

KMFRC | **CRFMK**
 Kingston Military Family Resource Centre | Centre de ressources pour les familles des militaires de Kingston

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS



MFSP
 MILITARY FAMILY SERVICES PROGRAM

PSFM
 PROGRAMME DES SERVICES AUX FAMILLES DES MILITAIRES



2023/24 ANNUAL REPORT

KMFRC.COM



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KMFRC | CRFMK

Kingston Military Family Resource Centre | Centre de ressources pour les familles des militaires de Kingston

MISSION

Deliver services and resources that enhance military family resilience and stabilization in the face of unique military challenges.

VISION

To create a supported and connected community of military families.

VALUES

Our services and activities are measured by the standards set out in our values. They are also the principles that shape our behaviors and actions as we strive to best support our military families.



Trust

We build relationships based on mutual respect by listening to our clients, employees, volunteers, partners, and community members. We keep our word and provide reliable services and accurate, timely information.



Integrity

We are honest with each other, our volunteers, our clients and our community. We are dedicated to being reliable and transparent in all that we do.



Quality

We pursue excellence in everything we do to achieve the highest level of service for the needs of our military families and our community.



Respect

We value people, diversity, and equality. We treat all those we partner with, employ and serve with dignity and integrity.



Empowerment

We invest in staff and volunteers who take the initiative to support our clients and communities in enhancing their resilience and quality of life.

3



1994
—
2024

Celebrating 30 Years

March 2024 marked the 30th anniversary of the opening of the Kingston Military Family Resource Centre (KMFRC) and staff, members from our Board of Directors, dignitaries and our community came together to celebrate.

For the past 30 years the KMFRC has been known as the primary agency solely dedicated to delivering services and resources to support military families through relocations, absences and transitions.

Even though first steps towards creating an official support for military families here in Kingston were already taken in 1980 by formalizing a Co-operative Family Centre, the KMFRC officially became incorporated on March 28th, 1994. Since then, the support services offered through the KMFRC have been a true game-changer for military families. For the KMFRC and its volunteer Board of Directors, this milestone was a great opportunity to reflect with pride on 30 years of service to the Kingston military community, and to recognize the many achievements the KMFRC has made during that time.



The celebrations were ushered in by an online 50/50 fundraiser, and accompanied by a social media campaign featuring daily posts which highlighted pictures and anecdotes from the KMFRC's 30 years of vibrant history. Sincere congratulations to Ms. Lecuyer for being the lucky winner of \$4597.50 in our first-ever 50/50 fundraiser.

The main festivities took place in the form of a fun community celebration on Saturday, March 23rd, which was a delightful opportunity for families and individuals to mix and mingle. Families were able to enjoy activities like facepainting, a community game challenge, a balloonist, and all areas of the Centre were open to visitors. The new 'YOUth Matter' room welcomed young visitors to explore the Youth Connect App that launched earlier this year, and helped promote the new YOUth Matter Advisory Committee.



Finally, a retrospective exhibition in the KMFRC gym titled "Through the Years" displayed many fond memories from the past 30 years and certainly brought smiles to community members' faces.

The Anniversary celebrations were extended to May when the Honourable Bill Blair, Minister of National Defence, came to visit and congratulate the KMFRC, in person. During their visit to the Centre he was very interested to learn about all the different areas of expertise at the KMFRC, and was much impressed by the 30 years photographic retrospective exhibit on display. Minister Blair was accompanied by local MP Mark Gerretsen.



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



FY 23-24 saw an important milestone for the Kingston Military Family Resource (KMFRC) as we celebrated 30 years of incorporation as a registered nonprofit charitable organization.

Although the faces have changed, the passionate work done by caring staff to provide optimal support to our Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and Veteran families remains the same. This special anniversary marked a time to celebrate and to reflect on all that the KMFRC has accomplished since its inception and how the organization continues to grow and learn as we remain responsive to the needs of our CAF and Veteran families.

Listening to the needs of the families remained paramount as the modernized Military and Veteran Family Services Program (MVFSP) delivery model saw its second year of implementation. The new MVFSP addresses the reality that Canadian families are changing and that a “family member” is now recognized as anyone of significance to the service member. This modernized approach acknowledges that service delivery needs to change to be appropriately responsive to CAF and Veteran families. As such, services are focused on the three identified stressors that families experience related to the military lifestyle: relocations, absences and transitions (including individualized support). Showcased in this Annual Report are the many services and activities that the KMFRC team provided to support our local CAF and Veteran community as they navigated their Military and Veteran journey.

As the needs of the CAF and Veteran community have continued to grow with increased complexity, it was and it has remained essential to turn to our many valued partnerships to assist help build the capacity required to fully support the families that we serve. The KMFRC team works diligently to foster, develop and grow community partnerships. Our partners are important to us. The relationship with Resolve Counselling Services Canada provides opportunities for family members to receive life-changing, long-term mental health counselling support. In partnering with the Montreal MFRC, our local youth are able to connect with other military youth throughout Canada via the specialized Youth Connect app, reducing feelings of isolation as youth relocate. In recognizing the need to expand our marketing to better reach our families, St Lawrence College’s dynamic SPARK team worked with our Level 1 team to help create a comprehensive Marketing and Communications strategy, and plan, introducing modernized tools and virtual platforms for increased efficiency and effectiveness. Frontier College provided opportunities for our children to expand their literacy skills through their Read4Fun program. The partnerships developed with our internal CFB Kingston partners remained strong, as seen through our active involvement with the Helping Professional Network. As well, our established partnership with the Base Chaplaincy was beneficial in developing the impactful Military Dads program for fathers seeking support to increase communication and parenting skills. We also worked together with the Family Violence Advisory Team (FVAT) to offer a night of entertainment and laughter with the hilarious comedian Jen Grant, who wove laughter into family and relationship stress with a focus on healthy relationships.

We continued to embrace opportunities for talented students from St Lawrence College and Queen’s University to join us for placements, providing a mutually beneficial learning experience for all involved. Nursing students worked with Military Family Navigators to provide prenatal and perinatal resources, Early Childhood Educator (ECE) and Community Integration through Cooperative Education (CICE) students supported child development in our Les Petits Amis Childcare Centre, and an Office & Administrative student developed an efficient filing system to support day to day operations.

