

MAKING STRIDES



Young Adult
Mental Health

2018
Annual Report

Co-Design Starts Here

A message from the Young Adult Council

Designed by young adults, their families and professionals, Stella's Place provides comprehensive mental health services for young adults, ages 16 to 29. The heart of Stella's Place is our downtown Toronto location where we provide support in an inclusive, peer-engaging community setting.

"I've chosen this charity because last year they saved my life. They taught me not to be ashamed of my mental health."

-Samantha, YAC Member

YAC Team with Donna Green, Chair and Jenny Carver, Executive Director

We are pleased to introduce the 2018 Annual Report, and to introduce ourselves—the Stella's Place Young Adult Council (YAC). At Stella's Place, the mission is to pioneer a collaborative model of mental health services, partnering young adults with professionals and empowering participants to manage their own health and recovery.

We have made huge strides in our first year of activity at Stella's Place, furthering the commitment to co-design. The YAC stands as a bridge between participants and staff to make sure that young adult voices are being heard and, more importantly, directly influencing the design of relevant, accessible, and effective programming. We are a community that values peer

support—formally through programming and informally between participants.

In addition to influencing program design, YAC members engage with donors and other Stella's Place stakeholders to communicate the needs and experiences of young adults. We represent the diverse faces and voices of Stella's Place, working passionately to ensure our messages are heard and understood.

At Stella's Place you will get to be known by name. From the Access Team welcoming you every time you enter our doors to friendships forged with fellow participants at the Café, Stella's is the place to be...and belong! Come in, grab a snack, use our free WiFi, wait for an appointment, or chat with peers.

As the YAC moves into our second year, we're excited to bring events to the Café and to connect with even more participants.

Stella's Place is vibrant and growing because we are listening to young adults and providing services that are relevant and impactful. We are proud to present the gains we've made in 2018.

Sincerely,



Madeleine Cho & Mara Howard

Stepping Into Community Connection

Making critical first contact with the Access Team

Making sure that young adults who walk through the door have a great first experience is the goal of our Access Team. "If I don't connect personally, participants won't come back," says Robin, Team Lead, "I hope what I can do is make a safe place for people to land: to make them feel OK with whatever they are bringing, to let them know they are not alone in that experience and, most importantly, that they deserve to be here."

Participants drop by the Café to get mental health information, to grab coffee and a snack, to wait for appointments and programs, and to simply hang out and socialize. Our multidisciplinary team has the unique blend of support skills and lived experience needed to create a welcoming and responsive space. "We've been on the other side of it," they say, "so we know how we would want someone to respond to us."

2018 saw tremendous growth in the Café. The Access Team responded: refining the intake and orientation process to reach more people and purposefully designing services to address the high levels of distress that young adults are experiencing.

Young adults often tell us that talking with others in the Café, both staff members and other participants, has given them hope: hope that they can find what

they need, hope of connecting with someone who understands them, hope that they can get help to have the kind of life that they want to have.

The Café serves as a first step, allowing people who may not be ready to access full treatment to come and learn about mental health and begin to seek connection. It can also be a vital last step after a young adult has worked through their recovery process—a way to stay connected with community while gaining strength and confidence.



Stella's street-front Café is the gateway to groundbreaking mental health services. Our "whole person" approach helps young adults learn skills, make meaningful connections and empower themselves to successfully manage their personal health and well-being.

Opening Doors

1,251

participants visited in person at least once

251

participants connected online at least once

374

participants registered

510

participants attended an orientation session

Advancing Clinical & Peer Integration

Doing better together—an innovative approach to DBT

Kayla and Miriam make a good team. Well attuned to each other and the participants they work with, they have delivered eight innovative DBT groups. DBT helps young adults develop new skills to manage painful emotions, improve relationships and build more meaningful lives. This therapy has also proven to be effective in treating suicidal behaviours, addiction, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and eating disorders.

