

## The Burning Bush

Troy Davies, Chief Executive Officer



Late last month we held our annual Mission Recognition Awards event. The celebrations looked a bit different this year; but the intentions, and the deep, deep gratitude were the same.

This year, we honoured 179 staff who were celebrating a career milestone, some as long 35 or 40 years! At CSS, we are fortunate to have so many staff who have dedicated years, or even decades, of their lives to service through our agency, and, who remain committed to the calling to serve even amidst historic uncertainty.

Truly, all CSS staff demonstrated a commitment to our mission this past year as they opened their arms and hearts even wider to those we care for.

It was because of this inspiring selflessness, bravery, and resilience that we chose to honour all 2020 Catholic Social Services' staff with the Archbishop MacDonald Distinguished Lifetime Contribution Award - the highest honour our agency can bestow upon an individual.

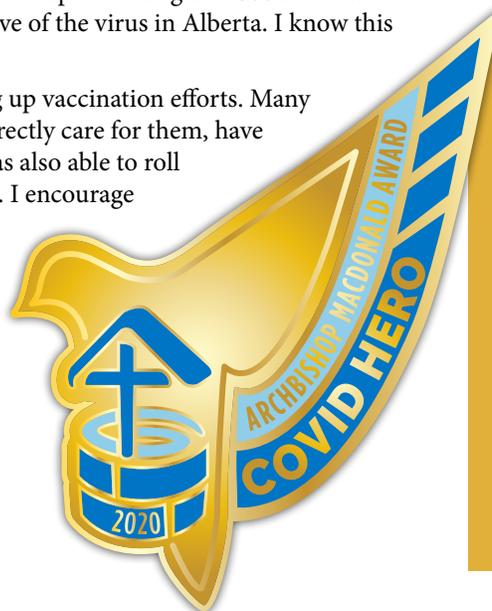
If you were not able to watch the 2020 Mission Recognition Awards event live, or have not yet read the event publication, I encourage you to do so by [visiting Portal's newsfeed](#). I hope all CSS staff will have the opportunity to hear and read the words of thanks and celebration from our senior leadership, because they are so very well deserved.

As we move forward into spring and summer, we continue to bear witness to tremendous demonstrations of resilience and spirit among our CSS staff. As I write this, we are experiencing a third wave of the virus in Alberta. I know this can feel discouraging and disheartening.

At the same time, Alberta is also ramping up vaccination efforts. Many of our clients, along with the staff who directly care for them, have now been offered the vaccine. I myself was also able to roll up my sleeve for my first dose last month. I encourage everyone who is able, to get their vaccine as well, when it is their turn to do so.

I am hopeful that a "new normal" is on the horizon, and very soon, I will be able to thank you again for your work throughout this unprecedented time, in person.

*Blessings always,*  
Troy



## Table of Contents

- PAGE 1** **The Burning Bush**  
**CSS in the News**
- PAGE 2** **CSS Spotlight - Family Counselling**  
**"Race Around the World" Reimagines Bike-a-Thon Fundraising**
- PAGE 3** **I.T. Renaming: Digital Services & Innovation (DSI)**  
**Faith's Offering - Words to Feed your Soul**  
**Self Care Corner**  
**Board Bulletin**
- PAGE 4** **Stories from the Frontlines**  
**Your New Anti-Racism Advisory Council**  
**Engagement Survey**
- PAGE 5** **Spring Crossword**  
**Vaccination Update**

## CSS IN THE NEWS

**Check out the links below to see recent news!**

**Dave Dowler's legacy sending kids to camp**  
<http://bit.ly/ddowler>

**St. Joseph Catholic School supports Edmonton area homeless**  
<http://bit.ly/cssbrief>

**More than food and a bed at Open Door**  
<http://bit.ly/opendoor2021>

# CSS SPOTLIGHT

## Family Counselling & Family Care

CENTRAL REGION

**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 will spotlight one of our programs and share some of the incredible work you are doing across the agency.**

**Here’s what Donna Damsgaard, Community Family Counselor, and Donald Bramfield, Program Manager, had to say about our Central Region counselling services.**

### FOR THOSE WHO AREN’T FAMILIAR, CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT WHAT SERVICES ARE OFFERED THROUGH OUR CENTRAL REGION COUNSELLING?

