

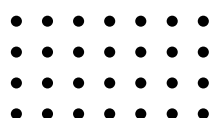


SMILE Canada  
Support Services



# 2023/24 Annual Report

SMILECAN.ORG



# Message from Chief Executive Officer



SMILE Canada  
Support Services

Greetings of Peace,

This past year, SMILE Canada - Support Services made tremendous strides. We now support over 1000 children and youth with disabilities and their families across Canada. Increasingly at SMILE we are getting referrals from newcomer children with disabilities and long term health conditions who are facing intersections of ableism, xenophobia, Islamophobia and racism. SMILE Canada has been instrumental in supporting racialized and newcomer families gaining access to critical support and services.

This year, we applied to multiple grants and were the successful recipients of the Ontario Trillium Foundation, Canada Service Corps Youth Grant, United Way and TD Ready Commitment grants. With this funding, we are able to support families in a number of ways including through direct service navigation in multiple languages, youth entrepreneurship development programs, and life skills support, with the unique opportunity to conduct outreach to Afghan, Arab, and Somali communities.

With the help and dedication of our incredible staff, volunteers, SMILE families, and supporters, we carried out impactful change and accomplished many goals. We look forward to another year of success with your support.

Sincerely,

Dr. Sukaina Dada

Chief Executive Officer



# Volunteer Board of Directors



SMILE Canada  
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## **Bilal Khan - President**

Bilal Khan is the Manager of the Analytical Unit at the Ministry of Solicitor General. He contributes heavily to the development of our organization and continues to work behind the scenes for SMILE.

## **Sharmin Sadia - Treasurer**

Sharmin Sadia is an accountant at Toronto Hospital who is an integral part of the SMILE team. She plays a major role in organizing SMILE's financial records and budget. Her energy and passion for SMILE exude into the work that she does and we are so grateful to have her on our team.

## **Asma Bala - Vice President**

Asma Bala is a Toronto-based lawyer with McCarthy Tétrault LLP who joined the SMILE board in 2018. She is passionate about social justice causes including mental health and disability, and through her experiences working for our board, she has been a great asset to the SMILE team.

## **Fatema Dada - Program Director**

Fatema Dada is a practicing human rights lawyer and she is legal counsel at the Ontario Human Rights Commission. She is one of the first board members of SMILE and has been heavily involved in program development and SMILE initiatives since 2008. Fatema is passionate about SMILE and our causes and continues to be vocal about disability justice.

## **Fatima Mussa - Secretary**

Fatima Mussa is a public health professional who is currently a Project Coordinator at the CIHR's Institute of Population and Public Health. She has experience in community-based research and is an advocate for refugee and immigrant communities in Toronto. Her skills and experiences are incredibly important and beneficial to our organization

# About SMILE



SMILE Canada  
Support Services

SMILE Canada - Support Services is a registered Canadian charity (846663623RR0001) operating for 15+ years with a primary mandate focused on promoting the social inclusion of children and youth with disabilities from diverse underserved and underrepresented communities, including newcomer and refugee families. Grounded in the principles of equity and advocacy, SMILE works towards shaping inclusive and accessible spaces for children and youth by eliminating barriers in various institutional systems including healthcare, education, and social services.

SMILE's efforts have expanded significantly, addressing gaps in service provision, advocacy, and community support. Their efforts encompass multiple facets in improving the lifestyles of SMILE children and youth and their families through various programs and initiatives focused on skills development, education, and direct family support - providing families with the tools and knowledge to advocate for their rights and navigate the complex landscape of disability

# Our Vision

Our vision is to ensure that all children and youth are smiling. Our plan of action to do this is by supporting families through various programs and services in a culturally safe and responsive manner.



## Our Mission

SMILE Canada - Support Services is a registered Canadian charity dedicated to supporting racialized children and youth with disabilities and their families, with a focus area on diverse communities including refugee and immigrant families.

# Overview of Outcomes



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Support Services

# 2024

in 2024, SMILE has achieved the following outcomes through direct and indirect services:

- Enhancing the health and well-being of racialized and newcomer families in Canada
  - Demonstrated 77% improvement in access to and utilization of healthcare services for families
- Increasing access to healthcare services for racialized and newcomer disabled children:
  - Through the accessibility fund, children and youth were able to receive essential therapy services including speech, occupational, behavioural, IBI, ABA, and physiotherapy to improve health and overall quality of life
  - Through language specific support groups, newcomers receive support in their spoken language with a trained service navigator.
  - Through the hospital support program, families benefited from critical hospital supports provided to racialized children and youth in long-term hospital stays
- Enhancing cultural competency amongst healthcare professionals serving marginalized populations
  - Provided in-person training and workshops to over 500 professionals across Canada
  - 80% improvement of trained professionals in culturally responsive practices and disability support
  - Provided virtual support to thousands of professionals across Canada (Paediatric Grand Rounds)
- SMILE also supports students who are getting into the field of healthcare and social services for example, SMILE Supports University of Toronto's Medical School Students through community based placements, McMaster's Occupational Therapy Students, TMU's medical school curriculum and black-student initiative through advisory councils, and University of Waterloo's Co-Op Work placements.

