

# CRCF Impact Report

## *12 years and counting*

2005–2017



CENTRE FOR RESEARCH  
ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES



CENTRE DE RECHERCHE  
SUR L'ENFANCE ET LA FAMILLE



**McGill**  
UNIVERSITY



## Director's Message

*The CRCF is, by all means, a centre that produces exemplary, cutting-edge social science research that addresses critical themes and a hub that brings together passionate and committed researchers, students and staff. What makes us so unique is our deep involvement and unceasing collaboration with practice and policy milieus allowing our research to make a true impact for children and families who live in vulnerable contexts. Our tremendous community engagement and connection certainly challenges the long-standing idea that academics remain in their ivory towers!*

**DELPHINE COLLIN-VÉZINA, PHD**





CRCF's Mission is to conduct and disseminate research on effective programs and policies for vulnerable children, youth and their families. We are whole heartedly committed to:

- 1 Conducting high quality research;**
- 2 Developing partnerships between researchers, service providers and policy makers to promote research on children and families and to bridge research networks nationally and internationally;**
- 3 Providing research training for graduate and post-graduate students, as well as supporting the development of research capacity in child and family service agencies;**
- 4 Ensuring the timely distribution of our research in a manner that is accessible and relevant to policy makers and service providers.**

Throughout the years, the centre's influence has reached well-beyond academia by offering opportunities for researchers, services providers, policy makers, and governmental representatives to develop collaborations within non-academic milieus, giving these actors access to high-quality and sound evidence on which to base their decisions. Our research activities in the centre have had program and policy impact at all levels from local agencies, to departments of social services in several provinces, to Federal agencies and NGOs.



# Our Staff



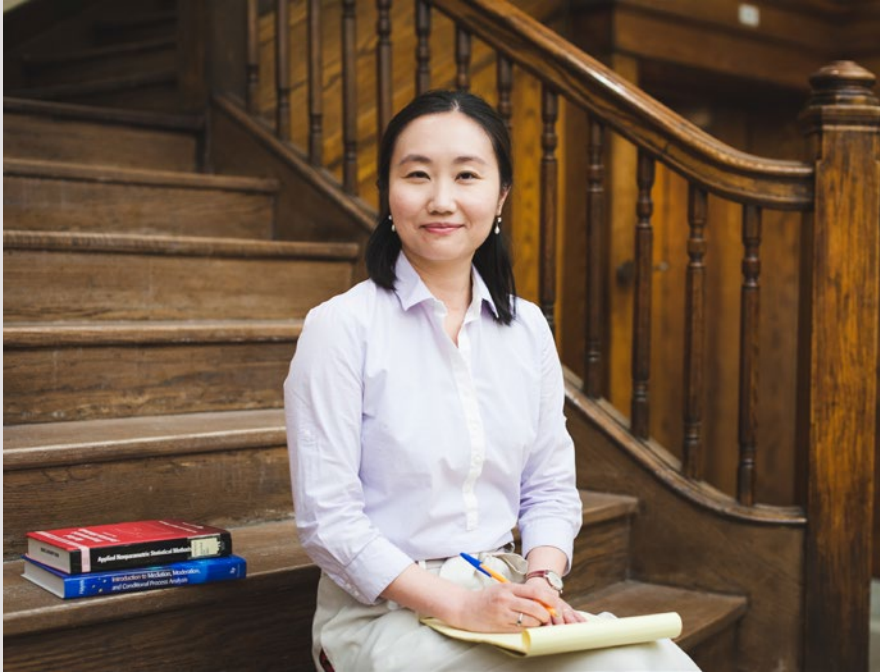
## KELLY FINNERTY

Financial and Administrative Coordinator. Kelly has been with CRCF for more than 10 years. This financial guru supports our centre on all financial related activities, ranging from drafting urgent contracts to processing expense reports, from managing research funds to planning social events in the centre. She is the go-to person to put out all fires for the CRCF. Kelly's name is being called a countless number of times every day at the centre!

## PAMELA WEIGHTMAN

Dissemination and Communication Coordinator. After 7 years of front-line experience in the field of child welfare and mental health in Quebec, Pam joined the CRCF team in 2008. She is the master mind behind spreading the word about the excellent work taking place at the CRCF, via vehicles such as the centre's annual reports, monthly newsletters, On the Radar publications, website and even Facebook. Most of all, her kind words always warm everyone's heart during times of duress.





## **BIRU ZHOU**

Academic Associate. After completing her postdoctoral training at the University of Montreal, Biru joined CRCF as an Academic Associate in the summer of 2016. Six months after her appointment, she had produced a Open Access Guide, organized and conducted two training workshops in the centre. With no doubt, she will continue to provide quality trainings to CRCF members, and to effectively facilitate the research and training activities in the centre with the mentality that “Productivity is never an accident. It is always the result of a commitment to excellence, intelligent planning, and focused effort.”

