



2018 / 2019 Calgary Alternative Support Services ANNUAL GENERAL REPORT

A Challenging Year...

The 2018-2019 fiscal year proved to be a monumental one at Calgary Alternative Support Services that was full of challenges, changes, new partnerships, projects and an abundance of things to celebrate! The first day of our fiscal year saw us go live with our new finance software solution and was also the day that we took over operation of Stepping Stone Manor (more on those developments later in the report). Both of these events were positive developments but both represented a tremendous amount of work, and having them coincide proved to be taxing.

2018 also saw some unforeseen staffing turn over at the senior management level, which was challenging, but also provided us with the opportunity to promote some internal long term employees. At times the learning curve was high, but we persevered and came out the other end stronger than ever and with a greater appreciation for, and expertise in, change management.

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Read about all the exciting projects and initiatives that we are engaged in ranging from our volunteer tax preparation program to our mindfulness workshops.

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Learn what each our of programs were up to during the 2018-2019 fiscal year including the onboarding of Stepping Stone Manor.

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The CASS Administration Team breaks down the 2018-2019 fiscal year by the numbers and describes the experience of going live with our new enterprise scale finance software solution.

The CASS Advisory Forum

In order to ensure that the people that CASS supports have direct involvement in decisions that are made in the agency, CASS has an Advisory Forum that meets twice a month to build self-advocacy skills, discuss current events, and provide input into CASS policies, programming etc. as needed. The CASS Advisory Forum has 6-7 core members, and is open to anyone supported by CASS.

The CASS Dinner Club

The CASS Dinner Club is one of our most-loved and long running groups. It is a client-planned and administrated group that gets together at a different local eating spot each month. The restaurants chosen rotate quadrants of the city each month so that the club is accessible to everyone at least a few times throughout the year, with 10-30 people attending each month.

Adapted Dialectical Behavioral Therapy - Mindfulness Workshops

Since Fall 2018, CASS has been a partner in delivering Adapted Dialectical Behavior Therapy (A-DBT) workshops to Calgarians with disabilities. Partners in this innovative inter-agency initiative include CASS, Calgary Progressive Lifestyles Foundation (CPLF), Supported Lifestyles and Catalyst (AHS). While the co-facilitators (one from each represented agency) were trained in all aspects of A-DBT (mindfulness, emotional regulation, distress tolerance and interpersonal communication), a 12-week psychoeducational group focusing on Mindfulness was offered to 8 participants between September and December 2018. In every session, participants experienced a new mindfulness practice and, in most sessions, created their own mindfulness tools to take home and use during times of distress.

The CASS Newsletter

CASS has published a newsletter since 2006. Starting out as the "[CASS Corner](#)" with "Sentiments from Steven" on the front page, it has proven to be a great means of communication for both staff and clients. It has evolved over the years, most recently, becoming the [CASS Report](#) with CASS clients acting as Editors. The publication always includes a health and safety section, a list of training dates and times for staff, and continues to be a venue for client talents such as story writing, artwork and cartoons. Clients are welcome to advertise their businesses in the publication as well.

The newsletter is mailed to over 100 clients that choose to receive it by mail, and it is also posted to the CASS website once a month for all staff and clients to catch up on everything new at CASS.

Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP)

CASS facilitates a year-round free tax preparation and filing program through the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP) to ensure that CASS clients can access all applicable benefits and credits, and avoid delays in receiving government assistance.

CASS has been a member of the CVITP program since 2013 although informally we have been helping clients with their taxes since 2006.

This program is facilitated by our Money Matters Program and Resource Facilitator, and serves between 50-100 taxpayers/year. As well as tax preparation and filing, we support clients to access their tax information from the CRA, disburse information around avoiding scams, applying for the Disability Tax Credit, Registered Disability Savings Plans, Registered Education Savings Plans, and host a workshop presented by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)'s outreach program and pertinent topics each year.



Friendships & Dating

Keeping in line with the CASS mission statement to create opportunities that promote personal development and building more meaningful relationships, our agency is participating in a project with the University of Alaska Anchorage Centre for Human Development to help give our clients the chance to take part in a Friendships and Dating Program (FDP).

This program has been specially designed to teach the necessary skills needed to learn and experience ways to achieve more meaningful friendships, connections and intimacy. The Friendships and Dating program is an evidence based, comprehensive approach that helps teach people with intellectual or developmental disabilities the skills needed to create and maintain deep and meaningful friendships and prevent interpersonal violence.