# FAMILY SUPPORT & SERVICES



SMILE Canada  
Support Services

## Programs & Services

SMILE aims to support families who have children and youth with disabilities that come from racialized and marginalized communities. In response to the needs of children, youth, families, and community, SMILE is proud to continue to provide a hybrid of in-person and virtual support, programs and services to all families. In 2024 we were awarded multiple grants allowing us to expand our programs and provide support to more families across Canada.

### Service Navigation

Service navigation provides support to families by connecting parents and caregivers with local healthcare, education and social services resources. Service navigation is offered in multiple languages such as English, Urdu, Somali, Arabic, and Farsi. We prioritize support for families who require language-specific services as they often face unique and compounded challenges, including systemic discrimination, limited access to resources, and cultural and language barriers. Service navigators are responsible for intake meetings with families that identify the needs of children and youth and their families.

Assessments that the Service Navigators conduct provide SMILE with insight on how to best support families, taking into account their diverse backgrounds and intersectional needs. The service navigation team provides service delivery in a culturally relevant manner, compiling useful resources for families and providing input on events and programs that help optimize the experience of SMILE children, youth and their families. Families are also connected with various government and private resources within the community to help access funding, respite, therapy, and other support.

### Wellness Check-ins

The Wellness Check-In Program has been instrumental to the success of SMILE programs and services during and post-pandemic. Every month, SMILE staff and volunteers call families at a time to ensure that they are receiving the necessary support they require. In total, the Service Navigation team conducted a total of 270 calls in 2024. These calls allow us to assess the needs and barriers that SMILE families face, including but not limited to: restricted access to food, housing insecurity, financial assistance, advocacy in healthcare and education, and more. Through wellness check-ins, we are able to better understand families' needs and adapt our programs and services accordingly.



# FAMILY SUPPORT & SERVICES



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## Accessibility Fund 2024

The Accessibility Fund, formerly known as the Scholarship Financial Assistance Program, is intended to aid marginalized low-income families with children and youth (ages 1 to 21) with disabilities and critical illnesses in Canada to access necessary therapeutic services and equipment to improve their quality of life. The program provides financial assistance for the following four streams:

1. Therapy services including but not limited to speech, occupational, behavioural, intensive behavioural intervention, applied behavioural analysis, and physiotherapy and fees for therapeutic camp services;
2. Respite Services to provide temporary relief to caregivers in caring for their child with a disability;
3. Adaptive Equipment (ceiling lifts, hospital beds, wheelchairs, etc.) & Sensory Items; and
4. Parent Coaching to connect families and caregivers to licensed therapists with a background in speech, language, and/or applied behavioural analysis (ABA) to address their child's needs through strategies and guidance.

In 2024, a total of **\$150,000** was allocated to provide aid and support to 152 families through the Accessibility Fund. The program continues to see a significant demand from families as it provides vital day-to-day support in their lives.

## Hospital Support Program

The *Hospital Support Program (HSP)* provides support to families that have children and youth in long-term hospital settings, including but not limited to:

- Parent support groups
- Counseling
- Child and parent/caregiver wellness packages
- Subsidized hospital parking and meals
- Respite services

We aim to provide social, emotional, and financial support to families in a culturally responsive manner, tailored to the needs of our families, such as providing culturally responsive and relevant meal options i.e. Halal. Currently, we serve children and youth in various hospitals such as Sick Kids Hospital, Holland Bloorview, and McMaster Hospital.

In 2024, 43 additional children were registered in the Hospital Support Program, supporting a total of 113 families.



# FAMILY SUPPORT & SERVICES



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## Embracing Somali Wellness Together - February 24, 2024



## Inclusive Summer Camp - August 15<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> 2023



## EDUCATION & ADVOCACY



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SMILE's Disability Awareness and Inclusion workshops are open to healthcare professionals, educators, community organizations and various institutions across Canada interested in implementing improved accessibility and inclusion policies and practices for those that access their services.