– Paul J. Meyer

## **MARTIN CHABOT**

Data Analyst. To the outside observers, data analysis may seem like a solitary work with countless hours in front of the computer going through numbers and codes. However, quality research requires a perfect balance between “a great idea” and “an innovative analysis”. Under the supervision of Dr. Tonino Esposito (Canada Research Chair in Social Services for Vulnerable Children), Martin, as our centre’s data analyst, has been a great asset and an invaluable member since 2005, involving in extracting clinical-administrative data from community service partners, producing project based sub-datasets, supporting faculty and student members on statistical issues.

## CRCF in Our Eyes:

# Changing the world, one social scientist at a time

“Studying and researching issues surrounding the First Nation Child Welfare in the centre **open** my eyes to think outside of the box, to question myself for biases, and to look for knowledge in my everyday clinical interventions as a social worker. Here in the centre, I feel I am **empowered** to do what I need to do as a social worker.



### PAULO FUMANERI

Recent graduate of the Bachelor of Social Work Program at McGill. He will continue his Master's degree in the School of Social Work at McGill in Fall 2017.

“Being a part of the CRCF was an amazing experience; I learned so much about social work, advocacy, and team work. As a student, it was really special to be included on a team of so many smart, talented, and passionate people, and to be considered an **equal** part of the team. This experience has definitely shaped how I see my future, in terms of the kind of work I'd like to do and the kind of worker I'd like to be.



### VERONICA KOST

Student from the Independent Study Program, who is interested in examining child and family health and well-being.

“A part of me has resided within the CRCF family since 2009 when I began a research block placement to finalize my BSW. As I then worked through my MSW, and now as I move forward through my doctoral research, I witnessed the natural change of faces that occurs, through the passage of time. While the faces may have changed, what has remained vibrantly consistent, is the brilliance, **dedication**, humour, and **joie-de-vivre** of every member, past and present, who contributes to making our CRCF family the enriching learning environment that it is. Researchers, students, administrative staff... together, we are the ‘family’ of the CRCF.



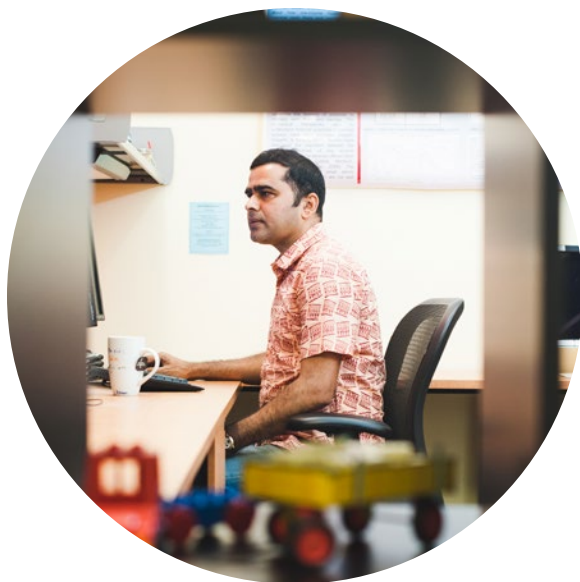
**GINA GLIDDEN**

Ph.D. student from the Social Work Program, who is interested in child and family well-being, as well as childhood disability.



# Our home away from home

“Before coming here, I had not been much exposed to research, but this center **invokes** my research interest. CRCF is a very big part of my life. I spend most of my time in the CRCF. I feel so lucky because I’m welcomed here. I come here every day, hang out with people in the center, and speak to them. The CRCF members emotionally **support** me.



## MOHAMMAD KHAN

Third year Ph.D. student from Bangladesh. His current research is about poverty, family economic stress and economic interventions among disadvantage populations.

“I found that the CRCF member is like a family. If you need something, you can ask it to anyone. It is an **inclusive** environment. You can depend on someone in the CRCF. There is a good mix of students and experts. Some are qualitative, and some are quantitative experts. It is so helpful.



## EMMANUEL CHILANGA

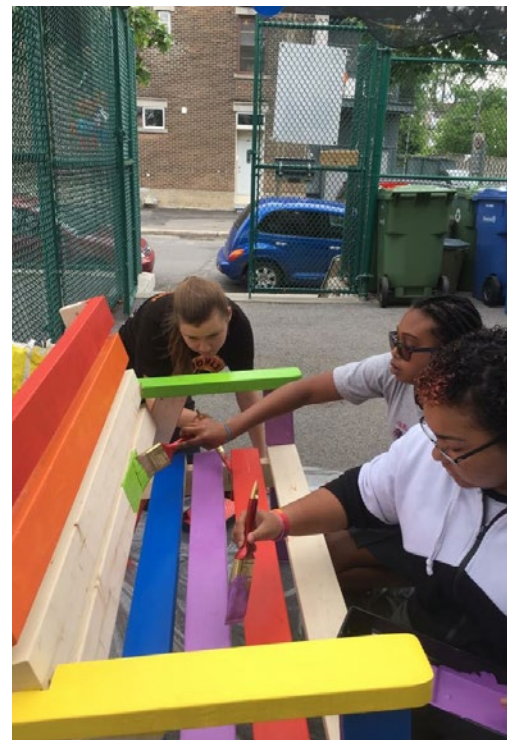
First year Ph.D. student from Malawi. He is primarily interested in studying child welfare, child maltreatment, food and nutrition security.



