



MFRS

**Multicultural Family
Resource Society**

Vision

Immigrant and refugee families are empowered and strengthened by knowledge, skills and connections to achieve ultimate health and overall well being.

2019 ANNUAL REPORT



In 2019, MFRS sought to take the heart of our organization – being responsive to our communities’ strengths and needs – and expand its impacts in new ways. We strengthened our social enterprise arm which provides Consulting, Advisory and Research Services and engaged in multi-sectoral partnerships, such as the Edmonton Local Immigration Partnership.

We created an Endowment Fund to sustain our work with communities. And, we also embarked upon a strategic planning process that reflected our principles and sought insight from many different sources. We consulted:

- **Cultural brokers from the Multicultural Health Brokers Co-op:** Brokers have a deep understanding of the realities that vulnerable newcomers face in Edmonton. We needed to hear in what areas MFRS could make an impact.
- **Partner agencies of MFRS:** MFRS asked other agencies that serve newcomers for their insights on where they felt good work was already being done, where there was a gap in services and where collaborative work could be most valuable.
- **Staff of MFRS:** Our staff work with families to understand their strengths and their needs. They have insights into where our programs have been successful and where we could strengthen our services.

We synthesized this input and brought it forward to the MFRS Board so that their knowledge could be complemented by the insight of those that we serve and work with for a fuller strategic planning process. For the next three years, MFRS intends to:

- Provide a range of participatory and responsive programs for immigrant and refugee families that strengthens their knowledge, skills, connections and confidence to navigate their journeys and leads to the fulfillment of their hopes and dreams and contributions to the Edmonton community;
- Honestly reflect on what we’ve learned and sharing this with collaborative projects focused on taking action on root causes of vulnerability experienced by families;
- Build meaningful connections across families, communities, organizations, and government so that communities can inform and lead positive change; and
- Steward the long-term health of MFRS.

In 2020, it will be more important than ever to hold true to our values – listening to those we work for and work with, building community and partnering with others. MFRS has realized it is these relationships and the trust we’ve built that sustains and keeps our work relevant, in times of both calm and crisis. We want to hear your ideas as MFRS re-commits to our mission and vision. Thank you for your support.

Mission

To support immigrant and refugee families to thrive in Edmonton through culturally responsive and participant-driven programs and services that reduce social isolation, enhance knowledge and skills, and increase access to community supports and intercultural opportunities, thereby encouraging health and wellbeing, reducing poverty, and empowering families to confidently walk in multiple worlds.

In the words of the MFRS community, what does this mission look like?

