

# ANNUAL REPORT

2024 - 2025



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# Land Acknowledgement

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i? sqilxʷ t́í ał? i? stqa?tkʷłńwłt sqilxʷ uł scqʷłqʷáłts ńsyilxcn.

We acknowledge and respect that this land is the traditional and unceded territory of the ńsyilxcn speaking people (syilx / Okanagan) who have resided here since time immemorial and will continue to be here for many generations to come.

Nsyilxcn translation by local knowledge keeper Jordan Coble  
Photo credit to Riley Henderson | @rileyhendersonphoto



# Introduction

Oak Child and Youth Advocacy Centre (Oak CYAC) is one of over 50 centres<sup>1</sup> (active or in-development) in Canada to offer wrap-around service in response to child abuse and neglect. Child and Youth Advocacy Centres (CYACs) are a welcoming, child-centric environment where children and youth who have experienced abuse or violence can share their experience, and receive ongoing support. CYACs work in partnership with other local and governmental agencies to lead best practices from referral, through investigation, and beyond.

This was the fourth complete year of Oak CYAC aligning data collection with the BC Network of Child and Youth Advocacy Centre's (BC Network) evaluation process. The evaluation process involves two primary components:

- **Evaluation data**, the collection and analysis of case characteristics, processes, and services provided by Oak CYAC<sup>2</sup>; and
- **Feedback** on services and processes using anonymous surveys:
  - Multi-disciplinary team (MDT) brief feedback
  - MDT in-depth feedback
  - Caregiver Survey
  - Child and Youth Survey

It is critical to note that although this report aims to capture the scope of work that took place at Oak CYAC in 2024-2025, it underrepresents the wide range of activities undertaken by Oak CYAC Partnership and staff. Cases are increasingly complex year-to-year, and service can span multiple years.

## Working in Partnership with



<sup>1</sup> Number according to Child and Youth Advocacy Centres of Canada, <https://cac-cae.ca/>

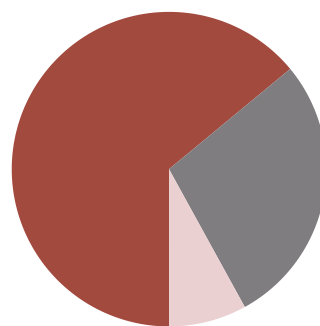
<sup>2</sup> Not all cases have data for all variables.

# Child and Family Characteristics

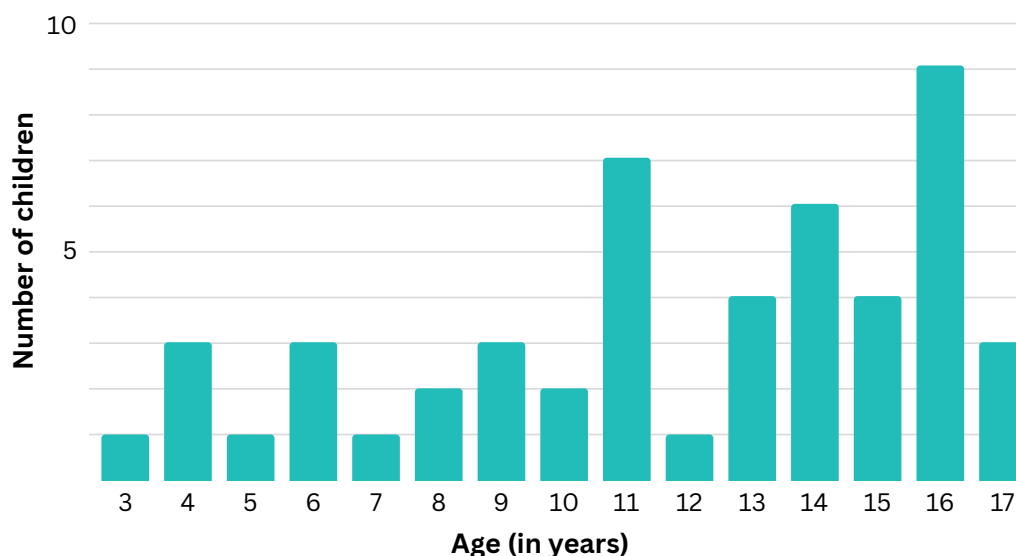
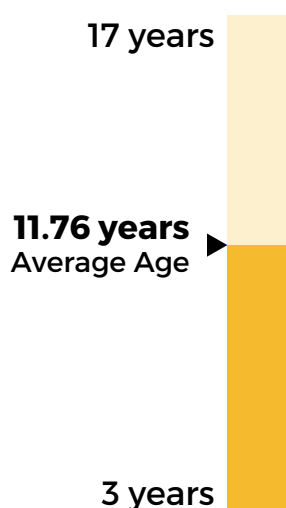
Oak CYAC served 50 new persons<sup>3</sup> during the fiscal year (April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025). Children were ages 3 to 17, primarily female, Caucasian or Indigenous, and all spoke English as a primary language. The Centre hosted an additional 40 interviews or meetings for other agencies or partners, and their clients<sup>4</sup>.