The FDP is a 10-week program available to all CASS clients free of charge. The curricular focuses on skill building using a group process and experiential learning opportunities. Session topics include feelings, relationships, boundaries, communication, meeting people, first impressions, planning activities and dates, the dating process, sexual health, recognizing difference and conflict resolution. Each session is open to 8 to 10 different participants.

The Friendships and Dating Program allows for more community involvement. In the previous session CASS worked with [Calgary Police Services](#), [Calgary Centre for Sexuality](#), [HIV Community Link Calgary](#) and the [TELUS Science Museum](#) to help offer unique learning opportunities directly linked to the Friendships and Dating Curriculum through community inclusion.

The program has already benefited CASS clients to create new friendships with others who take the class and increase communication outside of the program. In the coming year, CASS is taking part in the data collection offered through UAA Centre for Human Development which will show the direct effect this program has on the individuals we serve.



Spinz-A-Round

CASS facilitates a food program every Tuesday through the [Community Kitchen](#) program of Calgary called Spinz-A-Round which provides fresh and non-perishable food items to help combat chronic and acute food insecurity in the CASS community. Staff pick up food from the Spinz-A-Round program and Cobb's bakery and then bring it to the office for redistribution. This program serves 30-50 people per week, and encourages volunteerism from all walks of CASS to keep it going strong

Calgary Alternative Day Options (CADO)

Calgary Alternative Day Options (CADO) is a versatile, inclusive, community-based day program focused on meeting the needs and desires of the people it supports. The vision is for all people within the program to develop strong connections in the communities of their choice, while removing barriers and facilitating inclusion and personal growth. Each person in service at CADO determines how their day program looks and what they do according to their own passions and areas of interest. For some, this means becoming involved with local charities and other organizations to volunteer their time and efforts to serve others. For others, community inclusion looks like pursuing educational goals by returning to post-secondary education courses and classes to deepen their academic knowledge. CADO attendees have opportunities to explore and expand their skill bases through small business endeavors; everything from delivering weekly flyer routes, to starting up shredding businesses, building community gardens and selling wares at local farmer's markets, and participating in skill development programming at the local Food Bank. CADO clients also get involved in a large number of recreational, fitness, and wellness activities, as well as special interest classes that are offered throughout the City of Calgary and beyond!



2018-2019 Fiscal Year

Through this fiscal year the day program supported 72 individuals.

Projects / Special Initiatives

The 2018-2019 fiscal year brought about significant change within the CADO program with the continued uptake of another new caseload of individuals (the second in the past 5 years), as well as the departure of a long-time coordinator who had been with the program for a decade. As is the way with program growth, the new uptake has pushed the program and its staff and clientele to further seek out community connections in order to engage and facilitate individuals in developing and working towards their personal goals. The creation and initiation of activities like art classes facilitated by a front-line staff, creating artwork for “team” sweatshirts, talent showcases, and assisting with



CADO Staff sporting their new CADO hoodies

CASS social events were an integral part of creating a strong CADO community. CADO continues to have strong partnerships with the [Calgary InterFaith Food Bank](#) in the skill development program that has been running since 2006, as well as a number other community organizations like [The Calgary Dream Center](#), [The City of Calgary Recreation](#), [The Calgary Society of Community Opportunities](#), [Calgary Flyer Force](#) and the [Inglewood Community Garden](#), to name a few.

The sky's the limit for the coming year at CADO, with much anticipation to further our learning, development of skills and talents and providing stellar supports for the individuals who participate in our program.

Calgary Alternative Employment Services (CAES)

CAES assists job-seekers to overcome barriers, understand workplace culture and fill the personnel needs of inclusive employers in Calgary. Jobseekers experience opportunities to contribute their specific talents in the Calgary job market, as well as inclusion, self-reliance and a sense of achievement. Employers experience more dynamic and rewarding workplaces, improved morale, no-cost access to human resource consulting, improved corporate image and a wider market segment. Employers very often need help with inclusive recruitment and with on-boarding and retaining diverse talent; CAES facilitates hiring confidence.



