



# ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2024



**OUR VISION IS TO ENSURE THAT ALL  
YOUNG PEOPLE LIVE THEIR  
LIVES FREE OF PROBLEMATIC  
SUBSTANCE USE  
AND ADDICTION.**



**VISION**



90% OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH ADDICTION BEGAN USING SUBSTANCES AS TEENAGERS.



Statistics on youth, mental health and substance use continue to underscore the critical need for **targeted prevention and intervention strategies** that address substance use and associated mental health challenges among Canadian youth.



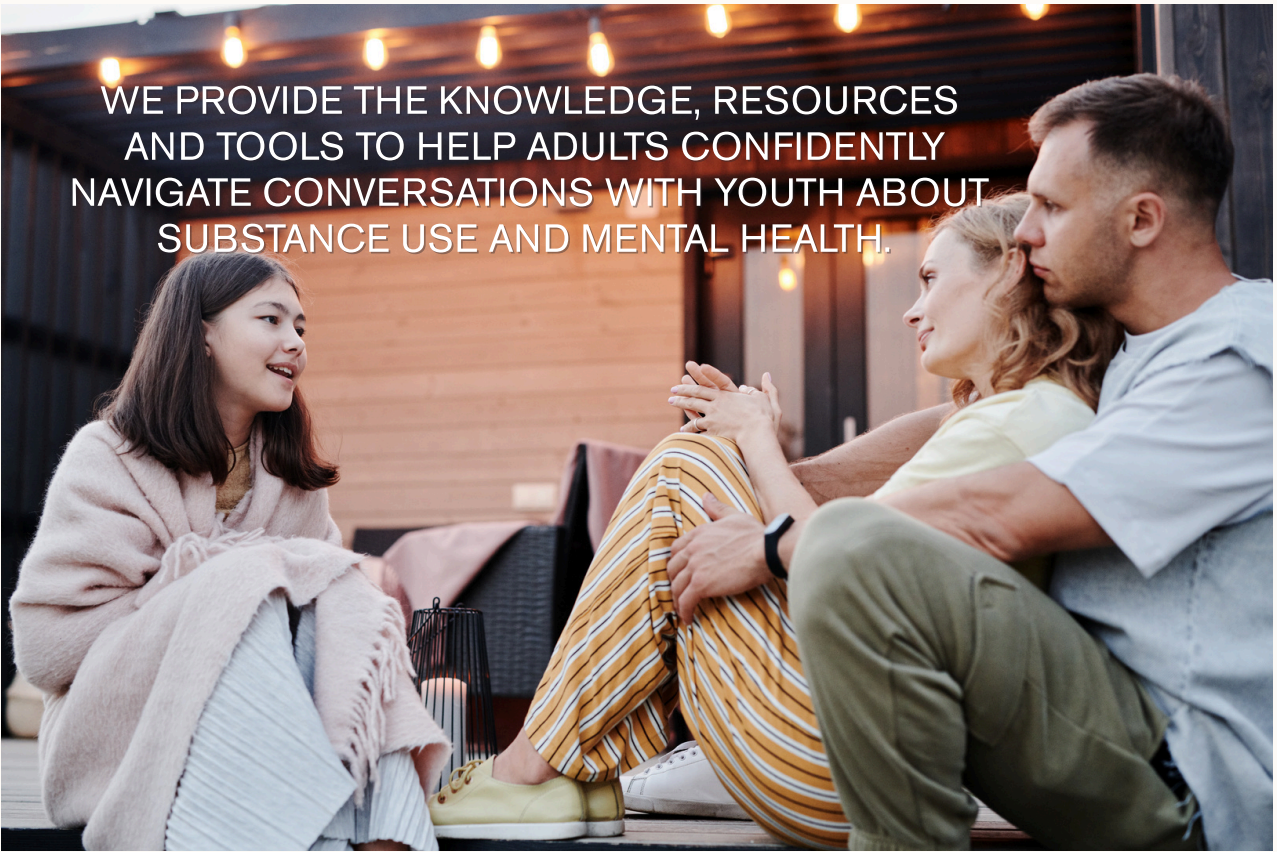
TEENS WHO USE CANNABIS ARE AT 11 TIMES HIGHER RISK OF DEVELOPING A PSYCHOTIC DISORDER.

