



Circle of Care is CASA Mental Health's quarterly publication for child, youth and family mental health in Alberta.

CASA Mental Health Welcomes Suncor's Multi-Million-Dollar Investment

A new partnership, including a \$5.5 million multi-location investment from Suncor, will strengthen access to youth and family mental health services across Alberta, with a special focus on the [previously-announced CASA House being built in Fort McMurray.](#)



Peter Zebedee hands Bonnie Blakley a potted seedling as a symbol of their new partnership and CASA House setting down roots in the community.

“Every child deserves access to timely mental health care close to home,” says Bonnie Blakley, Chief Executive Officer, CASA Mental Health.

“Suncor’s investment — the largest community contribution in CASA’s history — will truly change lives. More youth will be able to access much-needed mental health care services closer to the communities where they live, learn and play.”

Peter Zebedee, Executive Vice President, Oil Sands, Suncor, says the partnership reflects the company’s commitment to building stronger communities. “At Suncor, we believe thriving communities start with strong families — and that includes supporting children’s mental health. Working with CASA Mental Health, we’re helping ensure families don’t have to travel far to find care and that Alberta’s young people get help when and where they need it most.”

CASA House Fort McMurray will provide intensive treatment for up to 57 live-in youth patients and 24 Adolescent Day Program (ADP) patients each year, while also supporting patients’ family members and caregivers. The facility, which is scheduled to open in 2027, will be located in the south end of the city, between Quarry Ridge Drive and Highway 63.

Alongside the Fort McMurray project, Suncor's investment includes \$500,000 to support the new CASA House in Calgary and an additional \$25,000 sponsorship in

Edmonton towards the [CASA Gala](#).

In March, CASA gained possession of the land for CASA House Fort McMurray and CASA House Calgary. Construction at both sites will begin in spring 2026.

[Read More](#)

By Families, For Families: FamilySmart Offers Peer-to-Peer Support for CASA Families

Who can parents turn to when their child is struggling with a mental illness, and they want to know they're not alone? When they desperately want to talk to someone who gets it because their own child went through something similar?

At CASA Mental Health, they can speak to a **FamilySmart family peer support worker**.

Lori Erickson connects with families, letting them know she's here for them. She offers emotional support, helps parents navigate resources in the community and can provide information on CASA and its programs.

Lori is available to help whether families are waiting for services, accessing services or have transitioned out of services at CASA. "Most of all," Lori says, "we make sure families know that they are not alone."

Note: FamilySmart services are only available in the Edmonton area at this time.



Lori Erickson, FamilySmart Family Peer Support Worker, in front of her office at CASA Centre.

[Read Lori's Story](#)

[Make a Gift](#)

Core Program Levels Up Care: Introducing Extended Hours and Tailored Service Streams

CASA believes *all* families deserve equitable access to mental health care.

This month, the [Core program](#) began offering evening appointments out of CASA Centre to families with scheduling constraints, becoming the first program in CASA Mental Health history to do so. Offering extended hours advances [CASA's roadmap](#) by removing access barriers so *all* families are provided with timely mental health care. While this is a limited initiative focusing on one extended weekday, CASA will evaluate demand in the coming months to determine when and how to offer more.

That's not all the Core team has been up to. This quarter, Core launched evidence-based service streams for obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

The Core program heard feedback from patients, families, doctors and clinicians that treatment specific to ADHD and OCD could be more efficient and effective. Leadership listened, and sought out research-based solutions. These streams make the journey clearer, easier and shorter for families suffering with these diagnoses by following a proven blueprint. **Please note, external providers cannot refer directly to a stream. However, Core is training CASA's triage staff to be able to flag patients who may be a good fit.*



Congratulations to CASA's Core team on breaking barriers, setting records and on their commitment to outcomes-based accountability and continuous improvement.

Leave a Lasting Legacy

Making a gift through your will is an easy way to support a cause that is important to you. With a legacy gift, you can shape the future of mental health in Alberta. Your will makes a difference. [Learn more.](#)

[Get Help](#)

[Give Help](#)



Share Your Feedback on the Circle of Care Newsletter!

Help us improve the Circle of Care! For our 10th edition, we want to hear from you.

Your anonymous feedback on the way we communicate will help CASA Mental Health expand its circle of care around the province to provide much needed mental health service to as many families as possible.

Moving forward, a survey link will be included in each edition, so you can share your feedback at any time!

Warm Hearts, Strong Minds Fundraising Campaign

Your generosity helped raise **over \$84,000** for CASA Mental Health's Warm Hearts, Strong Minds fundraising campaign this past December. This remarkable achievement truly reflects the heart and commitment of supporters like you. Whether you contributed financially or amplified our message within your community, we're deeply grateful for the way you showed up. Your support helps provide life-changing mental health care for kids and families.