Two counselling services are offered through the South Region; Individual and Family counselling program offers individual, couples and family counselling; fees are on a sliding scale. Our Family Care program offers preventative psycho-educational counselling for families with children and teens. Families can access up to 8 sessions at no cost.

### HOW HAVE THE NEEDS OF THOSE WE SERVE CHANGED THROUGHOUT THE PAST YEAR?

The pandemic has created additional stressors such as isolation, job loss, depression and anxiety. There have been additional stressors placed on relationships as well. We saw a significant increase in intakes during the last three months and have recently added another therapist to the team to respond to the demand.

### DURING A TIME WHEN THERE IS INCREASED NEED FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ACROSS THE PROVINCE, HOW DOES YOUR TEAM KEEP COUNSELLING ACCESSIBLE?

We quickly shifted to video and telephone conferencing in March of 2020 within two weeks of the inception of the pandemic.



**DONNA DAMSGAARD,  
COMMUNITY FAMILY  
COUNSELOR**

People were able to access counselling services and people really appreciated it. Having said that, people are expressing a desire to return to in-person counselling. We are committed to providing affordable and accessible counselling and wish to reach out to those who might not otherwise be able to access services.

### IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU’D LIKE TO ADD?

We are blessed and thankful for the opportunity to support our community in an unprecedented time of need. More than ever, people need someone to listen and help process and navigate these uncharted waters. In this small way, we aspire to truly be a sign of hope to those who come to us for support.

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

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

## “Race Around the World” Reimagines Bike-a-Thon Fundraising

Each year, students and staff at St. Francis Xavier High School participate in a 24-hour bike-a-thon in support of Sign of Hope and the Edmonton Catholic School Foundation. Participants gather in the school’s gymnasium, like sardines atop stationary bikes, and incredibly pedal away to raise vital funds for the organizations.

This year the school shifted and persisted, taking the event outdoors and inviting participants to walk, bike, or run – including many of our own CSS staff! Teams across

the Agency tracked their movement and contributed an astounding 2,808 km, and helped raise \$3,474. In total, Race Around the World participants travelled 31,800 km and raised \$64,516!

Congratulations to our Immigration and Settlement Service team for winning our internal competition by collecting 1,482 km and raising \$1,800! Thank you to each of our SHED Committee representatives who spearheaded the initiative internally, and to all staff who participated!

**CODS STAFF FOUND SOME BEAUTIFUL SCENERY WHILE COLLECTING KILOMETERS FOR SIGN OF HOPE!**





## Faith's Offering Words to feed your soul

By Pope Francis  
(from Fratelli tutti)

*“A Prayer to the Creator Lord, Father of our human family, you created all human beings equal in dignity: pour forth into our hearts a fraternal spirit and inspire in us a dream of renewed encounter, dialogue, justice and peace. Move us to create healthier societies and a more dignified world, a world without hunger, poverty, violence and war. May our hearts be open to all the peoples and nations of the earth. May we recognize the goodness and beauty that you have sown in each of us, and thus forge bonds of unity, common projects, and shared dreams. Amen.”*

Do you have a prayer request for our Spiritual Care team?

Email [prayers@cssalberta.ca](mailto:prayers@cssalberta.ca) to have your intentions included each week.



## I.T. Renaming: Digital Services & Innovation (DSI) *Kirsten Anderson, VP of DSI*

Over the next five years, CSS will be leveraging our systems and processes so they are efficient, integrated and work together to enable employees to do their best and most important client-centered work. In strategic alignment with this focus, I.T. has undergone a name change and is now called *Digital Services and Innovation*, or DSI.

