



ANNUAL REPORT 2022

(01 April 2021 to 31 March 2022)

A Letter from the Executive Director

It is with excitement that I am writing this today! I have been able to remain in the Interim Executive Director role with Kickstand and I am incredibly grateful to those involved in supporting my commitment to the future of IYS in Alberta.

During the last year (01 April 2021 to 31 March 2022) which has passed so quickly, much of our work has been focused on two main areas – the development of society infrastructure required to ensure the sustainability of Kickstand (The Alberta Centre for Excellence in Youth Mental Health) and the design and implementation of Kickstand Connect, a provincial virtual integrated youth services platform.

Developing the required infrastructure for Kickstand has included establishing Human Resource policies and procedures, developing and implementing processes for Financial Management, and establishing Operational Supports, such as Information Technology, for the organization.

But the much more exciting work of Kickstand over the last year has been on the virtual integrated youth services solution! Kickstand's team, the Provincial Implementation & Support Team, worked tirelessly over the last year to bring Kickstand Connect from an idea, into reality. With ongoing, robust engagement from youth and young adults across the province, each member of the team brought their skills and experience to the table to create solutions to the complex task of building an easily accessible, young person friendly, 100% virtual clinic with an embedded evaluation framework! It is with anticipation, and a little bit of relief, that Kickstand Connect is so close to the finish line with an anticipated soft launch date of 04 May 2022.

Looking back... I would say that this work is not easy! It takes passion, perseverance, and personal resilience. But it is also a space filled with the most amazing people – thoughtful and intelligent – who bring unwavering commitment to solving complex health and social issues that face young people today.

I want to again thank the Kickstand Board for their support and guidance, the young people who take their time to actively design, consult and inform our steps forward, and special thank-you to Deb McKinnon, CEO of the Mental Health Foundation, for her authentic mentoring and leadership. I am looking forward to ongoing successes through the next year with the Kickstand community.

Sincerely, Katherine Hay



5

Active Research Projects including
3 National Research Projects



1280

Subscribers to More Good Days
following the launch of Phase II

3

Additions to the Kickstand Provincial
Implementation & Support Team



538

Hours of Engagement with 96
different Young People in Alberta



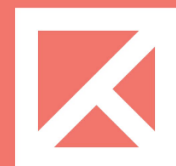
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Great Big Story
([Frayme GBS on emaze](#))



7

Panels & Conference Presentations



40

Young People across Alberta
composed 365 text messages as part
of the More Good Days Phase II
program



10

Contracted Service
Providers Joined Kickstand to
provide virtual peer support and
mental health/substance use
counseling appointments with
Kickstand Connect

Voices of Kickstand's Action Council and Network

“Kickstand’s initiatives to transform youth access to services have not only been true to their foundational value of youth engagement but has also created tangible outcomes that have been positively received by me and my peers who participate. One of the many examples is their creation of the MoreGoodDays message service. Aside from playing a role in the editing process, I have also been able to see my peers access this resource and tell me firsthand accounts of its benefit on their wellness. Another appreciation I have for Kickstand is their consistent efforts to maintain accessibility and relevance in the projects that they initiate. I strongly believe that this helps to keep the organization centered in their purpose and only bolsters the potential they could achieve for Albertan youth. With continued support, we can finally begin to repair the trust between youth and the genuine interest of organizations to, like Kickstand, meet the needs of youth and empower their voices in the process.” - *Trinity, Lethbridge*

“I appreciate how Kickstand is always trying to better understand the struggles and challenges a youth may go through then come up with the strategic plans to provide a wide range of supports for the youth community. As a university student, I feel that there are several resources available and accessible for me to support myself in overcoming a variety of different challenges, so I strongly felt that it would be greatly beneficial to the overall youth community if there are similar resources available for the youth groups of different ages and backgrounds. I sincerely appreciate and support Kickstand and their central goal of creating a better, and more supportive youth community across Alberta. I have not seen any other organizations that try to be inclusive of all the different youth groups and attempt to provide all the necessary supports crucial for the development and growing of a youth. Recently, Kickstand held a session with the different groups like ATB Financial and Cook & Converse, to better understand the questions and concerns a youth may have in learning about the essential life skills, which will ultimately help these organizations come up with better programs and services for the youth community. Hence, I wholeheartedly value and support the works being done by Kickstand and I hope it continues to grow to support many more others in the future.” - *Hasul, Edmonton*

“I have especially seen the need to support youth through the challenges and mental stressors that have been brought on during the impact of the pandemic. I have worked with Alberta Health



Services inside of hospitals for almost 4 years and have seen a rise of youth needing more mental health support and services. At times, our hospitals were tied up and unfortunately not able to provide support for the youth going through crisis as our beds were completely full. I believe there needs to be more proactive services available to the youth for support on their mental wellness before it becomes a mental health emergency. That is why I choose to be involved with Kickstand as I believe the organization wants to create a positive outlet and a positive community that youth can reach out to for multiple services.” - *Patrick, Wetaskawin*

