



Parent Support Services
Society of BC

Annual Report

2022 / 2023





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YEAR OF CHANGE

MESSAGE FROM THE Interim Executive Director

2022-2023 was a year of transition for PSS. Katie Robertson, who was hired in the Fall of 2021, was our Executive Director through April of 2023. She guided us through strategic planning with Board and Staff, organizational restructuring, and a deep dive into our work culture and team values. PSS's new mission is "to support the well-being of all families and children by empowering those in a parenting role through community connections, research, education, and advocacy".

As Interim Executive Director, I want to thank our volunteers. We always say we couldn't do our work without you. Volunteers: serve on our Board (guiding our organization); facilitate our Parenting Support Circles (giving folk a safe space to share and learn new strategies); guide us through Steering Committees, and volunteer for events (engaging community). It is you who truly powers our society.

I also want to sincerely thank, Daniela Alvarado-Torres, Orneli Bakajika, Violeta Munoz Berruecos, Kim Brown, Christina Campbell, Bella Cenezero, Sandi Halvoson, Yu Yan (Jacob) Huang, Viktor Panfilenok, Rani Narmadha Ramakrishnan, and Cassandra Strain. Your commitment, as staff, to our mission and your creative dedication to the families we walk alongside has been exemplary. Staff are exploring how we can embed the organization's commitment to the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action - into our work. This decolonization work is ongoing and involves all staff, students, and volunteers.

I hope you take the time to read this Annual Report and learn more about our valuable work over the past year. We are excited about our plans for the coming year. Together, with your support, we will make our vision, "Communities where all families and children are empowered and valued", a reality.

Sincerely
Jane Bouey
Interim Executive Director

Board of Directors

To the board — thank you for your leadership and service. Parent Support Services Society of BC is fortunate to have a diverse, skilled, and caring board who are committed to supporting and strengthening families across the BC.

Sarah Elisabeth Allan
President

Kamy Zargarpour
Vice President

Louise Costello
Secretary

Jade Chan
Member at Large

Louise Ironside
Member at Large

Shaun Wilson
Member at Large

David Wright
Member at Large

Jalisa Karim
Member at Large

MESSAGE FROM THE President of the Board



We are proud to share with you how PSS programs continue to successfully serve parents and kinship caregivers, along with their families, through our core programs such as Parenting Support Circles, the Kinship Care Help Line, our advocacy work, and educational workshops. This has proven to be another incredible year for our organization, filled with challenges we have rallied to overcome, and victories we have been privileged to celebrate.

As PSS's Board President, I am incredibly grateful for the dedicated staff members who have continued providing exceptional service to families throughout BC. They are passionate about their work, and it shows daily. Through changes to our organizational structure and on-boarding of new leadership and staff, we've continued implementing and evolving our programs to address the needs of our families and community members. We've developed strong educational resources, in the form of workshops, and have partnered with like-minded organizations and communities to achieve our mission.

I would like to offer a special thanks to former Executive Director, Katie Robertson, who took on the role of Executive Director in 2021, helped develop a new strategic plan with the Board of Directors and staff, built important strategic partnerships, and helped improve and stabilize operations and organizational processes, among many other accomplishments. Thank you to our volunteers who have demonstrated outstanding commitment, dedication and support. On behalf of PSS, we appreciate all the time and energy you put into supporting our work. I'm extremely grateful for our volunteer Board of Directors, who have spent countless hours providing governance and direction as we've navigated this past year.

I'd like to thank each and every staff member, for their tireless efforts. A huge thank you goes out to our funders, donors, and community partners. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to the important work we do. Parent Support Services Society of BC would not be the organization it is without our incredible community.

Thank you all for your remarkable support.

Sarah Elisabeth Allan
Board President



OUR VALUES

- Connectedness
- Cultural Safety
- Empowerment
- Inclusiveness
- Integrity
- Respect
- Social Justice

About Us

At PSS, our mission is to support the well-being of all families and children by empowering those in a parenting role through community connections, research, education, and advocacy.

In order to foster community connections, PSS operates a province wide network of facilitated self-help support groups, for adults in a parenting role. We believe these circles strengthen the first link in a chain that connects positive caregiving with healthy children, and help healthy families build strong communities.

PSS also promotes our mission by advocating within the broader community. Our advocacy work includes supporting those in a parenting role, including kinship caregivers who are dealing with a family crisis and work with other organizations who push for legislative and administrative changes around child abuse prevention.

Vision

Our vision is to see communities where all families and children are empowered and valued.

Mission

We support the well-being of all families and children by empowering those in a parenting role through community connections, research, education, and advocacy.



YEAR OF RESILIENCE

"I feel connected to the group and as I have an outlet to share my concerns openly and without judgement. The coordinators are kind, patient, understanding and very informative. The group members are my rock as we are all experiencing the same issues raising our grandchildren in our retirement years."