2018-2019 Fiscal Year

It's so important in the provision of Inclusion Services to challenge our assumptions and to make time and space to reflect, assess and evaluate the 'user experience.' How well are we serving employers and jobseekers? What are we doing really well and what do we need to do better? Over the past year CAES has developed new processes for helping jobseekers to support each other and to develop strategies for managing the anxiety that comes along with a job search in this economy. CAES has also built evaluation into our work so that we can use input from employers and jobseekers to improve our services. We have an extremely strong team at CAES comprised of people who possess the courage and commitment to challenge themselves and our service to reach for more and serve the community better.

CAES served approximately 150 jobseekers / employees with disabilities this past year. Approximately 40 of these individuals – and their employers – utilize CAES to help maintain employment and increase employer capacity for disability inclusion in the workplace. The remainder of people we're serving are either newly employed, currently looking for work – or receiving supports through CAES to explore and build strengths, self-knowledge, employability skills and to identify career goals. CAES supports the acquisition and maintenance of over 90 jobs each year and also helps people to identify and acquire training including return to school for many people we support.

CAES serves jobseekers through [Persons with Development Disabilities \(PDD\)](#) which is a branch of [Alberta Community and Social Services](#). We also serve jobseekers who self-identify as having a permanent disability (of any kind) through the [Service Canada Opportunities Fund](#).

Projects / Special Initiatives

CAES has always believed that investment in partnerships and collaboration expands our resources and knowledge as well as our impact. This past year's collaboration with the [Calgary Employment First Network](#), and Edmonton's '[Pan Disability Connection](#)' led to a variety of events and learning opportunities for other service providers, job seekers and employers – as well as the permanent provincial proclamation of October as [Disability Employment Awareness Month \(DEAM\)](#) in Alberta.

Partnerships also led to the development of new projects and resources. These include a new 'Mentor-Ability' project which connects job seekers to informational interviews within industry sectors of interest – as well as an Encouraging Employment 'Inclusion Grant' project which builds employer capacity to effectively hire and include employees with intellectual disabilities. Both of these projects include Edmonton's [Gateway Association](#) whose values and commitment to innovation are identical to ours. CAES is also actively involved in the organization and delivery of the annual [Community Futures](#)

[Treaty Seven Disability and Employment Summit](#). Our decade long partnership with this organization provides us with new knowledge and critical Indigenous community connections across the Treaty Seven region. None of these projects would have been possible without our direct partnerships with regional and national employment inclusion networks and policy makers.

What does the next year hold for CAES? Hopefully more of the same; reflect, innovate, partner, build, evaluate and improve. This is what helps us strengthen the Canadian workplace through inclusion.

Calgary Alternative Residential Services (CARS)

Calgary Alternative Residential Services (CARS) is the founding program of CASS, and has been providing supports to adults in the community since 1988. Formerly known as just “CASS” in 2007, the residential program was given the name “CARS” to assist in defining support goals for the adults we serve.

CARS supports adults to live life as independently as possible in the community of their choosing. Through a self-directed process we support people to identify areas that are important to them and contribute towards their personal goals. CARS provides outreach services, recreation and leisure activities, as well as, home and community based supports that assist with all areas of daily living. Annual planning promotes ongoing review and commitment to goals and allows for people to be flexible with their time lines. We support people to locate appropriate housing to assist with the development of community and skill development. We focus our service on encouraging the expansion of individual growth, empowerment, inclusion, and overall increase in the quality of life of the individuals we support.



2018-2019 Fiscal Year

Through this fiscal year the residential program supported 145 individuals.

Projects / Special Initiatives

The 2018-2019 fiscal year provided many challenges for CASS which greatly affected the residential and day programs. The challenges were due to a variety of short-term decreases in staffing resources.

Some things of note, however, were:

- The establishment of a partnership with [Horizon Housing](#) in June 2018, providing more accessible and low-income housing options for our clients
- The implementation of a ‘Friendships and Dating’ course for clients in January 2019, spearheaded by the residential team. (see page 3 of this report more detail)
- Hosting an art class in partnership with the CADO program
- Delivery of 25 Christmas Hampers to clients in need; funded through CASS staff fundraising activities
- The incorporation of a scheduler / float position to ensure all clients are receiving the staffing supports they require.

We hope increased stability in 2019-2020 will allow us more opportunity to explore special initiatives for our clients and staff.



Artist's Rendering of Horizon Housing

Calgary Alternative Permanent Supportive Housing (CAPSH)

With the onboarding of Stepping Stone Manor this year, our Permanent Supportive Housing operations (which had up until now only taken place at Langin Place) now had multiple locations. With that in mind it was determined that a new way to conceptualize this program was required and Calgary Alternative Permanent Supportive Housing (CAPSH) was born. This new program consists of permanent supportive housing operations at both Langin Place and Stepping Stone Manor.



