

2022 – 2023

Annual

Report



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MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This annual report provides an overview of the regular activities of the Society programs and staff, along with any changes and new programs during the **April 1, 2022 – March 31, 2023** fiscal year.

Our Board and Staff members are honoured by another year of delivering services that support our communities and enhance the lives of those that live in the Similkameen Valley. We are grateful for ongoing funding and program partners that support our services to the community. We strive to respond efficiently to new opportunities while ensuring that our ongoing services are relevant, inclusive, effective and client-focused for our community members. We promote and support programs and services delivered by others in our community as well as providing program & office space to outside organizations providing services in our area.



Sarah Martin
Executive Director

This has been an interesting year as we reemerged from pandemic response and began to orient to a new post-pandemic operating environment, a changed labour market, and a physical environment that anticipates extreme weather events and temperatures to be more frequent, requiring additional planning and preparation.

Construction activities including regular team meetings with many project partners, design decisions, financial claims management, and other related tasks over the past 5 years are winding down, as 3 new housing communities moved from construction to occupancy. This transition saw additional work transferred from the administrative and finance team to the housing team, with a focus on policy development and tenant selection during a very busy rent-up period, and ongoing tenant relations, building operations and maintenance.

In conjunction with the completion of the Ambrosia building, the Lower Similkameen Community Services Society (LSCSS) moved our offices in October 2022. This was a demanding project requiring much coordination and team effort and support!

In consultation with BC Housing and other advisors, and in acknowledgement of aging physical equipment, the Society transitioned to Microsoft Office 365 Non-Profit and cloud file storage in 2022. This also required team effort and support, as staff learned and adapted to new technologies.

The Society's 2022-25 Strategic Plan and priorities continued to guide our work throughout the year. The Society continues to focus on updating Board roles and policies and reducing demands on the volunteer Board by transitioning operational duties to Staff. The monthly Board Agenda has been updated and the contents of the agenda package reduced to primarily governance items. This has reduced the length of the monthly Board meeting to a manageable average of 1 hour! The Executive Director's Report to the Board has been updated, moving towards summarizing operational actions through the lens of the strategic plan and identifying any risks/liability concerns. Board Development & Recruitment activities were also reviewed, resulting in a streamlined format.



Julie Ellison
Manager of
Operations & Finance

As identified in our Strategic Plan, Human Resources or "People & Culture" is our number one asset and priority. Also, as identified in last year's annual report, staff burn-out, recruitment and retention, and managing workloads and wellness are ongoing challenges; we continue to see changes on our staff and board team. Despite these challenges, the staff team continue to show their commitment to our clients and communities every day. They show up, with kindness and empathy, providing an incredible diversity of services. Current and new staff continue

to learn new skills, to adapt, to accept challenges, and to support each other and the organization. The Society continues to pride itself on a creative and inclusive approach to rural recruitment and capacity development.

It is a pleasure to work with the amazing team of Staff, Volunteers and Board Members, and gratifying to provide services that make a difference in the lives of our community members. I have been with LSCSS for 15 years in June 2023.

Working with Brian Mennell as Chair of the organization for another year has been rewarding. Brian's support, lateral thinking and philanthropic social activism are inspiring and empowering.

Welcoming Tim Guthrie in the Treasurer position has been a pleasure. Tim brings many years of experience from the Executive Director position to the Board. Along with the Chair, the Society Treasurer role continues to be one of the more involved Board positions. Tim's regular attendance and oversight are appreciated.

I am grateful for another year with Julie Ellison; Julie's consistent systematic and thorough methodology provides a strong backbone for the organization – and a perfect complement and contrast to my own skill set.

The continuity of having Eileen Oliver-Bauer as third-party accounting support was observed and commented on by the Auditors. Our books are complicated, and having the previous ED with her extensive experience and history with our operations providing month and year end accounting services is a real asset and a pleasure.

Jenn Nelson has rapidly evolved from part-time finance clerk to a full-time and robust member of the administrative team, taking on a great diversity of projects and showing real strength with advanced finance, promotion and marketing, systems, and other tasks, and with a cheerful smile and kind heart.

I am thankful to the Board for their support and the opportunity to lead the organization through another year of opportunities and challenges in our efforts to fulfill the Society's mission and meet the needs of the community.



MESSAGE FROM CHAIR

What an exciting year this has been. Completion of Ambrosia, Quail Crossing and Cactus Court and then dealing with all the startup challenges and complexities of filling all sixty-seven suites in the summer and fall of 2022 was a large endeavour. Our administration and housing staff have done a fantastic job.

The transition of staff and services into Ambrosia was another amazing exercise that showed the strength and adaptability of the dedicated team that makes the Society so great. They had to adjust to many startup problems as well as managing Covid-19 outbreaks in one housing community and the office.

Many of the planned changes and guidance that was developed from the Strategic Planning sessions we did with Frank Growth Solutions have been put into action. The key ones that have affected the Board are reduced work and information overload, reduced financial signing obligations, (transferred to Staff), less “hands on” and more Governance of policy, future direction and growth of the Society and its assets.

We have changed the structure of the Board Nominating Committee and transitioned it to what we call the Board Development Committee. This will now be an active full year committee made up of three appointments from our membership and two Board members. We have encouraged potential candidates to get to know more about our activities by attending Board meetings and having tours of all the offices and housing sites that we operate. We also hope to do a much more detailed and involved “onboarding” of the new Board members once elected.

The Society received three very significant funding grants this year:

- A CMHC development grant of \$89,000 to hire a Development Contactor to prepare for Ambrosia 2. He is working with the building committee to have all the preliminary work done to be “shovel ready” to develop our other two lots. Our vision is a four-story apartment block with commercial sized kitchen on the first floor and 24 to 32 units contingent on numbers of bedrooms per suite and allowable parking spaces as dictated by the Village.
- Innoweave Social Opportunities Funding to explore the potential for adding transportation services that advance the Society’s social mission while generating additional unrestricted revenue. We received the report in April from an outside Consultant. The valley’s increasing aging population is outgrowing our volunteer driver service. This study has looked at how the Society could invest or partner with others to get better transportation services within and out of the valley. The information could be used to apply for Federal funding for vehicles purchases if the Society chooses to go in that direction.
- Community Foundation Recovery Grant - \$50,000 to hire an outside consultant to do a comprehensive assessment of the Society’s systems and processes and then develop and redesign our organizational policies. We have gone through tremendous growth during Covid, and this work is necessary to help streamline office activities as well as up grade and rewrite the Society Policies, so they are current to the expected standards of a Not-for-Profit organization.



