

2020 / 2021

# ANNUAL REPORT

W E A R E V I T A



W E A R E M E N S S A N A

**WE ARE VITA.**

PROVIDING SAFETY | PRACTICING RESPECT | PROMOTING COMMUNITY

**WE ARE MENS SANA.**

**TOGETHER WE ARE VITA.**

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# ABOUT US WHO WE ARE

We are a not-for-profit charitable agency encompassing two organizations – Vita Community Living Services (CLS) and Mens Sana Families for Mental Health. Together, we are known as VITA.

Founded in 1986, Vita CLS is funded primarily by the Government of Ontario's Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS). Our objective is to provide a range of community-based, person-directed services for adults with intellectual disabilities and/or a dual diagnosis of developmental disability and mental illness. Vita CLS strives to foster independence, enhance quality of life and provide community inclusion for those it serves.

Mens Sana Families for Mental Health (Mens Sana) was created in 1991 by families in the Greater Toronto Area who came together to support one another, and to provide the services and support their family members needed. Funded almost exclusively by the generosity of donors, Mens Sana offers residential supports, clinical and referral services, and day services for adults with chronic mental illness.

**At VITA, we refer to the people we serve as “members” rather than clients.**







**Because** they asked us to, and because we see VITA as one community that includes staff members, Board members and the members who receive the services we offer.

WHY?



## OUR MISSION

- Vita Community Living Services and Mens Sana Families for Mental Health (VITA) provide safety, respect and community through services for individuals with intellectual disabilities and/or mental health needs.

## OUR VISION

- Create a safe place for individuals to live and work.
- Develop an atmosphere of trust for all.
- Respect cultural heritage.
- Practice positive management for staff.
- Follow direction from members regarding personal goals and dreams.
- Aspire to provide open access to all with mental health and/or intellectual disabilities, regardless of their need.
- Encourage members, families, and staff to provide insight, oversight, and feedback.
- Promote the idea of voice for all, members, family, and staff.
- Provide opportunity to access all the community has to offer.
- Educate the larger community about the value of those with disabilities.

## OUR VALUES

- Challenging ourselves to stay current, stay fresh and stay committed.
- Understanding that safety is a basic human right.
- Treating everyone with dignity, honesty, respect, and compassion.
- Being a caring and professional organization.
- Having progressive, innovative, and adaptive personnel.
- Promoting the achievement of individual choices, dreams, and aspirations.
- Respecting individual rights.
- Fostering the Italian-Canadian heritage of VITA's origins.



## Joint Letter from Board President and Executive Director

COVID-19 has made this a year like no other for Vita Community Living Services and Mens Sana Families for Mental Health (VITA). This devastating pandemic has presented us with enormous challenges that our staff and Board are meeting with intelligence, passion, and empathy, expressed in our core mission, vision and values.

During this period of uncertainty, we have been comforted, encouraged, and humbled by the outpouring of generosity from our community. Remarkable individuals, organizations, community groups, businesses, and corporations have all stepped up to support our Direct Support team.

The support of our donors, funders and supporters has been a lifeline to us and the members that we serve. And we take this opportunity to show our heartfelt gratitude to all those who have supported us in these uncertain times.

VITA's Board of Directors play a key role in setting our vision, and we extend our appreciation for their hard work and involvement with VITA in this unprecedented year. Last, but certainly not least, we thank our members and families for being a pillar of support and cooperation. Their support and encouragement ensure that we are able to maintain the standards of service excellence that have become the hallmark of VITA.

The COVID-19 pandemic has put a spotlight on our sector. Knowing that the communities we serve are often neglected in a crisis, VITA jumped into action immediately when COVID-19 hit our programs.

From procuring the all-important PPE for our staff and members, to taking a leadership role in helping other Developmental Sector (DS) agencies procure this vital equipment, VITA has been at the forefront of the war against the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, we have provided clinical resources, and established communication channels to optimize important tools for the DS sector.

Within VITA, we have adapted to the ever-changing nature of this pandemic and were among the first to initiate virtual community participation services for our members.

On behalf the Board and the Management, we want to extend a heartfelt "Thank You" to VITA's Direct Support Workers for all their hard work, dedication, compassion, and care they have provided our members each and every day throughout the pandemic. Our Direct Support staff are the lifeline of our organization, and we collaborated with Community Champions, who donated essential items to deliver care packages to our staff as a gesture of appreciation for their dedication and hard work.



These are some of the many initiatives that we launched this year to help our staff, management, members, and families navigate through these uncharted waters.

Finally, the pandemic will be with us for some time, and we will continue to face periods of heightened stress and discouragement. But VITA has shown itself to be wonderfully adaptable and resilient. The spirit of dedication and collaboration that has brought us this far will continue to carry us forward.

As always, we ask you to continue supporting VITA, and helping us provide safety, practice respect, and promote community.

Sincerely,

Brian Naraine  
President, Board  
of Governors

Adam Smith  
Executive Director

# OUR SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

## The front door to all that VITA offers

Our Support Services staff are VITA’s ambassadors. They are typically the first point of contact for families looking for help and support. They connect and collaborate with families, members, and the developmental services sector to ensure appropriate services and supports are put in place to enable individuals to live fulsome lives in the community.

## Services Offered By VITA CLS

### Clinical and Educational Services

Clinical and Educational Services (CES) provides therapeutic interventions and learning opportunities for members to help them acquire the skills and abilities they need to live with a sense of well-being, safety, and support to achieve their life goals. Training is also offered to direct-support professionals and sector-related agencies in order to keep pace with evolving best practices and to better serve a variety of specialized populations.

### Respite Services

Respite Services offers pre-planned, short-term breaks for family members who provide daily support for family members eighteen years of age or older.

### Treatment Programs

These programs are individually designed to enable adults with complex behavioural needs to live in their communities as safely and productively as possible.

Our programs offer services that support individuals whose needs are changing either due to reaching different stages in life (aging) or changing circumstances: they may be transitioning from the family home, are in a homeless situation, or they have completed a medical or psychiatric treatment and are moving to life in the community.

### Residential Programs

Residential supports are calibrated to address individual member needs, interests, and behaviours, which can change over time. Homes are staffed with specialized and skilled talent to best support our members. Our direct-support professionals work closely with Clinical and Educational Services to expand existing skills and to identify and deliver new skill-building opportunities.

### Community Participation Services (CPS)

CPS offers educational and experiential learning opportunities aimed at empowering people to create meaningful connections and friendships while developing life, leisure, and independent living skills.

Services are member-driven, and staff work with members to create activities that are meaningful to each specific group. Supports are designed to encourage independence and promote self-advocacy and community inclusion.





# Services Offered By Mens Sana

## Residential Mental Health Services

We offer 24/7/365 support to promote healthy living, socializing and the development of strategies that individuals can use when they feel a loss of control.

