

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



Land Acknowledgement

Myles Ahead operates in Toronto and we wish to acknowledge that we are on the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples. Toronto is now also home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. Myles Ahead also acknowledges that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaties signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands.



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Message from the Founder

To say the least, it was an emotional challenge attempting to encapsulate 2020 in a message with an overarching theme. While I want the Myles Ahead Annual Report message to be uplifting, I will do my best to get there... First, I feel it is important to pause and reflect. Hindsight is 20/20, after all. It seems to me that last year exposed many deep-rooted systemic inequities. If 20/20 suggests clarity, then the tumultuous nature of last year feels like the 'wakeup call' of our era.

In many ways, we have been collectively disrupted by COVID-19. In 2020, amidst the global pandemic, we witnessed the deadliest year of peace-time gun-fatalities on record, and the seemingly endless news-cycles of horrific racialized violence, largely perpetrated by police. It was a horrifying year, filled with loss, grief, trauma, and an exponential growth of divisiveness. Let's pause for a moment here and breathe.

Despite all of the turmoil and heartbreak... or perhaps, because of all the turmoil and heartbreak, there was also an enormous outpouring of humanity, support, and love. Let's pause again here and acknowledge that there was good too. Given the varying inequities exacerbated by the pandemic, I recognize that not everyone will see the good in 2020. While I acknowledge my privileges to do so, I also feel it is necessary to acknowledge the good too. I think seeing the good helps to instill hope, and I believe that positive change is possible.

For our part in 2020, Myles Ahead refocused our plans. Instead of formally launching our charity with a community event on May 7, 2020, we created a virtual summer camp to help fill the activity gap for kids, given the cancelations of in-person summer camps due to COVID-19. As we monitored the progress of the pandemic, we saw that educators faced an increased level of strain due to confusion over COVID-19 precautions, closures, and re-openings, as well as the challenge of pivoting to online platforms for teaching and learning.

Since we know stress can be a contagion, we redirected our school-based R&D efforts and decided to launch a targeted weekly mental health email with resources to support educators and their students. In addition to our pandemic-specific initiatives, we also advanced our R&D efforts to begin creating initiatives that improve the first point of contact and early intervention opportunities to access mental health services.

The pandemic, political polarization, and violence have added layers of stress, grief, and anxiety at a time when our children and youth are already grappling with mental health challenges. The demand for mental health supports continues to outpace the rate that mental health organizations can provide these supports. In addition, the rate of service was further impaired by the need for service providers

to pivot to virtual platforms. While policy makers appear to finally be responding to the longstanding pleas for increased funding to support the mental health and wellbeing of children and youth, more substantial funding is required to sustainably co-create systems, programs, and services that provide appropriate supports, including thoughtful implementation strategies.

Advancement opportunities are critical, not only in the fragmented mental health care system itself, but also in the resource-constrained public education system, both of which require accessible and appropriate resources to help parents and caregivers support their kids. This 2020 Annual Report highlights some of our accomplishments towards Myles Ahead's mission to help bridge the gaps and advance the approach to support the mental health of children and youth across all systems. Also, it outlines some of the priority initiatives we are working on for 2021.

With sincere thanks and all my love,



Leslie Kulperger

“...positive change
is possible.”



About the Organization

Myles Ahead, Advancing Child & Youth Mental Health (“Myles Ahead”), was formed in response to firsthand experience attempting to navigate the disconnected services and inaccessible programs designed to support mental health for children and youth. In 2020, it was Myles Ahead’s first full year as a charitable organization, helping to answer how collectively we can and must do better to advance child and youth mental health.

- We are an emerging charity.**
- We are passionate about our purpose.**
- We are committed to creating meaningful change.**

As an organization dedicated to bridging gaps and scaling best practices that prioritize timely access to appropriate mental health supports and services for children and youth, both clinically and in schools, Myles Ahead’s goal is to prevent child and youth suicide. In addition, Myles Ahead’s long-term vision is for mental health supports and services to be integrated into healthcare and education systems throughout Canada, such that interactions with children and youth stem from a foundation of enhanced mental health literacy, and where consistent, cohesive, accessible, and equitable systems are in place to support all children, youth, and their families.

Myles Ahead approaches partnerships, initiative development, and program implementation with systems thinking and a lens that is equitable, diverse, and inclusive. The emphasis of our work has been on partnerships that serve middle school age children and their families, given the gap in services and supports for students who are within the 9-13 age range. Also, we prioritize programs that improve crisis supports for mental health, in healthcare, community, and school settings.