Collaboration between peer supporters and clinicians is essential to our innovative programming. Kayla and Miriam see themselves as a bridge to bring emotional literacy and key behavioural skills to participants. Kayla has lived experience of participating in a DBT group and now works alongside Miriam as a co-facilitator. “When Kayla tells a story everybody is nodding their head,” says Miriam, “it just speaks to her authenticity and the buy-in she gets from the group.”

“Miriam makes people laugh,” says Kayla, “but it’s not empty laughter. It provides comfort and builds trust.” Laughter adds a bit of lightness to work that is difficult and can feel heavy at times. Many of the participants

Over the past three years, Stella’s Place has been developing an integrated peer and clinical model of DBT (Dialectical Behaviour Therapy) that has made us one of the leaders in Canada. Our DBT groups have evolved and continue to be refined through our young adult co-design process. In 2018, three different DBT groups were offered, including Weathering the Storms—specifically designed for young adults identifying as LGBTQ+ and interested in examining their relationship with substances.

are new to attending group sessions and never thought they would feel comfortable in that kind of setting. Kayla is impressed, however, with how quickly participants develop friendships and build a support system. With that support in place, participants gain confidence to engage more deeply in the DBT process—from group to one-on-one counselling to phone coaching.

Participants decide what works best during sessions: interacting with the whole group or working in smaller groups with a peer supporter or clinician. The program includes role plays and experiential learning, unique

group materials such as a DBT music playlist, and participant-led mindfulness exercises and skills recap.

Both Miriam and Kayla value the depth of connection they are able to reach with each other and with the young adult participants. They describe the feeling of being in the DBT room with awe and appreciation: “Personally this part of the job is extremely rewarding and working alongside peer supporters in groups really feels special and dynamic,” says Miriam.

Kayla adds, “It is a privilege to be able to listen! It never gets old hearing someone say how they are using the skills they have been practising here.”

Deepening Skills

44 participants in DBT skills

Participants showed statistically significant changes from the start to end of the program:

- 35% increase in the use of effective coping skills
- 47% decrease in the use of harmful coping
- 24% increase in resiliency
- 30% increase in self-efficacy

26 participants in Weathering the Storms

- 19% increase in effective coping skills
- 23% increase in resiliency
- 14% increase in self-advocacy
- 14% increase in readiness to change substance use

Program Partners

Toronto Urban Health Fund, City of Toronto
Ministry of Health & Long Term Care



Gathering Momentum with Peer Support

The Stella's Place approach to mental wellness encompasses multiple avenues for deepening self-reflection and building confidence, including arts-based outreach. Stella's Studio offers participants a safe place to create and share drawing, writing, painting, improv and music. Studio is co-facilitated by trained peer supporters who are committed to inspiring participant creativity.



Arts-based outreach is booming in Stella's Studio!

"We held 47 Studio sessions during 2018, that's almost 100 hours of studio!" Liz says with enthusiasm. Studio is a drop-in, arts-based program that fills quickly. "People sneak in," Liz says with obvious glee, and Funmi nods appreciatively. "People want to be here!"

Funmi and Liz take great care to be ready for each Studio session, providing materials, project ideas, and encouragement that comes from personal experience. When reflecting on the benefits to participants, Funmi and Liz immediately mention the range and quality of the art that participants produce during the two-hour sessions. However, they say, it is the experience of being fully present and open during the Studio process that matters most. "Studio is not like other mental health spaces," says Liz. "Studio on Wednesday nights has a palpable feeling of warmth, gratitude and affirmation: This is what it looks like to give people a place to play."

A diverse range of people participate in Studio, new folks and regulars. Funmi emphasizes that when he sees participants hanging out after Studio, this is a good outcome for the program—the growth of communities. More and more, participants show confidence in advocating for what they need during sessions, not always relying on the facilitators to shape the direction of the group: "I like that people feel comfortable speaking up," Funmi says with satisfaction. Although Funmi was initially apprehensive when considering what he could bring to the Studio experience, he's learned that, "Really, all you need is authenticity, people vibe off it. That is how they relate, that is how you build trust in the space." Liz adds that making Studio work takes collaboration, openness, self-reflection, and most of all—willingness. "A little bit of willingness is all that we can ask," Funmi agrees, "both of our participants and of ourselves."

