



# Creating Connections: Pathways to Healing

**Annual Report 2020/21**





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Calgary, AB T2W 2Z8

[HullServices.ca](http://HullServices.ca)

# Message from Executive Director & Board Chair

It is my pleasure to share with you our annual report for 2020/21...and what a year it has been! Creating connections has never been so challenging or so essential to the well-being of young people and their families, and your connection to Hull and its mission has been a lifeline of support to children, youth and families struggling with trauma and fighting for their mental health.

Connection is one of our core values at Hull Services, and we believe that well-being and healing happen through authentic, respectful and nurturing relationships. That is why our staff and volunteers are the heart of our organization, and why the many contributions of our Board of Governors, Hull Child and Family Foundation Board, funders, donors and corporate partners have been such a source of inspiration for us during this challenging year as we have pursued our vision of *resilient young people and families thriving within communities that support their mental health and well-being*. It takes a well-connected, generous community to create the conditions where the most vulnerable can thrive.

While it felt like many things have been on hold during the pandemic, Hull has continued to see growth and development in key strategic areas, including the expansion of some early intervention/prevention programs and the addition of a campus-based treatment program for younger children. Despite the challenges facing Alberta, Hull has seen \$1.5M budget growth in the past year as we have responded to growing mental health needs.

True to our mission, Hull continues to build resilience — in young people and families, but also within our organization so that we can continue, with your support, to improve the futures of young people living with the impacts of developmental trauma.

Welcome to Hull Services' annual report for 2020/21. Its theme of Creating Connections highlights the centrality of relationships to Hull's important work — relationships between children and their families, between Hull's staff and the families they serve, between Hull's leadership and staff, between the Board and Hull's leaders, and between Hull and its funders, donors and the wider community. Without these strong connections, Hull would not have been able to overcome the challenges of the past year presented by the global pandemic, economic challenges in Alberta, and the rising tide of mental health needs in our community.

The organization is emerging from the past year stronger than ever. Hull has made significant gains toward its strategic goals, expanded existing services, added new programs to its service continuum, and found creative ways to continue to connect with young people and their families, building resilience today for a brighter tomorrow. As Board Chair, I am extremely proud of the excellent work that has been accomplished, and very grateful to Hull's leadership, staff, volunteers, board members and community partners. Their ongoing commitment to excellence, their capacity for creativity and their generosity of spirit to lean in through difficult times and ensure that our most vulnerable children, youth and families have the support they need to thrive, regardless of what has happened to them, has been exceptional.

As you read this report, I hope you feel a personal connection to Hull's work and share our excitement for the difference we are making each day in the lives of young people and their families. We are most appreciative for the part you play in creating a community where young people and their families can thrive. Thank you.



**Julie Kerr**

Executive Director, Hull Services



**Bonnie Johnston**

Board Chair, Hull Services

# About Hull Services

## Board of Governors

Thank you to our Board of Governors for the dedication and leadership you provide to Hull Services

April 1, 2020 – March 31, 2021

## Board members

**Ms. Bonnie Johnston** (Chair)  
BMJ Strategic Consulting

**Mr. Chethan Lakshman** (Vice-Chair)  
(Chair until March 2021)  
Vice President, External Affairs,  
Shaw Communications Inc.

**Ms. Joanne Cox**  
Executive Vice President and  
General Counsel, Ovintiv

**Mr. Chip Johnston**  
Private Investor

**Mr. Ross Middleton**  
Managing Director & Senior  
Partner, Boston Consulting Group

**Ms. Sarine Mustapha**  
Senior Vice President & Portfolio  
Manager, BMO Nesbitt Burns

**Mr. John Poetker**  
Counsel, Borden Ladner Gervais  
(retired)

**Mr. John Sparks**  
Strategic Counsel,  
NATIONAL Public Relations

**Ms. Geri Greenall**  
Chief Financial Officer,  
Spartan Delta Corp.

**Jackie D. Sieppert, Ph.D.**  
Professor and Past Dean, Faculty of  
Social Work, University of Calgary

## Hull Child and Family Foundation Board

Mr. David Churchill (Chair)  
Mr. Bob Algar  
Mr. Jim Banister  
Mr. George Bezaire  
Mr. Randy Findlay  
Mr. Rod Graham  
Mr. Tim Hamilton  
Ms. Sarine Mustapha

## What we do

Hull Services has long had a reputation for providing leading edge child, youth, and family mental health services. We work with children, youth, and families who have experienced significant challenges. Hull offers them an opportunity to seek well-being and happiness, with a focus on mental health.

At Hull, our employees are our strength. The level of continuous training our staff receive and their passion and commitment to excellence is what sets Hull apart as a leader in child and youth mental health.

For more than 58 years, we have been supporting the mental health and behavioral needs of our most vulnerable children, youth and their families across Calgary and parts of Alberta. Every year, over 7,000 children, youth and their families are supported by one of Hull's 29 services and programs.

## Our mission

Hull partners with young people and families, building resilience today for a brighter tomorrow.

## Our vision

Resilient young people and families thriving within communities that support their mental health and well-being.

## Our core values

### Purpose

We are clear about our purpose, intentional in our practice and ethical in our conduct.

### Inclusion

We are better together, celebrating diversity and honouring the uniqueness of each person.

### Connection

We believe that well-being and healing happen through authentic, respectful and nurturing relationships.

### Knowledge

We draw from multiple sources and ways of knowing to guide our planning and practices.

### Space

We create environments to promote relationship, healing and safety.

## Our goals



Participative strategic planning process



Responsive, inclusive, meaningful services



Unified philosophy, practice and measurement



Healthy workplace culture



Abundant, sustainable funding



Enhanced recognition and understanding of Hull's work



Increased early intervention services

# Continuum of programs & services



## Prevention and Early Intervention

Prevention works with young people and families before concerns develop. Early Intervention works with young people and families once concerns are identified; these programs reduce the risk of escalation.

### Services and programs:

- Braiding the Sweetgrass
- Community Parenting Education Program
- Family Advocacy and Support Project
- Friendship Group *\*New program*
- Lasting Impressions
- Mental Health in Sports and in Life
- Patch
- Social Emotional Learning Services

## Family-Based Treatment

Family-based treatment reinforces the preservation of families. We believe that children and youth belong in families, living in the community. Our support helps natural, foster and kin families to remain intact and receive the assistance they need to thrive.

### Services and programs:

- Family Initiatives
- Fostering Connections
- Kinnections
- Hull Psychological Services
- Resilient Families *\*New program*

## School-Based Services

School-Based Services assist students with diverse academic, emotional and behavioural needs. We help establish a positive learning experience for students and their families, while meeting their scholastic requirements. Students also gain self-esteem and appropriate coping and social skills.

