



# College Montrose Children's Place Strategic Plan 2014 through 2017

Approved by Board April 29, 2015

## Introduction – The Planning Context

### The Planning Process

The planning process was led by the Program Committee of the Board, the Executive Director, and the Program Director. They set the direction and oversaw the process.

The first phase of the planning process involved information gathering including:

- review of existing documents including previous plans, evaluation reports and municipal and EDI statistical reports
- interviews with key stakeholders including the United Way, a major funder.
- focus groups with participants (3), and with staff
- a capacity assessment survey completed by staff and board members

The results of all these inputs were documented and fed into discussions at a retreat attended by staff, board members and other volunteers on April 12, 2014. This session identified key priorities for the upcoming years and issues that need to be addressed in addressing those priorities.

Through two meetings of the Program Committee, and additional sessions involving the Executive Director, Program Director and planning consultant, the output from the planning retreat have been shaped into this plan.

## Scope of CMCP’s Operation and This Plan

Throughout this planning process, participants were mindful of the full scope of CMCP’s activities and responsibilities.

- As the lead Ontario Early Years agency for Trinity Spadina CMCP has accountability for delivery of the program for the riding. This accountability is met through the direct operation of the main OEY site, through purchase of service arrangements with satellite sites operated by other organizations, and through coordination and oversight activities.
- CMCP also operates sites outside the Trinity-Spadina’s boundaries; Gooch and St. Helen’s.

## CMCP’s Mission

This planning process confirmed that its existing mission statement remains valid and relevant. A short catch-phrase “Healthy Children, Healthy Families, Healthy Communities” was been added to the front of the mission statement during the 2011 planning process.

| <b>CMCP’s Mission</b>  |                         |                            |
|--|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Healthy Children</b>  | <b>Healthy Families</b> | <b>Healthy Communities</b> |
| <p>We are a family resource programme that addresses the changing needs of diverse families. We create connections between children, parents, grandparents and other caregivers in local neighbourhoods with a focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Supporting healthy child development</li> <li>✓ Strengthening parenting knowledge and skills</li> <li>✓ Promoting healthy families</li> <li>✓ Breaking down isolation</li> <li>✓ Fostering mutual aid and peer support</li> <li>✓ Valuing inclusion and harmony</li> </ul> <p>In partnership with families and the community we provide safe stimulating learning environments and opportunities for children, parents and caregivers. Children’s Place is an open collaborative organization that values and respects the unique needs and strengths of all families.</p> |                         |                            |

## CMCP's Values

CMCP's mission statement is further supported by a set of Guiding Principles. These have been adapted from the FRP Canada Family Support Principles<sup>1</sup>

### Guiding Principles

- ✓ We are open to all families, recognizing that all families deserve support.
- ✓ We complement existing services, build networks and linkages, and advocate for policies services and systems that support families' abilities to raise healthy children
- ✓ We work in partnership with families and communities to meet expressed needs.
- ✓ Our programs focus on the promotion of wellness and use a prevention approach in their work.
- ✓ We work to increase opportunities and to strengthen individuals, families and communities.
- ✓ We operate from an ecological perspective that recognizes the interdependent nature of families' lives.
- ✓ We value and encourage mutual assistance and peer support.
- ✓ We affirm parenting to be a life-long learning process.
- ✓ We value and encourage mutual assistance and peer support.
- ✓ We promote relationships based on equality and respect for diversity.
- ✓ We advocate non-violence to ensure safety and security for all family members.
- ✓ We continually seek to improve our practice by reflecting on what they do and how they do it.

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<sup>1</sup>Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs

## Organizational Values

In addition to the CRP Guiding Principles, there are values that pertain to the way in which CMCP operates as an organization. The first three of these “organizational values” were added during the 2011 planning process. The fourth was added this year in response to discussions at the Planning Day.

### Organizational Values

**Human Resource** – The effectiveness of CMCP programs relies on skilled staff who understand the values and principles of family support programs. CMCP will work to attract, retain, develop and support its staff.

**Partnership** - CMCP actively promotes partnerships and plays a facilitative and resource role for family resource programs in the communities it serves.

**Communications** – Effective communications – both internal and external are vital. CMCP will work to ensure that board members, staff and participants stay connected and have a shared understanding of the organization and its mission.

**Focus on Participant Outcomes** – CMCP’s decisions are driven by a focus on how they will impact on participant outcomes. Outcomes will be measured, and those measures used to drive continuous improvement.

## Strategic Priorities

Three strategic priority areas were identified for the upcoming years:

### **Priority #1**

#### **Serving Vulnerable Communities**

Without compromising CMCP's commitments as a universal program open to all families, it is particularly important that vulnerable families are being reached, and that special needs are being addressed.

“vulnerable” here is defined broadly to include low income families, non-English speakers, recent immigrants, families with physical or mental health challenges, LGBT etc.

