



**PARENT SUPPORT SERVICES
SOCIETY OF BC
ANNUAL REPORT**

2020 - 2021

A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

So much happened in the last year--wonderful, innovative, exhausting and tumultuous things--as we carried on during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the significant challenges, we also rose to the occasion with learning and experimentation. We pivoted, updated antiquated systems, created safety plans, ran online circles, groups, parenting and legal workshops, supported people with low technical literacy, engaged children and youth online and provided the board members with formal training.

We worked hard to maintain our funding and discovered untapped financial resources. Significant efforts were made to ensure accounting was in order and contingency plans were in place. The extraordinary circumstances of the pandemic created space for us to reimagine how we can best serve our communities in the face of so much uncertainty.



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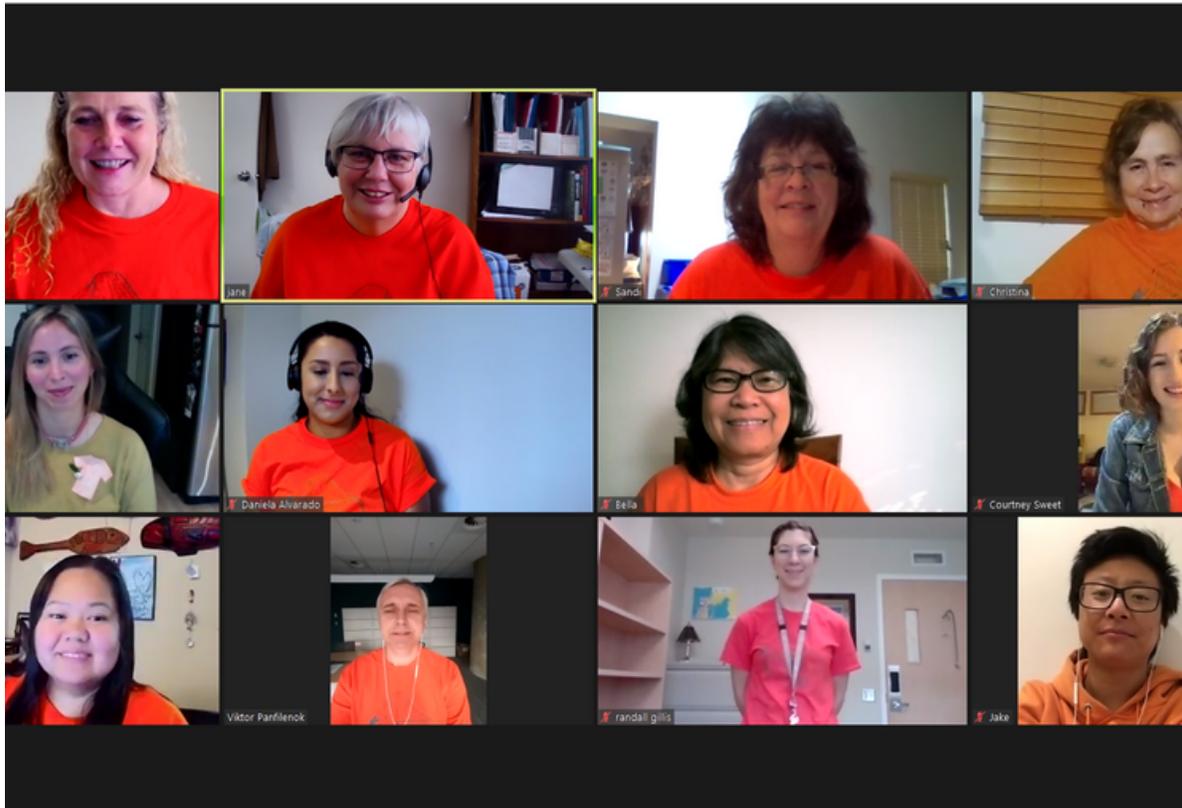
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Staff demonstrated remarkable adaptability, dealing with the urgency in the community to meet basic needs, while also coping with the impact of the pandemic on their own families and lives. This was a period of long, hard work and the PSS team rose to the occasion. From technology and communications, to training and risk management we are taking what we've learned and using it to create adaptive, innovative services that will strengthen our work now and for years to come.

