

## The Burning Bush

Troy Davies, Chief Executive Officer



*This is a season of transitions.*

Fall is well underway. The days are becoming shorter and the weather is getting colder.

Even though it is a sign of the winter to come, we can embrace and welcome this season mindful of the promise that following winter, spring always comes again.

This a good analogy for the time in history we are currently living. It has been eight months since the first case of COVID-19 was identified in Alberta. Since then, we have adapted, over and over, both individually and as an agency. We have changed the way we work, live, socialize, learn, and care for each other.

We all hoped this season would have passed by now. Instead, the virus is still here and continues to impact almost every area of our lives. I know many of us are experiencing “COVID fatigue.” We are tired of the restrictions, changing guidelines, and social distancing. It is not intuitive to live this way, and it is hard for each of us in different ways.

That said, our people continue to rise to meet the challenges the pandemic has created, because at the heart of our work are vulnerable individuals, children, and families who are counting on us. More than ever before, our clients need CSS, and I know that we won't let them down.

As we approach winter, I encourage each of you to remember that the cold will not last. The snow will melt. And when it does, we will be rewarded with the beauty of new blooms, fresh, hopeful, and ready for their season.

*Wishing you joy,*

Troy



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## CSS IN THE NEWS

Check out the links below to see recent news!

Catholic Social Services puts out a call for help as demand rises <http://bit.ly/CTVSOH>

Lurana Shelter to continue ministry to abused women under Catholic Social Services <http://bit.ly/LuranaCSS>

Demand at Catholic Social Services jumps during pandemic <http://bit.ly/CSSRD>





# CSS SPOTLIGHT

## Welcome Home

Community Outreach & Disability Service

CODS & WELCOME HOME STAFF AT THEIR 2019 CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

**We hear it all the time – “CSS does so much, I don’t even know half the programs we have!” And so each quarter, we’ll spotlight one of our programs and share some of the incredible work you’re doing across the agency. Here’s what Claire Rolheiser, Team Lead, had to say about our Welcome Home program.**

### FOR STAFF WHO AREN’T FAMILIAR, WHAT IS OUR WELCOME HOME PROGRAM?

Welcome Home is a volunteer-based program that works with individuals and families making the transition from homelessness to settling into a home. We operate in collaboration with professional housing and support services to address different needs of our newly-housed participants while helping them find community and companionship with volunteers.

### WHAT UNIQUE GAPS DOES WELCOME HOME FILL FOR PARTICIPANTS AND VOLUNTEERS?

Once individuals are housed, they often experience ups and downs as they adjust to life in their new homes. Although they receive professional supports through their Housing First providers, they often find themselves stuck in their apartments, lacking social support. Volunteers help Welcome Home participants feel at home in their new communities by building stable, honest, and trusting relationships that increase their social involvement and build their self-confidence.

Volunteers are often surprised by how rich and mutual their relationships with the participants become!

### HOW HAS PROGRAMMING CHANGED IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19?

COVID-19 has created some challenges for Welcome Home, but we’ve adapted and persevered!

Our monthly volunteer training sessions have moved online, with a variety of engaging topics and speakers, and we’ve begun delivering monthly care packages to participants to ensure they continue feeling supported, despite in-person visits being restricted. Staff and volunteers have also maintained regular check-in phone calls to help participants stay connected.

Since Phase Two of Alberta’s reopening, volunteers and participants who feel comfortable meeting in person have been able to do so with new safety protocols in place. Match meetings for new volunteers and participants have safely resumed and we are looking forward to recruiting new participants and volunteers in the months ahead!

### ANYTHING ELSE YOU WANT TO ADD?

Our participants are an ongoing source of inspiration for us as we get to know them and journey alongside with them. The friendships that have been built over the years have been amazing to see, and really remind us how resilient and courageous the human spirit can be.

**Want to see your program in an upcoming CSS Spotlight?**

**Email: [communications@cssalberta.ca](mailto:communications@cssalberta.ca)**

## EVENTS



### CEO Town Hall

November 9, 2020 - 12 p.m.

Virtual – keep your eyes on the Portal for details!

## Masks from your SWELL Committee!



In the absence of the traditional social and wellness activities put on by the SWELL Committees due to COVID 19, the

SWELL Committee was pleased to be able to purchase two cloth masks for each staff member across the agency.

We hope you’re proud to don your new CSS mask while in our offices or out in the community. Whether you’re surrounded by loved ones or strangers, we’re grateful to our CSS family for doing their part to keep every precious life around us safe.

