

ANNUAL
REPORT
2021-22

Vision

We enrich the quality of lives, no matter how short.

Mission

We meet the unique palliative care needs of newborns, children, youth and their families. We lead by advocating, by advancing clinical care and family support, and by learning through research and sharing knowledge.

Values

Roger Neilson was well known for his generosity, humanity, sense of humour, compassion and love of children. These values, as well as the following, will govern our daily work with families, community and each other:

Respect
Family-focused care
Collaboration
Innovation
Excellence
Learning
Celebration



Reflections from our Executive Director and our Chair, Board of Directors

As we reflect on the past year we have learned that, with a team like we have, there is nothing we cannot do. Our "One Strong Team" at Roger Neilson House worked together to deliver a comprehensive continuum of pediatric palliative care services despite all the challenges of the past year. We focused on the needs of the child and family so that families had access to critical services despite the pandemic.

We have so much to be proud of and thankful for, so many wonderful accomplishments that you will read about in this report, all while we continued to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are proud to say that we have continued to manage to keep the house fully open and COVID-free. The extraordinary efforts of our team to remain vigilant and follow the COVID-19 safety precautions is a testament to their dedication to the children, youth and families we serve.

In partnership with our colleagues at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) and Ottawa Public Health (OPH), the Roger Neilson House team led the early efforts to vaccinate vulnerable youth and their families in our community. We did such a good job our team was asked to run the OPH clinics throughout last summer!





We were thrilled to gradually welcome our volunteer team back to the house in the summer of 2021. After suspending most of our volunteer services since the beginning of the pandemic, seeing the return of their smiling faces was heartwarming to all. We thank all of our volunteers who so quickly got right back to their roles.

In June 2021 we marked the fifteenth anniversary of Roger Neilson House with a cupcake drive-by and virtual celebration! With our families, friends, and community supporters we celebrated our past 15 years of growth. If you missed our virtual celebration hosted by some of our very special friends and supporters, please click [here](#) to watch.

After a two year pause, we saw the return of the beloved Roger Neilson House Star Ceremony. Our families gathered, this time in a virtual setting, and we honoured and remembered the children and youth who we have cared for at end of life. It was a priority for us to see the return of this important tradition.



In June of 2022 we were honoured to release our newly created sibling bereavement videos, a passion project that has been in the works for some time. In 2021 a group of children and youth came together to share their experiences of grief, with the goal of creating a resource for other grieving children and youth to watch and listen to, when they are feeling alone after a death. From this content we created six short documentary videos for two age groups of children and youth, to be used as a tool at Roger Neilson House and in our greater community. To celebrate this amazing achievement we held a formal red carpet event at Roger Neilson House, in honour of the children and youth who so bravely and beautifully shared their stories.

This July will see a few changes to the Roger Neilson House Board of Directors. We are saying a fond farewell to Les Bell who has been a longstanding member of the Board of Directors, former Board Chair, and a member of the Finance and Audit Committee where he will continue to provide his expertise.





In addition, Mike Lupiano's term as Chair of the Board of Directors will come to an end. Thank you Mike for your chairmanship the past three years. They have been difficult however your steady leadership has helped us navigate these unprecedented times. We welcome Ian Hendry back to the role of Board Chair.

Roger Neilson House would not be as successful in the work we do without the help of all of our supporters, our primary funders, our community partners including the CHEO Foundation, our staff, volunteers and Board of Directors, and most importantly our families. It is an honour for us all to continue to proudly serve children, youth and families in need in our community.

Megan Wright, Executive Director
Mike Lupiano, Chair, Board of Directors



Volunteer Services

During the pandemic, Roger Neilson House felt very different without our wonderful volunteers. Fortunately, in the Summer/Fall of 2021, we were able to gradually start welcoming them back, which was such a joyous moment - one which staff, kids and families had been looking forward to for a long time. It was heart-warming to see so many volunteers choosing to return after such a long time away. RNH was once again able to see the smiling faces of our reception volunteers, and to hear them greeting families and visitors with such warmth and kindness. We were thrilled to see our child and family support volunteers back to reading, laughing, doing crafts or just cuddling with our guests. What about those wonderful and comforting smells coming from the kitchen as volunteers cooked and baked? It was also amazing to see our office support volunteer who has been instrumental in helping us get our volunteer services back up and running. Our Visiting Home Hospice children and families were each thrilled to welcome their volunteer back in their home. Finally, throughout the pandemic, our parent matching volunteers and our memory-making volunteers (quilts, memory-boxes, photography, cards) have continued their work in support of families going through challenging times, and we thank them immensely.

