

# CARING HEARTS



2019/20 ANNUAL REPORT

## Message from the Board Chair, Nicole Petrisor

The past year was filled with growth, learning, and changes as we welcomed several new board members and our new Executive Director to the Caring Hearts team. I have been continuously impressed by the energy, thoughtfulness, and dedication of this group as we have navigated the unknown, worked collaboratively to identify solutions, and moved forward with new initiatives.

The efforts of the Caring Hearts team to assess our current initiatives and identify growth opportunities to enhance our services, has gone a long way in creating stability for the future of the organization.

On behalf of the Caring Hearts Board of Directors, I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to the staff of Caring Hearts. Our Board is inspired by their demonstrated passion and willingness to go the extra mile to make a positive impact in the lives of so many. We cannot thank them enough for all they do.

The impact of the services Caring Hearts provides would not be possible without the generosity of our donors, sponsors, partners, and volunteers, and for that, on behalf of the board and staff, I would like to express our sincere appreciation and offer a most heartfelt thank you. It is your compassion and generosity that allows Caring Hearts to enhance mental health healing through education, and counseling for those dealing with grief and loss.

I look forward to an exciting year ahead!

## Governance

Caring Hearts is governed by an eight-member, volunteer Board of Directors.

The 2019/20 Board of Directors:

Nicole Petrisor, Board Chair

Jeremy Swystun, Past Chair

Jennifer Pederson

Whitney Beug

Zach Pengelly

Jyoti Haeusler

Mark Hillmer

Aaron Spelliscy

## Message from the Executive Director, Shelley Svedahl

The past year has been one of change for Caring Hearts, including finding a new home, changing leadership, and expanding our educational resources to include online programming. I joined the Caring Hearts team in October 2019.

As is the case with many non-profit organizations, Caring Hearts strives to balance our ability to offer responsive programming while managing limited resources. We are committed to seeking innovative ways to improve our programs and services so that we can provide timely access to resources for individuals, families, organizations, and communities throughout their grief journey.

We thank our Board of Directors for their guidance and support, and the many volunteers and partners who continue to share their time and resources so that we can continue to offer services in our community.

Together, with our volunteers, donors, sponsors, and partners, our organization continues to provide resources to help those dealing with grief and loss.

In the 2019/20 fiscal year, the Board of Directors held five board meetings, one strategic planning session, and an annual meeting.

At the January 2020 strategic planning session, the Board drafted four priority areas, and proposed changes to the organization's mission statement. The new mission statement below was approved at the March 17, 2020 Board meeting.

## Caring Hearts Staff

Trish Dupuis Executive Director (up to August 2019)

Shelley Svedahl, Executive Director (Beginning October 2019)

Dwayne Yasinowski, Director of Education

Sarah Barker, Office Administrator

Duane Bowers, Educational Resource

Elder Harry Francis (Up until July)

Elder Lorna Standingready (Beginning in September)

## Contract Clinical Team

Joyce Nicholson

Charlene Gorski

Cindy Werner

## Our Story

Caring Hearts was initially established as a non-profit charity in 1983 under the name Regina Palliative Care Inc. Through RPCI funds were raised to help support RQHR's Palliative Care Unit/Greystone Bereavement Centre as well as the ten-bed facility at Regina Wascana Grace Hospice.

In August 2018, Caring Hearts changed its name from the Regina Palliative Care Greystone Bereavement Centre to Caring Hearts Counselling Inc. The change has allowed Caring Hearts to extend its scope to a provincial mandate as a counselling and education agency that focuses on, among other things, grief and loss supports. The new name was in support of the Caring Hearts Camp, a recognizable youth-focused grief program offered by the organization since 1997.

## Mission Statement

To enhance mental health healing through education, and counselling for those dealing with grief and loss.

Four strategic objectives were approved at the March Board Meeting:

1. Align programs and services with the organization's mission goals and objectives.
2. Develop a sustainable funding model.
3. Strengthen organizational brand and increase awareness of programs and services.
4. Improve processes for managing our data and resources.





