

# Here Now & Forward

2021-2022  
Annual Report



## **VISION**

**Thriving children,  
youth, families  
and communities.**

## **MISSION**

**We build strength and resilience  
with infants, children, youth and  
families, by providing equitable,  
accessible, client-driven services,  
system leadership and advocacy.**

## **VALUES**

**Excellence  
Collaboration  
Respect  
Courage**

## The last year has been characterized by growth and change at Strides Toronto.

Collaborating with partners, we added almost \$9 million in new funding this year to better serve young people and families. This will enable us to prepare children on the autism spectrum to transition to school and to respond to urgent needs of young people on the spectrum. This fall we will launch One Stop Talk, a provincial virtual walk-in program. This Lead Agency Consortium initiative that Strides is hosting will ensure young people anywhere in the province can receive single-session counselling as well as warm transfers to additional services if required. Funding for our two Youth Wellness Hubs was enhanced and we received new funding to address wait lists in mental health. We are very grateful for these new opportunities to better serve infants, children, youth and families.

Our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI), anti-racism and anti-oppression continues to be a priority. This year we conducted an organizational assessment and developed a strategy to ensure our services are accessible and responsive to all residents and that we are creating an inclusive work environment for our diverse staff team. The sector Anti-Black Racism (ABR) Task Force that Strides supports engaged Turner Consulting, a recognized expert in ABR system change to undertake research into how the infant, child and youth mental health sector needs to change to better serve Black young people and families as well as work to address systemic racism. Strides also signed on to the 50-30 Challenge aimed at diversifying boards of directors and senior management and is making good progress towards this important goal.

In our Lead Agency role, increasing access to services is a key part of what we do. Following extensive consultations with core service providers and other stakeholders, a centralized model for intake into infant, child and youth mental health services in Toronto is in the planning stages. This will help address feedback from young people and families that the system is confusing to navigate and that they are asked to tell their stories multiple times. This past year, we've made it easier for individuals to contact our central access point by rebranding and advertising Help Ahead (formerly Mental Health TO).

These are just a few of our achievements over the last year. We encourage you to read on to see what else we've been up to at Strides Toronto this year!

We are deeply grateful for the continued support of our staff, partners, funders, donors and our board of directors. Thank you for your commitment to what Strides Toronto is doing here, now and moving forward.



**Paul Huyer**  
Board President



**Janet McCrimmon**  
Chief Executive Officer



# Strategic Goals

Everything we do is informed by our strategy. From serving clients; developing and integrating programs; IT projects; equity, diversity and inclusion training; working with partners to improve systems; community outreach and more, we move forward with intention and with our vision of thriving children, youth, families and communities in mind.

Our strategy is aspirational and comes to life every day through our commitment to doing whatever it takes to meet the needs of those we support. All five of our strategic priorities are interconnected and help us to deeply understand and meet the needs of communities while sharing our expertise to meet system gaps. As the world shifts, we continue to evolve our role and listen closely to the voices of our clients and partners to reach our collective potential.



**37**  
languages  
spoken by staff

## Our strategy has five priorities, each with goals and actions.

**Outreach, Visibility and Equity** encompasses equitable access to culturally safe services for all infants, children, youth and families so they can thrive.

**Accessible Services and Connected Pathways** ensures every client feels fully supported from the moment they come through our doors and has clear, connected pathways both inside and outside of Strides Toronto, for all the services they need from infancy through young adulthood.

**System Leadership and Advocacy** improves accessibility of services and addresses social determinants of health through system planning, partnerships, influencing policy and sharing our expertise.

**Empowering Learning Organization** keeps everyone in the organization engaged in ongoing quality improvement, learning and development and supports staff to stay inspired by their work's impact and feel empowered as they work at their best.

**Efficient, Technology-Enabled Organization** ensures that our robust technology, processes and infrastructure support high quality client experiences and efficient use of resources.



## **We've accomplished so much, and there's more to come.**

We're seeing our goals come to life in a number of ways.

Increasing our visibility and accessibility, taking proactive steps to address anti-Black racism, integrating our services and modernizing technology have all contributed to meeting our strategic priorities.