CAPSH is a Housing First and Harm Reduction model of program that serves chronically homeless tri-morbid persons challenged with mental illness and or severe addictions. CAPSH is primarily funded by the [Calgary Homeless Foundation](#).

Langin Place serves 53 men in partnership with the landlord [Calgary Housing Company](#).

Stepping Stone Manor serves 29 mixed gender individuals in partnership with the landlord [HomeSpace](#).

The Tenants in these buildings rent small bachelor type units. Case management, outreach, eviction prevention and 24-7 staffing support are provided by CAPSH. The landlord/agency relationship with both landlords is exceptional. Excellent support for each other is practiced.

2018-2019 Fiscal Year

Stepping Stone Manor was a new addition to CAPSH in April 2018. Enhanced core funding provided CAPSH with the ability to offer 24-7 coverage without the use of a Security Company. The challenges of an additional 24 new employees and 29 new Tenants was met by CAPSH supervisors with excellence.

CAPSH served approximately 92 Tenants, 25 post program Tenants and 100's of drop-ins and phone calls over the fiscal year

Projects / Special Initiatives

In the 2018-2019 fiscal year CAPSH was able to enhance the existing “eviction prevention” program, develop an “outreach” program, bring in indigenous Elders, have more activity projects and continue evolving into a more wholistic program for the Tenants.

Worthy of mention is that one of the long-term tenants of Langin Place (9 years) was able to purchase himself a mobile home in Cochrane and is now a homeowner.



Stepping Stone Manor

Over the span of five years CAPSH supported this individual on his health wellness journey which he decided to embark on after 4 years living at Langin Place. Once health matters were stable, he was able to concentrate on other priorities and eventually purchased his home.

What does the next year hold for CAPSH? Continued work to improve and build on the existing programs and we hope to add a Foot Care Nurse to our offered services.

Calgary Alternative Poss-Abilities (CAPA)

Calgary Alternative Poss-Abilities (CAPA) has been providing support to youth and adults in the community of Calgary since 2007.

CAPA receives funding from multiple funding sources such as; [Calgary Fetal Alcohol Network](#), [Disability Innovations Funding](#), and Individual Grants

The CAPA program provides ongoing case management, outreach, and support navigating government and other support systems for individuals living within Calgary & the surrounding area. CAPA also supports individuals who possess multiple diagnoses and to those who may be marginally ineligible for PDD services. CAPA provides supports that enable individuals to live and participate successfully in the community who would otherwise fall through the cracks of traditional funding/service provision. Some of the domains in which the CAPA program provides support include (but are not necessarily limited to) addictions, assessment, daily living management, education, employment, financial, housing, health & wellness, justice, parenting, and relationships.



2018-2019 Fiscal Year

CFAN- Youth to Adult	22 individuals served
Disability Innovations	12 individuals served
Complex Needs	20 individuals served
CFAN - Adult	19 individuals served
Total individuals served	73 individuals served

Projects / Special Initiatives

CAPA partnered with an educator at a high school with the Calgary Board of Education to provide learners (Class 7) driving license education to a special needs classroom, including students who have been suspected/diagnosed of having Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, among other developmental and learning disabilities. This program was tremendously successful and provided many students with the knowledge to obtain their license.

CAPA has also participated with the Community Kitchen Program in Calgary to access their Spin-A-Round food program, which provides free food that has been donated by various donors in the Calgary area. This has enabled CAPA to provide free food to our clients who are in need, struggling financially and may not be able to access the food bank and has been hugely beneficial.

CAPA has been able to participate on a limited basis with a subsidized housing provider in the city, through a partnership that Calgary Alternative Support Services has with this provider. This has been beneficial to a few clients who are able to maintain housing independently (or with minimal support) and are unable to afford market housing in the city. Stable, safe, and affordable housing is a crucial need for our clients and this partnership has been able to fulfill that need for one of our clients and his partner (and hopefully more clients in the future).

The length of our wait list indicates that there is lots of interest in the CAPA program and that our profile in the community has been raised significantly. Connections with community partners continue to be an important aspect of the service that CAPA provides and have proven to be beneficial for our clients. This has also raised awareness of FASD in our community.

