





Indigenous Land Acknowledgment

We would like to acknowledge that we are in Mi'kma'ki (MEEG_M_A_GEE), the ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaq people. This territory is covered by the Treaties of Peace and Friendship.

We are all Treaty People.

Message from the Halifax & Region Military Family Resource Centre Board Chair and Executive Director

In the forefront this year, was recognition that military families are changing, with many impacted by the cost of living in NS. Financial challenges, housing, health care, acute needs, family well-being, and a consistently high CAF operational deployment tempo were common themes affecting families in Halifax and region, that we heard and were responsive to this year.

We took a closer look at how families' needs have shifted, how they are accessing resources and information, and how we must diversify our approach in response. We remain committed to promoting MFRC services to ensure families know about the vast resources available to them by developing promotional videos to target audiences and military life challenges. We invested in understanding the needs of reservist families living outside the Halifax area and how we can best tailor support to address their unique circumstances, resulting in an outreach strategy that is underway and continuing into 2027.

Our professional, dedicated team continue to innovate. We developed and published Military Family Adventures, a book series for children. Developed a French version of our self-directed military lifestyle online training course, Educators Supporting Military-Connected Children. The youth team and committee planned and hosted our first Navigate Youth Conference, a for-youth by-youth initiative. All projects were made possible thanks to funding provided by Lockheed Martin.

As a non-profit agency, we augment services thanks to generous donors. With their ongoing support, we have extended our Community Pantry service another year, invested in financial assistance resources, all of which support families managing NS cost of living crisis. Our holiday assistance service, Op DASHER, served 88 families/360 individuals in 2025, with usage growing each year. All these services are low-barrier, which was important to families.

Shearwater Children's Centre (SCC) underwent renovations to enhance all classroom spaces and includes the addition of a security access system. Sustained staffing of qualified Early Childhood Educators continues to be a challenge, despite the province's investments in salaries and benefits for ECEs.

In Fall 2025, our Board of Directors reaffirmed the H&R MFRC mission, vision and values and developed new tri-annual Strategic Goals. This work was informed by an environmental scan, with focus groups, surveys, discussions with families, CAF leaders, and employees, as well as trends, and military family research. The Board sets and monitors the strategic direction for the organization, and we thank them for this important work.

Our H&R MFRC values and is grateful for the support and partnership of our military community, including Base Commander Capt. (N) Annick Fortin and Wing Commander, Colonel Tara Willis, as well as Chiefs who represent the interests of the military family community on our Board of Directors and the countless Command Teams we engage with weekly for deployment support.




Keely Anderson
Board Chair


Shelley Hopkins
Executive Director

Family-Centred Support

We offer flexible and confidential support, tailored to the needs and circumstances of families. Our team gathers feedback to inform our practice, planning, priorities and service offerings. Our responsive and proactive family-centred client pathway to care has three areas of focus:

Information and Awareness

- **5,142** occurrences of information and referral
- **214** referrals to Padre
- **3,573** CAF members checked out our base and wing pop-ups
- **1,014** CAF family members were reached at enrollment ceremonies
- Over **4,400** total outreach interactions
- Over **7,000** interactions with family members through community engagement connection activities
- **948** morale mail packages sent through our sites



Astror, the RCAF Mascot, visits Angela at our information table for the RCAF Run.

Navigation Support

- **9** naval deployments and **7** land-based deployments
- **1,387** check-in calls, **1,548** texts, **278** emails to **625+** families experiencing an absence
- Over **5,300** individual interactions with family members of all ages through a variety of navigation programs and services
- **78** family members with diverse needs supported
- **48** families supported with child care navigation



Natasha, Andrée and Dena at the very soggy homecoming of the HMCS Ville de Québec.

Intervention Services

- **300+** family members accessed our Mental Health & Well-Being services. The top presenting issues included accommodations, mental health (self), and couple relationships.
- **32** families experiencing financial challenges were supported with financial assistance.
- **851** nights of stay in our short-term accommodation apartments
- **75** children attended our Occasional & Respite Child Care service



Leanne and Alicia, two of our Occasional & Respite Child Care staff, in one of our recently refreshed spaces.