**CRCF in Our Eyes:**

# Changing the community, one action at a time

The warm and vibrant energy in the CRCF fosters a unique environment that allows CRCF members to not only do research that matters to children and families, but also stride to take actions that could help children and families in our local communities. Every year, CRCF is committed to different types of social action events, such as Holiday gift baskets to disadvantage families, sponsoring a LGBTQ youth friendship bench and donating LGBTQ positive children's books at local elementary schools.



# Our Donors

The success of the centre and our ongoing contributions to research, education, policy, and practice for child welfare across Canada and internationally are not possible without the generous support of our donors. We are deeply grateful for their assistance and we are confident that the work conducted using these funds will have a direct impact on vulnerable children and their families. Thanks to our donors, the CRCF continues to thrive as a vibrant academic community in child and family research.



## ALVA FOUNDATION

The Centre was established in 1985 with a gift from the Alva Foundation, formerly the Southam Foundation. The generosity of the Alva Foundation has played an essential role in the CRCF becoming a leading Canadian social research centre with established partnerships with local, provincial, and national child and family support services and advocacy organizations.

This gift from the Alva Foundation has placed our centre at the forefront of child welfare research

in Canada, and it continues to provide foundation funding base for our centre's core activities, such as research meetings, seminars and staffs. Thanks to this gift, the well-being of children and families has been and will remain our prime research focus, with strong emphasis on research with Indigenous children and their communities in Canada.





## **RBC CHILDREN'S SERVICES RESEARCH & TRAINING PROGRAM**

A very generous ten-year grant from the Royal Bank of Canada has permitted the creation of the RBC Children's Services Research & Training Program at the CRCF. With the RBC's contribution, our centre provides technical support and research training to build trust with and to assist policy makers and community-based children's mental health service providers in developing their research capacity. The seed funding provided by the RBC grant facilitates various research partnerships with local organizations. A triangular collaborative structure, consisting of organizations, professors and graduate students, has

formed a unique and effective alliance to create transformational changes to our communities.

In addition, the RBC fund provides support to the monthly Child Welfare Journal Club, which is a joint McGill / University of Toronto initiative to review empirical studies published by leading child welfare journals. Selected articles are summarized and distributed in monthly e-newsletters at no cost to subscribers in both English and French as means to disseminate the most up-to-date research to community partners.



## **GERALD SCHWARTZ AND HEATHER REISMAN FOUNDATION**

In 2015, the CRCF received a very generous gift from the Gerald Schwartz and Heather Reisman Foundation. The gift has been used to establish a new program of research regarding childhood literacy, which will be used over three years to support scholarly work on childhood literacy programming and advancement including the establishment of a full-time post-doctoral fellowship in this area. In collaboration with the Love of Reading Foundation, the CRCF will build a scientific evidence base to support the literacy of children in vulnerable communities across Canada. The research conducted through this partnership has the potential for playing a seminal role in promoting the well-being of Canadian children and positively influencing their life trajectories.