The SWELL Committee wishes you, and your loved ones, good health and happy moments. We look forward to being together in person as soon as safety permits.

*Note: If your work includes wearing procedural/surgical masks, please only use the mask provided by the Government of Alberta. Keep the new CSS mask for times outside of work.*

*If you have not received your CSS mask, please contact your supervisor.*



# CSS Anti-Racism Advisory Committee to be Launched

At CSS we are a family of all cultures and faiths. Our agency is committed to listening to and learning from the lived experiences of people of colour, and to ensuring our work is firmly rooted in anti-racist practice.

To that effect, the CEO will be launching an Anti-Racism Advisory Committee, to help better understand the experiences of staff and clients from various ethnic and racial backgrounds. The committee membership will include staff from across the agency, representing the diversity of those we employ and serve.

The Anti-Racism Advisory Committee will work directly with CEO, Troy Davies, to address systemic racism experienced by staff and clients, and build a more inclusive agency and society.

*Watch the Beacon and Portal for updates on this work in the coming months.*

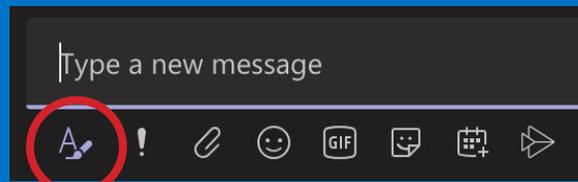


## I.T. Moment

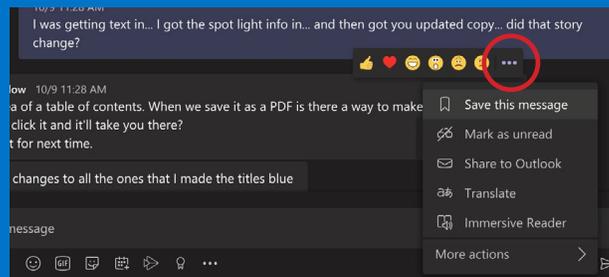
Kirsten Anderson, Director, I.T.

### MS Teams Tips & Tricks!

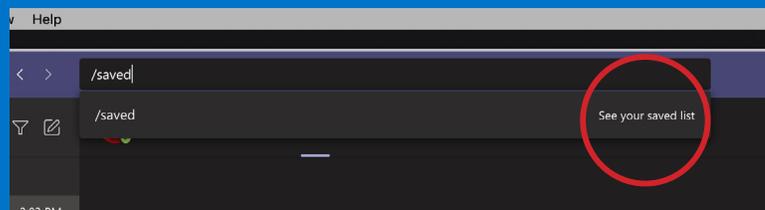
Do you want to help draw attention to a message in teams by changing font color, size, creating numbered lists, and more? Turn on the Rich Text feature by clicking the Format button below the chat box and begin customizing your messages.



Is there an important message you want to bookmark for later? Click on the “...” at the top right corner of the message and select Save this message.



To view your saved messages, type /saved into the search bar and press enter. A list of your saved messages will appear in the left panel.



## COVID-19 Engagement Survey Results

In response to the results from our recent COVID-19 Employee Engagement Survey, CEO Troy Davies posted a series of short videos addressing five themes that emerged from responses: Safety, Stress and Mental Health, Hazard Pay, Remote Working, Sick Days, and Communication. Staff can find these videos, and more, [on the Portal](#).

During times of uncertainty, CSS leadership will always strive to provide clarity and reassurance as we move forward together. Thank you to all those who made their voices heard in this year's Employee Engagement Survey!



# COVID-19 Employee Engagement Survey



## Sign of Hope Employee Giving

On September 22, we launched our annual Sign of Hope Fall Appeal and called upon our supporters to help raise \$2 million for Sign of Hope funded programs. Each year, staff join in answering this call by donating, signing up for payroll deductions, and sharing with loved ones.

Last year, staff contributed \$70,538 through payroll deductions, SHED Committee events, and more. This support helps change the lives of all those we serve in our Sign of Hope funded programs! For more information about employee giving options, [click here](#).

Did you miss our Sign of Hope launch event livestream? [Click here to watch the recording](#).



ISS STAFF AND CLIENT SPEAKER EVA MARIE ENJOYING FRESH AIR ON THE HOTEL MACDONALD BALCONY AT THE CAMPAIGN LAUNCH.

## Payroll Questions & Answers

with Susan Rizzuto, Chief Administrative Officer

Over the next several months Payroll will be undergoing some changes and upgrades to improve the employee experience. Read on for what you can expect and how you can help.