Cultivate and Enhance Relationships

Beyond Halifax & Region

To help us identify the military family footprint in communities within our geographical area and learn more about their demographics, challenges, and current supports, a comprehensive review of community organizations was conducted from Halifax to Cape Breton. Reservist and Family demographic information was also collected and will inform our targeted marketing approach.

Outreach was conducted with **31 organizations** across **6 counties**, with engagement and responsiveness. We are looking forward to fostering these relationships!

Unit Family Representatives

The Unit Family Representative (UFR) role is a collaborative effort to increase the resilience of members and their families in meeting the challenges of military life.

17 UFRs completed training this year. We have **68** total UFRs across **56** Units.

Family Connection Building

Our team hosted several programs which focused on building relationships and friendships. These programs included cozy evening gatherings, weekend family fun activities, Franco dinner group, daytime parent-focused playgroups, and plenty of fun activities for youth! Families enjoyed meaningful conversations with others who understand the military lifestyle in a supportive, stress-free space.



(L-R) CPO1 Pascal Harel, Capt(N) Annick Fortin, H&R MFRC Executive Director Shelley Hopkins, CPO1 Troy Beazley and VAdm Angus Topshee at the HFX Wanderers' DND Appreciation Match during Fleet Week 2025.



Our staff happily stand-in for families from far away at homecomings.



The team from Eastlink, the presenting sponsor of Bluenose Bienvenue, got a special visit from Jawslyn with the Halifax Tides



The Discovery Centre provided an exciting and engaging scientific display at Bluenose Bienvenue. This event is one of the ways we support military families connecting with one another and their community.



Thank you for everything you have done for me. There are not enough words to express my gratitude.

A Look Back

This September will mark our 40th anniversary of support for military families. Since then, we've become a cornerstone in a national network of MFRCs in Canada. Here is a snapshot of our history.



Our first location on Gottingen Street



First location staff team



Shannon Park memories

Thousands of families.
Hundreds of volunteers.
One community.



90's flashback!



Windsor Park construction



Windsor Park opening in 2004



Pride Parade 2016



Shearwater team 2008

Built Around Families

Every program, service, and initiative begins with one question: What do military families need? For 40 years, that focus has guided our decisions and shaped our impact across our military community.



Military families are at the
❤️ of everything we do.



Educate and Advocate

Supporting Families Through Learning, Connection, and Advocacy

In the Spring, we presented to the Seamless Canada Steering Committee on spousal employment, as well as supporting military-connected children through relocation. We shared our approach to school outreach and our training program for educators.



She helped me with so much as a spouse returning to work - resume writing and portfolio review. She's amazing!

Over 1,540

student connection interactions

Scan the QR code to access the course.



14 local schools
5 Francophone
9 Anglophone

202 enrolled in the Educators Supporting Military-Connected Students course

Career Counselling

We take a comprehensive and client-centered focus to Career Counselling, focusing specifically on the individual's needs and finding solutions for their particular job/life challenges. 56 spouses/partners and youth were supported with Career and Employment Counselling.

Classroom Collaboration

Last year, we expanded our reach to schools and students in a larger area. We were invited to present to SchoolsPlus Facilitators during their Professional Development day, and we continue to see a large number of enrollments in our online, self-directed military lifestyle training course **Educators Supporting Military-Connected Children**, which was developed with funding from **Lockheed Martin**. This year, we were able to launch a French version of the course!

Strengthening Our Team

Learning That Supports Our Work, Our People, and Our Purpose

Over the past year, we strengthened our approach to learning through a structured monthly training program. Training is aligned with the our 11 core competencies to ensure learning directly supports professional practice, service quality, and organizational values. The program was shaped by operational realities, staff experience, and family feedback. It included a blend of expert facilitators, CAF leadership engagement, and internal expertise.

