

SYNERGY

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1 OYears Strong in the Community

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"Synergy means more to the community than I think people realize. You can come from any walk of life and be welcomed with open arms. Synergy thrives on the diverse community it resides in, it is a place where support, compassion, kindness, and care are always available. My time spent mentoring there was nothing short of incredible."

- Former Volunteer Youth Mentor

Chestermere Metis Flag Ceremony

WHO WE ARE

Supporting and strengthening the wellness and leadership development of youth and the community has been a passion project for Synergy staff and Board of Directors for **10 years**, as we work toward our vision of connected, engaged, and healthy communities. Each year we strive to share our mission with the community, to empower youth and community groups to build strong connections through relationships, education, leadership, programming, and basic needs support.



OUR BOARD

Matt Sywenky Chair

Andrew Persaud Vice Chair

Deborah Hitchcock Treasurer

Grace McKenna Secretary

Neena Obhrai Director

Sheryce Hains Director

Rody Visotski Director

Lori Persaud Director

OUR STAFF

Patty Sproule Executive Director

Coralee McIntosh Leadership Team

Terry Gill Leadership Team

Alicea Sproule Leadership Team

Acknowledging the land

In the spirit of reconciliation, we acknowledge that we work and live on the Treaty 7 territory ancestral lands of the Blackfoot Confederacy: Kainai, Piikani, and Siksika as well as the Tsuu T'ina and Stoney Nakoda First Nations including Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Wesley. This territory is also home to the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3. We acknowledge the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people who have cared for these lands for generations. We are grateful for the Elders and Knowledge Keepers who are still with us today and those who have gone before us.

Through this impact report SERV may be used in place of South-East Rocky View

Synergy's 10th Anniversary

2023 marked two major milestones for Synergy; our 10th Anniversary and the retirement of Patty Sproule, our Executive Director, Fearless Leader, and Greatest Champion. Synergy was established in May of 2013 following an extensive community social needs assessment. Nonprofit support and youth programming were identified as two areas of focus in need of attention. With that in mind, Synergy was created to provide a variety of programming for youth ages 7-17 as well as support the growing nonprofit sector in our community.

Synergy's first programs were Super Sampler and Super Hero Camp offered to youth 10-12 yrs. The underlying theme of both programs was finding passions, giving youth the opportunity to step out of their comfort zone, try new things, and pursue what they were most passionate about. This theme rang true throughout the Chestermere Gives Back Campaign, our first largescale community initiative highlighting volunteerism in our community. Over the years, our programs, services, and events have grown as Synergy has taken a holistic approach to supporting the leadership and wellness of individuals in Chestermere, Langdon, and South East Rocky View. The Synergy Board and Staff have always been looking ahead to see how they can best support the community as needs and issues change. This has led to involvement in multiple coalitions, community surveys, and research projects. As an agency, Synergy has never shied away from making changes, taking risks, or standing up for our community. We will continue to follow this approach as we head into the future, and strive to reach our vision of connected, engaged, healthy communities.



2013 Synergy Launch



2017 Community Centre Grand Opening



2023 10th Anniversary Celebration

10 YEARS STRONG



2019 Langdon Pancakes in the Park



2014 Duck Race



2020 Dabble During COVID



2021 Federal and Municipal All Candidates Forum



2022 Community Art Refurbishment



2015 Superhero Retreat



2016 Langdon Community Garden Build



2018 Volunteer Appreciation Night

Patty's Retirement

Synergy's success is a true testament to the passion and determination of its founder, Patty Sproule. Her steadfast leadership, positive persistence, and endless drive to support her community have paved the way for every staff member, volunteer, and participant involved with Synergy. On May 31st, 2023, it was with mixed emotions that the Synergy Youth and Community Development Society (Synergy) Board of Directors announced the retirement of our Executive Director, Patty Sproule on June 30th, 2023. While her experience, expertise, and dedication will be sadly missed, no one deserves retirement more than Patty.

Over the past 45 years, Patty has selflessly given her time, blood, sweat and tears to serve children, youth, their families, and the community. She has been a Foster Parent, an Alternative School Counsellor, and an Assessment and Treatment Centre Director. Patty has overseen In-Home Support and Community Youth Worker Programs, co-founded Parent Link Centres, spent a decade as one of the City of Chestermere Directors, founded and developed Synergy, and served four years on the Rocky View Schools Board of Trustees.