# The Caring Hearts Care Philosophy

## **We believe:**

- All people requesting any service at Caring Hearts should be treated with respect and understanding so that their integrity, dignity and self respect will be maintained.
- The primary function of our service is to provide education, programs, and services for those dealing with grief and loss.
- In open and ongoing communications with our clients, their significant others, and health care professionals through our services.
- In utilizing community facilities/agencies that are intended to support our clients through their healing journey.

## Values

### **Respect & Integrity**

- We care about one another and about our workplace. We foster an open and inclusive environment that embraces diverse cultural heritage and opinions; we learn, work, and support each other as one team.
- We are committed to being accountable and transparent. We are honest with one another. We hold ourselves to high standards of ethical behavior and take responsibility for our actions.

### **Excellence**

- We go above and beyond what is normally expected to achieve excellence in our services. We accomplish this by maintaining high standards, strong competencies and committed partnerships, and by being responsive and accessible.
- We embrace and drive change, pursuing growth and learning while providing leadership and expertise in grief and loss education programs and services.
- We are creative and determined, providing innovative, high-quality programs and services for the community we serve.

### **Client-Centred**

- We build open and honest relationships with our clientele and the community we serve.
- We are committed to providing resources for grief and loss.
- We ensure confidentiality, respect personal values, and provide the time and compassion to help clients manage their needs.

### **Sustainability**

- We work, live, and learn in a socially and environmentally responsible manner. We support the health, safety, and overall well being of our clients, employees, and partners.
- We are conscientious stewards of our resources and continuously look for entrepreneurial and creative ways to strengthen and improve our organization. These considerations underlie all our actions, behaviours, and decisions.

**These values form a foundation of EXCELLENCE for which we strive.**

# Collaboration

Caring Hearts acknowledges the need to collaborate with our partner agencies in the delivery of programs and services. Thank you to the Ministry of Justice, Victim Services, the Department of Justice, the Regina City Police, STOPS to Violence, the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology, the federal Department of Justice, and the Provincial Partnership Committee.



## What We Do Matters

The number of people seeking our services continues to rise, and Caring Hearts is continuously evaluating our program offerings as well as our delivery options.

We work with other community partners to develop responsive programming.

## Education Services

	Sessions	Information	Family Support
2017/18	34	11	5
2018/19	31	8	4
2019/20	20	9	12

## Increasing Demand

In 2019/20 we tripled the number of family support sessions. We expanded our delivery options to include online webinars, resulting in a decrease in the number of face-to-face sessions and an increase in the number of access points online. We still have some work to do, as we strive to develop more online resources to expand our support across Saskatchewan.

The cancelled programming in March due to Covid-19 has led to an increased number of tools and resources that will be rolled out in the next fiscal year.

Over the past year, due to a reduction in clinical resources, limited individual counselling services were provided by Caring Hearts. Group sessions continue to be offered and will be increased in the coming year. Many individual counselling requests were referred to other agencies. As we move forward with fewer staff members, we are continually seeking partnerships as a viable way of responding to the need.

We work collaboratively with other agencies and partner with community-based groups to match service with needs.

### What do these numbers tell us?

The number of people seeking assistance to cope with grief and loss continues to rise, and Caring Hearts is not always able to schedule everyone who requests support services.

# Programs and Services

## Events

**March Fundraiser** - Postponed due to Covid-19 restrictions on gathering.

**December Open House** - We hosted an Open House in December to welcome sponsors, volunteers, and donors to our new location at 2310 Smith Street.

## Caring Hearts Youth Camp Program

Caring Hearts provides timely, safe, confidential services for youth in our camp programs.

Of the 60 confirmed attendees, a total of 53 children and youth attended the Spring Camp at Dallas Valley. Thanks to Cory Coleman at CBC, the number of volunteers for the Caring Hearts Camp was up to 44.