Creative Community Living Activities (CCLA)

Creative Community Living Activities (CCLA) is an Alberta Health Services funded, community based, long-term therapeutic day program for people living with severe and persistent mental illness. Groups are offered in a relaxed and supportive atmosphere.

Qualified, and experienced staff have a professional understanding of group dynamics, therapeutic counseling modalities, and crisis intervention.

Program participants are 30+ years of age with a history of persistent mental illness who are in need of ongoing assessment and support, and have the cognitive ability to learn the skills provided.

CCLA's focus is on sustaining participants' health and wellbeing by giving them the skills to manage their lives in order to avoid or minimize the need for crisis interventions and hospitalizations. CCLA strives to improve participants' quality of life by reducing isolation and providing a safe environment where they experience a sense of community and an opportunity to develop friendships. Because CCLA is a long-term program, participants develop a strong sense of ownership, especially as some have been involved in the program for decades.

2018-2019 Fiscal Year

Throughout the 2018-2019 fiscal year, CCLA was able to serve 55 clients.

This number was impacted by the condition of our old location at Continental Towers as we did not take in any new clients between February 2018 and December 2018.

Success Stories

CCLA has had a few success stories this past fiscal year. From our leisure group, is that of a gentleman who has been attending CCLA for two years. This participant has shown tremendous growth over the past year. Initially, he was shy, withdrawn and engaged within the group in very limited ways. After receiving support from both staff and clients, he came to recognize that CCLA is a safe environment and is now much more comfortable expressing himself. This participant has started to assist with tasks from the Spin-A-Round program, choosing to do this on his own. He also routinely puts forth ideas for outings for the leisure program during monthly planning. In addition, he has forged a friendship with another client, and they now meet for coffee together!

The move from Continental Towers to our new location in Panarctic Plaza is another success story this year. Although CCLA had been in this location for many years, the space was not servicing the needs of clients and staff. Fortunately, we were able to secure an \$8,000.00 one-time grant from Alberta Health Services to cover the costs of the move. Staff and clients are grateful to be holding our program in a space that better serves our program's needs. CCLA's new space is clean and bright, has a large open area to hold our groups, and is in an office space rather than a residential building. It is close enough to the old location that it was a relatively easy transition for our clients. Although the move itself caused a bit of a disruption to the program's activities, we are now happily settled into our new location. Clients and staff are extremely pleased with our beautiful, clean and bright space. In the words of one of our clients attending his first group in our new location, "Wow, is it ever bright in here! This is good for my mental health!"

Projects / Special Initiatives

CCLA provides special events to celebrate holidays during the year which helps our participants overcome loneliness during these times. Quite often the CCLA event is the only holiday celebration that our participants will attend. We gather supplies from the Spin-A-Round program for our special events.

Christmas: For 24 years, the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) has provided a beautiful Christmas dinner for CCLA participants and their guests, which is the most anticipated event of the year. Last year we had approximately 55 people in attendance. The SAIT Student Association plans and serves this sit-down meal, while the SAIT head chef and his team cook. SAIT students decorate the room and provide small treats on the tables, such as chocolates and mandarin oranges. Participants are offered a festive punch beverage, and each guest then receives either a gift bag, or a stocking filled with small gifts. SAIT students will dress up as Santa and/or Mrs. Claus. One CCLA participant plays his guitar and sings Christmas Carols at this popular event.



Money Matters

Money Matters is a partnership between Calgary Alternative Support Services and [Momentum](#) to provide individualized Money Management Education and Financial Management Assistance to people with mental health and/or addictions challenges.



2018-2019 Fiscal Year

The Money Matters Financial Administration core caseload remained at thirty individuals for the 2018-2019 fiscal year. The program reached Money Navigating (MN) capacity of ten participants by the second quarter. After that point, MN referrals were redirected to the financial counseling program at Momentum. Overall, 63 referrals were submitted to the Money Matters program for Financial Administration support. In particular, [AISH](#), [Alberta Health Services](#), and [Alpha House](#) submitted referrals for individuals with addictions and mental health disorders. In many cases, these referrals had already been rejected by the [Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee](#) due to not meeting formal trusteeship eligibility. Money Matters was considered the last financial support option for many vulnerable and underserved people.