### Services and programs:

- CBE Satellite Schools
- Children's Village School
- William Roper Hull School

## Community Group Care

Community Group Care offers treatment and supportive services for youth in a home-like setting. This environment allows young people a closer connection to community while they continue their progress, before being reunited with their families or transitioning to another permanent community placement.

### Services and programs:

- Cedarbrae Teaching Home
- Radisson Group Home

## Campus-Based Care

Campus-Based Care assesses, stabilizes, and treats children and youth with serious challenges. When behaviours escalate out of control due to mental health, addiction or traumatic experiences, immediate, intensive intervention is required. 24-hour care and therapeutic services are provided from arrival through discharge until youth can return to the community more safely.

### Services and programs:

- Preadolescent Treatment Program (PTP)
- River Lodge *\*New name*
- Safe Directions
- Specialized U13 Program *\*New program*
- Stepping Stones
- Track: Young People's Lodge *\*New name*
- Turtle Lodge: Developmental Treatment Centre *\*New name*

## Adult Services

Adult Services bridge the transition for young adults with mental health and developmental disabilities toward greater independence. In situations where supported living is required, young adults are placed within settings that offer structure, safety and community integration.

### Services and programs:

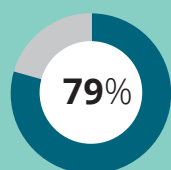
- Bridging the Gap
- Interdependent Living Services

# Service & impact

## People We Support

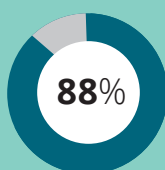
**7,158** Number of children, youth and families who were supported by one of Hull's **29 programs and services**

## Children's Services Funded Programs



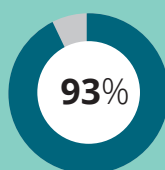
### Permanence

79% of children, youth, and young adults successfully discharged during the reporting period to a lesser restrictive setting and/or maintained, reunified, or transitioned to a family or natural supports.



### Well-Being

88% of children and youth demonstrated improved well-being.



### Family and Community Connections

93% of children, youth, young adults, and families were able to develop and maintain important natural supports and community connections.



## Developing Capacity in the Community

Hull's Trauma Informed Services team provided **14 training sessions on Neurosequential Model** concepts for community partners.

**2,570 people participated in courses, trainings and webinars** facilitated by I Got Mind, an organization Hull has partnered with to help promote the importance of mental health in the sporting world and in life.

Of the 2,570:

**250** were athletes

**70** were coaches

**200** were parents

**500** were from the education system

**1,200** were from the general community

**350** were business participants



## Clinical Support

The Trauma Informed Services team provided **over 80 NMT metrics**, a clinical problem solving tool, for the young people and families served by Hull.

The Trauma Informed Services clinicians and provisional psychologists provided **656 hours of therapy** to the young people and families served by Hull.

Hull's Trauma Informed Services provided **144 hours of NM consultations** with clients.



## Staff Training

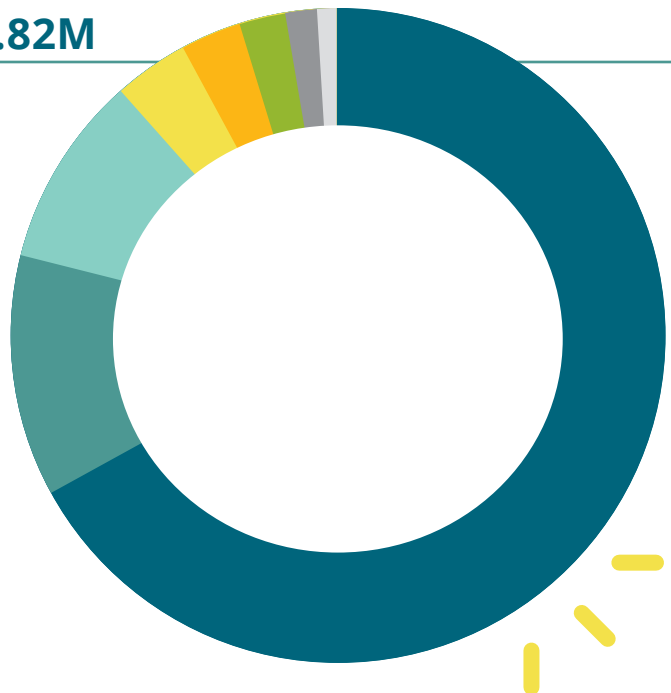
The Trauma Informed Services clinical staff provided **448 hours of NM consultation** with staff and **56 training sessions**.

# Financials

Operations: April 1, 2020 – March 31, 2021

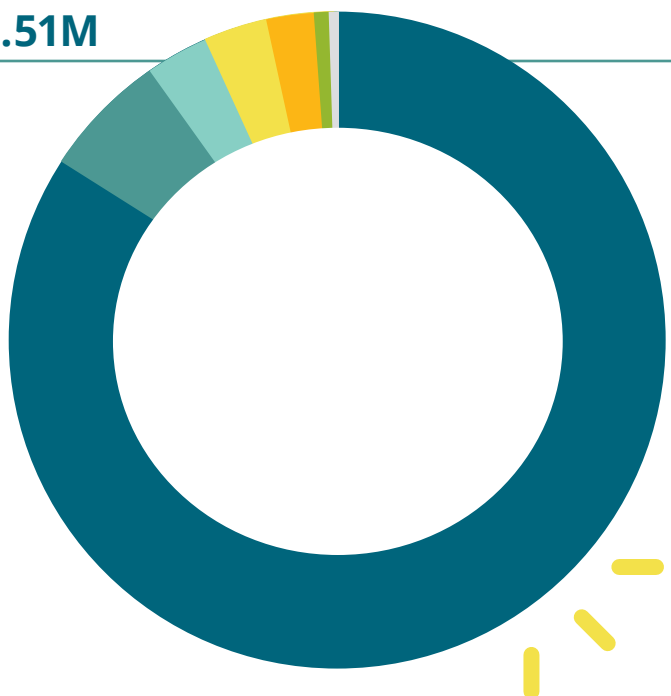
## Funding breakdown: \$45.82M

● <b>\$30.89M</b>	Alberta Children's Services 67.4%
● <b>\$5.25M</b>	Calgary Board of Education 11.5%
● <b>\$4.21M</b>	Alberta Health Services 9.2%
● <b>\$1.89M</b>	Grants and donations 4.1%
● <b>\$1.33M</b>	Investment and other income 2.9%
● <b>\$1.11M</b>	City of Calgary FCSS 2.4%
● <b>\$0.70M</b>	United Way of Calgary and area 1.5%
● <b>\$0.44M</b>	Hull Child and Family Foundation 1.0%