When the volunteers returned, they had to do things differently to keep everyone safe from COVID-19. For example, all volunteers had to adapt how they did their roles to comply with the safety measures, reception volunteers took on additional screening tasks, and parent matching volunteers went from providing primarily in-person support to offering it virtually. As they have done time and time again, volunteers demonstrated a great ability to adapt and a commitment to doing what was required of them to make sure that the needs of guests and families were met.





Following our initial focus on re-integrating our volunteers in their roles, we started recruiting new volunteers. Many of them had applied before or during the pandemic and were thrilled when we contacted them to discuss their interest in volunteering at RNH. After completing their interview, on-boarding and initial training process, many of them have now started their volunteering. It's been wonderful to see these new volunteers contribute their diverse talents, passions and backgrounds to our team.

Finally, in partnership with our Volunteer Advisory Committee (VAC), we have been conducting a thorough review of our orientation and training requirements and process. Our goal is to offer volunteers an orientation and training experience that is consistent, thorough, and efficient in preparing them for their role. As an example, improvements were made to our buddy-training, which provides 'on-the-job' training and coaching by experienced volunteers. We have introduced a standardized check-list and evaluation to cover all the essential skills and knowledge new volunteers need, as determined in collaboration with the VAC. This new tool has been tested, then brought back to the VAC for review, and it has now been fully implemented.

Many thanks to our volunteers for their incredible commitment, flexibility and their passion for supporting our guests, families and team. We truly do have the best volunteers!

Bruno Perrier, Manager
Community Engagement and Volunteer Relations

Volunteer Advisory Committee

As noted in our 2021 VAC annual update, beginning in March 2020, given the COVID-19 pandemic, VAC meetings were held virtually via Zoom rather than in person to help keep everyone as safe as possible. To that end, the VAC has continued to meet virtually on the last Thursday of the month throughout the past year.

As pandemic restrictions began to ease in 2022, the VAC's key discussions continued to focus on the ongoing and gradual re-entry of in-person volunteering and the efficacy of new and ever-evolving safety protocols designed to ensure the safety of staff, volunteers and RNH's guests.

Another priority agenda item was the discussion and review of the 2020-21 VAC Work Plan in terms of what had been achieved, which tasks, although now complete, might require ongoing monitoring and potential new objectives that could be added.

The VAC's key objectives for 2021-2022 included:

- Ongoing re-entry of in-person volunteering with a focus on new health and safety protocols
- Review and final streamlining of the training process for on-boarding new volunteers
- Continued development of up-to-date volunteer training and education pathways
- Fostering collaboration between the VAC and the Family Advisory Committee (FAC)
- Ongoing recruitment of new VAC members





VAC members were also happy to brainstorm ideas for another virtual Volunteer Week (April 24th- 30th) celebration which was held on April 27th, 2022. Everyone enjoyed the event which featured several volunteer awards, the sharing of stories and the chance to reconnect with staff and fellow volunteers.

The VAC is also delighted to announce that two new members have recently joined our committee!

Jeanine Otto is a new Reception Volunteer who started in her role in March 2022. Although she is a new RNH volunteer, Jeanine is well known to the RNH community through the incredible work that she and her family have done to raise funds for RNH by organizing and hosting Maddy's Gala which, to date, has surpassed the Otto family's initial goal of raising \$1M for RNH. Maddy's Gala is held in memory of the Otto family's beloved daughter Maddy who passed away at RNH in 2007.

Doogie Dick has been with RNH since 2018 and holds several volunteer roles. She is a Child & Family Support Volunteer and a dedicated Visiting Home Hospice Volunteer. In addition to these roles, Doogie is the minute-taker for the Family Advisory Committee and is often seen participating at many of RNH's special family events.

On behalf of all RNH volunteers, the VAC offers our most sincere gratitude to RNH's Administrative and Leadership teams who continue to go above and beyond in keeping volunteers feeling engaged, valued, and well-informed. RNH's strategic direction of fostering 'one strong team' of staff and volunteers is evidenced by the strong connections we all share both virtually and (happily) now more in-person as pandemic restrictions ease.