“The biggest problem that I've seen in youth mental health, has to do with the fragmentation of services. Having everything in the same community hub and making services centrally available and connected to each other will really overcome a lot of the obstacles that exist today. Kickstand is a place where equity is given, where we can revolutionize the way we approach health care and wellness. Kickstand's been built in partnership with youth since day one. Everything about it just says "nothing about us without us." - *Victory, Calgary (formerly known as Jenny)*

“Working with Kickstand during the brand process was fun because us YAC members were able to have our voice heard and pitch in ideas and suggestions! Especially as an Indigenous person, I felt safe and supported when sharing my opinions and feedback. The engagement process was a safe and inclusive space, it was made sure that everyone's voices would be heard and to be respectful and open minded.” - *Kian, Edmonton*

“It's so important to engage the people you're building the service for. I never really had a platform to share my own concerns with service providers in the past. But then when Kickstand started the youth engagement, it felt so good to have my voice heard. I could finally release all that pent up emotion and that itself did wonders for my mental health. Kickstand has consulted with youth for everything! From its name to its services, it has created a welcoming and safe environment for youth to participate in. To me, Kickstand represents the first. The first to welcome discontent rather than smother it. The first to allow youth to have a say in their mental health.” - *Neel, Fort McMurray*



Year in Review/Accomplishments

Meaningful Engagement of Youth, Young Adults, Families and Caregivers

A foundational value of the Society is the meaningful engagement of individuals and families/caregivers that may access services through Kickstand. Going beyond consultation, engagement is about authentically hearing, moving aside to give space to these voices, and amplifying if required, the messages of young people and their families/caregivers. Special consideration is given to subsections of the population and to Alberta Indigenous peoples who we continue to learn from as we co-create solutions for health and wellness of young people in our province.

Kickstand's second Youth Action Committee was established with 11 members representing Alberta's geographic and ethnic diversity and completed over 500 hours of active contributions up to the end of the fiscal year.

"I mean it 100% when I say I enjoyed every last bit of my journey. I ALWAYS feel heard by Kickstand, and Kickstand earned my respect as they thoughtfully received my suggestions, constructive criticism, and big ideas. I can see my work in Kickstand itself, and I feel like a valued member of the team. Kickstand is something I can not only recommend to others, but that I can comfortably call my own." - YAC member feedback received through Engagement Evaluation process

Engagement activities included assistance with all recruitment activities for Kickstand, creation and review of website health literacy content, co-presenting at multiple events throughout the year, input into the clinical evaluation design and process, beta-testing Kickstand Connect for ease of access, and active involvement with content creation and marketing activities for More Good Days.

Evaluation has shown that our engagement practices lead young people to feel able to express their views and be heard, have a high degree of confidence that they are influencing the design and implementation of the Kickstand initiative, and experience positive impact of the role on their own personal health and wellness.



In February 2022, Kickstand recruited a Family Engagement Coordinator to begin more targeted engagement with families and caregivers across Alberta. We look forward to meaningful input and contributions from these important voices over the next year.

Frayme's Great Big Stories

Kickstand collaborated with young creatives and young people to tell the story of Kickstand and where we are today. This unique approach has resulted in the following product which illustrates the commitment of Kickstand to including voices of young people in all we do.

[Frayme GBS on emaze](#)

Phase II More Good Days eHealth Program

Due to the positive health and wellness benefits of subscribers to automated text messaging e-health programs, Kickstand worked in cooperation with Dr. Agyapong and his research team to plan, create and implement Phase II of More Good Days. This program saw 40 young people from across Alberta write and submit all program content – resulting in a program built entirely by young people for young people! More Good Days now contains 365 days of automated text messaging to support the health and wellness of its over 1200 subscribers.

Kickstand Connect

Kickstand has been working on realizing our vision of an online integrated youth services space. The pandemic has propelled the growth and acceptance of providing health and wellness services through virtual connection and youth and young adults are comfortable with this form of access. In consultation with young people and families/caregivers, Kickstand has explored and created interactive functionality for the website and clinic platform, determined content and co-created assets for promoting health and wellness, and assisted in creating an evaluation framework to determine the impact of Kickstand on health outcomes as well as to provide real-time feedback for ongoing quality improvement. The team has worked with partnership vendors to build an IT solution, a health metrics platform, complete a privacy impact assessment and ensure compliance with privacy legislation, develop partnerships with service providers and community agencies, and draft information sharing agreements and contracts for services!



Although we had been hoping to begin to offer services through Kickstand Connect earlier in 2022, we are pleased to be very close to launch!