## Expense breakdown: \$45.51M

● <b>\$38.44M</b>	Salaries and benefits 84.5%
● <b>\$2.76M</b>	Client Services 6.1%
● <b>\$1.42M</b>	Administrative 3.1%
● <b>\$1.35M</b>	Facility 3.0%
● <b>\$1.21M</b>	Amortization and unrealized losses 2.6%
● <b>\$0.23M</b>	Transportation 0.5%
● <b>\$0.10M</b>	Mortgage interest 0.2%



To read the fully audited financials please visit our website at [HullServices.ca/FinancialStatements](https://HullServices.ca/FinancialStatements)

# Highlights & milestones

## New programs at Hull Services

April 2020

### Specialized U13

The Specialized U-13 Program is a trauma-informed, connection-based program serving children under 13 years of age. It provides a relationally rich environment with present, attuned, attentive, and responsive caregivers. The goal of the program is to teach the children regulation skills, improve social/emotional functioning and support parents/caregivers to increase their parenting capacity.

April 2020

### Resilient Families

Resilient Families is a program that provides in-home support to help preserve and strengthen families. Our Facilitators work together with families to help them reach their goals and address the challenges they are facing. We help to teach parenting skills and build on family resiliency so that parents are able to parent their children more effectively and independently.

December 2020

### Friendship Group

Hull's Friendship Group is an evidence and skill based program that offers children the opportunity to learn and practice skills related to making and keeping friends. Hull partners with Children's Cottage to offer this program.



August 2020

## New Senior Director, Community Services and Partnership Development

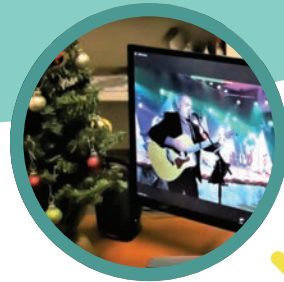
Kevin Foran, a well-respected Hull Services employee for 30+ years, took on the role of Senior Director Community Services and Partnership Development. Kevin's long standing commitment and experience within the agency across diverse and multi-disciplinary programs has spanned direct care through to early intervention. This experience positions Kevin to contribute to the strategic direction, organizational culture and leadership of Hull as we seek to become more unified in philosophy, practice and measurement and to enhance Hull's profile within the community.

Summer 2020

## Circle of Life signs installed at Hull

Hull Services installed four signs on the SW campus ring road to mark the Circle of Life (Medicine Wheel) and act as reminders that it is important to look after our whole selves: spiritual, emotional, physical and mental well-being. The signs are permanent fixtures and will continue to be used for education, awareness and engagement with the community and the people we serve.

To learn more visit [HullServices.ca/circleoflife](https://HullServices.ca/circleoflife)



December 2020

## Hallelujah goes virtual

Guests tuned into our 16th annual Christmas fundraiser, Hallelujah, virtually this year. Due to COVID, the fundraiser went virtual and it was a wonderful night of gathering together safely and celebrating The Huron Carole, the holiday season and Hull's important work. Thanks to our donors, we raised over \$90,000 to support our mission to partner with young people and families, building resilience today for a brighter tomorrow.





March 2021

## Cosmetology Lab gets a renovation

Thanks to a generous donation from Leslie Bissett, the Cosmetology Lab in the William Roper Hull School received a much-needed renovation. For many years, the students had not been able to learn the art of cosmetology due to the space's poor condition. Renovations to polish the space to perfection began last fall, with the Lab opening this past spring. This project was important to Leslie because it gives students a chance, early in their education, to build skills and learn about opportunities in a trade that can lead to a broad range of jobs and careers. The students study a wide range of beauty treatments such as hair styling, skin care, cosmetics and manicures/pedicures.



September 2020

## Hull launches an updated brand

Hull Services has long had a reputation for providing leading edge child, youth and family mental health services. Our brand is an important reflection of this work. At Hull Services, we are committed to being an active partner in the healing journey of the young people and families we serve, and to reflect this better in our brand, it underwent an update. Our enhanced and updated brand is an important part of the work being done to fulfill our Strategic Direction, "Enhancing Our Profile".

March 2021

## Celebrating 10 years of NMT at Hull Services

Ten years ago, with the vision of moving our programs to a trauma informed model of care, Hull partnered with Dr. Bruce Perry and the ChildTrauma Academy to embark on the NMT certification process. A year later, Hull was named a Flagship Site (2012-2021) for the model and Dr. Emily Wang was named a Fellow of the ChildTrauma Academy. Since beginning the certification process with Dr. Bruce Perry, Hull has been asked to provide training in Alberta and internationally, and continues to work with partners to progress the field of trauma informed services through research, education and training, and service delivery. The NMT provided Hull with the common thread that allowed us to become more integrated and focused in our work, with a deeper understanding of how trauma impacts development from a neurobiological perspective. This shift allowed us, as an organization, to provide more targeted treatment to our clients, understand the neurobiological impact of the evidence based treatments that we had adopted, and focus on creating opportunities for strong relational connections.

November 2020

## Hull Services' journey to truth and reconciliation continues with an Indigenous Strategy

Hull as an Agency has taken the beginning steps of developing an Indigenous Strategy as a way to support our goal of honouring the path of Truth and Reconciliation with Indigenous people in all of our work, as outlined in our 2019-2022 Strategic Directions. Twelve Working Group Committee members, including Hull's senior leadership, a board member, key Hull staff and external Indigenous advisors, are in the early developmental stages of the strategy, with Valerie Sipos, Hull's Braiding the Sweetgrass Program Coordinator, taking the lead. This strategy is another building block to what Hull has already been doing to implement Indigenous perspectives into the Agency.

March 2021

## New reflections: shining a different light on program names

This year, Hull changed three program names on our SW campus to better reflect the young people receiving care, while also honouring our Indigenous culture. Three programs were gifted new names by Casey Eagle Speaker, Hull's Indigenous Resources Coordinator, through naming ceremonies. All three names stem from the Blackfoot culture and represent the young people and the treatment focus of the program. *Cottage One* was gifted the name *River Lodge* or *nii'htaa moyis* in Blackfoot. *Cottage Seven* was gifted the name *Turtle Lodge: Developmental Treatment Centre*, or *sspopii moyis* in Blackfoot. *TRACC* was gifted the name *Track: Young People's Lodge* or *aast' taapii moyis* in Blackfoot.

Read the full story on our website.