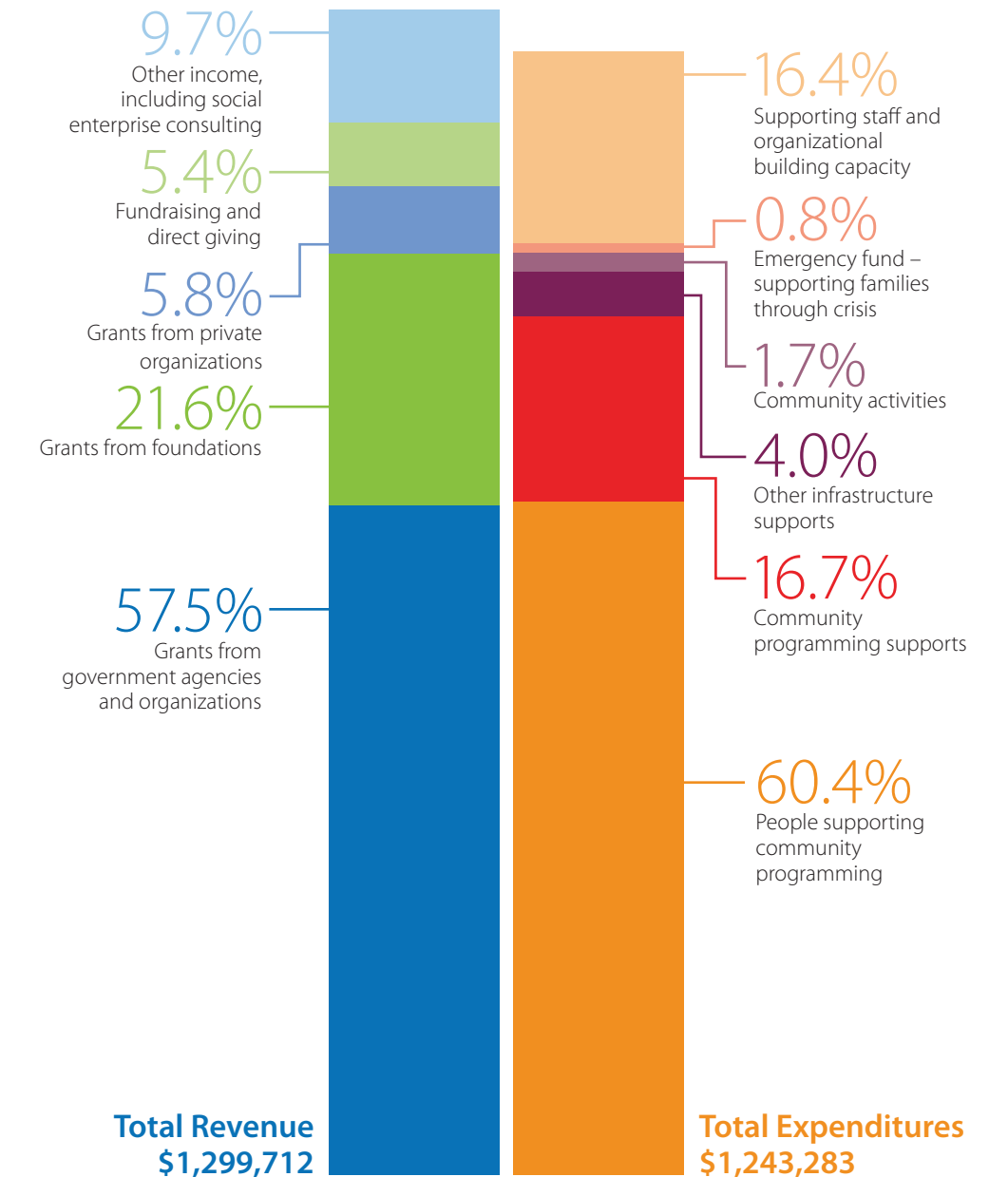
Relational – A way of interaction with and within the community in which we take time to listen, care, connect and love to build mutual support hand in hand.

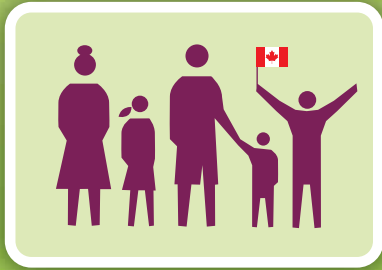
Participant-Driven – Participants identify what’s important to them, what they need, and what they want to achieve. Our programs meet participants where they’re at and support them in reaching their goals.

Empowerment – Building community and working together to share space, opportunities, skills, and knowledge for mutual learning, self-determination and ultimate well-being.

Culturally Responsive – Safe spaces to maintain a home culture and adapt to new connections and diversity; and developing a deeper understanding between cultures that are always changing.

2019 Financial Report





Accessibility



Childcare



Transportation



A student who had never gone grocery shopping on her own before paid for groceries for the first time. The instructor and student went to No Frills together twice and after that was able to do it on her own!

One of the classes celebrated a birthday party for one student and she made a speech (in English!) and told all of the participants that they are now her family here in Canada, and that she was so happy to share her birthday celebration with everyone in the class.

Two students of the program were hired to help with a community cooking and healthy living program that runs out of the Parkdale-Cromdale Community League where classes take place.

Collecting berries and making jelly helped us feel more at home in the community, we learned about the land and local food sources, and also about preserving food. Everyone loved walking in the river valley and learning about berries. One woman remarked that picking chokecherries (which grow in clusters) reminded her of picking coffee in her home country of El Salvador.

English for Community Integration

Number of participants
77

Sharing meals together during the program helped us understand more about each other through relaxed conversations and by sharing traditional foods and recipes.