## Mental Health Day Service: Drop-In Center

Program activities are offered both to members, and their families and support networks. Activities vary based on individual needs and goals. While some may want to work towards future goals (employment, independent living, furthering education, etc.), others may choose to participate in activities offered (mental health management classes, social and recreational opportunities, meal preparation classes, art therapy group, computer class, etc.).

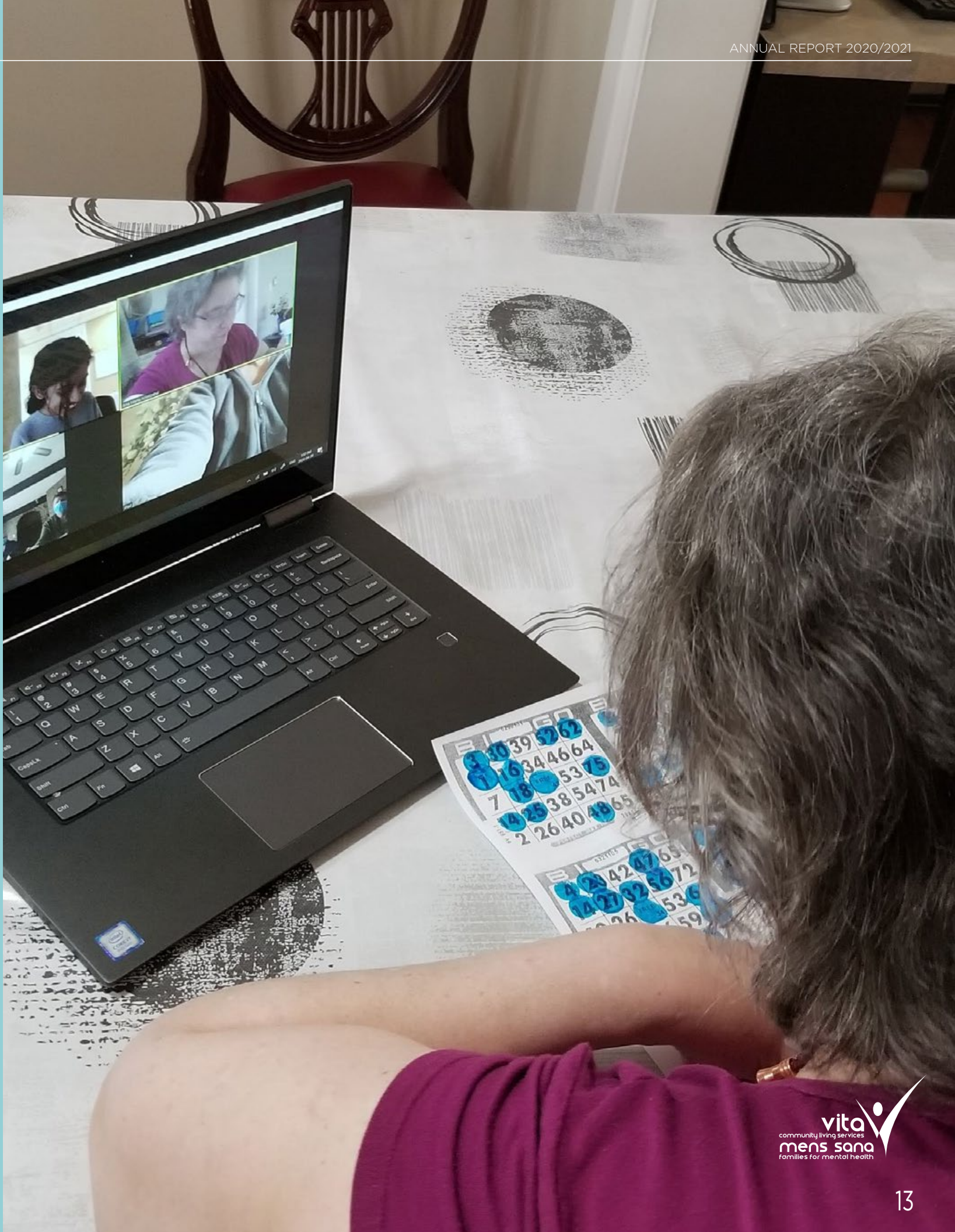
## Family Support

Services such as a weekly family support group are offered to families and people who live with a loved one with mental health and/or intellectual disabilities (dual diagnosis).

## Mental Health Referral Services

Services are offered both to people with mental health needs and their family and support networks.

We work in coordination with VITA's Support Services Team to connect and collaborate with families, members, and the Mental Health services sector to ensure that individuals and their families receive appropriate supports.







# WHERE TO FIND OUR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

VITA offers accommodation with varying levels of support to meet the diverse needs of adults with intellectual disabilities and mental illness, who live in the City of Toronto and York Region.

**Residential Programs:** We operate more than 81 residential options, including:



- 30 full support homes
- 4 full-support apartments in a residential building
- 30 supported independent living apartments
- 18 enhanced supported living apartments





We champion the rights of those we serve, actively encouraging and equipping our members to be their own best advocates in all aspects of their lives through initiative such as:

THE RIGHTS GROUP of VITA members that advocates, both internally and externally, for the rights of people with disabilities.

VITA MEMBER TIMES, a quarterly newsletter produced for and by VITA members.

ADVOCATES AGAINST ABUSE, an educational program that teaches members how to teach other members about different types of abuse and how to prevent them.

SPROUT TORONTO, a support group for LGBTQ adults who also have intellectual disabilities.

ADVOCATES AGAINST ABUSE is an initiative that engages people with intellectual disabilities to teach other people with intellectual disabilities about abuse prevention.



## LOCATIONS

- Group Homes
- Properties
- Community Participation Programs
- Head Office
- Fee for Service



# OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

AS OF MARCH 2021



**BRIAN NARAINÉ**  
PRESIDENT



**FRANK DECESARE**  
VICE PRESIDENT



**ADAM SMITH**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**PAUL BOTTOS**  
SECRETARY



**SUSAN MIKULICIC**  
TREASURER



**LARRY ANDRADE**



**ROBERT CARUSO**



**MARCELLINA GALVAN**



**FRANK PETTI**



**LOU CAIRO**



**JESSICA DIRITO**



**RUDY IACCINO**

## Leadership through strong governance & BOARD OF GOVERNORS



The following structures are in place to ensure VITA is using its resources and capacity...

TO DELIVER ON ITS MISSION.