Looking ahead, we are committed to bringing meaningful support and progress to better service our clients, communities and the sector.

## **Deepening our anti-racism work and promoting cultural competence.**

We've been working on a number of equity, diversity and inclusion projects that are strengthening our ability to understand and take action in at-risk communities.

We completed a comprehensive equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) organizational review and created a roadmap to deepen all aspects of this work.

Strides Toronto is actively taking a greater leadership role in addressing systemic racism and oppression. Mental Health Services staff participated in anti-oppressive, anti-racist, trauma informed training sessions and continue to have conversations within small teams about the applicability to clients and clinical work. The EDI Committee as well our Anti-Black Racism (ABR) Task Force continue to work hard to respond to the recommendations of the EDI organizational review. The review helps us to understand and develop our EDI proficiency as we move forward.

As part of the implementation of anti-oppression strategies, we partnered with TAIBU Community Health Centre, the City of Toronto and Tropicana Community Services to host Black Mental Health Week in response to black communities seeking ways to address the ongoing mental health impact of persistent, systemic anti-Black racism in all settings. During Black Mental Health Week, a number of anti-racism workshops were organized by the infant, child and youth mental health sector Anti-Black Racism Task Force, including opportunities to hear from Black youth about their experiences in accessing services and improvements that could be made to be more responsive to their needs. A presentation on Black history in Ontario was shared by the Sheffield Park Black History and Cultural Museum and a safe space for Black staff to get support was created.



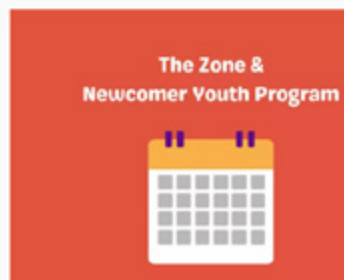
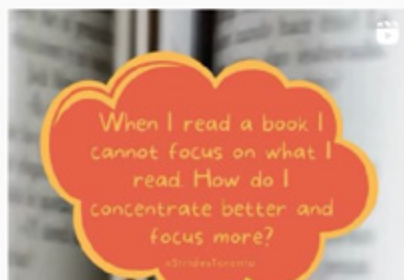
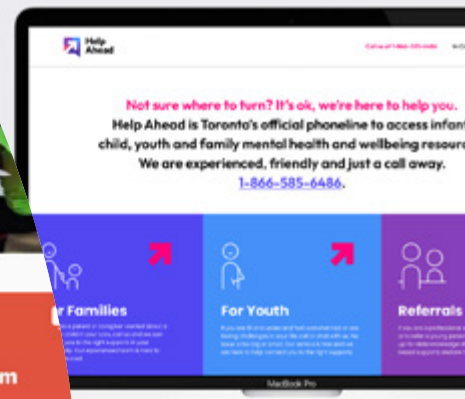
## Boosting our social strategy to increase engagement.

As part of our plan to improve outreach, visibility and equity, our marketing and communications team developed and implemented a dynamic social media strategy.

The updated approach on our social media now highlights Strides Toronto's programs, services and helpful information. As a result, engagement with parents and caregivers has increased and since January 2022, Strides Toronto's Instagram followers has grown by 91% to 1,502.

This notable progress has been made thanks to the creation of targeted, creative content that:

- Includes children's mental health information
- Highlights department and service profiles
- Includes "ask a therapist" featured post
- Speaks to a variety of family structures, ages and ethnicities
- Reflects the diversity of Strides Toronto's clients
- Celebrates cultural holidays and days of observance.