USE OF NEW TECHNOLOGY

At the end of March, with new technology recently in place, PSS staff who would not come into the office had access to resources they needed and were in a strong position to work remotely. Often stressful and isolating it was challenging for those who worked in the office and those who did not.

We completely re-did our database systems. Special recognition to Rebecca Vattathichirayil, Jacob Huang, Josh Rasalan, Viktor Panfilenok, and Project Manager Mel Ifada from KOJA Consulting. Special thanks to Jake who slogged for many hours reducing our contact list from over 9000 to 4000.

CIRCLES MOVED ONLINE

The peer support circles functioned virtually. This created both opportunities and challenges. At times during the 2020-2021 fiscal year, paid staff stepped in for volunteers.

Circle staff provided more telephone support to those participant families who were unable to participate in meetings due to lack of technology or technological literacy.

Many of our front line volunteer facilitators reported:

- being too stretched to volunteer during COVID
- having inadequate technological literacy to run circles virtually
- having inadequate technology
- having inadequate capacity at home to run confidential circles online

DEVELOPED NEW FACILITATOR TRAINING

Skilled staff swiftly moved to provide volunteer facilitator training online as we simultaneously completed an elearning digital technology overhaul with consultants from SPARK and Co.

Now equipped with Thinkific, a digital platform, we will be able to reach more communities. Special thanks to Annita McPhee who oversaw the Indigenous lens portion of the work, the Circle team, other PSS staff, as well as committed volunteers who served on Advisory and Indigenous Steering committees and as Beta testers. Much gratitude again extended to Mel from KOJA consulting who skillfully project managed the initiative.

Facilitation Training

This program includes 5 on-demand modules: Self-Help, Ethics, Preventing Child Abuse, Honouring Diversity and Indigenous Identities. It also includes your 201-page handbook and 5 x 2 hour virtual sessions, which includes peer-work.

[Resume Bundle](#)

Bundle includes
Here are all the courses that are included in your bundle.

- All Courses: Self-Help
- All Courses: Ethics
- All Courses: Preventing Child Abuse

<p>Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Line</p> <p>Help for Grandparents and relatives raising a family member's child (kinship caregiver)</p> <p>Providing Advocacy & Emotional Support</p> <p>Mon, Tues, Thurs & Fri. 10:00am - 2:00pm</p> <p>Toll-free across BC 1-855-474-9777 or 1-855-GRG-9PSS grgline@parentsupportbc.ca</p>	<p>Parenting Support Line</p> <p>Are you juggling home, work, at home education and possibly childcare? Are the new changes stressful and taking a toll on your emotional and mental health? Do you need space to talk it out?</p> <p>Give us a call</p> <p>Monday - Friday 10:00am - 4:00pm</p> <p>Toll-free across BC 1-877-345-9777 or 1-855-345-9PSS ext. 100</p>
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WEEKLY ONLINE PROVINCIAL SUPPORT CIRCLES

Our Support Circles are here to provide a safe and confidential space for Parents and GRG/Kinship Caregivers, to share the challenges, concerns, questions and offer the support you need during COVID-19

Online GRG/Kinship Caregivers Circles			
Indigenous Monday 6pm	Monday 10am	Tuesday 7:30pm	Thursday 10am
Online Parent Circles			
Indigenous Tuesday 6pm	Monday 9pm	Wednesday 1pm	

Want to join an Online Support Circle via Zoom

INNOVATIVE CIRCLE PROGRAMMING

Congratulations to Bella Cenezero, Sandi Halvorson, Kim Brown, Daniela Alvarado-Torres, and Danella Angus on their hard work. As we struggled to maintain volunteers. The Circle Team reconfigured the Circles so that many Circles served the entire province.

Now posted on the website and shared regularly in our Kinship Facebook group, we produced a short webinar explaining our services.

Two virtual province wide trainings, *Cultural Safety Awareness* and *Tools in Dealing with Conflict* within the Circles, were provided.

Five 8-week virtual book clubs explored several popular parenting books.

The Galiano Nature Camp went online, strategically held on school professional development days and Spring break. The *Galiano Conservancy* provided nature related online educational/childminding activities while their caregivers attended parenting educational workshops.

We offered additional virtual sessions for children and their caregivers allowing grandparents/caregivers to join with their kids for yoga sessions, arts & crafts, more nature exploration and cooking lessons.