COMMITTEES	MEMBERS	Mandate
Executive Board	Brian Naraine–Chair Frank DeCesare, Paul Bottos, Sue Mikulicic	Evaluate the Executive Director’s performance; conduct pre-planning for strategic planning sessions that occur every three years; develop policies pertaining to governance, orientation and training opportunities for new and existing Board members; and review the organization’s risk management plans.
Vita/Villa Separation	Brian Naraine–Chair Paul Bottos, Larry Andrade, Sue Mikulicic, Adam Smith, Ken Cancellara	
Audit and Finance	Sue Mikulicic–Chair Larry Andrade, Brian Naraine, Jessica Dirito, Adam Smith, Katie Chiragdin, Chris Pickard	<p>The Audit and Finance Committee assists the Board in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities relating to corporate auditing and reporting, financial policies, and financial risk management as identified in the Strategic Plan. This responsibility is carried out in accordance with approved policies that comply with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP).</p> <p><small>*This committee is also supported by VITA operative employees: Katie Chiragdin, Finance Director and Dee Baldeo, Sr. Financial Controller.</small></p>
HR Committee	Marcellina Galvan–Chair, Brian Naraine, Rob Caruso, Sue Mikulicic, Adam Smith, Silvana Rosa	<p>Oversee the implementation of the Human Resources strategy, policies and practices to achieve VITA’s operational goals and objectives.</p> <p><small>*This committee is also supported by VITA operative employees: Silvana Rosa, HR Director and HR Manager, Ellen Brocklebank.</small></p>
Ministry Advocacy	Brian Naraine–Chair Sue Mikulicic, Adam Smith	
Fundraising	Frank Decesare–Chair Adam Smith	Organize and oversee fundraising events for Mens Sana and VITA CLS.
Advocacy	Frank DeCesare–Chair Adam Smith, Faisal Ikram	Ensure that branding and marketing strategies are in line with the strategic plan, vision, mission, and value statements of each organization.
Board Recruitment	Brian Naraine–Chair Sue Mikulicic, Larry Andrade <small>*3 board member vacancies*</small>	Ensure that Board members represent the community with an appropriate balance in diversity and expertise of the members. Recruit new members.
Accreditation	Brian Naraine–Chair Paul Bottos, Adam Smith, Emily Romita	
Union Negotiating Advisory	Brian Naraine–Chair Larry Andrade, Paul Bottos	
Strategic Planning Steering	Brian Naraine–Chair Larry Andrade, Adam Smith, Dunja Monaghan, Osbourne Group	



# THE PANDEMIC

The past year saw a health crisis that was never seen before in this century. COVID-19 changed the way that this world functioned, creating a new “normal” in the process. These continue to be very challenging times, as well as we continue to look at the overarching issues concerning VITA during this crisis, and work with sector partners, government bodies, and Public Health in providing a coordinated approach to sharing information, resources, and collaboration between our networks and government.

In these unprecedented times, our key priorities continue to remain:

- Maintaining staff and morale
- Addressing potential impacts on people, families and supports
- Providing resources for people and families.
- Creating and sustaining clear channels of communication with all stakeholders

## But we will not stop there

We will continue to make sure that we are able to safeguard our programs and provide safety to everyone in this evolving situation. We will spare no time or expense when it comes to your safety and that of all our members. Additionally, we will continue to work with and follow the helpful guidance of all levels of government and local health authorities to ensure that everything we do protects the VITA family.

We will continue to work closely with the families, Public Health, and other government bodies to ensure our members are safe and healthy. We are committed to following public health policies and directives as put forward by our provincial and federal governments.

## Our journey through the pandemic

Our top priority ever since the onset of the pandemic has been the health and safety of our members, visitors, families, and loved ones.

As an organization, we have adapted to the changing environment of COVID-19 very quickly, and the services that we provide to our members and communities continue to be relevant and accessible without interruption. We have a robust action plan in place, and we have implemented specific precautions to minimize the spread of the virus.

## And we want to do more!

We know that listening is critical right now. Therefore, in line with our core values of providing safety and practicing respect, we worked day and night with local public units, LHIN, external IPAC bodies, and the government to create a safe workplace for everyone.

Below are some of the many milestones and achievements that VITA achieved over the course of the past twelve months.

## Leadership and Advocacy

In these uncertain times, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) became our most powerful weapon to fight COVID-19. Realizing the urgency and the value of this resource, VITA took the lead in PPE procurement for the sector. VITA and another Developmental Sector (DS) agency worked together with the Ministry and other sector partners to procure appropriate PPE for the entire sector across both the Toronto, and Central and Eastern Regions.



As a result of this initiative, VITA helped fourteen (14) DS agencies procure PPE at the height of the pandemic. These agencies were in dire need of this essential protective equipment, and it would have been very difficult for them to operate had VITA not extended its support. Furthermore, advocacy by VITA’s senior leadership for frontline staff led to a special request made to Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) on behalf of the entire DS sector. This request urged the government to recognize and help the frontline essential workers in these difficult times.



The advocacy request led to a wage increase for all frontline unionized staff. The total amount corresponded to \$4/hour for all unionized staff. VITA was an integral part of the Sector Pandemic Plan Initiative (SPPI), a group that was the result of the collective efforts of Ontario’s DS Agencies during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This is the largest single cash donation made to VITA in its entire history.

Externally, VITA connected with local and small businesses to seek their assistance at the height of the pandemic. Many of these businesses came out to help VITA as community champions. Not only did these organizations make in-kind donations to VITA, but they also helped VITA build a positive reputation among local community members. Proof of this came when our Executive Director used his personal goodwill to secure a \$100,000 donation. This is the largest single cash donation made to VITA in its entire history. The donated amount speaks to the positive reputation capital of VITA, and its senior leaders in the broader non-profit sector.

In these critical times, it was quintessential to build a channel of transparency and constant communication with, and among, all our stakeholders. Therefore, VITA focused on consolidating a channel of timely communication with families, staff, funders, supporters, and all other stakeholders to give them regular and relevant updates. Information regarding the status of programs and services is being shared frequently with all families and caregivers through email. Letters have also been sent to all the addresses in VITA’s database, and posted on our website and social media channels.

VITA’s Board also extended their support to all frontline staff and other departments at the height of the pandemic. The letter was shared with all staff and the gesture was appreciated.

