



MFRC WINNIPEG **CRFM**

MILITARY FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE
CENTRE DES RESSOURCES POUR LES FAMILLES DE MILITAIRES



Annual Report 2022-2023

*Proudly supporting military and veteran families
in Winnipeg and the surrounding areas*

The Murphy Family
*(L-R) Joyce and Sean with kids Abby and Holly
Winnipeg, 2023*

Families being front and centre

Stephanie Gillis-Bodnar
Chairperson



This past year was filled with organizational changes. The MFRC team has been brainstorming, adapting, and implementing modernized services and processes that meet the identified needs of our community.

Throughout the year, the board said goodbye to four members and welcomed four new ones. With the staff and stakeholders, we are proud to have started working on a strategic plan centred on military families and their evolving needs.

On behalf of the board of directors, I want to thank our Executive Director, Allison Payne, and our staff for all their hard work this past year. Their dedication and commitment to our community is truly inspiring.

We are incredibly fortunate to have a dedicated group of volunteers who give much of their time to help enhance our services. We could not do what we do without them!

I also want to thank the leadership teams of 17 Wing, HMCS Griffon, and the units of O'Kelly Armoury Thunder Bay for their continued support and partnership throughout the year.

Finally, thank you to our community partners and stakeholders whose investment and support are instrumental to our overall success.

We look forward to continuing to serve our military and veteran families with modernized supports and services in the coming year.



A more solid ground

Allison Payne
Executive Director

It was in the last fiscal year that the Military Family Services (MFS) modernization took effect at our MFRC. Modernization had us restructure to focus on three core services. It had us realign our resources, including having a new team of subject matter experts to complement our shift in services.

This report covers the highlights of what we have done while learning to change our perspectives and approaches. You will also read about the strategic initiatives we have undertaken that reflect these changes.

Many thanks go to our volunteers, staff, partners, and funders. Each of you has played a critical role that has allowed us to thrive while making change possible.

The next year will be a year of continuous implementation and learning. We will ensure to remain responsive to our community's needs. We will continue our focus on psychoeducation supports around the domains of wellness. Our goal is to assist each family with services and information specific to their needs.

In two years as your ED, I can say we are now standing on more solid ground with our new team and modernized approaches. I am also glad we have engaged our stakeholders to develop a strategic plan which will guide our course well into the future.

We hope you will continue to support us and our families in the next year.



Thriving in the face of change

The Winnipeg MFRC thrived as the primary resource for military and veteran families in the face of operational changes in the 2022/23 fiscal year.

We are working towards becoming a psychoeducation centre while remaining a safe and fun place for the community to come together.

We are guided by:

Our vision We will ensure a community where all military families feel supported.

Our mission To develop resiliency by supporting a mission-ready community of strong military families.

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Whether it be for education, skill-building, peer support, counselling, or referrals to outside resources, we work together with families to understand and cope better with the challenges of:

Relocation

Assisting families to integrate into their new community before and during their postings and supporting them even when they are posted out

Absences

Serving families experiencing work-related separation or reunion with their loved ones due to deployment or training

Transition

Helping families of new recruits, members, and veterans ease their transition into or out of the service

Relocation services highlights



New Client Care Coordinator, a connecting point to the right resources

A new position was created and filled, which welcomes members and their families, assesses their needs, and aids in accessing the right resources. This position will also build community partnerships to ensure that the outside organizations we refer our families to understand and serve their very specific needs and the unique situations they face.

Relocation discussion and support

In November 2022, we hosted an evening of discussion and support for relocated families. Attendees learned about the resources available to them. They also made a Manitoba vision board, which allowed them to explore and build a to-do list of what is in store for them in the province.

"This being my first meeting with an MFRC, the staff guided me through the in-clearance process with ease and connected me with their new Client Care Coordinator. The meeting was concise, but I felt like (Jessica) took her time assessing my needs and signing me up for the appropriate programs. I also attended the Women's Day event shortly upon arrival and had a great time talking to the staff there as well as the other women in attendance."