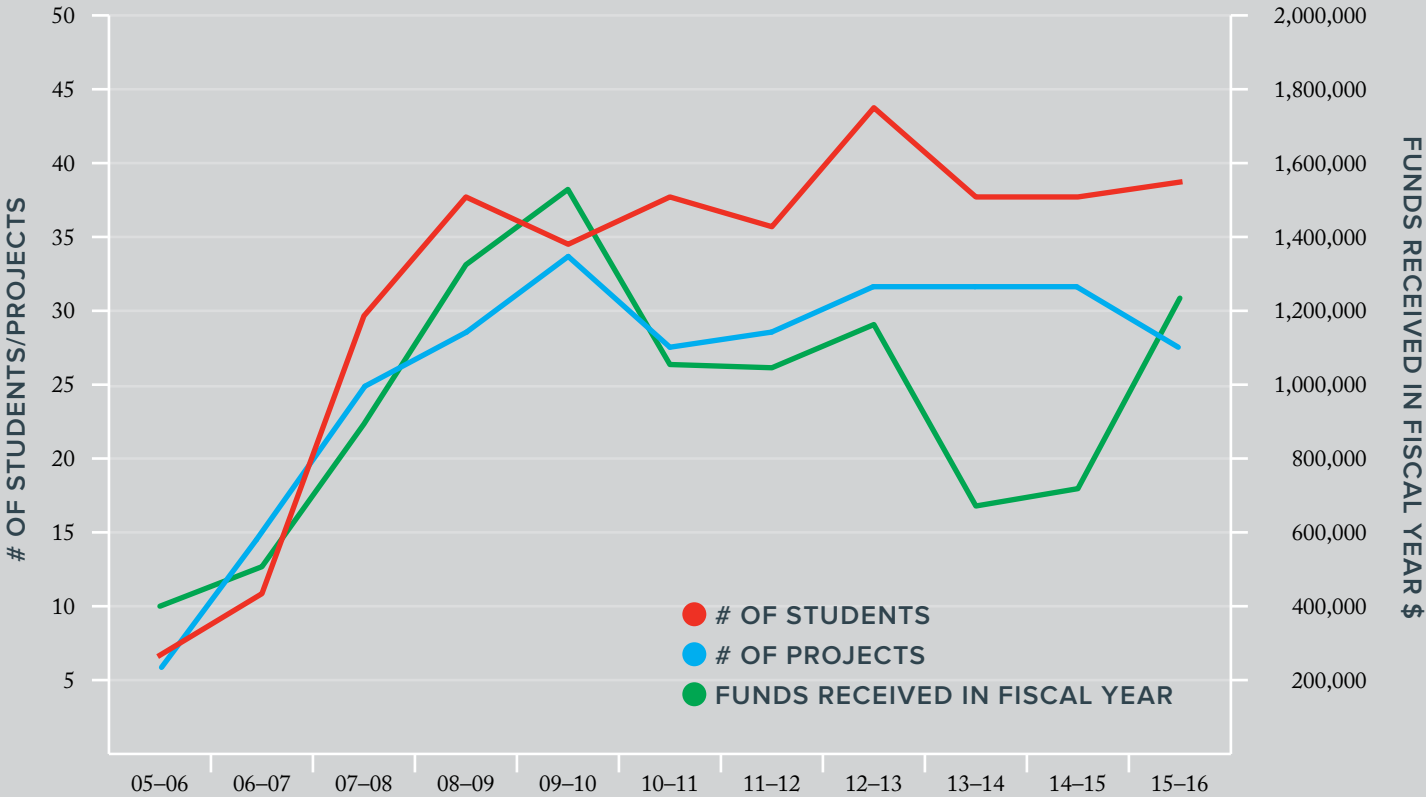


# Research & Training Activities

The CRCF houses on average 27 faculty members and 40 graduate students every year. We also manage on average 30 ongoing projects and over one million dollars of research fund annually. Thanks to the support from both private and public funding, our centre continues to offer a unique platform for developing local, national, and international collaboration in academic and non-academic milieus.

## RESEARCH & TRAINING ACTIVITIES: 2005–2016

(by fiscal year: May 1 to April 30)