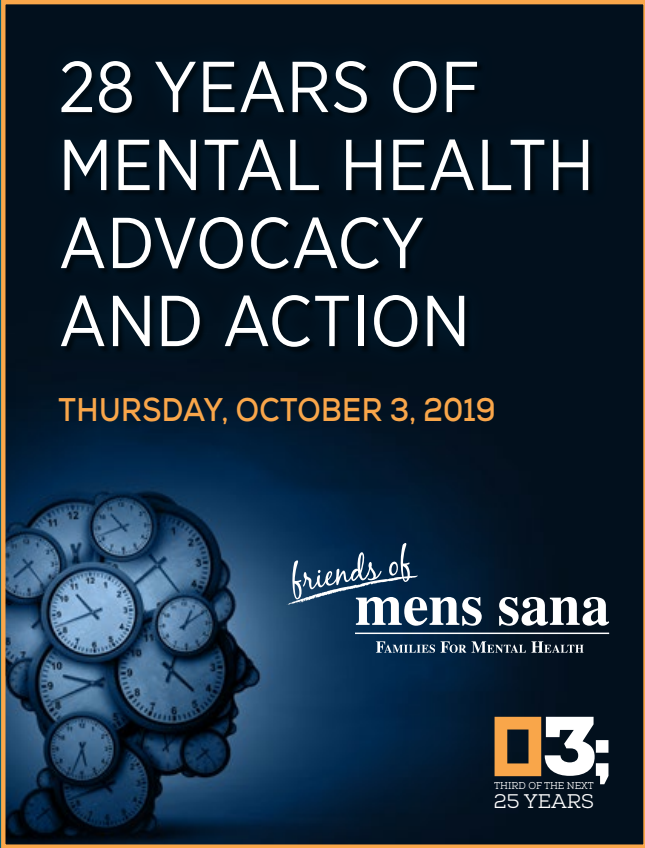


## Proactive Approach

The successful management of any crisis is defined by a proactive approach to minimize the risk. VITA reported its first positive case of COVID-19 on April 13, 2020. The management quickly sprang into action to contain the spread of infection. An outbreak management taskforce was put together to deal with the situation and a pandemic plan was implemented.

One of the first protocols implemented was the self-declaration of staff working at more than one agency; this decision was important as it greatly helped VITA to reduce the spread of the virus that staff might have brought into VITA homes from outside. Additionally, multiple mobile testing facilities were made available at different point in times for all staff, encouraging them to get tested. This was done as part of an ongoing relationship between York Public Health and VITA.

Not only did we advocate for physical distancing, but we also walked the walk. For the first time in our history, the Annual General Meeting (AGM) was conducted virtually, and the annual report was shared electronically with all our stakeholders. To make sure that VITA is prepared for the second wave, an internal Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) committee was created. The objective of this committee is to look at policies, provide recommendations, and understand best practices in the sector to minimize the spread of the virus in all VITA locations.



The annual Mens Sana gala dinner, which is the signature fundraising event for Mens Sana, changed to an online event. Realizing the importance of safety protocols and out of an abundance of caution, senior leadership embarked upon an innovative and safe approach to secure funding by contacting the donor base through personalized messages, urging them to support a vulnerable section of our communities in these unprecedented times. The strategy for this campaign was two-pronged: prospective donors were contacted electronically by Mens Sana while individual letters with similar key messages were also mailed out to donors. Additionally, an online campaign that engaged the audience on all digital channels ran with the objective of raising awareness about Mens Sana, and a call to action to support Mens Sana services financially. We are thankful to all the committee members, supporters, donors, and everyone else who came forward to support this initiative and help Mens Sana reach its fundraising goal for the year.

It has been a difficult year for organizing fund-raisers; however, our fundraising committee quickly adapted to the changing spectrum, and our annual fundraising event “Rally for VITA” was modified to be a drive-in event. “Dirty Dancing” screening was scheduled on September 12, 2020, at Vaughan Mills. The event was hugely successful and was supported by UniversalCare, Vaughan Mills and other sponsors and community champions.





# Operations

Quick action and prompt implementation of COVID-19 protocols and policies under the guidance of local public health units have enabled VITA to resolve outbreaks and limit the spread of the virus. The combined efforts of the frontline staff, program supervisors, managers, directors, and all the other departments was instrumental in ensuring that VITA was prepared to tackle outbreaks and resolve them in the given time frame.

In its mission to provide safety and remain steadfast in helping to minimize the spread of COVID-19 and maintain Public Health directives, all non-essential services were suspended. These include the following:

- VITA and Mens Sana Families for Mental Health, Community Participation and Drop-in Programs
- All residential / family visits
- All training and workshops
- Respite services
- Limited Safe Bed Program

In its commitment to provide safety and practice respect, VITA implemented a one-of-a-kind pilot project for community members to participate in virtual social groups in order to help them reconnect.

The pilot project was initially offered over Zoom video conferencing calls. The pilot was launched on August 20, 2019. Initially we offered the virtual service twice a week for 45 minutes, and soon expanded to three days of service to Community Members. Each community program had its own individual time for Members to drop in, meet others and to participate in fun activities. As a result of the positive feedback and popular demand, the sessions were extended to five days a week with one hour sessions daily.

The fruition of this initiative was the result of a great inter-departmental partnership between Operations, Clinical and Communications. Surveys and focus groups were conducted to gather and provide evidence-based service options to develop specific member virtual consent and education.

The Virtual Services initiative was presented at the National Association for the Dually Diagnosed (NADD) Conference. In January of this year, we started the second phase of the pilot and invited Residential members to participate. An alternate Service committee was developed, and now this service has been extended to our residential members as well.





# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



“Kamakshi is an enthusiastic participant in all the programs that I run.

Her welcome smile and thoughtful advice to her peers make her an invaluable part of any group.”

– Roger Ramsukh, Behaviour Therapist

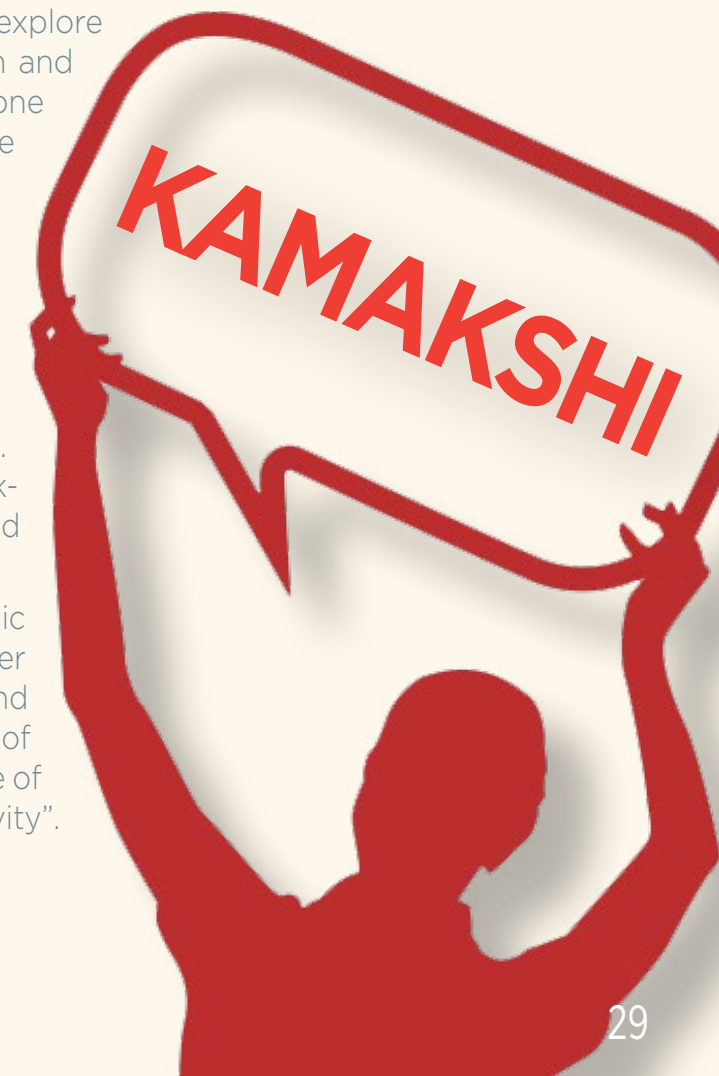
“I get to see everyone, and I can continue my friendship with all of them. We talk, we laugh, we have fun...[it] makes me feel less lonely and right now, it is the only way that I can socialize. Also, attending these meetings gives me the opportunity to express my emotions like, if I am sad, stressed out or depressed, I can talk about it”, says Kamakshi, who came to VITA in 2016, after completing school at Woodbridge College.