#### **Approaches to addressing vulnerable communities**

- a) Enhancements at the Gooch site whose existing participants fit our definition of “vulnerable” - the scope of this effort is expected to include improvements in the physical space, resources, equipment, staffing and resources in general;
- b) Continue outreach efforts with an emphasis on reaching those most in need of our services;
- c) Continue efforts to identify and address potential barriers to participation and ensuring that program offerings meet the needs of vulnerable communities,
- d) Provide supports to satellite sites, some of which serve vulnerable groups, to enhance the quality and effectiveness of their programs;
- e) Work in partnership with other community based organizations.

### Background/Rationale

At the Shaw Street and St Helen's locations, there is some sense that program participants do not represent the full complement of families in these communities. Some participants indicated that it would be nice to have a more diverse group participating.

CMCP recognizes that some of those most in need of the kind of services that CMCP provides are also those who may be hardest to reach through outreach efforts, or who may be hesitant to show up at a program like this.

One challenge addressing this priority lies in measurement. Program data collected routinely identify some, but not all, of the vulnerable groups. As a result, we have some understanding of those being served. What is more problematic is getting a good measure of the extent of these populations in the broader community and therefore the portion of those groups that we are reaching. What data do exist tends to be out of date.

Addressing the issues around both measurement and the provision of services to vulnerable populations are potentially very resource intensive. Given the demands already on the organization, we have to be realistic about how much we can commit to.

Initially, the efforts will be focused on improvements at the Gooch site. That said, the broader issue of serving vulnerable populations is an ongoing priority. CMCP remains committed to attracting and serving vulnerable populations, addressing any barriers to their participation, and providing the services they need.

Potentially, specific initiatives will be added to the plan as opportunities present themselves, as specific needs are identified, or as resources are available.

Our approach to addressing the needs of vulnerable populations need not be exclusively through the sites that we operate directly. We will also explore opportunities which involve leveraging the efforts of satellite sites by providing training and other supports, or partnering with other community based organizations.

### Gooch

The difference between the quality of the Gooch location and other sites has become more pronounced with the move of the main site to the Shaw Street location. Both staff and the Board agreed that it is time to put some focus on Gooch.

Gooch is outside the Trinity Spadina riding. CMCP operates Gooch as a satellite and does not have the same degree of control over funding as with its other sites. Addressing issues at Gooch will require the use of the proceeds of some of CMCP's fundraising efforts and possibly the redirection of program funds such as the Success by Six program.

One of the challenges with respect to improving the physical setting is the program's status as a rent-free tenant. There would be a risk to undertaking any major capital expenditures since there is no guarantee of long term continuation of the arrangements. Despite some shortcomings of the building, however, the location is important given its accessibility to participants.

It is important to ensure that resources are directed to wherever they will yield the greatest benefit to participants. To this end, a first step in this regard is to undertake a needs assessment, which will include getting input from participants. The results of this assessment will be used to develop an implementation plan. Notwithstanding the need to proceed based on a structured needs assessment, some steps will be taken in the short term to address needs that are well known by staff. For example, the Program Director will be working from the Gooch site on a periodic basis.

Work on this will be led by staff, with oversight provided by the Program Committee which will receive regular reports on plans and progress.

**Priority #2**

**Enhance Fund Raising<sup>2</sup> Effort**

- a) increase the amount of funds raised each year with a target of raising \$100,000 annually by 2019; the represents approximately 10% of the total budget
- b) develop and implement a plan for a more structured and more diversified approach to fund raising; the development of this plan will be led by the Development Committee

Background/Rationale

Historically, CMCP has received the bulk of its funding from the three levels of government, in some cases via other agencies, and from the United Way. The remainder of revenues has come from fundraising efforts including special events and donations.

There is no solid information on the future intentions of CMCP’s major funders, but it is unlikely that they will increase their funding levels. More likely, funding levels will remain at about current levels, and continue to erode with inflation, falling short of program requirements.

CMCP’s has had significant fund raising success recently, particularly with the capital program. To maintain and enhance program quality there is a need to not drop back down to historical levels.

Prior to the capital campaign, fund raising was typically represented between \$30,000 and \$50,000. These funds have been raised through a combination of special fund raising events and individual and corporate donations.

One concern raised in this regard was the time commitment required of staff to participate in fundraising activities and the potential impact that this might have on their core program-related duties. There are limits as well, of course, on the amount of time that board members and volunteers are able or willing to commit to such efforts.

To significantly increase the level of funds raised will require, among other things, clearly stated targets, agreement on and commitment to fund raising responsibilities and a specific plan.

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<sup>2</sup> Fund Raising is considered to include all funds raised with the exception of program funding from government, United Way funding, and any grants that are linked to specific programs, services or activities.

**Priority #3**

**Succession Planning.**

develop plan to address anticipated transition in the executive and board ranks

Background/Rationale

The key role played by the Executive Director and Program Director in CMCP's success is well recognized.

There is a need to anticipate and prepare for a time when they will move on.

Although less pressing, the organization should also develop plans to address other succession issues such as positions on the Board, committees and other key staff positions.

Approach

Succession at the executive level is a Board responsibility. Clearly, staff input will also be important to this effort.

As a first step, a task force will be established with a mandate to develop the succession plan.