“Driven by the human rights, voices, and experiences of children and youth, in partnership with families and experts...”



Our Values

Driven by the human rights, voices, and experiences of children and youth, in partnership with families and experts, Myles Ahead’s core values and guiding principles include the following:

- Inclusive.** We seek input from, listen to, and reflect diverse perspectives, with an emphasis on the voices and perspectives of children and youth.
- Respect.** All human beings deserve to be treated with respect, including, and particularly, those who are younger, dependent, and without agency.
- Compassion.** We believe in the power of compassion. We encourage and practice it.
- Impact.** We want to make sure what we are doing is valued and meaningful.
- Stewardship.** We nurture the thoughtful co-creation of solutions grounded in evidence.
- Partnerships.** Our support for child and youth mental health grows exponentially through partnerships. Together we are better.
- Best Practice.** Improvement is always possible. We prioritize scaling best practices over promoting our brand, sharing information rather than owning it, as well as collaboration, knowledge mobilization, and system integration.



Our Work

Myles Ahead's work is governed by the Board of Directors and applies an integrated management system approach that incorporates the continuous improvement model of "Plan, Do, Check, Act" ("PDCA"). For a more inclusive approach, Myles Ahead integrates the PDCA model with the fundamental principles taught by Indigenous Peoples: "The Circle of Knowledge" or "Ways of Knowing," including "Vision, Time/ Knowledge, Feeling/Reason, Action." The Circle of Knowledge, or Ways of Knowing, holds ethics, inclusivity, and compassion as fundamental components, which also align with Myles Ahead's values.



Figure 1. Management System Overview

This integrated approach will help to ensure that Myles Ahead's work is effective and evaluated on a regular basis to identify and incorporate diverse co-designed opportunities, while also supporting the mental health needs of children and youth in an equitable and inclusive manner. Myles Ahead coordinates with a network of professionals and lived-experience volunteers to provide perspectives and insights for research and development activities so that initiatives are specifically tailored with, and for, the community being served.

Fundamental to this approach is the refusal to believe that the status quo is acceptable or that improvements cannot be made.

Mental Health Services

In 2019, Myles Ahead completed a landscape assessment across Canada to determine the current state of organizations, practices, and programs that support child and youth mental health. Based on the gaps identified through this assessment, Myles Ahead's research activities in 2020 focused on mental health supports for children and youth in crisis and their first point of access for these supports. With oversight and guidance from Myles Ahead's Mental Health Services Sub-Committee, in addition to a special project advisor, we initiated the development of SafER Space, which is a framework and toolkit for Hospital Emergency Departments (aka "Emergency Rooms").

In addition to the SafER Space initiative, Myles Ahead created a resource booklet, called You Are Not Alone Survivor's Guide, for parents/caregivers seeking shelter/refuge from intimate partner violence. This effort was prioritized due to the increase in intimate partner violence, which is one of many negative impacts of the pandemic.

The following section provides additional insights into the Mental Health Services Research & Development work that we did in 2020.

SafER Space

Safe + ER = SafER Space

Given the increasing number of children and youth whose first point of contact is the Emergency Rooms (ER) for mental health treatment and supports, the SafER Space initiative was prioritized. Unfortunately, the ER is not designed to address the diverse needs of children and youth who need mental health treatment and supports. While arriving at the ER is anxiety-inducing for many people, the experience can be especially traumatic for children and youth.

The SafER Space initiative is under development, including a framework and implementation toolkit. Its purpose is to increase the awareness and adoption of key elements for ERs to help foster a more positive experience

“...help foster a more positive experience for children and youth...”



for children and youth who are in mental health crisis. The framework promotes the inclusion of staff and peer-support workers who are trained to non-coercively support children and youth in mental health crisis.

In addition, the framework includes recommendations for therapeutic design elements, such as soft furnishings, noise attenuating features, and organic elements (e.g., living walls, plants, water features, light boxes). Also, the framework will help to support empathetic and effective “soft” transfers from the ER to ongoing therapy and/or other services with community-organization partners. SafER Space has the potential to significantly reduce the mental health trauma related to ER experiences and reduce repeat visits.