**76% Female**  
**20% Male**  
**4% Other**



**64% Caucasian**  
**28% Indigenous**  
**8% Other**



It is important to note that not all youth access services with their parents or guardians. CYACs support youth to engage in services on their own, under mature minor<sup>5</sup> status. Approximately **32% of all new cases** at Oak CYAC are deemed **mature minors**.

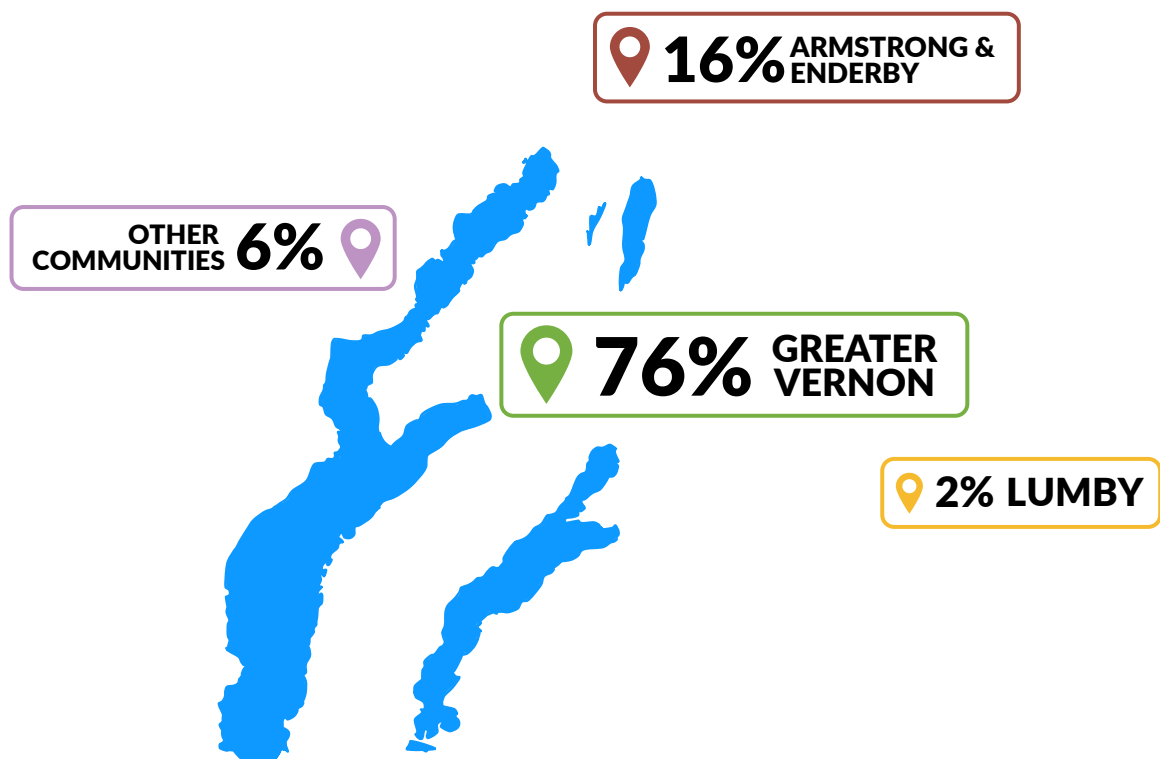
<sup>3</sup> Children or youth with existing files and Partner clients were not counted, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>4</sup> Clients are brought to Oak CYAC by partner agencies to use the facilities for interviews and meetings without engaging Oak CYAC staff for services.

<sup>5</sup> Each client is individually assessed for their ability to legally consent to services, through process adapted from EVA BC. (March 2020). *Information bulletin: providing coordinated services to mature minors*.

