

2023/2024

Annual Report

A large, stylized handprint graphic in a lighter shade of purple, positioned on the right side of the page. The handprint is composed of several overlapping, rounded shapes that form the fingers and palm, creating a soft, abstract representation of a hand.

linck
Child, Youth & Family Supports

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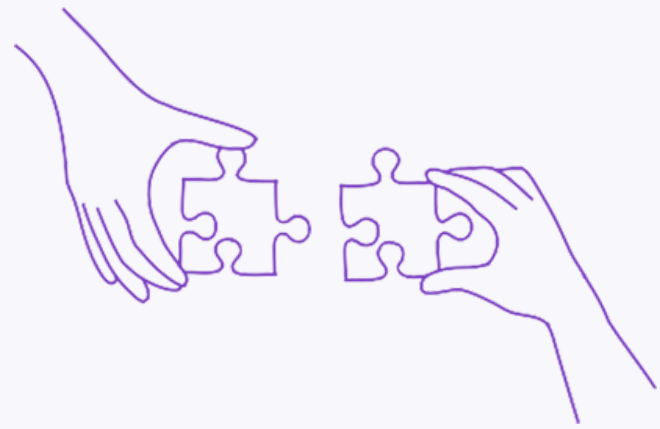
31 Board
Members

32 Foundation
Members

About Us

Linck Child, Youth and Family Supports is a non-profit agency that is here in the community to support the needs of children, youth and families. Linck strives to meet individuals where they are at and to come alongside to empower people in achieving their full potential.

Linck receives local, provincial and federal funding to work in the community as a trusted partner. As an integrated agency, we provide prevention, developmental, mental health, youth justice and child welfare services from a multi-disciplinary approach.



Mission

Strong connections for a better future.



Vision

Progressive improvements to well-being and safety for children, youth and their families.



Our Values

Together with our community, Linck CREATES

Respect

Our aim is that all children, youth, parents, families, caregivers and staff feel respected by the agency

Trust

Our aim is to continue to build trust with communities with whom trust has been broken, with those we support and our staff

Empowerment of Families

Our aim is to facilitate, to build upon their strengths toward a better future

CREATES

Collaboration

We aim to be good colleagues and community partners.

Accountability

Our aim is to be accountable for our service quality, with our resources and to our community.

Equity

Our aim is to deliver a more equitable service, reducing barriers & disproportionality in our services.

Support

We aim to provide the support children, youth and families in our community need

Message from the Board Chair & Executive Director

CHALLENGES & ADVERSITY

Like many, the past year has brought challenges and changes to Linck, our staff and the children, youth and families we support. Post pandemic effects are materializing in ways both anticipated and unexpected. Our community continues to find a new path forward as needs and service delivery models evolve. There have been unprecedented calls to serve for our staff, and there has been sadness due to losses on many levels. Despite these hard times, Linck Child, Youth and Family Supports continues to be a steady and consistent resource in the lives of so many in Chatham-Kent. The Mission of Linck- Strong connections for a better future has been our north star, as we move forward.

2022 - 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

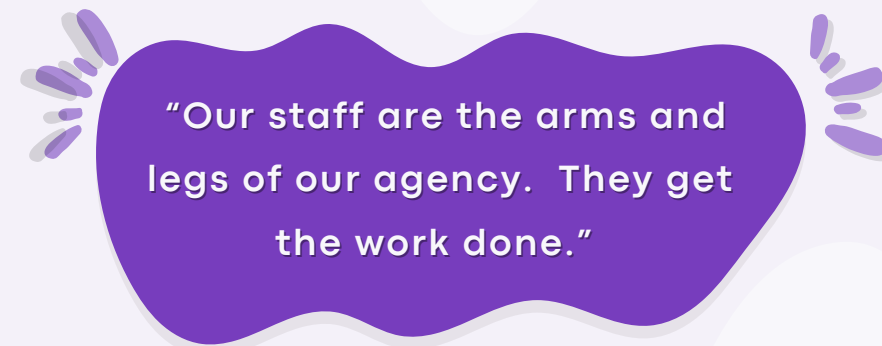
As we worked through the second year of our strategic plan, the four key areas of focus remain;

Learning Organization

- We use best practices to inform our service delivery and adopt a cycle on continuous quality improvement.

Timely Access to the Right Support

- Ensuring that children and youth get the care they need, when it is needed, close to home.



Truth and Reconciliation, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

- We commit to the Calls to Action, building relationships with local First Nations and celebrating the diversity of our community

Linck in the Community

- We show up in the community so that people know where and how to access care.

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!