Brian Mennell
Chairperson
Board of Directors

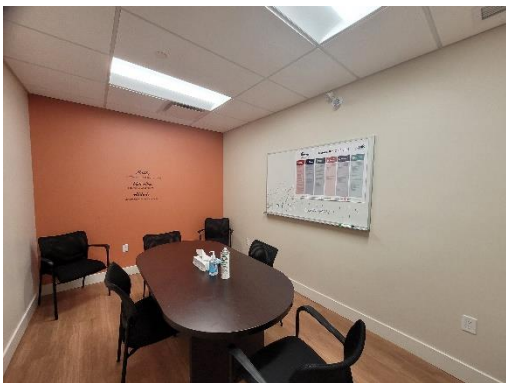
The Board and Society members carry the mandate to seek donations and fundraise.

We raised the \$345K needed for our down payment for our share of the offices in Ambrosia. With inflation and anticipated higher interest rates the Board made the decision to take \$55K from our hard-earned reserves and increase our down payment to \$400K. Even with this we will have difficulty paying our mortgage commitments with the rental fees we generate from the programs using the offices, due to rising interest rates.

Donations to the Society have in the past have been generous, and Ambrosia would not have happened without them. More donations are always welcome. Our mortgage on 310 Veterans Ave will come due September 2023. With only \$44K left to pay we are looking at paying this out if our finances permit. This is a good area to apply donations received before September 2023.

The Board's job is to assess the risks and problems that are confronting the administration and how to reduce them. The most troublesome issue is retaining staff and employees, identifying improvements we can make to the workplace environment to retain people and encourage engaged and dynamic individuals to fill new and replacement positions. To help find out whether turnover is just a result of the times, Covid, lack of housing and our location, or some other issues in our workplace environment that is causing it we are contracting a Human Resources Consultant to help assess the situation. Also given the large payroll and number of employees, the Board has budgeted \$10,000 for employee recognition and good will. How it will be used will be determined by a committee formed from next years Board.

To avoid the risk of leaving someone out I will make a big THANK YOU to all the people and organizations who have contributed to making the Society such a valuable and important contributor to the well being and health of our valley.



MISSION, VISION, VALUES

WHO WE ARE

Lower Similkameen Community Services Society (LSCSS) is a non-profit organization bringing programs, services and opportunities to people in the communities of the Similkameen.

OUR MISSION

Lower Similkameen Community Services Society (LSCSS) is committed to provide, facilitate, and promote excellent programs that enhance quality of life by improving the social conditions, housing, health and education of our citizens.

OUR VALUES

- ❖ Independence
- ❖ Promoting good physical and mental health
- ❖ Supporting a safe and healthy community
- ❖ Building community ties
- ❖ Providing a high quality of care
- ❖ Creativity

STRATEGIC PLAN & PRIORITIES

In February 2022, the Board of Directors, along with the Executive Director, Manager of Operations & Finance, and Housing Coordination team engaged with FRANK Growth Solutions to develop a 3-year strategic plan to guide the Society into the future. The Strategic Plan is based on 6 pillars that require success in each area to achieve greatness, following are the top five priorities for each pillar.



HUMAN RESOURCES

1. Encourage a culture of Empathy, Efficiency, adaptability, humour and transparency across all sites.
2. Hold regular Staff and Board meetings to encourage “team Concept” across all representatives.
3. Focus on recruiting and retaining staff to lighten workloads and increase capacity.
4. Improve onboarding, training and orientation for Board, Staff and Volunteers.
5. Promote and support an environment of wellness and work-life balance.

ASSET MANAGEMENT

1. Ensure all housing communities are fully occupied.
2. Assess Society’s bankable equity and assets.
3. Review investments for healthy returns.
4. Conduct a housing needs assessment for the development of vacant lots.
5. Maintain society reserves in conjunction with capital planning.

FINANCIAL HEALTH

1. Generate review through donations, grant applications, investment returns and maximizing occupancy.
2. Explore opportunities for offset costs in offices with daily and weekly rentals.
3. Continue to maintain and seek long-term contracts for housing.
4. Investigate and implement social enterprises revenue streams.
5. Maintain healthy cash-flow.

SERVICES & PROGRAMS

1. Maintain adequate staffing.
2. Promote inclusivity, specifically for LGBTQ2, Indigenous, and New Canadian communities.
3. Lobby for transportation and childcare.
4. Expand of offering for children and families, mental health, ESL related outreach and migrant workers.
5. Continue to provide seniors with community-based services to meet their needs.

ADMINISTRATION

1. Review, update and implement risk management system.
2. Ensure security both physical and digital.
3. Emergency preparedness planning for pandemic, environmental and crisis events.
4. Refining and simplifying framework for Board, Treasurer and Society.
5. Empowering Senior Administrative Team with more operational controls.

COMMUNITY

1. Clearly defining responsibilities of Staff and Board.
2. Developing an advertising and marketing strategy for cohesive messaging and branding.
3. Enhancing strategic partnerships with community organizations
4. Creating and hosting events to reach new potential clients, members and businesses.
5. Encourage programs to deliver programs together such as seniors and toddlers.



MESSAGE FROM TREASURER

This wraps up my first year as Treasurer of the Society and it has been an eventful one.

The role of Treasurer has changed dramatically with the addition of more people working on financial tasks and with significant delegation of authority to staff. New procedures have been put in place to allow senior staff to have more flexibility to process payments and to define the limits of their financial approval authority. To keep pace with the Society's growth we have increased the limit on the Credit Card used by staff to facilitate purchases. To recognize the divide between Board and Management duties the Board no longer directly oversees monthly cash control reporting.

As in past years, the Society relies on the auditors to be the final review of our statements and our procedures. Throughout the year, the Treasurer works with Administrative staff to review payments and receipts.

The Treasurer attends weekly to sign cheques and disburse online payments as well as reviewing payroll, contract, investment and other financial documents as necessary.

The Society completed the Ambrosia Building project this fiscal year and with the significant cash infusion needed to secure our portion of the building, we will record a loss in the 2022 /2023 financial year. I hope everyone has had a chance to view the new building and will agree with that it is an investment worthy of using the reserves built up by the Society in previous years. Overall, the Society continues to be in a sound financial position.

The Society continues to review the programs we offer for effectiveness and financial viability. We are not planning to initiate any new building projects for the next fiscal year but instead focus on staff recruitment and retention and put the chaos of Covid and three housing projects coming online simultaneously - behind us. This may not be totally within our control since we must be prepared to act if grant monies become available.

