

WELCOME

Within this Gratitude Report, you will learn about the incredible work that OCYI and its' partner organizations have been involved in over the past year. Through the numerous challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are so grateful to all the frontline staff, partners, and funders for their incredible work to help support children and youth from communities all across the city.

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Johanne Levesque,

Rideauwood Addiction & Family Services, Steering Committee Co-chair

We the Co-chairs of the Ottawa Child and Youth Initiative Steering Committee are very pleased to present the OCYI 2021-2022 Gratitude Report.

In each of our respective professional roles, we are provided with daily reminders of the essential needs and challenges faced by many of Ottawa's children, youth and families.

It is safe to say that all members of the OCYI Steering Committee are keenly aware of the necessity of providing the right supports to children and youth in a timely manner. The OCYI Steering Committee is also too familiar with the dire impact experienced by young people who are unable to access these life-altering resources.

Through the collective platform that is OCYI, leaders from over 80 local partner organizations work collectively and collaboratively to support local kids and youth. With offices across the city, this passionate team of OCYI members share ideas, resources, expertise, and serve to multiply and amplify each OCYI voice many times.

Having the opportunity to witness this dedicated team serve in the interest of helping young people to grow up great, and live their best possible adult lives, is truly an inspiration.

THROUGH THE
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AND YOUTH.

Knowing that the past year further heightened challenges for those we serve, largely through the impact and toll of the pandemic, the OCYI Steering Committee took time to reflect, listen and plan. Through exercises like OCYI's Plenary Session last summer, a new strategic direction was defined resulting in a move to place the mental health and well-being of children and youth at the forefront of our work.

We hope you will enjoy moving through the following colourful pages and seeing evidence of our strategic directives in action. It is our belief that with the continued support of our caring community, the chance to rebuild and recover from COVID-19 is now within reach. As Steve steps down from his role as Co-chair, we welcome the leadership of Kelly Raymond, Executive Director of the Children's Aid Society of Ottawa, as the new Co-chair of OCYI's Steering Committee.

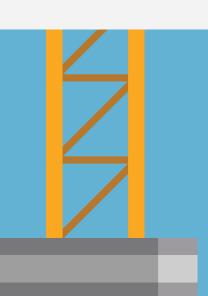
We wish to express our shared gratitude to each OCYI organization, OCYI's generous funders and to a wonderful community, committed to the future of all our children.





GROWING UP GREAT

The Ottawa Child and Youth Initiative (OCYI) is a collaborative of over 80 community organizations and agencies with a shared commitment to promote the healthy development of children and youth.



Vision

Mission

Values

Long Term

Objective

Ensuring all children and youth in Ottawa can reach their full potential and grow up great!

Recognizing the power of collective advocacy and collaborative community efforts and planning, OCYI provides a platform for groups to work together to guide and influence practices, systems and public policy, aimed at nourishing the positive, healthy growth of children and youth in our community.

- Collaboration to maximize impact

- Incorporating and advancing Equity, Diversity & Inclusion
- The fundamental rights of all children and youth as set out it the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Joint planning and evidenced-based decision-making
- Strategic development and resource pooling

Increase awareness, access, and alignment of mental health, substance use health, appropriate use of technology, and gambling resources in each Ottawa neighbourhood to achieve equitable, diverse, and inclusive support for infants, children, youth, and their families.



Awareness – Increase awareness among stakeholders of the importance of prioritizing mental health, substance use health, appropriate use of technology, and gambling needs and supports for children and youth in the pursuit of healthy development outcomes.

Access – All neighbourhoods have access to a coordinated system of mental health, substance use health, appropriate use of technology, and gambling

Alignment – Improve alignment of mental health, substance use health, appropriate use of technology, and gambling supports and services across the city to ensure equitable access.

