



GROWING RESPONSIBLY

PURSUING EXCELLENCE

WALKING TOGETHER

# Let Love Alone *speak*



CATHOLIC  
SOCIAL  
SERVICES

Strategic Plan 2024-2029

# Message from the Board

In the fall of 2023, the Agency set out to identify its strategic direction for the next five years. Foundational to our work as a social service provider, we will first and foremost continue responding to the needs of individuals and families and bringing healing and hope in enduring ways. Being true to our Mission, the work of CSS must be done prayerfully, and through our three core values of humility, compassion, and respect.

As the social service sector continues to change and become more complex, we know that so too do the needs of those we serve. In our efforts to make lasting, positive change, CSS will need to respond to this shifting environment in timely and innovative ways and with longevity in mind.

The Agency undertook a comprehensive engagement exercise, listening carefully to staff members and many other stakeholders about their experience with CSS, so as to gain a clear understanding of current needs and aspirations.

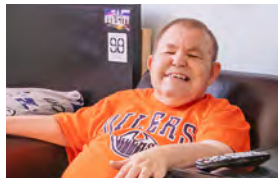
Through deep discernment, listening and discussion, we have set Agency goals that illustrate what we believe to be critical, as we grow and evolve.

The CSS Mission directs our work every day, and our faith calls us to be ever-present to the needs of individuals and the community. The Agency exists to serve all those in need, regardless of circumstance, and we do this through the efforts of staff, volunteers, donors, clergy, funders, and the community at large who make up the village that is Catholic Social Services. As our village grows, more needs can be met, and more lives can be changed.

As we grow and evolve, this plan will provide Catholic Social Services with clear direction in our continued work to serve, and be attentive to, those facing adversity, now and well into the future.

Yours in Charity,

*The CSS Board of Directors*



Shauna Mae, Betty, and John (pictured above) are three of the nearly 20,000 people CSS has the honour of serving each year.

*“Let us love, since that is what our hearts were made for”*

*- St. Thérèse de Lisieux*

## Our Mission

*As a Catholic social services agency, we are guided by faith to care for, and bring hope to, people in need with humility, compassion and respect.*

## Three Strategic Pillars

As Catholic Social Services looks at continuous improvement for the Agency over the next five years and beyond, our aspiration is to aim high. The three pillars identified in this strategic plan touch all parts of CSS and serve to enhance the experience of all those who are part of the important work that the Agency does. Our three pillars, sharing in equality of importance, are:

- 1. Growing Responsibly** – Responding to new or increasing needs where there is opportunity and where capacity exists.
- 2. Pursuing Excellence** – Cultivating a culture of continuous organizational improvement throughout all aspects and operations of the Agency.
- 3. Walking Together** – Deepening relationships with all those who interact with the Agency, and in a particular way Indigenous peoples.

### PILLAR

## 1 Growing Responsibly

While acknowledging that Catholic Social Services cannot be all things to all people, we know the needs of vulnerable individuals have changed and become more complex. While inviting innovation, we are committed to growing our organization responsibly where the Agency has the finance, capacity, and expertise to do so.

**GOAL:** To ensure the responsible growth and expansion of Catholic Social Services that will continue to meet the needs of vulnerable individuals, wherever they may be.

We will:

- a) Endeavor to grow Catholic Social Services beyond the geographical boundaries of the Edmonton Archdiocese where there is need and opportunity and where capacity exists.
- b) Invite and encourage a culture of innovation to better meet the needs of those populations the Agency serves now and into the future.
- c) Expand existing Agency programs and services where needs are identified, and capacity exists or can be feasibly attained.



## PILLAR

## 2

## Pursuing Excellence

As Catholic Social Services grows, it is incumbent upon us to continue responding to the evolving and complex needs of individuals and families in a way that provides hope, healing, and an enduring quality of life. In delivering our programs and services, we must pursue excellence at all levels of organizational functioning. With an eye to long term sustainability and continuous improvement, we will review internal processes and service delivery, evaluate workplace environments, strengthen relationships with partners, and ensure workforce continuity.