Many new initiatives were introduced, including the hugely successful Connect-A-Thon, which as its name implies, connected families and community resources to each other. Veterans Coffee Connections was introduced at the Royal Canadian Legion branch 560 which assisted in increasing knowledge of the many supports available for our Veteran community via the Veteran Family Program. YOUth Matter was born and has grown in strength as our team worked together with military youth to provide initiatives tailored to address their interests and needs. A lottery license was secured to enhance our fundraising initiatives which resulted in its successful unveiling at our 30th Anniversary celebration. As the designated donee of choice for the Order of St George, Kingston Priory, we hosted a highly productive sharing session which highlighted family trends and needs.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) remained an organizational priority. We were pleased to be able to reconfigure our community spaces to create more inclusive and welcoming environments to ensure that all of our families felt a sense of belonging upon entering. In turn, the community actively engaged in the naming of the spaces, resulting in the creation of the Community Hub and The Nook. As well, the organization actively participated in the **Innovation for Better Integration** initiative offered through KEYS Job Centre with a focus on inclusive service delivery. Staff furthered their awareness and understanding through participation in a variety of EDI training with Anne Marie Shrouder, an international speaker renowned for her work on building belonging. KMFRC's Navigational Team was honoured to be asked to present at the CFMWS Child Care Primary Office (CCPO) Inclusive Conference: Beyond Boundaries where the team showcased our special needs resource and assistive devices Lending Library, our Sensory Room and our partnership with KidsInclusive.

Recognizing that child care remained a primary stressor for families, the Les Petits Amis Childcare Centre (LPA) successfully reconfigured its classrooms and subsequently increased the number of spaces available for families. LPA continued to be enrolled with the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) program.

The CWELCC system supports quality, accessibility, affordability, and inclusivity in licensed child care. The objective of the program is to make child care more accessible and affordable with annual fee reductions to reach an average fee of \$10/day by 2025-2026. The program also recognizes the importance of recruitment and retention of Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECE) and incorporates phased in workforce compensation funding to increase wages over its five-year implementation plan.

KMFRC is incredibly proud of our dedicated and talented team that works diligently every day to provide outstanding support to our CAF and Veteran families. Acknowledging the need for more support required for our youth, we grew our staffing to include a Youth Counsellor. In addition, a Marketing Assistant was added to our Level 1 team to assist us as we engaged and started to implement the marketing and communication recommendations highlighted in our special project with SPARK. The work performed by our team is demanding and staff wellness remained at the forefront. We welcomed the innovative, thoughtful and helpful initiatives offered by our caring Wellness and Social Committee. As well, we were delighted to see the rollout of the much-anticipated Group Retirement Savings Plan that was successfully launched.

We were again honoured to host Dignitaries including interactive and memorable visits by both the Parliamentary Secretary, Brian May and the Minister of National Defence, Bill Blair. Additionally, we were honoured to welcome a representative from Mayor Bryan Paterson's office, Deputy Mayor Wendy Stephen, Mark Gerretsen MP and Ted Hsu MPP, to help celebrate our 30th Anniversary.

KMFRC continues to strive to align with the mission of the MVFSP to "contribute to the operational readiness of the Canadian Armed Forces by providing services that enhance family resilience and stabilization in the face of military challenges". We can do so thanks to the collective efforts of a talented and caring multi-faceted team, the Board of Directors, CFB Kingston leadership, Volunteers and community partners. Together we proudly provide quality services and activities to support the evolving needs of all members of our Military and Veteran families.

Colleen Fairholme

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Throughout the fiscal year, the KMFR Board of Directors worked diligently to support MFRC staff as they continued to provide valuable services to our military community.

Board members continue to participate in opportunities to help strengthen partnerships and advocate for the needs of our military families and staff members.

The Board has continued to diligently review existing policies, and implement new ones, when needed, to ensure operational efficiency and alignment with best practices in nonprofit management. We have worked to safeguard organizational financial assets and ensure transparency.

The MFRC has maintained a strong financial position thanks to our funders, donors, and community partners. Expenditures were carefully allocated towards services benefitting military families, and the staffing and resources required to provide said services.



The board has worked to maintain adherence to regulatory requirements and best governance practices to maintain the trust of stakeholders and donors. We have also prepared the organization for the upcoming deadline for compliance with the Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act.

The MFRC's impact on the community remains profound. I remain grateful for the steadfast support of our dedicated staff, volunteers, donors, and board members who have contributed to our organization's mission.

With continued collaboration and support, I am confident in our ability to meet future challenges and further our impact on the lives of those we serve.

Catherine (Beth) MacLean

PRESIDENT



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Elected at AGM Sept 2023

**Catherine (Beth)
MacLean**

PRESIDENT

Anna Downe

VICE-PRESIDENT

Denise Dubois

SECRETARY

Tanya Dion

TREASURER

Caroline Poulin

BOARD MEMBER

Grace LaRose

BOARD MEMBER

Robert Hamilton

BOARD MEMBER

Katelynn (Kate) Dixon

BOARD MEMBER

**Yevgenia (Jennifer)
Mykolenko**

BOARD MEMBER

Maj. Michelle Guertin

BASE COMMANDER'S
REPRESENTATIVE
(EX-OFFICIO)

Colleen Fairholme

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
(EX-OFFICIO)





LES PETITS AMIS CHILDCARE CENTRE (LPA)

We began our year by working closely with the Ministry of Education to improve our services, which involved reconfiguring and relicensing the childcare centre.

After extensive hard work, we were thrilled to announce that our efforts paid off.

On June 8th, while our educators attended the City of Kingston's 2nd annual Professional Development Conference, a moving team worked diligently to relocate the classrooms.

The following day, another team of educators put the final touches on our new learning environments. At the same time, our Program Advisor from the Ministry of Education completed her inspection of the new classrooms for final approval.



We were beyond delighted to be a recipient of the 2023 CFMWS Special Needs March Break Camp Grant; this allowed us to provide our school aged children with a variety of new sensory materials to experience and explore.