-- A military member



Relocation services cont.

Thunder Bay

We provided pertinent information to newly-posted families to Thunder Bay during our Open Door Information Morning with the units in Thunder Bay. These were also key to building our important relationship with the units.

Other Supports and Services



Career and Employment

Winnipeg Employment Resource Hub

This Hub was created on the CFMWS site, which is set to launch in April 2023. This page is a one-stop shop for job search support and resources, including tips for landing a job and links to openings in Winnipeg and beyond.

Thunder Bay

The City of Thunder Bay, YES Employment Services, and Northwest Employment Works continued to assist us in serving the employment needs of relocated families.



Second Language

We asked families about their training needs to assist in our service planning. We learned that most prefer in-person classes, especially those at the beginner level. The rest want virtual, teacher-led training offered by the Language Research Development Group (LRDG).

Meanwhile, 12 students pursue self-led learning through our Rosetta Stone licenses. Nine of them are learners of French, two of English, and one of Spanish.

Supports and services cont.

Youth Centre

We also asked for the community's input about re-opening our North-side Youth Centre. This information will aid in planning services tailored to current needs. We will share the results in the coming year.



Childcare Centre

123

children

89

families



Last year, our MFRC Childcare Centre was home to 123 children, who comprised 89 families.

We provided inclusive full-time care to children 12 weeks to 12 years old through our infant, short-term infant, toddler, preschool, and school-age programs.

Apart from our emergent curriculum, our children had access to various indoor and outdoor spaces, play equipment, and toys and enjoyed playtime, special events, and unique experiences.

Unique experiences offered

- Circus Show
- RCAF Band performance
- Prairie Exotics
- Prancing Pony Petting Zoo
- Drumming presentation





Childcare Centre cont.

"You have been wonderful for our family. My oldest started in one of the infant rooms, and I felt quickly at ease after meeting the ECEs and seeing how caring they were towards my son and the other children in the room. Since then, the Centre has become an important part of our lives - my boys have loved their time in all the rooms they've been in. They are so happy to come in every morning, they have learned a lot from all the wonderful ECEs, and all the staff are kind, friendly, and helpful to us parents. We love seeing the friendships our boys have developed with their peers and teachers and all the fun activities they do throughout their days. Thank you for being a safe, fun, and caring place for our boys to grow and learn."

-- A parent

Nursery School

14 children
morning

18 children
afternoon



In the past year, the MFRC Nursery School served 32 children.

In an inclusive learning environment, our school offered morning and afternoon sessions Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. We also offered an introduction to French in our afternoon sessions.



Nursery School cont.

Highlight of activities

- Fire hall visit
- Wee Be Jammin music classes
- Fit Kids Healthy Kids games
- I Love to Read Month

All of our school activities were aimed at helping children reach their full potential in all areas of development. For example, we offered opportunities for them to explore and develop in arts and sciences or their fine motor and interaction skills.

Thanks to our parents for their active participation throughout the year. We particularly thank those who volunteered during classes, our fire hall outing, and those who read our children's stories during "I Love to Read Month."



What an amazing job you are doing!

My son is having so much fun at nursery school. When he came home today, he told me all about the poppy on his shirt and how it's for remembering soldiers (he said remembering soldiers and their anemones 😊). He told me all about how soldiers were fighting, and then poppies grew on the ground.

Thanks for doing such a great job with all the kids! You are awesome!

P.S. When I was dressing him to go play in the backyard when he got home, I was trying to get his jacket sleeve over his cast, and he said, "My teachers did like a really much better job than you" 😊

-- A parent



Absences services highlights

Services provided

Pre-deployment

- Everything Binder
- Deployment Dinner

During deployment

- Warm Line Calls
- Free Parcel Service
- Parcel Packing Station
- Parcel Drop Off
- Morale Mail
- Meet and Greet

Post-deployment

- Re-integration

Deployment

We provided individualized services to prepare the members and their families for deployment or work-related absences.

