



# Annual Report 2023-24

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## Message from CEO and Board Chair

### To Our Community,

If any image captures the past year at Five Counties Children's Centre, it's one in which our beaming client Alexa holds up a 'thank you' sign.



Alexa is right. Five Counties has so much to be grateful for in 2023/24, and it wouldn't be possible without the determination, dedication, and support of many people and partners. Indeed, this total team effort was evident in many places.

It starts with the Ontario government's historic investment in pediatric services, including a \$2.025 million annual funding increase to Five Counties. These funds mean we can retain and recruit more staff and invest in our services to reduce wait times for kids.



Our staff continue to support thousands of children/youth and their families in our region. This past year, we served the second-highest number of clients ever (6,163 kids in total). We did so, even while adjusting to a new Client Information System (Five Counties was the first Children's Treatment Centre in Ontario to switch).

How we serve families is also changing for the better. Our new SmartStart Hub allows families to make online referrals for a child's development needs. In schools, we moved to tiered intervention in our occupational therapy support for students. This will provide better outcomes for more kids, especially as we shift more services to this model.

On the fundraising side, we raised a record \$1.2 million – the most in our history. This boosts high-demand services like occupational therapy and speech therapy, meaning more kids get the care they need when they need it. Our fundraising efforts were punctuated by a generous \$250,000 donation from Dr. James and Sheila Ryan.

We also completed fundraising for our Northumberland Backyard Project in Cobourg – a safe, fully-accessible outdoor area for treatment, recreation and other programs. The effort was capped off by nearly \$400,000 from the provincial government and the Ontario Trillium Foundation to help us get shovels into the ground.

We are boosting ways families can give input to improve their overall experience at Five Counties. This included a parents' input survey and creating a new staff position – our Client and Family Experience Lead – to enhance our engagement with families to better serve and support them.

We focused on a comprehensive plan to recruit and retain our valued staff. This included leadership development and competitive compensation. Staff also had their say in an Employee Survey that took the pulse on how we're doing to support them. Many had good things to say.

We also launched a new Justice Diversity Equity and Inclusion initiative to help us be more respectful and representative of our changing communities.

American author, disability rights advocate and lecturer Hellen Keller once said: "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." The past year at Five Counties is a true testament to that.

Scott Pepin, CEO, Five Counties Children's Centre

Julie Davis, Board Chair, Five Counties Children's Centre

## Delivering Services. Delivering Results

### Hayley's Story: Former Client Now Engaging Families

As a relative newcomer, Hayley Hodges already feels at home at Five Counties. After all, she is familiar with the Centre having grown up receiving treatment here.



“This place has inspired me so much to help me be the person I am today,” says Hayley, who started in March 2024 as the Centre’s new Client and Family Experience Lead. “It’s because of this place, because of the resources and supports, that I am more independent.”

Hayley looks forward to her new role at the Centre. In it, she aims to listen and engage with Five Counties kids and families to improve their experiences and strengthen the bonds with Centre staff. “Clients and families need to understand what they’re receiving from the Centre; they need to feel empowered and involved; they need to know they are being heard,” says Hayley.

In the grand scheme of things, Hayley is perfectly positioned to make that happen.

### Ellie’s Story: ‘Our time with Five Counties has given us the gift of communication’

Ellie started coming to Five Counties in October 2022. Since then, Ellie has benefited from speech therapy, occupational therapy, and feeding support. Her parents see the difference it’s made.



“Our time with Five Counties has given us the gift of communication, which has unlocked so many opportunities and possibilities for our family,” says Ellie’s parents, Ashley and Gord, who note contacting Five Counties was the best decision they could’ve made for their daughter. “Don’t underestimate the value Five Counties provides to our community... if Five Counties wasn’t here, our community would feel the impact.”

### Gordon’s Story: Helping us to say thank you



There's an art to saying thank you, as our former client, Gordon, demonstrates. His crayon-coloured dinosaur picture graces the cover of our thank you card we share with donors, volunteers and supporters.

Gordon was born with a genetic condition that causes many anatomical changes. With support at Five Counties, Gordon is now able to take part in daily activities without concern. "Thankfully we knew who to call," says mom Sarah, "and that was Five Counties."

## Delivering Services. Delivering Results

### Total Visits in 2023/24

There were 53,095 visits by clients and families last year, nearly on par with the previous year.

### Wait Times in 2023/24

There were 2,309 kids/clients on waiting lists for services at Five Counties. This is a drop of 11 per cent from the previous year.

### Kids/Clients Served in 2023/24

Five Counties served 6,103 clients last year, marking the second highest number of kids/youth served in its nearly 50-year history.

### Complexity of Kids' Needs in 2023/24

The kids/youth served by Five Counties continue to have varied and different levels of care needs. Last year, 34 per cent of kids received two or more services at Five Counties. The other 66 per cent of kids had one service need.

### Kids/Clients by Age in 2023/24

Based on age, 22 per cent of clients seen by Five Counties last year were ages 0 to 4 years. Two-thirds of kids/youth seen last year were ages 5 to 12 years. The remaining 12 per cent of clients were between the ages of 13 and 21 years.

### Kids Receiving School-Based Rehab Services in 2023/24

Five Counties provided school-based treatment services to 3,910 students last year. The services are broken down as follows: 57 per cent of students received occupational therapy, 38 per cent received speech therapy, and 5 per cent received physiotherapy.

### Other Program Highlights in 2023/24

The launch of our [SmartStart Hub](#) in 2023/24 makes it much easier for families concerned with their child's development to connect to care that's close to home.

Fundraising was completed in 2023-24 on the [Northumberland Backyard Project](#) in Cobourg. The aim is to transform this field of dreams into a safe, fully-accessible outdoor space for treatment, recreation and cultural awareness.

## Your Support Matters

### To Our Supporters, Volunteers and Donors:

We have a million-plus reasons to smile this year – and it's all because of you!

In 2023/24, your generosity helped us raise \$1,216,157 to support kids' treatment services in our community. This is the highest fundraising total in our history, and support came in many different ways!

One of the most evident was in the many individuals who assisted at fundraising events – resulting in a combined 1,582 volunteer hours last year.

We experienced a special moment when little Maggie dropped by with a \$200 donation – the proceeds of sales from her lemonade stand.



Then there was the incredible generosity of Dr. James and Sheila Ryan, who donated \$250,000 to assist the children seen at Five Counties. The Ryans' donation was based on their belief in the importance of providing detection, early assessment, and treatment

to help children get the care they need. We were pleased to rename our waiting area at our Peterborough site to recognize the Ryans' generosity.



At a time when demand for our services and programs is on the rise, your record-setting support help us fill the gaps that can't always be covered by government funding.

These contributions speak to the generosity of our community and the value you see in what Five Counties does to provide life-changing treatment for children, youth and families in our region!

Thank you for your support!

Lyn, Linsey, Lisa and Maddie

Five Counties' Fund Development Team