Caring Hearts Fall Camp was paused to evaluate and assess our service delivery. To provide the best care to children and youth we have made a few changes. One change includes expanding the number of clinical staff. The new model includes a Camp Director, one Lead Clinician, and two Junior Counsellors to work with a team of trained volunteers.

Many of our youth clients are referred to our camp for services their health care provider does not provide. Although our camp services are geared to the population between ages six and sixteen, many of our families also benefit from the support services we offer onsite.

Typically, our Caring Hearts Camp accommodates up to 60 children and youth campers and as many as 40 volunteers. We are grateful to our volunteer team - all individuals with big hearts who take care of those young people who need that extra love and support.

### Comments from some of the 2019 Spring Camper families:

"My daughter was in a very dark place when the hospital told us about the Caring Hearts Camp. It was good for her to go somewhere and see that there are so many kids who really understand how she feels. She came away with a new perspective."

"Caring Hearts Camp put a seed in our family, now it is up to us to see it grow. THANK YOU!"

"Thank you to everyone that makes this camp available to children and youth who are dealing with loss. You are making a huge difference in helping them through a difficult time in their lives."

### Thank you to the following Camp Supporters:

South Saskatchewan Community Foundation, Conexus Credit Union, Community Initiatives Fund, The Canadian Progress Club Regina Centre, Federated Cooperatives Ltd, Farm Credit Canada, Michael Lamarre, Brenda and Mike Woolley, Amanda Quayle, Heidi Pearson, Lynn Pawelko, the Wickenheiser Family, Cory Coleman from CBC, and the 44 volunteers for supporting the Camp.

## Working with Front-Line Care Providers

We offer a train-the-trainer approach so we can reach across the province. Partnerships include:

Balfour Collegiate High School • Battle River Treaty 6 Health Centre • Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations  
Fort Qu'Appelle Tribal Council Moosomin First Nations • Muskeg First Nations • North Battleford Catholic Family Services  
Onion Lake Cree Nation • Prince Albert Indian and Métis Friendship Centre • Ranch Ehrlo • Regina City Police  
Regina Victim Services • Regina Friendship Centre • Regina Public Library • Regina Public School Division • Sask Polytech  
Victim Services • Saskatchewan Aboriginal Women's Circle Corporation • Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority  
Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology • Saskatoon Youth Resource Centre • STOPS to Violence • Street Culture  
Swift Current Palliative Care • University of Saskatchewan Homecare Nurses • YMCA Regina

## Educational Programming

Education sessions cover a variety of topics including:

- Community Health & Wellness: Understanding Grief
- First Responders: Impact of Trauma on Others/Traumatic Impact on Self
- Fostering: Love and Loss; Grieving When a Foster Child Leaves
- Grief During the Holidays: Finding Hope During the Holiday Season
- Grief in the Workplace: Living with Loss at Home and at Work
- Impact of Trauma on Others/Traumatic Impact on Yourself
- Creating a Trauma-informed Care Agency
- Ambiguous Loss/Missing Persons Loss
- Building Hope & Resiliency
- Understanding Trauma/ Intergenerational Trauma (delivered in partnership with an Elder)

## Grieving is a process with twists and turns rather than a straight line.

Bereavement is a major life stressor. The death of a loved one can have a tremendous impact on the lives of those left behind. There is no timeline for grief and one's experience can be affected by a variety of factors, including whether the bereaved has a support system in place. The journey through grief is different for each person. With understanding and support, most people can resolve their feelings and make some sense of their experience over time.

Group counselling can be helpful for those who find solace in the reciprocal sharing of thoughts and feelings and can be essential to the healing process for many. For many individuals, group therapy can be more beneficial than individual counselling. While it is true that everyone is unique and may have unique circumstances with their grief and loss, group counselling serves as a reminder that no one is alone in their struggles.

Our organization exists to ensure individuals, families, and communities have access to resources and additional supports during their journey of grief.



## Group Counselling

Our grief groups offer mental health and wellness supports, companionship and understanding from others who have experienced a similar loss and are experiencing the similar challenges that living with grief brings. In a group setting, members are invited to share stories openly without judgement, develop skills to help cope with their grief, and build their own network of supports in our community.

