A Message from the Executive Director and Board Chair

There were smiles all around at Pathways on a number of occasions this year. In September, we were thrilled to re-open the pool. It had been sorely missed for nine months, and the community rallied to support us to get the needed repairs done in the short term to get it open. In the winter, we revealed a new Smilezone in our main lobby and Aquatic Centre, with bright colours and interactive elements. You can read more about both these in this report.

Empowered Kids Ontario, an association of publicly-funded child development and rehabilitation organizations, honoured us with a Tribute Award for Partnership. We shared the award with our partners The Aamjiwnaang First Nation, The Walpole Island First Nation and The Chippewas of Kettle & Stony Point First Nation, for our innovative work together to deliver developmental services in a culturally appropriate manner, a project we reported on in last year’s Report to Our Community. We also share this honour with our outstanding industry funding partners, Suncor, Esso, Shell, Nova Chemicals, and Arlanxeo.

This initiative was of particular interest to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services when the Minister visited Pathways and The Aamjiwnaang First Nation in August. We were honoured to be the first Children’s Treatment Centre visited by the Minister, and to have the opportunity to showcase our innovative programs and advocate for the important work done by Children’s Treatment Centres all over Ontario.

We were pleased to go back to school in the fall, as we resumed providing School Based Rehab Services in public schools after an absence of more than a decade. Working with four school boards and two service agencies, we were chosen to take over contract management of these services, previously managed by our LHIN. Thanks to good relationships and a commitment to the needs of the children from all involved, the transition towards an integrated rehab model was a smooth one.

On a more personal note, this is the last Report to the Community before I (Jenny) retire in September. I want to express my deep gratitude to all the staff and members of the Board of Directors I’ve worked with over the past fifteen years. I have valued working with an ever-expanding list of partners, community supporters and volunteers who engage with us because they enthusiastically share our commitment to helping children reach their full potential. I have learned a great deal from all of you, and together we have grown Pathways, providing more services, including gaining the trust of our community to be chosen as the Lead Coordinating Agency for children and families; undertaking a major renovation of the building nearly ten years ago; and working with the County of Lambton to deliver resource supports to licensed child care settings throughout our community, while simultaneously transforming our pre-school into a full daycare sought out by parents for its inclusive model where children with special needs learn alongside their typically developing peers.

I want to especially thank the children who are and have been our clients, I’ve been so proud to see how hard you’ve worked, how much you have achieved. And to their families – thank you for working with us and trusting us to care for what is most precious to you -- your children.

Jenny Greensmith
Executive Director

Dean Edwardson
Board Chair
Our Sarnia-Lambton community really came through for us this past year, and we successfully raised the funds we needed to repair and reopen our pool in September 2018, just in time for new swim lessons and aquatic programming. Everyone is glad to be back in the water, or to hear the splashing and shouts of joy echoing once again.

The need to renew and recondition the pool for the next generation remains, and this year we launched Phase Two of Save Pathways Therapeutic Pool Campaign with a generous lead donation from Rotary Club of Sarnia. Already we are well on our way to raising the $1.6 million needed to ensure our therapeutic pool can meet the needs of the next generation... and more generous individuals and organizations are joining each week.

Our team at Pathways is preparing to undertake the pool reconditioning in a series of stages over the next five years, as funds from committed pledges are received, along with additional community support. The first of these stages is planned for this coming fiscal year during the holidays in December when the pool is closed.

For 800 children and young adults with disabilities, the pool, and its specialized facilities, is irreplaceable. Those in wheelchairs can safely enter the water, where many have greater mobility and therapists can help improve their range of motion. Young people with autism may enjoy calming sensory swims, with music, lights, a fountain and floating balls. In addition, more than 10,000 community members of all ages enjoy the pool every year for rehabilitation, recreation and wellness.

Making a Difference, Every Day
We are always listening to our client families and developing new programs and services to meet those needs. At the same time, our most in-demand services remain constant: speech language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy.

This year, Pathways provided:
- **Occupational therapy** to 750 children over 7,323 hours
- **Physiotherapy** to 301 children over 2,676 hours
- **Speech Language Therapy** to 1195 children over 13,254 hours

In addition, since mid-November, we have managed contract services for 970 children to receive School Based Rehab Services.
Training highlights this Year

**Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Resource Hub**

This new provincial initiative launched with Pathways serving as the lead agency in Lambton County. It focuses on raising awareness and providing education, resources and support for caregivers and professionals to increase their knowledge and skills to support children, youth and families impacted by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). Prenatal alcohol exposure is the most common cause of developmental disability in Canada, and FASD services are critical to help guide research that can lead to more accurate diagnoses and develop further supports for individuals and families.

The Pathways FASD Resource Hub is run by the Family Resource Worker, and services include a monthly parent and caregiver support group, learning series sessions for the community, and an FASD educational workshop that this year reached 850 individuals, including caregivers, educators, midwives and child welfare workers. The FASD workshop provides basic information about this lifelong brain-based disability, which can cause a wide spectrum of effects, including challenges in communication, memory and executive functioning. However, with the appropriate accommodations and modifications in place, children and youth can be successful. The FASD Resource Hub provides support in developing service plans, attending case conferences and ensuring the right interventions are accessed at the right time. After this successful inaugural year, ongoing learning series sessions are planned with a focus on sleep, nutrition and self-care.