A few highlights of Patty's work over the past 16 years in Chestermere and Area include founding or cofounding the following: Christmas With Dignity Program (now called Gifts of Kindness), YELL Youth Council (now called SERVE), the SHOUT program, Community Block Parties, Everyday Angels, Seniors Lunch and Learns, CHEMA (Chestermere Emergency Management Agency), Chestermere Regional Community Development Foundation, Chestermere Community Health Care Centre, the Chestermere Bike Park, the Chestermere Gives Back and Langdon Legacies initiatives, a Youth Internship Program, the Langdon Summer Drop-In Program, the SE Rocky View Resource and Referral Program, as well as several coalitions, collaboratives, and collectives. Patty sat on the Chestermere Policing Committee for several years, and she co-founded the Chestermere Crime Reduction Program which won a Ministry of Justice award for Municipal Excellence during its third year and more recently, Project Rewrite (an innovative Restorative Justice Program). She led the way for the development of the Centre for Community Leadership which has become home to numerous non-profit agencies and community groups. Patty was grateful to receive recognition through the Alberta Parks and Recreation Award for Excellence in Youth Development, the AUMA Above and Beyond Municipal Sustainability Award, and the IPAC/Deloitte Public Sector Leadership Innovation Award over the years.



"What do you hope your legacy will be?"

"Two things - one is that I made a difference and the other is that I helped develop other leaders and most recently the three staff members who are taking over my duties when I retire. Coralee, Terry, and Alicea have got this – I am very proud of them for stepping up to form the Synergy Leadership Team." - Patty

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

HOLIDAY MEAL DROP-OFFS

Amidst the festive season, Synergy once again embarked on its annual mission of spreading joy and warmth by organizing Holiday Dinner Drop-offs. This initiative aims to support local families and individuals who face hardships or social isolation during the holidays. The impact of the Holiday Meal Drop-offs extends far beyond the provision of a meal, also serving as a beacon of comfort and hope to remind individuals that they are not alone. **This year, we delivered turkey meals generously prepared by the Kawula Family to 20 homes in Chestermere, Langdon, and South East Rocky View areas.** The heartwarming success of the Holiday Meal Drop-offs owes much to the dedicated volunteers who devoted their time and effort to deliver each meal with care!

"My family and I would like to send a very heartfelt thank you to and all the volunteers who contributed to the Christmas dinners. My family had a rather tough 2023 and were nominated by a dear friend. The turkey and all that came with it was so delicious and put a very big smile on all our faces. It is not always the financial support that matters the most but the thought and kindness of others that goes a long way to making our hearts and minds stronger, knowing that there are people on the community that genuinely care."

- Holiday Meal Recipient

SYNERGY'S EVENING WITH ROYALTY

The Fund Development Committee organized Synergy's first-ever "An Evening with Royalty" fundraiser in collaboration with Dunn & Company Kitchen and Mercantile. This 18+ event offered an exciting evening full of drag performances featuring Carly's Angels alongside an array of delicious appetizers while raising funds to support our community youth programs. With growing interest from the community and generous sponsorships from various local businesses including UCGC Ltd, Chestermere Heating and Cooling, Magna Engineering, Karen Gonzales, and others, we successfully sold 70 tickets, raising a total of \$6700.00 which was partially matched by Shaw Birdies for Kids presented by Altalink. Given a positive response from the community, we look forward to incorporating this event into our annual fundraising activities!





COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

PANCAKES IN THE PARK & WATER FIGHT

Synergy has been hosting Pancakes in the Park in Langdon for several years. This community event is open to the entire community, bringing together residents of all ages for a fun afternoon of pancakes, yard games, and a massive water fight with the local firefighters. Pancakes in the Park has been such a hit that we hosted the event in Chestermere along with our annual Chestermere water fight in July. **Over 350 Synergy families, participants, community members, and neighboring daycare kids joined us for a fun-filled day.**



Chestermere Pancakes in the Park



Langdon Pancakes in the Park

YOUTH SAFER COMMUNITIES SURVEY & FOCUS GROUPS

2023 saw the continuation of the Chestermere Rural Mental Health Community Project. The Spring Forward Project was **year 3 of a multi-phased project**. The focus groups conducted from 2022 to 2023 provided the Coalition with an incredible amount of data. It took months for the Research Team to transcribe, review, and code all of the information. The data from the focus groups was analyzed and compiled into 2 reports; a Youth Report and an Adult Report, each with a list of recommendations. The reports break the information down into themes which were identified through the data coding process. From these themes, the Research Team **developed a table of recommendations to improve the emotional, physical, social, and mental safety of youth in our community**. These reports and recommendations will be presented to key stakeholders throughout 2024. The Spring Forward Project also included community mental health training and the Community Mental Health Fair. Members of the Chestermere and Area Mental Health Coalition hosted a Parent Education session, we hosted a safeTalk: Suicide Alertness For Everyone training, partnered with The Do More Ag Foundation to host a Talk, Ask, Listen workshop, and mental health trade fairs at Chestermere Lake Middle School.