# Child and Family Characteristics

Children were primarily from Greater Vernon (Vernon, Coldstream & Okanagan Indian Band), and the communities of Enderby, Armstrong, Spallumcheen, and Lumby. Oak CYAC also served clients from other rural communities.



**602**  
 **DAYS**

Average length of time<sup>6</sup> a child or youth's file is active, from point of referral to completion of service is 602 days.

Clients may be on the caseload for an extended period of time depending on complexity of the case, and any ongoing court processes or client needs.

As long as there is a role for the Advocate and consent for service is maintained, a file will remain open.

6 Average file length was calculated using historical files from date of referral to date of discharge between January 1 2020 and March 31 2025.

# Child and Family Characteristics



Over sixty percent of children or youth reported **one or more** complex behavioural characteristic, such as:

- ADHD
- Depression
- Suicidal ideations
- Anxiety
- Developmental delays
- Trauma symptoms

The complexities that children are facing highlight the importance of a coordinated service, where all required professionals work together with the individual(s) and family to create and monitor a comprehensive plan for service.

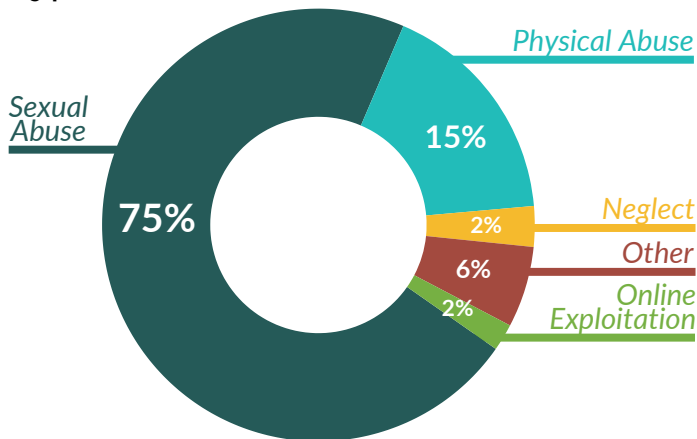
**43** Forty-three children had no previous experience with a CYAC.

**10** Ten clients reported domestic violence in the home.

# Nature of the Allegations

A majority of the children or youth who attended the CYAC reported a single instance of abuse, with fifteen children reporting repeated incidences. The most common form of abuse remains sexual.

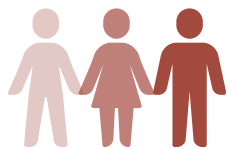
Type of Abuse



Since 2020, sexual abuse remains the most common reason for seeking service.

# Alleged Offenders

Gender Identity of Alleged Offender(s):



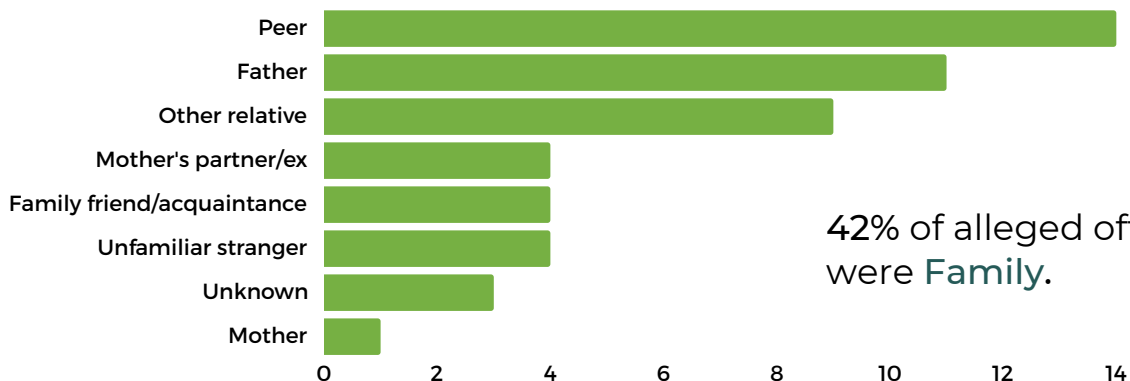
**88% Male**  
**10% Female**  
**2% Unknown**

Age of Alleged Offender(s):

● < 12 years ● 12 - 17 years ● 18+ years



Alleged offender's relationship to victim:



42% of alleged offenders were **Family**.