Program Partners

Oulahen Family
Maple Downs Ladies Pro Am Golf Tournament

Stella's Place peer supporters have lived mental health experience as well as relevant training. Having 'walked the walk', a peer supporter can listen and respond from a place of true understanding. Being in a different place in their recovery process, they can communicate hope and optimism. The values of respect, choice and mutual sharing build the basis of the relationship. Peer Support works online, face to face, individually and in groups—we do all of it!

BeanBagChat

BeanBagChat,™ our secure mobile chat application, allows young adults to connect with a trained Peer Supporter from the privacy of their cell phones. We supported 133 individuals during 580 online chats in 2018. The average length of a chat was 22 minutes, the average age of participants was 25 years.



NexJ Connected Wellness

With \$500,000 in funding from Ontario Centres of Excellence, Stella's Place undertook a 2-year research study to test, adapt and evaluate the NexJ Connected Wellness platform, an online self-management tool.

Led by David Wiljer from University Health Network, Stella's Place Research Coordinator, Maria Nazeer, and Research and Evaluation Manager, Stephanie Rattelade, the study followed 175 participants for a period of 4 months each. Participants received intensive supports for the first 2 months including regular check-ins with Stella's Place Peer Supporters, workbooks and moderated chat forums, and were transitioned to self-management tools in the third and fourth months. Preliminary results will be presented in July 2019.

“

Participating in WRAP not only gave me tools and taught me skills to help me manage my mental health needs, it also helped me to develop a way of navigating the world with compassion and patience.

WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan)

WRAP is a peer-led program that guides participants through a step-by-step process to assess their mental health needs, identify a plan of action for daily evaluation and self-care, and develop strategies to help during times of stress or crisis.

Building Resilience

44
participants attended
WRAP

14%
increase in
self efficacy

14%
increase in
resiliency

28%
increase in WRAP
specific skills

Gaining Ground in Our Communities

Peer Support training, healing, and employment

Designed to help prevent young people in Toronto from joining gangs, the Community Healing Project—part of the City of Toronto’s Youth Equity Strategy—began in 2014. Aiming to provide community intervention programs, Stella’s Place has played a key role since 2017, offering youth the Peer Support Training Program.

Our intensive hands-on curriculum, developed by Stella’s Place and partner organizations, is aligned with Peer Support Canada (PSC) competency standards. A significant investment announced in December 2018 will dramatically increase the reach of this project.

Abdul is passionate about community work. His smile reaches his eyes and his whole face lights up when he speaks about the kids he has worked with in camps and after-school programs in his Jane/Finch community.

Last year he heard about the Community Healing Project and was accepted into Stella’s Place’s Peer Support Training Program. This program works with young people to build capacity, protective factors, coping skills, and resiliency. “The training helped me identify issues with my own mental health, and how to help people conquer similar types of issues that they are going through. I became a better version of myself in order to really serve my community,” says Abdul.

As a Healer, Abdul promotes mental health literacy and skills to address trauma, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and hypersensitive flight/fight responses developed due to community violence. He explains how mental health has been over-stigmatized in the community. “The people who are coming to Community Healers need help even to find the language to talk about what might be going on with them. Because of the stigma, they need help identifying what is possible, what help is available.”

Abdul describes how he applies the skills he has learned in the Peer Support Training Program in his work: “You have to know your community—respect them and want to help them, but understand their needs. Working with people is more about listening to them, being present and not about jumping to solutions or problem solving too soon. I’m able to combine my training with my own experiences and reach others in a really personal way.”

After completing his Peer Support Training, Abdul was hired as a Youth Peer Mentor Coordinator with the

Community Healing Project. He now works at Jane Finch Community & Family Centre providing mentorship to Community Healers in the neighbourhood he grew up in and loves.