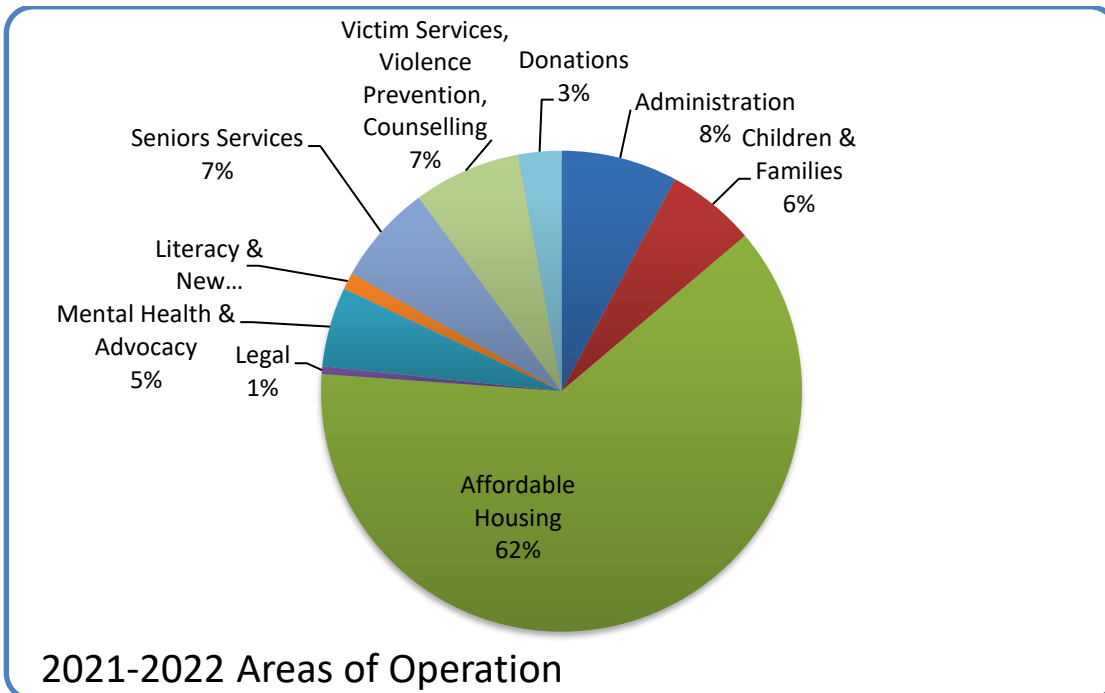
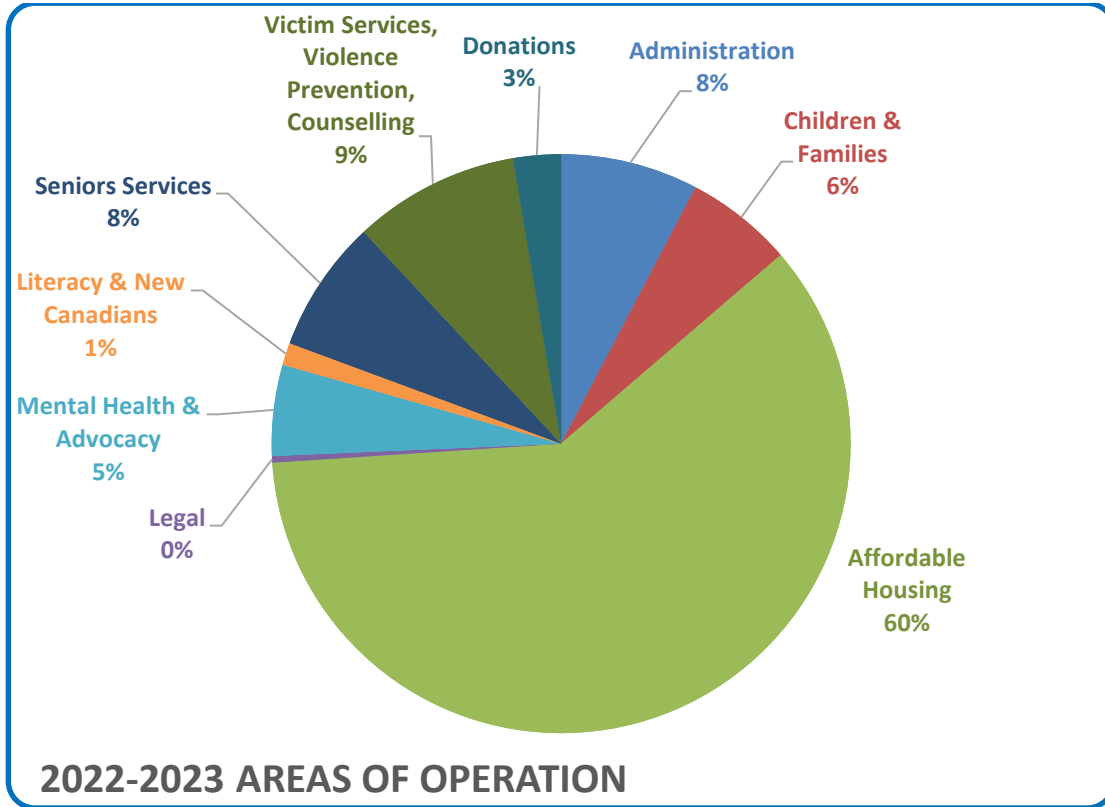
I have enjoyed learning about the Society and helping to spend your money! Thank you to all of the staff and board for their support in this past year.



Timothy Guthrie
Treasurer
Board of Directors

FUNDING DISTRIBUTION

The two pie graphs below are a visual representation of the percentage of funding received from different programming areas. The top chart represents the current fiscal year that just concluded in March of 2023 and the bottom chart represents our previous fiscal year ending in March 2022.