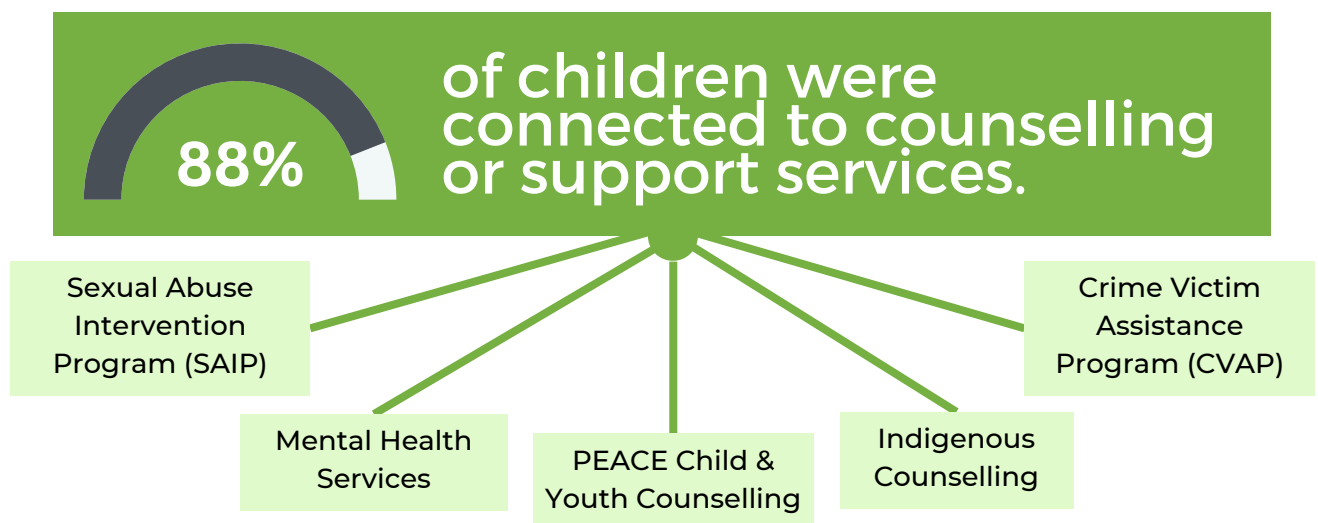
# The CYAC Experience

## Child Forensic Interviews

A total of **eighty-nine interviews<sup>7</sup>** were conducted this fiscal year. The use of a CYAC interview room helps ensure a child-focused setting that is comfortable, private, has minimal distractions, and is both physically and psychologically safe for diverse populations of children.



## Connection to Resources and Programs



Oak CYAC staff recorded **61 formal referrals** to other agencies, 51 interactions regarding Crime Victim Assistance Program, and **over 800 interactions** with other agencies directly related to client service or support.

<sup>7</sup> Includes interviews for clients accessing services through Oak CYAC, and interviews hosted for external agencies or Partners.

# The CYAC Experience

## Criminal Justice System Supports

Navigating judicial process is a large part of the Advocate's support role for clients. Most clients do not engage in court processes the same year that they begin service<sup>8</sup>; most court processes happen months or years after disclosing their abuse.

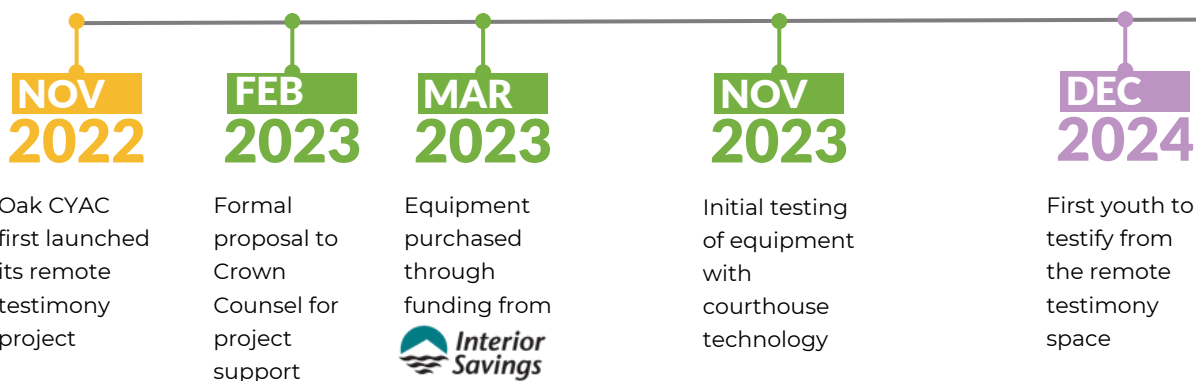


 **6 MONTHS → OVER 3.5 YEARS**

Criminal case timelines vary significantly from as short as 6 months to over 3 years and 8 months. Files where the accused is a youth (under 18 years of age) and enters a guilty plea are the quickest to reach conclusion.