We also worked on streamlining our processes to meet their needs at whatever stage they are in their deployment journey.

Thunder Bay

Deployment dinners were held along with meet and greet to engage the families of the deployed.

Families continued to utilize the Free Parcel Service. Many came for our drop-off evenings to take the opportunity to send their thoughts and keepsakes for their loved ones.



Transition services highlights

Family Liaison Officer

Our Family Liaison Officer is a great resource to the clients and staff of the Transition Centre (TC).

Last year, we assisted 69 clients experiencing grief, loss, bereavement, civilian life transition, anger, depression, anxiety, sexual abuse, and relationship issues, including domestic violence.

We also helped provide the TC staff with the tools needed when working with the ill and injured. These included a 3-hour training on working with volatile clients.

69

clients served

Services provided

- Supports for the families of the ill and injured
- Supports for members posted to the Transition Centre
- Partnering with the Designated Assistant to support the bereaved

New Recruits

We support the families of new recruits and ensure they have the knowledge and resources to prepare for this new role of supporting a military member and becoming part of the military community.



Transition services cont.

Veteran Family Services

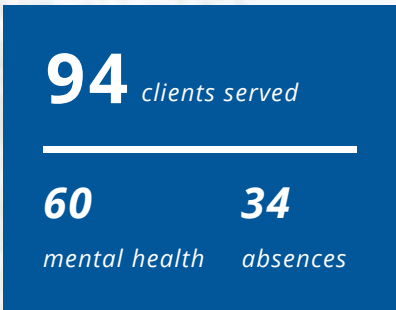
We offered our clients information, referral, and specialized services. Our goal has been to meet individual needs and find solutions and suitable supports.

A Mental Health First Aid Course was held at the end of the year. Twenty-eight participants from the veteran community learned to identify an emerging mental health problem and respond effectively to a mental health crisis.

Family Transition Advisor

This position was filled to help ease the members, veterans, and their families' transition to post-service life. Our support is focused on the different areas of wellness. We also conduct one-on-one meetings and information sessions on resources offered by the MFRC and the community.

Psychoeducation services highlights



Our new Child and Family Social Worker, who started in May 2022, has been our lead for offering psychoeducation services for our community.

In the last year, we were able to serve 94 clients. Of the 94 clients, 60 received mental health, and 34 received absenteeism supports. A high case of children, followed by adults, parents, and couples, sought professional help. Our Social Worker supported them through the challenges of relocation, work-related separations and times of anxiety, trauma, and crisis.



Thunder Bay

We referred families to the Family Information Line, Canadian Forces Member Assistance Program, Personnel Support Program, Health Promotion, and our core services staff and social workers. These subject matter experts complemented our services, which were geared toward offering mental health supports.

"Our daughter has been doing amazing, though - we have seen such a turnaround in her, and I am trying hard to be aware and continue supporting her through all of this. She has been stronger than I even knew she could be. I honestly don't know if I can ever truly express what you have done for our family. We knew she needed some help and someone to talk to, and learning that while facing another move was hard because I didn't know how to help her. You are 100% the person who has helped our young teen cope with all the things a "military child" has to deal with and so much more. She saw you as a friend, and I am so thankful to you for everything you did for her. Thank you, (Stefy), for being there for our daughter and allowing her to be a normal troubled teen again instead of someone who has to deal with deeper issues for the rest of her life." -- A parent

Strategic Initiatives

Gender-based Violence

We continue to learn more and help raise awareness about Gender-based Violence (GBV) and its impacts.

Our staff completed the Gender-based Analysis+ course by the Department for Women and Gender Equality. In addition, our Child and Family Social Worker sits on the Helping Professionals (HP) Committee that provides GBV training. With GBV funding and HP's support, she organized the Family Violence Training held in March 2023. The Crisis and Trauma Resource Institute offered this training, which was attended by 23 17 Wing and MFRC staff.



Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB)

We strive to incorporate DEIB in everything we do.

In the past year, we supported and joined several celebrations and awareness campaigns held within our military and the broader community.



17 Wing's Progress Pride flag-raising, May 2022

Collaborative and family-centred planning and service delivery

We have undertaken a collaborative planning process to enhance our services going forward. This has included our:

- Strategic planning activities that continue in the next year;
- Second Language Training and Youth Centre Re-opening surveys (see pages 6 & 7); and
- Post-activity feedback gathering to let us know how we did.

Strategic Initiatives cont.

Strategic marketing communications

Consistent with our modernization framework of serving the needs of families when, where, and how they want, we implemented a strategic and client-centric approach in marketing communications. Our major focus last year was on new media development, which included supporting the CFMWS team in the development and launch of the new and improved CFMWS site.

we listened.
Built from your feedback.
Personalized to your needs.



Increasing education and awareness

We learned about the work of our fellow service providers to be better informed of whom to refer the families to for specific support.

Staff meetings

During our meetings, we educated our team about the following services:

- Canadian Forces Housing Agency
- Designated Assistant
- Health Promotion
- Padre
- SISIP Financial



We worked on enhancing our community's awareness of our new structure and approaches.

Briefings

We introduced/reintroduced who we are and the supports and services we offer by providing briefings to:

- 1 Dental Unit, as part of the Helping Professionals Committee Briefings
- 23 Mental Health
- Barker College
- Fort Garry Horse Reserve
- Royal Canadian Airforce (RCAF) Band
- University of Manitoba Social Work Faculty Students Association



RCAF Briefing, March 2023

Strategic Initiatives cont.

Partnership and relationship-building

Strengthening our partnerships and relationships is of paramount importance to us. Thank you to 17 Wing, HMCS Griffon, the units of O'Kelly Armoury Thunder Bay, and all of our community partners for the opportunities to engage in their work in the last year. These allowed us to focus our resources and ensure non-duplication of services as we reach the members and their families we all serve.

Community engagement

- Toonie Walk in support of the Government of Canada Workplace Charitable Campaign (GCWCC)
- Volunteer Appreciation
- Wing Commander's Challenge in support of the RCAF Run

Community Outreach

- Backyard Bash
- Community Garage Sale
- Executive and Commanding Officers Coffee
- GCWCC and Transportation Electrical and Mechanical Engineering (TEME) Breakfasts
- Transition Centre Orders Group Meetings

Thunder Bay

- HMCS Griffon Enrolment Ceremonies



Wing Commander's Challenge, June 2022



Backyard Bash, June 2022

Thank you for your generosity



We are funded by the Military Family Services through the Military Family and Veteran Services Program (MFVSP).

Donors and Sponsors

Support Our Troops;
Women and Gender Equality Canada
Magellan Aerospace;
Royal Canadian Legion Branch #9 - Elmwood;
TD Bank;
Janet Heming;
United Way;
CanadaHelps; and

Our many generous anonymous supporters.

We made every effort to ensure that the above is an accurate list of donors and sponsors who contributed to us from April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023. Please let us know if there are errors or additions by emailing our Director of Operations, Brigitte Peters, at brigitte.peters@winnipegmfr.ca.

Enriching our social connection

Support from our community partners enriches our social connection. It makes for a fun place for our community and military families to come together. Thank you to those who sponsored several events that truly made a difference in our work last year.



Holiday Gift Shop

Our Holiday Gift Shop made a comeback in December 2022 through the generosity of our donors.

Seventy-five children and nine volunteer "elves" came out for this holiday tradition that allowed the children to buy gifts for their loved ones at a minimal cost.



Home Away From Family Appreciation (HAFFA) Event

Also, in December 2022, members of the 17 Wing Executive, MFRC staff, and a representative of the Padres were present at our HAFFA event to extend some holiday cheer to our military members who were away from their loved ones during the holiday season.