## CRCF Main Funders Include



Alva Foundation

Association des centres jeunesse du Québec

Canada Research Chairs

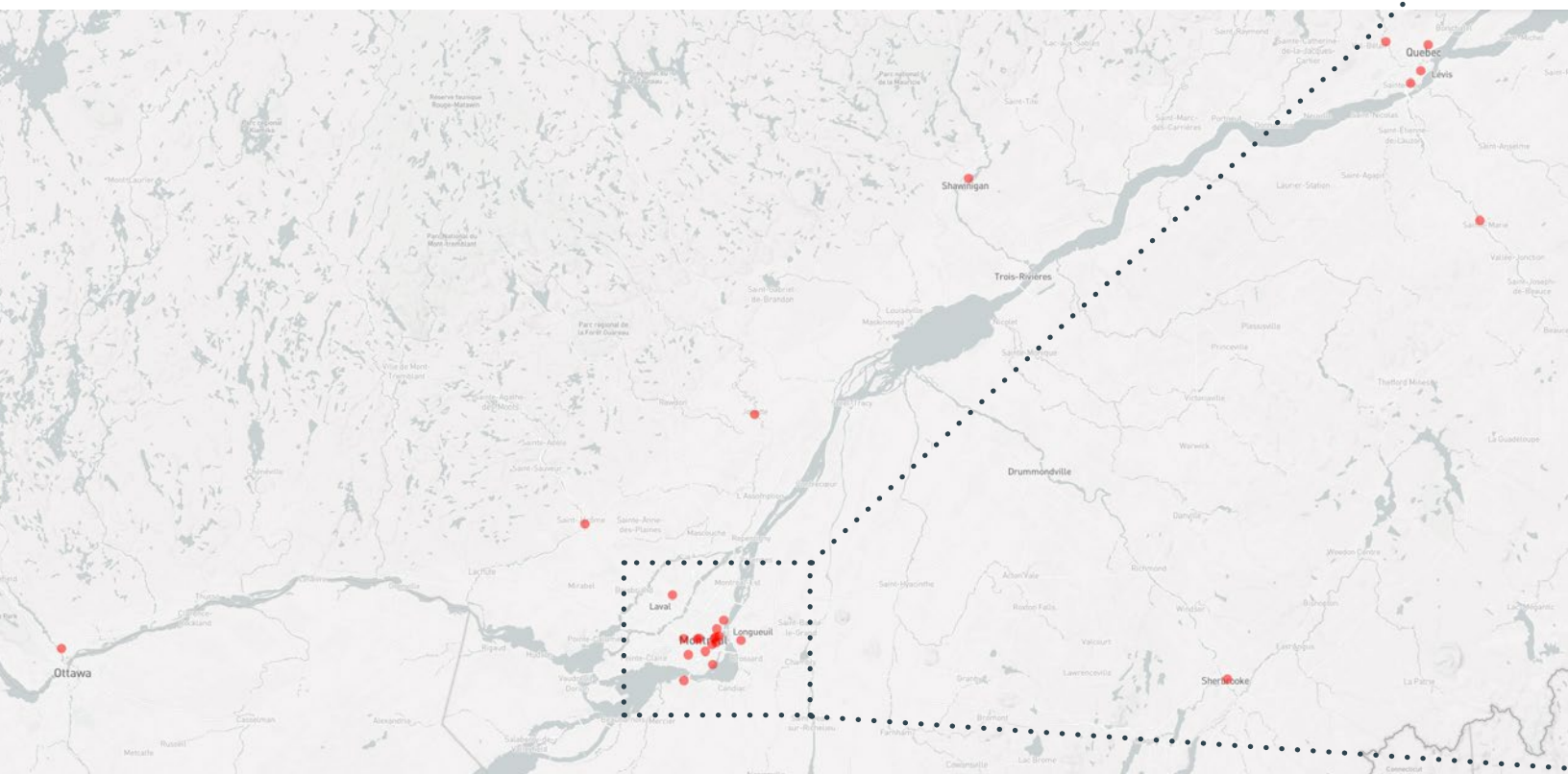
Government of Manitoba

Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux

Jewish General Hospital

Public Health Agency of Canada

# Our Local Community Partners



Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada

Agape Por Colombia

Association des centres jeunesse du Québec

Côte-des-Neiges Black Community Association INC.