**Innovating to Keep Autism Diagnoses Close to Home**

Along with our community partners, we at Pathways have long identified the need for a local option for autism diagnoses. Many families of children suspected of having autism have had to travel to London or McMaster Children’s Hospital in Hamilton to meet with a specialist. The trip can be a difficult one for children with sensory processing difficulties and the professionals in those settings are unfamiliar with the children.

This year, we invested a small amount of funds to support specialized training for two of our speech-language pathologists to participate in autism assessments. A small pilot followed, with great success.

This allowed us to hold discussions with Hamilton Health Sciences, which administers McMaster Children’s Hospital and is the Autism Diagnostic Hub for our region. They have now approved Pathways as a local hub for autism diagnoses. This means our two trained speech-language pathologists will be funded to support monthly autism diagnosis clinics with visiting pediatricians, and 24 children will be able to undergo their assessments close to home in the coming year. Not only will this provide greater convenience for families, but it will also give the physician the best insight into the child, as Pathways staff members are on hand to discuss their experience with the child, rather than being limited to sending written reports. Direct communication also speeds and improves the steps from diagnosis to treatment plan to implementation, as staff can receive clarification and guidance directly from the onsite specialist.

We are proud to have taken a proactive role on behalf of our child clients and families. This is only the latest step in our efforts to build capacity to support the treatment and diagnosis of autism in our community, and we will continue working with local paediatricians and family doctors.
A visit to Pathways has a new feel for the hundreds of children and families who enter our facility every day. The reason? A new, colourful lobby that encourages families to enjoy fun and relaxation while waiting for an appointment. It may not look like a typical quality improvement initiative, but that's exactly what it is, targeted to meet the needs of families, provide safety, allow for thorough cleaning for infection control and enable good flow into the building. Most of all, it needed to say, “We’re ready for you, we want you to be comfortable here, we want to partner with families.” To achieve these goals, a committee was formed that included Pathways leaders and the Pathways Parent Advisor, who ensured that the voice of families was always part of the design and decision-making process.

Thanks to a great partnership with Smilezone, a Canadian foundation specializing in transforming public areas in children’s hospitals and treatment centres, the process was smooth and the results spectacular. The new Smilezone is comforting, interactive and inclusive, with elements that reflect our community, like the Blue Water Bridge and Sarnia Sting jerseys. Children have a newfound excitement when they arrive at Pathways, and families are engaging with each other in every corner: building towers, trying the new tablet computers, leaving a handprint on the heat sensitive table, or cuddling on a beanbag reading a book. With additional Pathways fundraising, Smilezone was able to transform the lobby and viewing area of our Aquatic Centre too.

“Our new Smilezone Earning Grins

“There is something for everyone – things to explore, stimulate, calm and relax. There is no doubt that the Smilezone helps relax clients before they see their therapists, and it encourages them to want to come back.”

– Dana Heno, Audiologist

“The bright colours, open space, different textures and inviting options to entertain our son reduce everyone’s stress levels when coming in to wait for a therapy session.”

– Melanie and Curt Faerge; parents of David Faerge, 2 years
By the Numbers

Pathways Therapeutic Recreation presents: Expressive Arts - Under the Sea

Getting some reading in at C.A.C.H.E.

"Volunteering here is a gratifying experience."
- Dini Taylor, volunteer & former employee

"You receive more than you give."
- Marg Reckman, volunteer
It’s important to us at NOVA Chemicals to develop and sustain healthy communities where we live and work, and supporting Pathways is a great way to do that. We share the belief that building healthy communities can start with supporting, engaging and inspiring youth.”

- NOVA Chemicals, proud Pathways partner
Our Vision:
Supporting children, youth, and young adults to achieve their potential through effective partnerships.

We are proud of all the children and youth we serve, and delight in helping them reach their unique potential. This is how Shelby is reaching hers...

Shelby was part of the Teen Junction Program at Pathways, which she says helped her make friends. Through it, she attended Teen Life Skills camps, “Go Girls”, Teen swim, and the cooking program. Now 24, she is active in her community, volunteering at the Sarnia Humane Society and exercising with friends as a member of the Iron Eagles Strength Training Club. She loves being a regular participant in Pathways’ Lifelong Learning Program (LLP), particularly helping children in C.A.C.H.É. daycare and playing Bingo with seniors at Twin Lakes.

“I like all the LLP staff: Heather, Erin, Sue, and Diana! We do baking, cooking, lunch prep, crafts, and go out in the community.”
– Shelby

“Shelby is more outspoken, and has really come out of her shell.”
– Shelby’s Mom and Dad

What we offer:

• Audiology
• Augmentative Communication
• Autism Diagnosis
• Behaviour Consultation
• C.A.C.H.É. Child Care
• Coordinated Service Planning
• ECE Resource Support
• Family & Transition Support
• Feeding Services
• Infant Hearing Program
• Lifelong Learning Program
• Medical Clinics
• Occupational Therapy
• Parent Advisor
• Physiotherapy
• Respite Care
• Seating & Mobility
• Service Coordination
• Social Work
• Speech Language Pathology
• Student & Volunteer Services
• Teen Transition
• Therapeutic Aquatics
• Therapeutic Recreation
• Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Resource Hub
• School Based Rehabilitation Services

Pathways Health Centre for Children
1240 Murphy Road
Sarnia, ON N7S 2Y6
Tel: (519) 542-3471
PathwaysCentre.org

@PathwaysSarnia
/PathwaysHealthCentreForChildren