While there is ongoing work in each of these areas to advance our services, we have centered our focus on acknowledging and celebrating the good news stories that have sustained us. We show up in the community so that people know where and how to access care. This annual report is an opportunity to showcase the successes of those we support, our staff and our partners. From the smallest of gestures – a friendly smile to the big wows- knitting together 24/7 care for children and youth in crisis, we stand together to

ensure the wellbeing of children, youth and families in Chatham-Kent. Thank you to our amazing staff and committed volunteers. Our work is dependent on you. To quote one of our Mental Health supervisors, “Our staff are the arms and legs of our agency. They get the work done”. To the Board of Directors of Linck and the Foundation, your guidance has set the path for the agency, ensuring that every child is cared for, no matter what. To our core service partners and community allies, our work this past year has deepened and strengthened the social service fabric of the community.

We are stronger together, and through these connections, we all do better. We hope these stories provide a glimpse into the daily efforts that happen at Linck. It is with deep gratitude that we celebrate the good, for that is what will sustain us.



Teri Thomas-Vanos
Executive Director



Jennifer Morrow
Board Chair



GOOD NEWS STORIES

☀️ Our global celebration event took place on Wednesday, November 15, 2023, from 1:00pm to 6:00pm in the cafeteria.

☀️ Each team presented a creative cultural celebration display table that included fun facts, giveaways, decorations, and some traditional food! It was our way of furthering the knowledge and understanding of the various cultures that help make up the community of Chatham-Kent.

☀️ Staff are now more attune to the possible celebrations that could be occurring with the families we serve and can engage with them about their traditions.





GOOD NEWS STORIES

★ The Children's Services team is very grateful to community sponsors such as OPSEU Local 148, Mamma Maria's Restaurant, Kent & Essex Mutual and Brown's Auto Body who partnered with Linck to provide a catered holiday meal and gifts to the 45 youth living independently through the VYSA & RSG program. The annual holiday dinner is well attended and the youth really appreciated the event.



*VYSA - Voluntary Youth Service Agreement.

*RSG - Ready, Set, Go.



GOOD NEWS STORIES

- ★ New one year pilot partnership with the local YMCA to offer complimentary memberships to foster and kinship families and youth in care, and recently exited from care.
- ★ This has been a great community partnership with an organization that shares similar core values. Feedback has been very positive from youth and families that have obtained memberships.





GOOD NEWS STORIES

★ In June we will celebrate the accomplishments of 16 youth that will have graduated elementary school, secondary school, alternative education programs or post-secondary school.

★ A youth connected with Linck through a VYSA agreement has been accepted into the Astrophysics Undergraduate program at the University of Western Ontario. The youth's goal is to make a new discovery in outer space. This is a highly competitive program requiring stellar marks.





GOOD NEWS STORIES

- ★ The CKICS Foundation Board is proud to announce that the following youth will be awarded a bursary for the 2024-25 academic year:
- ★ Bursary winners will be invited to the AGM to receive recognition of their award.
- ★ The CKICS Foundation congratulates all of the bursary winners and wishes them success in their post-secondary education.

The Myers Family Bursary:

- Jessica V.R.

*CKICS - Chatham-Kent Integrated Children's Services

General Bursary:

- Layne C.
- Morgan V.
- Finn S.
- Hailey H.

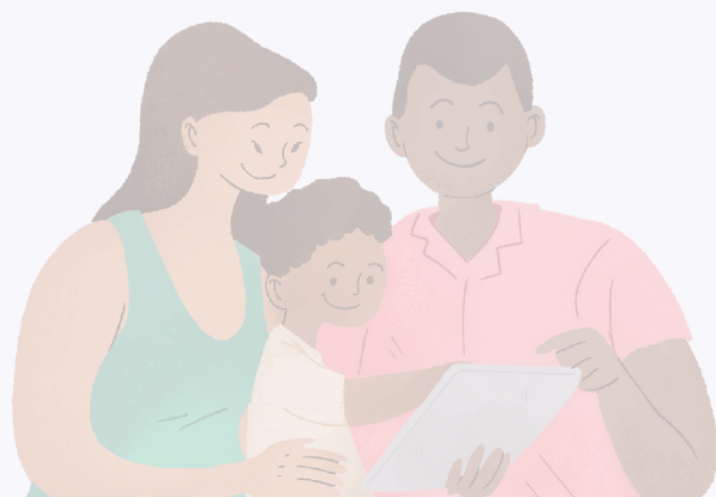




GOOD NEWS STORIES

★ Thanks to Dan and Costel from the IT Department, Linck has supported the youth and families of Chatham-Kent with surplus technology devices to assist with education, virtual appointments, and accessing information. For fiscal year 2023-24 - 13 laptops, 11 iPads and 8 iPhones were issued.