# Shifting to provide support during a pandemic

## What we did: created connections

If you've been to the movies, you may have watched a dramatic rescue scene where someone is falling from a building. As the audience watches with bated breath, clutching their popcorn buckets, those on-screen rush to grab hold of a blanket, ensuring there are enough hands hanging tightly onto it and shifting around to ensure they are in the right place to break the person's fall. It's a relief for all when they are safely caught thanks to the heroic and collaborative efforts of those on the ground.

There's a similarity in how Hull responded throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, working to ensure that the vulnerable young people and families we serve had the important supports they needed in place to survive the freefall the pandemic put them in.

Hull's in-home and campus-based programs literally save lives by creating supports and connections for those we serve. Those connections became even more crucial as the pandemic swept across communities and the globe, forcing unprecedented levels of isolation. Many of our families were already socially isolated due to the nature of their trauma; the impact of COVID only exacerbated that. Restrictions on visitation, the need for physical distancing, and the initial lack of access to professional supports presented a very real threat and untold challenges to our important work and the families and kids at the heart of it. Not fostering

those essential connections would have been the equivalent of folding the blanket and putting it away — leaving these children, youth, and families to suffer the consequences of an unbroken fall.

When the pandemic hit, we needed to find ways to both sustain and improve connection with those who so desperately needed our help.

Our in-home programs (Resilient Families, Family Initiatives, FASD MAPS, and Lasting Impressions) help reunify and preserve families and build connections that provide them with a network of supports. We believe children and youth belong in families, living in the community. Our support helps natural, foster, and kin families to remain intact and receive the assistance they need to thrive.

"It was a challenge determining how to offer in-home-type support without being in homes," says Virginia Hervey, Program Director of Hull's in-home programs.

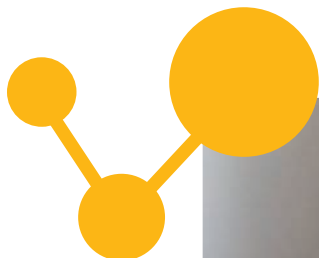
“

My family experienced something traumatic this year and Family Initiatives' support was crucial to our well-being.”

— CLIENT  
Family Initiatives program

"We had to assess what families needed and rapidly transition to a natural supports framework including extended family, friends, and members of their community — finding those supports in their networks, encouraging families to access them, and creating safe ways for them to connect."

While we shifted and found more hands and different tools to help those we serve, we also needed a new way of delivering that support. So, like many others during COVID, we turned to technology to foster those vital connections to families, making use of Zoom, Facetime, texting and calls to connect them to us and other supports. We also saw great success in virtual opportunities we set up for large groups of people to come together to learn important skills such as our Zones of Regulation (for kids) and Dialectical Behavior Therapy Skills group (for parents). Families reported feeling more



connected through participating and enjoyed the ease of accessibility of the groups.

Service delivery was almost completely virtual for a time. While that was successful, given the circumstances, in-person support will continue to be the foundation of service delivery in non-pandemic times.

We also shifted to offering support for families' basic needs, applying for and receiving a \$35,000 grant from the Children's Aid Foundation to provide things such as groceries or computers, or pay for utilities. This is not typically our area of service delivery, but if you can't afford to keep the lights on or don't have access to technology, you can't participate in virtual support programs or stay connected to others.

It hasn't been easy for our teams or these kids, families, and their support systems. After all, this is real life, not the movies. There were critical concerns and risks to mitigate — domestic violence, suicide intervention, self-harm and aggressive acting out behaviour in kids, and the need to support complex mental issues with parents, to name a few. The stakes were high and the hard work and shift in delivery paid off. As we begin to emerge from the pandemic, 93% of children, youth and families from these programs report being able to develop and maintain their important natural supports and community connections. And even though there was a significant rise in critical and noteworthy incidents over the year, we were able to keep almost 100% of kids at home with their families in a supported environment across all four in-home programs and support reunification in some cases. That's proof of how we can help break falls when we have many hands working together.





## What we know: relationships = resiliency

Just keep connecting. Easy to say, but not always easy to do with public health measures designed to keep people safely distanced throughout the pandemic.

Hull's on-campus programs focussed on creating and maintaining positive relationships and connections throughout the pandemic for the kids and youth that live with us. They faced similar challenges of isolation and disruption, but were different from in-home program participants in that they live on campus, 24-hours a day, seven days a week.

"The ever-changing landscape of the pandemic created so much uncertainty and worry, stress and confusion, and a sense of powerlessness," says Nadège De Pape, Program Director for Hull's Turtle Lodge: Developmental Treatment Centre, a therapeutic campus-based program for youth 6 to 17 years old with developmental delays and severe behavior and mental health problems. "What helped us most was to stay grounded in what we know how to do best. At its core, in the most simplistic terms, the work we do is about meaningful relationships."

Among many other things, kids in the program learn to cope better with daily stressors. She adds that, compounding the stress the kids and staff were already under due to the pandemic, the idea that restrictions meant they had to stop in-person contact with families was "heartbreaking." To help alleviate some of that stress and isolation, the team hit the ground running to find creative

and alternative ways for the kids to communicate with their support people — in essence doing everything they could to create a web of support around these vulnerable kids that have already suffered so much.

"We were thinking outside the box and being as creative as we could," explains De Pape. "A former foster family of a young person who is non-verbal wanted to connect with him. They couldn't carry on a conversation over Zoom but we encouraged the family to create some activities to still have a meaningful interaction that way. They read stories, showed him the groceries they had just gotten, and described the recipes they would use with them."

These approaches were successful and demonstrate that we do not need to look for overcomplicated solutions, but simply be present for those in need of support. It's been proven that healing, growth, and effective treatment occur within the context of relationships and it is the cornerstone of the trauma-informed work we do to make a difference in the lives of these kids.

"We were purposeful in creating an environment here that is safe, predictable, and has a focus on relationships. None of that changed because of the pandemic," says De Pape. "Kids feel safe when they know what's going to happen next. These kids come from extremely chaotic and unpredictable environments. We have seen an incredible amount of resilience from both our staff and kids. We will all come out of this for the better because of that."

## What we learned:

### **Being flexible and able to adapt is key to success in times of crisis:**


Regardless of our role prior to the pandemic, triaging and responding to the immediate and most urgent needs of vulnerable youth and families set them up for success in other areas.

### **There is great value in increasing natural supports:**

Increasing natural supports ensures another layer of connection for families in the event professional supports can't be delivered.

### **Virtual service delivery has some benefits:**

While in-person connection will always be the gold standard, virtual connection has its place. Adopting virtual options removed barriers to accessibility, especially with challenges related to childcare, transportation, or illness.