Carole Brulé, Chair



Family Advisory Committee

As the intensity of the COVID-19 pandemic continued to fluctuate, the Family Advisory Committee maintained virtual meetings in 2021/2022. As part of the committee's mandate to share their views regarding RNH services and contribute to discussions on policies and initiatives, they responded to many agenda items throughout the year.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, families have been impacted by necessary changes in policies and provision for respite care.

The leadership team and the committee discussed how families/caregivers were being affected by restricted respite services, how they were coping, and measures being taken to connect with them for wellness checks.

The Grandparent Bereavement Support Group Study was presented to the FAC for discussion by RNH Social Worker, Madelena Arnone. Madelena provided an overview of the thematic analysis and invited the committee to ask questions about the support sessions and grandparent feedback. The committee shared their thoughts on the prospect of continuing support for grandparents and the related capacity implications.

In November, RNH Recreation Therapist, Katt Brooks joined the FAC meeting to share the Child and Youth Bereavement Video Diaries project. The Committee viewed a preliminary video and discussed how beautifully the diaries demonstrated what it means for a family to need unique support and the importance of continuing to build connection and awareness for the child grief community.





Quality Coordinator Nancy Graham updated the committee on the Hospice Palliative Care Ontario (HPCO) accreditation process, and RNH's projected timeline for completion. The committee discussed ways in which information about the HPCO's accreditation standards could be more readily available to families. It was suggested that the Peer Review stage would benefit from family/caregiver participation in keeping with RNH's family-centred practices.

Given the ever-changing status of the pandemic, an important item for discussion was families' perspective on receiving support via virtual care versus in-person care. Over the past two years the leadership team heard from many families that they prefer virtual support but also that many families are 'zoomed out' and are missing in-person interaction. The committee was asked to reflect on and respond to several care delivery focused questions followed by robust conversation on possible ways forward.

There were several changes in the FAC membership this year, we will miss our departing members Anne Jones (staff), Bea Alvarez (volunteer), Ashlee Barbeau (volunteer), Bert Labonte (parent), Kirsty Berard (parent) and David Bell (parent). However, we are happy to welcome aboard Sarah Allan-Wiseman (staff), Christine Wing (volunteer), and Doogie Dick (volunteer). After several gratifying years as Chairperson, I (Kimberley Waara) will be stepping down from the position. The incoming Chairperson is Chloe Benoit (parent), Chloe has been a valued member of the FAC since 2018 and will do an excellent job fulfilling this role.