The pandemic has taken a toll on all of us, but for Kamakshi it was an opportunity to explore her inner inquisitive self and explore things that interest her. She started looking for Zoom and MS Teams links after speaking to VITA staff, Lorie Carbone and Amanda Gee, to be involved and keep to engage and keep herself busy.

Kamakshi says that she loves this chance in this new normal to learn a lot of important things virtually, which helped her to keep her mind busy.

Currently, Kamakshi takes part in programs from the CMHA on Mindfulness, stories about courage and recovery and creative writing, life skills, and meditation. At VITA, she enjoys the Art program, the weekly check-in, the Thursday dinner party and the Aerobics and Affirmations group.

In her spare time, she likes to call her family, watch music videos and movies on her laptop, listen to music on her phone and CD player and interacting with her peers and staff who work with her. Kamakshi has a good sense of humour, an infectious laugh and likes to help others. One of her favourite quotes is “I believe in Positivity not Negativity”.





# Clinical Department

Clinical took a lead in creating social stories and plain language documents for member engagement. These stories were not only shared within the organization but were also used by diverse organization in the DS sector. Operations, Communications and Clinical worked together to create resource Binders for staff and members. These resources were shared on the internal staff portal and shared with all staff, members and their families. The resources that were created by VITA also helped other DS agencies in North America. VITA's Clinical department presented a paper on COVID-19 Collaboration: Alternative Program Planning, Data-Driven Services at the National Association for the Dually Diagnosed (NADD).

The art therapy sessions that used to be in-person were moved online to make sure that VITA was following the government and local health authorities' recommendations with respect to COVID protocols. Starting March 30, 2020, all sessions were done online. This resulted in an increase in members attending these sessions.

To make sure that fatigue doesn't set in, the Clinical department came up with a weekly dinner party for our members. The dinner party was organized, and members from each program saw their friends/members on TV screens. Recipes for each dinner party were shared with the program beforehand. Additionally, Clinical initiated a Clinical Café. This Café that provides meals to any VITA home that needed food.

In order to support the well-being and mental health of our members during a time when so many regularly scheduled activities had been cancelled, it was important for us to find alternative ways to keep members engaged. An activity book was created with a variety of ideas and to help staff save time! Staff could print the entire book or individual pages based on member preferences. A new book was released each week with new activities to choose from for VITA members.

Towards, the second half of the first wave, Behaviour Therapists started a combination of in-person and virtual sessions with members. The Operational and Clinical teams collaborated to prescribe virtual or in-person sessions for members, based on their requirements.

Three abstracts were submitted to the NADD Conference and accepted. Two were COVID-related; one looked at Clinical transformation to a virtual service during the pandemic, the second looked at the operational side (specifically, in collaboration with community participation programs) of VITA and its response/crisis planning during COVID-19, the final abstract was based on "disability -informed service".

The clinical department was hired by Milestones, an organization in Pennsylvania, to provide virtual training throughout the state. This is the first time Vita has been offered this kind of opportunity.

# Finance

To make sure that VITA operations are running smoothly, finance requested US bank to increase our overall credit to twice its usual level. Cash withdrawal was turned on for Supervisor and above.

**P-card limits have been increased for Program Supervisors from \$2,000 to \$5,000.**

**Per transaction amount for Program Supervisor was increased to \$2,000.**

**Residential funding from the government was approved for \$500,000<sup>†</sup>.**

<sup>†</sup> This is in line with the amount submitted to the Ministry for approval. Pandemic Pay for unionized and non-unionized staff was approved for VITA.





# Human Resources Employee Engagement

During these difficult times, recognizing and thanking the efforts of our frontline staff has been a constant, achieved through thank you signs, eblasts, and social media posts.

VITA distributed care packages among all staff. These packages were arranged through in-kind donations made by businesses operating in the GTA and care packages were distributed to all staff for the entire second half of the month of May 2020. These packages were also shared with staff who were self-isolating or in quarantine as a gesture of support and appreciation from VITA for all their hard work. In addition to the ministry-approved hazard pay for all front-line staff, VITA’s Board approved hazard pay for all program supervisors, clinical and administrative staff.

Videos, resources, and other content were shared with staff on a regular basis to help them cope with the stress of the pandemic. Tools were also shared with staff to build employee morale and better their emotional well-being.

The \$82K in health and safety rebates we received this year is a testament to VITA’s commitment to workplace safety and employee well-being. It is further evidenced by the rebates we receive annually through Safety Group & WSIB and with the MOL and ministry audits that are performed. Recognitions like these confirm that VITA’s number one priority has always been our staff and members.



VITA distributed care packages among all staff. These packages were arranged through in-kind donations made by businesses operating in the GTA; care packages were further distributed to all staff for the entire second half of the month of May 2020.





# STAFF SPOTLIGHT



“Dealing with losing your home and everything you have, and then dealing with a pandemic while supporting vulnerable people, was probably one of the most trying experiences we have been through as a family. We lived in one room for several months after the fire with our two children, we experienced being isolated from each other due to outbreaks during special occasions, and felt times of loneliness, especially when we thought about the state of the world. What this whole experience taught us is that strength comes in numbers.”

— Sharicka Reid-Scaletta  
& Bradley Scaletta



# COMMUNICATIONS

## STAFF PORTAL

### Internal Communication Analytics

There are commonly between 100-200 visits to the Staff Portal every day, with a dip on the weekends to approximately 50-80 visits per day.

**WHAT THIS TELLS US**  
People are using the staff portal on a regular basis.

The average session duration is approximately 10 minutes per user.