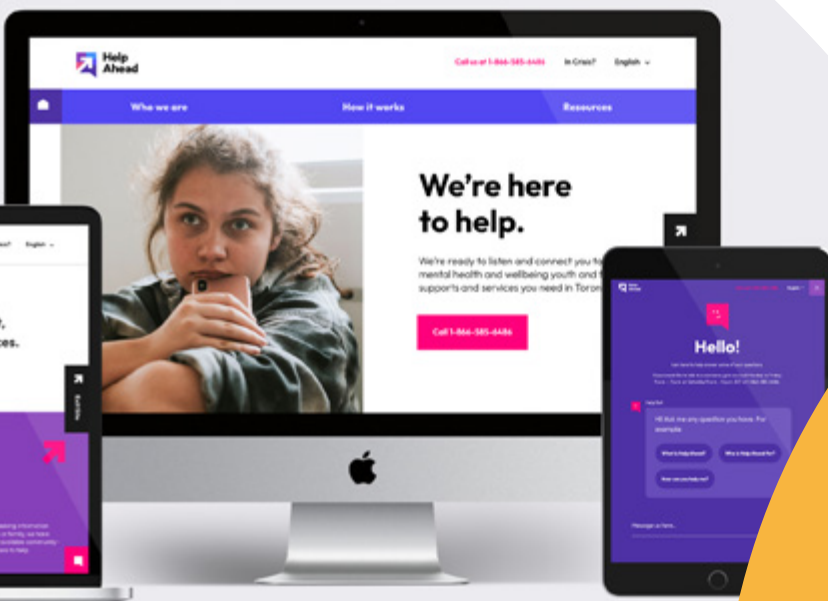
## Engaging partners to improve accessibility and impact health equity.

Strides Toronto has been collaborating with partners to identify and address improvements in accessibility and responsiveness of services within the sector.

As part of the Lead Agency Consortium, our organization is hosting the new provincial virtual walk-in service, One Stop Talk, which will enable young people and families anywhere in the province to access single-session counselling. The service will also connect clients to local services where additional help is needed. With funding from the Ministry of Health and support from lead agencies, we are excited to launch this new program in fall 2022.

Extensive stakeholder engagement was completed with the goal of improving accessibility, efficiency and effectiveness of the entry to Toronto's infant, child and youth mental health services. As a result, Help Ahead (formerly MentalHealth TO) will become the central intake point for all infant, child and youth services. Planning for implementation will begin in fall 2022, with a focus on intensive services as an initial spring 2023 launch and remaining services to begin in fall 2023.

The sector Anti-Black Racism (ABR) Task Force that Strides Toronto supports, engaged Turner Consulting to conduct research and design a strategy to address ABR in the infant, child and youth mental health sector. Young people, parents, experts, staff, management and board members from across Toronto participated in the research through surveys, focus groups and interviews. The resulting research report and strategy will be released in fall 2022.



**1,054**  
clients served  
through  
Help Ahead

## Implementing new technology today to prepare us for the future.

Technology is helping us modernize the way we work. By standardizing forms and processes and streamlining referral processes, our new client information system will enable staff to spend more time with clients and families and less time on administration.

TREAT, Strides Toronto's new client information system went live on Monday, July 4, 2022, and streamlines intake, assessment, treatment/service delivery and coordination processes. Once fully implemented, TREAT will replace four existing systems and centralize client records and service data into one platform, resulting in better services for clients. TREAT supports cross-program and cross-departmental integration which enhances the service delivery experience for those seeking support. We look forward to phase 2 when the remaining two databases will be integrated into TREAT and phase 3 when a portal will allow clients to update their contact information, view/request appointments, manage payment/invoice statements, complete and sign documentation and upload documents.

## Enhancing accessibility through integration and peer support.

Through the integration of similar service streams, Strides Toronto is better meeting the needs of children, youth and caregivers with increased accessibility. New peer support models expand the support options available and recognize the expertise of parents.

This year, we integrated departments and teams to enhance collaboration and coordination between services. Select achievements in accessible services and connected pathways include the merger of intake staff from Mental Health and Autism and Development Services into a single team accessible via one phone number. With this merger, the staff now use aligned intake protocols for streamlined access to services. We will continue to explore opportunities for integration of services so that clients receive accessible, coordinated services to meet their needs.

An Autism Parent Support group was developed, led by a parent volunteer and a Strides Toronto staff member. The group creates a safe, virtual environment for parents of children ages 0 to 12 to discuss their experiences and to support one another.





