

Welcome to the **Circle of Care**, CASA Mental Health's new quarterly publication for child, youth and family mental health in Alberta.

CASA serves 'missing middle' to build resilience and keep kids out of hospital

CASA Mental Health is meeting kids where they are.

The non-profit organization has been offering services for nearly 40 years. It was started for families, by families who identified a need for medical intervention for kids with mental illness.

While many organizations support people's mental well-being, CASA focuses on the "missing middle," treating mental illness and providing medical intervention in between prevention and promotion in primary and community care, and acute treatment in hospital.

Services include the Core program, where patients are seen by a therapist or psychiatrist, specialty programs like Trauma and Family Therapy, and several residential and day programs, including CASA House, a secure live-in facility that children and their families choose to attend.

Since the pandemic, there is a higher level of care required and an increased complexity in kids' mental health. Families are finally talking about mental illness, and CASA's medical professionals are here to treat it.

"Mental illness is like physical illness, some of it is environmental and some of it is biological," says CASA CEO Bonnie Blakley. "Some kids will develop mental illness and it's about us intervening sooner, so that there's less acuity, less episodes over time and more ability to be resilient and thrive in the community. Our goal is always to do that, so that kid is never getting into that emergency room and that hospital bed."

[Read more...](#)

CASA plans expansion to new communities



Patient artwork created at CASA House.



Paula Colvin can't wait to cut ribbons.

Paula is the director of CASA Mental Health's Program Management Office. She and her team are overseeing the organization's province-wide expansion of CASA Classrooms and expansion and integration of CASA House and the Adolescent Day Program (ADP).

The expansion plan is part of CASA's five-year strategic roadmap to ensure mental health resources meet kids where they are, serve more children and youth, and provide support built directly into families' lives.

[Read more...](#)

CEO Bonnie Blakley, left, and Paula Colvin speak to CASA expansion teams.

Level Up for Kids!

A young girl with a large afro hairstyle is dressed as a superhero. She wears a blue t-shirt with a white star on the chest, a blue cape, and a yellow mask. She is pointing her right arm upwards towards the sky. The background is a clear blue sky. In the bottom right corner, there is a stylized white cloud graphic containing the CASA Mental Health logo, which consists of a cluster of colorful dots and the text 'CASA Mental Health'.

TODAY'S KIDS ARE
TOMORROW'S
SUPERHEROES.

LEVEL UP FOR KIDS'
MENTAL HEALTH



CASA Mental Health launched its annual Level Up For Kids campaign on Giving Tuesday (Nov. 28), and it will run until Dec. 31. Thank you to everyone who has contributed so far! We're grateful to Starlight Casino Edmonton, our campaign matching partner, for giving back to the community and prioritizing kids' mental health.

Interested in helping us continue the momentum? Become a superhero for kids who are struggling with mental illness by [donating online](#) before the end of the tax year! CASA also accepts [gifts of securities](#). Your generosity helps CASA provide critical mental health care for children and youth aged three to 18 and their families.

Are you new to the CASA supporter, follower or patient family?

CASA Mental Health is an established non-profit organization delivering holistic, culturally safe wrap-around mental health services to Albertans aged three to 18 and their families. CASA provides mental health service to the missing middle – mental health treatment for diagnosed children and youth, in between prevention and promotion in primary and community care, and acute treatment in hospital.

CASA's team of mental health professionals are trauma experts committed to delivering service in collaboration with community partners. This includes assessment and treatment for more than 4,000 children, youth, and their families each year, from community outreach settings to intensive treatment programs.

What does CASA stand for?

We get this question a lot! After CASA formed in 1988, it stood for Child and Adolescent Services Association, however, after time, the organization kept the acronym and changed its name to CASA Child, Adolescent and Family Mental Health to better reflect our work. This lasted until 2022-23 when the organization simplified its name to CASA Mental Health – honouring our past and looking toward the future. Based on our 2022-2027 roadmap and vision, we strive for a community with Child and Adolescent Services for All.

Curtis and Shannon Stange impact the lives of CASA's patients and families.



The couple has raised nearly **\$40,000** for CASA Mental Health in five years. But wait, there's more! They learned about CASA through Curtis' job as president and CEO of ATB Financial. Shortly after Curtis started, ATB was looking to expand its mental health and wellness supports for staff. After meeting the chair of the former CASA Foundation, the couple were "struck" by the way family members were involved in the care process and the different ways that patients were set up for continued success after graduating CASA's services.