The SafER Space initiative has been informed by a secondary research landscape assessment of 135 programs and services at a total of 35 hospitals, including pediatric hospitals, and mental health centres across Canada. This assessment also includes the largest and most progressive children’s hospitals, a global literature review of emerging and best mental health ER practices, and a literature review of best-practice standards of co-design and implementation. Our approach is also informed by ongoing interviews with best-practice implementation and research experts, across Canada and internationally, to gain insights into barriers and opportunities, helping to ensure that we are not duplicating efforts.

SafER Space’s framework and implementation toolkit emphasizes the importance of co-design and scalability, to best support the awareness and adoption of enhanced therapeutic design, processes, and best practices to help prevent the unintended trauma, stress, and anxiety that ERs can cause for children and youth in mental health crisis. The framework also provides options for hospitals to consider for advancing their current practice, including a range of accessible implementations and costs, depending on the requirements and available resources.

Next Steps: In 2021, Myles Ahead will publish the SafER Space framework and toolkit for Hospital Emergency Rooms and work with strategic partners to promote and support the implementation of SafER Spaces in hospitals across Canada, focusing especially on Children’s Hospitals. In addition to advancing SafER Space’s framework and toolkit for ERs, in collaboration with industry experts and partners, we will consider opportunities to extend its applicability to other areas that would benefit from the approach, including psychiatric units and schools.

“...enhance therapeutic design, processes, and best practices...”



You Are Not Alone: A Guide for Survivors of Intimate Partner and/or Family Violence

In recognition that incidents of intimate partner and family violence have increased as result of COVID-19, Myles Ahead developed a resource guide for those seeking refuge, called You Are Not Alone: A Guide for Survivors (“The Survivor’s Guide”).

Searching for mental health supports can be challenging in the best of times. Waitlists for services have grown during the pandemic. For those who are experiencing the post-traumatic effects of exposure to violence, the purpose of The Survivor’s Guide is to help families avoid feeling isolated, discouraged, and frustrated as a result of trying to navigate the disjointed mental health system to find services to support their healing journey. Myles Ahead has undertaken local searches to filter through the dead-end leads, redirections, and lengthy waitlists so that users of The Survivor’s Guide are empowered to follow their healing path. Each location-specific Guide includes a vetted list of relevant programs, including waitlists within 3 months and support services that can be accessed immediately.

In addition to vetted services and programs, The Survivor’s Guide includes emotional guidance and suggestions to support adults after leaving an abusive partner, as well as help them to understand and support the needs of their children. Myles Ahead is working to provide local versions of The Survivor’s Guide to our partner charity, Shelter Movers, which safely moves people into shelters located in Greater Toronto Area, Ottawa, Waterloo, Montreal, Nova Scotia, and Vancouver.

Next Steps: Myles Ahead will provide local versions of The Survivor’s Guide for Shelter Movers’ current areas and will continue to develop the resource as their areas expand. Upon request, Myles Ahead will also develop local versions for other charities and shelters, such as the Women & Children’s Shelter of Barrie. In addition, Myles Ahead will explore other opportunities where similar resources would be considered valuable for other communities that facing barriers to accessing child and youth mental health supports.



School-Based Initiatives

School-aged children and youth spend nearly forty hours a week at school, whether virtual or in-person, which can have an enormous impact on their socio-emotional wellbeing. Educators help shape students into who they will become. Given the enormity of this, it is especially important to note that educators are exposed to many stresses, including their own and their students'.

The directive of each Myles Ahead School-Based Initiative (SBI) is to support the accessibility of mental health programming and resources in schools, fostering a safe, inclusive, and co-regulated environment. To help achieve this, an SBI Sub-Committee provides guidance and oversight on research, identifying best practices, and developing initiatives that are aligned with Myles Ahead's mission.

Educator Mental Health Resource Emails

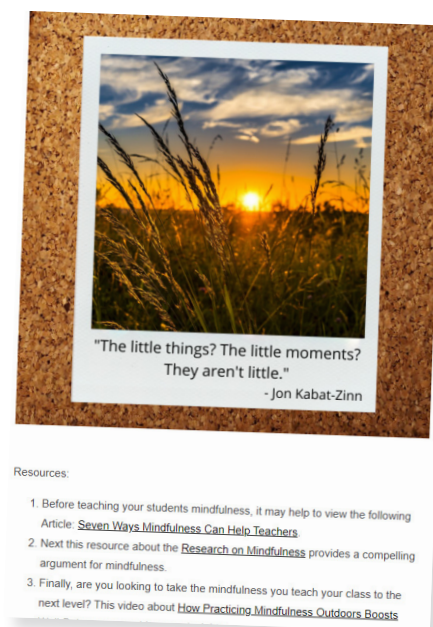
Based on several months of research and development, and in response to the challenging context that educators are faced with due to COVID-19, Myles Ahead created and launched a weekly emailer in October. Each email contained a polaroid infographic or image to convey a concise message with links to three different resources that related to the week's theme.