Smyrna completed the Peer Support Training in 2017 and was hired as a Peer Mentor in 2018. She echoes Abdul’s sentiments, describing how the training developed her active listening skills and helped her to understand herself better. “I grew so much through this program! I learned to do things with intention and to teach others about intentionality.”

What drives Smyrna is first-hand experience: she understands the gaps that need to be filled with nurturing, care and compassion to help young people reach their potential.

After her Peer Support Training she was placed as a Community Healer in Lawrence Heights. She wasn’t sure she could have much of an impact in the short eight weeks

the project lasted, but she knew she could plant seeds.

Many of the youth brought their younger siblings along, so there was a wide age range in the participants attending the group. Smyrna and her placement partner Alex had to find creative strategies to engage everyone. Drama and role plays were effective, as were cooking, dancing and drawing. They practised positive reinforcement, asking participants to draw what they liked best about their community. Smyrna was surprised to see herself in a drawing handed to her by a little girl. When she asked why she was in the picture, the girl said, “You are making me happy and I love you!”

Smyrna went on to become an Amplifier with the Ontario Child Advocate, working with children in foster care. Currently, Smyrna is completing her studies in Equity & Diversity at Ryerson University and is continuing the work of the Advocate through her own non-profit organization.

Rippling Outward

21 graduates from 1 peer support training program delivery	4 previous participants hired as Peer Mentors
10 communities served with Community Healing workshops	150 youth reached city-wide

“The Stella’s Place Peer Support Training has offered the skill building and knowledge base that the Community Healing Project needed and provides a valuable pathway to employment.

One of the most valuable elements of the training, the co-design session, is a therapeutic process that gives participants a chance to share their ideas and experiences with mental health and trauma as it relates to community violence. This helps prepare participants to take in the information more readily.”

Zannalyn Robest, Community Development Officer,
Youth Development Unit, City of Toronto

Next Steps

\$1.6 million over 5 years to train and certify 250 youth who will offer workshops, case management, employment supports and peer support to an estimated 1,350 young adults in over 20 different neighbourhoods with 6 new staff members in 2019.

Program Partners
City of Toronto, Youth Equity Strategy
Toronto Foundation



Amplifying Grassroots Support

Community fundraising ramped up

Stella's Place depends on the support from thousands of individuals to be able to provide our services to the young adults who need them, free of charge. Community fundraisers plan and host their own event and donate the proceeds to Stella's Place. In 2018, more people than ever before connected with us, passionate to do something about young adult mental health. Many had researched us on the internet and liked what they learned about our community-based approach, co-design and peer support. We are particularly pleased with the level of

32
Third-Party
Fundraisers

Third-Party
Fundraising
Reached
5,000
People

\$206,028
Raised in 2018

“
We've agreed that it will be
an annual event for us and
our team has already grown
for next year.

engagement from young people and the many creative fundraisers they initiated in their schools, universities and workplaces. Examples include candygrams, yoga raves, an Amazing Race, concerts and a tattoo parlour. Stella's Place is able to grow and become more financially sustainable thanks to the commitment and concern of our community organizers. Together, we can give young adult mental health the attention it needs. We are deeply grateful.

(Left) Team Easy Bre-ezies, the McGroarty family at B&O Yorkville Run 2018



Increasing Impact

The young adults who come to Stella's Place experience high levels of distress. In 2018, 68% of participants were screened to be at risk of suicide at intake and 47% reported visiting emergency rooms for mental health reasons in the past 2 years.

Our response has been to develop, test and evaluate holistic, integrated services that are highly relevant to young adults and achieve measurable results. We can confidently report that our approach and interventions are making a real difference in the lives of our participants.

We are seeing remarkable improvements in resiliency across all of our registered programs, as well as improved coping skills in our DBT programs.

In our annual survey to understand participants' progress and satisfaction with our programs, a full 49% of respondents reported significantly lower distress than at intake and 82% were satisfied or very satisfied with the service they received. Additionally, 67% of respondents had also started exploring career options.