Centre de protection et de réadaptation de la Côte-Nord

Centre de recherche interdisciplinaire en réadaptation de Montréal

Centre hospitalier universitaire Sainte-Justine

CISSS Chaudière-Appalaches

CISSS de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue

CISSS de l'Outaouais

CISSS de Lanaudière

CISSS de Laval

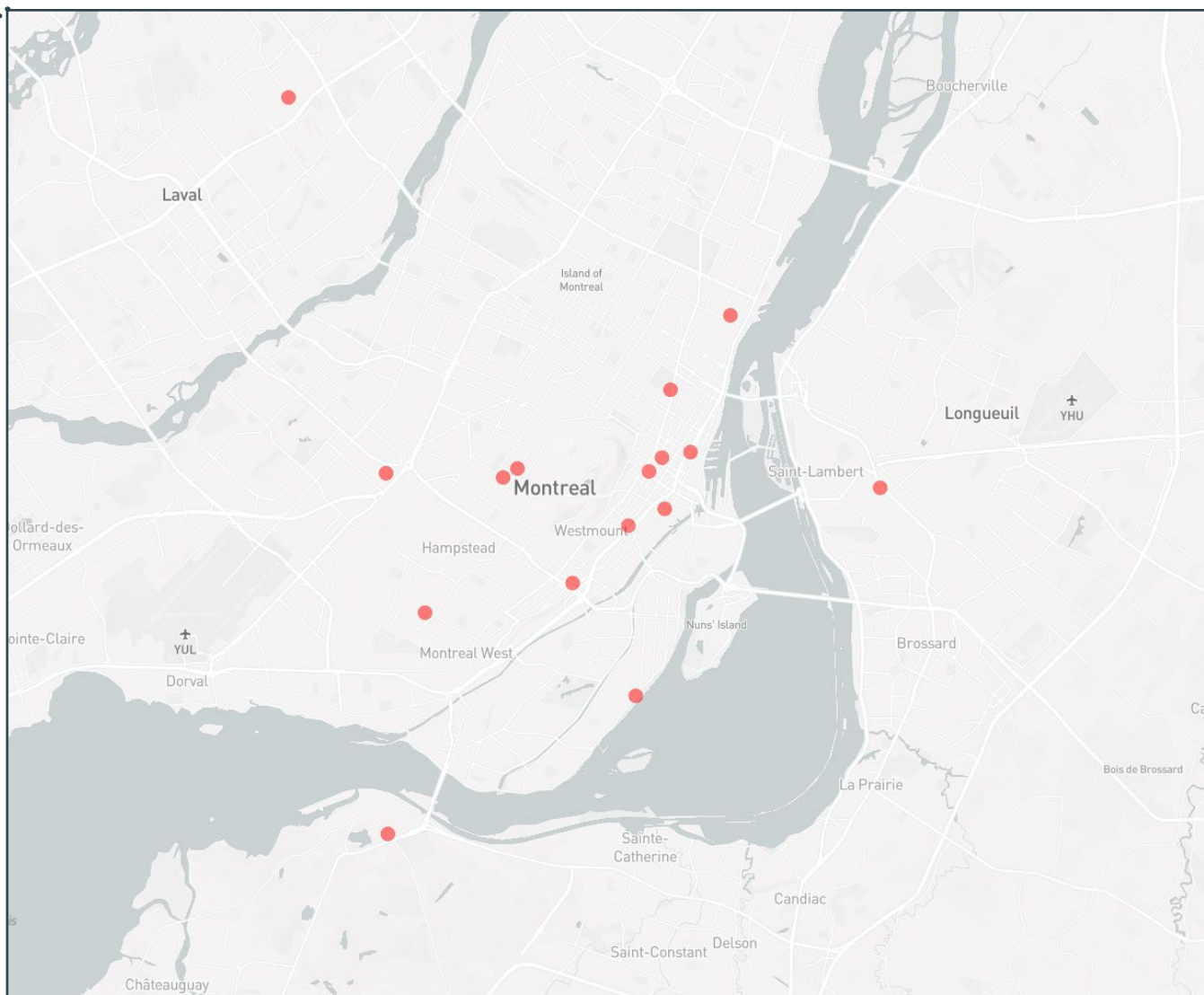
CISSS de l'Estrie

CISSS des Laurentides

CISSS du Bas-Saint-Laurent

CISSS du Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean

CISSS Gaspésie/Les Îles



CISSS Mon r gie

CIUSSS Capitale-Nationale

CIUSSS de la Mauricie et du Centre-du-Qu bec

CIUSSS du Centre-Sud-de-l' le-de-Montr al

CIUSSS Ouest-de-l' le de Montr al

First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission

Institut national d'excellence en sant  et en services sociaux

Kahnawake Shakotiaa'takenhas Community Services

La Fondation du Dr Julien

Minist re de la Sant  et des Services sociaux du Qu bec

Montreal City Mission

Old Brewery Mission

Ometz

Step-by-Step Child and Family Centre, Kahnawake

The Montreal Children's Hospital

The Montreal Children's Hospital—Adolescent Medicine



# Achievements by the Numbers

## Peer Reviewed Publications



*More than*

**300** journal articles,  
**7** books, and  
**99** book chapters

## **99** Research seminars hosted in total in the past 12 years

with presentations by Canadian researchers and international scholars from the U.S.A., Switzerland, Ireland, Palestine, Sweden, Germany, and China.



## **31** Travel grants provided for CRCF student members

to attend training and conferences around the world, including **25** cities, **11** countries in **5** continents (Asia, Africa, Europe, North America and South America).

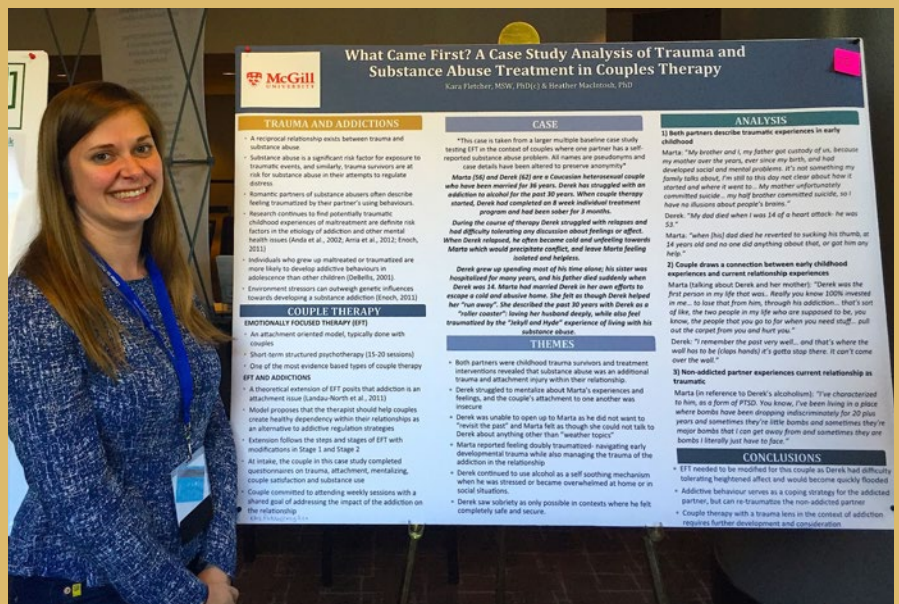
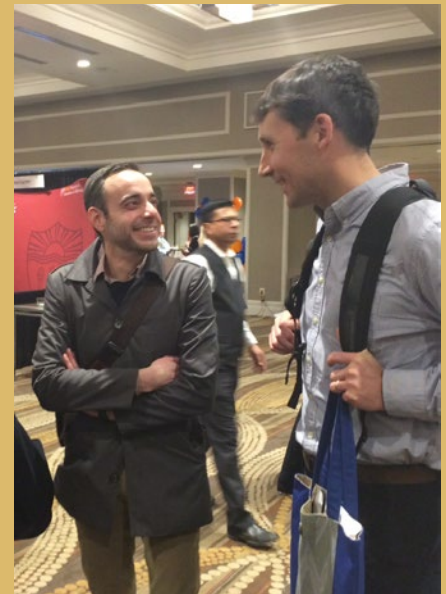
## **46** Training events organized



## Internal Publications

Monthly Newsletter,  
**17** issues of In the Know,  
**17** issues of On the Radar,  
**300** freely accessible  
journal article summaries