By attending SMILE training and workshops, various professionals and organizations have been able to improve their services through the implementation of culturally safe practices to better accommodate and meet the distinct needs of those at the intersection of racialization, disability, and newcomer status. In 2024, over 15 trainings and workshops were delivered to 1000+ healthcare professionals, settlement agencies, and community social service providers. Our educational and training workshops aim to spread awareness on the importance of providing culturally safe and responsive support to develop and promote inclusive and safe spaces. Our workshops aim to raise awareness on the intersectional needs of racialized families with children and youth with disabilities, focusing on newcomer families. They are designed to generate conversation, share examples and experiences, and increase participants' understanding of how they can contribute to their organization's journey toward a more inclusive society.

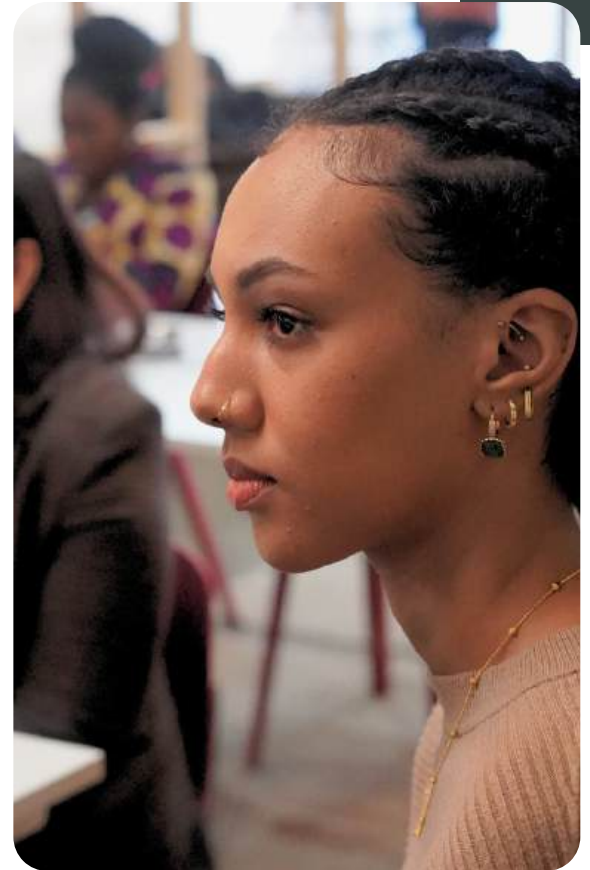
## EVENTS & CAMPAIGNS



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### **Critical Conversations - Sharing Untold Stories**

On March 5, 2024, McMaster University's CanChild Research Centre and SMILE Canada - Support Services held Sharing Untold Stories, an educational forum highlighting the journeys of newcomer and refugee children with disabilities and their families. Through a panel discussion, the event was designed to shed light on the critical yet overlooked experiences of newcomer populations who are often faced with distinct challenges when navigating the complexities of the Canadian healthcare system. SMILE newcomers and refugee families were invited to paint a picture of their personal expectations vs. realities of accessing healthcare services upon their arrival to a new country after fleeing war, political turmoil, and other pressing challenges in their home countries. While many of these families share similar narratives of exclusion, barriers to access, and discrimination, these stories are often unheard, unknown, discounted, and dismissed by healthcare practitioners. The event provided an opportunity to nearly 100 attendees working as healthcare practitioners and allied health professionals to actively listen to unheard voices, explore meaningful ways to offer support through holistic frameworks such as the F-words tool, and address existing barriers within the healthcare system.



### **Intersecting Narratives of Displacement and Disability: Critical Conversations on Culturally Safe Practice**

On December 5, 2024, SMILE Canada - Support Services held an educational event as part of the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) campaign titled, Intersecting Narratives of Displacement and Disability: Critical Conversations on Culturally Safe Practice. The event highlighted the complexities of intersectional challenges and the experiences of those directly impacted by displacement, trauma, and systemic inequities. Through a fireside chat, Asmaa Nasser and Rwan Muzamil described the barriers they encountered within the healthcare, education, and social services sectors. They shared personal narratives outlining their challenges in navigating complex institutional systems due to the lack of culturally safe practice, accessibility, and access to tailored resources. Following the fireside chat, attendees engaged in discussions and an action plan activity on how to implement culturally safe practice to better support racialized newcomer families with children and youth with disabilities.



## EVENTS & CAMPAIGNS



SMILE Canada  
Support Services

### Move4SMILE

#Move4SMILE is an annual SMILE campaign aimed to raise money for children and youth with disabilities in the community. It encourages community members to fundraise by engaging in sport, recreation and any activity to motivate others to be active in ways that work best for them. In 2024, 6 Move4SMILE events were held across the Greater Toronto Area including: Kick4SMILE, Hoop4SMILE (2), Walk4SMILE in Mississauga and Ottawa, and Paddle4SMILE. Fundraisers were invited to our exclusive RECFEST event in September to celebrate SMILE's impact in the community.