Phase Four: Building a Community of Wellness will continue to implement the recommendations from the Youth Safer Communities Survey and Focus Groups in 2024.

"Synergy is a place where I can be myself without fear of judgment and somewhere that I can go to if I need help with anything." "Synergy impacts the community through an individual level, making meaningful and lasting connections with everybody."

- Volunteer Youth Program Mentor

- Volunteer Youth Program Mentor

SERV INFORMATION AND REFERRAL

In the spring of 2023, Synergy began to formally offer information and referral services to the residents of Langdon, Indus, and South East Rocky View. Our staff provides support for basic needs as well as services such as **youth programs**, **family and parent education**, **housing**, **government financial support and subsidies**, **employment resources**, **and mental health and wellness**. We are able to meet individuals and families in Langdon at the Qualico Resource Centre or connect over the phone or email. We are also able to provide counselling appointments in Langdon, through the Connection & Care Program. Having access to programs and services directly in your own community can be a game changer for residents. We look forward to continuing to offer these services in 2024.

DUCK RACE

Our annual Ducks for Bucks fundraiser has become a family favorite throughout the community. Each year, five outstanding community members—ranging from members of the **RCMP, Peace Officers, Fire Department, and City Council**—run an elaborate obstacle course cheered on by the community to grab a sponsored rubber duck and race to the finish line. The Duck Race has been a success thanks to the support we receive from our Community Partners, who help sponsor the event. Funds raised from sponsoring ducks go toward supporting Synergy programs.





CHESTERMERE RCMP REGIMENTAL BALL

In October 2023, Synergy had the opportunity to be part of a very special event, the inaugural Chestermere RCMP Regimental Ball. This grand event was an evening full of entertainment, culture, and traditions, drawing RCMP members from across the province. With 2023 being the 150th Anniversary of the establishment of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Red Surge was celebrated in style. The event also included a silent auction, live auction, Challenge Coin toss, and wine raffle with **proceeds supporting the Chestermere Women's Crisis Society and Synergy's restorative Justice program, Project Rewrite**. We were honored to be part of such a special event taking place in our home community.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Restorative Justice has a history in Canada coming out of Indigenous traditions. Centered in the value of living in harmony with all things these practices were developed by Indigenous peoples. The Cree word "Wetaskiwin" refers to people coming together and living in harmony with each other and all things.

This approach establishes dignity for individuals while enhancing communication and empathy for those who were harmed and for those who inflicted harm. It also improves understanding of the impact and consequences an action can have, for those who caused harm and can increase their understanding of the broader consequences.

Non-adversarial approaches allow all parties to hear the perspectives of the others and provide the victim and community an opportunity to be a part of determining the appropriate consequences to restore the relationship, rather than leaving that decision to a court where the victim and community may never know the outcome. This approach also builds the skills necessary to deal with conflict in healthy ways going forward. Our focus is on:

- accountability
- improved or restored relationships
- dignity for all parties
- increased understanding of the impact/ consequences of actions
- victim and community being able to ask questions and participate in restoration
- decreased likelihood to re-offend
- communities build safety and stronger connections

ELEMENTS

It is voluntary

It respects all of the participants

It is held in a safe place

It has informed consent

It holds the person responsible for the harm accountable

OUR VALUES

PROJECT

RESPECT

Allows for a safe experience for everyone. Involves listening to the other person's perspective, whether we agree with it, and behaving in a way that allows the process to play out safely for everyone.

RELATIONSHIP

Aim is to help repair the harm done to all relationships, giving the harmer a safe space to take responsibility and make amends.

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RESPONSIBILITY

Taking responsibility for your part in the harm. Each party must be honest with themselves and look deeply to see if they did have a part in the incident, even if they were the harmed person.

REPAIR

Perpetrator repairs as much harm as they can, knowing it may not all be repairable. Repair should be able to resolve feelings of anger and revenge from the harmed and help the harmer regain feelings of respect.