Quarter one focused on Financial Administration support, MN meetings, and filing tax returns. In the first quarter (Q1), Money Navigating Meetings had the greatest number of participants (8) compared to any other point during the year. During quarter two (Q2) the Calgary Alternative Support Services Money Matters workshop series took place. As always, the workshop series was well attended with several clients earning their certificate of completion. The annual feedback survey was sent out in quarter three (Q3) to both clients and referral agencies. Feedback from participant and referral agencies reported that increasing the number of financial administrators in Calgary would be highly beneficial. Also in this quarter, the Money Matters Financial Administrator joined the Calgary Alternative Support Services Risk Assessment Committee (RAC). The purpose of the Risk Assessment Committee is to complete clear and concise quantitative risk assessments for all CASS clients. Money Matters participants will benefit by assessing areas of risk in order to promote safety for the individual, staff, and the agency. The fourth quarter (Q4) recorded an increase in Individual Treatment via Face-to-Face meetings. This is likely due to program participants filing their taxes for another year.

Success Story

When Jordan* first joined the Money Matters program, she had a high interest credit card with a balance of \$16,892. During the Financial Administration process, Jordan addressed this debt with an Orderly Payment of Debt (OPD) program. Using money from an inheritance, Jordan made a lump sum payment to complete the OPD early. Jordan also opened a Tax Free Savings Account and invested \$10,000 in GICs. Jordan graduated this year from Financial Administration with a well-being score of 56. Since discharge from the program, Jordan has continued to build her financial stability. To quote Jordan, “I now have overdraft protection \$100.00 and an automatic TFSA deposit for 25.00 per month. I can’t see the account online, so the temptation to spend is not there. Instead, the money is accumulating every month and I am preparing for the future.” Jordan hopes to take the Savings Circle class at Momentum in 2019.

Projects / Special Initiatives

During the last year, Money Matters renewed its membership with the Community Volunteer Tax Program (CVITP). Overall, the Financial Administrator processed twenty four tax returns for Money Matters program Financial Administration participants. The remaining six participants had family support to file their taxes, or had already visited a different CVITP tax clinic. The Money Matters program continued to be involved with the Spin-A-Round food distribution network, which connects people with free donated groceries. One major accomplishment of the year was transferring our first participant to financial administration support with the Informal Benefits Administration Program at the [Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee](#). Referrals to this program have been challenging due to their lengthy wait list, and qualifications requiring a Primary Contact and a Content Provider to submit the application.

CASS Administration Team

The CASS Administration Team is comprised of Reception, Human Resources, Accounting, and Information Technology and presently consists of ten staff.

The CASS Administration Team works closely together to ensure that the needs of CASS' programs are met and that staff are supported in order to do their jobs and support the individuals CASS serves to the best of their abilities. The CASS Admin Team are engaged in ongoing professional development and critical analysis of our processes and practices in the pursuit of continual improvement so that we can better support the needs of programs, staff and clients.



2018-2019 Fiscal Year by the Numbers

In the 2018-2019 fiscal year we served 209 employees and 83 Support Home Providers/Supportive Neighbours.

Throughout the 2018-2019 fiscal year the CASS Administration Team supported programs in the hiring of 80 individuals and our total employee population increased by 35 staff or 20% which represents the largest year over year increase in recent memory at CASS.

Over the course of the 2018-2019 fiscal year, our finance department worked with over 10 different funders to:

- Facilitate the receipt and disposition of \$15,842,592.65 to support individuals with disabilities
- Process roughly 3,480 staff time sheets in order to pay out \$8,499,670.76 in gross pay to employees
- Process 1290 Support Home Provider payments for a total of \$5,088,932.62
- Process 4551 expense claims and vendor payments for a total of \$536,597.49

Projects / Special Initiatives

Going Live with our Sparkrock Finance Implementation

The start of the 2018-2019 fiscal year saw CASS going live with our new enterprise level finance software solution Microsoft Dynamics NAV as well as the launch of the web based Employee Center portal, both of which were developed in partnership with our vendor [Sparkrock](#). The implementation of this project was a year in the making and going live with this project represented the culmination of thousands of hours of effort and in many ways, it was only the beginning.

We spent the remainder of the fiscal year gaining expertise in the use of Microsoft Dynamics NAV and the Employee Center, refining our in-house documentation, and training our staff in the use of the Employee Center. One year in we are starting to see this effort really come to fruition in the form of increased efficiency and enhanced reporting and insights into our financial realities.