Youth and Family Voices Council Member Profile: Faer

"If you had told me when I first joined CASA at the age of six that, in just over 10 years, I'd be advising decision makers for the organization, I wouldn't have been able to process the statement.

My time at CASA, while incredibly turbulent, has led me to an inspiring place. I joined the Youth and Family Advisory Council (YFAC) in September of 2024 after my mother (who was already a member) recommended me.

Being a part of YFAC is both fulfilling in the sense of my own journey and in the context of helping improve CASA for others.

CASA was there for me through some pretty rough times, but that's not to say the organization is perfect. Being a member of YFAC allows me to speak up about where we can improve and what needs to be changed.

Through YFAC, I've sat in on decisions regarding new ventures, provided input on designing new CASA House facilities and contributed to the UNSEEN Zine. The YFAC council has given me immense opportunities to have my voice heard and to represent those who can't. I couldn't be more thankful for my time as a council member and all those who respect YFAC's unique insight."

[Learn More or Get Involved](#)

CASA IN THE NEWS

How Families Play a Critical Role in Children's Mental Health

We know children don't develop in isolation; they need their parents, siblings, peers and other trusted adults to learn from and practice life with. But did you know that the same applies to their mental health and well-being? **Caitlin Ebbers**, registered psychologist and program manager with CASA Mental Health joined Global News Morning Edmonton to talk about how a child's family is the single most important piece of a child's mental health and recovery.



[Watch the Segment Here](#)

Speaking to Children and Youth After a Traumatic Event

Following a school shooting in Tumbler Ridge, B.C., parents and caregivers in Alberta may be struggling to figure out how to talk to their own kids in the aftermath of the traumatic event. **Sharon Ling**, Trauma and Family Therapy Program Manager at CASA, spoke to CityNews Edmonton with [advice for parents and caregivers](#).



[Watch the Segment Here](#)

How Parents Can Respond to Kids' Defiance

Around ages three or four, kids start to explore defiance, meaning they discover the word "no." **Kristen Kachuk**, registered psychologist and program supervisor at CASA, joined Global News Morning Edmonton to explain why it is such a huge part of preschoolers' vocabularies, and offer productive ways for parents to respond.



[Watch the Segment Here](#)

EVENTS

Join the CASA Golf Classic and Support Kids' Mental Health!

The CASA Golf Classic 2026 is an invitational event held at the premier Blackhawk Golf Club on Aug. 20, 2026. The tournament features hosted food and beverages,

hole-in-one opportunities and proximity prizes and draws, followed by a banquet. Whether you've been golfing for years or are trying it out for the first time, the Texas Scramble format gives players of all levels the opportunity to have fun on the green while helping more Alberta kids get timely mental health treatment.



Limited spots available! [Become a partner today](#) and participate in this meaningful event.

Garden of Hope CASA Gala

On Friday, March 20, the [Garden of Hope CASA Gala](#), presented by Clark Builders, brought over 500 community members together in a beautiful show of compassion and shared purpose, raising **\$744,000** towards free, life-changing mental health care for kids and families. We are deeply grateful to our guests, partners and donors, whose generosity made the night – and the impact it fuels – possible. Throughout the evening, guests celebrated the stories, resilience and hope that continues to grow because of this collective support. Together, we've planted seeds that will continue to strengthen families and brighten futures.



At the CASA Gala we also introduced a new awareness campaign in key Alberta markets, including Edmonton and Calgary: *Toys Aren't Trained for this. CASA Mental Health is.* You can [view the ad on our website](#), as well as learn more about our expansion of timely mental health services for children and youth across Alberta.



Featured Fundraiser: 2026 Hypothermic Half Marathon Doubles 2025 Fundraising Total

“I think it’s cool that running organizations team up with organizations like CASA, because it just makes it so someone doesn’t just run for themselves. It allows them to do something for a bigger cause.” – Dustin Brooks, Hypo Half runner.

The 2026 Hypothermic Half Marathon in Edmonton on Sunday, Feb. 8 at the Highlands Golf Course was a huge success. The event is in its second consecutive year and is held by the Running Room, with all proceeds going to CASA Mental Health.

Across the 5K, 10K and 21K runs, the Hypo Half runners were all smiles. That could have come from the bright blue skies, coupled with the hoots of encouragement of the CASA volunteers acting as marathon marshals. [Read more on our blog.](#)

Interested in taking part in CASA events and fundraisers like the Hypo Half Marathon? Check out the [Servus Calgary Marathon](#) (May 23) and the [Servus Edmonton Marathon](#) (Aug. 16).



(Pictured: Sarah Dittrich, a manager with CASA's Philanthropy department, after participating in the 2026 Hypo Half).

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

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