One student learned how to access the library on her own and take out books for herself and for her child.



Participants also learned how to take public transportation to access resources and services in the community, which helped to improve their quality of life and their family's.

Girls Club and Building Girls Resiliency

Over the last three years, we have seen the MFRS Girls' Program grow as participants continue to connect and raise each other up. Our program expanded to include leadership development and gave the older girls a unique opportunity to develop their capacity in and practice mentorship. We have seen the girls become more open and confident to engage in conversations with peers, teachers and school administrator, as well as with family members and within their community.

There is also an increased awareness of who they are, their responsibilities and rights. They practice positive self-talk and affirmation about their body, hair texture or skin color; and they have a more accurate and positive picture of themselves and others. They also show increased understanding of vulnerability as a place of potential growth rather than danger, and strive to create good connection rather than choosing power over others as the path of growth.

Newcomer Consultations on the Context of Early Learning and Care in Edmonton (2019)

was compiled for the Edmonton Council for Early Learning and Care (ECELC) by MFRS to provide insight into the lived experiences, barriers, and keys to success for newcomer families in Edmonton when it comes to child care. The experiences of newcomers and inclusionary practices described in this paper will be used to inform and guide the Council in its forthcoming work.

The ECELC is an organization composed of institutional and community partners tasked with improving early learning and care in the city, with a focus on vulnerable populations. It was established in response to Action #29 of the EndPovertyEdmonton Road Map in 2016. The report is available at www.endpovertyedmonton.ca/posts/initiative-elcsc

Coaching, Advisory and Research Services

Our work in this area involves research projects, consultations, evaluations, organizational development and participatory workshops in the areas of interculturalism, anti-racism, and inclusion. We supported seventeen projects and our clients included non-profit organizations, child care organizations, multi-sectoral coalitions, law enforcement agencies, health services, and funding agencies.

Poverty

25 families
-
108 individuals

received temporary support for housing related costs, health related costs and food to help them cope with unexpected crises in their lives. This support, along with staff providing other resources, ensures families can bridge these crises with resiliency to prevent any further vulnerability.

Unemployment

Mentorship



Photovoice project:
During the summer session (July and August), we collaborated with John Humphrey's Centre for Peace and Human Rights to run a Photovoice project. The girls imagined and creatively engaged in identifying and depicting who each girl's 'shero' is and why.



Understanding finances:
In our fall sessions, we focussed on financial management. In partnership with Money Mentors, we covered topics like: how to save money, the difference between credit and debit, and how a want is different from a need.

Connections

Celebrating the girl you are:

This has been an overarching theme of cultivating a positive self-image, exclusively around race and ethnicity to effect a lasting difference in the girls' confidence and performance.



PAY IT FORWARD
EMERGENCY FUND

Racism

Overall, we believe the recipe for successful and holistic programming is not only being guided by the families but in creating space to recognize and highlight the strength, skills and resiliency that exists in our communities, so that we can contribute to the empowerment and wellbeing of families.



2019 Staff and Team

- Abdulrahman Al Homsy, Family Support Office
- Ada Wong, Program Development Facilitator / Basic Sewing Fundamentals
- Alex Abboud, Senior Fund Development Officer
- Ammar Jouma, Family Support Office
- Arsema Sisay, Girls' Club
- Ashima Sumaru-Jurf, Co-Executive Director
- Bashar Youssef, Family Support Office
- Elena Youssef, Family Support Office
- Eugene Chok, Bookkeeper
- Fana Tesfay, Girls' Club
- Ganga Subedi, English for Community Integration
- Hadil Askari, Family Support Office
- Hala Mostafa, Family Support Office
- Hanine Al Helwani, Family Support Office
- June Kon, Parenting Program
- Kassie Kovalchuk, English for Community Integration
- Martha Alemu, Basic Computers and Digital Skills
- Marvet Hmadeh, Family Support Office
- Moataz Alokhlah, Family Support Office
- Niga Jalal, Family Support Office
- Roxanne Felix-Mah, Co-Executive Director
- Roxanne Yip, Program Manager / Breaking the Silence in Ethnocultural Communities
- Sabah Tahir, Family Support Office
- Sarah De Lano, English for Community Integration
- Sheryle Carlson, Intercultural Multilogues
- Sofia Lorena Sanchez Sanchez, English for Community Integration
- Suzan Nihad, Family Support Office
- Tetyana Polyanytsya, English for Community Integration
- Tsion Demeke Abate, Girls' Club