★ The IT department also provisioned public access Wi-Fi in 2023 to support youth and families on site.





GOOD NEWS STORIES

★ Thank you to the Equity Committee, CK Youth Social, and all staff who volunteered their time and baking skills to participate in this year's PRIDE BBQ!

★ A big THANK YOU, to Terry-Lee for organizing the bake sale this year!

★ CK Youth Social raised \$450 through the sale of baked goods!

★ CK PRIDE raised \$387 from their BBQ!





GOOD NEWS STORIES

★ 8 youth participated in Linck's Culinary Camp, an 8-week introduction to kitchen basics.

★ Students learned basic kitchen knowledge, how to create budget friendly meals and how to work in a team environment.

★ 4 youth successfully completed and received their Food Handlers Certificate!





GOOD NEWS STORIES

★ The Medavie Foundation provided us with \$100,000 this year, which has allowed the agency to increase counselling and therapy staffing, to address our program with the longest waiting time. The counselling and therapy program is for children 6+ who have a moderate to high mental health need but are not experiencing a crisis. As a result, this program has a longer waiting time. At the end of March our waiting list had 130 children and youth waiting on average 4-6 months for service.

★ The funds from Medavie have allowed us to serve 43 additional clients in counselling and therapy. We were also able to provide additional mindfulness groups to youth with lower acuity needs.



Annually there are approximately 520 children who are identified as needing our counselling and therapy program. Typically, children and youth in this service remain in service for 6 months.



GOOD NEWS STORIES



3-Year Plan and Education Pathway

- ★ Working with child and youth mental health core service partners, and community partners, Linck has developed the Chatham-Kent Service area plan for Chatham-Kent for the next three years 2024-2027. Key priorities for the plan are intensive services, family capacity building and support, ensuring smooth pathways to and between services and ensuring that services are culturally adapted for different communities. The plan has been shared widely with community partners.
- ★ Over 2023-24, we regularly met with school boards, and the lead agency in Sarnia, St. Clair Child and Youth, to ensure that services at school and in community were not duplicated. We made significant progress on crisis pathways with hospital partners and have made sure that students receive similar services whether they live in Chatham-Kent or in Sarnia Lambton. This work is part of the Lead Agency Right Time, Right Care Initiative and we have been highlighted by the knowledge institute as an area that is leading the province in our partnership work with local school boards.



GOOD NEWS STORIES

Shout out to Mamta Chail and the amazing team at Youthdale Treatment Centre! The team responded to multiple SOS calls as we worked to support youth with intensive needs. They brought their skill and knowledge of trauma informed care to share with us as we designed local responses.

Please know how much your efforts mean and how you are directly impacting better outcomes for kids in Ontario. Your collaboration and leadership are the benchmarks that we can all aspire to.

Many thanks to Mamma Marias and Brown's Auto Supply Chatham for generously supporting a holiday feast for children in care. A hearty and delicious dinner was shared, along with laughs and festive cheer. There were enough leftovers so everyone could have a nice meal the next day. This is a wonderful example of kindness and proves that it truly does take a village.





GOOD NEWS STORIES

★ Since introducing the new coaching model and philosophy, some great success with Linck's community partners in the childcare setting has been noticed. One site in particular spent some time with one of the resource consultants to come up with some goals and strategies for educators and a child in the preschool program who were struggling with emotional regulation and group participation. Within one week of implementing the strategies that were created in the Coaching Plan, they were able to meet all of their goals!

★ The resource consultant has received lots of positive feedback from the childcare staff and supervisor. The childcare staff have expressed their excitement and feelings of empowerment. At every follow-up, they have displayed their eagerness in continuing to work on their plan as they come up with new ideas and build off of the ones that are already in place.

★ The resource consultant continues to support their progress as needed, while capacity-building advances within their classroom.





GOOD NEWS STORIES

★ In March 2024, Linck held its first Queer Conference. The overall attendance was made up of 9 community members and 16 youth, for a combined total of 25!

★ 5 Speakers were able to share their experience and advice to younger 2SLGBTQIA+ youth.

★ Youth had the opportunity to hear advice about finding queer joy, healthy relationships, coming out safely and mindfulness.

★ Swag bags, stickers, pins, pizza, and sundaes wrapped up this great event!