We organized Grand Gatherings for Indigenous, Island and Northern Region kinship care families covering *Self-Care; Resilience in the Face of Adversity* and *Boundary Building in Relationships with Adult Children and Extended Family*.

Spring Break: Kids Programming
For kids Ages 6-12y
Please note that not all activities will be suited for all ages. Please refer to the application form for more information

From March 16 to 25, 2021, Parent Support Services will be offering **FREE** 1h kids programming to keep kids active and learning during spring break. Join us via Zoom in the various activities we'll be offering

YOGA WITH BRITTANY
March 16 & 23 @ 9:30am & 11:00am

ART & CRAFTS WITH COURTNEY
March 17 @ 9:30am

BECCALICIOUS COOKING CLASS
March 18 & 25 @ 10am

GALIANO WET LANDS NATURE CAMP
March 24 @ 9:30am & 11:30am

INDIGENOUS SUPPORT CIRCLE

Are you a Parent, Grandparent Raising a Grandchild, Kinship Caregiver or a Relative Raising a Relative's Child?

Do you or your children that you are raising self identify as Indigenous?

Are you looking to join a Parenting Support Circle?

Are you able to join a Circle on Zoom?

TO JOIN
Email: danella.angus@parentsupportbc.ca
call: 1-877-345-9PSS (9777) ext 100

CIRCLE IS EVERY 2ND MONDAY 1:00PM - 2:00PM

PSS RECOGNIZES and RESPECTS all the INDIGENOUS NATIONS, TRADITIONAL LANDS & TERRITORIES that we GATHER, LIVE, WORK & PLAY ON across BC.

PARENTING BOOK CLUB

Interested in reading and discussing some of today's best selling parenting books?

THE WHOLE BRAIN CHILD | *BUILDING RESILIENCE IN CHILDREN AND TEENS* | *NO-DRAMA DISCIPLINE* | *BRAINSTORM*

Join us on a bi-weekly basis via Zoom and on our Facebook group, to discuss the reading material; have the space to ask questions; receive information and resources; and connect with other parents & caregivers.

To Join, Click **HERE**
OR email: office@parentsupportbc.ca

OR call our Parenting Support Line: 1-877-345-9777 ext.1

Open to all Parents/Caregivers in BC

We thank the Province of British Columbia for their financial contribution

INNOVATIVE CIRCLE PROGRAMMING

CONTINUED

FRIDAY MARCH 5, 2021 @ 6:30PM

PSS GRAND GATHERING

PRESENTING

A Zoom and Facebook live performance by Juno Awardee Murray Porter was a huge success and was open to Indigenous and other families across BC thanks to Danella Angus.

Vancity Foundation helped us create a Provincial Parenting Support line for families struggling during COVID. Referrals were made to online circles, educational workshops and to other community services. Circle team members responded to the calls.

Circle Staff provided 300+ Thrifty Foods gift cards and Vancity prepaid Visas to vulnerable families to purchase food and hygiene supplies, thanks to the United Ways Central & Northern Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland.

Our Village Newsletter was beautifully revamped thanks to Kim Brown, and Grand Connections continued to land into people's inboxes thanks to Sandi Halvorson.

Additional virtual parenting workshops offered included: *Self-care While Parenting in a Global Pandemic; Preparing for the Holidays during COVID-19; Raising Our Children: The Role of Discipline; Registered Education Saving Plans (RESP) and the various grants and learning bonds available to families; Anger & Stress Management.*

The GRG/Kinship Facebook group grew in number of participants and with a staggering 71% increased level of engagement from the previous year.



To join our Zoom

Danella

bc.ca

our

page

Grandparents Raising Support Line

Community engagement across the organization continued to result in direct referrals to the support line resulting in greater impact.

At Legal Aid BC and the Law Foundation of BC's *Provincial Advocacy Training*, support line staff presented "Kinship Care and Associated Benefits" to province-wide Law Foundation Family Law Advocates.

Staff also delivered a workshop on the Extended Family Program to Designated Band Representatives served by the Fraser Valley Aboriginal Children and Family Services Society.

Job-share Advocates, Christina

Campbell and Caity Goerke

recorded 238 new callers and

supported and tracked their

concerns. Trends were noted and

5 themes emerged.

