

# 2020/21

## ANNUAL REPORT



THE BEAUTIFUL  
THING ABOUT  
LEARNING IS THAT  
NO ONE CAN TAKE IT  
AWAY FROM YOU.

BB KING



# GRIT

Learn without limits

# Dear GRIT Friends,

Well, that was a year like no other we've experienced! ... and hopefully won't have to experience again.

We know most of what we do works best with human contact and connection. We work *'hands on'* with children, we work *'hands on'* with families, we work *'hands on'* with educators and we collaborate *'hands on'* within our teams. When the *'hands on'* ability is taken away or limited, it obviously puts a major strain on our families and staff.

I want to extend my appreciation and understanding to our staff for all they've had to adapt to, to endure and to accommodate in still providing the exemplary service that defines GRIT. This team is amazing!

I'd also like to acknowledge GRIT's leadership team for the additional work and focus they've put in this year to ensure organizational stability. Through their commitment, GRIT has a strong and valued voice in helping government understand their budget ramifications for our sector.

As we further build our foundation for growth, we are thankful for our staff's commitment to embrace and adopt new frameworks to guide and strengthen how we

work with children, families and the community, in all three of our program streams.

Board members have also contributed to sustaining GRIT in many ways. Here are a few of the highlights:

- We have engaged stakeholders in the development of a new strategic plan to direct GRIT through the next 3-5 yrs.
- We have reviewed and developed major organizational policies and procedures around Succession Planning, Board Recruitment, Disaster Management, and Vaccination mandates.
- We continue to invest in our staff, including a new RRSP matching benefit.

We are grateful for the constant presence of our donors, who have continued to give generously when we need them most, in the absence of signature events during the pandemic.

In this upcoming year, I'm looking forward to seeing things stabilize in our "new normal". I'm also looking ahead with confidence and pride as we are well positioned for another year of excitement at GRIT.

With gratitude,



**Roger Cable**  
PRESIDENT, GRIT BOARD OF DIRECTORS





# Vision

Communities embrace diversity and uphold the value and rights of all children and their families.

# Mission

GRIT provides family centered and inclusive early learning experiences to support the meaningful participation of children with disabilities in home, community and school.

# Values

GRIT embodies these values in all aspects of our organization:

## ► Family Centered Practice

Parents hold a central role in decision making and choices for the well-being of their child and family. Parents experience active parent participation, learning, and gain confidence to positively influence their children's future.

## ► Inclusion

The belief that “we all belong”. All children have the right to participate in natural settings. When children are included, they are active and valued participants in life.

## ► Learning Through Play & Everyday Routines

Play nourishes development and forms a strong foundation for learning. Through play, children make sense of their world, expand their imagination, gain independence and develop friendships.

## ► Learning Community

Passionate people are our most valued asset. Together, we learn, seek knowledge, and discover innovative practices for our work.

# 2020/21 YEAR IN REVIEW

1

## A Leader in Inclusive Early Learning

Through teaching, learning and dialogue, people and ideas continue to grow. In upholding our value to be a learning community, GRIT is informed by current research to guide our programs. This past year, we adopted two new frameworks to strengthen our work with children and families. Our committed staff are now fully engaged in a change process as they begin to implement the Primary Service Provider Approach (in Early Childhood Services) and Early Start Denver Model (in Specialized Services). [gritprogram.ca](http://gritprogram.ca)



## Developing Inclusive Communities

Inclusive communities are welcoming of the diversity of children and families. As our ASaP program continues to expand across Alberta, GRIT was invited to lead early conversations about a new inclusive child care framework for Alberta. In this early planning phase, we have worked closely with Midwest Family Connections (Central region) and Providence (Calgary). It has been exciting to envision a future where the diversity of all children is embraced, to plan for how supports might be provided to early childhood educators, and to ensure all children have equitable access to high quality and inclusive child care in Alberta.

