

A photograph of a man with a beard and mustache, wearing a dark blue long-sleeved shirt, holding a young child with brown hair on his shoulders. The child is wearing a yellow and black striped long-sleeved shirt and is smiling and looking upwards. The background is a bright, sunny outdoor setting with green foliage. The text '2024 Annual Report' is overlaid on the left side of the image.

2024

Annual Report



KARA Family Resource Centre



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"You gave my family a sense of belonging and support when we needed it most. Thank you KARA!"

-KARA Client



Welcome to KARA

KARA Family Resource Centre achieved remarkable success in 2024! Our organization experienced continued growth in programming and service delivery, expanded outreach locations, and increased community engagement. Awareness of KARA grew significantly, reaching new clients, local businesses, service providers, funders, donors, sponsors, and all levels of government.

Amid this growth, we made significant progress on key projects outlined in our 2024-2027 strategic plan. We assessed and enhanced our social media presence to strengthen stakeholder engagement. Our refreshed logo now reflects a bold brand identity aligned with KARA's mission. We also developed a service delivery model to guide long-term program planning and implementation. Additionally, we formalized our organizational values, embedding them into our culture and interactions with clients, partners, and the community.

A major milestone was the hiring of a dedicated Fund Development Manager. This new role has greatly expanded our capacity to secure funding, attract donors and sponsors, and elevate KARA's community presence.

Perhaps our most significant development was the sale of KARA's main building, which we had owned since 1991. This strategic decision enhanced our financial resilience and positioned the organization for long-term sustainability. Supported by a lease-back agreement, this transition ensures KARA will continue delivering place-based programming in northeast Edmonton.

I extend my deepest gratitude to our incredible employees and volunteers. Their dedication, passion, and hard work have been instrumental in KARA's growth and success. Together, we continue to make a lasting impact in our community

Darby Wilkinson
Executive Director





Message from the Chair

2024 was a transformative year for KARA! Alongside the organization’s growth in programming and community engagement, the Board of Directors made significant strides in strengthening our governance and strategic direction.

To support KARA’s evolving needs, we welcomed six talented new Board members and in doing so, expanded our collective expertise and perspectives. In May of this year, the Board approved a comprehensive 2024-2027 strategic plan which will guide our efforts to enhance service delivery and long term sustainability. Additionally, we modernized our bylaws in March to ensure alignment with our mission and best governance practices.

Recognizing the importance of clear roles and accountability, the Board developed detailed job descriptions and committee terms of reference. These foundational tools will help us maintain effective oversight and collaboration. We also partnered closely with the Fund Development team to co-plan KARA’s 40th anniversary celebration, strengthening relationships with donors, sponsors and community partners.

Looking ahead, the Board remains dedicated to supporting KARA’s growth and success. With the continued passion and hard work of the staff and volunteers, KARA is well positioned to provide essential services that empower families across northeast Edmonton.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I extend heartfelt thanks to our community for your unwavering support. Together, we are building a future where every family has the opportunity to thrive.

Cameron Van De Walle
Board Chair

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair	Cameron Van De Walle
Vice Chair	Jessica Griffin
Treasurer	Janet Horton
Secretary	Stephanie Brown
Director	Amanda Au
Director	Tyler Casavant
Director	Hersharon Sandhu
Director	Cindy Siu
Director	Luke Skaarup
Director	Katrina Tan

VISION

Empowered communities with resilient families.

MISSION

Championing a brighter future for families and communities through supportive programs and services that are rooted in education, connection and acceptance.

VALUES

KARA IS:	Accepting
Compassionate	Resilient
Playful	Committed

In 2024, KARA staff, board of directors, volunteers, and community stakeholders came together to develop a new logo and brand that truly reflect our clients, community, and mission. This transformation was a key milestone in our strategic plan, ensuring that our visual identity aligns with the values and services that make KARA a trusted support system for families.



Our goal was to craft a brand that resonates with the families and the community we serve while allowing each individual to see their own story within KARA. A heartfelt thank you to Susanna Woudstra and Evelyn Dotimas for their expertise, creativity, and dedication in bringing this vision to life. We are excited to move forward with a fresh look that will carry KARA into the future, reflecting the strength of our community.

NEW LOGO & BRAND



FAMILY
RESOURCE
CENTRE



IKEA PARTNERSHIP

IKEA generously partnered with us to help furnish and enhance our KARA Too location, making it more inviting, functional, and accessible.

Their team even came out to assist with the setup, ensuring the space is welcoming for the families we serve.

"As a newcomer to Canada, I felt overwhelmed trying to find support for my family. KARA's Family Navigator welcomed us with kindness, guided us through resources, and helped us feel at home in our new community. Their support made all the difference!"

-KARA Client



PROGRAMS

This year, KARA expanded programs to two new sites at Balwin and Kensington Community Leagues. We provided 6,000 meals and snacks, distributed 180 hampers, and supplied 430 bus tickets to support families. Through the After the Bell program, we delivered 30 food hampers per week for 8 weeks, ensuring children had access to nutritious meals during critical times.