The sensory items we chose to incorporate in our program through the grant, help to teach self-regulation, manage anxiety, and develop and maintain both fine and gross motor skills through play, amongst many other benefits.

**Staff and Supervisors
are great. They are caring
and helpful.**

”



One of the highlights in the past year was the first Preschool Graduation hosted by the LPA on August 31st, 2023. **The event was held to celebrate the end of the preschool era and the beginning of the next phase of the children's education.**

Graduating from preschool is a significant milestone for both children and parents. **It's a moment to commemorate the hard work, dedication, and growth of young learners.** Preschool graduation is not just a ceremony; it signifies the start of a new chapter in a child's life, filled with new opportunities and challenges.

Our aim was to create an environment where families could celebrate their children's growth and development, while also instilling a sense of accomplishment in the children themselves.

The support that each family provided to all preschool graduates as they walked down the aisle to receive their diploma was heartwarming. The event ended with a small reception filled with yummy treats and a photo booth for everyone to enjoy.

In essence, preschool graduation is more than just a ceremony; **it's about celebrating learning, building confidence, and preparing our children for the educational journey ahead.**

“

My daughter attended the March Break Camp, and it was a wonderful experience for her. The educators in the classroom provided her with age-appropriate activities. My daughter really enjoys the new couch in the cozy corner and playing at the house centre. She really enjoyed the daily themes that the educators had planned, especially pajama day!! I would recommend the camps at LPA to any family that is looking for a wonderful day camp to keep their children active and busy.

“

We love LPA and are very happy with the care our children receive. Love the variety of activities the children participate in and the wonderful outdoor space. We would like to see more nutritious meals but also understand it's difficult to prepare food for this many kids and in the grand scheme of things it's not a huge deal.

LEVEL 1: INFORMATION & AWARENESS

Information and awareness are integral components of the KMFRC's service delivery model. Ensuring Military and Veteran families have access to reliable services and accurate, timely information helps to support them during relocations, absences, and transitions.

Level 1 Information has been shared through a variety of channels, such as: our website, kmfrc.com (which is integrated into the cfmws.com page), social media, print materials distributed throughout the base and at partnering organizations, e-newsletters, phone calls, other outreach activities, and even a radio campaign to promote the 30th anniversary and our 50/50 fundraiser.

In this fiscal year, the KMFRC Marketing Team launched a new Instagram account to enhance our social media presence. We are focusing on youth-oriented activities, hosting small competitions, and leveraging the platform as a key tool to increase client engagement.

Information Services

304 Clear-Ins

98 Welcome Packages handed out

Coffee Connections

309 Visits to Coffee Connections

9 Average number of participants per session



164%



**Increase in Facebook
Total Reach 24,000**



246

**New
Likes**

16.7% Follower Increase

Relocating to a new city can be challenging for individuals, couples and families. Whether Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members and their families are going through their first military posting or have already experienced multiple moves, relocation is a stressful situation that affects all members of the family. The KMFRC Information Services Team, comprised of our Information Services Assistants (ISAs), effectively engaged with couples and families that were new to the area. Our ISAs provide tailored information to address the unique needs of newcomers, ensuring dedicated support throughout the entire relocation process. Before arriving in Kingston, members and their dependents are encouraged to explore our website (www.kmfrc.com) and social media channels (Facebook: @KingstonMFRC and Instagram: @kingston_kmfrc) to learn more about life in Kingston and the exceptional resources we offer. From our Les Petits Amis Childcare Centre to our Military Family Navigators and Mental Health and Wellness Team, as well as our diverse events and activities, we provide comprehensive support.

Our team is always available to answer questions and provide guidance, offering information both in person and virtually to suit all communication preferences. Upon visiting, newcomers receive one of our unique Welcome Packages, which includes all relevant information presented in print form.

In the past fiscal year, we have enhanced the 'Relocating to Kingston' section on the KMFRC website. This update aims to help families feel more prepared and confident during their transition to Kingston. [Explore the new resources and information here!](#)

Over the past year, our Level 1 Team facilitated 32 Coffee Connections sessions, offering CAF family members the chance to meet new people, expand their support networks, and learn about the services provided by the KMFRC and the wider community. These sessions were instrumental in fostering relationships and highlighting community services through presentations by guest speakers. The topics and speakers were chosen based on the needs and interests of the clients. Notable guest speakers included representatives from Kingston Victim Services, Kingston Frontenac Public Library, and St. Lawrence Parks Commission. Coffee Connections has ultimately supported CAF families in their personal growth and helped them acclimatize to their new environment.

LENDING LIBRARY

The KMFRC Tiny Cat Lending Library continued to grow this past fiscal year. Suggestions from the KMFRC Mental Health and Wellness Team, Early Childhood Educators at Les Petits Amis Childcare Centre, and members of the CFB Kingston community have led to the addition of numerous books in both English and French, related to topics such as positive self-esteem, mindfulness, and parenting support and many more. We pride ourselves on the ability to respond to the needs of our community, and to provide unique resources to assist them.

The Lending Library continues to be a highlight of the support provided across service levels to military families, and its availability meets the outcome of improved coping skills developed by family members.

We continue to support other MFRCs, both neighbouring and afar, to develop their own Lending Library Systems, seeking to achieve continuity of services across Canada.



62 New items were added to the Lending Library



Nearly 50% of clients who have a TinyCat account borrowed books or assistive devices this past fiscal year!



LEVEL 2: NAVIGATIONAL SUPPORT

The Navigational Support team provides absence services and support during training, exercises and deployments.



ABSENCE SUPPORT

483

Requests for absence support in the 2023/24 fiscal year

58

Families supported through imposed restriction or unaccompanied postings



386 Absences were supported by the KMFRC directly, with some CAF members and their families experiencing more than one absence in the calendar year



39 Were supported by other MFRCs closer to their loved ones, however the KMFRC was the initial point of contact for these requests



57 Mass emails were sent to the families who requested to be on the distribution list

These messages included absence-specific information, details about absence-focused events and activities, and general KMFRC and community information

A highlight of this support has been continuing to offer bi-weekly Virtual Deployment Coffee peer support groups and activities throughout the past fiscal year. As well, monthly Absence Support & Connections evenings were introduced in June 2023, enabling families of deployed Canadian Armed Forces members to interact with one another while exploring a variety of relevant themes, with one activity for adults and another for children.