- Training topics reflected both strategic priorities and practical, day-to-day needs, such as:
- CAF operational readiness and organizational priorities
 - Family-centred practice and family engagement
 - Growth mindset, engagement, and leadership development
 - Cultural competency, neurodiversity, and inclusive practice
 - Confidentiality, policies, and practical tools to support daily work

By treating learning as an ongoing process rather than one-off sessions, training has become a meaningful driver of capacity building, consistency, and shared momentum, supporting staff, strengthening practice, and reinforcing our purpose.



Chris

Michael

Responsiveness and Innovation

Responding to Current Family Needs with Flexibility and New Resources



Cortney and Jenna led the children's book project. Special thanks to Katie Robinson for the adorable illustrations and bringing our MFRC critters to life!

Community Pantry & Food Insecurity

The pantry continues as a self-sustaining military family community initiative. Usage remains steady, with daily visits to both locations. This is all possible thanks to the incredible generosity of local donations from families, Units, and partners like the **Veteran Farm Project Society**, who provided non-perishable food items, school supplies, socks, small toys, colouring books, and small books.

We would like to recognize the support of the Province of Nova Scotia for providing us with an \$8,000.00 donation from their Feeding Communities Funding.



I am just really grateful for the support my family received from the MFRC and how easy the program was to access. I felt supported without feeling ashamed of my family's situation.

Military Family Adventures: Stories of Strength and Pride

We are launching a new resource! **Military Family Adventures** is a heartwarming collection of stories that explores what it means to be part of a military family, learning to adapt to new homes, staying connected during times apart, and embracing new adventures with courage and joy. Perfect for children and families, these tales remind us that love, resilience, and connection make every military family special.



Shelley with Jessica Miller at the Veteran Farm Project in West Hants, with some of the gorgeous blooms from their gardens.

Op DASHER

The number of families accessing this service fluctuates yearly, but we have seen a steady increase in the last three years. We rely on the generosity of individuals and Units to fund this initiative. This year **88 families** (369 family members) were assisted through our Op DASHER holiday service.

Shearwater Children's Centre

A Milestone Year, Inclusion, and Enhanced Improvements



Shearwater Children's Centre (SCC) celebrated its 30th anniversary with the 2024-2025 school year. Celebration activities included social media posts highlighting photos and stories of former children, families, and employees, reflecting on shared memories and reconnecting with where children are today. Children also participated in a commemorative drawing contest, with the winning design featured on a tote bag distributed to current Centre families.

The 2025-2026 year also included significant facility improvements and ongoing construction projects. Updates included new flooring, upgraded plumbing, and new cabinetry in several classroom spaces, and installation of a secure access system. These renovations have created refreshed, welcoming learning environments. Construction will continue into the 2026-2027 year, and we look forward to completing these much-needed improvements.

The SCC focused on strengthening inclusive practices and policies. Key areas of focus included increasing family engagement through enhanced communication and meetings, providing families with home-based supports that align with Centre strategies, and building the skills and capacity of our Early Childhood Educator (ECE) team to better support all the children in our care.



SCC Staff (below) with the winning artist for the 30th anniversary tote bag design.

Donor Impact

We are thankful for the continued commitment from our donors, including the corporate, community organizations, Units, and individual supporters, who fund essential programs and services. Funds raised support our mental health initiatives, short-term accommodations, community pantry, financial support resources, Emergency Relief Support, and so much more.