REINTEGRATION

This final principle refers to how the community should allow the harmer to accept their part in the harm and reintegrate back into that community with trust.

PROJECT REWRITE

Project Rewrite is a restorative justice program inviting participants to **rewrite their story**. It allows those harmed and those who caused harm to take responsibility in the aftermath of a crime or wrongdoing. Youth and families meet with a facilitator to discuss the incident, **hold themselves accountable**, and determine a solution for repairing the harm they have caused. This can range from apologizing and paying any dues deemed necessary to completing community service hours with the facilitator.

Feedback from those who have completed the program has been **overwhelmingly positive**, with some participants volunteering more hours than required.

SYNERGY SPOTLIGHT

SYNERGY SPOTLIGHT - HANNA MUGHAL

Hanna first joined Synergy as a member of the YELL Youth Council in 2018 and has been a vital presence ever since. She transitioned into roles as Summer Staff, Program Facilitator, and now as a Synergy Research Student, leading the Youth Safer Communities Project over the past few years. Throughout her tenure with us, Hanna has brought a unique blend of positivity, dedication, and mentorship that has significantly impacted the youth, our team, and the communities we serve. Her commitment and community involvement earned her the Langdon Youth Volunteer of the Year award in 2019.

Hanna's influence extends beyond her direct interactions with youth. She is also a role model for her peers, consistently demonstrating professionalism, empathy, and a collaborative spirit. Despite her busy schedule, Hanna is always willing to lend a helping hand or share a moment of quality time, brightened by her infectious laugh, which we all adore. In every aspect of her work and life, Hanna exemplifies Synergy's core values. Her positivity, dedication, and unwavering support for both youth and the community make her a true asset to our organization and a shining example of what it means to be a mentor and leader.

In her personal life, Hanna manages to balance her role as a University of Calgary student, working towards her Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology, with her active involvement in CrossFit, spending quality time with her family, and engaging in outdoor activities that help her enjoy nature. The entire Synergy team is extremely proud of Hanna and remains in awe of everything she accomplishes, all while maintaining high energy and a great attitude, no matter the situation. She has truly been a role model for all of us, demonstrating that it is possible to balance it all while being a positive role model, actively contributing to the community, and possessing a genuine heart of gold.







SERVE LEADERSHIP

Empowers youth (ages 13+) to learn and demonstrate their leadership skills while becoming conscientious members of the South East Rocky View community through social activism, volunteerism, and self-determination.

Teen SHOUT

Teen SHOUT (ages 13+) provides the chance to connect and share with peers in a fun and welcoming space. They cover a range of subjects, including healthy relationships, current events, social justice issues, and the latest issues on social media.

SHOUT Girls

SHOUT Girls (ages 10-13) offers a structured support circle designed to nurture self-awareness and positive relationships. They explore topics that are relevant to their lives, such as puberty, self-awareness & self-compassion, making healthy relationships, body image, and more.

SHOUT Boys

SHOUT Boys (ages 10-13) centers on the development of social skills, teamwork, and other attributes essential for youth. They gain experiences and insights on excelling in school, contributing to their community, and fostering positive relationships.

YOUTH INTERNSHIP

Gives local youth (age 15 - 21) an opportunity to gain hands-on work experience and real-life job skills. Interns also have the chance to participate in a multitude of training sessions, all while making a difference in the community.

DABBLE

An experiential learning program (ages 7-9) that provides opportunities to try activities participants may not get the chance to otherwise. Typically offered as a week long Day Camp during the summer.

FRIDAY FAM

Friday Fam (ages 10+) helps build healthy relationships with peers and mentors through fun team-building, recreational games and facilitated activities. Takes place in Langdon.

LANGDON DROP-IN DAY CAMP

A structured outdoor program for youth to engage and connect through physical literacy games, problem-solving activities, creative art projects, and be mentored by Synergy Staff, Youth Interns, and volunteers.



SHOUT Mentors

"Synergy's greatest strength is giving youth a place to build skills and relationships and let them have a safe place to be themselves."

- Volunteer Youth Program Mentor



2023 Youth Interns

INITIATIVES

Synergy's initiatives continue to grow yearly, with feedback received from staff, mentors, youth, and people in the community, Synergy pushes to create new spaces for people to meet and connect through common interests. Turnout continues to grow as stories and experiences are shared, along with people seeing the involvement, care and effort Synergy puts forward to it's programs and initiatives.

