



IMPACT REPORT 2020-21



Adoptive Families
Association of BC

The Davis family



Family

for every child.

About the Adoptive Families Association of BC

For more than 40 years, AFABC has promoted and supported adoption and permanency in BC. We find families for kids who need them. We support those families through the ups and downs of their lifelong journeys. And we help youth transition out of government care and into independent adulthood.

As a registered charity, AFABC relies on a range of funders—government, foundations, and individuals—to make our work possible. Without their contributions, we would not be able to provide services and support to the thousands of families who depend on AFABC every year. Because of the stability of their funding, when COVID hit, we were able to move quickly and efficiently into virtual service delivery, including COVID-responsive offerings.

AFABC also could not exist without the generous contributions of a wide range of volunteers. We are especially grateful to our volunteer Board of Directors, whose encouragement and oversight are essential to our ongoing success. In addition to donating their time, 100% of our Board members chose to make a financial contribution in 2020-21.

Board of Directors 2020-21 at March 31, 2021

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Jennifer Randall Nelson
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Strategic Advisor

Cynthia Dyson



2020 was a chaotic year, but we got through it **together**.

Photos (top left to bottom right): The Larocque family; the Mayeta Cumba family; the Carroll family; the Domonkos family; the Bell-Haldar family; the Frederick family; the Keno family; the Borkowski family; the Marshall family; the Turnbull family; the Fancott family; the Ho family; the Magnuson family; the Yuen family; the Ciccone family; the Kilpatrick family; the Pon family; the Claycamp family

These are the smiles that make our work worthwhile.



The Bunn family

A letter from our Board Chair and Executive Director

This year—the year of COVID—was the most challenging time many of us have ever experienced. At AFABC, we faced that challenge with a strong sense of purpose, and with the perseverance, adaptability, and resilience that is characteristic of our team, and the community we serve.

This year, the adoption and permanency community needed us as never before. We **accelerated our move to virtual service**, accessible across BC, and our community met us online. We also saw increased interest from the public in adoption and permanency. We believe the pandemic may have provided time for people to reflect and act on their interest in adopting. This is good news for BC's waiting kids.

We **embraced opportunities to share our strengths and resources** with other organizations. We know we have knowledge that can benefit not only adoptive families, but all the other kinds of families providing stability and permanency to kids. We were delighted, for instance, to offer our Safe Babies online course to several groups of foster parents, and we hope to do much more of this.



Merel Veldhuis
Board Chair



Anne Tower
Executive Director

In partnership with the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, we celebrated our Wendy's Wonderful Kids team's contribution to **an incredible milestone: 10,000 kids have been adopted** because of the efforts of child-specific recruiters across North America. We piloted our new Stepping Stones to Infinite Possibilities life skills curriculum with two partners, Archway Community Services and Easter Seals. These pilots were the first steps to building a high quality, provincially-approved program that can be offered at low cost to youth-serving organizations across BC. We have many other pilot projects on the go, as we explore new ways to provide more targeted recruitment, most-needed family support services, and stronger research to inform our work.

One of the biggest questions we ask ourselves at AFABC is what role we can and should play to support the welfare of Indigenous children, youth and families. It is **our sincere desire to contribute to reconciliation**, and we know we have a lot of listening and learning to do. We are most grateful to be guided by our friends at the Indigenous Perspectives Society, who have been working with our entire Board and staff to help us develop our cultural competency, and an informed path forward.

We continue to upgrade and streamline our technology and systems for the future, and prepare for re-accreditation through COA, an important endorsement of our organizational strength.

We're also preparing to revitalize our profile and expand our reach with **a new name, brand, and website** to reflect our service to a wider community, including permanency families of all kinds, and youth in and from government care. We look forward to engaging our stakeholders in this process in the year ahead.

We are fortunate to have all this good work powered by stable, ongoing funding from the Ministry of Children and Family Development, the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, other wonderful foundations and grantors, and individual donors whose lives we've touched (see page 23).

Thank you, from all of us at AFABC, and from all those we serve.



2020 was **tough**.

But we were **tougher**.

In 2020, we became math teachers and reading tutors. Our kitchens became science labs, the neighbourhood park the school gym. Messes were made, and sometimes cleaned up. When all else failed, we played in the mud. Through it all, AFABC families showed strength and compassion in the face of adversity. Every day, they made us proud to call ourselves champions and cheerleaders for the adoption and permanency community across BC. Throughout the pandemic, we drew our inspiration from them, and from the kids they love and nurture.

COVID was especially hard for nonprofits, **but AFABC didn't just survive COVID, we got stronger**. We pivoted and adapted and innovated and grew our capacity. **We pulled together as a team** in the face of much uncertainty, and are emerging from this challenging period with greater confidence.

Inquires about the Adopt BC Kids program doubled, and we doubled the number of adoption information sessions to accommodate this demand. Registrations for the 16-week Adoption Education Program **went up by 14%**. Over 300 new members joined one of our online support groups.