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (Education & Awareness) Task Group

- Practice Change
 Champions
- Parent and Professional Tip Sheets
- Bell Let's Talk Day Participation
- Early Childhood Development Task Group
- Creating Connections:
 a transition to school tool
- Supporting Vulnerable Children
- Critical Hours Task Group
- Common Evaluatio Framework
- · Critical Hours Program Mapping
- Apply Multicultural Lens
- Ottawa Collaborative for Parenting Support Task Group
- · Parent Engagement Tool
- · Just Ask Campaig

Research and Evaluation Task Group

Strengthen the link between research and practice and provide evaluation expertise to support the deliverables of the other OCYI Task Groups

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OCYI Structure & Leaders

STEERING COMMITTEE

- · Co-chair: Johanne Levesque, Rideauwood Addiction and Family Services
- · Co-chair: Kelly Raymond, Children's Aid Society of Ottawa (term started April 2022)
- The OCYI Steering Committee is composed of senior leaders from organizations that support children and youth in Ottawa and the task group chairs

STAFF

- Project Coordinator: Karen Kennedy
- · Communications Specialist: Chloe Girvan

TASK GROUPS

- Critical Hours: brings together member organizations to support children and youth in critical hours programing, which includes before and after school programs, homework clubs, recreation, and youth drop-in centres
 - Co-chair: Carly Haydt, City of Ottawa, Recreation, Culture and Facility Services
 - Co-chair: Beth Tooley, Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses
- **Early Childhood Development:** aims to successfully support all young children (0 to 6 years) and their families in school entry
 - Co-chair: Michelle Crogie, Pinecrest-Queensway Community Health Centre
 - Co-chair: Holly Overhoff, Ottawa Catholic School Board
- Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health—Education and Awareness: brings together
 service providers from across sectors to increase awareness of infant and early childhood
 mental health and how to foster health mental health in early childhood
 - Chair: Clarissa Arthur, Education Foundation of Ottawa
- Ottawa Collaborative for Parenting Support: community of partners working together
 to build resilient families that can support their children's healthy development, feel
 empowered, and are able to cope with the ups and downs of everyday living
 - Co-chair: Mariama Aregbesola, Parent Resource Centre
 - Co-chair: Michelle Crogie, Pinecrest-Queensway Community Health Centre
- **Research and Evaluation:** supporting the research and evaluation needs of the other OCYI task groups as well as developing a framework for OCYI as a whole to support steps towards achieving the long-term objective
 - Co-chair: Kady Carr, Ottawa Neighbourhood Study
 - Co-chair: Erin Montague, United Way East Ontario



OCYI Strategic Direction

OCYI invited members of our Steering Committee, task groups, and network organizations to participate in a plenary session on June 2, 2021. The session included five breakout rooms where groups of participants could answer two questions, with a facilitator recording answers.

- **Question 1:** What should OCYI's long-term objective be? How will we accomplish this? What will we need?
- **Question 2:** What are OCYI's opportunities for service collaboration? Are there lessons from COVID-19 that we can leverage or should consider?

The responses from the plenary session participants shaped the work of defining what the OCYI long-term objective should be. Both equity and mental health and addiction services were identified as key themes. The strategic priorities of awareness, access, and alignment were affirmed as resonating with the participants. These pieces were brought together to create the long-term objective and finalize OCYI's Strategic Direction in December 2021. OCYI leadership was happy to see that participants affirmed the networking and collaboration of OCYI's role in the community, with OCYI noted as a valuable resource for organizations throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.



Increase awareness, access, and alignment of mental health, substance use health, appropriate use of technology, and gambling resources in each Ottawa neighbourhood to achieve equitable, diverse, and inclusive support for infants, children, youth and their families.



- **1. Awareness** Increase awareness among stakeholders of the importance of prioritizing mental health, substance use health, appropriate use of technology, and gambling needs and supports for children and youth in the pursuit of healthy development outcomes.
- **2. Access** All neighbourhoods have access to a coordinated system of mental health, substance use health, appropriate use of technology, and gambling resources supports.
- **3. Alignment** Improve alignment of mental health, substance use health, appropriate use of technology, and gambling supports and services across the city to ensure equitable access.