The Grandparents Raising Grandchildren & Kinship Care Support Line

THE SUPPORT LINE

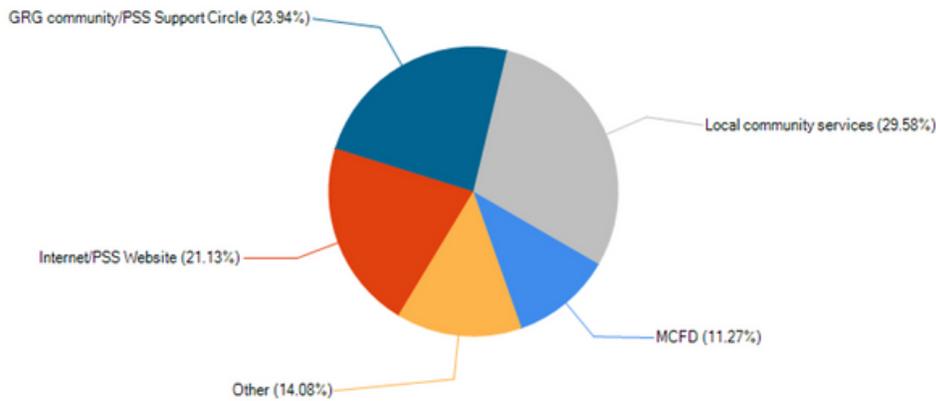
THEMES & TRENDS

THE EXTENDED FAMILY PROGRAM AGREEMENT AND CUSTOMARY CARE

The Extended Family Program (EFP) provides the most fulsome support available to kinship caregivers. Of 89 distinct calls, 67% were ineligible, 19% were unaware of the program, 7% had been successful and 7% had applications in process. Ineligible callers continued to grow despite recent efforts to increase access to the program through the April 2019 amendments to the *Child, Family and Community Services Act* (CFCSA) and resulting changes in Out of Care policies. While kinship caregivers can now request an EFP agreement themselves (as opposed to the parents needing to make the request) and while parents no longer need to be parties to an EFP agreement as long as they sign Schedule A, a corresponding increase in access to the program is not reflected in the statistics collected by the Advocates.

How did you learn about us referred from - 1/4/2020 to 31/3/2021

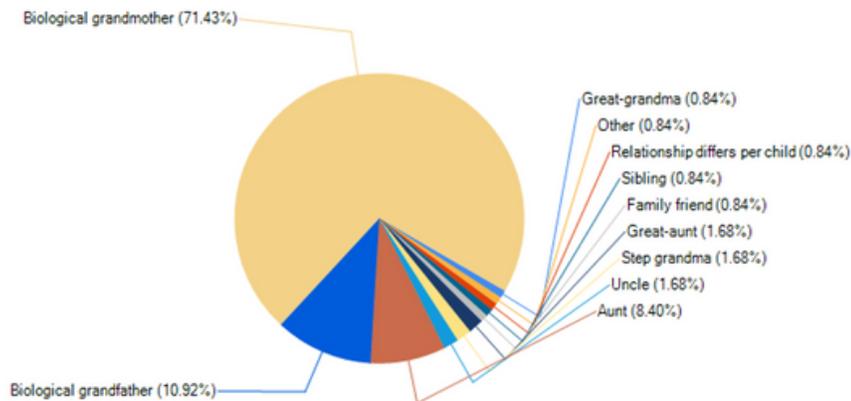
As of 14/4/2021



How did you learn about the Support Line?

What is your relationship to the children you are raising - 1/4/2020 to 31/3/2021

As of 15/4/2021



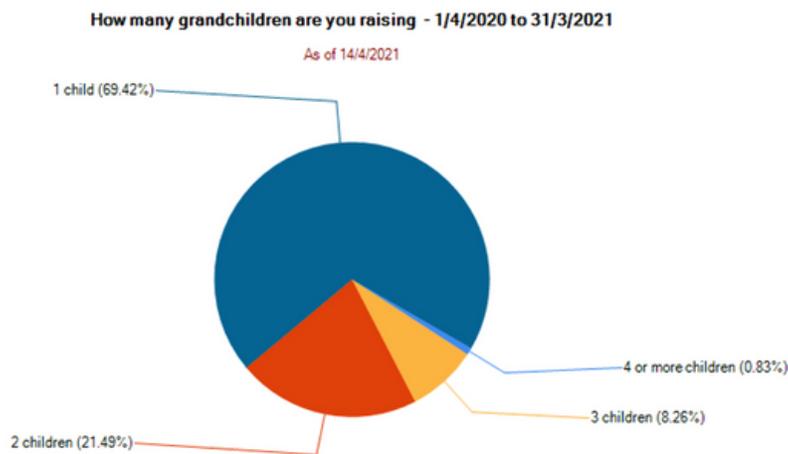
What is the relationship to the children you are raising?