Kimberley Waara, Chair

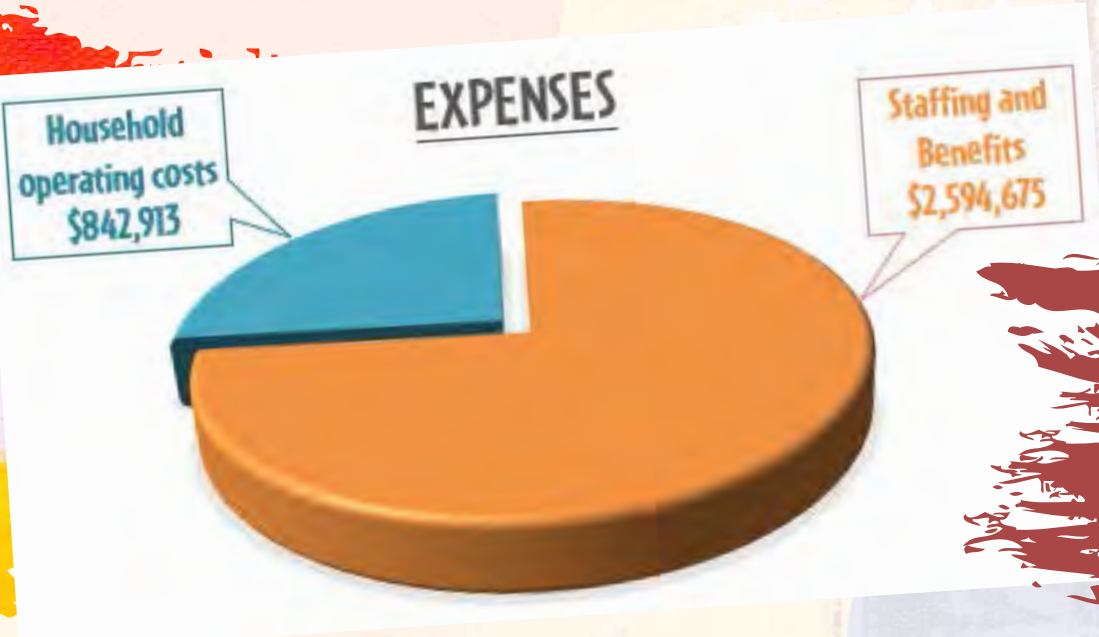
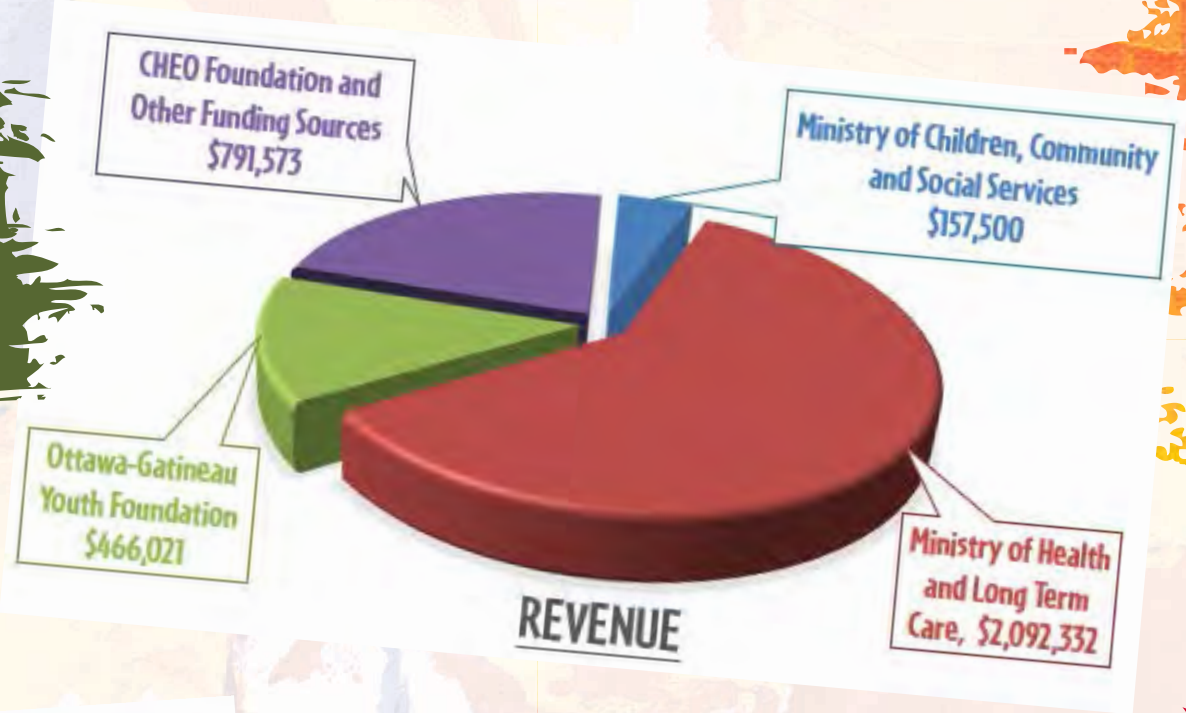


The Roger Neilson House leadership team would like to extend our heart-felt gratitude to Kimberley for her years of service as the chair of the Family Advisory Committee. She has been instrumental in helping shape the FAC's partnership model. We appreciated her special talent in leading meeting discussions in such a way that everyone felt valued and engaged. Additionally, Kimberley has always been a warm and inspiring voice at various events on behalf of our FAC families. Many thanks Kimberley for your invaluable contributions, your compassion and the commitment you have always demonstrated.

RNH BY THE NUMBERS

2021-22

98 CHILDREN SERVED
1,972 DAYS OF CARE PROVIDED
4,206 COUNSELLING VISITS
4,671 VOLUNTEER HOURS DONATED



SINCE OPENING IN 2006
551 CHILDREN CARED FOR
35,512 DAYS OF CARE PROVIDED
220,685 VOLUNTEER HOURS CONTRIBUTED

FAMILY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

(2021-22)

Kimberley Waara, Chair

Bertran Labonté, Parent

Bruno Perrier, Manager,

Community Engagement & Volunteer Relations

Caroline Signorini, Parent

Chloe Benoit, Parent

Christine Wing, Child & Family Support Volunteer

David Bell, Parent

Doojie Dick, Secretary

Emma Gofton, Parent

Kristy Bedard, Parent

Lillian Kitcher, Parent

Megan Wright, Executive Director

Nahal Yazdani, Manager

Richard Ouimet, Parent

Sarah Allan-Wiseman, Social Worker

Yara Saikaly, Parent



VOLUNTEER ADVISORY COMMITTEE (2021-22)