3



## Collaborative Partnerships

2

GRIT's knowledge has grown significantly through the two-year Mental Health Capacity Building project (funded by Alberta Health Services). It is in partnership with others that we will sustain and share knowledge. First, in collaboration with Policy Wise, we created a survey for any organization to use to capture the entry point of their staff mental health knowledge. Second, in partnership with the Neurorelational Framework (NRF) Institute and Dr. Connie Lillas we developed the GRIT NRF Guide. Third, six core mental health competencies workshops available for engaging the broader community. We are deeply grateful for the long-standing mentorship of Dr. Carole Anne Hapchyn (Elmtree Clinic).

## LESSONS LEARNED FROM COVID-19

The past 18 months of a global pandemic has impacted us all in diverse ways. Families, staff and community partners remain resilient and creative in how to stay connected. We have learned the benefits of technology to support virtual home visits and coaching supports for families and community partners. We have learned to effectively use remote platforms such as e-mail and phone calls to offer meaningful and timely support when face-to-face was not possible. Most of all, we have learned that when we take care of ourselves we can be compassionate and better able to support others around us.

“

*I've been to many workshops and conferences, and this is the first place that's felt like home.*

EARLY CHILDHOOD  
EDUCATOR

“

*I know I speak for all of us when I say that we truly could not have done this without the collaboration, guidance and collective efforts of the GRIT team.*

PRINCIPAL, NORTHERN  
GATEWAY PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS

“

*We cannot say enough about the ASaP partnership with our Centre. The thing that we never expected that has occurred is that the staff team has become more unified in how we work with all children.*

DIRECTOR, EARLY LEARNING & CHILDCARE



# Our Impact

## CHILD

Children are active and valued participants in natural environments of home, community and school.

Children transition to inclusive education in their neighborhood school.

Children form positive and lasting relationships with family and peers.



## FAMILY

Parents gain knowledge for supporting their child's development.

Parents make choices and informed decisions for their child and family.

Parents have skills and confidence to articulate a vision, advocate and positively influence their future.

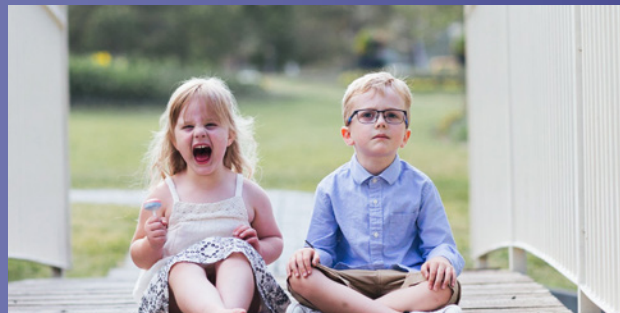


## COMMUNITY

Community settings welcome all children.

Parents are active leaders in local school districts and advocacy associations contributing insight and expertise.

All policies are welcoming, inclusive, and reflective of diversity.



# Financial Highlights

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS YEAR ENDED AUGUST 31, 2021

## Revenue

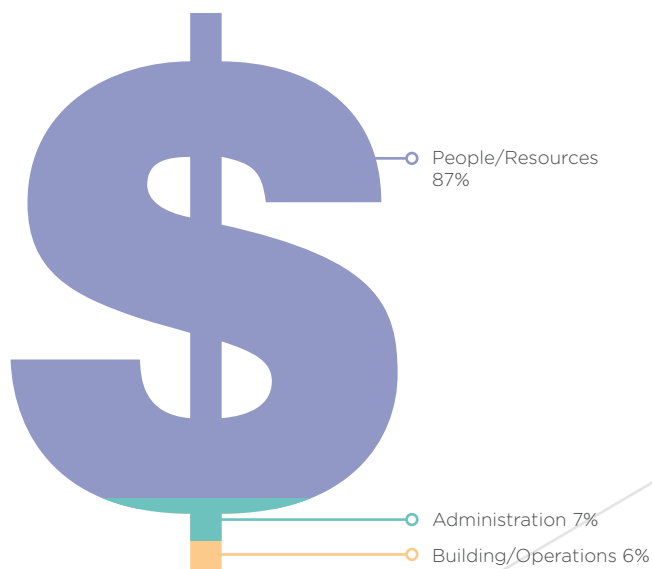
Early Childhood Services	\$3,307,022
ASaP/ICC	\$2,931,751
Specialized Services	\$284,097
Mental Health Project	\$226,617
Grants/Professional Services	\$13,266
Donations	\$80,930
Fundraising	\$12,794
Investment Income	\$73,365
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$6,929,842</b>