Pretty in Pink

Bullying is a significant issue for our youth. Each year, SERVE Leadership sells hand-made buttons to raise funds within our community to combat bullying and support youth charities. SERVE members also visited local schools to conduct assemblies for 950 students, educating them on addressing and preventing bullying.

LIFE SKILLS WORKSHOPS

Workshops are provided to the community as well as schools to support youth in learning life skills. Sessions such as Suicide Prevention, Nutrition, Resume Writing, Job Interview Skills, Mindfulness, Diversity and Financial Literacy are offered regularly.

POSITIVE TICKETING

With the support of Synergy and Stepping Stones to Mental Health, Chestermere RCMP and Peace Officers hand out Positive Tickets with prizes in them to children and youth "CAUGHT" in the act of doing positive things in Chestermere.

GAME NIGHTS

Game Nights are offered in Langdon on the first Friday of the month with a variety of video gaming systems and board games for youth to choose from. This free event is a chance for youth to meet new people and practice their social skills.

DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS

Synergy is proud to host several designated D&D, Dungeons and Dragons game nights in Chestermere at the Leadership Centre and in Langdon at the Qualico Resource Centre. Synergy partners with the Chestermere Rec Centre to promote weekly D&D game nights.

VOLUNTEER INITIATIVE SUPPORT

Synergy has a variety of volunteer roles for community members of all ages. We work with our volunteers to determine their passion and assign volunteer roles that are of interest to them and they would benefit from. Synergy helps support local not-for-profits by connecting them with volunteers to help with their events and inititatives.



Pretty in Pink

"Synergy is a place where you can share and express your feelings and ideas openly to everyone."

- Volunteer Youth Program Mentor



Game Night in Langdon

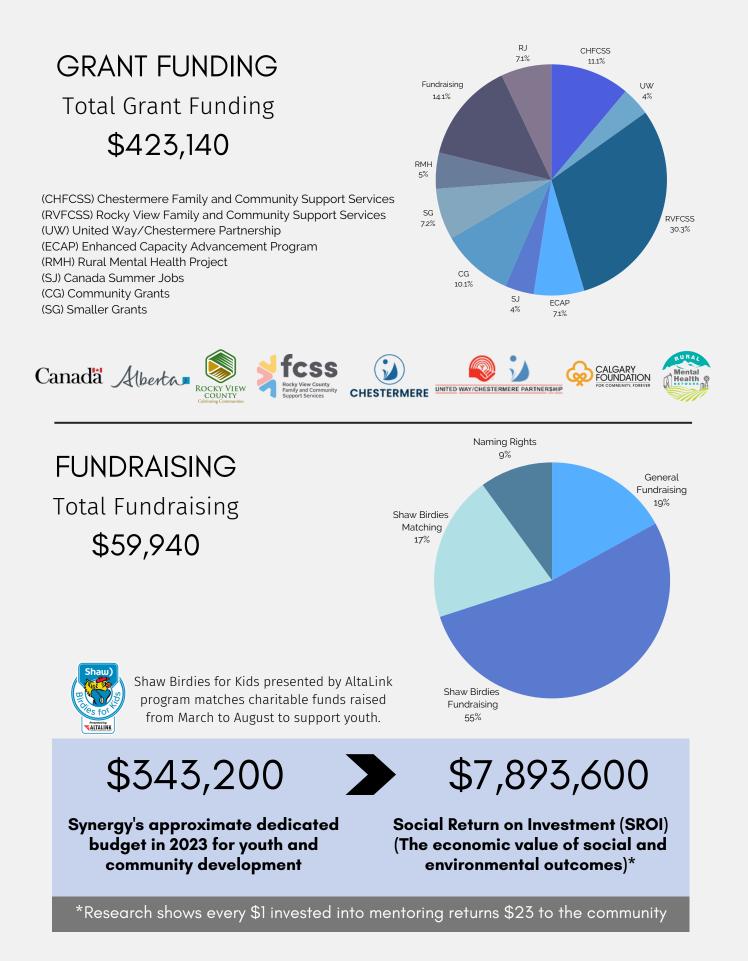
"Synergy has helped me be more open about my personality through an open and inclusive environment."