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UNICEF CANADA Child & Youth Well-being Survey

In spring 2021, OCYI was one of four partners across Canada to collaborate with the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW), UNICEF Canada, and the Ontario Trillium Foundation to launch the UNICEF Child & Youth Well-being Survey. Between April to June 2021, Children and youth ages nine to 18 were invited to complete the survey. OCYI was grateful to hear directly from children and youth about their well-being, noticeably during a large wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The survey was available in English or French and there were just over 600 children and youth who responded. We were pleased to receive so many responses and although the sample cannot be considered representative of all children and youth in Ottawa, the findings are important conversation starters for how to better support the well-being of kids and youth in our city.

The OCYI Steering Committee reviewed a summary report of the survey findings, and the Research and Evaluation Task Group will be leveraging their expertise to dig deeper into the results. OCYI's next steps will be identifying the concerns the survey respondents shared about their wellbeing, and how OCYI's task groups can support narrowing the gaps through their work.

Where does Canada stand?



The Canadian Index of Child and Youth Well-being

oneyouth.unicef.ca @OneYouthCanada #OurBigSelfie



A series of data briefs have been prepared which provide a snapshot of the responses with respect to the UNICEF Canadian Index of Child and Youth Well-being. **Check out the OCYI website to view the data briefs** and learn more about what Ottawa's younger residents had to say.

SURVEY RESPONSE HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- **We belong:** 78% of French language respondents felt a very strong or somewhat strong sense of belonging, while only 56.7% of English language respondents did.
- We are healthy-mental and emotional health: Just 28.3% of respondents reported their mental health as very good or excellent
- We are healthy-physical health: Half (50.7%) of survey respondents self-reported their physical health as very good or excellent.
- We are learning: Most respondents (64.3%) reported that they like school a bit or a lot.
- **We are participating:** The majority of respondents felt able to express themselves with friends (71.9%) and family (62.7%).
- We are free to play: About eight in ten (79.6%) of respondents reported that because of COVID-19 and social distancing their participation had gone down a little or a lot.
- We are connected to our environment: "Plant. More. Trees." one respondent's comment.
- **We are protected:** 91.8% of respondents felt reasonably safe or very safe.
- We are secure: Nearly one in ten (9.3%) of respondents reported having experienced housing insecurity. Similarly, 8.0% reported going to school or bed hungry due to not enough food at home.
- We are happy and respected: When asked to rate their life satisfaction in general, over half (55.8%) rated at least a moderate level of satisfaction, while 64.4% at least moderately agreed that they are living their best possible life right now.

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PARTNER Profile Series

In the past year, OCYI visited five partner organizations to connect and learn more about how each supports kids and youth in Ottawa. We are pleased to showcase these partners, the needs and gaps experienced by each, and how OCYI supports them in enhancing their reach.



YOUTH SERVICES BUREAU

The YSB drop-in is open 365 days a year to offer warmth in the winter, a cool spot in the summer, health care, meals, a food bank, laundry facilities, showers, access to computers and places to sit, talk and play. Youth visiting the downtown drop-in are also able to access guidance from onsite youth workers or attend and finish high school thanks to a partnership with OCDSB.

Click here for the full story





BETHANY HOPE CENTRE

Between September 2020 and June 2021, there were 496 visits to Bethany Hope's Lunchbox Program and 2480 lunches provided.

Click here for the full story



CRIME PREVENTION OTTAWA

Students inspired by a CPO event created a program called Man-Up which involved discussions about healthy masculinity, healthy relationships and the promotion of the prevention of sexual violence and dating violence. Before the pandemic it was running in 23 high schools in Ottawa.

Click here for the full story



SOUTH-EAST OTTAWA COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

At least 350-400 local kids and youth have recently enjoyed, and relied upon, SEOCHC's park-based programming.

Click here for the full story









THE DOOR YOUTH CENTRE

Pre-pandemic numbers show that in 2019 alone 3779 meals were served, 3,926 youth visits were made to the centre, and 382 hours were spent by youth in the homework room.

Click here for the full story

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THE JUST ASK Facebook Series Is Answering Questions!