Our strategic plan guides our work and helps us measure our impact towards our vision of thriving children, youth, families and communities. Over the past year, we have provided system leadership in the areas of health equity and social determinants of health, including addressing racism and oppression. Our visibility has increased and we continue to expand the reach of our programs within the community while making foundational investments in the delivery of our services.

Together with our partners, we have made great strides in improving the accessibility and responsiveness of services within the sector.

While much progress has been made, much is still to be accomplished. We will continue to deepen our knowledge and skills, listen and support the communities that we serve, develop a positive organizational culture and build upon the strong foundation that motivates us to move forward.

# Autism and Developmental Services



## Province of Ontario Funding

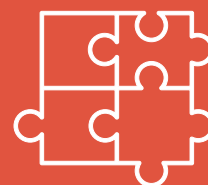
As a part of the Toronto Autism Services Network, Strides Toronto received funding from the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Service (MCCSS) for several new programs. The network includes Surrey Place (Lead Agency), Lumenus Community Services, Geneva Centre, Kerry's Place, South Asian Autism Awareness Centre and Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital.

## Entry to School Program

Beginning in March 2022, children on the autism spectrum entering kindergarten or grade one for the first time were able to access the Entry to School Program. This program includes applied behaviour analysis, speech-language pathology, occupational therapy and early development programming. The six-month program focuses on helping children develop school-readiness skills in communication, play, social interaction, behavioural self-management, learning and attention. To deliver the new program, Strides Toronto hired 20 new program delivery staff who will work in a TDSB school and from our Eglinton location.

## Urgent Response Services

Through the new Urgent Response Services, Autism and Developmental Services is able to provide services and supports to respond rapidly to children and youth in crisis, to keep themselves and their loved ones safe from harm. Twelve weeks of support is available to all children and youth registered in the Ontario Autism Program. Twenty-two new staff have been hired to support the services which are offered in client homes and at our Eglinton location to allow for flexible options.



**1,929**

clients access  
autism services

There has been significant growth in the Autism and Developmental Services department in the past year, as well as changes to the ways in which services are delivered. The Province of Ontario provided new funding for two programs: Entry to School and Urgent Response Services.

We continue to adapt to changing funding and delivery models and work to ensure our services are flexible and responsive to evolving needs and are aligned with evidence-based practices.

# Community Services



Strides Toronto provides a broad range of Community Services, from youth hubs to expanding skill sets to food security and health. We are embedded in local neighbourhoods and ready to assist. We provide our clients with a variety of programs, events and initiatives to meet our clients where they are at.

## **Youth Champions**

The Youth Champions are a group of youth who meet twice a week with the support of Strides Toronto staff. The group focuses on developing shared goals related to Strides Toronto's youth engagement strategy and advocacy.

This year, the Youth Champions group supported the planning and implementation of several youth events including a back-to-school event, a holiday party and Black History Month celebrations. They also engaged with the Strides Toronto Board of Directors to offer a youth lens to support governance decision-making.

## **Zone Mart**

The Zone Mart was established in October 2021 in response to the ongoing food security needs of Strides Toronto youth and families. It provides weekly food hampers to pre-registered clients every Tuesday at The Zone youth space at 1200 Markham Road. Food for the initiative is donated by Second Harvest, a food rescue program. Each week, the program supports 15 – 22 youth and families. Since October 2021, youth and families have accessed The Zone Mart more than 300 times.



Food for the Zone Mart is donated to Strides Toronto by Second Harvest, a food rescue program.



### Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Program

According to Statistics Canada, about half (45%) of all victims of police-reported human trafficking were between the ages of 18 and 24 and nine in ten (90%) incidents of human trafficking were reported in census metropolitan areas.

The GBV Program provides free support to Toronto residents aged 12-29 at risk of being involved in domestic sex trafficking or those who have been involved in the sex trade by choice, circumstance or coercion. The program is grounded in treating trauma, providing relational therapy and addressing human rights. Our GBV staff work from a strength-based, sex-positive, harm reduction and trauma-informed approach.