Our one-on-one absence support includes adding email addresses to the deployment email database and providing personalized service to meet the needs of a deployed member's loved ones. The deployment email database promotes KMFRC activities in such areas as absences, mental health & wellness, and community engagement, as well as local community events that may interest military families.

We encourage CAF members and their loved ones to meet with a Military Family Navigator to discuss and prepare for all three stages of an absence: pre-deployment, deployment, and reintegration. Throughout the absence, ongoing support is offered by way of warmline calls, meetings, and sharing of Road to Mental Readiness (R2MR) information and strategies. The KMFRC is also pleased to be able to offer deployment bears to families who will be experiencing an extended absence or frequent interval separation. The intent is to offer CAF members teddy bears that they can provide to their children or loved ones prior to leaving, to foster connection and communication throughout their absence.

Thank you for hosting the talk last night. It was great to meet other wives who are experiencing the same thing; I was happy to find out they find the “no end date” an obstacle like I do. I like your suggestion of still making plans for myself, and then change them if my husband is home by that day.

”

“

Thank you for the session tonight. It was nice to meet everyone and talk about our experiences. It made me feel not alone. I look forward to our next virtual coffee!

“

I can't thank you and your colleagues enough for the support, and invitations to the events and coffee. The virtual stuff usually happened in and around my son's bedtime, so though I couldn't participate, it was nice to know the support was there.

“

Thank you very much for the event yesterday evening. It was a great first introduction to events at the KMFRC. I appreciate all of your tips and kind words. Thank you so much again. I am looking forward to future events!

EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION SUPPORT

During the 2023-24 fiscal year, the Navigational Support Team prioritized establishing and strengthening connections with Kingston agencies that provide 1:1 career guidance and employment support.

These partnerships have been beneficial for Canadian Armed Forces spouses who are seeking a career change, looking for support with transferring educational certifications, or aiming to expand their entrepreneurial endeavours. Our team has also proudly provided referrals to the Military Spouse Employment Initiative, Military Spousal Employment Network, and CareerCOACH+, all of which offer dedicated supports that are specific to CAF spouses. By maintaining knowledge of relevant opportunities and resources, both locally and nationally, we can achieve the outcome of increasing families' abilities to access services when needed.





Second Language Training Services

The Information Services and Navigational Support Teams provide details about local and national second language training services that military families may benefit from for professional and/or personal reasons. National support, that can be accessed by CAF families, is offered by Rosetta Stone and Language Research Development Group (LRDG). Rosetta Stone has resources to assist with learning of various languages; however, as of the 2024-2025 fiscal year, this service will only be available to members of CAF families moving OUTCAN in the next annual posting season (APS).

As a result, all learners with a Rosetta Stone license for French or English will be asked to utilize the self-directed portion of the LRDG platform to continue their education. LRDG offers resources in both French and English, which CAF families can access via the self-directed model, or self-directed with online learning, which allows 4 learners at an equivalent level to learn grammar, verbs and oral communication skills with support from an LRDG tutor. The Information Services and Navigational Support Teams also inform families about additional community as well as national resources that are available to CAF members and their families, whether they are free, offered at a cost, or funded by Military Family Services (MFS).

Binder Workshops

During the past fiscal year, the Navigational Support Team hosted three Binder Workshops, covering two topics of interest and serving a total of **14 individuals**. The Relocation Binder Workshop helped families prepare efficiently for an upcoming posting, using the CFMWS Guide to Relocating online resources. The Medical/Educational Binder Workshop assisted families with the organization and retention of medical and education documents that need to be accessed frequently. All binder workshops provided essential tools to facilitate a smoother transition during relocation, thereby enhancing families' understanding of the challenges posed by military life.



YOUTH SUPPORT

Month of the Military Child

The KMFRC paid tribute by wearing Teal Up t-shirts every Tuesday throughout April, which culminated in a special Month of the Military Child celebration. During this event, families enjoyed cake, visited with Kingston Frontenacs mascot Barrack the Bear, and had an opportunity to paint rocks that could be brought to subsequent postings, as a visual reminder of the strength and resilience of military children and youth. People attending the celebration were encouraged to engage with other families and KMFRC staff, to strengthen and foster their military community. This event welcomed **109 attendees**, including **87 people from CAF families** and **4 people from a Veteran family**.

“

My son had a wonderful time mixing the different colours using the chart provided. He had a great time connecting with other military children in the play area. Thank you.

“

Spent a great, relaxing time with kids and adults, and made connections. Very much enjoyed the set up and especially the rock painting.

At Home Alone with First Aid

Over the course of the 2023-24 fiscal year, the Navigational Support Team delivered four At Home Alone with First Aid courses. Each had full registration, resulting in a total of **40 youth participating this year**. The At Home Alone with First Aid course remains popular, and supports military families by alleviating the strain of childcare during an absence, relocation, or transition. This increases understanding of the burdens posed by the 3 military challenges.





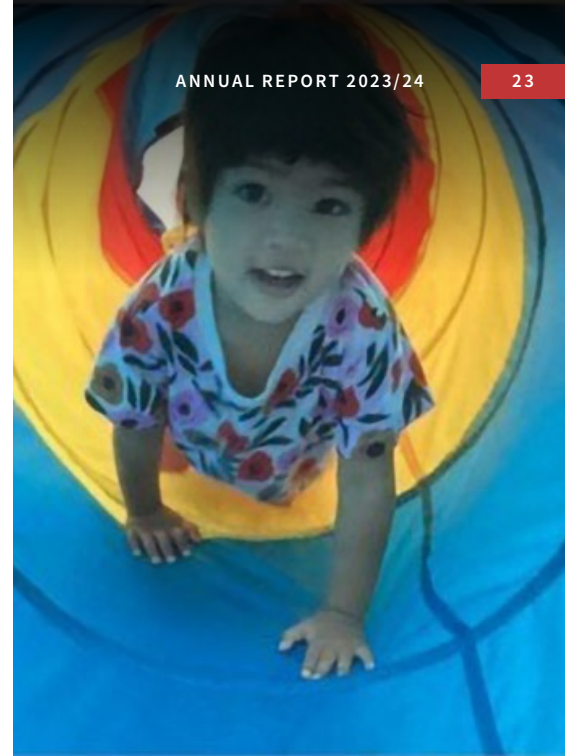
PARENTING SUPPORT

Baby Shower in a Bag

Perinatal health has continued to be a significant focus among Navigational Support clients at the KMFRC, including twelve Military families who received a **Baby Shower in a Bag** while accessing parent support during the past fiscal year. This resource was launched in March 2023, and includes wellness information, details about local perinatal services, and gifts from the KMFRC. It is offered to new and expectant parents in the Military community, who may be far from a familiar support network of family and friends.