THE SUPPORT LINE

THEMES & TRENDS (CONTINUED)

INDIGENOUS CHILD WELFARE

The Support Line Staff are often told by Indigenous families and their service providers that the legacy of residential schools, the 60s Scoop and the continuing disproportionate number of Indigenous children in government care creates a real barrier to accessing MCFD services, even when they are provided services through a DAA. Families shared that the fear of having children apprehended prevents them from engaging at all with provincial child welfare services.



How many grandchildren are you raising?

SOCIAL WORKER PRACTICE

Advocates regularly received calls where a major barrier to accessing services was ineffective social worker practice, regardless of what may be provided for in law or policy. Callers were placed on an extended series of Safety Plans (sometimes spanning months or years) when an Out of Care option such as an EFP agreement would have been applicable; callers requested an EFP agreement but were told by social workers that they have never heard of the program; and callers continued to be advised by social workers to obtain guardianship under the *Family Law Act* when access to services and supports under the *Child Family and Community Service Act* would have been appropriate.

THE SUPPORT LINE

THEMES & TRENDS (CONTINUED)

INADEQUATE FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Apart from the Extended Family Program, kinship families may access either provincial supports through Out-of-Care agreements or federal government supports such as the Canada Child Benefit and Child Disability Benefit for children, but not both. Advocates determined that strict eligibility criteria and fear of reaching out to the Ministry left the majority without provincial financial assistance.

The Canada Child Benefit (CCB) is not available for those who received provincial maintenance under a permanent Out-of-Care arrangement, as their eligibility for provincial supports excludes them from accessing federal benefits attached to children – a benefit specifically developed to lift children out of poverty. These families are not accessing the BC Child Opportunity Benefit as it is tied to the access of CCB as well, thus leaving out the most economically vulnerable kinship care families. Kinship caregivers who are ineligible for the CCB are also ineligible for the Child Disability Benefit (CDB). Similarly, some kinship care families have struggled to get Registered Education Savings Plans because their caregiver status is not recognized by the CRA.

Importantly, these systemic barriers also prevented many kinship care families from accessing important financial assistance intended to provide economic relief due to the pandemic, including COVID-19 funding attached to the CCB benefit (\$300 per child) and to the CDB benefit (\$600 per child) as well as the BC Recovery Benefit (\$1000 per family). For some families, the government addressed this matter following individual or systemic advocacy, but other kinship care families have been prevented, despite advocacy, from accessing the financial support they would be otherwise entitled to if it were not for their status as BC kinship caregivers.

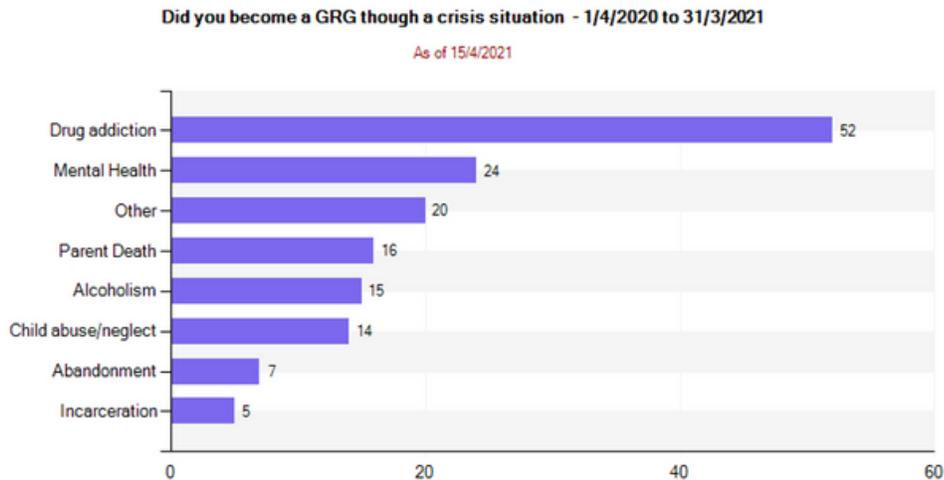
Support Line staff continued to observe barriers for families in accessing government services and supports (both financial and otherwise) particularly for children with higher needs.