## Empowering families - Transforming lives

The work we do facilitates informed, compassionate, and non-judgemental dialogue with youth and young adults about substance use to ensure young people have the right information to make healthy choices for their own mental and physical health.

**We are here to help.**

WE PROVIDE THE KNOWLEDGE, RESOURCES  
AND TOOLS TO HELP ADULTS CONFIDENTLY  
NAVIGATE CONVERSATIONS WITH YOUTH ABOUT  
SUBSTANCE USE AND MENTAL HEALTH.



Through a multifaceted approach, we serve as knowledge brokers, making evidence-based information on substances accessible and easier for families to process and understand.

Our website, parent helpline, community-based prevention trainings for families and professionals, and public awareness campaigns are all designed to provide neutral, non-judgmental, and compassionate support.

By equipping families and trusted adults who work with young people with clear, factual information and resources, we empower them to communicate effectively about substance use — engaging kids to develop the knowledge and confidence to make informed decisions for themselves as they grow.



IN 2023, STREET DRUGS BECAME  
THE LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH  
AMONG YOUTH AGED 10 TO 18 IN  
SOME PROVINCES, NOTABLY  
BRITISH COLUMBIA.

# WEBINARS/ LIVE PRESENTATIONS

**Transforming lives** with youth drug prevention information workshops.

Thanks to the support of key partners like BMO Bank of Montreal, the Slaight Family Foundation, the McCain Foundation, Odlum Brown and the Canada Post Community Foundation, DFK connects directly with local community organizations, school boards and health units to deliver webinars, live presentations and informational events to parents, health professionals and youth educators in communities across the country.

## REACHING PEOPLE WHEREVER THEY ARE

Over the year, we did **139** in person presentations, virtual webinars and special community events;

reaching **4727** parents, health care practitioners, teachers, social workers and public health students and providing them with relevant trainings on youth substance use prevention, resources and strategies for discussing substance use with young people.



**This year's presentation attendance rate represents a 7 fold increase in last year's attendance rate.**



*Very educative presentation. I learned about substance use, going from opioids to sedatives to stimulants, why people use them, effects, mortality rate.*

*Overall, I truly enjoyed the presentation and look forward to participating again.*

**DFK Webinar attendee.**

*The webinar gave me a clear picture between the contrast of different effects of several drugs and it will help me in my social service working career. The conversations were engaging, funny, informative and was not boring!*

**DFK Webinar attendee.**



**NON-MEDICAL USE OF  
SEDATIVES AMONG YOUTH IN  
GRADES 7-12 HAS QUADRUPLED.**



YOUNG PEOPLE (AGED 15 TO 24) ARE THE SEGMENT OF THE POPULATION WITH THE LARGEST INCREASE IN HOSPITAL CARE RELATED TO SUBSTANCE USE AND OVERDOSES IN THE COUNTRY.

# A ROBUST WEBSITE

An **essential platform** for accessible, evidence-based information and resources.

We provide the latest evidence-based resources on youth substance use, empowering parents and adult allies with the knowledge to address these challenges head-on.

Our comprehensive website, accessible on both desktop and mobile, offers neutral, non-judgmental information about substances and their effects on mental and physical health.

It also provides practical tools and strategies to help parents and other supportive adults start—and continue—meaningful conversations with young people about these important issues.

IN 2024, the website received **266,000 views**. **5,525** of our resources were downloaded.



# THE PARENT SUPPORT HUB

Offering families compassionate care when needed, at no cost.



The Parent Support Hub is the cornerstone of DFK's tangible support system, offering vital assistance to parents navigating their children's substance use and mental health challenges.

Powered by Telus Health, and made possible thanks to Power Corporation of Canada and the TD Ready Commitment, this free online chat and phone support service is available 24/7, providing families across the country with consistent, high-quality counselling services — ensuring they receive the help they need when they need it most.

## OUTCOMES

Parent Support Hub usage continues to increase.