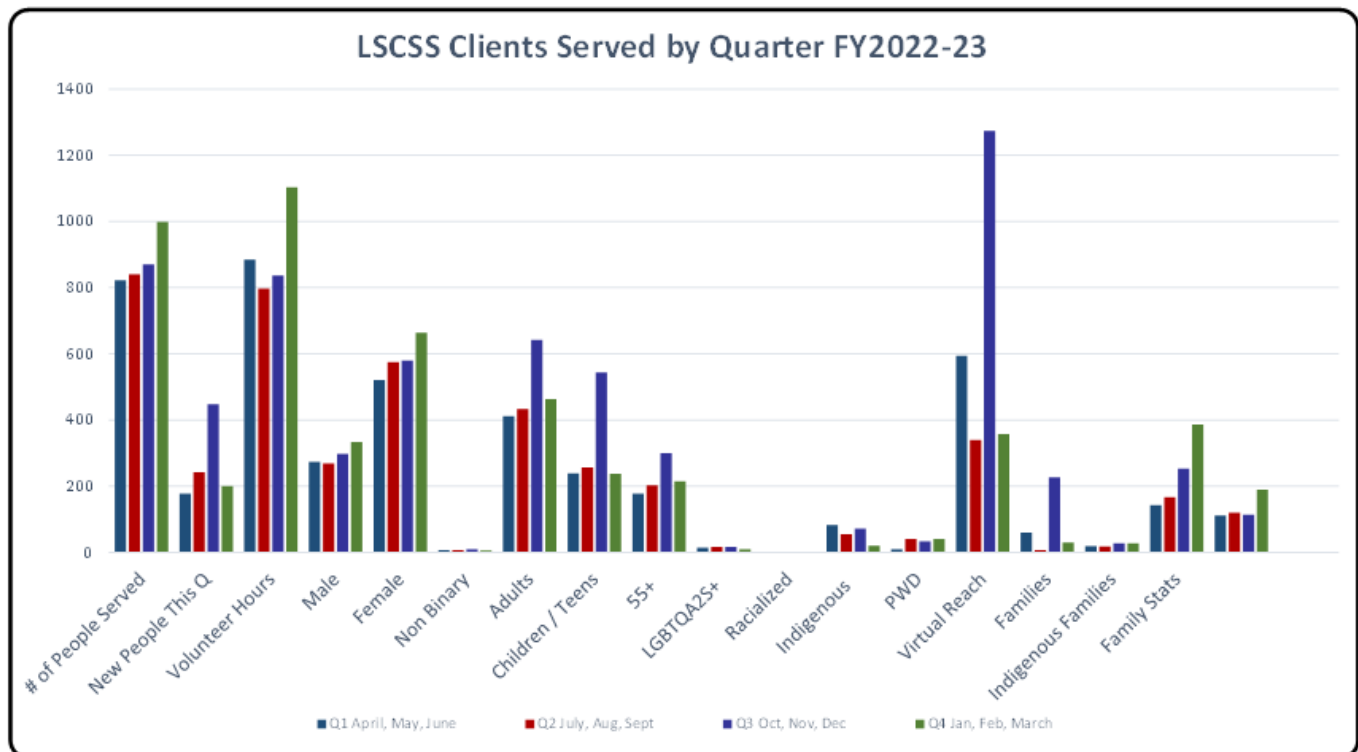
COMMUNITY IMPACT

Part of the success of the Society is connecting with individuals in the community and working to improve their lives in accordance with our mission and values.

As seen the funding contribution above housing comprises a large portion of the Society’s revenue and directly impacts 123 families of various sizes living in the 6 housing developments. Of note, 67 suites have been added since July 2022.

The greater outreach to the community is from the Community & Social Services programs which helps over 1,700 individuals in our communities of Keremeos, Cawston, Olalla, Hedley and Princeton (Child & Youth Mental Health). Below is a graphical representation of our client distribution over the year.

Many of the programs rely on volunteers to help them be successful and we would like to take this opportunity to recognize that these individuals contributed over 3,600 hours. In addition to the volunteer hours reflected below we thank the volunteers that help at our housing facilities and the incredible Volunteer Board of Directors for all their time, knowledge, and involvement.



PROGRAM UPDATES

Following is a brief description of each of our community & social service programs, together with a commentary on significant changes, projects or statistics:

ADMINISTRATION

- ❖ The Society's administrative team is responsible for implementing the strategic goals of the Board of Directors, and for: financial and asset management, contract administration, program & service development and accountability, human resources management, Board support and Society administration & governance; community relations, and general oversight of the Society's activities.
- ❖ The team for 2022-23 included: Sarah Martin, Executive Director; Julie Ellison, Manager of Operations & Finance; Jenn Nelson, Finance Clerk & Administrative Support; and Eileen Oliver-Bauer, contracted accounting services. Lisa Flex, Coordinator of Volunteers and Senior Services also provides general administrative support.
- ❖ I am honoured by this team's commitment to the organization, our mission, and the community. The enthusiasm, determination and patience put into their incredibly demanding roles, tasks and challenges is amazing and makes this team a great pleasure to work with.
- ❖ With the completion of the Ambrosia affordable housing building, the Society now has two locations: 715-7th Street (Commercial Space Ambrosia Ground Floor) & 310 Veterans Avenue. The Society moved its administrative offices and many of our programs to the new location at 715 7th Street in October 2022. The Early Years and PEACE Programs remain at 310 Veterans Ave, in what we call the Family Centre. Additional office space at 310 Veterans Ave. has been made available on a cost-recovery basis to other providers of health and social services. We are pleased to be hosting family medical practice, physiotherapy, registered massage therapist, eyeglass purchase and fitting, foot care, and others at this location.

COMMUNITY & SOCIAL SERVICES

ADULT DAY SERVICES

- ❖ The Adult Day Services program funded by Interior Health provides a range of health, social and recreational supports to help improve and maintain the well-being of older adults and adults with disabilities in the community, as referred by the Community Care Nurses. Services are designed to help individuals to remain at home and include health education and monitoring, personal care, therapeutic social and recreational programs and caregiver respite, resources and support. This part-time program has capacity for up to 12 participants; there are currently 7 active participants.



- ❖ While previously hosted at Kyalami Place Assisted Living, COVID-19 pandemic response and restrictions saw this program adapted to a stand-alone program. The program is now hosted in The Gathering Place – an amenity space in the Ambrosia building from 9:30 am – 3:30 pm. Participants enjoy refreshments and a midday meal This program was Coordinated by Candice Robertson in 2022-23.

ADULT MENTAL HEALTH & ACTIVITIES – KEREMEOS

- ❖ Interior Health funds the Adult Mental Health Program, also known as Gustavson House. This funding supports psycho-social rehabilitation services in the domains of Employment, Education, Leisure and Wellness & Basic Living Skills to adults suffering from chronic mental illness through socialization, education and support. Additional federal funds provide support for pre-employment, employment and volunteerism education and skill development.
- ❖ A diversity of services and activities are planned as per client interests and goals. Activities include: social groups, arts and crafts, games and discussion groups; facilitated exercise; seasonal activities and outings and information sharing. This part-time program has capacity for up to 18 participants; there are currently 17 active members. Gustavson House is Coordinated by Signe Percevault and is now hosted in The Gathering Place at Ambrosia.

