Just 4 kids
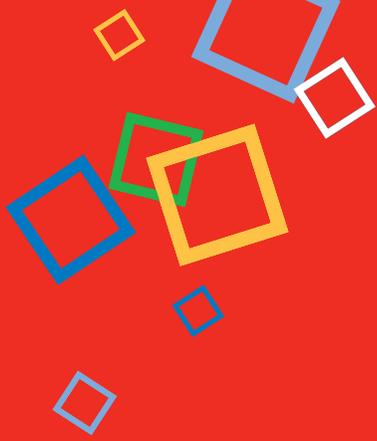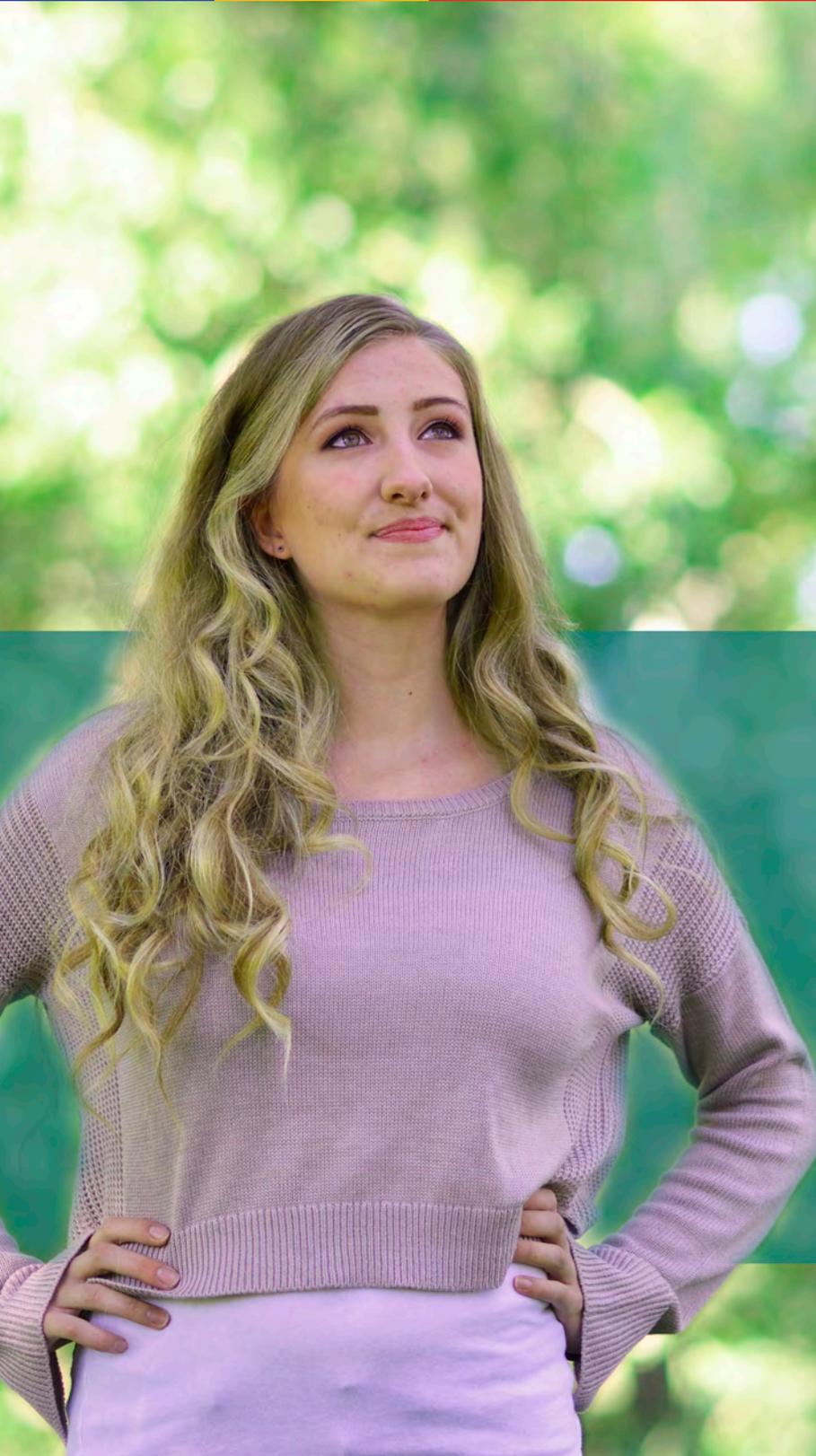
Alberta Children's HOSPITAL FOUNDATION

Build them UP

70% of mental health issues begin in childhood.