Integrated Youth Services Knowledge Creation & Dissemination

Kickstand has been actively involved at a local, provincial and national level as a knowledge user – learning from others involved in Integrated Youth Services initiatives – and a knowledge generator! Kickstand is actively engaged in the following research projects:

1) Kickstand Connect's Evaluating a Virtual, Walk-In Integrated Youth Services Space

This project is the evaluation of Kickstand Connect. Rachal Pattison, Kickstand's Research Manager, in partnership with Dr. Gina Dimitropoulos from the University of Calgary, are evaluating the implementation of Kickstand Connect to ensure equitable and just access to services, the effectiveness of Kickstand programs and services on how young people perceive their health and wellness, and the satisfaction and quality of the interaction with Kickstand with a focus on ensuring a positive help-seeking experience.

2) LIFT Employment project: What Works for Work?

Working in cooperation with a lead research team from CAMH (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto, ON), evaluating the impact of employment services offered within an integrated youth services setting.

3) Racism in Youth Mental Health project

Dr Hilario from the University of Alberta's project to evaluate and address the experiences of racism for young people with mental health concerns in Alberta. Young people involved with Kickstand will be key informants in the work.

4) Indigenous Gender and Wellness project

Dr. Srividya Iyer, Researcher from Douglas Hospital Research Centre & Prevention and Early Intervention Program for Psychosis (PEPP-Montreal) has a project focusing on the creation of a toolkit for providers to more effectively address gender diversity and promote health and wellness for Indigenous young people across Canada.

5) Wisdom2Action SAFER project

SAFER team completed curriculum creation and first round of trainings delivered to 2SLGBTQ+-serving organizations across Canada between January-April 2022. Kickstand providers are all expected to complete training and ongoing professional development to ensure that Kickstand Connect is a safe place for young people of all identities to access programs and services.

Financials

Financial Statement for the Year 01 April 2021 to 31 March 2022

Revenue	Mental Health Foundation	\$1,160,267.81	
	Grants	\$20,041.41	
	Other		
	Total Income	\$1,180,309.22	\$1,180,309
Expenditure	Central Infrastructure (branding, website design and build)	(\$33,510.21)	
	Virtual Clinic	(\$203,729.00)	
	Provincial Implementation and Support Team Staffing (salaries & benefits)	(\$352,961.64)	
	Provincial Implementation and Support Team Non-Staffing	(\$71,353.90)	
	Total Expenditures	(\$661,554.75)	(\$661,555)
Balance			\$518,754
	Starting balance on 01 April 2021		\$221,722
	Retained assets at end of period		\$740,476

Looking Forward

Kickstand will be the go-to place for young people and their families/caregivers to have more good days!

Kickstand will:

- Ensure Alberta young people and their families/caregivers have rapid access to easily identifiable, integrated health and social services that enhance quality of life and build capacity.
- Transform pathways to care systems by bringing community partners together, nurturing reciprocal relationships, and providing a provincial framework to enhance efficient and successful implementation across the province.
- Actively engage in innovative research focused on improving services and health outcomes for young people and their families/caregivers.
- Maintain accountability to Alberta young people and families/caregivers in all we do through intentional engagement practices
- Commit to policies and practices that ensure equity, diversity, inclusion and decolonization in a manner that recognizes ongoing learning and growth

Kickstand Connect

Kickstand is looking forward to the launch of Kickstand Connect. Kickstand Connect will be open from 1:00-9:00pm on Mondays and Thursdays providing mental health and substance use counseling appointments, peer support for young people, and employment support appointments at launch. Kickstand has established relationships with 8 community partners who will be providing groups and workshops, sharing their expertise with young people accessing Kickstand Connect.

A phased launch plans to bring the service to various target audiences across the province with full provincial implementation expected within 18 months. Increased capacity and enhanced

programs and services will be a main priority of Kickstand's Provincial Implementation and Support Team.

Alongside Kickstand Connect, further work will focus on the development of health promotion and health literacy assets, easily accessible on the Kickstand webpage.

Ongoing Engagement of Young People and Families and Caregivers

The Kickstand Youth Engagement Coordinator will recruit a third cohort of young people to sit on the Youth Action Council. Individuals will be selected to represent different sections of young people in Alberta including participants from various geographic locations, ages, experiences, and diverse identities. Kickstand has a robust youth engagement budget and an annual plan for participants involvement.

The Family Engagement Coordinator will be working with Families and Caregivers across Alberta to begin to develop a text messaging program for carers supporting young people experiencing mental health and substance use issues. Consultation and co-creation of a continuum of services for families and caregivers is an important part of the development of Kickstand Connect and will be complemented by an evaluation framework to guide ongoing quality improvement as well as to measure impact.

Community Convening

The next year will also see Kickstand facilitate community convening, creating a shared vision and capital plan for a physical integrated youth services centre. This process will begin in the Edmonton urban area and spread to other urban centres in Alberta as appropriate.

Integrated Youth Services Knowledge Creation & Dissemination

Ongoing, active participation in provincial and national development of integrated youth services. The commitment to aligning integrated youth services initiatives and create robust, sustainable and impactful change in Alberta will continue.