### RECFEST

This year, SMILE held its annual RECFEST at the Hangar in North York with over 1000 registrants. RECFEST is an inclusive and accessible sports carnival for children and youth. We had multiple activities and sports such as soccer, football, basketball, ball hockey, alongside a raffle draw with amazing prizes and more. Within each activity, we incorporated variations to ensure it was accessible so each child could participate and feel included. Various community organizations within social, healthcare, education, and community services were in attendance and connected with SMILE families during the event to expand and enhance service coordination amongst the community.

## EVENTS & CAMPAIGNS



SMILE Canada  
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### IDPWD 2024: A Journey Together

For December 3rd, SMILE ran its annual **International Day of Persons with Disabilities** campaign. In 2024, the theme was A Journey Together as we aim to support children with disabilities and their families within our local communities. As part of this campaign, the Education and Research team developed a lesson plan on topics of accessibility, inclusion, and supporting children with disabilities in the classroom. The lesson plan was distributed to 120 local elementary, middle, and high schools across the Greater Toronto Area.



*If you are an educator that is interested in receiving the lesson plan for your class, please  
contact [rwana.muzamil@smilecan.org](mailto:rwana.muzamil@smilecan.org).*

## Grants & Fundings



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### Canadian Race Relations Foundations (CRRF)

On February 13, 2024, SMILE Canada hosted a fireside chat event called Exploring the Intersection of Anti-Black Racism, Ableism, and Islamophobia. Funded by the Canadian Race Relations Foundation (CRRF), this Black History month event was an opportunity to engage 50 attendees in a vital discussion to examine the impacts of anti-Black racism within healthcare, education and social services. The event fostered meaningful dialogue about the overlapping systems of discrimination faced by Black communities, particularly at the intersection of racism, ableism and Islamophobia.



Canadian  
Race Relations  
Foundation



### Canadian Tire Jumpstart

In 2024, SMILE Canada conducted a series of Sports Clinics, funded by the Canadian Tire Jumpstart Community Development Grant, to provide opportunities for SMILE children and their siblings to participate in accessible and affordable sporting programs and activities.

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## Grants & Fundings



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Support Services

### Community Foundation of Mississauga

The Pendle Grant, awarded by the Community Foundation of Mississauga, supported a series of accessible and affordable recreational camp sessions for racialized children and youth with disabilities held across the city of Mississauga. The sessions aimed to bridge gaps in services for racialized children/youth with disabilities coming from low-income backgrounds who have experienced challenges of accessibility, inclusion, affordability, and lack of support. Through the support of respite workers and instructors, children and youth with disabilities received 1:1 support in group and individual activities to strengthen their social abilities and support their cognitive development. Logo placement: Community Foundation of Mississauga.



### Enabling Accessibility Fund



Through the support of the Enabling Accessibility Fund, SMILE Canada created and delivered multi-sensory mobile stations to both community spaces and transitional homes in Scarborough and Thorncliffe Park, including Sakeenah Canada shelter homes and Thorncliffe Park Autism Support Network community space. The stations are intended to fill the gap of culturally responsive social services available to marginalized communities, focusing on racialized children and youth with disabilities fleeing domestic violence and/or have lack of access to affordable supports. SMILE Canada's multi-sensory mobile station increases overall accessibility by providing various tools to address the needs of children with sensory processing disorders (ADHD, anxiety, Autism, sensory overload). The stations consist of auditory, visual, muscle sense, movement, and sensory dampening equipment.



## Grants & Fundings



SMILE Canada  
Support Services

### ESDC Canada Service Corps

SMILE's Community Heroes is funded by Canada Service Corps, a national movement that empowers youth aged 15-30 to gain experience and build important skills while giving back to their community. In 2023, 40 participants sought out project initiatives meant to improve the social scope of their local communities, including, but not limited to: disability awareness events and workshops, care package deliveries to those in need, and bridging relationships with local grassroots organizations. Through community engagement, participants were encouraged to not only develop interests and passions, but also build connections within the greater community leading to positive impacts on their social well-being and greater social connections

# CANADA SERVICE CORPS



### ESDC Canada Summer Jobs

The Canada Summer Jobs grant supported SMILE Canada in employing 5 racialized Canadian youth in areas of service navigation, programming, and research to further expand culturally safe services for racialized children and youth with disabilities and their families across Canada. The youth were responsible for supporting the planning and development of major SMILE events including Move4SMILE and the annual RECFEST event, to provide SMILE families with access to accessible and inclusive community programming.