**194** parents engaged in helpful chats and calls.

**47** parents received counselling support for addiction and mental wellness issues.



ONLY 1 IN 4 YOUTH EXPERIENCING SYMPTOMS OF A MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE WERE ABLE TO ACCESS SERVICES



# IMPACTFUL INITIATIVES

Working in collaboration with community partners to create safer environments for youth.

For over a decade, DFK has instigated key initiatives like the National Drug Drop-Off Campaign (NDD), designed to raise awareness about the importance of safely storing and disposing of medications, a simple act to prevent substance use by kids.

By educating families on the risks of using expired or non-prescribed medications and promoting proper disposal practices, DFK along with our NDD corporate partners are helping to prevent accidental poisonings and the non-medical use of prescription and OTC medications by kids, underscoring the importance of fostering safer home environments.

We are grateful for the incredible support of our committed partners, Rexall, the Health Products Stewardship Association, and Innovative Medicines Canada for the 2024 NDD Campaign.

We also thank the pharmacists and health professionals, media partners, police services, and our behind-the-scenes contributors - their commitment and participation play a vital role in making our initiatives impactful.



25% OF POST-SECONDARY STUDENTS REPORT USING OPIOIDS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS, A QUARTER OF WHOM REPORT HIGH-RISK USE.



# RAISING AWARENESS

Partnering to inform, support, and protect

Since our beginning, our valued partnership with media has been the foundation of our awareness efforts.

With the knowledge that radio has always been at the heart of our awareness strategy, we initiated an original approach to raising awareness.

We invited all our radio partners to incorporate two short targeted PSA messages - between 7 and 15 seconds long - to catch parents' attention and direct them to our website. **Each one of our radio partners generously stepped in to help us, and the campaign ran until November.**

- **Got questions about drugs?**

We've got answers.

- **Want to talk with your teen but not sure how to start?**

We're here to help.

SHE WON'T ANSWER  
YOUR TEXTS.  
BUT SHE READS THEM.

#KEEPTALKING



At the same time, our “Keep Talking” campaign returned—thanks to support from our digital, print, and out-of-home media partners. This initiative reminded parents to trust their instincts and keep the lines of communication open with their kids.



21% OF STUDENTS REPORTED USING NON-PRESCRIBED OPIOIDS TO GET HIGH, EVEN BEFORE TOBACCO, ALCOHOL OR CANNABIS.

# RAISING AWARENESS

Partnering to inform, support, and protect

In August, as part of National Drug Drop-Off Month and International Overdose Awareness Day, our campaign **“It Happens Far Too Often”** aired nationwide from August 19 to November 17.

With the help of our agency, FCB Montréal, we produced two powerful 30-second radio ads for national broadcast, **“Back Pain”** and **“Knee Pain”**, both focused on reducing access to prescription medications in the home.

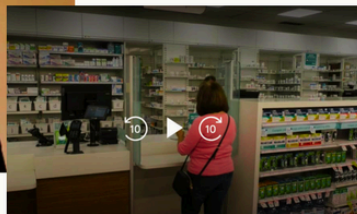
**13.5 Million**

In Kind Support

**60** Media Partners from across the country

**We received over \$13.5 million in media visibility** for these two campaign components.

The generosity of our media partners toward our cause has once again been truly extraordinary. Without them, it would have been impossible to air any awareness campaign in 2024, and therefore, to reach and protect families across the country.



## When the issues that matter become the headlines!

Over the course of the year, various issues raised by DFKC captured media attention, particularly the importance of securing medications to help fight the current opioid crisis. This issue made headlines, and our Executive Director, Chantal Vallerand was interviewed on major news networks, radio segments, or articles in both national and regional newspapers.

# FINANCIAL STATEMENT

For the Year Ended December 31, 2024

## Revenue

Donations, Grants and Sponsorships	\$ 722,688.
Interest and other Income:	22,390.

**Total** **\$745,078.**

## Expenses:

Campaigns and program costs:	\$ 646,069.
Administrative Expenses:	\$ 63,875.

**Total** **\$ 709,944.**

Download the [audited financial report here.](#)



# THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our generous sponsors and donors whose unwavering support made our impact in 2024 possible. Your contributions fueled our mission, strengthened our programs, and helped us reach more youth, families, and communities with the tools and education they need to thrive.