GOOD NEWS STORIES

★ Linck became involved with a child, who was nine years old, and residing with his biological father, step-mother, and siblings. It was reported that D. was acting out at school and very disruptive. There were concerns that the father and step-mother were physically and emotional abusive, as well as not meeting his needs. D. was brought to a place of safety and was placed at the agency's staffed home in Wallaceburg. D. remained there for a number of months, during which time he was dysregulated and not doing well. D. was eventually placed at an OPR in Barrie, Ontario, where he received the support and treatment he required.

★ During this time, D. re-established a relationship with his biological mother, with whom he had been estranged. She began participating in D's treatment plan and gained a better understanding of the trauma that her son had been through. She actively engaged in services and wanted D. to be successful in his treatment. D. is now residing with his mother and there is a plan for her to obtain custody. D. is thriving in his mother's care, changing his trajectory for a better outcome with stability and a loving and committed parent.

*OPR - Outside Paid Resource

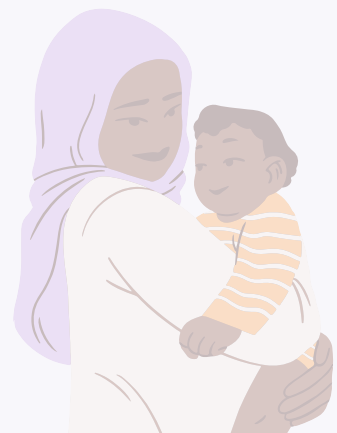


GOOD NEWS STORIES

★ Linck has been supporting a mother, who has had several children placed outside of her care. These children were subsequently placed either for adoption or reside with kin providers. The mother has had another child, who remains in her care, and with the support of her worker and community partners, she is addressing her substance misuse, improving her parenting capacity, and creating positive relationships with her networks.

★ She is now using her lived expertise as part of the Drug Awareness Council to help others be successful in their recovery journey.

★ She is doing well and has started to re-establish a connection with her other children. All of her service providers, including her ongoing worker, are extremely proud of the gains this mother has made to overcome her adversities and her desire to be the best parent she can.





GOOD NEWS STORIES



Spotlight on a Community Partner

- ★ **Acting Sergeant Kyle Wright, Chatham-Kent Police Service, has been working with us since January 2022.**
- ★ **In partnership with CKPS, the Youth Officer shares office space with us at Linck. Acting Sgt. Wright has been an invaluable resource to us during periods of supporting youth onsite at the office. His skills are only surpassed by his warmth and kindness. We think he is really a social worker in uniform.**
- ★ **Kyle represents the bright future of policing in CK and is a role model for the children and youth he interacts with. We appreciate his responsiveness and wise consultation on many complex matters.**



GOOD NEWS STORIES



Spotlight on a Staff Member

- ★ One of our team members was honoured for their writing this year!
- ★ Vivian Yejide Kilanko was shortlisted for the prestigious Caine Prize in African writing for her story, *This Tangible Thing*. Her title was also chosen for the winner of the anthology of shortlisted stories.
- ★ The Caine Prize for African Writing is an annual literary award for the best original short story by an African writer, whether in Africa or elsewhere, published in the English language.



This Tangible Thing,
Winning Short Story



Vivian Yejide Kilanko,
Author



GOOD NEWS STORIES

The Data Collaborative

Working as a collaborative with members of the Child and Youth Planning Network, a database with a wealth of information pertaining to child and youth well-being in Chatham-Kent is now available free to local service providers and the general public. The free online data portal, Keeping TraCK, at public.tableau.com/app/profile/keepingtrackchathamkent/vizzes

5% Annualized Investment in CYMH Funding

In March 2023, the Provincial Government committed new annualized funding for community mental health. This was a 5% increase to base funding. These investments are critical to assist us in stabilizing child and youth mental health services and address the growing demand for mental health care in Chatham-Kent.



GOOD NEWS STORIES

One Stop Talk/Parlons Maintenant

Our agency is supporting One Stop Talk – an innovative, virtual, single session therapy service that helps to eliminate barriers to high quality mental health services. This program provides single-session counselling support and ensures direct referral to additional services when needed. Services are provided through an integrated network of infant, child and youth mental health agencies across Ontario. As part of this network, Linck has two staff who devote 4 hours every week to this service, and as of March 2024, almost 30,000 clients had visited the website, and 1835 clients had engaged in a virtual single session.



In addition, 145 successful referrals were sent to local agencies following the completion of the single session.



GOOD NEWS STORIES

This past year, the Linck Board of Directors had the opportunity to reconnect with the direct service work provided by the agency. In person presentations to the Board were suspended during the pandemic but we were able to have the Leadership team supervisors return to speak about trends, themes, what is working well, worries and what needs to happen next. It is important for the Board of Directors to make these connections to services so they can advance the governance and future planning for the agency.