A Great Start for Families (Kahwà:tsire Ronwatiyenawá:se) Centre

Throughout 2023-24, a Military Family Navigator (MFN) visited **A Great Start for Families (Kahwà:tsire Ronwatiyenawá:se) Centre** twice per month. One of the visits featured a limited-registration workshop about emotional coregulation among parents and children, which was attended by two Military families and one Veteran family. The ongoing partnership between KMFRC and A Great Start strives to support Military families who have recently relocated or are experiencing an absence.



“

I wanted to let you know that we already implemented most of the strategies that you explained to us, and things have been better (a lot better I would say).

“

Thank you so much for meeting with me and for the lovely Baby Shower in a Bag gifts. It really made me feel welcome to the community. I also appreciate the resources and look forward to digging in.



Baby on Board

Baby on Board was launched in the third quarter of the 2023-24 fiscal year. This monthly drop-in group supports individuals and couples who are expecting a baby, or have recently welcomed an infant, and are simultaneously navigating challenges that are inherent to the military lifestyle. Baby on Board provides a space for expectant and new parents in our CAF community to connect with peers and discuss local perinatal services and resources. A total of thirteen unique individuals accessed Baby on Board from October to March, inclusive. Participants included serving members, Military spouses, one Veteran, and a Veteran spouse.

These parent support services assisted families experiencing the challenge of relocation, increased their awareness of services that are available to the Military community, and enhanced their ability to acclimatize to a new reality.

SPECIAL NEEDS INCLUSION SUPPORT



Support our Troops
reimbursed

\$12,597

to families with special
needs dependents through
the Special Needs Grant,
with applications facilitated by
the Navigational Support Team

In 2023-2024, the Sensory Room was not only accessed by 23 local military families, but also by a group of students and three support staff from Thousand Islands Elementary School, who utilized the Sensory Room visit as a field trip for the children. The connection for this activity was made through a CAF family who was already supported by a Military Family Navigator. The experience was enjoyed by both the children and the support staff, who expressed interest in booking the space again in the future. The Sensory Room also had 158 visits by children from Les Petits Amis Childcare Centre programs (nearly 100% of whom come from military families) and, separately, 126 visits by Les Petits Amis educators seeking the space for self-care and meditation.

Through an incredible partnership with Support Our Troops, we were able to assist a total of 12 families, leading to the approval of 13 Special Needs Grants. These funds are integral to reducing the financial strain associated with providing services to CAF dependents with higher support needs.

To meet the fluid needs of military families, we prioritized reflecting on the special needs services and support we have offered in the past, and remaining aware of trends and programs in the greater Kingston community. Our goals include encouraging new families to join our activities, and ensuring our offerings are relevant, timely, and beneficial to the diverse group that we support. This reflection led to the development of the Family Advocacy, Inclusion & Resources (FAIR) Network, which will be launched in June of the 2024-2025 fiscal year. Through quarterly events and bi-monthly correspondence with families accessing the Les Petits Amis Childcare Centre, we aim to foster opportunities for peer connection, promote advocacy, and share knowledge and resources among caregivers and loved ones in military families who have dependents with higher support needs.

Our Special Needs Inclusion Services reduce the burden on families who are looking to reestablish services following a relocation, as they enhance the ability to adapt to a new reality.



VETERAN FAMILY PROGRAM

In 2023-2024 fiscal year, we witnessed an incredible growth to The Veteran Family Program (VFP) as essential relationships deeply solidified with key stake-holders and community partners, including but not limited to, the Transition Centre (where on-site VFP support increased to two days/week), OSISS, The OSI Clinic, VAC, Homes for Heroes, The Respect Forum, The Legions, and MVP+.



VETERANS & FAMILIES
FAMILLES & VÉTÉRANS

VFP saw **50** new clients, with **425** client interactions, equaling a grand total of **618** client facing hours. The fall SCAN seminar provided an opportunity to brief **84** members and their families on the transitional supports through VFP, with **12** individual conversations about how the VFPC can assist in their medical release transition.

VFP is also participating in a large Community of Practice group run by Kingston Community Health Centres. This facilitates strategic relationships and greater awareness, which directly benefits VFP clients. These close relationships enabled a more seamless and less siloed support to our transitioning members and their families, mitigating much stress and anxiety throughout the release process.

The Kingston VFPC was invited to help develop a database of national service providers and programs that exist to support our Military, Veterans and their families. This project is still underway and is set to be a valuable tool our community will greatly benefit from.

The Mental Health First Aid course was offered in June and November, with a total of **36** participants learning how to identify and better support individuals facing mental health challenges.



52 Spring SCAN
Seminar Attendees

In honour of the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations Peace Keeping Missions during Veterans Week, the VFP coordinated “The Gathering”; a beautiful event that brought together **41** various CAF members old and new, families, Veterans, and service providers. This event offered a chance to learn from the lived experiences of those who served our country as Peacekeepers and the wisdom embodied through their journey. We also received guidance from the CAF Indigenous Spiritual Leader on how to live more aligned with our true nature and the natural world around us to bring peace into our homes and lives.