This year, the Strides Toronto GBV team developed an educational video with animator Tommy Truong titled "Surviving Romeo – Jenna's Story." It anonymously tells the story of someone who was brave enough to share her story of being trafficked. The video helps increase awareness of domestic human trafficking and sex work.

### Youth Wellness Hubs Ontario (YWHO)

YWHO is an initiative that brings services to youth and their families in a one-stop-shop model of care offered in a youth-friendly environment. It provides quick and easy access to easily identifiable mental health and substance use services with clearly defined pathways to support.

Strides Toronto hosts two hubs, one in Scarborough and one in East Toronto. Each hub site consists of multiple partnerships that support the initiative, which provides youth direct access to various partner programs.

Current partnerships include:

- Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities
- WoodGreen Community Services
- LOFT Community Services
- Vibrant Health Care Alliance
- Michael Garron Hospital



**4,535**

participants accessed  
Strides Toronto  
community services

# Mental Health Services

Strides Toronto continues to provide mental health services to support and meet the needs of the children, youth and families we serve. Our programs are designed with our diverse client base in mind and feature a broad range of supports. Through the use of digital technology, new services and programs and providing better access to marginalized communities, Strides Toronto continues to evolve to meet the mental health and well-being needs of infants, children and youth in Toronto.

## **Greenspace Program**

Strides has implemented Greenspace, a digital platform that enables service providers and clients to measure treatment progress through standardized online assessment tools. Clients and service providers complete assessments on a regular rotation, allowing for treatment improvements to be measured while seeing trends to evaluate treatment outcomes. In the long term, we envision expanding this program into general counselling services to improve customized service delivery.

## **New Day Treatment Classroom**

There are many youth in grades 7-8 who are experiencing significant social, emotional and behavioural challenges that are impairing their academic performance. As a result of the high demand for services in this demographic, Strides Toronto has relocated one of our elementary day treatment classrooms to Donview Public School. Using existing funding, we are adapting to the community's needs and will be able to double the number of children in grades 7-8 that we can serve. This change is scheduled to begin in September 2022.





### **Workforce Capacity Grant**

We were successful in receiving a grant to expand mental health services to young people on the autism spectrum. This is an important service change that increases our ability to be responsive to these young people's needs.

### **Community Resource Navigators**

Three new Community Resource Navigators were hired in June 2022. Their role is to help clients access community resources throughout their treatment with a therapist. This support can include assisting with the search for a family physician, housing, food assistance, recreational activities and more. The added staff also provide supportive counselling and address any crises that may arise while families await more intensive services.

### **Support for Student Placements**

Within Strides Toronto, students are able to access a cross-agency opportunity for practicum. The students in placement learn about our organization and our multidisciplinary approach. An examination of such topics as anti-oppressive, anti-racist, trauma-informed models and social determinants of health practices is included.

### **Brief Services**

Strides Toronto began offering brief treatment services in partnership with George Hull Centre. Through the program, youth can access short-term treatment options ranging from three – eight sessions and additional opportunities to receive appropriate services as efficiently as possible.

### **Thornccliffe Park Program**

Strides Toronto staff have been working with educators to look closely at how COVID-19 has impacted younger children. Our team responded to the needs of the Thornccliffe Park community and continues to support young children experiencing challenges due to the impact of the pandemic. The Thornccliffe Park program has also offered webinars, live virtual support and other resources for educators to support children in kindergarten to grade five.



**9,729**

clients access  
mental health  
services



**Thank you to all  
who support  
Strides Toronto!**

Thanks to our funders and donors, Strides Toronto is making a difference in the lives of children, youth and families. We express our gratitude to all of you for supporting us so that we can help communities thrive.