**WHAT THIS TELLS US**  
Staff are not only going to the Staff Portal on a regular basis, they are spending time there. We can find out why people are spending time on the portal and help make the time spent more efficient.

Page loading time for all users is tracking at an average of 19 seconds. This includes users from different locations with different internet speeds. We can see notable differences between the Vaughan location where page loading is very slow vs. Markham and Toronto, where loading is much faster.

**WHAT THIS TELLS US**  
Load times are still slow for some people, but now it's specific to their location.

City	Acquisition			Behavior		
	Users	New Users	Sessions	Bounce Rate	Pages/ Sessions	Avg. Session Duration
Non-Bounce Sessions	<b>303</b> % of Total 10.55% (2,873)	<b>200</b> % of Total 7.23% (2,768)	<b>451</b> % of Total 11.13% (4,053)	<b>0.00%</b> Avg. for View: 88.87% (-100.00%)	<b>2.47</b> Avg. for View: 1.16% (111.99%)	<b>00:10:42</b> Avg. for View: 00:01:11 (798.67%)
TORONTO	207 (64.69%)	141 (70.50%)	289 (64.08%)	0.00%	2.52	00:10:59
VAUGHAN	47 (14.69%)	25 (12.50%)	67 (14.86%)	0.00%	2.40	00:11:36
MARKHAM	28 (8.75%)	21 (10.50%)	31 (6.87%)	0.00%	2.13	00:07:46

- The two most popular pages are the landing page and the forms on the portal.
- This shows us that users are getting all the information on the landing page, which makes it browsing and access easier.

### Internal Email Communication:

Ever since the onset of the pandemic, VITA's focus has been to be consistent in sharing information with our staff. To build a community that provides safety and practices respect for all, it is imperative that we are as transparent as possible. On that note, we want to share the performance of our email communications strategy, which has been the primary tool of sharing information and news with the staff.

AVERAGE OPEN RATE PER EMAIL CAMPAIGN: **45%**

AVERAGE CLICK RATE PER EMAIL CAMPAIGN: **14%**

This is much higher than the industry (non-profit) average of 27% and it shows that VITA staff are engaged with our organization. However, the percentage rate does gives us an opportunity to increase our engagement and communication internally.



External Communication

 **2.7k**  
PER POST

AVERAGE IMPRESSION

**8.7k**  
PAST YEAR

AVERAGE MONTHLY REACH

**FOLLOWERS:** FROM **145** IN FEBRUARY 2020 TO **405** IN FEBRUARY 2021

 **113**  
PER POST

AVERAGE IMPRESSION

**1.6k**  
PAST YEAR

AVERAGE MONTHLY REACH

**FOLLOWERS GROWTH:** FROM **66** IN FEBRUARY 2020 TO **100** IN MARCH 2021

YouTube

**258.8**  
HOURS

TOTAL WATCH TIME

**13.5k**  
PAST YEAR

TOTAL IMPRESSIONS  
(INCREASE OF 370%)

↑

**5.7%**  
CLICK RATE

IMPRESSION CLICK THROUGH RATE

**6.4k**  
PAST YEAR

TOTAL VIEWS  
(INCREASE OF 353%)

↑

**TOP VIDEO** HAS CLOCKED 1.5K IN THE PAST 6 MONTHS.



WEBSITE



**32,189**  
PAGE VIEWS

TOTAL PAGE VIEWS

**10,792**  
VISITS

TOTAL UNIQUE VISITORS

**2.22**  
PAGES

PAGES PER SESSION

**14,421**  
SESSIONS

TOTAL SESSIONS

**2.22**  
PER USER

NUMBER OF SESSIONS

Additionally, as part of our policy of transparency, VITA engaged with our members, caregivers, and member families on a regular basis. Communication was shared regularly with these stakeholder groups to keep them up to date in times when policies, procedures and protocols were continuously changing.

These communication pieces were shared by mail and electronically with relevant parties. The changes to VITA's policies and protocols were also shared on our website to help visitors. These were presented as "pop-ups" on the landing page to ensure that these updates were not missed by any visitor to VITA's external website.

# Human Resources

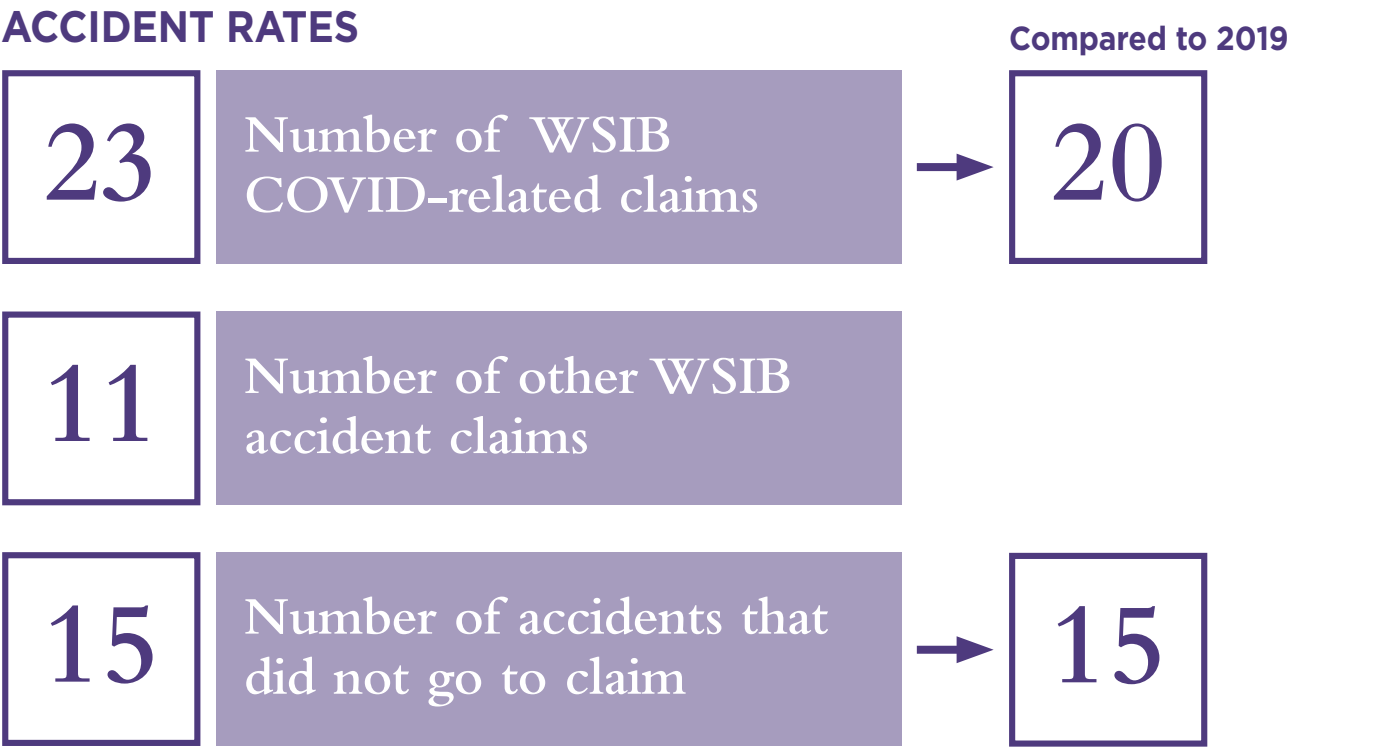
**JHSC**  
2019 – 3 meetings  
2020 – 16 meetings

Initially starting in March 2020 every week, then reduced to every other week in May, every month in July, and then to every other month starting in November.

