

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.

Web site:

www.closertohome.com

Pekewe House Stats:

- 81% of parents reported increase in parenting knowledge
- 79% parents demonstrated increased use of effective parenting skills

1 Year SROI ratio: 1 : 0.64

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“It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men”

Program Facilitator

Program Background:

Pekewe House offers an opportunity for Aboriginal families to live together while parents are improving their parenting skills and their child has been taken into care by the Calgary Rockyview Child and Family Services.

The program is unique in its design to support the parent and child while they learn and strengthen the skills necessary to improve their family situation.

A house parent resides permanently at the house in order to provide 24-hour emergency and crisis support. Additional support is provided by an alternative teaching parent and a family support specialist.

Preservation and reunification is the focus of this program. Pekewe House creates opportunities for Aboriginal families to reunite, further integrate into the community with in-home support, and to utilize community resources to support their long-term success.

Social Value Created:

Children and families that engage in Pekewe House reduce their reliance on emergency services such as police intervention, accessing homeless shelters, and having their child remain in social services care.

Keeping families together and creating an environment for parents and children to learn important skills in a natural home setting increases family stability long-term and creates value well into the future.

Without the opportunity of being placed in this program, parents are likely to continue struggling with addictions, homelessness

and domestic violence. The long term effects of these struggles would lead to more costly intrusive services due to the likelihood of parents developing mental health issues, engaging in criminal activity or requiring medical attention due to domestic violence.

Through work with eight families in 2007, the social value created by Pekewe House was **\$198,112.**

Theory of Change

If Aboriginal children apprehended by child welfare can remain with their families under 24-hour supervision, parents will improve their parenting skills, improve their communication, learn where to access support in the community, connect cultural traditions to the family unit and the family will be more likely to stay together.

Pekewe House Clientele:

Pekewe House holds six contract beds (for children in care) and can hold up to six families at a time. On average, eight families a year stay at Pekewe House. Families stay at Pekewe House for a minimum of three months, but in some cases they extend their

stay longer than one year to ensure they receive the support they need to re-unify their family.

Children and their parents who are referred to the program face many struggles that leave them feeling hopeless. The children are growing up within environments that are unstable and chaotic. Proper supervision, nutrition and parental guidance are absent prior to enrollment in the program.

Sixty-six percent of families who are referred to the program by Calgary Rockyview Child and Family Services are homeless. In almost all cases, parents are struggling with addiction, the effects of domestic violence, depression and major health concerns such as the risk of developing Diabetes. These parents do not seem able to meet the basic needs of their children, nor for themselves.

In most cases children who are admitted into the program confirm being emotionally abused,

threatened, feel rejected and display out of control behaviors.

The average age of a child brought into the program is six years old. These children exhibit cognitive and decision-making impairment as well as a tendency to self-harm. This creates many problems in the home, school and community.

All participants must be drug-free prior to participating in Pekewe House in order to ensure long-term success and demonstrate their commitment to reuniting their families. Most participants suffer from addictions and are required to complete a three-month AADAC drug treatment program prior to moving in to Pekewe House.

Case Study— Social Value Created: SROI Calculation

This SROI calculation focuses on the social value created by the monetizable changes experienced in the lives of the participants of the Pekewe House program. The SROI calculation projects value for only one year, however in reality, the changes experienced are sustained over a much longer period of time.

Pekewe House has approximately eight families participating per year, and has an annual budget of \$308,264. There are six main monetizable SROI indicators included in the SROI calculation for the Pekewe House program (see **Table 1**).

Every person and family progresses through Pekewe House at a different pace and with different results. As a result, the six monetizable SROI indicators do not apply universally to each family. In the third column of **Table 1**, each indicator is attributed to a **percentage** of the total group, in order to illustrate the actual percentage of Pekewe House families that experienced each change.

At least one member of each family would otherwise have been arrested for either domestic violence or crime that would otherwise result in police calls, a hospital stay and EMS services. During their stay at Pekewe House, domestic violence is addressed by the House Parent and other support workers 24 hours a day, thereby reducing the need for an intervention by the police or other emergency services. The instances of crime are reduced due to the prior treatment of residents for their drug addiction and the availability of stable housing throughout the period of the program.

Sixty-six percent of participants are homeless when they arrive at Pekewe House. This means that at least one member of the family would have otherwise been relying on emergency shelters for their housing needs.

