

Fast Facts

About Closer to Home (CTH):

- Provides a continuum of programs designed to meet the needs of vulnerable children and families
- Known for demonstrating flexibility and creativity in developing programs that respond to identified needs within the community.
- Services range from early intervention to group care programs.
- Stakeholder-driven, community based and guided by a commitment to quality assurance, accountability, and measurable outcomes.
- Fully integrated with community, municipal, provincial, and federal support systems.
- CTH has community relationships which allow a variety of resources to be accessed that meet unique needs of children and families within their own communities.

Home Visitation Program stats:

- 90% of program participants are at risk of going into care.
- All program participants are exposed to domestic violence.

1 Year SROI ratio: 1 : 3.25

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“My children are everything. I don't know what I would have done if it wasn't for this program”

- Cara, program participant

Program Background:

Closer to Home Community Services provides the Home Visitation Program as part of the Calgary Regional Home Visitation Collaborative (CRHVC). The Home Visitation Program supports parents of Aboriginal newborns by providing education on parenting, nutrition, and child development. The Home Visitation Program is unique because it provides in-home support to at-risk families when babies are first born.

Children are referred to the Home Visitation Program as a result of their family's at-risk situation. Because the majority of children are newborns, support is provided to the child's parents. The support is designed to enhance parenting skills, provide information on child development, child health and positive family relations. Families are reconnected to the Aboriginal community and are connected to resources that will assist with meeting their children's basic needs.

Services are provided for an average of six months. At discharge most children remain living with their parents and the majority of parents report being more knowledgeable and skilled in providing the necessary care for their child or children.

Social Value Created:

The Home Visitation Program provides basic emotional and educational support to parents. Social value is created by the Program by increasing the likelihood that children will stay with their family and avoid being placed in care. The program also reduces the need for families to access

emergency services such as police interventions and medical services due to malnutrition or domestic violence. The Home Visitation Program enables these municipal and provincial services to be reallocated to other Calgarians in need.

The program links participants to resources for housing assistance, child behavioural treatments, addictions treatment and the prevention of stress. Emotional and practical support that can prevent depression reduces the likelihood that parents will require access to mental health services. Improved mental health is linked to the prevention of child abuse, financial abuse and spousal abuse.

The Home Visitation Program provides services and support to an average of 42 families per year. This creates a social value of **\$376,215** annually.

Home Visitation Clientele:

In almost all cases, children are referred to the Home Visitation Program through the CRHVC. Ninety percent of children referred are at risk of being separated from their parents and being placed in social services care.

The parents of the children are mostly single Aboriginal mothers with a grade nine education. They are unemployed and are suspected of having addiction issues. Because all the mothers report being exposed to domestic violence at the time of intake, all are at risk of needing to access some type of emergency service in order to protect their children or themselves from harm. In fact, each participant requires intensive support with safety planning to manage the risks associated with domestic violence.

Theory of Change
If inexperienced parents of newborns are educated, encouraged and supported, they will learn how to successfully support their child's healthy development over the short, medium and longer term.

After being admitted to the program many participants choose to leave their partners and therefore require social and housing assistance. At the time of intake at least 75% of program participants are likely to become homeless within three months as a result of choosing to leave their abusive partner.

Almost all participants report needing direction on how to provide proper nutrition for their child and how to prevent

medical concerns such as baby bottle syndrome, SIDS or baby shaken syndrome.

Since most referrals are mothers with newborns there is a concern that many of these mothers may be suffering from post-partum depression. Without proper social supports and knowledge of their condition, these mothers pose risks to themselves and to their child or children.

Case Study— Social Value Created: SROI Calculation

The Home Visitation Program creates social value in a number of ways. The SROI calculation in **Table 1** projects the value created for only one year, however in reality, the value of these changes endures over a much longer period of time.

The Home Visitation Program has approximately 42 families participating per year. The annual budget is \$115,700. There are five monetizable SROI indicators included in the SROI calculation for the Home Visitation Program: 1) reduced police calls; 2) reduced hospital stays due to the prevention of domestic violence; 3) the prevention of children entering the child welfare system; 4) increased access to social assistance and 5) increased access to subsidized housing. As every family will experience different changes as a result of their participation in the program, the SROI calculation has attributed a percentage to each monetizable indicator listed. (See the third column in **Table 1**)

All parents in the program report experiencing domestic violence that requires the involvement of police. While they participate in the Home Visitation Program, the victims of domestic violence will call their support worker for support to help them handle the crisis situation instead of calling the police. This means over the course of one year, we can estimate that at least one police call per family would be avoided due to the Home Visitation Program.