Our team spent the year visiting six EPL libraries twice a month, reaching over 400 participants and connecting them to KARA and other resources. We also dedicated 150+ hours to building robots and exploring STEM with girls in the community. Through our cooking programs, kids prepared 2,000 servings to share with their families. We also read 350+ new book titles with families through Books & Bites, Story Sprouts, and Family Book Club.

Additionally, we strengthened relationships with local schools, health services, and social support networks, collaborating to share resources, knowledge, and support—ensuring families have access to the best tools and opportunities available.

Stasia Quillian

Program Manager

3700

INDIVIDUALS
SERVED

1500

PROGRAM
HOURS

1530

COMMUNITY
REFERRALS

Connecting families with the right supports, building relationships with community organizations to guide and empower them toward their goals.

"My son absolutely loves the Kids in the Kitchen program! Not only has it helped him learn new cooking skills, but it has also given him confidence and a sense of independence. He gets so excited to share what he he's made and try new foods at home."

-KARA Client



COMMUNITY



Kickoff to Summer BBQ

Highlights included a free community bbq, face painting, petting zoo, balloon art, carnival games, and agency row!

1650

COMMUNITY
MEMBERS
ATTENDED

Kicks for Kids

Our annual Kicks for Kids event empowers children as they go back to school with a new pair of shoes that THEY PICKED OUT!

368

KIDS RECEIVED
NEW SHOES



Celebrating Families

From family dinners, Father's Day, Mother's Day, and other holidays, we loved celebrating families in 2024!

6000

MEALS & SNACKS
SERVED

More 2024 Highlights!

National Indigenous Peoples Day with FRN Network
Hullabaloo at the HUB
Belvedere Family Day Spaghetti Dinner
Lead Community Engagement Sessions
M.E. LaZerte Career Day Presentation
Heroes Day Out & Winterfest





VOLUNTEERS



This year, our volunteers generously gave over *1,000 more hours* than last year! We proudly welcomed 42 new volunteers, growing our team to an incredible 130 dedicated individuals who show up with passion, energy, and heart.

With this amazing growth, we've expanded volunteer roles to include custodial support and COBS Bread drivers, ensuring every corner of KARA thrives. But beyond the tasks, our volunteers bring something even more powerful: connection. They've built friendships, uplifted families, and strengthened our community in ways we never imagined.

We were also thrilled to welcome corporate teams from ScotiaBank, ATB Financial and Ikea, proving that when people unite for a shared mission, magic happens. To every volunteer—your time, dedication, and kindness are changing lives. You are the heart of KARA!

Nikki Kirk

People & Culture Manager

2539

VOLUNTEER
HOURS

130


VOLUNTEERS

Roles

Board of Directors, Bingo,
Reception, Programs,
Baby-Cuddling,
Yard Clean-Up,
Event Support,
Custodial,
COBS Bread driver.

\$60K+

ESTIMATED
\$ VALUE



"KARA is such a warm and welcoming place. Volunteering here has allowed me to meet so many wonderful people and be part of something bigger. I love knowing that my time and effort contribute to supporting families."

-KARA Volunteer





FINDING STRENGTH THROUGH SUPPORT: JOY'S STORY



When Joy first walked through the doors of KARA Family Resource Centre, she had no idea what to expect. A friend had recommended she visit, sensing that Joy needed support as she navigated an overwhelming new reality. “I really didn’t know what KARA did,” she recalls. “A friend told me that I needed to come here, and I am glad I did.”

Just months before, Joy’s world was turned upside down. Her husband, the primary provider for their family, had passed away suddenly. He had always handled the finances—paying the bills, managing the mortgage, keeping everything in order. Left to figure it all out on her own, she found herself lost. To make things even more challenging, Joy had recently been diagnosed with a mobility disability, which made working outside the home impossible. Now, she was solely responsible for raising and supporting her two young children, navigating grief, financial struggles, and an uncertain future all at once.

Working with a Family Navigator, Joy received guidance on filling out important forms, supportive referrals to other resources and securing essential resources like bus tickets and food support. Every Monday, she stops by to pick up fresh bread donated by COBS. When winter approached, KARA provided warm coats, snow pants, and mittens for her and her children—an expense she couldn’t afford as they rapidly outgrew last year’s gear.

“I feel like there are so many barriers in the systems in place, and I get bounced back and forth with no resolution,” Joy shares. “Sometimes, I would just come into KARA to talk with someone.”

Beyond the practical help, KARA has given Joy something even more meaningful—a sense of community. At first, she found it difficult to open up, but over time, she built connections. Attending classes helped her step out of isolation, and she and her children have made friends along the way. “We even see other families from KARA at the park in the summer!” she says with a smile.