## What Came First? A Case Study Analysis of Trauma and Substance Abuse Treatment in Couples Therapy

Kara Fletcher, MEd, PhD(c) & Heather Macdonald, PhD

TRAUMA AND ADDICTIONS	CASE	ANALYSIS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A reciprocal relationship exists between trauma and substance abuse.</li> <li>Substance abuse is a significant risk factor for exposure to traumatic events, and similarly, trauma survivors are at risk for substance abuse in their attempts to regulate distress.</li> <li>Research partners of substance abusers often describe feeling traumatized by their partner's using behaviors.</li> <li>Research continues to find potentially traumatic childhood experiences of maltreatment are salient risk factors in the etiology of addiction and other mental health issues (Smith et al., 2002; Arria et al., 2012; Enoch, 2013).</li> <li>Individuals who grew up maltreated or traumatized are more likely to develop addictive behaviors in adolescence than other children (DeBellis, 2003).</li> <li>A theoretical extension of EFT posits that addiction is an attachment issue (Lindou-Nurth et al., 2012).</li> <li>Model proposes that the therapist should help couples create healthy dependency within their relationships as an alternative to addictive regulation strategies.</li> <li>Extension follows the steps and stages of EFT with modifications in Stage 1 and Stage 2.</li> <li>At issue, the couple in this case study completed questionnaires on trauma, attachment, mentalizing, couple satisfaction and substance use.</li> <li>Couple committed to attending weekly sessions with a shared goal of addressing the impact of the addiction on the relationship.</li> </ul>	<p>"This case is taken from a larger multiple baseline case study testing EFT in the context of couples where one partner has a self-reported substance abuse problem. All names and pseudonyms and case details have been altered to preserve anonymity."</p> <p>Marta (26) and Derek (32) are a Caucasian heterosexual couple who have been married for 10 years. Derek has struggled with an addiction to alcohol for the past 10 years. When couple therapy started, Derek had completed an 8-week individual treatment program and had been sober for 3 months.</p> <p>During the course of therapy Derek struggled with relapses and had difficulty tolerating any discussion about feelings or affect. When Derek relapsed, he often became cold and unfeeling towards Marta which would precipitate conflict, and leave Marta feeling isolated and hopeless.</p> <p>Derek grew up spending most of his time alone; his sister was hospitalized for many years, and his father died suddenly when Derek was 14. Marta had married Derek in her own efforts to escape a cold and abusive home. She felt as though Derek helped her "run away," she described the past 10 years with Derek as a "roller coaster," losing her husband deeply, while also feeling traumatized by the "high and low" experience of living with his substance abuse.</p>	<p>1) Both partners describe traumatic experiences in early childhood.</p> <p>Marta: "My brother and I, my father got custody of us, because my mother was the years, ever since my birth, and had developed social and mental problems. It's not something my family talks about. I'm still to this day not clear about how it started and where it went to. My mother unfortunately committed suicide... my half brother committed suicide, so I have no illusions about people's secrets."</p> <p>Derek: "My dad died when I was 14 of a heart attack. He was 54."</p> <p>Marta: "When [his] dad died he overreacted to sucking his thumb, at 14 years old and no one did anything about that, or got him any help."</p> <p>2) Couple draws a connection between early childhood experiences and current relationship experiences.</p> <p>Marta (talking about Derek and her mother): "Derek was the first person in my life that was, really you know 100% invested in me... his love that I got from him, through his addiction... that's sort of like, the two people in my life who are supposed to be, you know, the people that you go to for when you need stuff... pull out the carpet from you and hurt you."</p> <p>Derek: "I remember the past very well... and that's where the wolf has to be (claps hands) it's gotta stop there. It can't come over the wall."</p> <p>3) Non-addicted partner experiences current relationship as traumatic.</p> <p>Marta (in reference to Derek's alcoholism): "I've characterized to him, as a form of PTSD. You know, I've been living in a place where bombs have been dropping indiscriminately for 20-plus years and sometimes they're little bombs and sometimes they're major bombs that I can get away from and sometimes they're bombs I literally just have to face."</p>
<p><b>COUPLE THERAPY</b></p> <p><b>EMOTIONALLY FOCUSED THERAPY (EFT)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An attachment-oriented model, typically done with couples.</li> <li>Short-term structured psychotherapy (15-20 sessions).</li> <li>One of the most evidence-based types of couple therapy.</li> </ul> <p><b>EFT AND ADDICTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A theoretical extension of EFT posits that addiction is an attachment issue (Lindou-Nurth et al., 2012).</li> <li>Model proposes that the therapist should help couples create healthy dependency within their relationships as an alternative to addictive regulation strategies.</li> <li>Extension follows the steps and stages of EFT with modifications in Stage 1 and Stage 2.</li> <li>At issue, the couple in this case study completed questionnaires on trauma, attachment, mentalizing, couple satisfaction and substance use.</li> <li>Couple committed to attending weekly sessions with a shared goal of addressing the impact of the addiction on the relationship.</li> </ul>	<p><b>THEMES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both partners were childhood trauma survivors and treatment interventions revealed that substance abuse was an additional trauma and attachment injury within their relationship.</li> <li>Derek struggled to mentalize about Marta's experiences and feelings, and the couple's attachment to one another was insecure.</li> <li>Derek was unable to open up to Marta as he did not want to "revisit the past" and Marta felt as though she could not talk to Derek about anything other than "weather topics."</li> <li>Marta reported feeling doubly traumatized, navigating early developmental trauma while also managing the trauma of the addiction in the relationship.</li> <li>Derek continued to use alcohol as a self-soothing mechanism when he was stressed or became overwhelmed at home or in social situations.</li> <li>Derek saw sobriety as only possible in contexts where he felt completely safe and secure.</li> </ul>	<p><b>CONCLUSIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EFT needed to be modified for this couple as Derek had difficulty tolerating negative affect and would become quickly flooded.</li> <li>Addictive behaviour serves as a coping strategy for the addicted partner, but can re-traumatize the non-addicted partner.</li> <li>Couple therapy with a trauma lens in the context of addiction requires further development and consideration.</li> </ul>