Each month, OCYI task group, Ottawa Collaborative for Parenting Support (OCPS), partners with Ottawa Public Health's **Parenting in Ottawa's page** for the Just ask Facebook series. Each live event features a different topic, relevant to those caring for children and youth in Ottawa. Expert guests, from OCYI member organizations, are there for the day to answer questions and provide current information. Staying true to OCYI's values of equity, diversity, and inclusion, OCPS's recent Just ask guests have incorporated mental health and addiction needs of children, youth, and their families with the session topic.

TOPICS THIS YEAR:

- **1Call1Click.ca:** connecting to mental health and addiction services for children and youth
- Rural Ottawa Youth Mental Health Collective: supporting youth in Ottawa's rural wards
- Transition to kindergarten: key information from all four Ottawa school boards
- Family Services Ottawa's **Around the Rainbow program:** supporting 2SLGBTQ+ children, youth, and their families
- Applying for and getting help with costs of childcare: two childcare agency staff members shared how to navigate applications

The OCPS is thankful to the experts who have participated in the Just ask Facebook series. The series has also been a wonderful opportunity to collaborate with OCYI partner Parenting in Ottawa.

Check the **OCYI website** to see the calendar for upcoming sessions, and don't forget: all parents have questions, just ask!

OUICK NUMBERS

25K

Parenting in Ottawa and Être Parent à Ottawa Facebook followers

2600+

average reach of each post

90

average Facebook reactions per session

40

average comments from followers per session

30

average shares per session



Join the conversation on the Ottawa Public Health Facebook page "Parenting in Ottawa"

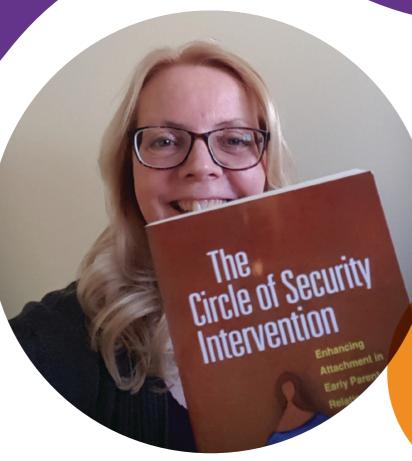
- November 24: Rural Ottawa Youth Mental Health Collective on mental health resources for rural youth
- December: TBD
- January 19: Registering for kindergarten with experts from each of Ottawa's four school boards
- February 9: Supporting LGBTTQ+ children and youth with Around the Rainbow
- March 9: How to register for and find help with costs for child care in Ottawa (rescheduled date!)

Joignez-vous à la conversation sur la page Facebook de Santé publique Ottawa <u>« Être parent à Ottawa »</u>

- 24 novembre : Rural Ottawa Youth Mental Health Collective sur les ressources de santé mentale pour les jeunes ruraux
- Décembre : à déterminer
- 19 janvier : S'inscrire à la maternelle auprès d'experts de chacun des quatre conseils scolaires d'Ottawa
- 9 février : Soutenir les enfants et les jeunes LGBTTQ+ avec « Around the Rainbow »
- 9 mars: Comment s'inscrire à des services de garde d'enfants à Ottawa et trouver de l'aide pour les frais de garde (date rééchelonnée)







PCC participant proudly shares the book won in the participant drawing!

In November 2021, the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) Education and Awareness Task Group relaunched Practice Change Champions (PCC) with a kickoff event on providing information and acquiring feedback from its members. The purpose of the session was to ensure that PCC was meeting the existing and emergent needs of service and childcare providers, as well as those of the community.

The first PCC event of 2022 was held virtually on Wednesday, March 2nd, and discussed the topic of infant and early childhood attachment. Kristina Scully, a Parent-Child Psychotherapist at the Youville Centre, facilitated the session and led group discussions through a series of breakout rooms. Participants explored how to support secure attachment with children in their programs and their families. The collective discourse afforded participants tools and resources that could further enrich their practice and professional environments.

Participant Comments from March 2022 Practice Change Champions Session

"Very informative! Really enjoyed connecting with others in the breakout rooms."

"Loved [the] prior training, [attachment is] so important. Even more so with the challenges of the pandemic to connect with families."