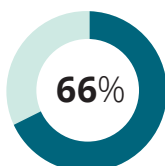
## What we accomplished:

### In-home programs

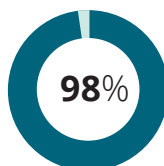


**1,000+**

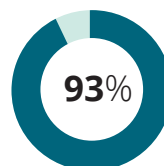
Young people and families supported across our 4 in-home programs



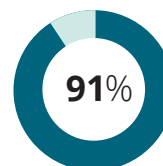
Average reduction in safety-related concerns associated with critical incidents/high-risk behaviours



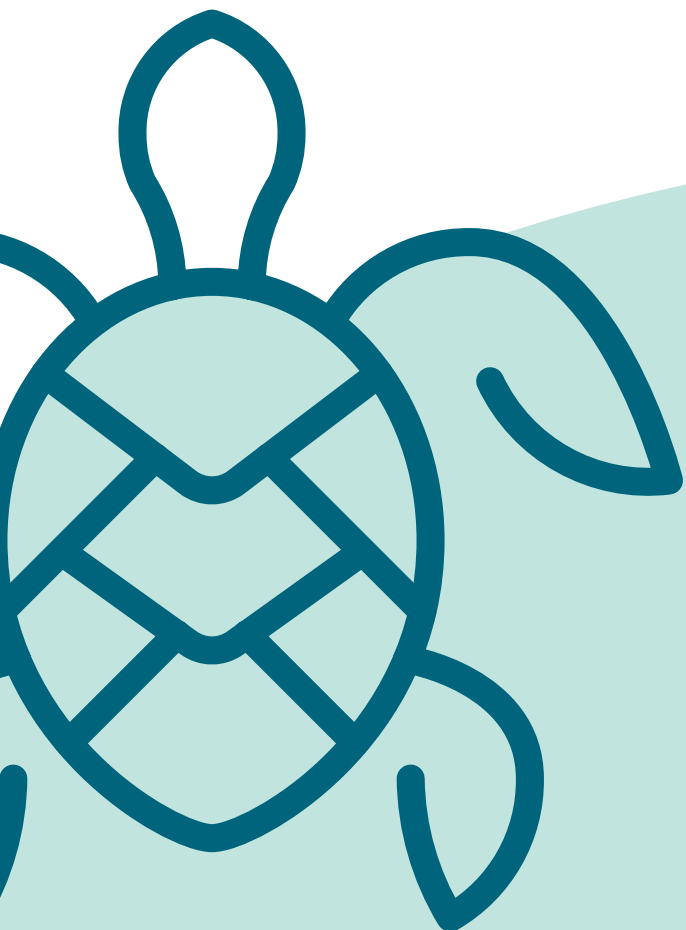
Young people and families successfully discharged, maintained, reunified, or transitioned to a family or natural support setting



Young people and families developed and maintained important natural supports and community connections



Young people, families, partners and staff members reported high satisfaction with the in-home programs and supports provided



### Turtle Lodge: Developmental Treatment Centre

**88%**

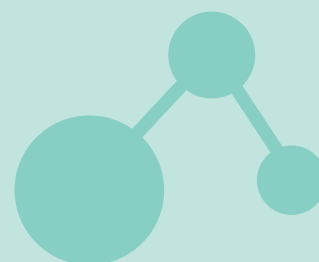
Program participants who demonstrated a supportive connection with family or other natural supports

**64%**

Program participants who experienced an increase of frequency of positive social connections

**4,869**

Opportunities of connection and natural support for program participants were facilitated



# The healing power of play

In the summer months, Stacey Manolescu often drives home from work sitting on a towel and garbage bag. She is doing crucial work healing brains as part of the therapeutic support Hull provides young people in our care, and that often requires a good old fashioned water fight. On less sunny days, it generally entails a rousing game of dodgeball.

It sounds like fun and games, and for the kids it is. But it's also brain science. Hull is internationally recognized for our work in leading-edge trauma-informed care. Trauma-informed recreation is a critical component in healing these young brains that have suffered the devastating impacts of developmental trauma.

"They haven't had the chance to just be kids," explains Manolescu, Recreation Programmer at Hull. "Biologically they are one age, but mentally they are younger because they often didn't get to play. Perhaps they were being the adult at home and taking care of their siblings; maybe they lived in a constant state of fear; perhaps they were always put in front of a TV."

The trauma they have suffered has disrupted their cognitive, emotional and psychological development and we need to intervene to give them a shot at a "normal" childhood and adult life. This is where the importance of play comes in. It is the first step in a sequence of engagement consisting of three stages: regulate, relate and reason. Regulation comes first because, if kids aren't regulated, they simply cannot relate or reason.

It's akin to driving home after a stressful day at work, fighting traffic

along the way, walking into a house that's a mess, being greeted by kids that are demanding attention, realizing that supper still needs to be cooked, and then trying to have a difficult conversation about finances with your spouse. You just aren't in the right head space to tackle a complex problem at that particular time. When regulated, you can access your brain's frontal cortex, which is key to making decisions; if not, you are simply reacting to everything.

It's the same process for the young people we serve. They need to be regulated to benefit from other trauma-informed interventions. Play allows kids' brains to build over negative neural pathways and get to a place where they can better access problem solving capabilities and learn new skills. It also creates a sense of community and belonging, develops boundaries, allows for choices, and teaches kids to be good sports and good friends.

"We are helping these kids learn skills that usually develop naturally. But if you don't live in a safe environment, you just learn how to survive. There isn't opportunity to learn typical skills," says Manolescu. "There is no pressure here. Our first rule is to always have fun and, if you want to try something new, we will help you. Also if you want to stick with what you know, we will help you. The great thing about recreation as an approach to therapeutic intervention is you learn how to feel successful with yourself and in a group, whatever that may look like to each kid."

Those successes are individual and Hull's team celebrates every one of them. Manolescu taught an 18-year-



old who had never been on a bike how to ride one this year. Another youth told her he was trying out for the school basketball team and said, "I learned how to be confident and play because you gave me a safe space to try."

Just two examples of the many huge accomplishments for our young people and further proof of the importance of play for kids who have suffered so much trauma in their young lives.

## Playing through the pandemic

Hull's Recreation team worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic to support our young people and their families. Healing brains isn't something that can be put on hold, so we found ways to encourage play to keep kids regulated and engaged in therapeutic interventions during the stress of the pandemic.

COVID-19 restrictions created small group cohorts, families were unable to visit on campus, other community services and supports were cancelled, and supply-chain



disruptions, along with decreased funding, limited the number of craft and game supplies at our disposal. It was a challenge, but we held fast to two key principles: stick to the basics and focus on relationships.

We created activity kits, loaned equipment to families and community groups, and offered a bike program for kids, families, and our volunteers and staff. We continued to offer as many recreation opportunities as possible — we just ran them for smaller groups and more frequently to accommodate all the kids in our care.