The requirement under the Health and Safety Act is one meeting per quarter but due to the Pandemic, the Committee members felt it was important to meet more frequently in order to stay informed and to support the Health and Safety program at VITA.

**REBATES**

For 2020, the rebate from the WSIB (\$60,843.88) and the Safety Group (21,294.12).



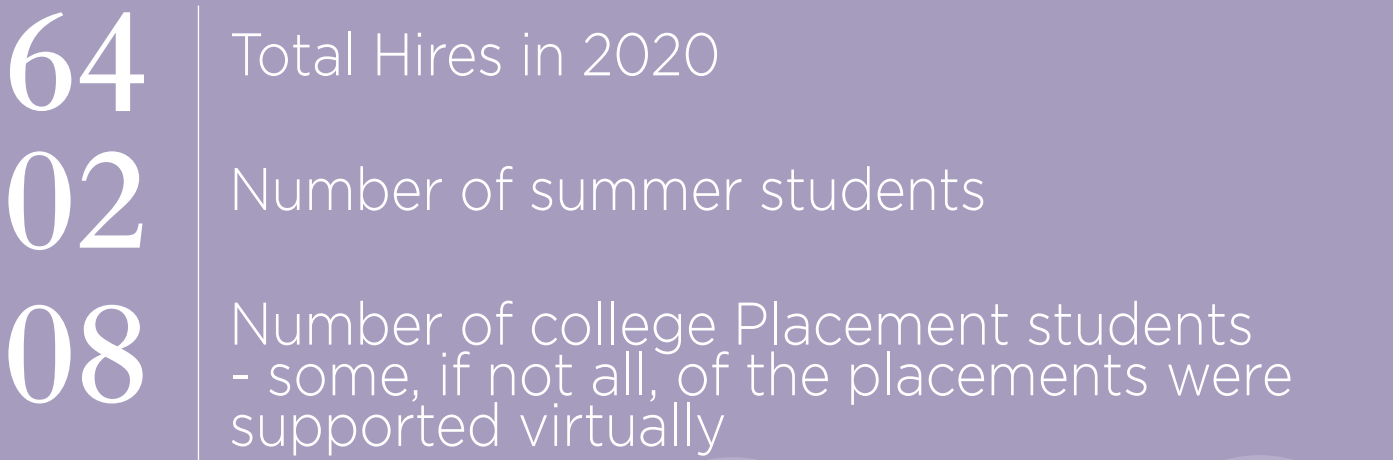
Created resource materials and instruction for Pandemic protocols. Signage for PPEs, deployment of PPEs, and other needed equipment. Tracking and monitoring the deployment of PPEs.

# Ministry of Labour

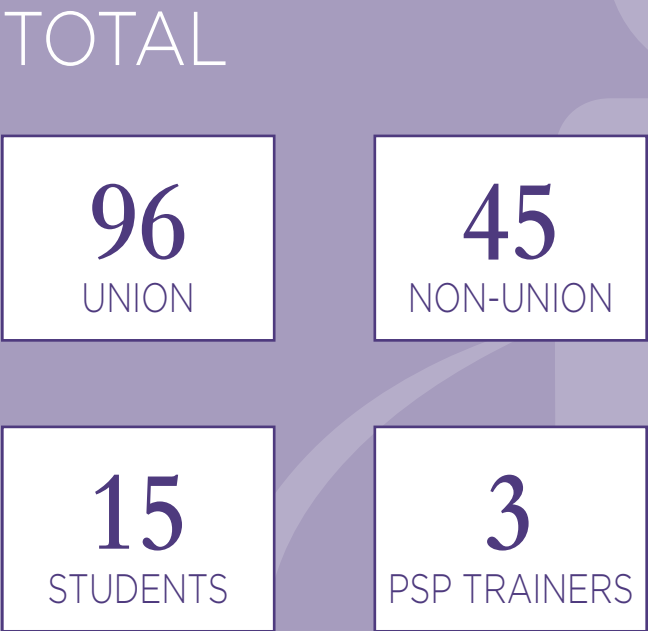
Representatives of the Ministry came to the Head office to talk about what we had in place related to the Pandemic. They were very pleased with all the supports to staff and controls in place, including policy, processes, personal protective equipment, and ongoing communication.

**RECRUITMENT**

We participated in one Virtual Job Fair in 2021, three additional job fairs booked for this year.



Number of Interviews from April 2020 to March 2021





RECOGNITION

From Humber for sitting on their DSW advisory Committee

Operations

01

CLINICAL & EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Members benefiting from clinical services  
Target = 125 Actual = 278

Publications  
Target = 2 Actual = 2

Educational Training Sessions for Staff and Members  
Target = 5 Actual = 14

Issues of the International Journal for DSPs  
Target = 12 Actual = 12

Webinars  
Target = 12 Actual = 16

Conference Presentations  
Target = 4 Actual = 5

02

MEMBER SERVICES

Members using community participation  
Target = 206 Actual = 0  
(TO funded + CE funded)  
\*Day programs closed this year due to COVID-19

Members using residential services  
Target = 222 Actual = 220  
(TO/CE 8847 + 8886 + 9112 + Mens Sana)  
\*Actuals below target due to intakes on hold because of COVID-19

Members using fee-for-service programs  
Target = 40 Actual = 2  
(Day + Res) \*Below target as day services were closed due to COVID-19

Safe beds programs  
Target = 8 Actual = 2  
(TO + CE) \*Below target due to 2 blocked beds.