Through professional development sessions, PCC aims to influence professional capacity and organizational change to include infant and early childhood mental health in Ottawa community programs and services. It strongly supports the alignment of infant and early childhood mental health services, resources, and information by bringing professionals together to engage in knowledge sharing and ongoing education. Practice Change Champions fosters an environment that showcases what infant and childhood mental health services are available, when to seek them out, and how to go about it. Learn more on the **Practice Change Champions webpage** and join the **email list here.**

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CREATING CONNECTIONS: Supporting Entry to Kindergarten

With the lens of a strategic direction relating to mental health and well-being this year, the OCYI Early Childhood Development Task Group's Creating Connections subcommittee engaged in creating a city-wide form and process to facilitate children's transition from the child care environment to school. As participating boards in 2021, the OCSB, OCDSB, and CECCE provided increased communication opportunities between parents, child care program staff, and schools in the hopes of greater success for families and educators alike.

Research shows that staff working in early learning and care environments develop strong relationships with the children in their care, as well as a good understanding of strategies to support them through challenges. This knowledge can be valuable to school staff as they prepare for those children to transition into their kindergarten classrooms.

Through straight-forward and easily understood questions, the form addresses all important elements of children's learning and development from a group care setting point of view.

The initial success of the pilot program can be demonstrated through end-user quotes such as:

"The form allowed for a good exchange of information regarding the child's social development and independence. The teaching team appreciated receiving this information which confirmed their observations at the beginning of the school year. This also allows us to make adaptations if there are students who need it."

As a committee, we are pleased and encouraged by the response to this project and we look forward to its expansion in 2022.

HOLLY OVERHOFF

Early Childhood Development Task Group co-chair Early Learn Services Manager, Ottawa Catholic School Board







The Value OF

WORKING TOGETHER TO SUPPORT KIDS & YOUTH

Critical hours programming continued to face many challenges throughout 2021 and into 2022. With the unpredictable ebb and flow of restrictions and closures, the members of the Critical Hours Task Group continued to meet regularly and collectively work towards enhancing responsive after-school programs for children and youth.





Disruptions posed by school closures and reduced community programs over the last two years will have a long-term impact on children and youth when it comes to academic success, development milestones, and, most importantly, their well-being. Collaborating and aligning with other youth-serving organizations (ranging from community-based programs to school boards) goes a long way in increasing capacity to be able to bring more awareness to the issues facing children and youth. In addition, it provides an opportunity to learn and share through networking, trainings and workshops for frontline staff, and common evaluation.

Critical hours programs have long been supporting the mental well-being needs of children outside of the school hours. The

benefits of caring and supportive adults, safe spaces, and skills development all lead to increased mental well-being. We are in an exciting time to reframe the impacts of our programs and advocate for adequate investments to increase an equitable distribution of critical hours programs across Ottawa.

As we continue to navigate the complexities of this pandemic and the impacts it is having on young people, together we will continue to share, learn and support each other to ensure critical hours programs are addressing the needs in the community.

BETH TOOLEY

Critical Hours Task Group co-chair Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses

The OCYI Book Club

Mindful that winter months can be isolating for many families, and knowing that reading and being read to can enhance the well-being of children and youth, OCYI partnered with the Collection Development of the Ottawa Public Library to create access to a curated selection of winter-themed books.

Designed to keep readers of all ages warm and connected last winter, the OCYI Cozy Reads Book Club counted down to 2022 by posting links on social media to a different daily book throughout the month of December.

All books remain available from the Ottawa Public Library, and some are even eBooks. In response to positive feedback, OCYI asked Just ask guest, Family Services Ottawa's Around the Rainbow program, to recommend some of their favourite child and teen LGBTQ+ books to share on Twitter, Instagram and the OCYI website.

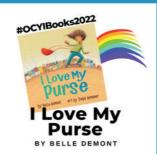
Please find below links to OCYI's Book Club and keep an eye out for new 'chapters' in the near future!