Our Advocates assisted with **40 court appearances**. Each court appearance could range from **1 to 5 days**, including first appearances, trial proceedings, and decision or sentencing hearings. For each appearance, there is also court preparation which takes **at least 4 hours, per client**.

## Remote Testimony Project



Remote testimony is a proven success and has been used in CYACs across Canada. It is gaining traction due to its trauma-informed approach and Oak CYAC is excited to be able to offer this service to vulnerable victims of crime.

<sup>8</sup> Court statistics include all prior, existing and new clients that attended a court process in 2024-2025.

# The CYAC Experience

## Accredited Facility Dog

Accredited Facility Dogs (AFDs) are meant to assist service professionals in situations where the company of a dog (and its specially trained handler) can offer physical, social or emotional benefit to the child or youth. CYACs are encouraged to incorporate a facility dog service. AFDs may sit with children and youth to provide support during forensic interviews, meetings, or accompaniment during criminal justice system processes.



Oak CYAC's AFD "Cirque" helps children feel comfortable and safe enough to share their experience of abuse. Cirque has been with the CYAC for 5 years.

In 2024-2025, Cirque:



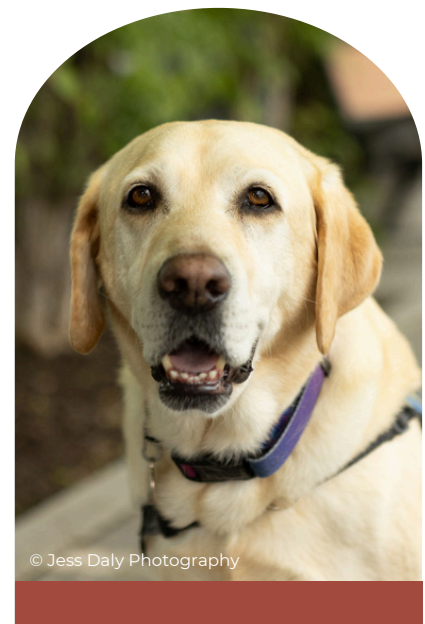
Provided support to children/youth for over **30** interviews



Accompanied clients during court appearances **51** times



Attended over **90** meetings with clients and professionals



© Jess Daly Photography

# Feedback from Surveys



The multi-disciplinary team (MDT) are frontline professionals of each of the organizations who work to provide a collaborative and integrated response to children and their families through a CYAC Partnership. Staff and professionals are employed by, and report to, their home agency.

## MDT Brief survey

After each interview conducted at Oak CYAC, members of the MDT complete the brief survey form anonymously, using an on-site tablet and survey link. One-hundred and thirty brief surveys were completed, a significant increase from last year.



[Police] interviewer slowed down the process for the family and presented as calm and very confident.

## MDT In-depth survey

Oak CYAC sent a link for an in-depth case specific survey for every third case, at least 2 months following intake, to all MDT members involved in the case. Twenty-one in-depth surveys were completed.



The file became very complex & the MDT was able to come together to establish a plan of action for each team member [to support the client]

## Caregiver and Child / Youth surveys

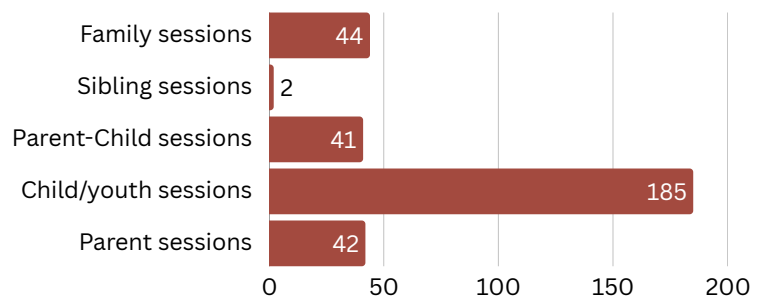
No responses were recorded for caregiver or child and youth surveys in the last fiscal year. Surveys were provided to Caregivers using a QR code in the 'Caregiver Guide' they received during their first visit(s) at Oak CYAC, and participation was completely voluntary.