A deepened relationship with The Atlas Institute for Veterans and Families and the Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research (CIMVHR) led to discussions, conference participation, and collaboration in building needed programming. Through a better understanding of the researched and identified needs of our medically impacted members/ Veterans and their families, Kingston’s VFPC created and will facilitate Navigating Healing & Finding Centre, a program that is set to launch in the 2024-25 fiscal year. Devon Cosgrove (Holistic Nutritionist) and Larry Aiken (Executive Coach and iRest Facilitator) will contribute to this program that uses an integrative approach of psychoeducation, somatic work of yoga, breathwork and iRest regarding trauma’s impacts to our nervous system and physiology.

10 Impactful VFP Discussions

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS

Wellness Day

The Mental Health & Wellness team hosted a Youth Wellness Day in August 2023, a day for youth to learn about **the importance of self-care**. The intention of the Wellness Day was to introduce youth to different ways of coping and expose them to community services that can benefit and increase their mental health. The Mental Health & Wellness Team and VFPC provided information, resources and each participant was offered a bag filled with resources to take home with items to help them focus on their mental health and self-care. The Wellness Day included an introduction to yoga, a guided meditation, how to set healthy boundaries, a self-defense class and a lesson about cyber safety with the Kingston Police.



14 Attendees



“

The self defense was pretty helpful and I learned new skills.

“

I got to meet new people.

“

Everyone was included, and it was informational.

Understanding Grief

Before the Holidays, the Mental Health & Wellness Team held an event called Understanding Grief, so participants could learn how to support themselves and others, especially during the Holidays. During this event, participants gained **a better understanding of what grief is and how it affects their brains, bodies and ways of existing in the world.** They also received tools that they could use to help themselves cope with grief and as well as guidance on how to be a support to someone who is grieving. Participants who attended were engaged and shared that they were grateful to discuss the topic of grief. The smaller group of attendees allowed a space for a more intimate experience and conversations. The participants were able to **openly share their experiences** and were given an opportunity to ask the presenter questions, which **created a space that made participants comfortable discussing their personal grief.**



YOUth Matter Launch

This fiscal year saw the launch of the YOUth Matter team, made up of the KMFRC Youth Counsellor and KMFRC Military Family Navigators. This team held a launch event in December aiming to introduce the **YOUth Matter initiative to youth from military families.**

Youth were asked, what services they would like to see offered and were given the space to share, what are current challenges military youth face. Youth were given gift bags with the YOUth Matter logo, these bags included a YOUth Matter sticker, pen, sketchbook, adult colouring book, and pencil crayons. There was a draw for a gift basket that included a variety of youth friendly items as well as a YOUth Matter hoodie.

5 youth attended the event. There were a variety of activities for youth to enjoy including cookie decorating, adult colouring, a gratitude activity, bracelet making, and the chance to see and try the Youth Connect App. The youth also had the chance to write their ideas for services and events on a bristol board or to place them in a drop box.





YOUth Matter Advisory Committee

The YOUth Matter Team made up of the Youth Counsellor and Military Family Navigators, started the YOUth Matter Advisory Committee in January 2024. The first meeting was held on January 16 with two members in attendance. The committee continued to meet every two weeks, recruit new members, and grow. At the end of the fiscal year, there were three committee members who helped discuss, generate ideas, and plan events and services for youth. **The committee is open to youth between the ages of 13-20 and gives them the ability to earn volunteer hours for their secondary school diploma.** The committee is ongoing and meets twice per month and continues to see a growth in members.

“

The YOUth Matter Committee means a lot to me as a place to be able to get involved in my community and to be able to make our space more welcoming for youth in military families coming into Kingston. It's helped give me a positive volunteering experience as well as given me the great opportunity to help organize meaningful and relevant events to youth today.

“

Being in the YOUth Matter Advisory Committee means I can have amazing experiences with people my age and help others my age know they have somewhere they feel welcome and appreciated. It means I can do something in the community that matters and has an impact on others. It also helps me keep up with everything in my own life, it keeps me organized and I am so grateful for that. It's an amazing thing to be doing and I will continue to help as best I can.

Youth Connect App Launch

The evening included a variety of board games for youth to play, registration for the **Youth Connect App**, demonstrations of the app, and pizza and refreshments.

The YOUth Matter team officially launched the Youth Connect App, in March with a Games Night. This event was open to **children and youth between the ages of 9-17** and included a variety of board games for them to engage in, the opportunity to sign up for the **Youth Connect App**, as well as provide pizza and refreshments. Participants were encouraged to bring their own game if they wished.

The Youth Connect App is an initiative spearheaded by the Montreal Military Family Resource Centre and is funded by True Patriot Love. It is an interactive platform where military youth from across Canada can connect with one another during dedicated supervised times. There are currently **22 Military Family Resource Centres across Canada participating in the app and a total of 109 users.**



 **25 Attendees**

I think we had a lot more participants than most events and it was a success. People showed up, communicated, and had fun. I also thought it was amazing and very well planned.

Me and my friends loved it and I hope for it to happen more.

”

The Mental Health & Wellness Team continued to have psychoeducation available through the “Wisdom for Wellness” podcast. Through the fiscal year of 2023-2024, we received 434 listens of our catalogue of 24 episodes on attachment, resiliency, grief, children’s anxiety, trauma, depression, boundaries, divorce and separation, transitions etc. In January 2024 we highlighted a special release episode with Michael Landsberg, founder of SickNotWeak, sports journalist and keynote speaker. Michael shared his personal experience with depression and spoke openly about men’s mental health and how he is empowering people to reduce the stigma around mental health and talk about it. Our community continues to have unlimited access to our entire archive of episodes whenever needed.

LEVEL 3: INDIVIDUALIZED INTERVENTION

The Mental Health & Wellness Team is very proud to share that for the fiscal year 2023-2024, we over doubled the number of clients served and number of short-term counselling sessions provided!

The Mental Health Team provided **617** hours of short-term counselling to **176 clients**. Funded by United Way, we were also able to offer longer term counselling once again at Resolve Counselling Services Canada to CAF families through our Community Resource Connections Program. Through this program, **57 additional individuals were referred to Resolve and received 333 hours of counselling services.**

Our Youth Counsellor Sarah saw great success utilizing art with children over the past year. Therapy through art allows children to process the things that have happened to them and helps reduce stress and anxiety as they work through these challenges. The development of mental, emotional, and physical well-being of a child can be enhanced through art since it is a safe space for kids to express themselves. Below is some art that our clients have made with Sarah, which greatly benefited their mental health.