THE SUPPORT LINE

THEMES & TRENDS (CONTINUED)

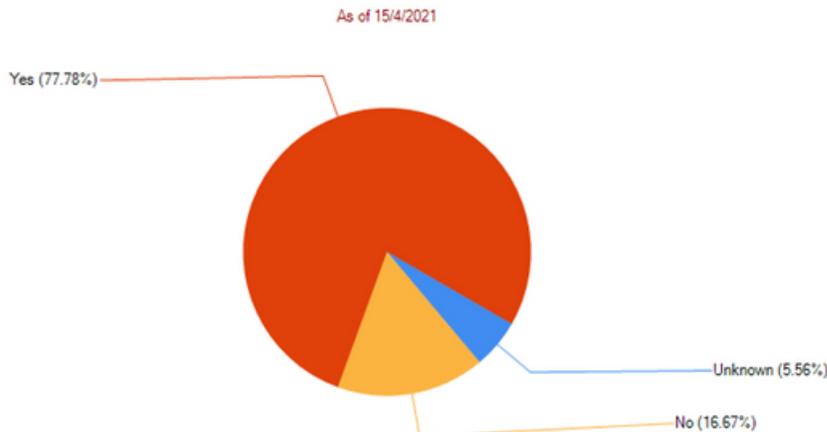
ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACES & TRAUMA)

Many callers expressed concern about the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and trauma experienced by children in their care. Parent struggles with substance misuse was the most common reason for children coming into kinship care next to parent mental illness, parent death, child neglect, abandonment, and parent incarceration. 78% identified violence contributing to the children coming into kinship care– a sad 26% increase from previous years.



Did you become a GRG through a crisis situation?

Was violence a contributing factor to the crisis - 1/4/2020 to 31/3/2021



Was violence a contributing factor to the crisis?

SKILLSHARE PROJECT

Indigenous Child Welfare Skillshare: Cross-Nation Knowledge-Sharing Event on Child Welfare Law, Policy, and Practice

March 3rd Extended Family Caring for Children: Policy, Services, and Supports

March 10th Overview: An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis Children, Youth and Families

March 17th Strengthening Indigenous Legal Authority Over Child Welfare Matters

DAILY SCHEDULE

10:00 am to 11:45 am

Elder / Introductions / Circle Discussion / Elder

11:45 am to 12:30 pm

Elder / Lunch / Informal Discussion

12:30 pm to 2:00 pm

Powerpoint Presentation / Circle Discussion / Elder

**Register via the Grandparents
Raising Grandchildren Support
Line before March 1st, 2021 at
grgline@parentsupportbc.ca or
1-855-474-9777**

*Zoom link to be provided upon
registration*



Indigenous Child Welfare Skillshare

The Skillshare project was extended until March 31, 2021 due to the departure of Caity Goerke and COVID-19 travel restrictions. With the approval of the Law Foundation and Supervising lawyer, Patricia Barkaskas, re-imagined events were developed. Hera Qazi took up the Advocate-lawyer post in January and Christina and Hera moved forward with three consecutive week smaller Zoom events covering:

1. Extended Family Caring for Children: Policy, Services, and Supports
2. Overview: An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Metis Children, Youth and Families
3. Strengthening Indigenous Legal Authority Over Child Welfare Matters

23 Indigenous Nations were contacted. 19 professional representatives from ten unique Nations from diverse regions participated. Respected Elders provided openings, closings and culture sharing opportunities. Legal resources, education materials and webcams were sent out in advance. Evaluations clearly demonstrated the value of the Skillshare and advocates were encouraged to facilitate future educational and engagement events.

KINSHIP FAMILIES MOBILIZE FOR CHANGE ADVANCES DESPITE COVID RESTRICTIONS

Building on findings and recommendations cited in the previous year's *State of Kinship Caregivers in BC* research, the Mobilization project took shape. Funded partially by the Vancouver Foundation, the Mobilization project has been developing strategies to implement the recommendations.