Thanks to our donors for allowing us to put together this special event and provide 35 members with gift bags and refreshments.



International Women's Day

Through GBV funding, we were able to celebrate International Women's Day, in person, in March 2023.

Guest speaker Lisa Bednar of the University of Manitoba shared with 35 participants the value of unpaid work in our families and communities.

"I really enjoyed the speaker and her topic. It is truly amazing how much unpaid work a woman does. Thank you for this relaxing event. I felt very comfortable with all the girls there. Which is important for me and my PTSD." -- A participant



Thank you for your steadfast support

Our Winnipeg volunteers have always been and will always be a vital piece of what allows us to thrive. That was why an appreciation event was held in their honour on International Volunteer Day in December 2022.

Thank you to all our volunteers - from our board of directors to those who assisted in our events, translated documents, or helped out at the front desk. Your steadfast support throughout the past year is invaluable to us!

An opportunity to meet more people

"I really enjoyed volunteering at the Christmas children's gift shop. The event was well organized for volunteers - someone greeted me right as I arrived, my role was clearly described to me, and there were lots of treats afterwards. All in all, I felt very appreciated, but also really liked the opportunity to meet more people in our community and to help support this wonderful event." -- A Holiday Gift Shop Volunteer



Weaving the Thunder Bay community together

50
volunteers

589
volunteer hours

Our Thunder Bay volunteers have weaved our community together amidst the challenges brought about by the shift in our services.

Thanks to our advisory committee and those who helped execute or support our activities. All in all, 50 volunteers showed their solid commitment and logged 589 hours for our success last year.





Strategic planning, March 2023

2022 - 2023 Board of Directors

Executive Members

Katy Wedgwood, *Outgoing Chairperson*
Stephanie Gillis-Bodnar, *Incoming Chairperson*
Dylan Lee, *Vice-Chairperson*
Corina Wappler, *Outgoing Secretary*
Vacant, *Treasurer*

Members at Large

Irene Wyrozub, *Thunder Bay Advisory Committee Chairperson*
Matt Janes, *Childcare Representative*
Jenelle Hollinger, *Nursery Representative*
Fiona Li, *Member at Large*
Kylee Van Zeyl, *Member at Large*
Melanie Abrahams, *Member at Large*
Sarah O'Brien, *Member at Large*
Bettina McCulloch-Drake, *Member at Large / Incoming Secretary*
Jolene Tod, *Member at Large*

Ex-Officio Members

LCol. Carl Gravel, *Wing Commander's Representative*
Chris Merrithew, *PSP Representative*
Allison Payne, *Winnipeg MFRC Representative*
Vacant, *Military Police Representative*



With Colonel Aaron Spott, 17 Wing Commander (R) and CWO Jim Sandall, Acting 17 Wing Chief Warrant Officer (L)

Not in photo: Kim Smyrski and Kendra Martin

Current Staff Members

Allison Payne, Executive Director

Brigitte Peters, Director of Operations

Kendra Martin, Childcare Centre Director

Corinne Reyes, Nursery School Director

Jenny Brennan, Program Manager

Kim Smyrski, Family Liaison Officer

Stefy Reed, Child & Family Social Worker

Marilyn Camaclang, Marketing & Communications Officer

Tamika Reid, Community Services Advisor & Veteran Family Program Coordinator

Jessica Jones, Client Care Coordinator

Carole Matiwsky, Administrative Assistant, Second Language Training Coordinator, & Receptionist



Thunder Bay

Evelyn Harrison, Director

Lorna Plant, Program Assistant

Evelyn (L) and Lorna (R) with Lieutenant Commander Farn, Executive Officer HMCS Griffon



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<https://cfmws.ca/winnipeg/mfrc>

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Charity Number: 13310 5536 RR0001

Please consider us when making your charitable donations or planning your wills or estates.