We **showed up for youth in and from care as never before**. Our AgedOut.com website exceeded 5,500 registered users—a 22%

increase—with almost 3000 users/month. Through this trusted platform, we provided young people with timely updates on enhanced government COVID supports as they were offered throughout the year. In partnership with the Children's Aid Foundation of Canada, we were able to disburse COVID emergency funding directly to over 230 young people.

2020 was a challenging year for many of us, but AFABC didn't just survive the past year, we thrived. **With an amazing group of supporters**—cherished donors, volunteers, partners and members—we continue to pursue our dream of family for every child.

Photos (top left to bottom right): the Konge family; the Peters-Ho family; the Tang family; the Comishin family; the Pakula family; the Hogg family; the McFadden family; the Bradley family; the Ladoski family



Waiting kids

Matching them with loving families

“You, quite possibly, have made all the difference for our family.... I cannot tell you how thankful I am for you and AFABC for all the support you provide for families in such exciting, yet stressful situations.”

- K., approved adoptive parent

Last year, AFABC helped families **find each other & grow together:**

- ✓ **851** inquiries to the Adopt BC Kids info Line
- ✓ **403** graduates of the Adoption Education Program
- ✓ **2,885** requests for support and information



26%

increase in online support group membership

27%

increase in requests for support and information

500

views of each “Ask the Expert” Facebook Live



Everyone has a story

Meet the Lafortune family

Laura and Joel's social worker had suggested other potential matches, but something about their sons' profile grabbed their attention: two brothers with mischievous grins, described as high-energy adventure seekers. "We were in the position to adopt two children and thought, 'Well, here they are!'"

Like many families built through adoption and permanency, big feelings, big questions, and trauma triggers are everyday things in the Lafortune home. But the best part of the journey has been watching their boys' confidence grow. Now 12 and 11, the boys walk tall and

speak their minds. The Lafortunes credit lots of counselling and plenty of shared activities for helping them stick to an everyday routine that allowed them to build the strong, resilient family unit they have today.

How has AFABC made a difference to your family?

"The online resources are invaluable, especially during COVID-19."

-Laura & Joel Lafortune

AFABC helps families like the Lafortunes navigate life's challenges together.

“Our facilitator was AMAZING! Funny and engaging, she obviously was knowledgeable about the material and presented it terrifically.”

-virtual AEP participant

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, AFABC **was able to move our programming online:**

- ✓ 9 online workshops, including **Safe Babies, Trauma-informed Parenting, and Teens & Tweens**
- ✓ 19 on-demand webinars, **available 24/7**
- ✓ **3 brand new, comprehensive resource guides**, including a new guide specifically for caregivers of LGBTQ+ youth

Education & Resources

Helping families thrive



54
education
programs to choose
from

36
virtual support sessions

1,583
total registrations
across all educational
programming

1,001

new users of
AgedOut.com

\$200k

in emergency COVID funding
dispersed to youth in care

\$8k

awarded in bursaries, to
help make post-secondary a
reality

\$10k

awarded in gift cards, to
help with life's everyday
costs

160

hours of lifeskills training per
youth

Every year, approximately 500 youth turn 19 and “age out” of government care in BC. AFABC helps them navigate a wide variety of supports through our comprehensive AgedOut.com website and Stepping Stones to Infinite Possibilities lifeskills training. Through the Howard Legacy Youth Fund Bursary and other bursaries, we help youth in and from care achieve their post-secondary dreams. And through our recruitment efforts, we find families for older youth in foster and other forms of government care.

Youth in and from government care *Preparing them for adulthood*



“I applied for [emergency COVID funding] while I was pregnant and I received it after I had my son. It was a life saver! It helped towards rent and groceries, diapers and baby wipes. It was such a relief to be able to stock up on the essentials.”

-AFABC COVID relief recipient



And then there were three

Meet the Franco Cea family

Alfredo and Nozomi's paths crossed when both started their studies at UBC. Despite the fact they were in different departments, they ended up in the same dorm for graduate students on UBC campus.

They adopted their son, M, through the Adopt BC Kids program when M was a toddler. They were told M was a shy, quiet child, who might experience speech delays. Today, the Franco Ceas have no concerns about M's development. "He doesn't stop [speaking]!" says mom Nozomi, laughing. Currently, the Franco Ceas are waiting to welcome their second child home through the Adopt BC Kids program.

How has AFABC made a difference to your family?

"I follow [AFABC] on Facebook and often there are some very interesting articles. For me, they are informative, but also I like to share them to tell my Facebook friends... yes, our family is adoptive, and here is a bit of information on how our family works."