### Funders

Canadian Women’s Foundation  
 Centre for Addiction and Mental Health  
 Children’s Aid Society of Toronto  
 City of Toronto  
 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada  
 Knowledge Institute on Child and Youth Mental Health and Addictions  
 Michael Garron Hospital  
 Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services  
 Ministry of Health  
 Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries  
 Native Women’s Resource Centre of Toronto  
 Ontario Trillium Foundation  
 Public Health Agency of Canada  
 RBC Foundation  
 Red Door Family Shelter  
 Springboard  
 Surrey Place  
 Women and Gender Equality Canada  
 YWCA Of Greater Toronto

### Donors

#### \$ \$1,000 TO \$9,999

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 Donna Chow  
 Janet McCrimmon  
 Jordan Ross  
 Mary E. McCaig  
 Margaret Wood Foundation  
 Paul and Judy Huyer  
 Scarborough Spots Inc.  
 Timothy Eaton Memorial Church

#### \$500 TO \$999

Anita Stern  
 Jason Pilz  
 Nashid Chroma Art and Apparel  
 Reliable Appraisal Services  
 Scott and Amanda Sinclair  
 Tom Moutsatsos  
 William Lumsden

#### \$200 TO \$499

Mary Jarrell  
 Nancy Schmidt  
 Lauren Dade  
 Louise and Michael O’Neill  
 Rachel Frankel  
 Sheldon Levitt  
 Scarborough Hustle  
 Tally Kales

### UP TO \$199

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 Peter Sit  
 Ragaven Sabaratnam  
 Robin Gofine  
 Ross Ridout  
 Vernon Henry  
 Vidya Rajasingam  
 Vignesh Nithyanandam  
 Zamin Baqar

# Financials

<b>Revenue</b>	<b>YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2022</b>	<b>YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2021</b>
● Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services + Ministry of Health	21,798,293	19,369,717
● City of Toronto	3,287,035	3,294,311
● Special programs funding	2,552,668	1,925,317
● Federal Government	1,221,218	696,082
● Fee for service	660,339	213,053
● Donations and Fundraising	156,342	25,661
● Investment Income	146,546	45,713
● Other	97,866	193,897
	<b>\$29,920,307</b>	<b>\$25,763,751</b>

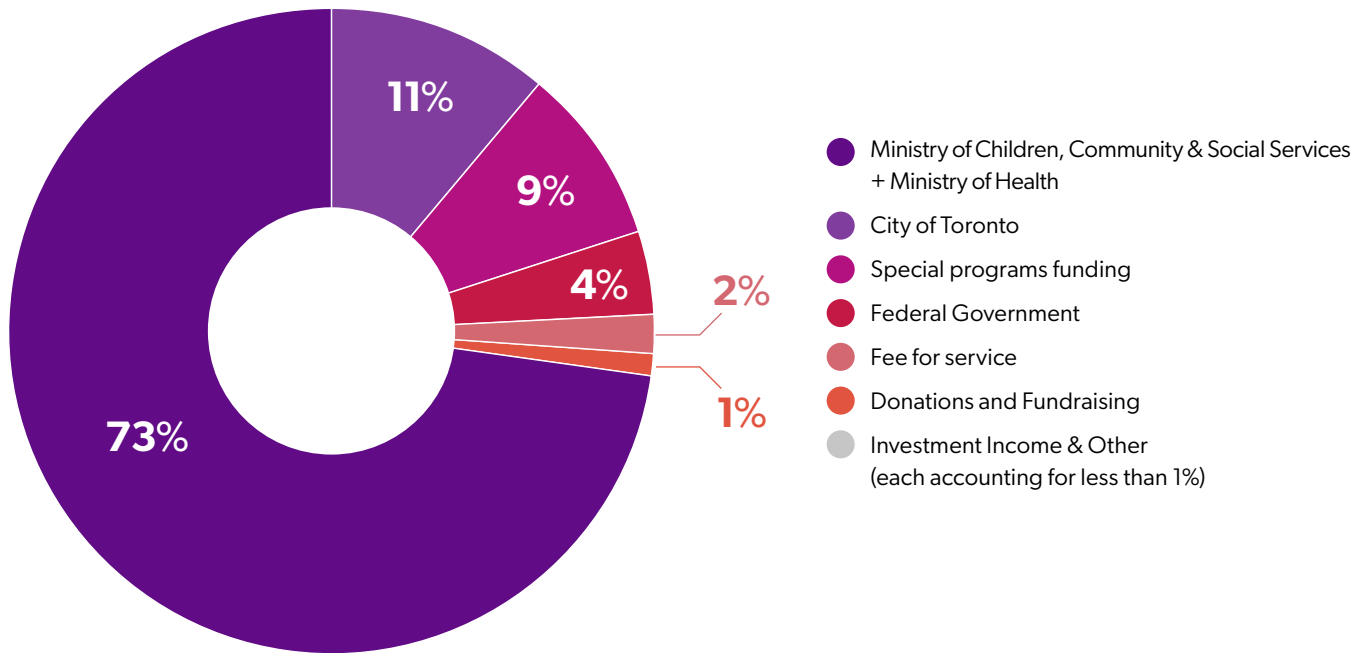
<b>Expenses</b>		
● Salaries and benefits	20,817,178	20,045,609
● Services	6,924,659	4,453,735
● Supplies and equipment	1,525,679	964,237
● Transportation and communication	255,642	207,418
	<b>\$29,523,158</b>	<b>\$25,670,999</b>