Through KARA’s programs, Joy has learned to manage a budget, pay bills, and navigate the financial world that once seemed so foreign to her. “I didn’t know what I needed to know until I needed help,” she admits. Parenting classes like Parenting with a Purpose have been a valuable source of support. Meanwhile, her children have found joy in programs like Kids in the Kitchen, where they learn to cook, make friends, and bring home a meal for the family. “They LOVE that program,” she says. “It’s their favorite.”

When asked where she would be without KARA, Joy’s answer is simple: “I would be lost. They have really helped me. I am able to get out, find resources, and realize I am not the only person dealing with these hard things.”

Her journey is far from easy, but she remains determined. “I am trying. This is my current situation, I have to live with it, and I am doing the best I can,” she says. “I can’t say it’s not tough, but it gets easier.”

To those considering supporting KARA, Joy wants them to know the real impact their generosity makes. “Your gift impacts lives. You are helping parents as they navigate real struggles and supporting us when we don’t know where to go,” she says. “KARA has become part of our community.”

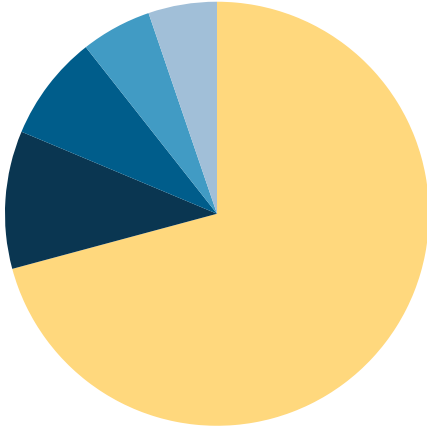
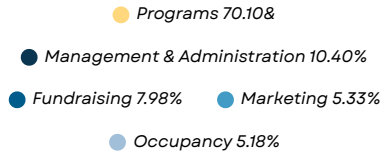
Joy is strong, resilient, and full of love for her children. She is a fighter, navigating life’s challenges with determination and grace. With KARA by her side, she is building a future for her family—one step at a time.



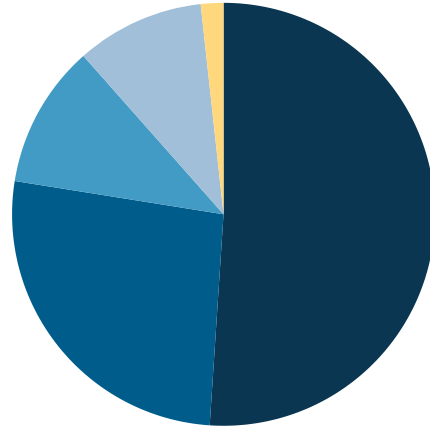
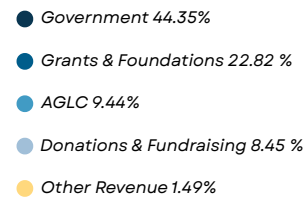
FINANCIAL STATEMENT



EXPENSES



REVENUE



This year marked an exciting milestone for KARA with the addition of our first full-time Fund Development Manager, significantly expanding our fundraising efforts and resulting in a 126% increase in overall fundraising revenue from 2023. We worked strategically to secure new funding opportunities, increasing our grant applications by over 50%, with great success. Notably, we received grants from the Stollery Charitable Foundation, Enbridge, Realtors Community Foundation, The Allard Foundation, & the Butler Family Foundation, providing critical funding to support our programs and operations.

We strengthened community partnerships and saw incredible Gift-in-Kind donations, including IKEA furnishing KARA Too, Kunitz Shoes supporting Kicks for Kids, and EIA donating free advertising space. We also grew event sponsorships for our Community BBQ, Kicks for Kids, and 40th Anniversary celebrations, allowing us to expand programming and outreach.

A major focus this year was community engagement, as we worked to build awareness and connections. We joined NEBA(North Edmonton Business Association), attended Edmonton Chamber events, and networked with over 1,000 business associates, further solidifying KARA's presence in the community. In December, we closed the year by celebrating KARA's 40th anniversary, bringing together supporters, partners, and donors.

With strong strategies, new partnerships, and increased funding, 2024 has set the stage for even greater impact in 2025, and we are excited to build on this momentum.



Jenna Sparrow

Fund Development Manager



"Before KARA, I struggled with emotional connection and structure. Now, I've grown personally, my family is stronger, and I've built meaningful community connections."

-KARA Client



WAYS TO SUPPORT



Sponsorships available for our Kick Off to Summer BBQ & Kicks for Kids Campaign.

For more information contact Jenna at:

jenna @kara-frc.ca

780.220.0885

DONATE TODAY!



VOLUNTEER



Looking for a meaningful way to give back.

Join the KARA Volunteer Team!

For more information contact Nikki at:

Nikki @kara-frc.ca

587-525-7280

LEARN MORE!



"KARA has been a lifeline for my family, providing support and connection that have truly made a difference in our lives!"

-KARA Client



THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS & SPONSORS



FAMILY
RESOURCE
CENTRE