



Getting Ready for **Inclusion** Today

**Annual Report 2022/2023**

# A MESSAGE FROM G.R.I.T.

## ON BEHALF OF OUR PRESIDENT

Dear G.R.I.T. Friends,

With this being my first opportunity to communicate directly to you in my role as President of G.R.I.T., I thought it was important to use this letter as a means of reflecting not only on the last year but also more generally on my experience working with G.R.I.T. over the last three and a half years. Joining the GRIT Board of Directors in February 2020, I witnessed firsthand the strength, resiliency and compassion that makes G.R.I.T. such an incredible organization. While COVID tested G.R.I.T., our staff and the families we serve, I believe that we emerged from the pandemic stronger than ever. As an organization, it renewed our commitment to working closely together as a team, to actively listening to one another, and, above all, to ensure that we are consistently furthering our common goal of building a program that reflects our vision: that every child deserves the right to achieve their full potential. I believe that our success in these respects is best demonstrated through the trust-based relationships we have developed with the children we serve and their families. For this, I am tremendously grateful to the hard work of the G.R.I.T. Staff and the leadership of Paula Carby, our Executive Director.

This year, G.R.I.T. has continued its mission of providing high-quality individualized educational programming to the children we serve, underpinned by our "learning through play philosophy" and the belief that every child has the right to participate in all settings. In recognition of the fact that children learn at their own pace, we continue to offer an extensive variety of programming options to ensure we are responsive to children's diverse learning needs, capabilities, learning styles, dispositions and backgrounds. This year, we piloted a new program at G.R.I.T., Junior Kindergarten, which is designed to give children an opportunity to expand their love of learning and curiosity about the world, while creating meaningful relationships. The program offers children the chance to learn, laugh and grow in a nurturing and supportive environment while preparing them for independence in their next educational journey. The feedback we have received regarding this pilot program has been extremely positive, making me confident that this program will be a focal point of our organization for years to come.

On behalf of the Board, I am very proud of what G.R.I.T. has accomplished and never cease to look forward to what lies ahead.

Michael Barrett



## ABOUT G.R.I.T.

G.R.I.T. Calgary believes that the home and the community are natural learning environments. An individualized education/therapy program will be developed for your child by the education/therapy team and implemented by a child development specialist. Program time can occur within the home, a community preschool, a daycare program or an educational setting in the community. The goal of community-based programming is to facilitate integration and provide the opportunity for a child to live, learn and grow within various natural settings.





## OUR **VISION** AND **BELIEFS**

Every child deserves the right to achieve their full potential. We provide an early education program that is tailored to a child's individual needs with opportunities to experience inclusion and full participation in their home, school and community setting.

**We believe** that you, the parents, need to be provided with flexible program options that cater to your child's individual needs including time in home, in the community and access to specialized programs.

**We believe** that your child will benefit from the Consultative Model, which involves consistent therapy and education provided by a Child Development Specialist. They work as part of a team with teachers and therapists who establish, model and monitor these strategies for the Child Development Specialist and your family.

**We believe** that a positive and successful transition into the school system requires support and advocacy from a highly experienced education/therapy team working together with the families.

# PROGRAMS @ OUR LEARNING CENTRE

## GROSS MOTOR GROUP

Instructed by the physiotherapists, it provides an opportunity for children to participate with peers in activities that promote muscle strengthening, improve balance and coordination, introduce turn taking and gross motor games in a fun environment.

## IET (INTEGRATED EDUCATION & THERAPY) GROUP

This group provides engaging activities focused on the senses (visual, auditory, tactile and olfactory) for children who would benefit from a heightened focus or a gradual exposure to sensory input. The group seeks to provide a variety of experiences and methods on how to adapt craft, exploration of items, practical life skills and fun to both the child and to the DS. A key component of this group is the TAC PAC program. This program was developed in the UK. It combines sensory input with music to prompt communication, social interaction, sensory, neurological and emotional development.

## S.T.E.P (Social Therapy Education Program)

Our S.T.E.P. program offers children who are not attending preschool a chance to be exposed to a classroom environment. The focus of this group is to promote social communication as well as develop independence with classroom routines and daily tasks. Themed crafts, circle time and sensory exploration allow the students to engage with each other in a structured environment to develop positive relationships.

## JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN

Our Junior Kindergarten program is an opportunity for children to expand their love of learning and curiosity about the world, while creating meaningful relationships with others. This program is overseen by a Certificated Teacher and supported by Child Development Specialists. It offers a small class size with a maximum of 12 students, which allows for opportunities to optimize each child's learning and development. A Speech Language Pathologist and an Occupational Therapist visit the class regularly to support children in reaching their individualized goals. The program offers children the chance to learn, laugh and grow, in a nurturing and supportive environment, while preparing them for independence in their educational journey.

# WORDS FROM OUR FAMILIES

"We have been with GRIT for 14 months now and the program has been very beneficial to our son's early development. The skill, dedication and enthusiasm of the Child Development Specialists has been instrumental to allow our child to learn alongside his peers, with the goal of entering Grade 1 next year. The team of professionals at GRIT have maintained great communication with us and applied their programming to best meet the needs of our child. We feel very fortunate to be with GRIT knowing that we have the best team of people continuously developing his skills. Thank you GRIT!"