Demand for our services is high and growing as more young people hear about us from health care professionals (38%) and hospitals (31%). Café drop-in visits alone more than tripled from 228 in 2017 to 747 in 2018. Our participants tell us that they feel safe, valued and included at Stella's Place and that they are making progress towards their goals.

Drop-in Group Participants

DBT Refresh	46
FMP Gathering	73
Fitness Group	30
Spectrums	39
Studio	144
Yoga	81

Registered Group Participants

DBT Evening	32
DBT Skills	47
Sacred Minds	29
SfSL	30
People are Scary	11
Weathering the Storms	42
WRAP	44

Satisfaction

82%	Satisfied or very satisfied with Stella's Place
73%	Felt included and valued as a person
84%	Would refer a friend
65%	Have made progress towards goals

Employment

67%	Started exploring career options
53%	Had handed out resumes or applied
47%	Had a job interview
31%	Reported now being employed

Services Offered in 2018

Access & Engagement:

Intake Counselling & Coordination
Interdisciplinary Assessment/Consultation
Café
NexJ: Online self-management tool

Drop-in Programs:

Walk-in Counselling
BeanBagChat: Online drop-in chat support
DBT Refresh
Finding My Path: Navigation, life skills, career exploration
Spectrums: Group for LGBTIQ2SA+ participants
Studio
Art in the Café
Yoga
Fitness

Registered Programs:

8-session psychotherapy
Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT)

- DBT Skills (Day)
- DBT Skills (Evening)
- Weathering the Storms

Skills for Safer Living (SfSL): Suicidality Group
People are Scary (PAS): Social Anxiety Group
Primary Care
Psychiatry
WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan): Peer-led wellness group
Sacred Minds: Alternative Realities Group

Community Healing Project:

Peer Support Training Program

Growing Stella's Place Together

We gratefully acknowledge the caring individuals who donated in memory of

Matthew Kirby
Breana McGroarty
Mary Patricia O'Neill
Mark Rathwell
Tamara Jane Rice
Ben Smith
Bradley Whalen-Strauss

Gifts In Kind

Alan Greenberg
Cineplex Entertainment
lululemon athletica Queen West store
Paula Schipper
Second Harvest

We are delighted that our community of donors is growing and we are grateful for all of your support. Due to space limitations we can only list gifts over \$500.

Artwork & words by Ben Smith



My skin is porous
I hear life in chorus

500-999

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Harry Wadhwa
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Susan Weisbarth
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Chantelle Williams
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5,000-24,999

Anonymous (2)
Talya & Jeffrey Baum Fund

“
As soon as I walked in I got a really positive feeling. This place makes me feel hopeful about achieving my goals.

Canadian Hadassah-WIZO (CHW)
Toronto CTR
Crowdriff
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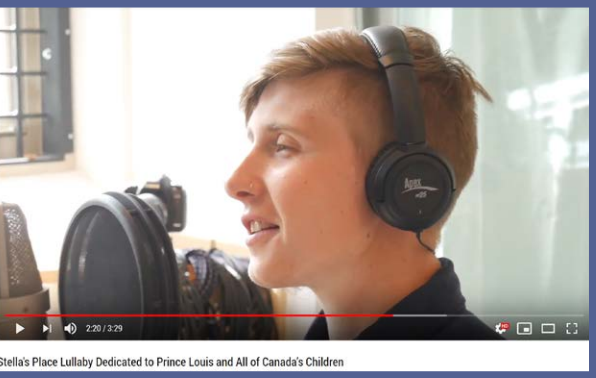
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The Lindy Green Charitable Foundation

500,000+

Ministry of Health and Long Term Care



Stella Green Sanderson recording a lullaby dedicated to His Royal Highness Prince Louis of Cambridge in recognition of a gift from the Canadian Government.