That's why the Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation is working with Alberta Health Services (AHS) and the Province to build a new **Centre for Child & Adolescent Mental Health**. It will provide three new services to help young people and their families better identify and manage challenges before they escalate into crises that require hospitalization.

Continued inside...

Together, we can build the Centre and Build Them Up.

Design work underway for new Mental Health Centre

Mental health issues are the single largest health problem facing young people in Canada today. With 1 in 5 children and teenagers struggling with conditions such as anxiety, depression, eating disorders and schizophrenia, the demand for services is higher than our health system can accommodate.

The Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation (ACHF) is pleased to be partnering with Alberta Health Services (AHS) to build a Centre for Child & Adolescent Mental Health to help ensure mentally healthy futures for young people in our community.

Plans to create a new Centre were announced this spring, marking an important step forward in enhanced services for families. For the first time, young people and families who need this specialized support will be involved in shaping a 3200 m2 three-storey facility dedicated to and purpose-built just for them. Everything about it – the light, the energy, the colours, room layouts, furniture and, of course, the programs – will be specially designed to create a warm, inviting, youth-focused atmosphere that contrasts the more clinical options currently available in our city.

The new Centre will be home to a mental health walk-in service, intensive outpatient therapy and a day hospital program where families can receive specialized triage and the opportunity for immediate referrals to programs at the site. This unique combination of crucial services will augment and integrate with the continuum of care currently provided by Alberta Health Services and agencies within our community.

"AHS is grateful for the partnership we have with the Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation to build the first stand-alone centre for child and adolescent mental health in Calgary," said Dr. Verna Yiu, President & CEO, AHS. "The Foundation's commitment will help us provide the best care possible to children and youth in our community who experience mental health issues."

"Mental health is such a significant issue for young people that we all need to play our part and work together to reduce suffering for kids and families," said Saifa Koonar, President & CEO of the ACHF. "The community helped build the Alberta Children's Hospital, the best facility possible for children with physical health issues. And now, together, we're going to do the same thing for young people struggling with mental health issues."

By offering new expanded services in the community, families will benefit from a broad spectrum of programming that will help stabilize and manage escalating illness with the goal of preventing hospitalization.
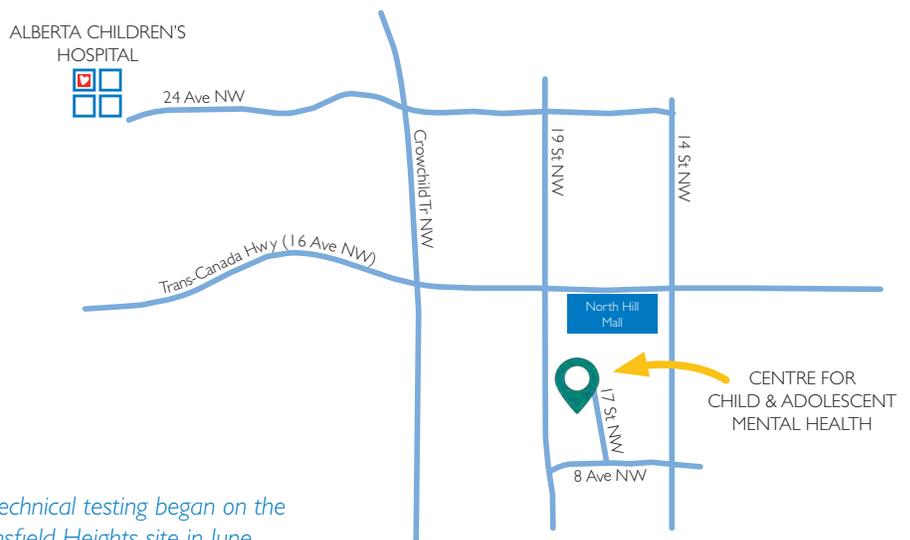
"This unique partnership between the Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation and AHS speaks to the importance of helping connect more children and teens to the mental health supports they need to live fulfilling, healthy lives," said Sarah Hoffman, Minister of Health. "I thank the Foundation and its donors for their commitment and generosity in supporting expanded health care delivery for Calgary families."