“Society expected a lot of kids during the pandemic — wearing masks, no physical touch, periods of isolation,” says Manolescu. “COVID had a lot of ‘had to dos.’ Rec was a place where our kids could come and just have fun, feel less anxious, release emotions, and regulate.”

COVID restrictions created a silver lining with respect to Hull’s ratios of adult staff to young people. Science tells us that, biologically, kids require large amounts of adult time

and attention. Young brains evolve and develop best in relationship-rich environments where adults are nurturing, supportive, and attuned to young people’s emotional needs. Brain researchers call this a “protective factor” that contributes to children’s resilience, even when they experience significant challenges in their lives. Hull maintains very low youth to staff ratios at the best of times. Our typical recreation therapy ratio has four young people supported by one adult (staff member). Those ratios were even better during the pandemic, as other Hull staff were now attending recreation therapy with their groups of kids.

When adults have opportunities to play with kids instead of telling them what to do, it builds better rapport and trust in those relationships. Nicole Berggren, Assistant Director of Hull’s Trauma-Informed Services, explains, “More positive adult interactions for kids create moments to fire neurons that create new and healthy connections for them.”



## Program highlights in 2020-2021:

**1,789** recreation programming opportunities for the people we serve

**250 bikes** provided to young people and families at no charge

**18 years old:** the age of one young person taught to ride a bike

**3 hours:** the amount of time Hull’s Recreation Programmers spend in water fights on any given sunny day

**1.5 hours:** the optimum amount of time for a dodgeball game, according to our kids

**10:4:** the ratio of kids to adults in recreation therapy programming

# Hull: Taking care of those that give care

Hull's staff are amazing. They are consummate professionals, they are wholly committed to the kids and families whose lives depend on us, and sometimes they are a bit like ducks. When you see a duck floating on water, from the surface view they project a sense of calm but a different view may show their feet paddling madly below the surface to keep afloat.

Our team stepped up to support young people and their families during the pandemic even though they were often experiencing disruption and stress in their own lives. They weren't immune to the challenges of child care, kids attending school remotely, concerns for parents in long term care, fear of infection or the multitude of other issues and stressors brought on by COVID-19. Yet they showed up every day, regardless of what was happening in their personal lives, to make sure our kids and families had their calm and continued support.

Whether in front line roles or supportive ones, such as administration or maintenance, our teams did everything they could to support those we serve. In turn, Hull provided necessary supports to our teams so that they could stay focused and show up to do their best every day.

We did this in a variety of ways — through team check-in Zoom sessions that gave staff the opportunity to talk about what was on their minds, having our Trauma-Informed Services team available for employee consultation or connection, initiating Reflective Practice groups to help staff process their own feelings and stresses

related to supporting others during a pandemic, and through fun activities not related to work. But “why” we did it is more important than “how” we did it.

Regulation is just as important for our workers as it is for the young people and families we support. If staff aren't regulated, they can't help to regulate others. The young people and families we work with pick up on that.

“We need our staff to be able to access the smartest part of their brains so they can be with kids and families in intentional, meaningful ways,” says Nicole Berggren, Assistant Director of Hull's Trauma-Informed Services. “If we are not at our best, we can't do our best.”

Desmond Murphy, Program Coordinator for Hull's Fostering Connections program, observes that, “It's difficult to support others if you feel depleted yourself.”

The work we do at Hull is critically important, but it can also be very difficult emotionally. We are supporting kids and families who have suffered unimaginable trauma. They aren't bad, they've had bad things happen to them and they desperately need our help. Providing “buffers” is part of the brain science we use to help them heal (see sidebar on the following page). That brain science also teaches us how to be neurobiologically respectful to the needs of caregivers. It's crucial as an Agency that we provide that same type of support to our team to help them manage their health and well-being.

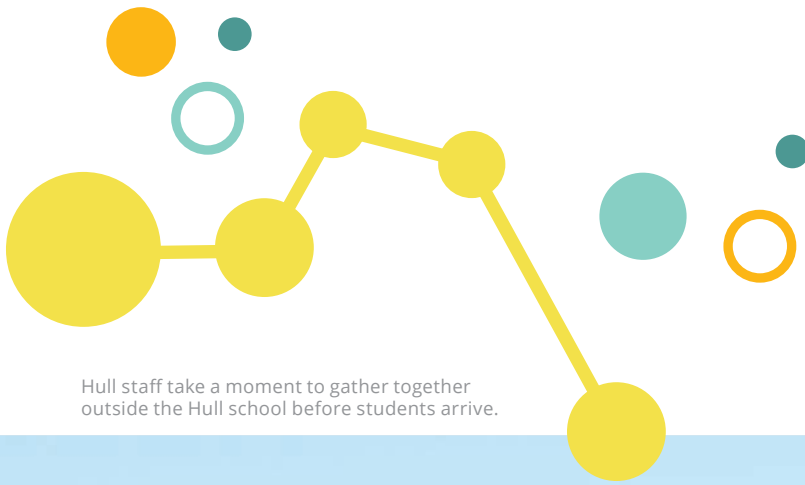
While our employees project a sense of calm in order to support those we serve, they are human and feel stress, worry, and uncertainty just as strongly as everyone else. We are incredibly proud of them and will continue to do everything we can to support them.

“

Both Hull and our people have been incredible in supporting one another throughout the pandemic. We have something very special here.”

— DESMOND MURPHY

Program Coordinator, Hull's Fostering Connections program



Hull staff take a moment to gather together outside the Hull school before students arrive.



## Hull's team: Holding each other up through tough times

In addition to Hull taking extra measures to support our staff throughout the pandemic, our staff greatly supported one another as well.

In trauma-informed care, "buffer" is a term that applies to a person who provides a positive relationship that helps lessen or moderate the impact of traumatic or adverse experiences. Hull employees stepped up to be buffers for their colleagues throughout the pandemic, helping one another cope with personal and professional stressors often unique to the work we do.

"Every person who becomes successful after going through trauma cites at least one person who was their buffer," explains Desmond Murphy, Program Coordinator, Hull's Fostering Connections program. "We can't bring our work home and talk to our partners. It's not only confidential, it would be very difficult for them to understand. The people we work with do understand."

Shared experiences, understanding the critical principles of Dr. Bruce Perry's Neurosequential Model (the brain science that guides us), and the common goal of helping heal kids and families who have suffered unspeakable trauma enable colleagues to be uniquely supportive of one another. For the Fostering Connections team, that means knowing each other well enough to sense when a colleague is becoming stressed, then stepping up to help them write a report or take their on-call shift for an evening or weekend.