— CIRCLE MEMBER

Education and Support Program

Our Parenting Support Circles are unique. They're free, confidential, and operate in multiple languages. Rather than expert-led, these self-help groups provide participants with safe spaces to share parenting stories and stresses. Participants learn from each other and discover resources together. Complimented by our educational workshops - PSS educational and support programming makes a positive difference in the lives of families across BC.

This fiscal year was one of both resilience and growth for the Education and Support Program. While navigating through the tail-end of what would be a 3-year long global pandemic, PSS was provided with many opportunities as well as challenges with ensuring the sustainability of one of its major programs, the Parenting Support Circles.

Despite the uncertainty and changes brought forth by the Pandemic, we approached our work with diligence and a clear focus on using innovative strategies to not only maintain but expand the reach of our service delivery.

We've gone through organizational restructuring as a result of PSS's 3-year strategic plan. We want to express our gratitude and appreciation to Cassandra Strain our part-time Interior Coordinator who now works fulltime with PSS Advocacy & Mobilization Program.

We also bid goodbye and express our gratitude and well wishes to Kim Brown, our Northern BC and Indigenous Program Coordinator.

With the help of our energetic, collaborative and innovative E&S Program team members, Bella Cenezero, Daniela Alvarado-Torres, Sandi Halvorson and Violeta Munoz-Berruecos, 25 active Parenting Support Circles in 7 different languages and other specialized parenting areas, were available to families throughout BC.

Parenting Support Circles

PSS is still recovering from the effects of the pandemic on its Circle program. During the pandemic, we moved all of our programming online. During 2022-23, few circles met in person, the majority met online. However, despite these challenges, **25** circles have been maintained in seven languages and with diverse and specialized communities.

Through online platforms, we are reaching families across BC, including remote communities we have never been able to serve before. A total of **10,346** parents and caregivers accessed the circles **6,214** times. The Circle members were provided additional 1:1 support outside of the Circles through resources and information sharing **11, 592** times.

As demand for in-person meetings has increased, more Circles will be developed within the next Fiscal Year. We will face the challenges of finding space for our Circles to meet, and volunteers who are willing to return to face-to-face meetings.

Our members across the province have reported feeling far more **supported** and **encouraged**, as well as having a **sense of belonging** in the communities they've had the opportunity to build.



A Volunteer Facilitator's Experience

— Susan Ogilvy, Kamloops BC (1 year volunteering)



Why did you become a Circle Facilitator? What motivates you to continue facilitating?

"I have always wanted to give back to my community and help drive change in the foundation of family strength and stability. When I was raising my own children, I was blessed to have access to a village of people who helped guide and support me as we navigated the joys and challenges of life with children."

What motivates you to continue facilitating?

"I continue in my role today because of this organization, the families it supports, and the volunteers who provide so much to the Circles they run. They inspire me and they challenge me to grow and share so that I can inspire others."

What impact or changes have you seen in your circle members this year?

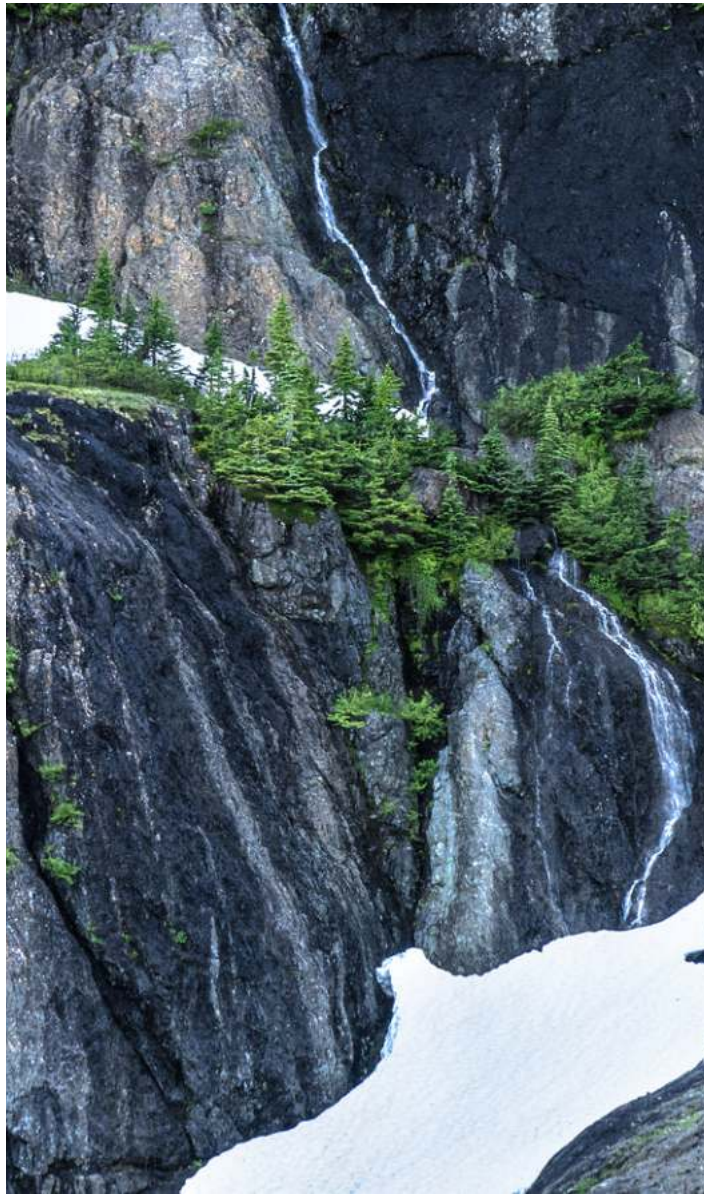
"The circle I was co-facilitating last fall shut down earlier this year due to a lack of participation. As a result, I have had the opportunity to support in other ways. Helping with interviews for new volunteers, supporting Sandi with the Circle of Support program, and very soon I hope to co-facilitate a new circle for new and postpartum parents."