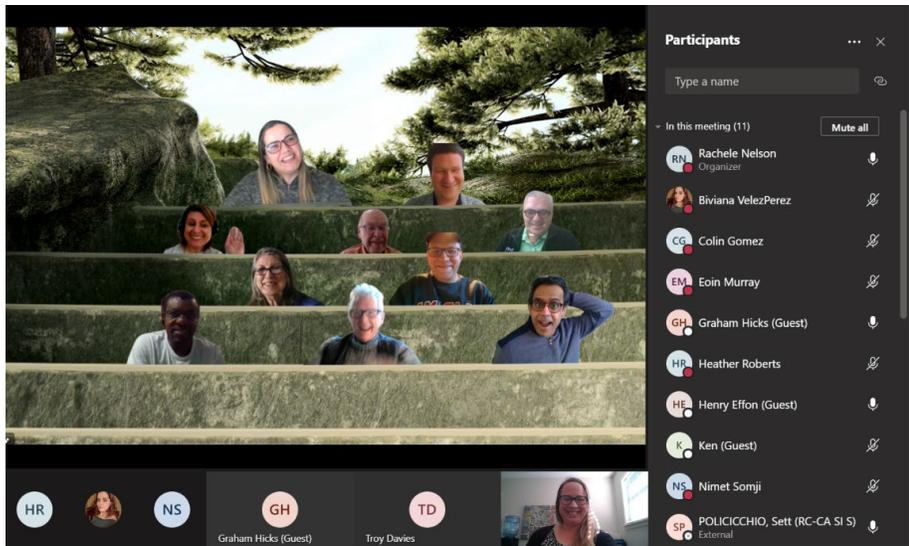
This renaming is an acknowledgement of the critical role DSI plays across our Agency, from our Administrative offices all the way to the frontlines, particularly as we find our world pivoting digitally more each day.

And, as the world shifts digitally, our focus on cybersecurity becomes increasingly important. To date, over 85% of staff have completed the new mandatory cybersecurity training on Moodle. If you have not completed the training yet, please do so as soon as you are able. Our staff are our first line of defense against cybercriminals, and each of us play a critical role in keeping the Agency cybersafe.

## Self Care Corner

*Self care looks a little bit different for everyone – it's not all face masks and bubble baths.*

Perhaps self care is having compassion for needing a few extra minutes in bed in the morning, or maybe it's intentionally setting aside time to read or write at the end of your day. Whatever it looks like for you, make space in your life for one act that leaves you feeling cared for today. *You deserve it.*



## Board Bulletin

Five members of our Board of Directors participated in our annual “Thankuary” this February, helping call hundreds of Sign of Hope donors to personally thank them for their support during this past campaign season. CSS is blessed to have such engaged Board Members who not only dedicate their time to guiding our Agency, but also stewarding the many donors who support the work we do.

***Thank you to all of the incredible Board Members who participated!***



# Your New Anti-Racism Advisory Council

As a part of the Agency's Anti-Racism Action Plan, we have established an Anti-Racism Advisory Council. This 5-person advisory body will meet with the Agency's Senior Executive Team (or, C-Team) to discuss matters of concern and paths forward relating to creating an anti-racist culture within the Agency.

2021-2023 ANTI-RACISM ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS:



COLIN GOMEZ,  
Central Region representative



JOHN LENDEIN,  
Immigration & Settlement  
Service representative



RENÉE PROTAIN-PACHECO,  
Community Outreach &  
Disability Service  
representative



SAMANTHA YUTZY,  
Children, Family & Community  
Service representative



STEVE ZHU,  
Irwin Centre representative



STAFF AND RESIDENT AT MCDANIEL MANOR, A CODS SUPPORTIVE LIVING HOME, WORK TOGETHER ON A PUZZLE.

## Stories from the Frontlines

Submitted by SkyAnne Krupa, Director -  
Community Outreach & Disability Service

Our staff in Community Outreach & Disability Service (CODS) Edmonton are true beacons of hope!

Staff, working in homes supporting people with developmental disabilities, battled the pandemic in 2020 along with the rest of the world. Through this extremely stressful, tiring and dark time, the character of our staff shone through. These amazing teams worked countless hours to ensure the people we serve had familiar faces by their sides. The flexible and creative ideas of the staff brought fun to the homes in a time when most of the community activities and family visits were either not possible, or extremely limited.

It was inspiring to see staff work in homes with outbreaks, many of whom were working 12 hours a day for the entirety of the outbreak to try and limit the transmission of COVID-19 in the home. Others worked on their birthdays or statutory holidays because they knew that the people living in the home needed them. Multiple staff offered to work at more than one outbreak site throughout the year, because they had the experience and knew that their skills were needed. Managers from CODS also picked up shifts in outbreaks sites, working side-by-side with our staff and supporting the people we serve.

As I reflect on this difficult time, I am humbled by the dedication and selflessness demonstrated by our staff, and I continue to be in awe of the people we serve. The resilience and joy embodied by both staff and those we serve continues to inspire me each day.

