the “Big 4” accounting firms. He happened to be with his case manager when he received the phone call. She encouraged him to take that call and coached him through it. She also helped prepare him for the interview process and contract negotiation with success; with the help of the recruitment firm he set up his own business and had his first consulting contract. “I still haven’t applied for a job yet,” he says smiling.

The contract is coming to a close but Shehbaz isn’t worried. The contract allowed him to work with a wide variety of clients and gave him a taste of different corporate cultures and future possibilities. He’s networking with other professionals, and is exploring further education opportunities.

For now, Shehbaz and his wife are settling into their new life in Canada. They are enjoying the diversity of their West End neighbourhood and they’re even taking Italian language lessons. “I am so happy I read that sign that day and walked upstairs to the WorkBC ESC Vancouver City Centre office – that was the best thing I did in Vancouver. They proved to be angels in the new country for me. In fact, the staff does not seem that they are doing a job—it’s their life. They are doing a great service, with a human touch.”

Check out our video annual report at: https://vimeo.com/141142249
Highlights and Achievements

Resources to fulfill our mission
This year over 470 staff members, together with 165 volunteers and 50 students, provided services to 13,300 people at 13 locations throughout Metro Vancouver, as well as other areas of the province. Practicum students provided 9,845 hours of service and our volunteers generously contributed an additional 5,095 hours. These commitments to our programs and clients made an integral difference in our ability to meet service demands. Our agency revenue totalled $24,124,730.

Location, location, location
With a view to using our resources in the best way possible, locating our services where they will meet the greatest need, and making experiences for the people we serve positive, we have moved several of our facilities this past year.
Directions Youth Services Centre moved back into a re-developed space at 1138 Burrard St. This purpose-built facility is on the main floor of a multi-level social housing development, which has 10 units for youth who are ready to take the next steps in exiting life on the streets.
WorkBC Employment Services Centre - Vancouver City Centre has moved a 1/2 block to the corner of Burrard and Davie St — a newly designed space that is a more inviting experience with its bright airy feel, and best meets the needs of the people using it.
And our Kingsway office closed and services moved into our Joanne Brown Centre for Families on East Broadway at Commercial with elevator access for strollers and wheelchairs and excellent transit accessibility.

Accountability to our stakeholders
This past year, our agency received another three year CARF accreditation status. This external review focuses on ensuring we have systems in place to measure and improve the impact our services have on our client groups. There were few recommendations given overall and no improvements required in program specific areas—a testament to the agency’s commitment to excellent service delivery.

“I feel better, calmer, more peaceful, understand myself better.”
- Client who accessed our victim services

Check out our video annual report at: https://vimeo.com/141142249

Brighter Tomorrows Fundraising Luncheon
On February 26, 2015, our Brighter Tomorrows Luncheon took place at the Four Seasons Hotel. We are grateful to our two speakers, Naomi (a mom who used our trauma counselling services) and Silken Laumann (our keynote speaker) for their inspiring and courageous personal stories. Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors and attendees, we raised over $73,000 in total. Compassionate support can change our lives so that we can have better tomorrows; so that we may fulfill our highest potential in all our roles, as parents, spouses, co-workers and friends. As Silken said, “help must be there when it’s needed”.
Highlights and Achievements

FSEAP receives accreditation
FSEAP Vancouver received an expedited reaccreditation through the Council On Accreditation (COA). COA’s program of quality improvement is designed to identify providers that have met high performance standards and have made a commitment to their stakeholders to deliver the very best quality services. This was the first time FSEAP went through the process independently. A testament to the quality service it delivers.

Helping people find work and build job skills
12,839 visits to our WorkBC Employment Services Centre - Vancouver City Centre
Served a wide range of people with 68% of our client base identifying as a specialized population, for which we have specialized service.
Delivered 449 workshops with 1,826 clients attending those workshops
Helped 242 people find work

Adoption Agency
Our adoption agency is one of four licensed adoption agencies in the province. We were delighted to receive word that our provincial license has been renewed by the Ministry for Children and Family Development for another three years. A big initiative for adoption this year was launching online adopting parent profiles—increasing the profile of families who are so patiently waiting to add to their families. We also received additional funding from MCFD to complete more home studies to increase the number of families who are approved to adopt or permanently care for the many waiting children and youth in British Columbia.

“Made me believe I still got a chance.”
- Youth in our Youth Detox

Successes in building stronger families this past year
85% of people attending our community kitchens reported an increased ability to cook healthy and affordable meals.
90% of foster parents in our Foster Family Support program reported that their skills and confidence have improved.
88% of people who receive counselling at our Surrey counselling clinic told us they had more positive feelings about themselves.
76% of parents who received intensive parenting support through our Project Parent program indicate they believe they can identify appropriate boundaries and implement those skills in parenting.
85% of youth who visited our SafeHouse indicate they achieved their service plan goals.
90% of parents in our Family Preservation program reported they are making more positive lifestyle choices.

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Family Services of Greater Vancouver is a not-for-profit community agency. We rely on individuals and businesses in our local community to provide their time, advocacy, expertise, and funding to help us realize our goal to assist those in need. While we do provide service through government contracts for some of our programs, many others survive solely on the support of community and corporate dollars. Without this funding, these programs would not exist. Every dollar is crucial to assisting one more child, one more youth, one more family in crisis.

“By allowing me to connect with other mothers, I have learned that I’m not the only one who sometimes feels like I’m failing as a parent. Knowing this has given me greater confidence.”

- Participant in Healthy Connections program
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