Says Murphy, "Support is not just a top down thing. We all support each other and we all lean on each other. This is difficult work but we have the foundation of knowing we have each other's backs and that we will carry one another through difficult times."

# Your generosity makes a difference

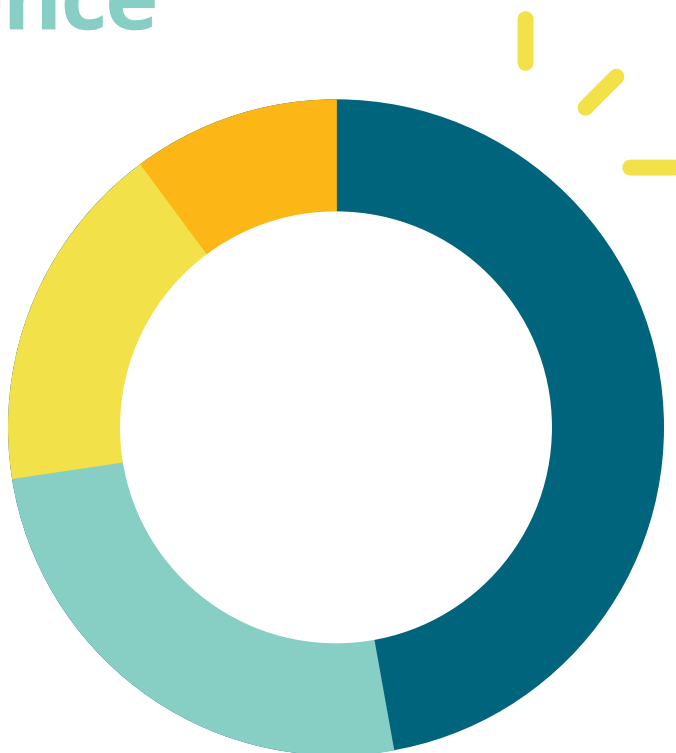
Thanks to your support, we are partnering to build resilience today for a brighter tomorrow for more than **7,000** kids, youth and families we serve each year.

**Total monetary gifts:**

## \$4,139,123

- \$1,887,479.....Grants and donations
- \$1,114,507.....FCSS — City of Calgary
- \$697,137.....United Way of Calgary & Area
- \$440,000.....Hull Child and Family Foundation

*Contributions are received from individuals, corporations, foundations and service clubs and community groups through Hull's annual campaigns, fund-raising events, sponsorships, and government and private grants. Our fiscal year is April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021.*



## Where your gifts make an impact



Backpacks filled with school supplies so our young people are equipped with everything they need to learn.



Donor funded furniture makes the live-in spaces feel more like home for our children and youth who reside in-program.



Funds are used in emergency situations like the COVID-19 pandemic. This past year, Chrome books were purchased for families so they could continue with work, school, and have access to critical services throughout the pandemic.



Providing food support so vulnerable children, youth and families receive the proper nutrition needed to live and thrive.

“

I believe in the saying ‘children are the future,’ and it’s the most vulnerable ones that really need our help. I believe that each child deserves as equal an opportunity as their peers to grow and learn, and volunteering with Hull is one way I can do my small part in trying to make that happen.”

— MARISA PILGRIM  
Aramark GIV Day volunteer

## Volunteers

Volunteers who are willing to step up and give their time help make all the difference to children, youth and families who are struggling with mental health challenges. At Hull Services, volunteers give their time through our Group Involved Volunteer days, as individual or group volunteer mentors in our mentorship program, and help in critical support roles at various special events. Though their support looked different and was limited this past year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were impressed at their resilience and determination to support our children, youth and families in any way they could. Our volunteers play such an important role in the healing journey of our young people and families and their dedicated support to give back will have far-reaching and long-lasting positive effects on our communities.

### A quick glance at the impact volunteers have at Hull Services

#### Group involved volunteers (GIV)

4.....Number of groups  
126.....Number of volunteers  
957.....Total number of hours  
\$20,796.....Value of volunteer time

#### Mentor volunteers

62.....Number of volunteers  
1,438.....Total number of hours  
\$34,517.....Value of volunteer time

## Gifts in kind

### Total value: \$163,390

Gifts in kind, also referred to as in-kind donations, are donations of goods and services.

Some of our donors and community partners choose to support the children, youth and families Hull serves with gifts and necessities they might not otherwise receive or have access to. Many kids and youth in our programs live in low-income households where purchasing items such as clothing, recreational equipment and toys can be a challenge. We are grateful to all the donors who were able to give and support our young people and families during COVID-19, while also facing the challenges of a pandemic. Donations of gifts in kind help meet the needs of the children, youth and families we serve and build stronger, healthier communities.

### Examples of gift in kind donations in 2020/21

- Backpacks
- Recreational opportunities
- Christmas and birthday gifts
- School supplies
- Sports equipment
- Gift cards
- Personal stationery



Volunteer profile:

## Dana Stan

Dana Stan is a skateboarder and a mentor. But before she got involved with Hull's Mentors Matter program, she was neither.

While these dual passions seem somewhat unrelated, the common factor is Abby, the young woman that Stan was connected to when she decided to volunteer. She wanted to offer a young person the kind of support she didn't have while

growing up. "I try to be the person I wish I had to look up to as a teenager. There weren't a lot of role models for me," says Stan. "It's been such an interesting experience. You forget what it's like to be a teenager — what they struggle with."

While Stan focusses on how she can be a support for Abby, she says she also benefits in many ways from her involvement as a mentor.

"It's nice to do something for other people. It feels good. Part of her (Abby's) thing in looking for a mentor through Hull was to help her get out of the house and try new things. It's done the same for me," she says. "We have a really good relationship and are on the same page about trying new things and activities together."

So much so that when Abby took her skateboarding for the first time last summer, Stan was hooked. "She loves to research, so she watched videos on technique so she could show me what to do. I ended up loving it and bought my own skateboard."

Healthy relationships build healthy kids. Unfortunately, those relationships aren't always within a child's natural supports; but Hull is making sure they still benefit from relational support by connecting kids and youth to adults that can be positive role models for them. Sometimes mentors are the only unpaid support in these kids' lives.

Over the past year, COVID-19 has led Hull to adapt the program to public health restrictions and

“

Dana's commitment throughout the ups and downs of the pandemic has supported her mentee and created a positive and long-lasting mentoring relationship."

— MARILYN BOSTON

Program Coordinator for Hull's Mentors Matter program

encourage mentors to adapt their own approaches to these relationships, under the oversight of Hull staff. Creativity and persistence by all have allowed those relationships to continue.