Our weekly emails are disseminated to teachers, administrators, and support staff (aka. educators) and the evidence-based content is developed in the following ways:

Relationship-centric: Information and resources that empower educators in the realm of mental health, including the importance of well-being and the relationships they have with themselves and with their students. Supporting the development of stronger connections between educators and students is important to support mental health for both.

Resiliency: Psychologists define resilience as the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, and/or significant stress. When teachers, administrators, and support staff model resiliency, they help their students to become more resilient.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (ED&I): Equitable, diverse, and inclusive culture concepts are evidence-based with a primary focus on transforming school cultures for the better. This includes developing healthy relationships and building awareness about the importance of self-care, self-preservation, mental health, and wellbeing for teachers, students, and beyond.



Our weekly educator emails include topics such as causes of anxiety and stress; socio-emotional learning; trauma-informed learning; substance use disorders; and mindfulness. Resources were obtained from trusted sources and presented for ease of access, including content from the following:

- [Mental Health Commission of Canada](#)
- [Canadian Mental Health Association](#)
- [School Mental Health Ontario](#)
- [Child Mind Institute](#)
- [The Foundry BC](#)
- [Education Canada](#)
- [Edutopia](#)
- [Hey Teach](#)
- [Anxiety Canada](#)
- [Thrival Kits](#)
- [Mental Health Rubric](#)
- [Mind Up Program](#)
- [Roots of Empathy](#)
- [Lives in the Balance](#)
- [PBS Learning Media](#)
- PBS' Building Anxiety Resilience: [Emotional Understanding: Module 1 Video](#) | [COMPASS for Courage](#)
- Relevant Ted Talks, such as Carol Dweck's, [The Power of Yet](#)
- [Edutopia's For Teachers, It's Been A Year](#)



To support educator engagement, we held weekly draws of educators who had signed up for the weekly emails for a limited time, with prizes such as:

- Mind Up curriculum series (3 books: K-2, 3-5, 6-8),
- \$50 cash, or,
- 5 sustainable soft-bamboo facemasks

As of December 2020, Myles Ahead's email distribution list contained over 930 educators!

Next Steps: In 2021, Myles Ahead will continue to produce the educator emailers and work to increase our distribution list and engagement. Our long-term objective is to provide every educator in Canada with access to the resources they need to support mental health and wellbeing in their classroom, starting with themselves.

Youth Suicide Prevention

Myles Ahead is a founding member of the Ontario Youth Suicide Prevention Leadership Committee (YSP LC), which has grown to include representation from the following people and organizations:

- Canadian Mental Health Association (Ontario)
- Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health
- Children's Mental Health Ontario
- Dr. Ian Dawes, Trillium Health Partners
- Fae Johnstone
- Jack.org
- Mental Health Commission of Canada
- School's Mental Health Ontario

The Leadership Committee has worked to establish a formalized Charter and process, as well as several working groups to tackle specific scopes of work. The branding and web-presence are also under development.

Next Steps: Myles Ahead will continue to support the YSP LC with priority research, content, and initiative development. When the YSP LC web presence has been established, Myles Ahead will include a link on mylesahead.ca.

“...building awareness about the importance of self-care, self-preservation, mental health, and wellbeing...”



Communication and Outreach

In addition to the resource called *You Are Not Alone: A Guide for Survivors* described within the Mental Health Initiatives section of this report, Myles Ahead developed a communication and outreach strategy in response to COVID-19, to support children and youth mental health. The following section includes highlights from these initiatives.

Myles Ahead approaches community engagement with hopefulness to provide uplifting messages and supportive resources, helping people cope with stressful and heart-wrenching challenges, including the local and global challenges that we collectively face. To help alleviate stress and nurture wellbeing, our community engagement includes themed blog articles, and the #SpreadTheLove, and #MylesAheadSummerCamp initiatives.