**Q: What is the goal of Payroll?**

**A:** To make sure all employees get paid correctly and on time.

**Q: What can I do to ensure my pay is accurate and on time?**

**A:** The following steps will help ensure you are paid properly:

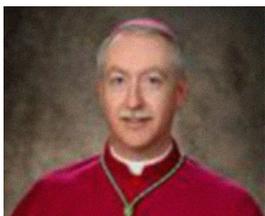
1. Review and approve your timecard. Make sure it is correct each pay period.
2. Record any vacation days, personal or sick days.
3. Inform HR of any personal information changes, address changes, or changes in your banking information.

**Q: What are the changes that might impact you?**

**A:** In October, we updated Kronos to create a quicker and easier login experience by removing the need for Flash. We also recently phased out paper cheques. In the future, pay adjustments will be put directly into your bank account.

We are working to make processes easier for supervisors and employees by making additional system enhancements our goal is to ensure you are paid accurately, consistently, on time, and with fewer errors.

## Archbishop's message to CSS staff



Archbishop Smith shared a message of solidarity with and gratitude for CSS staff, who have continued to care for those we serve despite the challenges COVID-19 has created. [Watch the Archbishop's message here](#).

## Agility Study Underway

When COVID-19 entered our communities last spring, our agency worked quickly to adapt and keep staff and clients safe. For many office-based staff this meant remote work stations and alternative work arrangements.

Now, the agency has commissioned a study of all office-based positions in Edmonton to determine the level of agility (ability to work remotely long term) for each of these positions. The study has taken place over the past several weeks, and information collected will help determine future facility and human resource planning.

Edmonton-based office staff are currently housed in four separate office buildings. With the Grovenor (CFCS) office lease ending in December 2021, the agency has begun exploring the possibility of one, consolidated Edmonton office space.

Ultimately, administration will bring a variety of options to the Board in December 2020, and a careful and data-informed decision will be made that takes into account all relevant factors regarding whether to consolidate offices or not.





## Stories from the Frontlines

Years of struggling with mental health had taken a devastating toll on Duncan's life. Alone, homeless, and sleeping in his truck, Duncan had hit rock bottom. His few remaining possessions were in a storage locker he was unsure he'd be able to afford come next month.

That's when Duncan reached out to staff at St. Zita's, who worked with him for months to help him get back on his feet. At the peak of working together, staff were answering Duncan's calls for support as many as 5 times a week.

St. Zita's took full advantage of their community relationships and the broad range of CSS services available. Staff referred Duncan to the Primary Care Network for mental health support and secured funding for a damage deposit on an apartment. Slowly but surely his calls for support slowed, eventually stopping altogether.

"The ultimate goal at St. Zita's is to listen to our callers with compassion, and to do our best to lead them in the right direction," said Wendy Layne, Intake Worker for St. Zita's. "When we don't hear from them again it's a sign we've provided the right supports, and that they've grown from the experience and have been able to move forward."

*In Duncan's case, silence is a sign of newfound stability thanks to the St. Zita's team.*

## Benefit re-enrollment is coming up!

Every two years, staff have the opportunity to review their current benefit choice and move up or down one Flex Level if their current plan no longer meets their needs.

In November, employees enrolled in the benefit plan will receive an email with a summary of their current benefit selection. Employees who want to change their Flex Level can do so by emailing [hrbenefits@cssalberta.ca](mailto:hrbenefits@cssalberta.ca) indicating their choice (Flex 1, 2, or 3), and changes will take effect on January 1, 2021.



## STAFF Signs of Hope

Our staff are the heart and soul of what we do. Lance Scout was recently celebrated as one of our staff **#SignsofHope** for going above and beyond as a Cultural Aide for our Children, Family, and Community Service. You can read his story, and others, under the [Uplift](#) section of our [staff COVID site](#).

## Meet our newest Board Director



**Henry Effen** is originally from Ghana in West Africa, and moved to Canada for new opportunities and beginnings in life. He and his wife reside in Wetaskiwin along with their three children. Henry is passionate about volunteering, has a long history with Sign of Hope and was once an employee with CSS many years ago. Henry is a Registered Social Worker, and an elected trustee on his local school board. He was sworn into his first three-year term with the CSS Board in June 2020. *Welcome Henry!*



**Have an idea you'd like to see in an upcoming edition of The Beacon? Submit your ideas to [communications@cssalberta.ca](mailto:communications@cssalberta.ca)!**