<b>Excess of revenue over expenses before other items</b>	<b>\$397,149</b>	<b>\$92,752</b>
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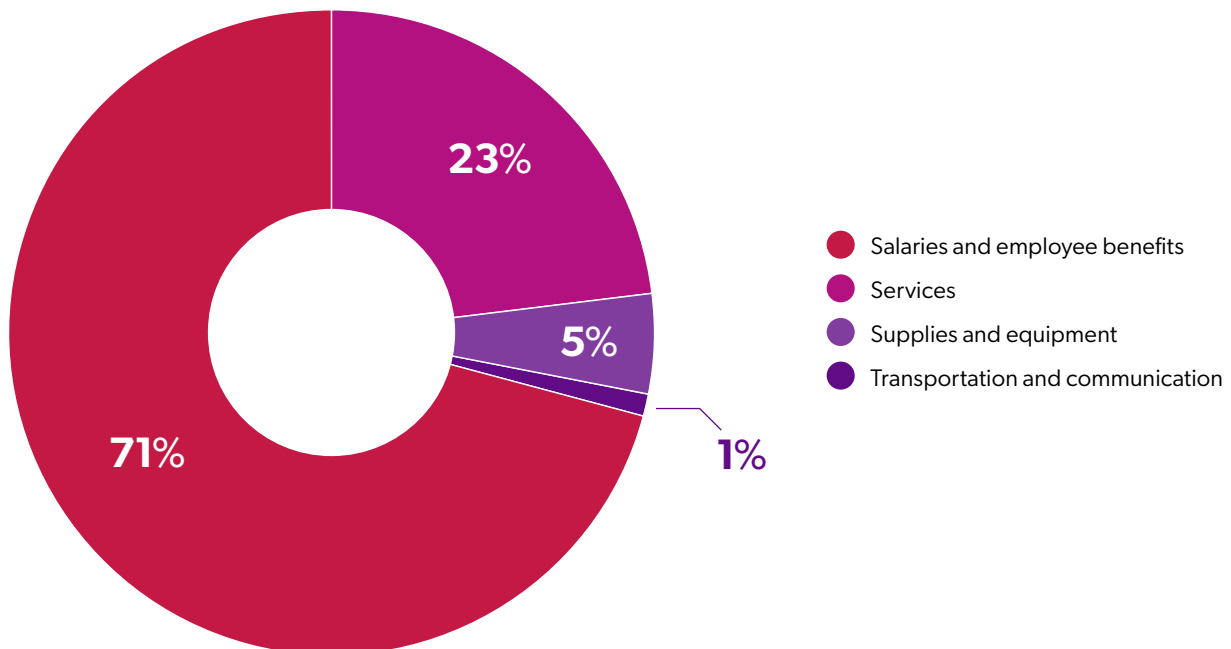
<b>Other items</b>		
Unrealized gain (loss) on investments	44,095	87,029
Amortization of property and equipment	(984,587.00)	(800,178)
Amortization of deferred capital contributions	981,405	745,437
Amortization of lease inducements	26,449	50,834
	<b>\$67,362</b>	<b>\$83,122</b>