## Engagement Survey

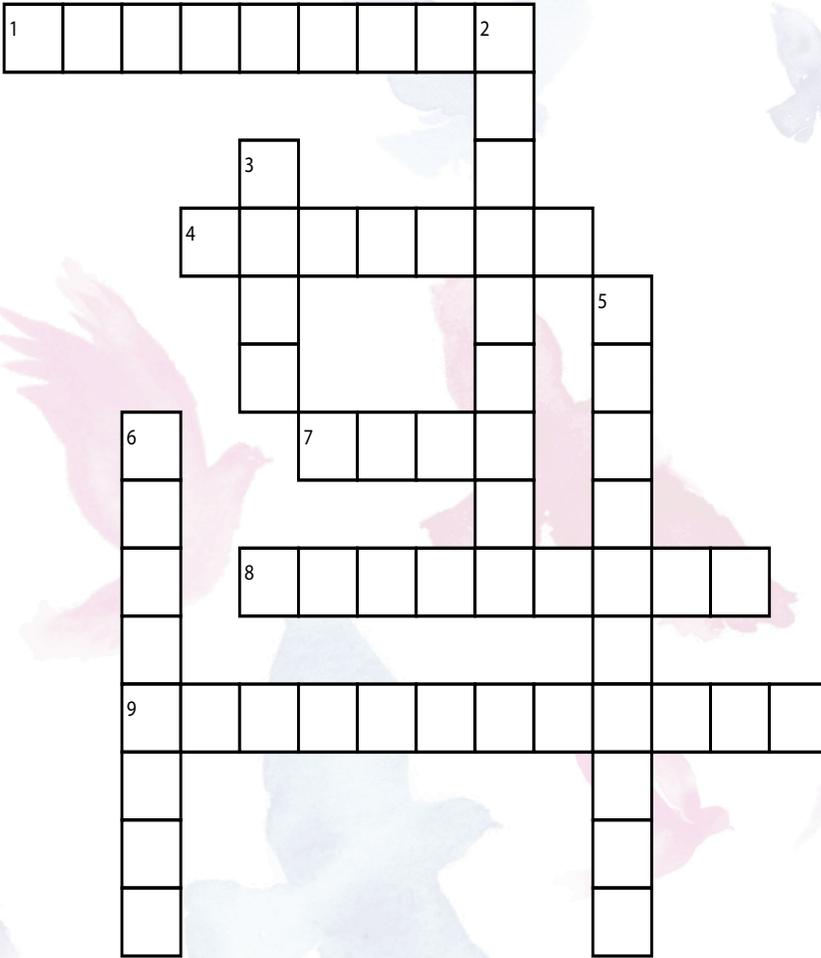


The 2021 Employee Engagement Survey is now closed! 67.8% of staff made their voices heard in this year's survey.

*We're delighted to have such a high participation rate and look forward to sharing the results with you!*



# SPRING CROSSWORD



**Down:**

- 2. Persons served through Immigration and Settlement Service
- 3. A water vessel
- 5. Kindheartedness
- 6. Modesty, meekness

**Across:**

- 1. Our founder, Father...
- 4. Reverence
- 7. Care for and bring \_\_\_\_ to people in need
- 8. Our southernmost CSS community
- 9. Our easternmost CSS community

## Vaccination Update

Vaccinations continue to roll out across the province, with many of our staff and clients having received their first doses! Effective April 21, the provincial government has passed amendments which allow for paid leave to receive your vaccination.

If an appointment falls during a scheduled work shift, staff may take up to 3 hours of paid leave to receive their vaccination. When completing your timecard entry, please use the code "Vaccine" to reflect the time you were away.

This paid leave is not retroactive to earlier appointment dates.

Visit the [Government of Alberta website](http://www.alberta.ca) to see current vaccine eligibility and to book your appointment.

**CONTEST!**

Submit your completed crosswords to [communications@cssalberta.ca](mailto:communications@cssalberta.ca) by **May 15** to be entered to win a Sign of Hope *Hopefully Cooking* cookbook!

Answers will be on Portal May 17.



*Our 30, 35, and 40 year Long Service Award recipients!*

### *Congratulations to all staff,*

both those pictured and not, who received Long Service Awards at this year's Mission Awards! Thank you for embodying our Agency's core values throughout your years of dedicated service. *Missed the live event? Watch the Mission Recognition Awards recording here: <http://bit.ly/missionrecognition>*