Blog Articles

Blog articles with suggested strategies are shared on a regular basis and include links to resources for children, youth, parents/caregivers, and educators. Blog articles address a broad range of mental health subjects and address socio-political concerns and initiatives, as outlined in the following examples:

“How You Can Support the Mental Health of Black Youth”

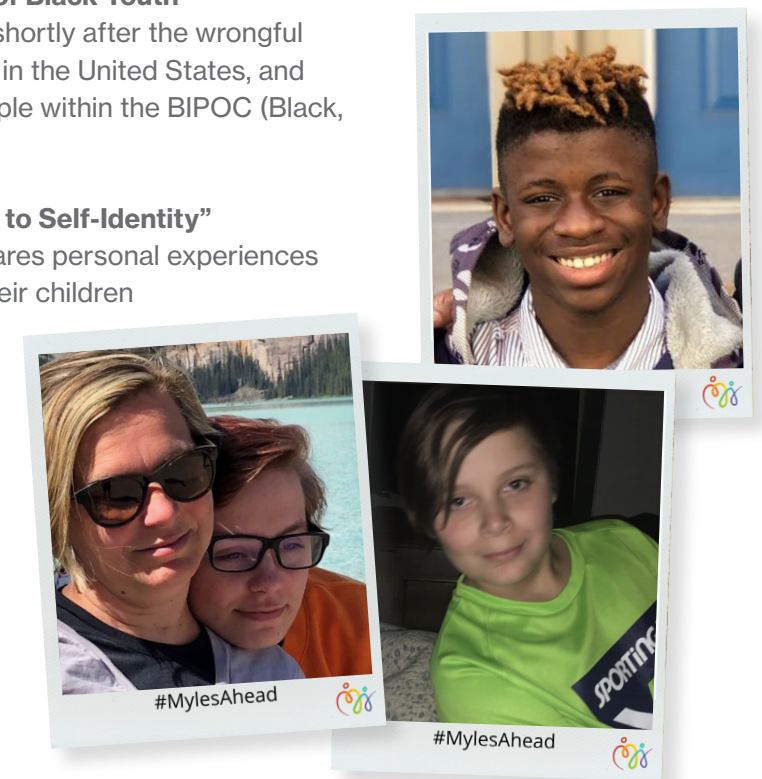
This article was shared in early June 2020, shortly after the wrongful deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor in the United States, and Chantel Moore in Canada, among other people within the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Colour) community.

“Supporting LGBTQ2S+ Youth on the Path to Self-Identity”

In celebration of Pride Month, this article shares personal experiences and offers advice to help parents support their children who are exploring their identity.

“How Gratitude Can Enhance Our Lives”

For Mother's Day at the end of Mental Health Awareness Week in 2020, this is a personal reflection by the Founder of Myles Ahead.



#SpreadTheLove

For National Child & Youth Mental Health Day in 2020, Myles Ahead launched our #SpreadTheLove initiative and invited our community to participate in creating positive ‘rock art’ messages. Participants placed their creative rocks where the public could see them, and then posted photos of their creations on Facebook, Instagram, and/or Twitter with the hashtag #SpreadTheLove.

#MylesAheadSummerCamp

Due to COVID-19, many families were faced with the challenge of keeping their children active and engaged without camps, activities, and the usual summer opportunities. In response to this, Myles Ahead came up with a plan to help kids maintain mental wellness without compromising community safety.

Our #MylesAheadSummerCamp challenges were developed as weekly initiatives to bring the camp experience home. Children and youth were asked to make a short video to teach a favourite skill or technique for others to learn.

This initiative focused on empowering children to be their own camp counsellors and take pride in their own skills. While prizes were the main reward of the campaign, many families found other victories throughout the challenge: increased opportunities to connect, learn from one another, and to engage their children in a unique way.



Events and Activities

Myles Ahead participated in events and activities that promote a sense of community, belonging, and connection. In 2020, those events included the following:

Run Myles Ahead

Throughout the month of October, we had over 75 amazing people participate in the virtual Run Myles Ahead! To promote a sense of togetherness, even though we were physically apart, participants were encouraged to share their Run pics!

The 2020 annual event marks what would have been Myles’ 14th birthday, a fitting way to celebrate the life of a boy who loved to run and his legacy to advance mental health supports... Myles Ahead! Fundraising for the event exceeded \$27,000!

A HUGE THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR SUPPORTERS AND RUNNERS FOR MAKING THE 2020 RUN MYLES AHEAD SUCH A SUCCESS!



“...promote a sense of community, belonging, and connection...”