COMMUNITY WORKER PROGRAM

- ❖ The Community Worker Program focuses on eliminating client psychosocial concerns from physician's visits to strengthen the quality of connection between patients and family doctors to a more medically centered consultation. By alleviating the psychosocial challenges of the patient through the assistance and support of the Community Worker, the program can ensure the appointment process is pertinent and targeted to primary health concerns.
- ❖ The Community Worker links clients to resources available in the community that will benefit all aspects of their lives. The Worker may also support unattached vulnerable (i.e. chronic pain, Mental Health & Substance Use) patients to find a family doctor through offering support that will help to stabilize the patient and increase the likelihood that a GP will take them on as a patient. (E.g., supporting vulnerable or complex clients with making appointments on time, interacting with the physician and clinic staff, assisting with filling out forms, etc.). This program is funded by Interior Health – LSCSS has a third-party contract with One Sky Community Resources in Penticton. The Community Worker works in partnership with the Primary Care Network.
- ❖ Shoneugh (Sho) Lindsay retired from the Community Worker position in December 2022, and we welcomed John Wiersema to the Worker position. This program is well utilized, appreciated by the clients and provides a much-needed service. This program is in high demand assisting people with applying for disability, pension and other benefits and supporting clients in accessing virtual services. Accessing virtual service by telephone and internet is a significant barrier in a rural population, particularly with clients who may struggle with poverty concerns, hearing impairment or low technological literacy. This part-time program was supporting 56 active clients at year-end.

CHILD & YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES (CYMH) PRINCETON

- ❖ The Child and Youth Mental Health Program (CYMH) is funded to 0.8 FTE by the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) and has had additional support from the Society to 1.0 FTE. CYMH provides a range of free and voluntary mental health services and supports for children from 0-18 years of age and their families. These services include assessments, therapy and treatment, education and referrals to specialized programs and resources. Because most of the children and youth who require services are identified through the school system, the Ministry and Schools work closely with the Society and Clinician to co-ordinate the effective provision of this service.



- ❖ Jamie Holloway, MACP, is the Princeton clinician. The clinical caseload of the Princeton practitioner is typically high, with clients with complex needs; particularly in comparison to other CYMH catchments in the South

Okanagan/Similkameen. This was exacerbated by environmental emergencies including loss of homes due to flooring. Client caseload at year-end is 35.

- ❖ LSCSS has been lobbying for funding to support a full-time Clinician for many years. This year MCFD announced that they would be hiring an internal clinician to support both Princeton and Keremeos. Recruitment for skilled clinicians in this rural community is very challenging. We look forward to additional support for this high-needs community.

DONATIONS

- ❖ Donations from the community are received by the Society throughout the year. Some are for specific programs and/or fundraising campaigns while other donations are gifted to the Society for use wherever there is need. These donations support un-funded programs including counselling for men; rec centre, pool passes and camp fees for any family with affordability concerns, Christmas hampers, emergency support for those experiencing urgent hardship or disaster and other concerns that arise.
- ❖ This fiscal year the Society received donations to support programs that struggle with budget sustainability including the Stopping the Violence Women's Counselling Program, Better At Home for Seniors, Starfish Backpack, and additional donations to support the Society's new offices in the Ambrosia building, which are a significant financial commitment for the organization, and will be for years to come. The generous support of the community is well appreciated by the Society staff and those we assist.

EARLY YEARS FAMILY CENTRE & COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN (CAPC)

- ❖ The Early Years Family Centre is a program that provides activities, resources and services to families with children 0-6 years of age. This part-time program is funded by a number of partners: Community Action Plan for Children (CAPC) and Canadian Pre-Natal Nutrition Program (CPNP) are funded through Public Health Canada; Infant Development and Family Resource Centre are funded by the Ministry of Children & Families (MCFD); Early Years is funded by MCFD and delivered in partnership with One Sky. One Sky provides a Family Engagement Worker who works alongside LSCSS Staff providing support to local families as per the MCFD Early Years Framework. This role is filled by Natalia Schwartz.
- ❖ This program saw several staff changes as Barb Regasz vacated the position for medical leave. Jamie Riedl served briefly as Casual Early Years and CAPC Coordinator. Jocelyn Reaume joined us to replace Natalia Schwartz as the Infant Development Consultant. Jocelyn has since transitioned to Coordinating all the Early Years Programs including, CAPC, Family Resource Centre, Infant Development and related Gaming programs on a Term basis.
- ❖ It has been noted by this team that there are many new families with young children in the area. The Early Years team have developed strong partnerships with the Similkameen Recreation Centre and the SD#53 Strong Start Team, and delivery many programs in collaboration with these partners.



FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAM

- ❖ The Family Support Program is funded through the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). The Family Support Coordinator provides skilled intervention from which to strengthen the family's capacity to maintain a stable and healthy home while supporting the development of positive parenting skills. This full-time program supports families who may be struggling with communication, healthy parenting, needing support through conflict resolution and/or separation, stress management, and relationship support, where children are involved. The program supports families who may require MCFD intervention and facilitates supervised visits for parents/caregivers.
- ❖ The Family Support Coordinator provides emotional and instructional support to families for basic daily living activities and obligations including budgeting & time management, day-to-day home management, transportation, education, grief work, and referrals to other programs and services. The program also supports youth up to age 19 in developing healthy relationship and independent living skills.
- ❖ Gizella Samu is the Family Support Program Coordinator for 2022-23. One of the strengths of the Keremeos Family Support Program is the ability for clients to self-refer. This ensures that families have quick access to local services. Referrals are also received from MCFD Social Workers and other community service providers. At year-end this program was supporting 53 adults and 74 children/youth.

GAMING

- ❖ We received a Gaming Grant of \$21,900.00 from the Province of British Columbia. These funds were used for: Tumble Bumble – an interactive play group promoting physical literacy and gross motor skill development in young children; Generations – a program promoting intergenerational interactions through song, play, arts and crafts; bringing children and seniors together; and Similkameen Family Literacy – a program promoting community literacy through a diversity of activities including One to One Volunteer Tutoring at Cawston School, Summer Theater Camp, Writing Out Loud, and others. These activities are coordinated by various staff members.

LEGAL AID COMMUNITY PARTNER

- ❖ The Legal Services Society has contracted LSCSS as a “community partner” to provide legal information to the public. Deborah Vance coordinated this program upon Shoneugh Lindsay's retirement. The program helps people to access legal information and resources on the internet and in print. Examples of the types of information and assistance provided are: wills; family law; civil law; applications for benefits including CPP & OAS, Fair Pharmacare, disability and income assistance; and assistance with completing a diversity of forms and online applications. With very limited funding, this program runs just 5-7 hours per week.