"Our daughter is in her third year with GRIT and we couldn't be more proud of the progress she has made. Everyone from administration to therapists to her development specialist goes above and beyond to support her where she is while also challenging her to reach new goals. The improvements she has made in all areas - social, language, gross motor and overall confidence are more than we could have hoped for. Her team makes sure she is set up for success at school and at home. Her development specialist who works with her daily, is truly an incredible individual. We knew with the right support, which GRIT provides, she could achieve so much."

"The other day our daughter said "preschool is my favourite thing in the whole wide world" and we think that says everything."

"My son has been with GRIT for the past few years and it has been life-changing. The progress he's made is unbelievable and our GRIT team have become like family. It has been amazing to see him thrive not only in the school environment but also in everyday life. He may face a future of challenges, but the confidence and skills he's developing will undoubtedly set him up for success. I am incredibly grateful for our team and experience with GRIT, it will be bittersweet come graduation day. Thank you!"



# SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT SHOUTOUT

## TOY LENDING LIBRARY

Here at G.R.I.T. we pride ourselves on having our own personal toy lending library. With a revolving amount of toys that we provide our students in our programs and those in the community with.

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## SENSORY ROOM

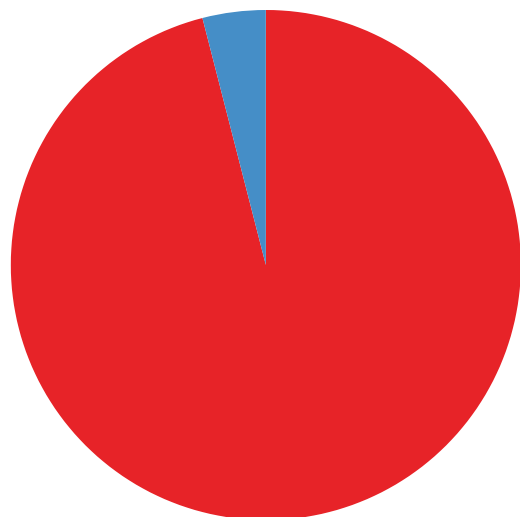
A room designed to support children in their learning and development through their exploration of a unique environment that provides opportunities for stimulation of sensory system, modulation of emotions and motivations to engage in learning and therapy activities.



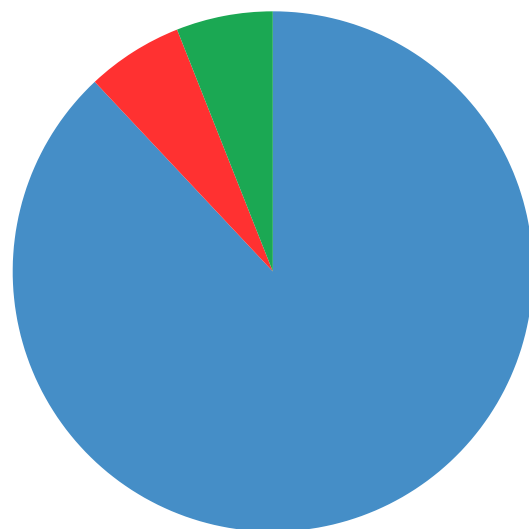


# 2022/23 Financials

## Revenue:



## Expenses:





# Our Years Highlights...



Thank you to everyone who came together in support of G.R.I.T. Calgary Society for our Fundraising Gala, and helping us raise \$34,000!

Including a selection of fidget toys and noise-cancelling headphones!



Thank you to everyone who has continued to support G.R.I.T. throughout the 2023 year!



# Our Board of Directors

**President:**

Michael Barrett - Lawyer

**Vice President:**

Michele Monteith - Realtor

**Secretary/Treasurer:**

Carolyn Olson - HR Advisor

**Director:**

Lana Barrett - Master of Library and Information  
Science

Richard Lefebvre - Professional Engineer

# **A Very Special 'Thank You'...**

**G.R.I.T. Calgary Society would not be the program it is today without the continued support of so many individuals and companies**

**Telsec**

**Riverwest Therapy Collective**

**Red Seal Dining**

**ChairFlair**

**J & L Supply Co.**

**Carlene & Don Harland**

**Michelle & Dave Holkestad**

**Calgary Childrens Foundation**

**Dakota Comfort and Design**

**Paradise Leisure Products**

**Global Calgary**

**Occasional Notes**

**SMILE - therapy for kids**

**Village Ice Cream**

**milk jar Candle Co.**

**J & B Music Therapy**

**Cherrington Sawers**

**Sue McDermott & Dave Taylor**

**Alim & Tazz Devani**

**Friends and Family of G.R.I.T.**



Getting Ready for **Inclusion** Today

Phone number: (403) 215-2444

Fax: (403) 215-2448



@g.r.i.t.calgarysociety

Address: #117 4615 112th Ave. S.E.

Calgary, Alberta, T2C 5J3

Email: [info@gritcalgarysociety.com](mailto:info@gritcalgarysociety.com)



/gritcalgarysociety

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