This less-institutional delivery approach offers more readily available mental health services in the community, making it more convenient for patients and families to access treatment. The new Centre will provide a comprehensive continuum of coordinated, integrated, and seamless intervention services for youth suffering from mental health disorders, and their families.

Sahuri Architects is leading the design of the new facility to be located in northwest Calgary, in the community of Hounsfield Heights - Briar Hill. Construction will begin in Fall 2019 and is expected to take about two years.

> ## "We all need to play our part and work together to reduce suffering for kids and families."
>
> *- Saifa Koonar, ACHF*

Geotechnical testing began on the Hounsfield Heights site in June

ALBERTA CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

24 Ave NW

Crowchild Tr NW

19 St NW

14 St NW

Trans-Canada Hwy (16 Ave NW)

North Hill Mall

17 St NW

8 Ave NW

CENTRE FOR CHILD & ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH

Together, the Alberta Children's Hospital Foundation and Alberta Health Services will build the first stand-alone centre for child and adolescent mental health in Calgary.

(L-R): Steve Stretch, Board Vice Chair, ACHF; Dr. Brenda Hemmelgarn, Vice Chair, Board, AHS; Dr. Sid Viner, Zone Medical Director, Calgary Zone, AHS; Saifa Koonar, President & CEO, ACHF; Karen Radford, Board Chair, ACHF

With inspiring grace and courage, Julia Caddy shared her personal journey to mental health during the Centre announcement at the Alberta Children's Hospital this past spring.

"I'm 19 years old and I'm happy to say that I've just finished my first year of university – and first year away from home - at McGill in Montreal.

Today, in Canada, suicide is one of the leading causes of death for people in my age group. I know way too many teenagers who have tried to take their lives. And way too many who have wanted to. In fact, I'm one of them.

When I was in grade 8, I was diagnosed with anxiety and depression. I was prescribed medication and I went to weekly counselling, but in January of grade nine, I was hospitalized because I was suicidal and had developed an eating disorder.

This might sound weird, but I actually didn't think I was "sick enough" to need help. There's so much stigma around mental health, and the way it's portrayed in the media is so sensational that—since I didn't look like those people on TV or in those ads—I didn't think I deserved the help I needed. I didn't have cancer. I didn't have a broken leg. I had a broken mind. And since it was my mind that was broken, I found myself faced not with chemotherapy or a cast but instead with shame and denial.

Looking back now, I understand that what I was dealing with was just as serious as other life-threatening illnesses kids are facing in this hospital. But I didn't get it back then.

Once I got here, a team of incredible people saved my life. They intervened medically…and then helped me find myself again. I'm in a much better place today and am so grateful to have gotten the care I needed in time. I owe this hospital my life.

The sad thing is there are too many young people who don't know what to do when they're overwhelmed by mental health issues. They don't know where to turn for help. Or sometimes, even if they do know they can go to Emergency, they're nervous about going to a hospital.

So when I heard about the new Centre, I was thrilled. And hopeful. And grateful that people want to build a place for young people just like me. It's a chance to remove some of the stigma. And to provide help for kids as soon as they're not feeling well.

I'm sharing my story with you today because I believe it's incredibly important to talk about mental health – to normalize conversations about it. Actually, I think teenagers deserve some credit for talking about it way more than people my parents' or my grandparents' age ever did.

I truly believe ours is the generation that can change how the world approaches mental health.

Of course we can't do it alone. We need initiatives like this Centre. And we need support and understanding from more people like all of you.

To all the individuals & families who are facing mental illness: I promise you there is light.

I have found my light again, and the hope is that this Centre will bring back that light to each and every young person who finds themselves in darkness."