From the steadfast commitment of our monthly donors to the invaluable support of our philanthropic and corporate partners, your belief in our mission continues to drive every milestone we achieve.

Thank you for standing with us and playing a vital role in creating lasting, positive change in the lives of young people across Canada. We are truly honoured to have you as part of our community.



Barclays Capital Canada Inc.

BMO Bank of Montreal

Canada Post Community Foundation

CIBC Foundation

Le Germain Hotels

Health Products Stewardship Association

Innovative Medicines Canada

The McCain Foundation

Odlum Brown

Off to Market

The Peter Cundill Foundation

Rexall

Power Corporation of Canada

The Slaight Family Foundation

TD Ready Commitment

Telus Health



# OUR BOARD

We are proud to recognize the invaluable leadership and commitment of our Board of Directors.

These distinguished Canadians bring their expertise, passion, and vision to guide Drug Free Kids Canada in its mission.

## **BOARD CHAIR - Tom Kennedy**

Paul Allison - Director

Nicolas Caprio - Director

Dr. Matthew Chow - Director

Lucie Dutil - Director/ Governance committee

Dave Friesema - Director/Finance committee

Debra A. Doucette OBC - Director

Alex Girling - Director

Raymonde Lavoie - Director/Chair, Marketing committee

Christophe Lecomte - Treasurer

Kelly Mitchell - Director

Giuseppe Papia - Director

Danielle Perron - Advisor to the Marketing Committee

Guillaume Girard - Advisor to the Marketing Committee

## **Governors**

France Chrétien Desmarais

James McCoubrey

Eloise E. Opheim

Richard Pound Q.C.



The impact of substance use on our communities is widespread and long lasting. We strongly believe that well informed parents, teachers and other adult allies can help young people make wise decisions when confronted with potentially dangerous substances.

**Wise decisions are informed decisions** and our mission at Drug Free Kids Canada is to help inform the young people that will be the future of our country.

This report is one measurement of the effectiveness of our messaging, and we hope you will find it informative. In the past year DFKC utilized over 13.5 million of public advertising. Mindful of our mission, we are thankful to our media sponsors and everyone whose passion about educating youth about substance risks makes this organisation so successful. We are also thankful to our donors whose generosity is so motivating.

We are always seeking ways to get more information into the hands of more people, – and this report on 2024 is the reflection of the continued dedication of DFK.

Thank you for making it possible!

**Tom Kennedy**

**Board Chair, Drug Free Kids Canada**





# OUR COMMITMENT TO LASTING CHANGE



Dear Friends,

This year, once more, we have been reminded of the importance of being informed in a constantly shifting landscape of substances, and of the need for ongoing dialogue with the youth in our lives.

At Drug Free Kids Canada, we remain committed to ensuring that parents and adult allies understand the vital role communication plays in preventing substance use among young people.

I want to extend my deepest gratitude to our incredibly dedicated staff, whose hard work and commitment ensure that we continue to provide relevant, compassionate, and impactful support to those who need it most.

This year's action plan focused on consolidating and expanding our work on the ground through educational sessions and awareness-building campaigns. I am proud to report that we not only met but surpassed our objectives. The success of our Let's Talk Drug Series stands as a powerful example of our impact— 139 events, over 4,700 participants, and increased community engagement that will continue to ripple outward. This initiative exemplifies our commitment to delivering accessible, evidence-based education that resonates with families, communities, and youth alike.

A major highlight of 2024 was our National Drug Drop-Off Campaign in August, which garnered significant media attention and sparked important conversations about safe storage and disposal of medications. With activation activities on the ground, a national webinar, and media interviews, we raised awareness of the crucial role proper medication management plays in reducing the risks of problematic use. The campaign not only engaged communities across Canada but also emphasized the importance of responsible action in preventing substances from being misused or contributing to harm.

None of this would be possible without the steadfast support of our staff, Board of Directors, and Advisory Council. Together, we are making a difference, and I am deeply thankful for the ongoing dedication and commitment of everyone involved in the Drug Free Kids Canada family.

Thank you for your continued support, and I look forward to what we can accomplish in the year ahead.

Warm regards,

**Chantal Vallerand**  
**Executive Director**