In collaboration with the CFB Kingston Chaplaincy Team, we continued to work on the development and delivery of the Military Dads program. Military Dads supports men to navigate stronger and healthier relationships with their children, families, and support networks.

Military Dads increases the safety and well-being of military children and families. Military Dads is a 10-week group-based program that has been piloted and developed at CFB Kingston and CFB Trenton. Another pilot project began in March 2023.

I think all military dads should be required to take this program. ”





“

This program showed me that it is possible to be a good soldier and a good dad at the same time.

“

Through this program I learned tools that have been missing the whole time and now my toolbox is more equipped for both my career and my kids.

“

Of all the years I've spent working on things in my life, this program connected all the dots for me.



VOLUNTEER SERVICES

Providing our community members with meaningful volunteer opportunities, where they can share their talents and achieve personal fulfillment, is key for the KMFRC.

784.5

Volunteer
hours

13

Projects & activities
were positively
supported by volunteers

Volunteer Appreciation Event

In April 2023 the KMFRC was one of the co-organizers of the annual Volunteer Appreciation Event that was hosted together with PSP Kingston at a mess on base. The event was a great success with a considerable turnout of **48 PSP and KMFRC volunteers** and offered an opportunity for volunteers to mix, mingle, exchange and listen to an inspiring talk by retired LCol Steve Nash, owner and coach at Traditional Excellence.

KMFRC Community Garden

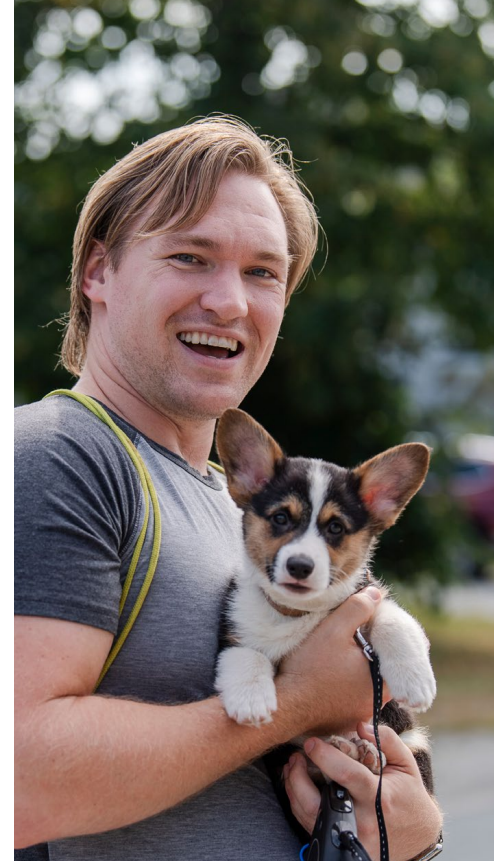
April also saw the return of the KMFRC Community Garden that had **several volunteers involved in keeping the garden**, as well as tools neat and tidy and water levels up. Thanks to one of our dedicated volunteers, we were able to install water barrels (generously donated by the CFB Kingston Eco-Team) and add on an Indigenous garden plot that followed traditional planting patterns.

Canadian Walk for Veterans

On September 24, 2023, the KMFRC was honoured to host the annual Canadian Walk for Veterans for a second time. The event brought together the **entire community to walk 'shoulder to shoulder' in support of Military, Veterans, and their families**. Thanks to many volunteers, this was certainly a memorable occasion for all. We had the pleasure to be joined by our friends from the Footsteps of Canadian Heroes Memorial Trailer, Music Healing Veterans, the Kingston Military Wives Choir, Royal Canadian Legion, Limestone City Branch 560, Kingston Frontenacs, and numerous volunteers stationed throughout the route to ensure everyone was safe and hydrated!

Garrisons Kids' Holiday Party

Once again, the Garrisons Kids' Holiday Party turned out to be an incredible volunteer opportunity for individuals in our community. This past year there were over **20 volunteers who contributed their time to this event, totalling over 160 hours of valuable work**. The success of this event would not be possible without wonderful volunteers from our amazing community.



The KMFRC is extremely proud of one of our dedicated youth volunteers, Aleena. **Discover the inspiring story of Aleena.**

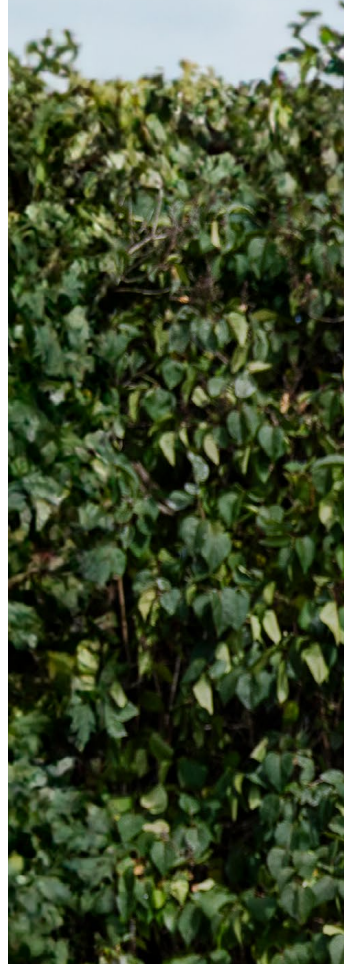


Throughout the summer of 2023, Aleena dedicated her time, volunteering 1-3 times a week, to water the front garden areas at the KMFRC. This simple act of kindness brought life and vibrancy to the Centre, creating a welcoming atmosphere for military families and visitors.

Aleena's journey as a volunteer at the KMFRC exemplifies the positive impact one person can make in a community. She has enriched the centre's environment through her consistent care and dedication, bringing joy to military families and visitors alike.

I chose to volunteer in the beginning as I thought it would be a fun activity to do to come out of my shell a little bit and most importantly to give back to my community. Now that I have volunteered at some of the events and seen the effort behind putting everything together to give everyone who attends an amazing time, I fell in love with it all. This volunteer experience has definitely broken me out of that shell.