Read more about the Stanges in CASA's 2022-23 annual report [online now!](#)

CASA Supporters Honoured at National Philanthropy Day Awards Celebration

CASA Mental Health was proud to celebrate some of our generous supporters at this year's National Philanthropy Day on Nov. 15 hosted by Edmonton's Association of Fundraising Professionals!

Don and Jacqui Smith were recognized for consistently donating both their time and money to various initiatives through the Smith Family Foundation. Since 2012, they have donated more than **\$500,000** in support of CASA, and often exceed their fundraising goals through matching gifts. Don and Jacqui often volunteer in their local community and their commitment to giving back and making a difference in the lives of children and youth is evident.



Don and Jacqui Smith

Jennifer Mikula and Jan Wallace are an inspiring reminder of the power of giving. They motivate others to live generously and contribute to the community's greater good. These two neighbours started a business and philanthropy partnership to raise \$10,000 for CASA's Minds Over Mountains Cycle tour, but they surpassed that goal, raising more than **\$250,000** for CASA through their company, JJ Wool Company. Children and youth at CASA have greatly benefited from JJ Wool's contributions over the past seven years.

From our kids, youth, families and staff – thank you Don, Jacqui, Jennifer and Jan!

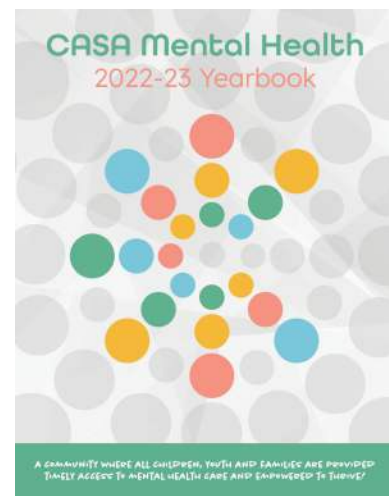


Jennifer Mikula and Jan Wallace

CASA YEARBOOK CELEBRATES 2022-2023

- 4,151 children, youth and families served
- 92 per cent caregiver satisfaction and 85 per cent youth satisfaction
- 130 new employees
- 325 volunteers and 2,298 volunteer hours

What a year! [Read more](#) in the 2022-23 annual report.



CASA IN THE NEWS

Managing holiday stress

CASA Senior Manager, Clinical Operations **Renee Strong** joined Global News Morning to talk about tips to alleviate holiday stress and CASA's Level Up For Kids fundraising campaign, which runs until Dec. 31.

[Watch the segment here.](#)



Trauma on children and community

CASA Clinical Manager **Blessing Igiogbe** spoke with CityNews Edmonton about traumatic effects on children and the community following the tragic shooting deaths of a father and son.



[Read and watch the segment here.](#)

CASA Cycle Tour

Each year, dedicated cyclists ride across Alberta to raise money for CASA Mental Health as part of its Cycle Tour.

CASA's Chief Donor Love Officer **Nadine Samyca** and cyclist **Chad Stewart**, owner of Concrete Blonde Hair and Body, joined Global News Morning to talk more about the event.



[Watch the segment here.](#)

The Importance of Play

Play plays a major role in early childhood development. It can encourage imagination, build relationships and even allow children to work through negative experiences.

Registered Psychologist and Clinical Manager of CASA's Core Program **Caitlin Ebbers** joined Global News Morning to talk about the importance of play.



[Watch the segment here.](#)



Introducing the Youth and Family Voices Network

The Youth and Family Voices Network is a new avenue for Alberta youth and family members to advocate for mental health, tell their stories and provide input to CASA. Members can contribute in a variety of ways, from sharing their perspectives at virtual focus groups and workshops to reducing stigma through mental health advocacy projects. Plus, members can participate virtually, whenever it works for them. The network complements the meaningful work of CASA's Youth and Family Voices Advisory Council. [Learn more.](#)

SUPPORT KIDS' MENTAL HEALTH TODAY TO AVOID 2024 TAX CHANGES

Did you know, according to the C.D. Howe Institute, proposed changes to the Alternative Minimum Tax legislation in Canada could reduce the overall value of charitable donations by four per cent while donations of publicly listed securities may decline by 22 per cent? Donate before Dec. 31, 2023 to avoid these tax changes and help charities survive. Please speak to your financial advisor to learn more.