- AD Astra Lodge #130
- Aethera Technologies
- Angus G. Foods
- BMO Bank of Montreal
- Eastlink
- Halifax Wanderers FC
- Highway of Heroes Tribute NS Association
- Lockheed Martin
- Mi'KMAQ Office Furniture & Interiors
- Military Police Unit - Halifax
- Music for Mental Health
- Navalis
- Our Lady of the Assumption Chapel
- Royal Bank of Canada
- The Community Foundation of NS
- The Navy League of Canada
- The Royal Canadian Legion
 - Nunavut Command Branch 148
 - Vimy Legion Branch 27
- Veterans UN Nato Group

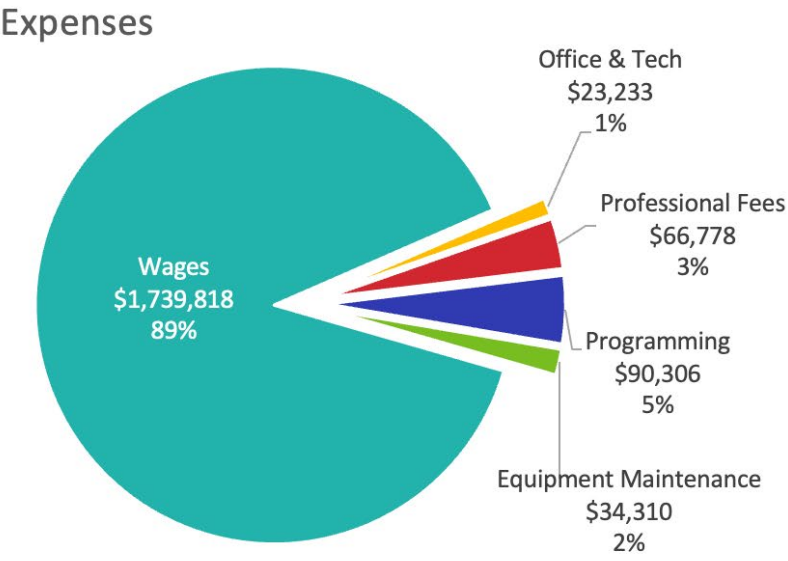
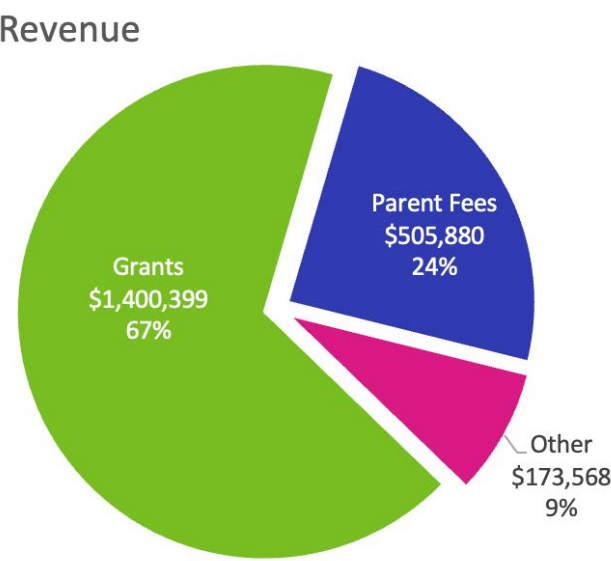
In addition to monetary donations, we are grateful for the in-kind donations received during special events, such as coffee from Angus G Foods at departures and arrivals, Domino's Pizza (Dartmouth), cake from BMO, and Ice Cream from the Dairy Farmers of Nova Scotia.

We would also like to thank M&M Foods, Together We Stand Foundation, and The Personal Insurance for donating gift cards in support of military families.