Being with those who understand the nature of our loss can bring us healing and comfort. Together we create a circle of hope — a safe place where we can begin to heal.

The Adult Grief groups run for six to eight weeks and are facilitated by a licensed counsellor.

In 2019/20 Caring Hearts offered two Hope Heals Adult Grief Groups sponsored by the Cooperators

Two adult grief support groups were held this past year: in May/June 2019 and October/November 2019. Over 20 adults participated in the two Hope Heals evening support groups.

### **Feedback from the Participants in the Hope Heals groups:**

“It really helped having the stories of others to listen to.”

“I believe that the group helped me reach from the extreme grief I was dealing with.”

“The tools, the facilitator, and the other group members helped me walk through my grief instead of avoiding it.”

### **Hope for the Holidays December Event Sponsored by the Cooperators**

The holidays can be an especially difficult time of year for those dealing with grief and loss. The Caring Hearts community offers this special group session to provide support and an opportunity to connect with others who need a sense of community as they move through their grief during the holidays. This year, over 70 people registered for the evening of reflection during the festive season. Despite the extreme weather conditions, many travelled in to share their stories about grief during the holidays.



# Provincial and Federal Programs surrounding ambiguous and traumatic loss

In an effort to address the increasing need for education and counselling supports surrounding the various types of loss due to death (and traumatic loss in particular), Caring Hearts began working with the Provincial and Federal governments in support of a Missing Persons Initiative, a targeted program that provides counselling to families of persons who have gone missing throughout Saskatchewan.

## Caring Hearts Provincial Missing Persons Project

### **Ambiguous Loss**

#### **“A Loss Unlike any Other”**

Ambiguous loss is loss unlike any other kind of loss. It is filled with unanswered questions and uncertainty. It leaves the families and friends of the Missing feeling like they are stuck in a constant battle between hope and despair. Ambiguous loss leaves people in a constant state of worry, anxiety and trauma. The less that is known about the situation the more anxiety, depression, and internal conflict they feel.

Ambiguous loss occurs when someone is physically absent but psychologically present. It is an unclear loss that resists closure or understanding. It leaves one searching for answers and thus complicates and delays the process of grieving, and often results in unresolved grief.

Since 2012 Caring Hearts has been working with the support of the Saskatchewan Ministry of Justice to provide specialized ambiguous loss and grief counselling and group supports to the families and friends of all missing persons. The Caring Hearts Missing Persons program also provides education and training opportunities to other frontline professionals, agencies and volunteers who find themselves working with families and friends of Missing Persons. Caring Hearts offers a live Ambiguous Loss and Trauma education session, an Ambiguous Loss manual, and a webinar.

There are currently 134 missing persons listed on the Saskatchewan Missing Persons data base.



# Families of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women & Girls

Following the Federal Government's call for a formal inquiry into murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls, we recognized the Families of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women & Girls (FMMIWG) in Saskatchewan would require both direct and indirect assistance. It is widely recognized that a gap in services exists for these families. Support is necessary for specialized ambiguous loss and trauma, counselling, and group services provided in a trauma-informed manner for FMMIWG. Caring Hearts has been supporting FMMIWG through The Case Project since 2017.

The project builds upon the work that began with the Saskatchewan Ministry of Justice, which provides culturally sensitive, western therapeutic counselling supports to the families of missing persons. In addition, Caring Hearts works closely with an Elder to be able to offer families traditional healing practices.

- C - Counsel families and victims
- A - Advocate for services to support Families of Missing or Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (FMMIWG)
- S - Support families and victims with a variety of services and programs specially developed to serve FMMIWG
- E - Educate our province and its varying communities so they can build capacity which results in a library of both human and tangible resources, and increased networks of support.

Caring Hearts has provided counselling support options for Families of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls through either Western or Traditional Therapeutic methods. Our organization works closely with Elders to provide families with this guided Traditional approach.