Work was primarily conducted over Zoom. However, in early Fall, small, in-person mostly outdoor kinship care gatherings were held across BC when it was possible and within the COVID-19 health guidelines. Jane Bouey travelled to Surrey, Kelowna, Vernon, Kamloops, Quesnel, Williams Lake, Prince George, Salmon Arm, Victoria, and Duncan.

We continue to learn how Kinship care within Indigenous communities is distinctive. A unique group "*All Our Relations: Equality for Relatives Raising Relatives*" was formed and provides an Indigenous lens to the work, exploring issues like racism and the ongoing impact of colonization.

Early gatherings reviewed the research findings and raised interest in the mobilization project (and PSS in general). The main focus of all meetings has been sharing experiences and knowledge of government systems, as well as building advocacy skills, and strategic planning. The intention of the project is for kinship caregivers to take on the leadership, and begin independently organizing for changes to government policy, legislation, and practice.



KINSHIP FAMILIES MOBILIZE FOR CHANGE

Families working together to win change

- Connecting families
- Learning with kinship care families
- Empowering kinship families
- Identifying problems
- Finding solutions
- Building public awareness of challenges faced by kinship care families

Sign up and Info:
604-669-1616 Ext 11
jane.bouey@parentsupport



All Our Relations

Equality for Relatives Raising Relatives

Purpose of group: Indigenous grandparents and others who are raising a relative's child face unique struggles. Non-Indigenous caregivers raising Indigenous children also deal with unique issues, such as racism directed at their children. Changes are necessary to help these families. This group is working together to win the necessary changes.



THANK YOU!



As PSS of BC's Board President and Executive Director, we are more grateful than ever for the incredible team of staff members who consistently provide exceptional service, and who have demonstrated outstanding commitment, flexibility and perseverance during the pandemic. Our volunteers have also shown amazing dedication, continuing to give their time and energy to support our work.

Special shout out to our Advisory Committee members on the Curriculum Overhaul who contributed hundreds of hours to the project.

Our volunteer Board of Directors has done wonderful work in providing governance and support as we responded to the pandemic. We thank each and every staff member, volunteer and Board member for their tireless efforts, now and always. We thank outgoing board members Jacob Black-Lock for his commitment to the Society and to Christine Lal who put in countless hours with the accounting challenges faced this year.

We also would like to recognize the work of Caity Goerke who moved on to a full-time legal position, Simon Fraser University Coop student Rebecca Vattathichirayil, practicum students, Brittany Mills and Courtney Sweet from the University of Victoria, and Jill Donnelly from the University of British Columbia.

Finally, many thanks to you, our friends, donors, partners and funders. You sustain the work we do and ensure that we can continue supporting those community members who need us most.

Best wishes,
Sarah Allan, President & Carol Madsen, Executive Director



**Siham Alkhashief
Donna Andrews
Erin Anyar
Sherifa Azzab
Echo (Yifan) Bai
Alexandra Bandasmi
Jennifer Beckett
Reynaldo Blasco
Darrion Capellan
Lynn Carty
Kalbir Chahal
Terence Chan**

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Jonah Fialkow
Shiela Ginn
Bee Grandison
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THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEER FACILITATORS!



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Mary Anthonette Tecson
Lidia Veronica
Emerald Weninger
Sarah Willms

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEER FACILITATORS!



Debbie Wilson
Derek Wilson
Jessie Wu
Cynthia Yaunish
Bao Yi (Alice) Zeng

“
*Our volunteers are
the backbone of
our programs.
Thank you so
much!*
”

Vicky Albarracin
Stephanie Angel-Garay
Laarni Bernardo
Sonia Blanco
Reynaldo Blasco
Lilian Bocol
Sylvia Caberio
Diane Chan
Serina Chen
May Lai-Sin Cheng

Marlyn Dadural
Erin Ding
Gudaad (Andrea) Doolan
Hazel Edurese
Bee Grandison
Yuqi (Helen) He
Gina Hortelano
Lidia Lee
Paeony Hei Yin Leung
Anyar Lin

THANK YOU TO OUR STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS



Aurea Lucas
Ana Machado
Milagros Martinez
Esaine Mo
Violeta Munoz-Berruecos
Marisol Nacho-Vargas
Yan (Catherine) Qiao
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Jeannette Hicks
Wendy Jankovic
Kim Jensen
Teresa Kung
Joa Lazarus
Sally Louie
Caslynn McKinney
Annita McPhee**

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!