PEACE – PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH EXPERIENCING VIOLENCE

- ❖ The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General funds the PEACE Program. This part-time program provides short term education, information and supportive counselling on an individual and group basis to children and youth who have experienced violence. Children and families may self-refer; referrals are also received from other LSCSS program coordinators and the schools.
- ❖ In May 2022 Gizella Samu joined Dave Cursons as a PEACE Counsellor. In February 2023 Signe Percevault also joined as PEACE Counsellor. The program and clients have benefitted from the diversity of counselling skills, knowledge and modalities on the team. Program Staff liaise with SD #53 School Staff & Counsellors, Regional District Okanagan Similkameen Recreation Staff and other local programs and services to provide an expansive program including education, advocacy and promoting empowerment for children, youth and caregivers.
- ❖ Additional funds supported the delivery of school-based Violence Is Preventable programming.

SIMILKAMEEN SEASONAL WORKERS PROGRAM

- ❖ MOSAIC Migrant Workers Program provided funding to support the Similkameen Seasonal Workers Program again with a contract extending the March 31, 2024. The focus of this program is to support migrant workers during emergency situations; Increase migrant workers' awareness and understanding of their rights and responsibilities through educational activities and/or existing educational material; Empower migrant workers to exercise their rights by providing or assisting in accessing services available to them; Foster inclusion and welcoming of migrant workers through social, cultural and/or sporting events; Assist employers in supporting migrant workers they hire (e.g. provide interpretation services, deliver workshops at the workplace, etc.); Increase employers' awareness and understanding of the needs, challenges and issues faced by migrant workers and their responsibilities (and of their staff) as per Program requirements and conditions.
- ❖ The migrant workers in our community are primarily seasonal agricultural workers whose home countries include Mexico, Jamaica and Guatemala. Signe Percevault coordinates this part time program, and our liaison worker David Haro connects directly with workers throughout the season, both on farm and virtually, providing supplies, information and support. In March 2023, Natalia Schwarz replaced Signe Percevault as the Program Coordinator. A WhatsApp group is maintained and advertised for workers to join to ask simple questions about life in our area. Welcome bags are provided to workers with practical supplies and information about our services were provided to workers throughout the season, along with bicycles, kitchen supplies, work pants, boots and hoodies with a Keremeos logo. Many of these supplies were community donations. David provided translation services between employers and employees, attending staff meetings to ensure important information was correctly understood. Signe responded to a number of emergencies and employee rights concerns through the year.



STOPPING THE VIOLENCE

- ❖ The Stopping the Violence Against Women Counselling Program (STV) is funded by the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General. The part-time program provides one-on-one and group counselling to women and transwomen who have experienced current or past relationship abuse, sexual assault, or physical, emotional or sexual abuse at any age. It offers a safe space to address issues that arise from their experiences and strives to empower women to make decisions that feel right for them. Signe Percevault is the STV Counsellor. In addition to other counselling modalities, Signe brings a passion for Art Therapy to this program.
- ❖ Services include: Crisis intervention, safety planning, coping strategies; non-judgemental environment to explore options and discuss questions, confusion, fear or other feelings; information and support to help clients make their own decisions; referrals to other agencies or services.

VICTIM SERVICES

- ❖ Our RCMP Based Victim Services Program is funded by the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General and is dedicated to providing support to people affected by crime, crisis or other trauma. The part-time program provides critical response, criminal justice system information and support, information on victim rights, court and witness orientation and court accompaniment, practical and emotional support, and referrals to counselling and other resources. Laurie Lion is the Victim Services Coordinator.

VOLUNTEER & SENIOR SERVICES & MEALS ON WHEELS

- ❖ Coordinator Lisa Flex organizes the Volunteer and Seniors Services Program. Services include Volunteer Drivers, Friendly Visitors, Meals on Wheels, Better at Home and CRA Volunteer Tax Preparation. This program is funded by Interior Health and United Way through a partnership with One Sky. The program provides a broad range of non-medical services that are important for supporting seniors and people with disabilities in remaining well and independent in their own homes.
- ❖ The Volunteer Driver Program transports clients to medical appointments, grocery shopping and other activities necessary for health and well-being. Our Volunteer Drivers take clients as far afield as Penticton, Summerland and Kelowna for specialist and surgical appointments. **589 local and out of town drives** were provided last year. There is a strong demand for this service; if you, or someone you know, could volunteer to drive a couple of times per month, please call 250 499-2352. Our THANKS go out to the Volunteers Drivers for their caring service to others!
- ❖ The Meals on Wheels Program provides hot lunchtime meals up to three times per week. Our dedicated group of volunteers help to box up meals and deliver them to folks who are ill or unable to cook for themselves. **4651 meals** were delivered this past year. Again, this program relies on volunteers – if you, or anyone you know, might be able to help out, please give us a call to get started.
- ❖ Through the Canada Revenue Agency Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP), community organizations like LSCSS host free tax preparation clinics and arrange for volunteers to prepare income tax and benefit returns for eligible individuals who have a modest income and a simple tax situation. This program is now available year-round and is very well used. The amazing volunteers completed 352 tax returns through the year; many thanks!
- ❖ The Friendly Visitor program provides social support through in-person, telephone and virtual support. The heartwarming feedback from volunteers and clients alike of shared stories and friendships born are incredibly gratifying.
- ❖ The Better at Home Program provides support for day-to-day tasks for seniors so that they can continue to remain independent in their own homes. LSCSS receives funding to provide subsidized housekeeping and light yard work. 51 clients received biweekly supports in 2022-23. The demand for this program significantly exceeds the funding to support services. Generous support from the Community Foundation of the South Okanagan Similkameen sponsored additional service hours to vulnerable clients to support them aging in place with dignity and independence.

OTHER PROGRAMS

Additional and extraordinary funding supported some special projects throughout the year including:

- ❖ **TECH SAVVY SIMILKAMEEN** – supporting seniors and people with disabilities to use technology and virtual services including banking, ordering supplies and visiting with friends & family, while teaching about cyber-security. Lisa Flex maintains a small roster of volunteers who avail themselves to help people seeking support. This program was Coordinated by Deborah Vance in 2022-23.