## Expenses

Wages (Service Delivery)	\$5,221,217
Resources/Materials/ Transportation	\$616,045
Administration	\$492,080
Building & Operations	\$372,104
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$6,701,446</b>

**NET SURPLUS FOR 2020/21** **\$228,396**

## Where do our dollars go?



## Our Major Supporters

THANK YOU FOR  
YOUR SUPPORT!



**MR. GEORGE  
SMITH**



# Board of Directors



**Roger Cable**  
PRESIDENT

Roger is a decisive, yet fun-loving entrepreneur. He has built Veyron Projects into a growing enterprise serving the commercial construction and renovation market. The recent acquisition of Aquarian Renovations, a partnership with F45 Fitness, and his membership with Entrepreneurs' Organization ensures he keeps busy. Roger holds his integrity and spiritual values close to his heart. He has great respect for GRIT's vision and families and is generous in the ways he gives back to community.



**Karen Lynch**  
VICE-PRESIDENT

Karen is a respected community and civic leader. Karen's forte is creating and nurturing networks of people. Graduating with a degree in Economics, she served in senior positions in communications before following her passion for community volunteerism and political engagement. In 2012, Karen received the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal for her dedication to non-profit sector leadership.



**Bernie Bolton**  
TREASURER

Bernie Bolton is an accomplished leader with extensive experience working collaboratively with executives and Boards. She is a professional accountant (CPA) and internal auditor, with expertise in strategic planning, performance evaluation, risk management, and board policy. Bernie is thankful for the opportunity to play a part in positively impacting the lives of the children and families GRIT serves.



**Christina Radyo**  
DIRECTOR

Christina Radyo is a civil engineer at Urban Systems Ltd. She is pleased to be serving her third term on GRIT's board of directors as the board secretary. Christina enjoys volleyball, snowboarding, hiking, and music in her spare time.



**Kandice Pace**  
VICE-PRESIDENT

Kandice is a stay at home mom to three adorable children under the age of 9, two who have been supported by GRIT. Kandice expresses gratitude for the learning she has gained and cannot imagine where her family would be without the guidance received from GRIT.



**Grace Knight**  
DIRECTOR

As a partner with Three Knights Investments Inc. Grace enjoys supporting passionate entrepreneurs across Western Canada. In her previous role as an Early Childhood Educator, Grace had the opportunity to work with GRIT. She is an advocate for inclusion in schools, communities, and business.



**Joan Kurylo**  
DIRECTOR

While currently retired, Joan's professional history brings unique contributions. As an innovator, entrepreneur, and a successful business owner, Joan is committed to supporting local, provincial and federal politics and an avid organizer for several volunteer events. Joan has been aware of the GRIT Program for many years and is honored to formerly contribute to the meaningful work of the organization.



**Jeff Bisanz**  
DIRECTOR

Jeff has had a long-term interest in the wellbeing of children and serves on the Edmonton Council for Early Learning and Care, the Steering Committee for the Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families (CUP), and the Board of Directors of the Muttart Foundation. He is retired from the University of Alberta, where he served as a professor of developmental psychology.



**Andy Akle**  
DIRECTOR

Andy is and has always had the entrepreneurial spirit. Andy's current role is a Certified Financial Planner with IG Wealth Management. Andy is married with three children, one of whom was a part of the GRIT program. Giving back to the community is a guiding principle that Andy leans on.

ANNUAL REPORT DESIGNED BY: BROKEN ARROW SOLUTIONS INC.

## GRIT

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The GRIT Program

@theGRITprogram