Onboarding of Stepping Stone Manor

At midnight on April 1st 2018, CASS took over operations at Stepping Stone Manor (see CAPSH). The onboarding of 24 employees, 19 clients and the integration of existing information technology infrastructure in such a short time frame represented a major challenge for both program operations at CAPSH and the CASS Administration Team. The fact that this happened to coincide with the go-live date for our finance project only complicated things further and strained our limited administrative resources. True to form, CASS embraced this challenge with perseverance, dedication, and compassion. It was a rocky road at times but as the 2018-2019 fiscal year drew to a close it was clear that Stepping Stone Manor had been fully integrated with CASS operations and had become part of the larger organization.

Accessibility / Door Opener Project

In 2017 CASS applied for a grant from the [Enabling Accessibility Fund](#) available through Service Canada and were awarded \$24,000 in federal funding in to install door openers at our main office in order to improve the accessibility of our building for staff, clients, and the community. CASS worked with Dobbryn Electrical, Calgary Lock and Safe, and Union Alarm through 2018 in order to complete the installation of the door openers and the end result is a more accessible space for everyone.

Staffing Changes

The 2018-2019 fiscal year saw the onboarding of two new Human Resources team members, our Human Resources Advisor Michael Berlando and Human Resources Administrative Assistant Roma Kebede. The fiscal year also saw a change of position for Kyle Maclean, and the hiring of Gabriel Popa as our new Network Administrator.

Michael Berlando

Michael was hired at CASS as our new Human Resources Advisor in June of 2018. Michael graduated from Mount Royal University with a degree in human resources. He has over five years of experience working in both corporate and agency settings. His journey has seen him work in a variety of industries that span from staffing and workforce planning; to advertisement, marketing and public relations; and information technologies and computing. His curiosity continuously finds him exploring new thought leadership models and leading-edge human resources practices. Michael is currently pursuing his CPHR designation. He has a passion for basketball and everything design.

Roma Kebede

Roma was hired in August of 2018 as our Human Resources Administrative Assistant. Roma attended SAIT where she studied Business Management and also Bow Valley College where she studied Human Resources. Roma has worked in the Human Resources field for over 10 years as an HR Administrator, HR Representative, and HR Technician. These positions have provided Roma with a wealth of experience in recruitment and document control. Roma has a clear understanding of, and ability to deal with sensitive information and materials while handling matters in accordance with legislation and adherence to policies and procedures.

Kyle Maclean

In November of 2018, Kyle Maclean was invited to join the CASS Senior Leadership Team as Director of Operations in order to head up the Administration Team with Radost Alexandrov, Director of Finance. Kyle has worked as a Systems Analyst with CASS for nearly 15 years which has provided him with the opportunity to work with, and get to know all of the different programs at CASS and the many different facets of CASS' operations. Kyle co-led the CASS 2016 Needs Assessment project which proved to be a very valuable exercise which identified a need to pursue an enterprise level software solution to integrate our Finance, HR, and Payroll operations. Kyle then went on to co-lead the implementation of the first step in in that software solution, our Finance project. Kyle is excited to take on the new challenges of leadership and to work with the CASS Senior Leadership Team and the CASS Administration Team to achieve the strategic objectives identified in the CASS 2019-2020 Strategic Plan.

Gabriel Popa

Gabriel Popa was hired as our new Network Administrator in January of 2019. Gabriel brought with him a wealth of Information Technology experience and expertise. Sadly, while Gabriel was proving to be an excellent fit and resource for the agency he was presented with an opportunity to move back to Europe with his family which resulted in him leaving CASS at the end of the fiscal year.

Final Word

The 2018-2019 fiscal year proved to be a challenging one for CASS but we rose to the occasion and not only persevered, but experienced exciting growth and change. We maintained our unwavering focus on building diverse and inclusive communities, sought out new opportunities, and built new partnerships with other like-minded organizations and funders.

While this didn't occur in the 2018-2019 fiscal year, we would be remiss if we failed to address the departure of our Chief Executive Officer and founder Steven Law which occurred effective June 30th 2019. Steven founded CASS in 1988 in response to a request for proposals to meet the residential support needs of people with developmental disabilities. At the time, CASS consisted of just a handful staff members. Thirty-one years later, we have experienced dramatic growth and developed a myriad of programs funded by a wide range of funders but our focus has remained the same. We are incredibly grateful for the leadership that Steven has provided in order to bring us to where we are today and we look forward to the road ahead.