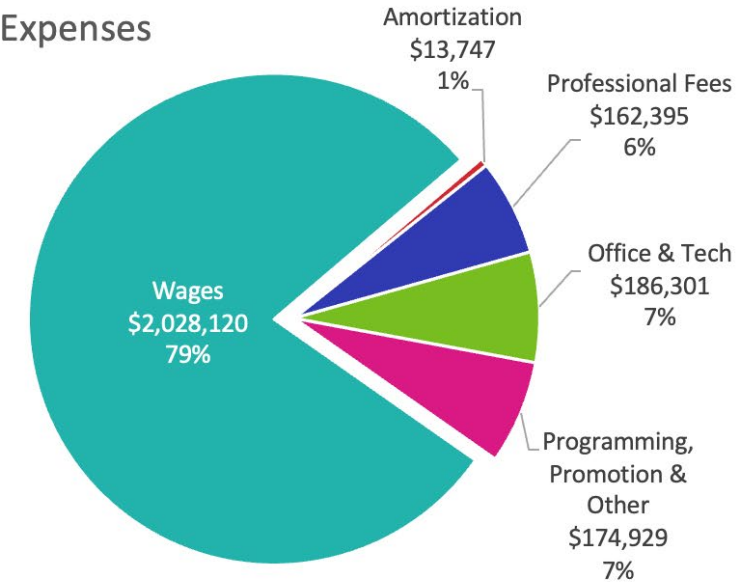
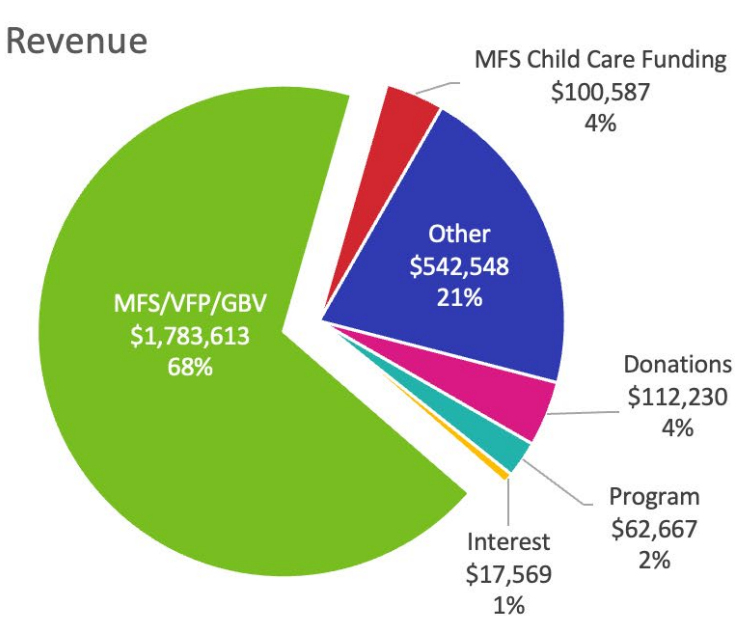


A special shout out to our youngest donors, Hendrik & Harrison, who chose the H&R MFRC to receive proceeds from their race during the Bluenose Marathon, raising \$1,000!

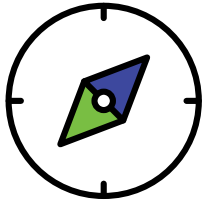
Shearwater Children's Centre Financials



H&R MFRC Financials

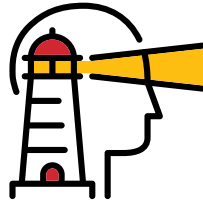


Mission, Vision & Values



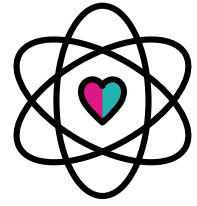
Mission

To strengthen the well-being of all those who share the unique experience of military life.



Vision

Strong, connected, resilient military families.



Values

Innovative
Collaborative
Inclusive

Looking Ahead

Our Strategic Goals for the next three years:

- Responsive - Evolve to Meet the Needs
- Relationships - Enhance Connection and Collaboration
- Reliable Support for Military and Veteran Families

Our services are being enhanced through the addition of a few new positions. We are thrilled to now have a full-time Francophone counsellor on our Mental Health team, additional staffing for Occasional & Respite Child Care, and we will be hiring a brand-new position to provide Housing and Healthcare Assistance.

We are also making a few upgrades to our look! We've upgraded our logo to include an image of the province to help families recognize that our support does not end at the Halifax boundary; our connections extend throughout the province. We've also updated the photos in our Family Banner Image – thank you to all those who shared their family photos! And finally, we are also launching a new Registration System over the summer months to replace our outdated system.



MFRC
HALIFAX & REGION
CRFM

Est. 1986