Meet the Team

Leslie Kulperger (She/Her), Executive Director

As the Executive Director (ED), Leslie oversees and contributes to every aspect of Myles Ahead's operations, including planning, strategy, research, and development. After first-hand experience of the significant gaps in mental health services while attempting to provide appropriate supports for her son in life and at school, and ultimately losing her son to suicide, Leslie founded Myles Ahead. Leslie has 20+ years of transferrable knowledge and experience with initiative research, evaluation, and management systems that she brings to her ED role, which is pro bono. Her previous work focused on generating tangible improvements through strategic program development, delivery, monitoring, evaluation, as well as policy advocacy within environmental and energy conservation.

Amanda Chalmers (She/Her), Research Lead, School-Based Initiatives

Amanda's preliminary research includes best practices for the classroom and resources for students, teachers, and the entire school community. Amanda's research focuses on helping to transform the way that communities, schools, and school boards address students' mental health. Related to this, her research evaluates the ways that policies are implemented and can be improved through optimal methods and deliverables. In addition to being a teacher, having a Master of Teaching from OISE, Amanda is also a parent. She is passionate about the mental health and wellbeing of children and youth, striving to advance the accessibility of proven approaches to meet their varying needs.

Chloé Simms (She/They), Research & Development Lead, Educator Content & SafER Space

Chloé is instrumental in creating evidence-based outreach email campaigns that support the mental health and wellbeing of educators and students who face the challenges of COVID-19. In addition, Chloé leads the research and development activities for SafER Space, including the framework and toolkit that supports hospitals to implement safer spaces for children and youth within emergency rooms. Chloé is a graduate of the Communication and Media Studies program at Carleton University. Having completed an original mental health summer research project and participated in community mental health efforts, Chloé is a strong advocate for mental health and wellbeing.

Damion Nurse (He/Him), Social Media Manager

Damion is an experienced professional who is highly skilled in the ideation, development, management, and execution of strategic initiatives and programs. He transitioned from film and television production into strategic initiative development and execution for St. Joseph Communications, where he is instrumental in launching numerous creative initiatives and programs. Damion leverages his expertise, including marketing and brand management, to oversee Myles Ahead's social media. He is also a dad and passionate about mental health and wellbeing for children and youth, in addition to racial equity issues. He brings a wealth of lived experience with navigating mental health services to support his son's needs.

Helena Pearce-Reilly (She/Her), Research Lead, Mental Health Initiatives

Helena has conducted comprehensive research on Ontario's mental health landscape and helped facilitate partnerships between Myles Ahead and mental health organizations in Toronto. As a Master's Student in Clinical Psychology, Helena is passionate about reducing barriers to mental health services and promoting mental health literacy for children and youth.

Natalie Francoeur (She/Her), Office Services Coordinator

Natalie brings exceptional people skills and compassion to her role as office services coordinator & support lead. From helping out with research & development to adding her artistic flair and creativity to presentations and work products, Natalie has channeled her passion for child & youth mental health to support the team and organization beyond "typical" administration work.



Committees and Working Groups

Mental Health Services Working Group and Sub-Committee Members

Emily Angl

Emily’s ‘journey’ as a patient has taken her through ER’s, OR’s, MRI’s and many acronyms in between. Her perspective includes a broad range of personal, academic, and research experience, as she seeks to understand and effectively implement best practices in health care, for the betterment of patients and public engagement. For over ten years, Emily has consulted on patient and family engagement with hospitals, government agencies, research institutes, and other organizations across Canada. She currently works as Director of Health Engagement and Communication with Reframe Health Lab.

Jake Ernst

As a therapist, writer, and speaker who is based in Toronto, Canada, Jake is interested in unexplored feelings, unprocessed trauma, and unmet attachment needs in childhood and adolescence as catalysts for mental unhealth and unwellness in adulthood.

Jennie Ormson

Jennie is a Clinical Social Worker with over two decades of experience helping children and families. Her early career work included frontline positions with children and teens in inpatient and outpatient psychiatric facilities, school settings, and groups homes. In addition, as a parent of three children, Jennie has firsthand experience of the challenges in the school system for children with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Dyslexia. Also, Jennie is passionate about outdoor education and the value of nature and kindness in healing and shifting the future of mental health and wellbeing.

Damion Nurse (see Bio on previous page)

Anseh Dibaji, Myles Ahead Board Member (see bio in Appendix A).