Financials for year ending December 31, 2018

Revenue

	2018	2017	2016
Donations – undesignated	\$1,171,801	\$1,902,955	\$939,318
Donations – designated	383,477	363,638	143,518
Government Grants	1,308,655	233,360	43,915
Other	356,710	20,118	4,239
Total Revenue	3,220,643	2,520,071	1,130,990

Expenses

	2018	2017	2016
Program	\$2,118,605	\$1,940,459	\$749,190
Non-Program	739,598	506,798	348,438
Amortization	139,164	13,691	2,052
Total Expenses	3,136,518	2,460,948	1,099,680

Excess of Revenue Over Expenses	84,125	59,123	31,310
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Financial Successes for 2018



Achieved increased government funding, including largest funding announcement to date: 1.6M over 5 years for Peer Support Training Program



1,774 new donors added \$384,550 in revenue (11.9% of total Revenue)



For the fourth year in a row, we have an operating surplus

Financial Goals in 2018

Increase revenues to support full program delivery and capacity building/infrastructure to solidify our operations

Revenues increased by 28%; capacity & infrastructure increased in Finance, HR and IT

Increase government funding so that by end of 2019 50% of revenue is from government

41% of total annual revenue is from government (3 levels with 461% increase in 2018)

Increase sustainability through diverse funding streams and wider donor base

Our active donor base more than tripled in 2018; government, foundation & corporate support all grew

Letters from the Executive Director & Chair



In 2015, we committed to a new, full-service delivery model of young adult mental health, embedding co-design and evaluation into our organizational practices. At the end of our second year of full operations, we are

pleased to see strong evidence of increased levels of engagement, palpable impact and a stunning level of community awareness. We are making a tangible difference in the lives of young adults. Through this journey of learning and innovation, Stella's Place has emerged as Toronto's 'go-to place' for young adults.

Our health-care, community and education partners have demonstrated their trust, referring hundreds of young adults to our door. In 2018, our team delivered training and services to almost 1,500 young adults, online and face-to-face. Young people are accessing supports as they are ready—moving forward with their own toolbox of skills and strategies, less distressed and more resilient, to live the lives they choose.

Municipal, Provincial and Federal funding covered 41% of our operating costs in 2018. Our generous individual and corporate donors have also played a pivotal role in our success. We have truly found our stride and walk forward confidently with a clear sense of purpose, identity and direction.

Looking ahead, we are focused on sharing our proven, effective model with other organizations and regions, growing our enterprise. With your continued loyalty and support, Stella's Place is poised to broaden our impact, reach and recognition. Together, we are transforming the landscape and building the future of young adult mental health. Thank you.

Jenny Carver, Executive Director



As Founder of Stella's Place, I could not be prouder of the herculean efforts made by so many people on this incredible journey. We created a new model of care to allow young people to participate in their own mental

health recovery, but they have become involved in so much more: They have co-created programs, volunteered at events, joined committees, become peer supporters—and I see now that many are starting to live the lives they choose. It takes incredible courage to do this. Thank you for helping make Stella's Place what it has become—Canada's leading young adult integrated service hub.

Our staff bring their whole selves to their jobs every day and work with tremendous passion and compassion. Guided by Jenny's capable and inspiring leadership, we are seeing a dream come to fruition and changing the future of mental health.

Deep thanks go out to our Board members and volunteers. Without your wisdom, advise, patience, curiosity and, most importantly, your belief that we could do this, we simply would not be where we are today.

And none of this would have been possible without you, our supporters. Your generosity and belief that we can do something so much better for our adult children, friends and loved ones has allowed us to model a new approach and become a player in the mental health care system. For this, I am truly grateful.

My best to everyone for the very exciting years to come.

Donna Green, Chair

Board Members

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Liuba Turlova

“

I actually accomplished something this year. I had a lot of things that didn't go well this year. Now I can tell everyone I ran a 10k. I felt powerful. My dream is in two years to do a marathon.

-Joseph, YAC Member



2018 lululemon Toronto Waterfront 10K



Stella's Place was able to offer weekly yoga and fitness classes as well as race entries thanks to our generous program partner, lululemon athletica



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