## Webinars

In July of 2019 we were excited to launch educational webinars on trauma, intergenerational trauma, traditional healing, missing persons, and bereavement as it relates to frontline professionals and those who provide caregiving.

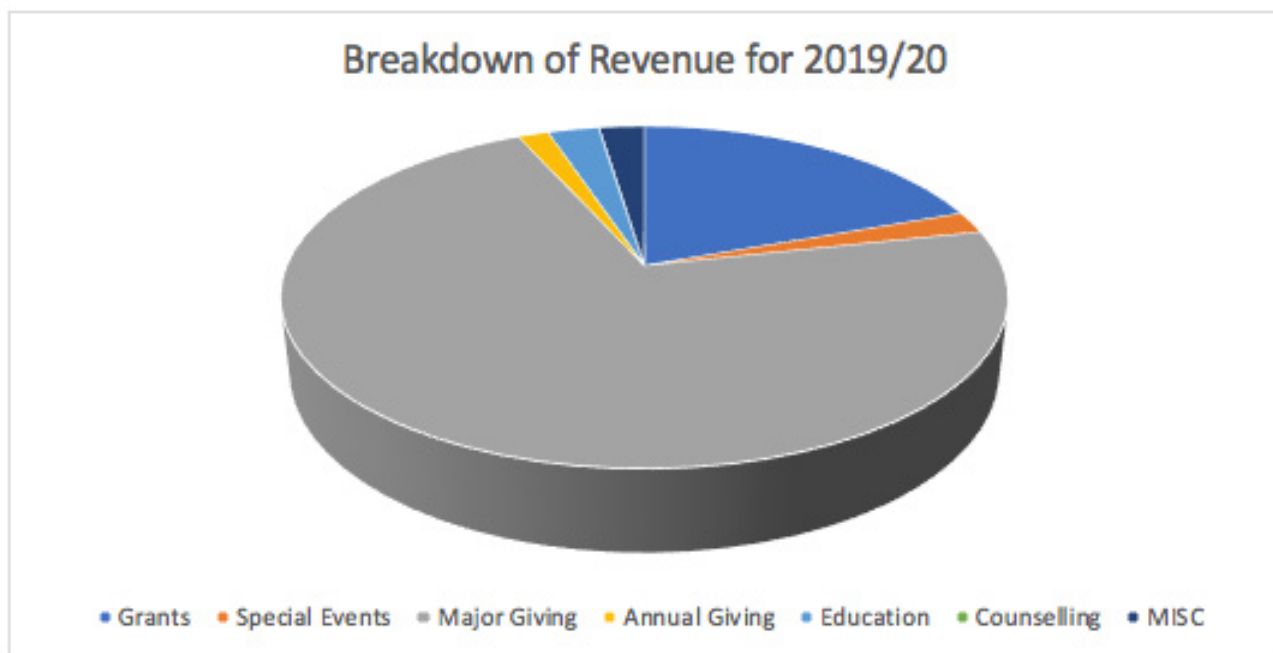
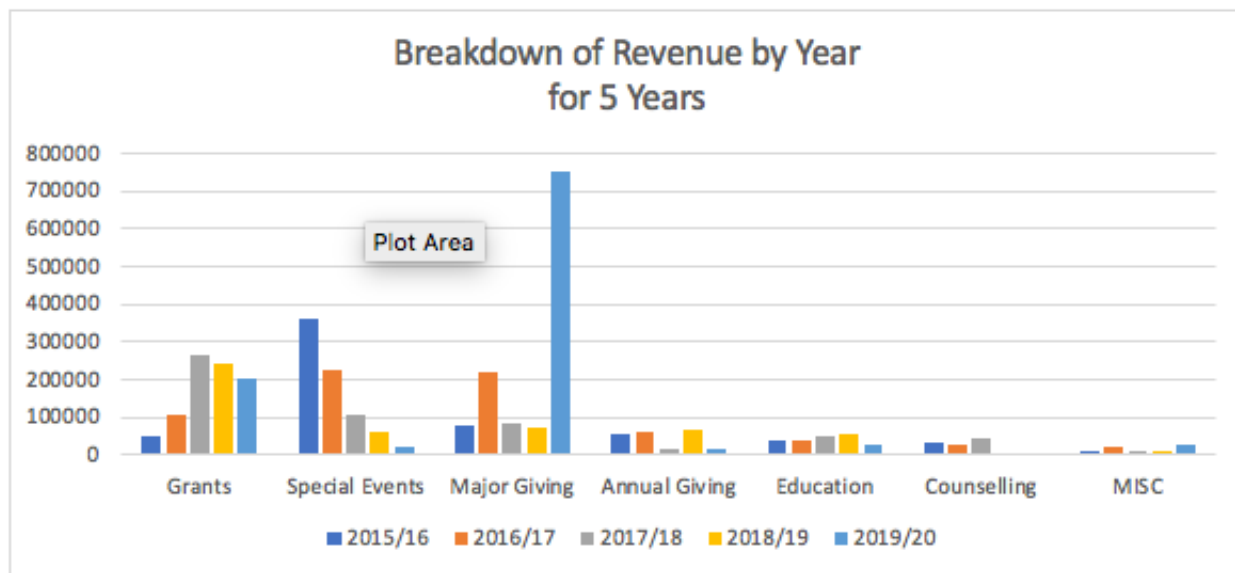
Caring Hearts continues to look for ways to respond to support healing for those suffering grief and loss. Webinars include:

1. Children's Grief
2. Trauma-informed Care/Trauma
3. Ambiguous Loss
4. Early Nurturing Developmental Trauma
5. Self-Care & Resiliency Building
6. Intergenerational Trauma
7. Traditional Healing
8. Restorative Yoga
9. Understanding the Sharing Circle (Facilitated by Elder)

### **In 2019/20 the Ministry of Justice provided funding to create additional resources including:**

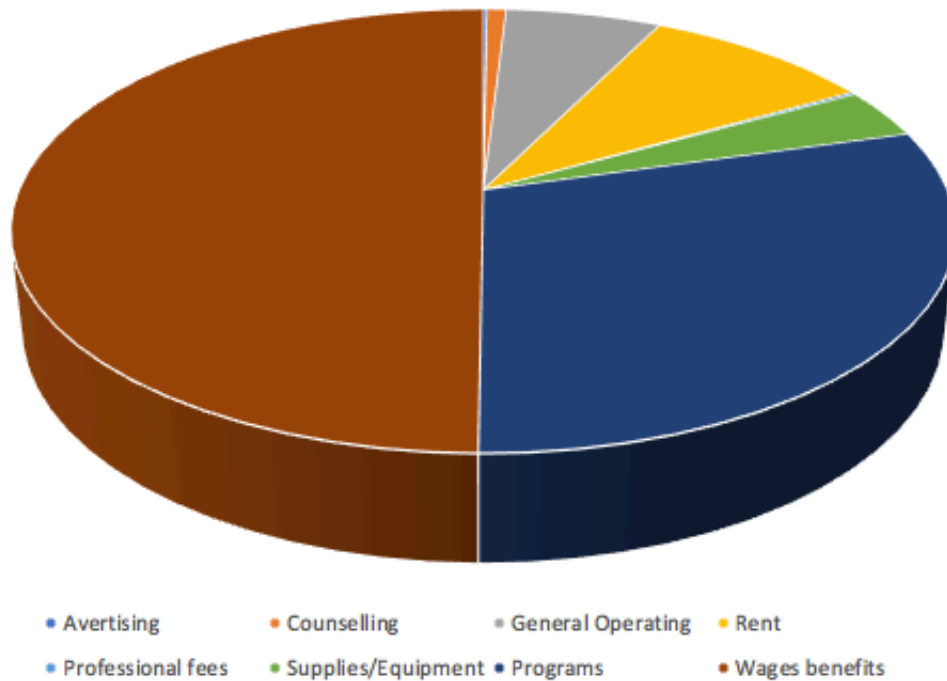
- A self-study Ambiguous Loss online program. The program includes video segments as well as workbook options.
- A print resource for Resiliency and Self-Care for those dealing with trauma and loss.
- A print resource for 'Development of a support group for families of missing persons'
- A print resource for children dealing with grief and loss.