- [Learn more](#)
- [Read the C.D. Howe Institute brief](#)

- [Tell the government not to weaken donation incentives](#)

EVENTS



Minds Over Mountains Cycle Tour

Join our seven-day cycle tour and get ready for an epic adventure! Cyclists will hit the road from June 15-22, 2024, for a week of inspired riding through British Columbia and Alberta. These dedicated riders will cycle 836 km to support the important mental health services that CASA Mental Health provides for children, youth and families in Alberta.

The 2023 cycle tour raised more than \$157,000, and we can't wait to see what 2024 will bring. This is a cycling experience of a lifetime, and you won't want to miss it! [Learn more and register.](#)

Barney Bentall & the Cariboo Express

On Oct. 28, supporters joined us for a Barney Bentall & the Cariboo Express fundraising concert in support of CASA Mental Health.

The concert had attendees laughing and tapping their feet, as a cast of some of Canada's finest roots and country musicians each took turns in the spotlight, collaborating and warming hearts in the audience.



Eighth Annual CASA Golf Classic in Edmonton

We returned to Blackhawk Golf Club on Aug. 24 for the eighth annual CASA Golf Classic presented by Durabuilt Windows and Doors. Not only did golfers get to experience a world-class golf course, but there were activities on almost every hole. From putting against Oilers alum Ben Scrivens to attempting to outdrive CASA CEO Bonnie Blakley, it was a day for the books!



21st Annual Zin on the River

CASA Mental Health, along with many members of the community, celebrated the amazing legacy of Nick Lees on Aug. 17 at Zin on the River presented by Concrete Blonde and JDK Heating and Cooling. We were proud to unveil a new scholarship fund in honour of Nick, to empower CASA youth pursuing education in journalism, marketing or communications.

Guests enjoyed fine wines, hors d'oeuvres and beautiful music on the terrace of the Fairmont Hotel Macdonald.



Inaugural CASA Golf Classic in Red Deer

On July 27, golfers joined CASA Mental Health for the inaugural CASA Golf Classic in Red Deer presented by Johnson Insurance. Held at the beautiful Alberta Springs Golf Resort, this event was part of CASA's provincial expansion plan into central Alberta. Despite the stormy skies, spirits couldn't be dampened and there were smiles to be seen all across the golf course. Thank you to everyone who made this inaugural event a success!



**SAVE THE
DATE**

Join us on **Thursday, Aug. 22, 2024** at the Blackhawk Golf Club in Edmonton for the ninth annual CASA Golf Classic. Funds raised support CASA programs and initiatives that make a difference in the lives of children and their families. If you're interested in becoming a tournament partner, please contact **John Markey**, Philanthropy Officer, Signature Events.

Volunteer at CASA's 2024 Casino!

CASA Mental Health is seeking volunteers for its casino on Feb. 22 and 23 at Grand Villa Casino in Rogers Place.

Volunteering at a casino comes with a huge return on investment — not just for volunteers, but also for CASA. A two-day casino raises an average of \$70,000-\$80,000, and these dollars will go towards CASA's clinical programs, services and the infrastructure required to offer them.

A variety of roles and shift times are available. If you're interested in volunteering or would like more information, please [email CASA's Volunteer Resources team](#)

Community Fundraisers

Thank you to our community fundraisers!

- 100+ Women Who Care - Sherwood Park
- Aces N Spades
- Alquinn Homes
- Autobody and Insurance Adjusters Sports Club
- Establishment Brewing Company
- Dr. Alex DiGiacomo
- École Gabrielle-Roy
- Edmonton Kiwanis Capital Club
- El Mero Mero
- The Emily Taylor Legacy Project
- Navina Yoga
- Michelle Anderson and Earthgroove Activewear
- JATED Created
- Tim Hortons and Dollar a Day Foundation
- Weaving Roots Foundation

Check out these ongoing community fundraisers!

- Food Bike Tours hosted by [Food Bike Tour](#)
- Recycling with [SkipTheDepot](#)
- The Self-Love Book by [Wishing Star Publishing](#)

Get help, give help. Visit our website at casamentalhealth.org



CASA Mental Health | 406, 10011 - 109 Street NW, Edmonton, T5J 3S8 Canada

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