Marilyn Boston, Program Coordinator for Hull's Mentors Matter program, explains: "We do this because many kids don't have a strong web of support in their life. When their worlds are closing in on them, we need to be there for them. With COVID, we knew we had to do our very best to keep things going for these kids through a time of even more isolation and uncertainty. We put plans in place to keep these relationships going as best we could with the restrictions in place. We never once considered disconnecting these kids from the people willing to engage with them and be in their lives."

Stan is willing to be in Abby's life long-term, even after the official mentor/mentee relationship through our program comes to an end.

"I can see us being in each other's lives forever," she says. "I never had a little sister and think of her that way. As long as she wants to continue, I will be here for her."

For her first volunteering experience, this has been a positive one by all accounts, and Stan credits Hull for that, as well as the mentee she was paired with. "I think Hull is great. They've been super supportive. They have guidelines but are also flexible and understanding. I was so nervous to volunteer and was worried about screwing up. They've been very understanding and supportive and I can reach out whenever I need. This is a very human organization."

Caring and supportive relationships are essential for humans to grow and develop. Incredibly selfless and giving people like Dana Stan give us all hope for the future and for these kids.

## Mentors Matter

Think about a person that made you feel valued and supported, that helped with your self-confidence and growth and saw potential in you. Can you find time to be that person for a youth that needs support?

You don't need to learn to skateboard if that's not your thing. And you don't need to "fix" anyone. You just need to meet these kids where they are at, so to speak. It's the positive and supportive relationship they need most, and the opportunity to be with healthy adults who are present and attuned to them.

From a clinical perspective, mentoring with us is your chance to help support healthy brain development and resiliency in kids that just need someone to invest a bit of time in them and remind them of their worth and potential.

From a human perspective, Hull's Mentors Matter program is looking for good humans to help develop other good humans. It's as simple as that, and an experience that just may change your life as well.

Contact Marilyn Boston at [mentors@hullservices.ca](mailto:mentors@hullservices.ca) for more information on the various mentoring opportunities at Hull.



Donor profiles:  
Wayne Burke | Link Energy | Falco Electrical

# Changing lightbulbs, changing lives

Lightbulbs may not be the first things that come to mind when you think of giving gifts or helping kids, but the donation of more than 2,600 of them to Hull created a bright spot for us this past year, in both the literal and figurative sense.

This generous gift from Link Energy will continue to shine on us for the next decade or so (the lifespan of the LED bulbs) by reducing our operational energy costs and, in turn, saving us close to a million dollars. That translates to more funds available for the important work we do to support the vulnerable young people and families we serve. The bulbs are also brightening up our spaces and creating a positive impact on our planet by significantly reducing our carbon footprint.

Wayne Burke, Link Energy's CEO, had a vision for a business with a triple bottom line — people, planet and profit. When Burke and Steve Shoiry cofounded Link Energy in 2016, they committed to providing clean energy while also supporting non-profit agencies through the

donation of LED lighting retrofits so those savings could be used for greater good in the community. They have never wavered from that commitment, even through the tough business environment brought on by the pandemic.

"This has been the most difficult time I've ever seen to run an energy business," says Burke. "But our commitment to community is non-negotiable. It's our brand promise and the core of our company DNA."

That commitment is even more impressive given that Link Energy's donation to Hull is by far their biggest support of an agency to date — with a projected cost savings to Hull of \$994,032. In addition to providing \$50,000 worth of LED bulbs, Link Energy also provided team members to help install the lights and inspired other companies to get involved. You can read more on this page about the generous donation Falco Electrical Systems made to the project.

Link Energy chose to support Hull because our work has a mental health focus. That aligns with the values of

the company that walks the talk by offering an array of mental health supports to its own employees. Burke also has a personal appreciation for child and youth mental health supports because of family members he feels would have benefitted from accessing services earlier in their lives. He speaks openly about the benefit of therapy in his own life as well.

"Most of us at Link have been in the position where we could use a helping hand, in some manner," he says. "The most important thing we can do for a young person is support their mental health. That is high impact work. Hull is the perfect partner for us because we care so much about that."

Hull is grateful for both the show of support and the timing of it. We often experience a surge in demand for services at the same time the economy is in decline and external factors are decreasing donations and other supports. It can also be difficult to earmark funds to update facilities when the need for programming is so urgent.

## Impact of Gift



**\$1,002,201**  
total costs saved



**76,789**  
equivalent trees planted



**370** volunteer hours



**6,568,089 kWh**  
energy use reduced



**3,091**  
lightbulbs donated



“

We are so proud to play this small role in supporting Hull in the important work they do.”

— WAYNE BURKE

Co-founder and CEO, Link Energy



## Many hands make light(s) work

How many people does it take to change a lightbulb? In the case of Hull, it takes a team of big-hearted companies coming together for the sake of kids that have suffered immense trauma and darkness in their lives.

When Link Energy contacted Hull offering to retrofit our lighting to greatly reduce our energy costs and carbon footprint, they inspired a domino effect of giving. Dan Zembal with LED Source, who had partnered with Link Energy on previous community projects, graciously agreed to do so again — giving his time for free and providing the bulbs at a discount to Link Energy, to stretch their donation even further.

Given that much of Hull’s campus electrical infrastructure is quite old, many fixtures required rewiring and new ballasts. Link Energy had generously offered to pay for the required electricians. When we

reached out to Falco Electrical Systems Ltd. (our primary electrical contractor) for a quote, they immediately offered to do the work for free, providing four full-time electricians for the project. When it was decided that lighting in Hull’s on-campus school should also be updated, Falco offered to work for free again, sending four to six electricians every day for another week.

It was an incredible gift that was unexpected but not unprecedented. Having been involved with Hull for 13 years, Falco co-owner Miles Gillham not only understands our electrical needs, but also sees how our trauma-informed work helps young people heal and thrive. Falco is constantly finding ways to support us without ever being asked — encouraging their suppliers and network to get involved with Hull; advocating and negotiating for us with the City to help lower our construction costs; replacing our

switchgear to avoid the catastrophe that would occur if it went down; and doing numerous other upgrades and repairs, such as replacing a motor in a saw at no cost. They know that, by doing so, they are freeing up funds to support the direct work we do with our kids and their families.

“We will always support Hull,” says Gillham. “It’s such a great place. I couldn’t imagine where those kids would be without them.”

We feel the same way about Miles and company. “Falco is not only a trusted supplier to Hull, they are long-term supporters, advocates and partners to us,” says Debbie Wheeler, Hull’s Community Engagement Coordinator. “They are incredibly giving and have stepped up time and time again in support of our kids.”

Because of their partnership with us, we hold hope for our kids that their futures will be much brighter than their pasts.



In addition to the individual donors and organizations that support Hull, we would also like to recognize the following funders