## Caring Hearts by the Numbers

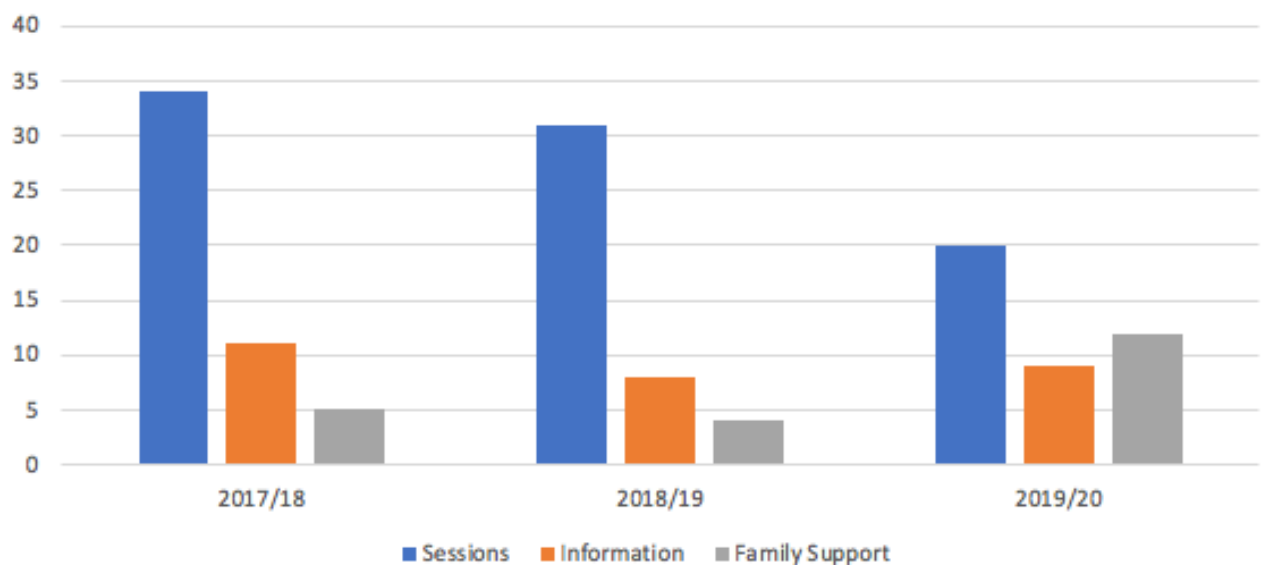




Breakdown of Expenditures for 2019/20



Summary Education Stats by Year



## Thank You To

The RBC team who volunteered to help with the Caring Hearts library, and for their generous donation of \$1000.

Conexus Credit Union for providing additional resources for the Caring Hearts library and for their generous donation of \$5000 for our operational needs.

Rochelle Smith for volunteering to catalogue the resources in the Caring Hearts library.

Royal LePage East Regina for their donation of \$1000 for our operational needs.

The University of Regina Chapter of Engineers Without Borders for dedicating their fundraising dollars (\$1090) to the Caring Hearts Camp.

WestJet for donating a trip for two to be used in our upcoming raffle.

Golf Steak House for the donation of a gift card.

Boston Pizza for the donation of gift cards.

To all our volunteers and donors for your continued support.

We could not do it without you.

## Bequests

Caring Hearts received two bequests in 2019/20.

We are grateful for legacy gifts from:

- The estate of Edgar George Phillip;
- The estate of Emily Sheung-Chuck Leung.

Thank you for supporting others in their healing journey.