<b>Excess of revenue over expenditure</b>	<b>\$464,511</b>	<b>\$175,874</b>
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## Revenue Sources



## Expenses



# Recognizing our Team and Board

We are grateful for the incredible staff at Strides Toronto. Together, we have accomplished so much. Your dedication and commitment has helped so many people reach their potential. A heartfelt thank you to all of our staff and special recognition for those celebrating service anniversaries last year:

## **40 YEARS**

Lisa Milligan, *Community Child Therapist*

## **35 YEARS**

Cecelia Martin, *Community Child Therapist*

## **30 YEARS**

David Baxter, *Youth Worker Day Treatment*

Shane Hubert, *Child Therapist Day Treatment*

Pat LeClair, *Manager, Intake and Autism Services*

## **20 YEARS**

Emma Aspinall, *Rise Program Worker*

Maduka Nirmalan, *Bookkeeper*

Leigh Armour, *Manager, Brief Services*

Sherry Hastie, *Communicative Disorders Assistant*

Kathleen Jobin, *Manager, Residential Services*

Norma Sockett-DiMarco, *Manager, Family Treatment Services*

## **15 YEARS**

Caron Gabbidon, *Program Assistant*

Nathan Hill, *Family and Community Worker*

Rosy Jabbour, *Child Therapist Day Treatment*

May Lam, *Intensive Behaviour Therapist*

Rachelle Mazin, *Speech and Language Pathologist*

Jennifer Uger, *ABA Therapist*

Francesca Oddone, *Relief Youth Worker*

Ian Physick, *Developmental Services, Relief Youth Worker*

## **10 YEARS**

Caleigh McMahon, *Relief Youth Worker*

Erin Physick, *Director, Mental Health Services*

Sabrina Samsudeen, *Manager System Service Access*

Caitlin Sollecito, *Relief Youth Worker - Megan*

Edyta Latuszek, *Early Childhood Education Therapist*

Betty Su, *ABA Therapist*

Tafaris Haughton, *Child Therapist Day Treatment*

## **5 YEARS**

Chanece Graham, *Relief Youth Worker, Day Treatment*

Maria Kollias, *Relief Youth Worker, Day Treatment*

Sean Mauricette, *Multimedia Program Worker*

Gracia Ngalula-Maiba, *Executive Assistant*

Agnes Podbielska, *Youth Worker, Day Treatment*

Kate Araniyasundaran, *Speech and Language Pathologist*

Rohullah Azizi, *IT Services Assistant*

Sinthu Chandramohan, *Intensive Behaviour Therapist*

Kendra Fallon, *ABA Therapist*

Zarifa Hamidi, *Program Support Worker*

Amiee Kung, *Child and Family Therapist*

Janet McCrimmon, *Chief Executive Officer*

Lina Vishnevsky, *Child and Family Therapist*

We are grateful to the dedicated volunteers who serve on the board of Strides Toronto. Our Board of Directors consists of 14 diverse, committed and skilled individuals who care about Toronto and wish to help Strides Toronto achieve its vision of thriving children, youth, families and communities.

Many thanks for all you do to help Strides Toronto be the best organization it can be!

**BOARDS OF DIRECTORS:**

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Lauren Dade, *Vice President*  
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**Strides**  
T O R O N T O

Helping children, youth  
and families thrive

**1200 Markham Road, Suite 200**

Scarborough, Ontario M1H 3C3

Phone: 416-438-3697

Fax: 416-438-7424

Monday to Thursday ..... 9 am – 8 pm

Friday..... 9 am – 5 pm

**325 Milner Avenue, Suite 110**

Scarborough, ON M1B 5N1

Phone: 416-321-5464

Fax: 416-321-1510

Monday to Thursday ..... 9 am – 7 pm

Friday ..... 9 am – 4 pm

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Have a question? Want more information?

**[contactus@stridestoronto.ca](mailto:contactus@stridestoronto.ca)**

**[StridesToronto.ca](http://StridesToronto.ca)**

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