# Our Signature Events: 12 years in the making

## 2005

With the **ALVA FOUNDATION's** endowment fund, CRCF is invigorated and Dr. Nico Trocmé is appointed as the Director of the centre.

## 2007

With two prestigious **CANADIAN FOUNDATION FOR INNOVATION FUNDS** awarded, the **CANADIAN CHILD WELFARE DATA LAB** and several laboratories are set up and equipped.

## 2009

The **CANADIAN CHILD WELFARE RESEARCH PORTAL (CWRP)** is created and launched to provide access to up-to-date research on Canadian child welfare programs and policies.



## 2006

As a fast-growing research centre, we house 29 members and staffs in the centre.

## 2008

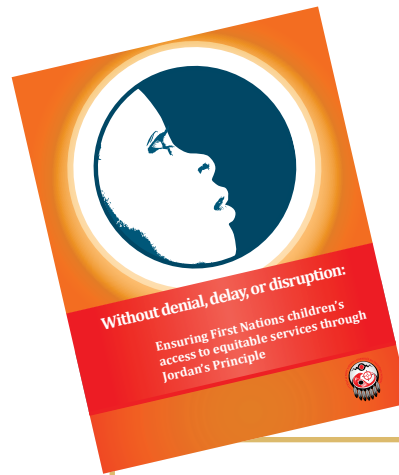
A generous ten-year grant from the **THE ROYAL BANK OF CANADA** permits the creation of the RBC Children's Services Research & Training Program at the CRCF.

## 2010

The nationwide **2008 CANADIAN INCIDENCE STUDY REPORT** on child abuse and neglect is released.







**2011**

First release of the provincial report on **CHILD PROTECTION SERVICE TRAJECTORIES IN QUEBEC (GFISC)** tracking over 400,00 children who have Youth Protection Services over the past 12 years.

**2013**

The CRCF is home to 66 members and four research labs on child welfare research.

**2015**

The **JORDAN'S PRINCIPAL** Working Group report, "Without denial, delay, or disruption: Ensuring First Nations children's access to equitable services through Jordan's Principle", is released.

**2017**

The CRCF is proudly sponsoring the **6TH CONFERENCE OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR CHILD INDICATORS**.

**2012**

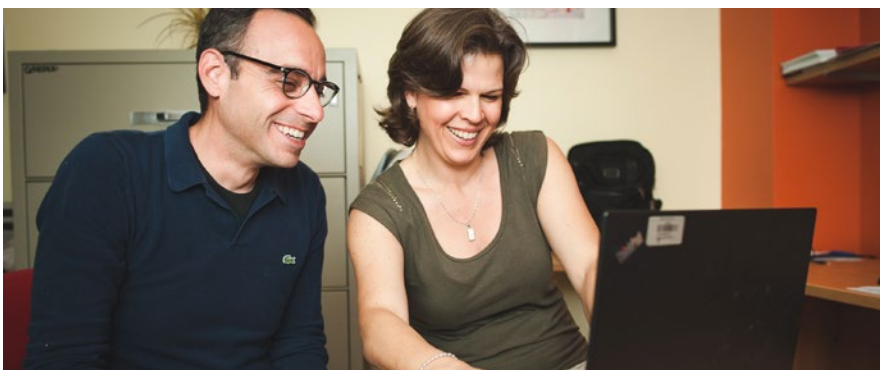
The **SSHRC PARTNERSHIP GRANT – BUILDING RESEARCH CAPACITY** with First Nations and Mainstream Youth Protection Services in Quebec is launched.

**2014**

Dr. Delphine Collin-Vézina is appointed as the new Director of the CRCF.

**2016**

Partnership with the **LOVE OF READING FOUNDATION** is in full action to promote childhood literacy research and programming targeting at-risk communities.







## Director's Closing Message

*Reflecting back on 12 years of research produced in CRCF, I am deeply proud and impressed by how meaningful and impactful our work has been within academia, our community and beyond. I am looking forward to productive and stimulating new endeavours that will further improve the well-being and strengths of children and families facing adversity and challenges. As Frederick Douglass, abolitionist and statesman, cleverly stated: “It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.” Hence, we hope our work can continue supporting prevention initiatives, early intervention, specialized services and effective policies to create positive changes in vulnerable populations.*



#### **EDITORIAL TEAM**

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p.2-8 & p.22-23

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