- Volunteer Youth Program Mentor

THE NUMBERS

PROGRAMS	INITIATIVES	COMMUNITY SUPPORT	
SERVE Leadership Total -46	Youth Workshops Total - 890	Connection and Care Clients Total - 81	
Teen SHOUT Total - 38	Langdon Pancakes in the Park Total - 167	Wellness Support Clients Total - 14	
SHOUT Boys/Girls Total - 76	Chestermere Pancakes in the Park Total - 200	Mental Health Coalition Total - 43	
Youth Internship Total - 8	Langdon Video Game Nights Total - 380	Youth Focus Group Total - 36	
Dabble Total - 21	Dungeons & Dragons Total - 21	Nonprofit Meeting Members Total - 37	
Friday Fam Total - 23	Paint Day Total - 26	Nonprofit Trade Fair Total - 26	
Langdon Drop In Total - 118	Positive Ticketing Total - 100 Tickets Given	Holiday Dinners Delivered Total - 20 Homes	
General Volunteer Total -278	s Key Mentors Total - 23	Volunteer Hours Total - 4548	
TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE SERVED Total - 5137			
4,548 VOLUNTEER Hrs Synergy volunteers contributed over 4,548 volunteer hours towards the community in 2023			
Value of Synergy Volunteers			

FUNDING



ON THE HORIZON

PATTY SPROULE HEART OF SYNERGY AWARD

Patty Sproule's profound influence showcases the lasting power of compassion, connection, and a commitment to empowering youth and communities as part of her legacy, the Patty Sproule Heart of Synergy Award will now be **awarded annually** to acknowledge and reward a young leader who has made an outstanding contribution to our community. This award honors the young individual who has gone above and beyond to selflessly give their time, energy, and skills to causes that matter.

Whether through community service, charitable initiatives, or social outreach, the recipient of this award stands out for their remarkable efforts in improving the lives of others. The Patty Sproule Heart of Synergy Award aims to inspire and applaud the spirit of **philanthropy and community engagement** among the youth. The recipient embodies the **values of empathy, responsibility, and a strong sense of civic duty**, serving as a role model for their peers and inspiring a new generation of compassionate leaders.



HOCKEY MARATHON 2024

In March 2024, **40 players** will once again attempt a groundbreaking **262 consecutive hours** on the ice, aiming to surpass their own record. Our ultimate goal, as always, is to raise awareness and funds for the Alberta Children's Hospital to ensure children facing serious illnesses receive the support they need. **In 2022, a total of \$1 million was raised during which Synergy was fortunate to be a part of the event as an organizer of the Silent Auction Fundraiser**. With generous contributions from community members and businesses, we were able to auction off over 100 items, raising a total of \$20,000. For the upcoming 2024 marathon, Synergy will be taking on the role of volunteer recruitment for timekeepers, scorekeepers, bench liaisons, and off-ice volunteers.

COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH FAIR

In January 2024, the Mental Health Coalition hosted the inaugural Community Mental Health Fair, which included presentations on Addiction & Substance Use, Managing Anxiety, Setting Boundaries & Healthy Relationships, Suicide & Suicidal Ideation, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, and Exploitation & Social Media Safety. Local agencies and service providers were on hand to provide additional information, resources, and support. The presentations were given by representatives from community agencies as well as one local youth, Lucas Tacknyk, who developed the Exploitation and Social Media Safety in partnership with Terry Gill. Lucas brought a youth voice to the presentation making it more relatable for parents, service providers, and youth in the audience.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would would like to take this opportunity to thank our amazing funders, sponsors and donors that make it possible for us to provide programs, services and supports to the community. We cannot thank you enough for your continued support and generosity through the years. We would also like to thank our participants, parents, volunteers, and community partners who continue to support us on a monthly, weekly, and even daily basis. Thank you!

Alberta Solicitor General **ATB Financial Blair Foundation** Blaire Cote **Briane Sproule Calgary Foundation** Chestermere Regional Community Association **Chestermere FCSS** Chestermere Heating and Cooling Chestermere Lifepath Wellness City of Chestermere Communities Choosewell Dunn & Company Kitchen & Mercantile Government of Alberta Culture & Status of Women Karen Gonzales Lake City Cannabis Langdon Bottle Depot Langdon Community Association Magna Engineering Oilmen's Association **Qualico Communities RGO Products Ltd** Rocky View County **Rocky View FCSS Rotary Chestermere** Rural Mental Health - CMHA Alberta Division Ryan Wolff Shaw Birdies for Kids presented by Altalink TD Canada Trust Chestermere The Government of Canada The Sandbox Project Tim Horton's Smile Cookie - Andrew Marriott UCGC Ltd. United Way/Chestermere Partnership





Synergy

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