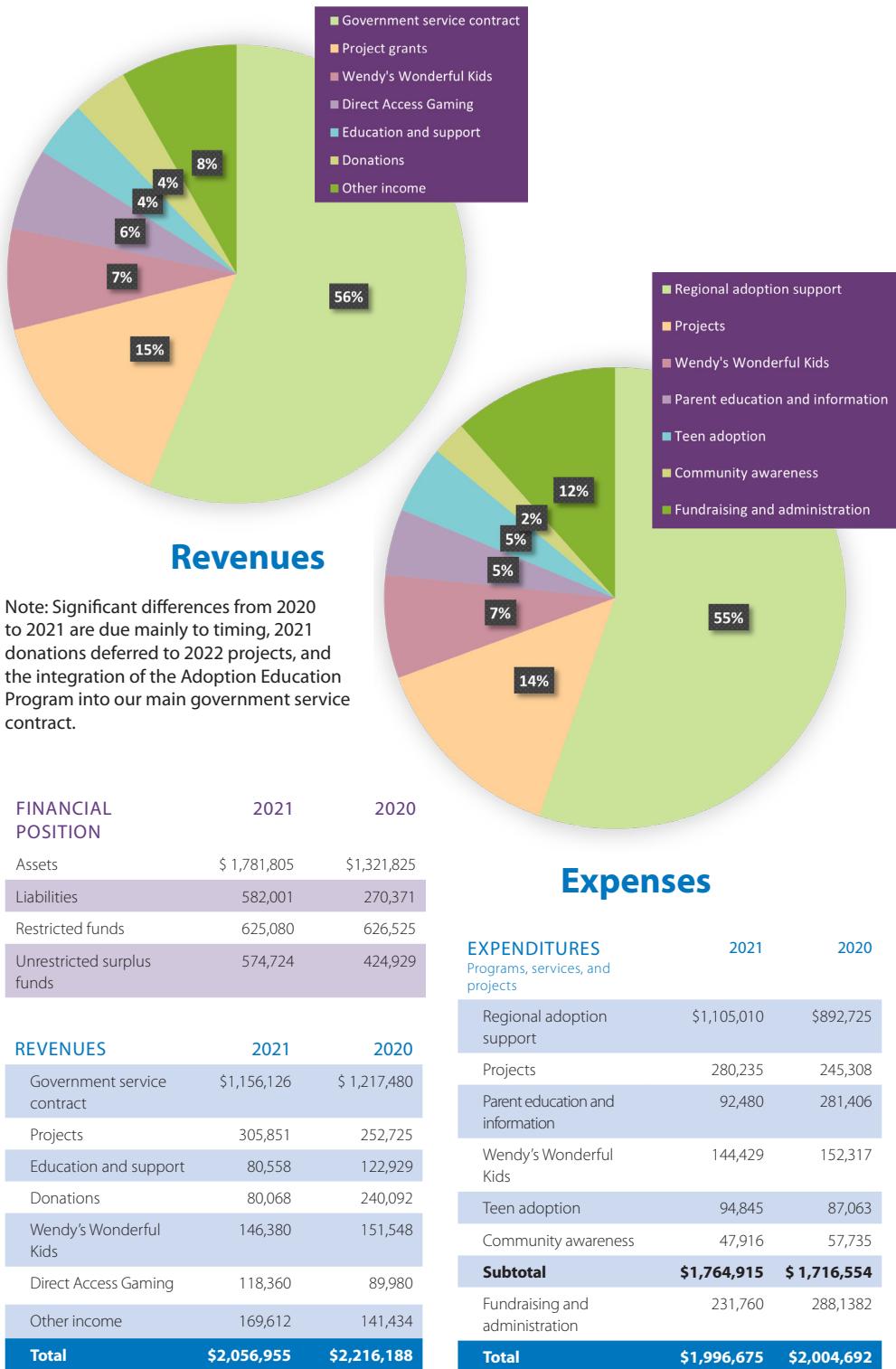
-Alfredo Franco Cea

AFABC helps families like the Franco Ceas build community.

Year-end financials



The Aldridge family



Our supporters



The Hogan family

Thank you to our family of supporters—individual donors, companies, foundations, and community partners—for your generous contributions this fiscal year. Because of you, we're closer to making the vision of a family for every child a reality.



Supported by the
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Make a difference in the lives of children and youth today at bcadoption.com/donate or contact Brianna at bbrashnyberg@bcadoption.com.

* Denotes AFABC Board members.

** Monthly Giving Club members.

We have done our best to include everyone who made a contribution between April 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021. We apologize for any errors and omissions and invite you to contact us with corrections.

Spirit Partners (\$100 - \$199)

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Xun Huang
Yuki Matsuno

Thank you to our many other donors—too numerous to list here—who gave gifts up to \$100. Every dollar helps!



The Nishi family



Adoptive Families
Association of BC

#200-7342 Winston St
Burnaby, BC V5A 2H1
1-877-ADOPT-07
Charity BN: 118777671RR0001

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