

## **NEWS RELEASE – Family & Community Support Services – Lamont County Region (FCSS) celebrates 20 years!**

**March 29, 2024 – LAMONT, AB:** Family & Community Support Services is a unique program that has been working in partnership between municipalities and the Alberta Government since 1966. It is in place to allow municipalities across the province to deliver preventative social programming at the community level.

On April 4, 2024, FCSS – Lamont County Region, celebrates its 20-year anniversary.

The FCSS family has grown over the years, and we are excited to reflect on how far services have come. Lamont County communities have positively grown and thrived with FCSS support during the past two decades.

In 2004, Lamont County announced its first provincial partnership to create an FCSS program to serve County residents. Shortly after, both the Town of Mundare and Village of Chipman signed a multi-municipality agreement to become part of the program and extend supports to include the town and village. In 2009, FCSS welcomed the Town of Bruderheim to the family, followed by the Village of Andrew in 2015, and the Town of Lamont in 2016.

“We are proud to celebrate this important milestone and look forward to working with our communities in the future to continue to support Lamont County individuals and families,” said FCSS Lamont County Region Board Chair, Carol Lynn Babiuk.

In addition to one-to-one support, FCSS provides a variety of programs and events that target social needs such as:

- Programs to assist seniors to age in community.
- Programs that teach empathy to young children.
- Programs that strengthen resilience and positive social interactions in youth.
- Community initiatives to address social needs such as Elder Abuse and Family Violence reduction and prevention.
- Volunteer support, recruitment, and appreciation.

This also includes countless initiatives and partnerships to identify and address local challenges, and to provide education and awareness. Throughout the years, the majority of FCSS’ programs were preventative in nature. Although FCSS outcomes for individuals are not immediately seen, statistical evidence shows that for every **dollar** spent on preventative programming, **seven dollars** is saved in future intervention services.

Municipalities generally are given some latitude on what programs and services they offer, and it is based on the unique needs of each community. One of the challenges is that FCSS looks very different in rural settings when compared to urban municipalities. For example, there can be limited access to provincial and federal service programs across rural Alberta, and in many cases, FCSS ends up being the only shop in town for residents to obtain the programs and services they need.

FCSS is overseen by an Advisory Board that includes Council representatives and local community members. Over the years, the FCSS Board has welcomed 28 contributing members to the family, with each individual bringing a unique perspective from their community and positive advocacy for social change.

“With direction from the FCSS Lamont County Region Advisory Board and supervision of FCSS – Lamont County Region, we continue to provide quality service and supports to our communities,” said Babiuk. “The local community has benefited from the many programs and assistance provided in the past 20 years.”

Lamont County FCSS has grown from an original staff of three, to over a dozen Coordinators, Facilitators and Assistants supervised by Lamont County’s Community Services Manager. The Community Services Manager works with local stakeholders, Lamont County Council and the FCSS Advisory Board to create, monitor and analyze programs and services within Lamont County and its participating municipalities.

The Department has also expanded over the years to include Lamont County’s Family Day Home Program and the Kalyna Family Resource Network (KFRN – Lamont County Region).

The collective impact of both past and present board members and staff from the past 20 years has shaped the quality and variety of services and programming available today throughout Lamont County and participating municipalities.

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**Media inquiries can be directed to:**

Jay Zaal,  
Communications Coordinator  
780-895-2233 Ext. 222  
[jay.z@lamontcounty.ca](mailto:jay.z@lamontcounty.ca) | [www.lamontcounty.ca/news](http://www.lamontcounty.ca/news)

**For more information related to FCSS:**

Sara Rindero,  
Community Services Manager  
780-895-2233 Ext. 217  
[sara.r@lamontcounty.ca](mailto:sara.r@lamontcounty.ca) |  
[facebook.com/FCSSLamontcountyregion](https://facebook.com/FCSSLamontcountyregion)  
[lamontcounty.ca/community-programming](http://lamontcounty.ca/community-programming)