Many thanks to our guest speakers,
event volunteers, and those who helped
with our e-learning development and
mobilization projects.



**Brittany Mills
Shari Monsma
Gail Montgomery
Stephanie Morgan
Mary Morgan-Pick
Marlon Morrison
Marylin Nelson
Harinder Parmar
Sue Pearse
Shirley Piedt
Catherine Qiao
Mary Scheidegger
Lynn Sinclair
Cassandra Strain
Students
Courtney Sweet
Tabitha Tucker**

**Cheryl Wehr
Bonnie Whipple
Sharon Whiting
Derek Wilson
Cynthia Yaunish
Mike Zlotnik**

**And the Board of
Directors, who all
volunteered their time!**



**Sarah Allan
Jacob Black-Lock
Jade Chan
Louise Costello
Crissy George
Randall Gillis
Christine Lal
Shaun Wilson
Kamy Zargarpour**

**THANK YOU TO OUR
DONORS!**



**Bella Cenezero
Rick Downie
Shirley Piedt
Lagrimas Salazar
Arcteryx
Browns Social house at Q.E theatre (Vancouver)
Cafe Justicia
City of Prince George
Earnest Ice Cream (Vancouver)
East Van Hot Glass (Vancouver)
Hilltop Inn (Salmon Arm)
Homer Cafe (Vancouver)
Inn On The Quay (New Westminster)
Iron Dog (Vancouver)
Kennedy Stewart (Vancouver)
Kidsbooks (Vancouver)
London Drugs on Granville (Vancouver)
Massy Books (Vancouver)
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Rain or Shine Ice Cream (Vancouver)
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Sheraton Vancouver Guilford Hotel (Surrey)
Staples on Seymour (Vancouver)
Team Aquatics
Upstart & Crow Stories Inside Book Store (Vancouver)**

**THANK YOU TO OUR
FUNDERS!**



Adoption and Permanency Fund of BC, Victoria Foundation

Anonymous

British Columbia Ministry of Children and Family Development

Children's Health Foundation of Vancouver Island

City of Prince George

First Nations Health Authority

Gaming Policy & Enforcement Branch

Government of Canada

Law Foundation of BC

Province of British Columbia

United Way Central & Northern Vancouver Island

United Way Central & Northern Vancouver Island Cowichan

**United Way Central & Northern Vancouver Island Emergency Community
Response Fund**

United Way Central & Northern Vancouver Island Nanaimo

United Way Central & Northern Vancouver Island Senior Response Fund

United Way Greater Victoria

United Way of the Lower Mainland

United Way of the Lower Mainland Emergency Community Response Fund

Vancity Community Foundation

Vancouver Foundation

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS!



Archway Community Services - Family Centre & Best for Babies; & Child, Youth and Family Services

Britannia Community Centre

Broadway Youth Resource Centre

Cameray Child and Family Services

Carney Hill Neighbourhood House

College of New Caledonia

First Nations Health Authority (FNHA)

Galiano Conservancy Association

Greater Nanaimo Early Years Partnership

Hadih House

Immigrant Services Society of BC

Information Children

Kiwassa Neighbourhood House

Little Mountain Neighbourhood House

Mount Pleasant Family Centre Society

Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House

Nanaimo Child Development Centre

Nisga'a Ts'amiks Vancouver Society (NTVS)

Prince George Native Friendship Centre

Richmond School District # 38 – SWIS Program

SHARE Family & Community Services Society

South Vancouver Neighbourhood House

SUCCESS

United Way of Northern British Columbia

University of Northern British Columbia

University of Victoria

Urban Native Youth Association (UNYA)

Vancouver Community College

Vancouver Island University – Blake Landry, Canada Learning Bond Coordinator

Vancouver School Board – SWIS Program

**THANK YOU TO OUR
STUDENTS!**

**THANK YOU TO OUR
CONTRACTORS &
SUPPLIERS!**

Caitlin Alder

Jill Donnelly

Simone Klein

Brittany Mills

Courtney Sweet

Rebecca Vattathichirayil

Annita McPhee

Integrus

James Cariou

Josh Rasalan

Keela

Kent Employment Law

Mel Ifada, KOJA Consulting

Sea to Sky

Holly MacDonald, Spark and Co.

STAFF AND BOARD 2020 - 2021

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