Stacey Espinet, Ph.D., Myles Ahead Board Member (see bio in Appendix A).

Dina Lafoyiannis, Ph.D., C.Psych, Myles Ahead Board Member (see bio in Appendix A).

Leslie Kulperger, Myles Ahead Executive Director (see bio on previous page).

Dina Lafoyiannis, Ph.D., C.Psych, Myles Ahead Board Member (see bio in Appendix A).

Leslie Kulperger, Myles Ahead Executive Director (see bio on previous page).

School-Based Initiative Sub-Committee Members

Cathy Dandy

As a leader in public education, Cathy has advocated for children and youth and their families by building on their strengths, helping them to access the support they need. Cathy works to improve school systems so that they can work in favour of every child.

Anna Matjeka, Ph.D, C.Psych.

Anna brings over 10 years of clinical psychology experience. She specializes in psychological and developmental assessments of young children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). Also, she is a published author and has conducted research in the areas of early detection of children with ASD. In addition, Anna provides Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) for children and adolescents who have significant anxiety, mood disorders, and/or anger management concerns.

Bella Karsh, Myles Ahead Board member (see bio in Appendix A).

Leslie Kulperger, Myles Ahead Executive Director (see bio on page 13).



“...co-design is a fundamental practice in all that we do.”

Board of Directors

Edward Kulperger (He/Him)

Founding Director, Chair of the Board, Member of the Finance & Audit Committee

As Senior Vice President with Geotab and a Board of Director at BeWhere Inc. (BEW:TSX-V), Edward brings a wealth of business development and organizational governance expertise to Myles Ahead. Edward is dedicated to making a difference in memory of his nephew, Myles, and translates his innovative business strategies to help fill gaps, creating effective and efficient solutions to enable more access to services for those who need it.

Mike Singleton (He/Him)

Founding Director, Treasurer, Chair of the Governance Committee, Member of the Finance & Audit Committee

Mike Singleton has more than 15 years of experience as an energy economist, operating a non-profit organization focused on energy policy and resource planning. As the Executive Director of Sustainable Buildings Canada (SBC), Mike has extensive experience developing capacity through the use of hands-on activities, including stakeholder design charrettes, demonstrating the potential to improve building designs and operations. Mike's knowledge and understanding of the value of the integrated design process are invaluable for Myles Ahead's vision.

Bella Karsh (She/Her)

Founding Director, Secretary, Member of the School-Based Initiative Sub-Committee

After graduating from Concordia University with a Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood and Elementary Education, Bella then attended the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto to complete a Master of Arts in Applied Psychology and Human Development. She has worked for the Toronto District School Board for the past 16 years, which includes 12 years as a teacher and 4 years as vice principal at Clairlea Public School. Bella is a passionate advocate for children with special needs.

Dr. Stacey Espinet (She/Her)

Founding Director, Member of the Mental Health Services Sub-Committee

Stacey has over 15 years of experience conducting research and large-scale program evaluations in the fields of child development and mental health. She has a Doctor of Philosophy in Developmental Psychology from the University of Toronto, where she focused on facilitating the early emergence of executive-function skills that underly mental health. Bella is dedicated to improving access to affordable, effective, and flexible mental health supports that are tailored to the needs of children and their families. In support of this, Bella has conducted research in a variety of applied and clinical settings, focused on innovation in mental health supports.

Anseh Dibaji (She/Her)

Founding Director, Member of the Mental Health Services Sub-Committee

Anseh is a clinical social worker and mental health lead at a Family Health Team in downtown Toronto. She has a Bachelor of Social Work from Ryerson University and a Master of Social Work from the University of Toronto. Anseh worked in the children's mental health sector for 7 years prior to focusing on youth and adult mental health treatment in a primary care setting. Anseh has a keen interest in the fields of psychoneuroimmunology, interpersonal neurobiology, developmental trauma, and the neuroscience of mindfulness meditation. Anseh believes it is a privilege to be able to work with people who live with trauma, including emotional and physical pain. As such, Anseh is dedicated to helping trauma survivors recognize their courage; cultivate self-compassion; strengthen resilience; build attuned and meaningfully-connected relationships; and learn to be more present and grounded.