Linck and Sarnia Lambton Children's Aid Society continue to participate in shared service agreements for several administrative functions. We have mutually grown from each other's best practices and wisdom. Finance, Property and Procurement and Human Resources are areas where we benefit from mutual capacity. Our staff in these areas demonstrate collaboration and innovation in action.

The Chatham-Kent Integrated Services Board Foundation took a bold step forward in their efforts to support youth receiving services from Linck. After learning more about local housing pressures, the Foundation Board committed to increasing access to safe, affordable housing for young people in need. They undertook the process of acquiring a house to provide more housing options for youth served by Linck. This is the courageous leadership that makes meaningful differences in the life of a young person.

Financial Highlights



REVENUE

- Province of Ontario
- Municipality of Chatham-Kent
- Chatham-Kent Health Alliance
- Other
- Expenditure Recoveries, Rebates, Interest

2023/2024

\$22,872,826
 \$2,113,054
 \$200,000
 \$295,232
 \$1,147,243

\$26,628,354

2022/2023

\$22,297,023
 \$2,463,301
 \$200,000
 \$88,482
 \$1,360,562

\$26,413,369

EXPENSES BY PROGRAM

- Child Welfare
- SCS - Infant Development and Other; Special Needs Resourcing and Autism Classroom
- Child & Family Intervention, Children's Mental Health 0-6 and Youth Criminal Justice Act
- Other Programs
- Operating Surplus (Deficit) for the Year

\$19,685,860

\$2,918,173

\$3,903,860

\$295,232

\$26,803,125

\$(174,770)

\$19,368,537

\$3,239,991

\$3,723,511

\$81,330

\$26,413,368

\$0

Service Highlights



INTAKE/FAMILY SERVICES

2022/2023

1719 Total Reports Received

771 Total New Investigations

579 Investigation Not Required

203 Cases Opened

213 Cases Open at End of Year

2023/2024

1845 Total Reports Received

780 Total New Investigations

463 Investigation Not Required

225 Cases Opened

240 Cases Open at End of Year

Service Highlights



CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

2022/2023

667 Intake Referrals

109 Brief Services and Walk in

462 Counselling and Therapy Services

83 Psychological Assessment

8 Young Offenders Served

144 Childcares and Early Learning Programs

67 Infant Development

2023/2024

643 Intake Referrals

109 Brief Services and Walk in

444 Counselling and Therapy Services

77 Psychological Assessment

12 Young Offenders Served

132 Childcares and Early Learning Programs

66 Infant Development

Service Highlights



CHILDREN IN CARE

2022/2023

59 Children Admitted to Care

202 Total # of Children Served in Care

59 Children Discharged from Care

6 Total Adoptions Completed

143 Children in Care and End of Year

41 Total Foster Homes at End of Year

65 # of Kinship Service Homes at End of Year

15 Adoption Disclosures Completed

44,731 Total Days Care Provided

2023/2024

67 Children Admitted to Care

232 Total # of Children Served in Care

44 Children Discharged from Care

9 Total Adoptions Completed

152 Children in Care and End of Year

40 Total Foster Homes at End of Year

67 # of Kinship Service Homes at End of Year

17 Adoption Disclosures Completed

53,562 Total Days Care Provided

Senior Management

- Teri Thomas-Vanos
Executive Director
- Lisa Reaume
Sr. Executive Assistant
- Michelle DeTurk
Executive Assistant
- Shelley Thibert
Director of Service
- JoDee Anderson
Director of Service
- Loree Hodgson-Harris
Manager of Legal Services
- Jeff Thibert
Manager of Procurement
and IT Services
- Laura Vidler
Manager of Financial Services
- Pam Glazier
Director of Service
- Carol Moore
Director of Service

Board Members

- **Jennifer Morrow**
Chair

- **Evan Rogers**
Vice Chair

- **Marianne Willson**
Director

- **Mike Donomy**
Director

- **Jennifer Goodal**
Past Chair

- **Arlene Rintjema**
Secretary/Treasurer

- **Ahmed Al-Amry**
Director

- **Erin Kearney**
Director

- **Nick Bazylko**
Director

- **Rebecca Caron**
Director

- **Jenny-Lee Almeida**
Director

- **Chris Porter**
Director

- **Joel Johnson**
Director at Large

Foundation Board Members

- **Jasmine Miller**
Chair

- **Joel Johnson**
Vice Chair

- **Michelle Robbins**
Past Chair

- **Bailey Cumming**
Secretary/Treasurer

- **Gary Edwards**
Director

- **Margery Muharrem**
Director

- **Amanda Melnyk**
Director

- **Jay Denorer**
Director



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