COZY WINTER INDIGENOUS READS FOR CHILDREN

COZY WINTER READS FOR CHILDREN

WINTER READS FOR TEENS

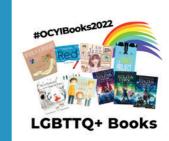
LGBTQ+ READS FOR CHILDREN AND TEENS

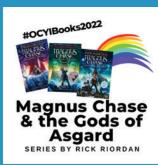


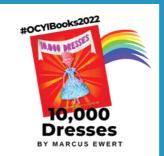




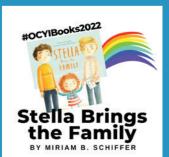












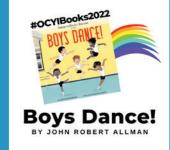




















- OCYI's website now features a bilingual blog of stories, profiles and individual articles from the OCYI Ovation newsletter. These images and links provide vibrant social media content intended to reach a larger and more diverse audience.
- Communications efforts continue to support initiatives of our partners. In early 2022, OCYI staff enjoyed a second opportunity to assist the IECMH-EA Task Group in producing social media content for use on Bell Let's Talk Day.
- Another example entailed teaming up again with partners Ottawa Public Health (OPH), the Kids Come First Health Team and CHEO's YouthNet/ReseauAdo (YNRA) to refresh and relaunch the Your Minute video campaign for back to school 2021.
- OCYI continues to produce and circulate its seasonal newsletter, the OCYI Ovation, along with monthly issues of the OCYI Bulletin. With each new issue, OCYI looks for new ways to improve and enhance the impact and circulation of these publications.
- This year the ability of OCYI to share important resources and information has been enhanced by new relationships with communications leads from Ottawa's four school boards.
- As part of our commitment to supporting all of our partners, OCYI continuously works to share news, events and initiatives using OCYI social media platforms and publications.





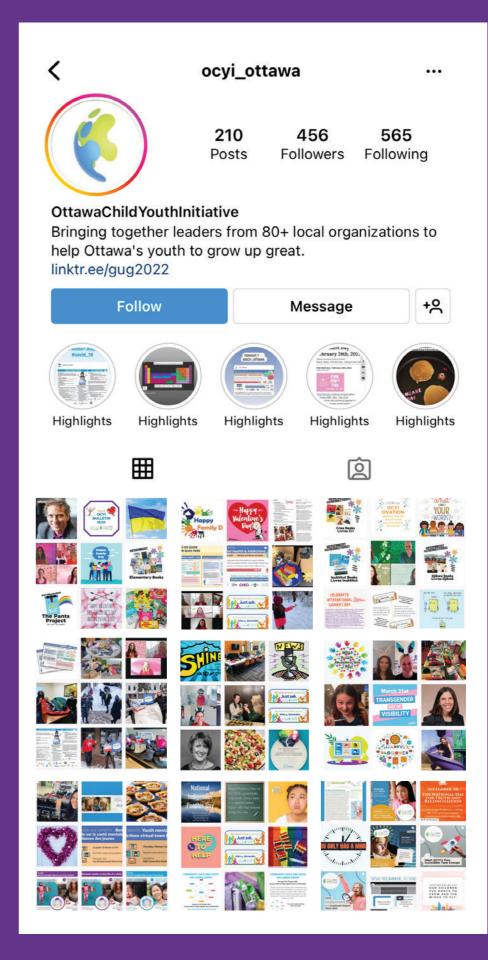


TWITTER

OCYI's Twitter account OCYI_Ottawa has now welcomed over 600 new followers since October 2020.

The use of Twitter Analytics helps us to learn more about what our followers are interested in and ensures we are sharing relevant and meaningful information.