- ❖ **CANADIAN WOMEN'S' FOUNDATION** – Grant funds supported a diversity of activities and supports for women and those who identify as women. LSCSS continued to coordinate a series of Women in Business workshops, ongoing Women's' Circles with diverse and skilled facilitators, murals throughout the community supporting established and emerging indigenous artists, and additional staff hours and resources to support our STV, PEACE, Family Support and CYMH services.
- ❖ **LINDA EDWARDS AGRICULTURAL FUND (LEAF)** - LEAF is a Field-of-Interest Fund that is held in trust and administered by LSCSS in consultation with the LEAF Committee. Its overarching aim is to strengthen the Similkameen Valley's agricultural resilience and adaptation to ecological, economic and environmental shocks and stresses. To achieve this, LEAF supports initiatives in grower-centric research, education, and targeted collective actions (e.g. advocacy towards regulatory frameworks) for the purposes of promoting the continued environmental, ecological and economic health and resilience in the Lower Similkameen Valley. Additionally, the LEAF Fund provides scholarships for local high-school graduates pursuing post-secondary education in areas related to the ecological, environment or economic health of the valley and its growers.
- ❖ **SIMILKAMEEN STARFISH PACK** – This program is coordinated entirely by volunteer Josée-Anne Rouleau, including fundraising and grant applications, and delivered by a team of amazing volunteers. Each week, volunteers fill backpacks with 2 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 2 dinners, and snacks that are easy to prepare, and then deliver them to local schools for students as referred by the school administration to take home on the weekend. The students return the empty backpacks to the school the following week, and volunteers pick them up to be refilled for the following weekend.
- ❖ **UNITED WAY** – Board & Staff Capacity Building. This funding was used to support facilitated strategic planning for the Board and management staff, updated performance review tools for the Executive Director's review, and consultant advice around Board meeting agendas and topics.
- ❖ **INNOWEAVE** – This funding supported a robust review of a Society identified underfunded community need – transportation, and potential solutions. This funding specifically reviews the identified need through the lens of social enterprise, or the potential for a non-profit to earn revenue from transportation solutions to support unfunded transportation needs. A number of creative solutions were identified, to be further developed by the Society staff as time permits, including a car sharing cooperative, sponsorship from car dealers, partnering with private enterprise bus systems, purchase of accessible transportation vehicles that could be multi-purpose shared with private enterprise, and additionally lobbying efforts to expand existing systems.
- ❖ **COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS** – Memory Café Pilot Project – LSCSS Partnered with the Community Foundation, Medical Art Research and Program Manager Barb Stewart to support a series of Memory Cafés as part of a Dementia Friendly Communities initiative. A memory café is a warm and welcoming community space where people experiencing memory loss and their family and care partners come to socialize, enjoy music, games, art-based activities, and to get information and resources. The feedback from clients and caregivers from this project was very positive; we hope to see more of these activities in the future.
- ❖ **SIMILKAMEEN COUNTRY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (SCDA)** – As a member of the Similkameen Country Development Association and Chamber of Commerce, LSCSS Executive Director and Manager of Operations & Finance participated on the Board of SCDA, providing guidance on governance and Societies Act compliance to the new Administrator, and acting as Treasurer.



HOUSING

AMBROSIA

- ❖ The Ambrosia building was completed for occupancy October 1, 2022, providing 43 units of mixed-use affordable housing for low-to-moderate income households. As expected with a complex building, there were a few glitches with building systems that delayed rent-up activities until January 2023.
- ❖ The process of renting up this building to ensure the appropriate ratio of Deep Subsidy, Rent Geared to Income and Market Rent units has been challenging. Applications for 2- and 3-bedroom family units were initially slow to come in. Our largest demographic of applicants continues to be Deep Subsidy applicants, particularly seniors and people with disabilities for 1-bedroom units. The building is now mostly occupied, with three 2-bedroom units remaining to be filled. We are grateful for Housing Coordinator Sharon Boisvert's long history with the Society and Housing as she took the lead on the challenge of getting to know the new building systems and working through the tenant selection process. Melanie King joined the housing team to provide applicant support in June 2022 and was promoted to Housing Coordinator in March 2023. Melanie is working to occupy the remaining units, while learning rapidly about the complexities of affordable housing operations.
- ❖ The Society moved our offices to our new location on the main floor of the Ambrosia building in October 2022, as detailed above.
- ❖ The Gathering Place, a large amenity space on the ground floor of the residential building, has become a community hub, hosting several LSCSS programs, as well as providing gathering space for other community organizations, for a nominal fee. Residents are encouraged to use the indoor/outdoor space to gather with neighbours, host family events, watch moves/sporting events, barbeque, etc.

CACTUS COURT

- ❖ BC Housing, with support from Mierau Contractors Ltd., completed work on the interior of these 16-unit row style townhouses to allow occupancy for low-to-moderate income households over the winter months. This community includes 4 x 2-bedroom units and 12 x 1-bedroom units. LSCSS operates this community on behalf of BC Housing by Operating Agreement. The building was fully occupied in January 2023. Exterior and landscaping work is being completed during the spring and summer of 2023. Tenants are very pleased with their new affordable homes. Housing Coordinator Sharon Boisvert facilitated the rent-up of the buildings; Melanie King is the current lead on this project.

KYALAMI PLACE ASSISTED LIVING

- ❖ Kyalami Place provides 13 subsidized one-bedroom suites and one privately paid two-bedroom suite of Assisted Living (AL). BC Housing provides funding for the building, and Interior Health for the hospitality and personal care services. Services include: two meals per day; weekly housekeeping; weekly linen laundry, daily personal care services, 24-hour emergency response and social & recreation activities.
- ❖ Coordinator Siobhan Wyman and the team of Assisted Living Workers, Cooks and Multi-Service Workers provide kind client-centred care in a small cozy community while adapting to increasingly complex client needs and waitlists for long-term care.
- ❖ COVID-19 visitor screening continued through this fiscal year, including funding to support a staff member to greet and screen all visitors to the site, along with facilitating essential and family visitors.



- ❖ Kyalami Place had a number of vacancies this fiscal year, with no eligible applicants on the Interior Health waitlist. We have been more proactive about advertising the public and private units, hosting site tours and advocating for local seniors who may need assistance with the referral and assessment process.

MOUNTAIN VIEW MANOR SENIORS SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

- ❖ BC Housing contracts the Society to operate Mountain View Manor located at 412 – 12th Avenue in Keremeos, providing subsidized seniors supportive housing services including: tenant selection and relations; building and landscaping maintenance; hospitality services (one meal per day, weekly housekeeping and linen service); 24-hour emergency response and resident social and recreational activities.
- ❖ As with our Assisted Living, our residents have increasingly complex health and wellness needs. Mountain View Manor is not a care facility; Interior Health Home Support provides personal care to clients whose needs exceed the building services. Coordinator Toni Long and a team of Multi-Service Workers and Cooks provide kind, client-centred care for residents in 26 suites.

QUAIL CROSSING

- ❖ BC Housing, with support from Mierau Contractors Ltd., completed work on the interior of these 8 x 1-bedroom row style townhouses to allow occupancy for low-to-moderate income households over the winter months. LSCSS operates this community on behalf of BC Housing by Operating Agreement. The building was occupied in July 2022. Tenants are very pleased with their new affordable homes. Housing Coordinator Sharon Boisvert facilitated the rent-up of the buildings; Toni Long is the current lead on this project.