2019 Board of Directors

- Tristan Robinson, Chair
- San San Sy, Vice Chair
- Michelle Mayner, Treasurer
- Loren Miller, Secretary
- Anne Fitzpatrick, Director
- Arlanna Pugh, Director
- Fadumo Robinson, Director
- Kathy Toogood, Director


Partners

- Alberta Health Services
- Catholic Social Services
- Centre for Race and Culture
- Changing Together
- City of Edmonton
- Compass Centre for Sexual Wellness (no longer in operation)
- Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations
- Edmonton Intercultural Centre
- Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers
- Grant MacEwan University – Social Work Program
- HIV Edmonton
- John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights
- Kris Ellis
- Multicultural Health Brokers Cooperative
- Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton
- Susan Devins
- University of Alberta – Community University Partnership, Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry, Faculty of Nursing, School of Public Health

Donors and Funders

To all of the donors that supported our mission and vision in the past year and beyond, we thank you for your contributions and continued support.

- Alberta Gaming, Liquor, and Cannabis Commission (AGLC)
- Baher Family Fund at Edmonton Community Foundation
- Bell Let's Talk Community Fund
- Canadian Women's Foundation
- City of Edmonton
- Crescent Hill Fund at Edmonton Community Foundation
- Don and Georgie Scafe Fund at Edmonton Community Foundation
- Don and Joan Stanley Fund at Edmonton Community Foundation
- Duggan Family Centennial Fund at Edmonton Community Foundation
- Edmonton Community Adult Learning Association (ECALA)
- Edmonton Community Foundation
- EPCOR
- Fonds Vital & Colleen Oulette Endowment Fund at Edmonton Community Foundation
- Goonchen Family Fund at Edmonton Community Foundation
- Government of Alberta
- Government of Canada - Immigration, Refugees, Citizenship Canada (IRCC)
- James H. Brown Solicitors & Barristers
- Servus Credit Union
- Stollery Charitable Foundation
- Teri Taylor-Tunski (T3) Fund at Edmonton Community Foundation
- The River Church



In Memoriam: Surinder Dhaliwal

Surinder was a broker, sister, and friend of the Multicultural Family Resource Society and the Multicultural Health Brokers Cooperative, who dedicated many years in supporting parents and families to thrive with her wisdom, and kind and loving heart. In her memory, her family and friends gave generously to MFRS to support food security and parenting programs, as this aligned closely with the work Surinder carried out over the years. Because of their donations, MFRS was able to help more families access much needed supports and vital programming.

You Can Make a Difference

At MFRS, we believe that working collaboratively creates better outcomes for immigrant and refugee families and strengthens the fabric of Edmonton as a whole. Co-create an intercultural community of support with us by supporting us financially or through partnerships with shared resources.

Give to MFRS

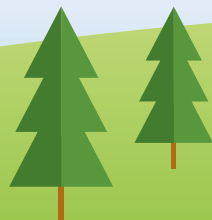
ONLINE: www.mfrsedmonton.org/donate

BY MAIL: Send a cheque made out to the Multicultural Family Resource Society

BY PHONE: Call us at 780.250.1771

Contribute to our ENDOWMENT FUND

MFRS' endowment fund focuses on secure funding in the future, enabling MFRS to better respond to community directions.



MFRS
Multicultural Family
Resource Society

3rd Floor, Edmonton Intercultural Centre
9538 107 Avenue, Edmonton, AB T5H 0T7

Phone: 780.250.1771

Email: info@mfrsedmonton.org

Twitter: @MFRSEdmonton

Facebook: @MFRSEdmonton

Instagram: [mfrs_edmonton](https://www.instagram.com/mfrs_edmonton)

www.mfrsedmonton.org