As a result of the skills learned at Pekewe House, 64% of participants have been able to demonstrate that they are no longer putting their children at risk. They have treated their

Table 1

Monetizable SROI indicators:		\$\$ value per change in Year 1	% of client base experiencing this change.	\$\$ value for entire group (8 families)	Notes There are a total of 8 families within the client base
1	Reduced police calls	\$1,875	100%	\$15,000	100% of the families would avoid calling police once a month for 3 months @ \$625 per call.
2	Reduced need for hospital stay due to decreased domestic violence.	\$1,038	100%	\$8,304	100% have otherwise experienced domestic violence that would require a hospital stay @ \$1,038.
3	Avoided EMS calls to due reduced domestic violence	\$342	100%	\$2,736	100% have otherwise experienced domestic violence that would require EMS @ \$342.
4	Reduced use of emergency shelter as housing is provided for 3 months.	\$2,844	66%	\$15,016	66% of the participants were homeless at time of intake. Homeless shelters avoided for 3 months @ \$948 per month, per family (Drop in Centre).
5	Avoidance of child welfare system for 9 months	\$36,300	64%	\$185,856	64% of participant's children were discharged to the family after 3 months. Avoidance of \$66 per day, per child (per Closer to Home Fee for Service). (Avg. 2 children per family)
6	Addiction treatment program	-\$3,600	100%	-\$28,800	AADAC 3-month treatment program is a requirement for the program. (\$3,600 per person)
Social value created annually for group of eight families:				\$198,112	
Total annual investment in group of eight families:				\$308,264	
SROI attributed to Pekewe House program (in Year 1)				0.64	

addiction, proven they can create a stabilized home setting and continue a healthy parent/child relationship. With these successes, custody of their children is transferred back to the parent.

The monetizable social value created by Pekewe House in 2007 was **\$198,112**, representing an SROI ratio of **1: 0.64**. This SROI calculation does not take into account the many changes experienced by program participants that cannot be monetized. These include: 1) increased confidence of

both children and parents; 2) improved skills to manage conflict; 3) improved communications skill and 4) improved relationships with family members.

Children also experience improved social relationships with other adults and with peers at school as a result of their participation in Pekewe House. Many of these changes are long-lasting and will serve to benefit these families in many areas of their lives.

Conclusion

After participating in Pekewe House children and families make significant improvements towards development and independence. Parents who previously struggled with addictions have been for at least six months since their involvement in 2007. They have learned important skills both in parenting and providing proper nutrition for their children. They feel supported by their community, which is a key factor of long-term success.

In some cases, parents have connected to employment services and have pursued either education or training to further qualify them for better paying jobs requiring less dependency on social assistance when living independently. In addition, each family reconnected to the aboriginal community where natural supports help them stay spiritually connected to their native culture.

Success Story:

Nora was a 30 year-old single aboriginal mother of eight children who have all been apprehended and taken into care. She was waiting to give birth to her ninth child. After making the decision to separate from her common-law husband due to domestic violence, Nora became focused her relationship with all of her children and how to live successfully as a family over the long-term.

At the time of Nora's intake into Pekewe House, she was suspected of suffering from depression. Many of

Monetizable Social Value Created Over 5 Years	Total Value YR 1 (9 months)	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4	YR 5
Avoidance of child welfare system for 9 children	\$163,350	\$216,810	\$221,146	\$225,569	\$230,081

her children demonstrated out-of-control behavior, were struggling in school socially and academically. Nora and her children were emotionally traumatized from the domestic violence that previously occurred in the home. They were homeless and without connection to a healthy network within the Aboriginal community.

The Pekewe House house parent began to help Nora and the children heal from their difficult experiences by connecting them to aboriginal spiritual practices. As the family begins to feel connected culturally, Nora began to trust in the Pekewe House program, which in turn became the springboard to her achievement in learning important skills toward change.

The house parent actively supported Nora as Nora taught her children to follow instructions, to accept "no" and to express their feelings. As Nora and her children began to communicate effectively, her relationship with all children strengthened. Nora demonstrated confidence in both teaching and caring for all her children. Calgary Rockyview Child and Family Services became less concerned with her ability to parent as a result.

At the time of discharge, Nora and all her children resided on the reserve. Nora were

provided with housing, social assistance and in-home support that enabled her to be a stay at home parent caring for all nine children on her own. By continuing to apply all her newly learned skills in her own home, Nora and her children continued to demonstrate success in their quest to be a healthy family.

After one year, all nine children still remain living with Nora on the reserve and she continues to use the skills she learned at Pekewe House. All of her children enrolled in school are passing and doing well. The family continues to strive working towards staying together and being successful well into the future.