INSTAGRAM

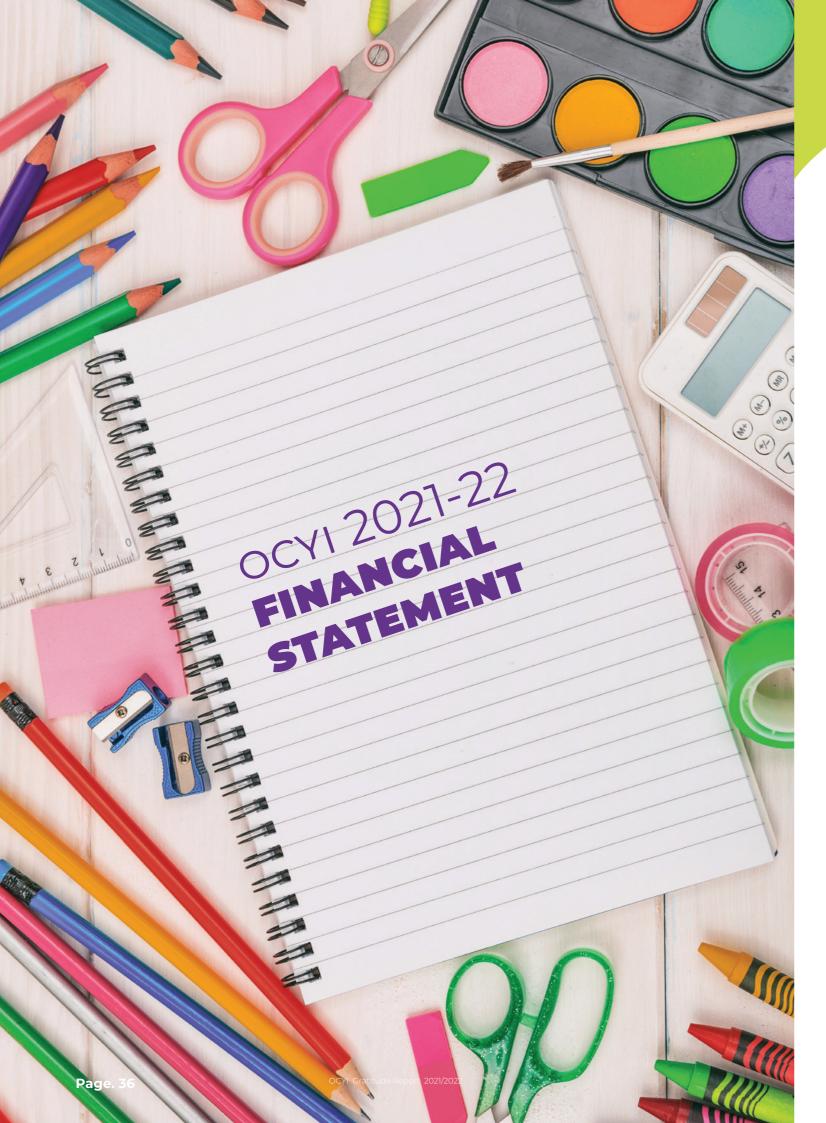
OCYI's Instagram account

OCYI_Ottawa

has celebrated its one year anniversary with **441** followers.

The addition of the tool Linktree created an easy way for us to share links on our Instagram page.

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	REVENUE	EXPENSES	BALANCE
BALANCE FORWARD (April 1, 2021)			\$93,674.71
REVENUE			
United Way East Ontario	\$75,000.00		
CHEO	\$20,000.00		
Ottawa-Carleton District School Board	\$20,000.00		
Ottawa Catholic School Board	\$10,000.00		
Ottawa Police Service	\$5,000.00		
Children's Aid Society of Ottawa	\$1,250.00		
TOTAL	\$131,250.00		
EXPENSES			
Salaries & Benefits		\$79,930.30	
Website & Communication Tools		\$2,192.10	
Graphic Design		\$2,623.40	
Translation Services		\$2,651.50	
Project Expenses		\$388.52	
Consultant Fees		\$5,042.50	
TOTAL		\$92,828.32	
March 31st Fund Balance			\$132,096.39

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Instagram

Twitter

@OCYI_Ottawa

@OCYI_Ottawa

Email

info@growingupgreat.ca

The Ottawa Child and Youth Initiative works together to foster the healthy development of all children and youth through research, advocacy and program development.

Our vision is for children and youth in Ottawa to have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

www.ocyi.ca

THANK YOU