Domestic violence often results in the abused person requiring hospital care. The Home Visitation Program teaches participants how to address conflict in the home and avoid instances of domestic violence. Over the course of one year, the need for each participant to be treated in hospital due to domestic violence is reduced by at least one visit as a result of their newly learned conflict management skills.

90% of children in the program are at great risk of being separated from their parents and being placed in social

Table 1

Monetizable SROI indicators:		\$\$ value per change in Year 1	% of client base experiencing this change.	\$\$ value for entire group (42 families)	Notes There are a total of 42 families within the client base
1	Reduced police calls	\$625	100%	\$26,250	\$625 per police call. 100% of participants would otherwise call the police at least once domestic violence if it wasn't for this program.
2	Reduced need for hospital stay due to decreased domestic violence	\$1,038	100%	\$43,596	100% have otherwise experienced domestic violence that would require at least one hospital stay @ \$1,038.
3	Avoidance of child welfare system	\$36,135	50%	\$758,835	\$66 per day per Closer to Home. 1.5 children per family. 90% of the participants are referred to the program because they are at risk of having their children going into care. We estimate 50% would be placed in Foster Care if it wasn't for this program.
4	Increased access to social assistance	-\$8,082	75%	-\$254,583	75% participants will receive social assistance of \$732 (total core benefits) + \$166 (National Child Benefit Supplement)/month
5	Increased access to subsidized housing	-\$6,282	75%	-\$197,883	75% participants will require access access to housing subsidies valued at \$698 per month, for 9 months.
Social value created annually for group of 42 families:				\$376,215	Alberta Employment and Immigration: Alberta Works, Financial Benefit Summary
Total annual investment in group of 42 families:				\$115,700	
SROI attributed to Home Visitation program (in Year 1)				3.25	

services care. We estimate that approximately 50% of these families will avoid having their children placed in foster care within the first year of completing the Home Visitation Program.

75% of families in the Home Visitation Program report requiring housing assistance three months after they have completed the program, as a result of leaving an abusive relationship.

Housing subsidies are based on 30% of household income. If these participants receive social assistance of \$8,082¹ for nine months of the year, they would be required to pay \$202/month in rent. Based on a rental rate of \$900/month for a two bedroom apartment in the Beltline, the subsidy

amount they would receive would be approximately \$698 per month. (Based on info from Calgary Housing Company August 25, 2008). Both the social assistance and housing subsidies these participants would receive result in increased costs to society, and as such are represented by a negative number in the SROI calculation.

The changes experienced by families as a result of their participation in the Home Visitation Program create **\$376,215** in social value annually, based on an investment of \$115,700. This represents an SROI ratio of **1: 3.25**.

1 Alberta Employment and Immigration: Alberta Works, Financial Benefit Summary

Conclusion

The Home Visitation Program provides inexperienced parents with essential parenting education and support. Once a family has successfully completed the Program it is likely their children will not be considered at-risk by Child and Family Services, and will remain in the family's care. Parents also gain access to community resources that will encourage and support the continued health, independence and well-

being of their family.

The Home Visitation Program teaches parents how to successfully support their child's healthy development over the short, medium and longer term which increases the likelihood their family will remain together.

Success Story:

Cara is 26 year-old Aboriginal mother of two children ages four and three months old. She was referred to the Home Visitation Program by Child and Family Services as a result of having put her two children at risk. Cara exercised poor parental judgment, was suspected of suffering from post partum depression and was living with a partner that abused her both emotionally and physically.

Afraid she would continue to be beaten by her partner or have her children removed from her care, Cara felt the Home Visitation Program was her only option.

With support from her Family Support Specialist, Cara became knowledgeable of the risks she and her children faced as a result of domestic violence. She began learning how to develop and implement safety plans and access supportive resources in the community. After six weeks in the program, Cara left her partner and was able to establish herself in the community independently. As she continued to work hard in applying her newly learned parenting skills, Cara also began healing

herself by attending spiritual Aboriginal practices along with counseling services provided in the Aboriginal community.

After three months, Cara was providing proper nutrition to both of her children, had connected with an employment centre, continued living independently in the community and actively participated in community activities that were connect to her Aboriginal heritage.

Six months into participating in the Program, Cara had enrolled in a course and was learning important skills for the workplace. She continued to stay separated from her partner and stayed connected to the Aboriginal community.

When Cara was asked where would she see herself 1 year from now Cara responded, "I will be the sunshine in my children's eyes and they will be proud to have me as their mother. We will grow and always be together". Today, Cara continues to strive towards reaching this goal.

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