”



I feel as though I can give back to the community while also making amazing memories and new friends. I will definitely be volunteering until I am finished with High School and most likely even beyond that”, says Aleena.

Aleena encourages youth to volunteer, “Just go for it, I know you might be thinking you’re going to be alone and not know what to do and probably be really nervous. I was all of those things and more but I have an amazing dad who helped me realize everything was going to be just fine and I was going to do an amazing job. With that wise and encouraging advice passed on to me, I promise once you put yourself out there, and talk to everyone, you will love it. You will make so many new friends and make many new memories that will last you a lifetime. Volunteering truly is a life-changing experience.”

After having been nominated for the national MFS Volunteer of the Month Program by the KMFRC Volunteer and Event Specialist, Aleena received this award in November of 2023.



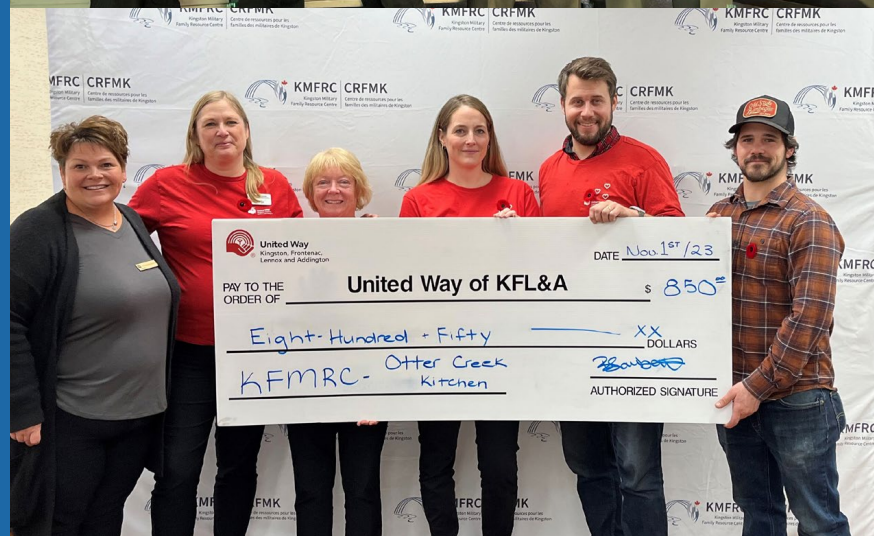
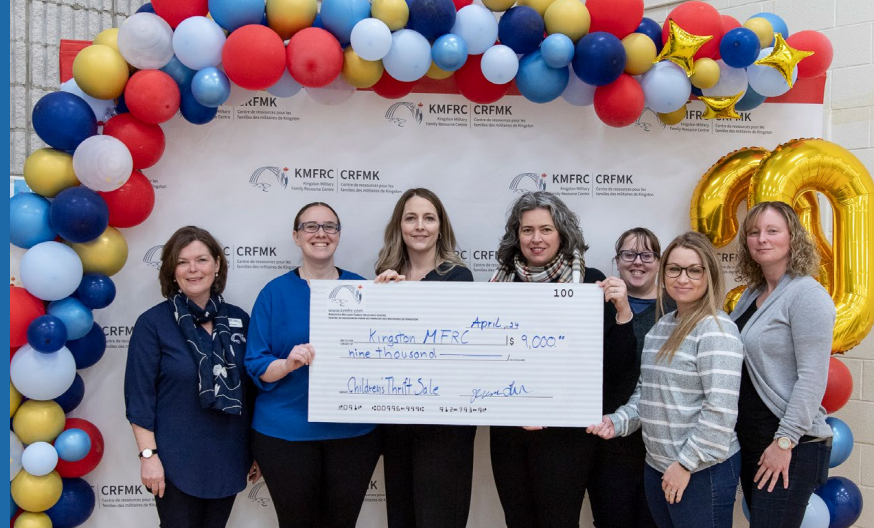
DONORS

Thank you for your support!

Together We Stand	\$17,250
Members of Order of St. George, Kingston Priory	\$16,445
Estate of Wyona Thompson (Trustee/ John Price)	\$15,200
Royal Canadian Legion, Limestone City Branch 560	\$5,000
Kingston Frontenac's Hockey Club	\$3,983
Vancouver Foundation (Starbucks)	\$2,700
One Veteran Society	\$2,318
Coca Cola Bottling, Kingston	(In-Kind)

Under \$1000 *monetary and in kind

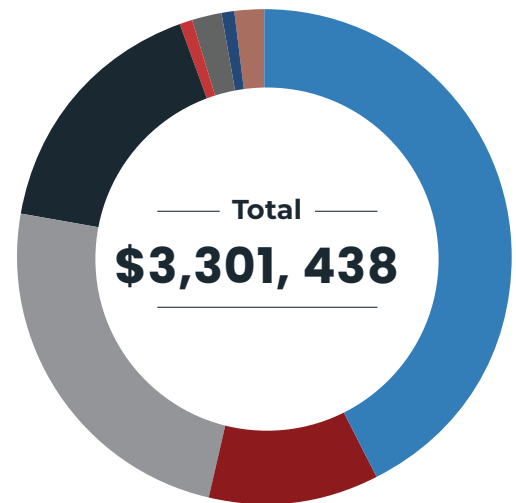
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VIA Rail
The Rocking Horse
SISIP
CANEX
BMO
Hampton Inn, Kingston East
MilSOBrave Box
Home2 Suites by Hilton, Kingston



REVENUES

MFS Funding	\$1,425,431	46%
CFB Funding	\$360,867	12%
Grants	\$788,890	26%
User Fees	\$542,959	18%
United Way	\$38,898	1%
Fundraising & Donations	\$50,192	> 2%
Amortization	\$22,513	> 1%
Interest	\$71,688	2%

0%



EXPENSES

Personnel	\$2,643,485	84%
Program Delivery	\$367,261	12%
Administration	\$97,434	3%
Amortization	\$23,150	> 1%
Bad Debt (Recovery)	\$315	> 1%