Members' families using respite program:  
Target = 89 Actual = 0  
(TO/CE combined) \*Residential and day respite closed due to COVID-19

Virtual Day Service: Attendance Stats: from August 2020 – March 22, 2021: **3137** participants enrolled and took part in virtual services to date -440 virtual sessions offered – four time slots per day



# FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

## Statement of Financial Position

Year ended March 31, 2021, with comparative information for 2020

ASSETS	2021	2020
Current assets:		
Cash (note 2)	\$ 7,679,967	\$ 6,319,119
Accounts receivable (note 3)	232,744	395,478
Due from Mens Sana Families for Mental Health (note 8)	1,386	-
Sales taxes recoverable	699,483	512,135
Prepaid expenses	99,489	74,055
	8,713,069	7,300,787
Capital assets (note 4)	4,258,227	4,508,574
	\$ 12,971,296	\$ 11,809,361
<b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>		
Current liabilities:		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities (note 5)	\$ 5,828,874	\$ 4,994,364
Advances from Villa Charities Inc. (note 6)	548,071	548,071
Deferred government grants related to capital assets	1,947,020	2,184,306
	2,495,091	2,732,377
Net assets:		
Net assets invested in capital assets (note 7(a))	2,311,207	2,324,268
Unrestricted net assets	2,336,124	1,758,352
	4,647,331	4,082,620
Economic dependence (note 11)		
Contingencies (note 12)		
	\$ 12,971,296	\$ 11,809,361

## Statement of Earnings

Year ended March 31, 2021, with comparative information for 2020

Revenue	2021	2020
Ministry of Community and Social Services ("MCSS")	\$ 30,494,254	\$ 26,937,989
Fees for service and other client fees	2,736,142	3,527,019
Other (note 13)	2,012,213	2,193,475
	35,242,609	32,658,483

Expenses	2021	2020
Salaries and benefits	26,359,690	24,905,324
Purchased services (note 8)	2,882,598	1,049,168
Maintenance	1,427,852	2,254,743
Office and general	1,349,833	652,627
Rent	1,136,311	1,191,031
Food	630,967	693,814
Vehicle operation and maintenance	293,705	532,261
Insurance	184,382	173,708
Supplies	160,272	196,597
Program expenses	128,203	184,100
Residents personal needs	66,206	86,470
Transportation and travel	43,007	188,424
Professional fees	31,325	25,997
Bank and interest charges	9,373	15,839
Bad debts	(38,887)	4,016
	34,664,837	32,154,119

Excess of revenue over expenses before the undernoted item	577,772	504,364
Amortization of capital assets (net of deferred capital grants related to capital assets)	13,061	14,052
Excess of revenue over expenses	\$ 564,711	\$ 490,312

If you would like to view the complete audited financial statements of VITA CLS, please visit [www.vitacsl.org](http://www.vitacsl.org)

 Director  Director



# DAVE HINGSBURGER

Dave Hingsburger began his career at VITA in 2006. Working on a two-year project, his goal was to create policies and procedures that would target the abuse of people with disabilities who received services from organizations like VITA.

Dave and VITA's first ED, the late Manuela Dalla Nora, worked diligently, with the full approval of the Board, and with the goal of making VITA as safe as is possible in the service system. During those two years, Dave noted that clinical services needed to be better integrated into the life of VITA, and thus was born the Clinical Services department at VITA. It would be tough to list the accomplishments of the Clinical Department as it grew and developed, but, in time, VITA would be known for its diverse set of skills and a profound knowledge of providing service.



The International Journal for Direct Support Professionals was developed almost by accident when Dave and the present Director of Clinical Services, Chanelle Salonia, wrote an article about supporting people with disabilities through the holiday season. The internationally renowned journal serves as the basis with our webinars done in collaboration with the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals; these, too, reach a worldwide audience, and celebrated ten years of monthly publication in 2020.

While at VITA, Dave received a spot on the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame (for his work on abuse prevention) and the Inspire award, which is the lifetime achievement award given out by the gay community of Toronto (for his work on sexuality and disability) as well as the lifetime achievement award from the National Association for Dual Diagnosis (given out for groundbreaking work in service provision).

Dave retired from his duties as the Director of Clinical and Educational Services in 2020. VITA is honoured to have an accomplished sector leader work as part of its team, and and so, as a gesture of appreciation for his contribution, the clinic he helped to develop was renamed as "the Dave Hingsburger From Trauma to Trust Center for Education and Healing".

**Even with retirement, Dave is staying on as a consultant to VITA.**





# GRATITUDE TO OUR DONORS AND FUNDERS

In these difficult times, VITA staff connected with “Food Rescue”, a part of “Second Harvest”. Through their initiative, VITA was able to secure food donations for our members.

Food donations were secured for Mens Sana as well as Vita CLS homes. Programs that benefited from these donations include Alamosa, Indian Road, Bello and many Single Individual Living (SIL) programs. Our sincere thanks to Food Rescue, Second Harvest and all those involved in this project for their hard work and passion to secure this donation for our members.

During these testing times, our financial resources were strained, and in these difficult situations, we needed our donors and community champions. For the first time in almost 30 years, the Friends of Mens Sana Gala (our biggest fundraiser for Mens Sana) could not be organized. However, the response to our appeal and call to action was astounding. Thank you to all the donors who came out in these unprecedented times believing in our mission to provide safety, practice safety and promote community among a vulnerable section of the community.

**Thank you for your generosity.  
Thank you for believing in us!**

# DONATIONS

Alan Eaton  
Amherst Concrete Pumping Ltd.  
Canadian Council of Construction Unions  
Carpenters & Allied Workers Local 27  
Carpenters District Council of Ontario  
Carpenters District Council of Ontario  
Political Action  
Citrine Foundation  
City Park Homes  
Concrete Forming Association of Ontario  
Conquest Carpets Corp.  
Cristeen Bybyk  
Dambro Investments Inc.  
Diana Fishleigh-Eaton  
Dolvin Mechanical Contractors Ltd.  
Dr. David Jacobs  
Drywall Acoustic Lathing & Insulation Local Union 675  
Dufferin Water Co Ltd.  
First View Homes (Scarborough) Inc.  
Focus Flooring & Construction Inc.  
Frank Bandiera Architect Inc.  
Hardrock Forming Co. Ltd.  
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers  
JMS Forming Ltd.

Johnathan Pecchia  
Laborer’s International Union of North America LIUNA Canadian Tri-Funds  
Labourers’ International Union of North America Local 506  
LiUNA Local 183  
L.I.U.N.A. Ontario Provincial District Council  
Lisgar Construcion Co.  
Local 183 Members Benefit Fund  
Mariani Metal Fabricators Ltd.  
Masters Insurnace  
Ms Margaret D Eaton-Kent  
OFA-CFAO Golf Invitational  
Ontario Formwork Association  
PayPal Giving Fund Canada  
Premform Ltd.  
Sam & Donna Ciccolini  
Sam & Phyllis Cuzzolino  
The Policaro Foundation  
Trim Association of Ontario  
UniversalCare  
WES Consulting Inc.  
778317 Ontario Inc.  
1555091 Ontario Ltd.







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