TUMBLEWEED TERRACE SENIORS RENTAL HOUSING

- ❖ Tumbleweed Terrace is a 16-unit row style affordable housing community for independent seniors and people with disabilities. Toni Long is the Coordinator of this housing community. Residents pay 30% of their after-tax income for a suite. Tenancy in this housing community have tended to be long-term; however, this seems to be changing as our senior population ages. Residents tell us that they are very pleased with their suites and the housing community in general. The building will be 13 years' old this fall and remains in very good condition.

AMBROSIA: PHASE 2

- ❖ The Society owns two vacant lots adjacent to Ambrosia. These lots were purchased with community donations with a long-term plan for more affordable housing. With the support of CMHC Seed Funds: initial site survey and environmental and geotechnical assessments have been completed, we have worked with Lower Similkameen Indian Band Natural Resources Department to confirm compliance with land development referral policies re archaeological impact, architect NSDA has provided an initial project design and Mierau Construction Ltd. have confirmed their interest and availability to work on the development of phase 2 of this project. A building design has been developed as per an anticipated call for proposals from the Province for more Community Housing Fund units – the same concept and operating agreement as Ambrosia. The design matches and ties into the current Ambrosia site and building. The ratio of unit sizes has been estimated based upon the current demand and waitlist for the Ambrosia units. When the Province opens the request for proposals the Society will submit a package requesting funding support.

LEADERSHIP

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Brian Mennell, Chair
Farida Lubbers, Vice-Chair
Tim Guthrie, Treasurer
Shelly Clark, Secretary
Albert McCormick, Director
Sherry Philpott-Adhikary, Director
Karen Sherbina, Director

FUNDERS, PARTNERS & DONORS

COMMUNITY

One Sky Community Resources
Canadian Women's Foundation
United Way British Columbia
MOSAIC Settlement & Employment
BGC Okanagan
Legal Services Society
School District #53
Regional District of Okanagan
Similkameen
Royal Canadian Legion Branch 192
Keremeos Royal Purple
BC Care Providers Association
BC Society for Transition Houses
The Grist Mill
Cawston United Church
Keremeos ELKS Rodeo
Kars Under the K
Desert Sun Counselling
Community Foundations South
Okanagan Similkameen

SENIOR MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

Sarah Martin, Executive Director
Julie Ellison, Manager of Operations & Finance
Jenn Nelson, Finance & Administrative Support



GOVERNMENT

BC Housing
Interior Health Authority
Ministry of Children & Family
Development
Ministry of Public Safety & Solicitor
General
BC Gaming
Employment & Social Development
Canada – New Horizons for Seniors
Canada Mortgage & Housing
Corporation
Public Health Agency Canada
Village of Keremeos

CORPORATE

Osoyoos Credit Union
First West Credit Union
Fortis BC
Tree To Me Organics
Buy Low Foods
Total Restoration Services
T.L. Timber Ltd
Complete Purchasing Services
Harris & Son Transport Ltd.
DAKS Holdings Ltd.
Dawson Investments Ltd.
Vespers Transport
Cornucopia Crop Consulting
Similkameen Industries Ltd.

PRIVATE DONATIONS

❖ LSCSS received over \$46,000 in charitable donations from 51 private donors this fiscal year.

Donors contributed to:

- “Grow with Us” campaign to support the Society’s construction of and move to the new offices in Ambrosia
- Similkameen Starfish Pack
- Stopping the Violence Women’s Counselling
- Family Support Program
- Similkameen Seasonal Workers
- Tenant Activities at Kyalami Place & Mountain View Manor
- Meals on Wheels & other Seniors Services
- Client Support – including men’s counselling, recreation passes, Christmas hampers, emergency support and other unfunded community needs
- General Use – supporting the Society operations

Amazingly, most donors prefer to remain anonymous. We are constantly amazed by the generosity of our community, and hope donors are confident that their generous contributions are put to good use and are greatly appreciated by the clients we serve!

LOOKING AHEAD

The 2022-2025 Strategic Plan will continue to guide the Society's priorities and actions. The Society will welcome a new Board of Directors at the 2023 Annual General Meeting. The Society routinely plans strategy and governance activities in the fall. The new Board will assemble to review the plan, and provide input into the Executive Director's operational plans. I look forward to onboarding the new Directors and hope that they will find serving on the Board a rewarding experience.

The Society will prioritize core operations and supporting current programs and services, with reduced focus on seeking new opportunities, grants and funding streams in the year ahead. We will enjoy continuing to settle into our new space and gaining experience at operating mixed use housing.

Budgeting in recent years has been challenging. Mandated retro-active wage increases as per the collective agreement, limited and/or no assurance of matching funding lifts and when they may be expected, extraordinary expenses with the Society's new offices and IT upgrades, increased interest rates and other factors mean the Society will need to be fiscally conservative this year and may want to engage in fundraising to replenish Society reserves and support underfunded programs. Finance staff will be monitoring program expenses closely throughout the year.

Society governance and operational projects that are currently underway:

Governance Systems & Process Review and Update. Supported by Community Services Recovery Fund from the Government of Canada, Administered by Community Foundation South Okanagan Similkameen, this project includes a facilitated review and update of the Society's governance systems and processes and the development of Key Performance Indicators. Board engagement is required.

Human Resources – Culture Survey, Systems & Processes Review. Supported by funds from the Canadian Women's Foundation this project includes a facilitated assessment of the Society's Organizational Culture from a Human Resources perspective. This will help us better understand the employee experience, and what is important to engage and retain employees. Along with this is a review of the Society's Human Resources systems including recruitment, tracking and policies.

Projects to undertake include: To develop and apply consistent and mature systems to address risk management and quality assurance & continuous improvement. To assess the Society's systems in the non-profit life cycle to ensure alignment in the organizational systems as the Society progresses from Growth to Maturity.

We regret to announce that Julie Ellison will be moving on from the Society in June 2023, returning to the world of Environmental Protection and Regulation for the Province of BC. We are grateful for Julie's years of service and wish her very well in her next adventures. Julie's commitment to supporting the onboarding of new staff even after her departure date is greatly appreciated.

As a result of this upcoming change, Julie's position of Manager of Operations and Finance was reviewed. The Society decided to split the position, promoting Jenn Nelson to the new position of Manager of Finance. This includes administrative support and general office administration.

The posting for the position of Manager of Operations is currently open. The Society hopes to recruit someone with specific human resources experience and training along with experience in leadership and systems.

Its hard to believe that, as of the AGM, we are almost ¼ way through the new year! The months are flying by. We wish everyone well, and thank the membership for their ongoing support of the Society and the work that we do!