**GOAL:** Catholic Social Services will prioritize the pursuit of organizational excellence by focusing on staffing continuity, ensuring positive workplace environments, and fostering strong relationships with each other and partners.

### We will:

- a) Develop an evermore robust staff recruitment and retention strategy to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Agency.
- b) Continually improve employee experience through a workforce strategy that supports employee wellbeing and development opportunities.
- c) Develop an increasingly sophisticated succession plan for key positions to ensure continuity in all areas of the Agency.
- d) More deeply evaluate the overall organizational structure to optimize effective and efficient internal operations.
- e) Further foster new and existing partnerships that bring hope and healing to those we serve.

*“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.” – Matt. 25:35*



## Walking Together

Catholic Social Services acknowledges the profound importance of the journey toward Truth & Reconciliation. The Agency commits itself in a special way to understanding and walking the path of deepening relations with Indigenous people. Honoured to be a service provider to many different vulnerable populations, CSS also undertakes to walk alongside all those who suffer in their pilgrimage of hope and healing. Importantly, as a faith-based organization, the Agency also looks forward to undertaking a deeper discernment of what it means to be a Catholic organization that walks with people from across a vast array of cultures, creeds, and ways of seeing the world. We welcome the moment for gaining clearer insight on the opportunities and implications of Catholicity for the work we are called to do.

**GOAL 1:** To deepen Indigenous relationships by continuing the journey of truth and reconciliation through education and understanding.



**We will:**

- a) Increase Indigenous representation at all levels of the Agency while promoting awareness, appreciation and education of Indigenous culture.
- b) Implement an Indigenous cultural understanding framework that focuses on enhancing responsiveness to the Indigenous community.
- c) Deepen relationships and continue to build bridges with Indigenous peoples as partners.

**GOAL 2:** As a social service provider to the most vulnerable, CSS will deepen our understanding of each other, our perspectives, our creeds, and our cultures. This journey is founded on the values of humility, compassion, and respect.

**We will:**

- d) Discern a greater clarity about what it means to be a Catholic organization and the implications and opportunities for the services we provide.
- e) Further foster relationships with those we encounter from other communities, cultures, and creeds in hope of discovering unity within our diversity.

# Continuing our service through humility, compassion, and respect.

Catholic Social Services is privileged to serve nearly 20,000 people each year. Some individuals and families require services for only a time, while others remain with us throughout their life's journey. The Agency acknowledges the hard work of those who serve directly with clients as well as those who are serving the Mission behind the scenes. Everyone has an important job to do to ensure that this remarkable organization performs at its very best, serving those most in need.

This strategic plan is a continuation of the momentum and excellent work of the 2019-2024 strategic plan in which we aimed to lift people and families in lasting ways, strengthen our community relationships, and sustain our efforts to serve well.

The above goals speak to the quality of services to vulnerable people, the importance of relationships and community connections, and organizational sustainability to serve for the long term. While the language in the new plan may be different, the essence of these goals still remain, and are embedded within the three pillars: *Growing Responsibly, Pursuing Excellence and Walking Together.*

The Mission to serve with humility, compassion, and respect is explicit to how we execute this plan, while the plan itself provides direction for the Agency and determines where time and resources will be spent.

Also important is the recognition that the environment in which CSS operates may shift and evolve. In response, this plan may need to change overtime to remain relevant. As with any strategic plan, it should be regularly reviewed and updated.

Father Bill Irwin, our much-loved founder, had a vision of helping those in the community who were most in need. Now, more than six decades later, Catholic Social Services continues his inspiring legacy, serving scores of individuals and families every hour, every day and every year. Our commitment is to grow, walk alongside others, and serve the greater community with excellence so that we can continue Father Irwin's legacy well into the future!

*"A Christian knows when it is time to speak of God and when it is better to say nothing and to **let love alone speak**. He knows that God is love and that God's presence is felt at the very time when the only thing we do is to love."*

**- Pope Benedict XVI**