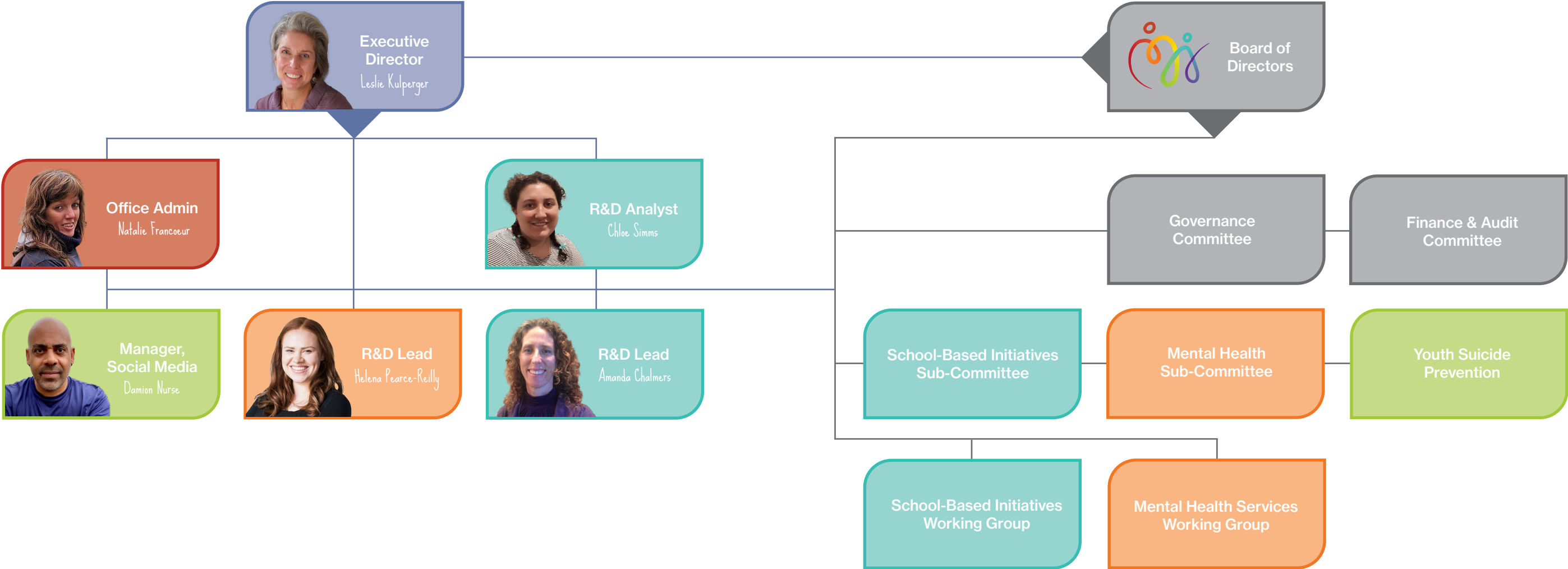
Dr. Dina Lafoyiannis (She/Her)

Director, Member of the Mental Health Services Sub-Committee

Dr. Lafoyiannis is a clinical psychologist registered with the College of Psychologists of Ontario. She is licensed to work with children, adolescents, adults, and families in the fields of Clinical Psychology and School Psychology. She provides assessments and treatment for mental health concerns, behavioural challenges, interpersonal problems, and relationship challenges with parenting and families. In addition, she is an adjunct clinical supervisor at the University of Toronto (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education) and at York University, providing supervision to psychology interns and psychology practicum students. She also has experience providing supervision for psychotherapists and is interested in providing supervision for those entering Supervised Practice.



Organization Structure



In Summary

Thanks to the support of our amazing community, volunteers, and donors, we raised over \$86,000 in 2020 and began to implement a strategic research and development plan which included the following:

Mental Health Initiatives:

- SafER Space Research and Development
- You Are Not Alone: A Guide for Survivors of Intimate Partner &/or Family Violence

School-Based Initiative:

- Educator Mental Health Resource Emails

Youth Suicide Prevention

- Founding member of the Ontario Youth Suicide Prevention Leadership Committee

Communication and Outreach

- Themed blog articles with helpful resources for children, youth, caregivers, and educators
- #SpreadTheLove social media campaign
- #MylesAheadSummerCamp

While it is important to take stock and celebrate what we have accomplished, we recognize that we are just getting started and that there is a long road ahead. Fueled by our passion for the mental health and wellbeing of children and youth, we are dedicated to creating and supporting meaningful change to advance our mission.

The sky is the limit!



Onwards! Upwards! Myles Ahead!



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