## Grants & Fundings



SMILE Canada  
Support Services

### Humaniti

As part of the Emergency Response Program, Humaniti granted SMILE Canada funding to hire an Emergency Response Coordinator and critical respite support to provide crucial support to 150 vulnerable families impacted by war and displacement, grappling with long-term critical health conditions and complex disabilities.

# Humaniti<sup>™</sup>

FOUNDATION



International Development  
and Relief Foundation

### International Development and Relief Foundation (IDRF)

International Development and Relief Foundation (IDRF) granted SMILE Canada funding to further expand critical support and culturally safe service navigation for Arabic and Urdu-speaking families through the hiring of additional Service Navigators.

## Grants & Fundings



SMILE Canada  
Support Services

### Islamic Relief Canada (IRC)

Islamic Relief Canada (IRC) partnered with SMILE Canada to provide training and workshops to professionals and community leaders and collaborate on a December 3rd IDPD campaign to promote inclusion and accessibility in community spaces. SMILE's workshops challenge existing approaches in addressing the diverse needs of this priority population.



Ontario  
Trillium  
Foundation



Fondation  
Trillium  
de l'Ontario

An agency of the Government of Ontario  
Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

### Ontario Trillium Foundation

With the support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation's Resilient Fund, SMILE Canada hired two service navigators to provide tailored and one-on-one support to the growing Arabic and Urdu-speaking families requiring culturally safe support for their child registering with the organization. SMILE continues to see an increase in newcomer families requiring connection to culturally responsive services to access resources and referrals to address the financial, social, and health needs of their child with a disability.

## Grants & Fundings



SMILE Canada  
Support Services

### **Surrey Place Urgent Response Services Program**

Through the support of Surrey Place, SMILE Canada supported 37 high needs families requiring urgent response services through emergent and culturally responsive intervention support. The partnership entails formalized training and streamlined processes, relationship building, and strengthened stakeholder engagement between the organizations. SMILE staff received training with Surrey Place on URS and coordinated services and SMILE provided presentations to partner organizations involved in the URS program on their processes.



**TD READY  
COMMITMENT**

### **TD Ready Commitment Grant**

With the support of TD Bank through the TD Ready Commitment Grant, SMILE Canada created and distributed self-regulatory toolkits to 50 organizations and institutions across Ontario to make their spaces more inclusive and accessible. Organizations and institutions receiving the toolkits include community spaces such as libraries, schools, religious institutions, social service centres, and healthcare spaces.

## Grants & Fundings



SMILE Canada  
Support Services

### United Way Greater Toronto

Funded by the United Way Greater Toronto (UWGT) Community Program grant, the Open Shop and the Roots programs are dedicated to supporting youth with disabilities in providing them with skills development training in entrepreneurship, financial literacy, independent living, and life skills.

#### Roots Program

The Roots Program, conducted in collaboration with the Thorncliffe Park Autism Support Network (TPASN), worked towards building the personal and professional skills necessary in racialized youth with disabilities in order for them to excel and succeed in life. With a focus on life skills, employment and financial literacy, each stream has goals of youth development and enhancing social skills. In 2024, over 20 participants benefited and graduated from the program.

#### Open Shop

The Open Shop program supports the development of entrepreneurship in SMILE youth - providing support in marketing, product development, essential funding, mentorship, and unwavering support by SMILE Project Coordinators. In 2024, the program successfully launched the businesses of 6 individuals, whilst sustaining support for 5 individuals from the previous year. This assistance enabled them to transform their passion into a reality and provided a revitalized sense of purpose as they developed foundational skill sets in entrepreneurship, marketing, community engagement, and self-confidence.



**United Way**  
**Greater Toronto**

# SMILE

## Revenues

### Statement of Operations & Changes in Fund Balance - June 30, 2024

Type	Amount
Contributions	\$486,446
Contributions - Zakaat	\$346,199
Grants	\$664,192
Events Fundraising Income	\$11,901
Non-Receipted Donations	\$76,480
Other Revenue	\$2450
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,587,668</b>

# SMILE Expenditures

## Statement of Operations & Changes in Fund Balance - June 30, 2024

Type	Amount
Family Support Services	\$1,463,276
Administrative Expenses	\$36,556
Fundraising Costs	\$45,481
Professional Fees	\$17,118
Bank Charges	\$439
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,562,870</b>





# LEARN MORE ABOUT SMILE

Visit [smilecan.org](http://smilecan.org)