Carole Brule, Chair, Child and Family Support / Visiting Home Hospice Volunteer

Christine Grace, Vice Chair, Reception Volunteer

Ann Gordon, Kitchen Volunteer

Bruno Perrier, Manager, Community Engagement & Volunteer Relations

Carinna Moyes, Child & Family Support / Visiting Home Hospice Volunteer

Clare Pearson, Child & Family Support / Visiting Home Hospice Volunteer

Jennie Wilson, Administrative Assistant, Community Engagement & Volunteer Relations

Joann Zimmerling, Personal Support Worker

Leah Bradley, Recreation Therapist

Liz Kelly, Reception Volunteer

Terry Moxness, Child & Family Support / Visiting Home Hospice Volunteer

Villana Murray, Reception / Visiting Home Hospice Volunteer



ADMINISTRATIVE / SUPPORT STAFF

(Current)

Megan Wright, Executive Director

Chris Vadeboncoeur MD, Medical Director

Bruno Perrier, Manager,

Community Engagement and Volunteer Relations

Nahal Yazdani, Manager

Helen Yoxon, Manager

Sonja Marshall, Coordinator,

Strategic Projects & Governance

Jennie Wilson, Administrative Assistant,

Community Engagement and Volunteer Relations

Caitlin Neil, Legacy Project Coordinator

Ashitta Chawla, Project Coordinator

Katherine Robotham, Housekeeper / Reception

Mattie Wright, Housekeeper / Reception

Shokoufeh Modanloo, Research Assistant

Sofie Marshall, Housekeeper / Reception

Xavia Goyette, Housekeeper / Reception



BOARD OF DIRECTORS (2021-22)

Mike Lupiano, Chair

Ian Hendry, Vice-Chair

Les Bell, Past Chair

Robert E. Houston, Secretary

Michelle Bouchard, Treasurer

Alexa Brewer, Director

Dr. David Creery, Director

Monique Lugli, Director

Brian Morris, Director

Caitlin Neil, Director

Janet Wilson, Director

Paul Lalonde, Director

Jacqueline Belsito, Ex-officio Director

Megan Wright, Ex-officio Director



CLINICAL STAFF (Current)

Addison Yeomans, Personal Support Worker
Alison Verbruggen, RN
Amy Cameron, Personal Support Worker
Carinne Moreau, Personal Support Worker
Carleigh Sanders, RPN
Carol Openshaw, Social Worker
Celine De Rubeis, Educator
Claire Watson, RPN
Courtney Potvin, RPN
Daniel Ebron, RPN
Danielle Hanley, RN
Danielle Scarlett, Recreation Therapist
Dawn Davies, MD
Emily Fullarton, RN
Hassan Almahdi, RPN
Heidi Hollohan, RN
Jackie Davis, RPN
Jamie Ford, RPN
Jen Tung, RPN
Jennifer Quinn, RPN
Joann Zimmerling, Personal Support Worker
JoAnne MacNeil, RN
Katt Brooks, Recreation Therapist
Kelly Farrell, RPN
Kirstin Neville, RN
Krista Watters, RN

Kristin Geiger, RN
Kyle St. Louis, MD
Leah Bradley, Recreation Therapist
Lesley Sabourin, Perinatal Hospice Coordinator
Lucy Whitlock, RN
Lynn Grandmason Dumond, Nurse Practitioner
Madelena Arnone, Social Worker
Maureen Merkley, RN
Megan Doherty, MD
Meghan Peirce, RN
Monica Sevigny, RPN
Nancy Graham, Quality Coordinator
Olivia Lourenco, Recreation Therapy Assistant
Rennie Bimman, Social Worker
Sabrina Morin, Care Coordinator RPN
Sarah Allan-Wiseman, Social Worker
Sarah Bussiere, Personal Support Worker
Sonia Bouchard, RN
Stephanie Toll, RPN
Stephanie Van Zanten, MD
Taheera Tharani, RN
Virginia Meisner, RN
Wendy Mihell, RN
William Splinter, MD
Zandra Strnad, RN





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MEMBERSHIPS

Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association

Canadian National Hospice Network

Hospice Palliative Care Ontario (HPCO)

Volunteer Ottawa | Ontario Hospital Association