# Family Therapy Program (FTP)

Each year, we identify an increasing number of children and youth who have been victims of abuse and sexual assault. The trauma from victimization can have a profound impact on families, often creating crises that hinder the ability to effectively support a child's healing journey. Our Family Therapy Program was created in direct response to this growing need, providing specialized, intensive support for families navigating the aftermath of trauma.

This program is designed for families who need intensive stabilization efforts. By focusing on both immediate and long-term healing, we ensure that each family receives the personalized care they need during critical moments of recovery.

## Total client sessions



20

Families



32

Persons



As part of the program, we offer clinical consultations between the Family Therapist and other professionals, such as CYAC staff and external service providers. These consultations are essential for assessing the unique needs of the family, guiding referrals to additional services, and developing a comprehensive service plan that prioritizes the child's well-being.

## Total clinical consultations





# Family Therapy Program (FTP)



In addition to direct client support, our Family Therapist also provides supervision and mentorship to a Master's student in clinical psychology. This collaboration benefits both the student, who gains hands-on experience, and families who might otherwise be on program waitlists or unable to access immediate support.

The student works with clients pending Crime Victim Assistance funding or those whose needs fall outside of other program mandates, bridging the gap to long-term counselling solutions.



By combining clinical expertise, collaborative consultations, and student mentorship, we strive to create a well-rounded and sustainable path to recovery for families affected by trauma.

# Looking Forward

In 2025-2026, we are working to:

- advocate for the use of remote testimony from our new accommodation room so that children can testify from the safe and familiar space of Oak CYAC;
- continue to enhance our partnerships with medical professionals to offer a more robust medical service and response to our clients;
- maintain outreach into rural areas, being available to clients from our new Armstrong location, and pursue opportunities for development of soft interview rooms at satellite office locations;
- create meaningful, relevant educational opportunities for our partners, members of our multi-disciplinary team and other community service providers;
- develop a more robust relationship with Indigenous communities and organizations, and School District to benefit client service;
- ensure the continuity of our Accredited Facility Dog service for clients; and
- accomplish facility improvements and updates, with the aim to be more culturally inclusive and welcoming.

Oak CYAC Partnership will continue to pursue service excellence, for all children and youth that have experienced abuse and violence, and their families. We are committed to refining the response model that defines Child and Youth Advocacy Centres.



Oak CYAC is proud to participate as an active member of the BC Network of Child and Youth Advocacy Centres (BC Network), an organization that leads provincial initiatives to guide wise practices and increase the knowledge and skills of multi-disciplinary teams.

# Thank You



**Nathanael Hewitt,**  
Acting Program Manager,  
Child & Family Services

As the Acting Program Manager at Oak CYAC, I would like to sincerely thank all the dedicated professionals who collaborate at Oak CYAC for their exceptional efforts in supporting children and youth in our community. After a decade of service, we have had the privilege of working alongside some of the most inspiring children, youth and families in our region. Every day we are amazed by the resilience of children, many of whom have been hurt by ones they love.

The progress and successes achieved by the entire Oak team are a testament to our commitment to providing a safe, welcoming, and empowering environment for the young individuals and families we serve. It's inspiring to watch the incredible work carried out by such passionate and skilled people.

The positive outcomes we've seen in the children we serve are a direct result of the work done by Oak CYAC partners - from frontline service providers and responders, to leadership and support staff. People who are called to work in response to children who have experienced abuse and violence go above and beyond to ensure that young victims have what they need to heal and prosper. Thank you to each and every one of those who have made a positive impact on the children, youth and families who need our help the most.

We could not do what we do without the support of our community. Oak CYAC is not a government contracted program and relies on grants and fundraising to lead this essential service. We sincerely thank the community members, family foundations and committed organizations who believe in this work and support us to help keep children safe.

Once again, thank you. I'm grateful for the opportunity to work alongside such an outstanding team and look forward to many more successes in the coming year.

With sincere appreciation,



[www.oakcentrevnon.ca](http://www.oakcentrevnon.ca)  
@oakcentrevnon