What have you learned from your experience as a circle facilitator?

"I have learned that my view of the world is very narrow and that I need to be more aware of my bias and ignorance of circumstances I am unaware of or have little to no understanding of. I have learned to listen with open ears and an open mind and to avoid judgement when I only know part of another person's story."

A Volunteer Facilitator's Experience

— Wendy Glover, Errington BC (4 years volunteering)



Why did you become a Circle Facilitator?

"I became a member really knowing nothing about PSS. I was a volunteer admin for a social media community bulletin board and shared a flyer for PSS looking for volunteers, which prompted me to fill out the inquiry, met with Sandi and have been so grateful ever since. I stay for several reasons."

What motivates you to continue facilitating?

"Mostly for the satisfaction of seeing group members connect and support one another and improve the lives of the children in their care. Secondly because of Sandi. I really admire her and learn from her and appreciate all the seminars she puts together. PSS enriches my life and gives me connection with wise and caring people. Lastly, I really appreciate all the things I learn which I hope also improves my connection to my own children. "

What impact or changes have you seen in your circle members this year?

"The bonds of support and encouragement gives the group members strength to face tough challenges and helps them see how much their efforts improve the lives of their grandchildren."

What have you learned from your experience as a circle facilitator?

"I am enough. I can learn from everyone and I can hear and appreciate people silently, yet they can still know I care just from my hearing what they wish to express."

A Volunteer Facilitator's Experience

— Hazel Edurese, Richmond BC (13 years volunteering)



Why did you become a Circle Facilitator?

"A circle facilitator encouraged me to volunteer. As a landed immigrant in 2007, I seriously considered the invite believing that it is a good opportunity to connect with fellow Filipinos in a safe and supportive environment."

What motivates you to continue facilitating?

"My belief in self-empowerment, heart for children, and my desire to walk alongside parents and parent figures in our joint effort to make a difference in the lives of who really matter to us – our children."

What impact or changes have you seen in your circle members this year?

"Parents' willingness to educate themselves, their enthusiasm to put into practice what they learned and their mindfulness of self-care"

What have you learned from your experience as a circle facilitator?

"Personal stories are life changing; Parenting is evolutionary; What applies then does not apply now; Continuous learning is essential."



YEAR OF KNOWLEDGE

Thank you to our partner organizations and guest speakers for their collaboration and expertise. Your efforts have helped us support numerous families across BC, by providing parents and caregivers with free and accessible parenting workshops.

Workshops

PSS offers free, interactive, and informative workshops on a variety of parenting topics. These workshops provide parents and caregivers with practical strategies for supporting the development of their children.

We've hosted 11 Virtual Parenting Workshops on a variety of topics over the course of the fiscal year. These workshops covered themes such as "Self-care while parenting in a pandemic," "exploring strategies in supporting your child's unique way of being", and "understanding big feelings".

Parenting Bookclub

After a short hiatus, the Parenting Book club program was re-launched in April 2023. Parents and caregivers from across the Province registered to meet for 8 weeks via Zoom and our Facebook group to discuss, ask questions, and connect with each other over the book titled *The Whole Brain Child* by Dr. Daniel Siegel & Dr. Tina Payne Bryson.

371 Virtual Workshop Participants

What Participants Learned:

"What I mostly took away from it is to honor our children's temperaments and not shame, blame or punish them for who they are :-)"

— WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT

"It was a lot of things I have learned in other workshops, but I loved how it brought together so many different resources and gave solutions to use in the day to day parenting tantrums."

— WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT

"How to better manage and set yourself up for success dealing with tantrums and outbursts. Refreshing the idea that they are a normal part of development. How that when children are dysregulated that they do not have the ability to reason/use their cortex."

— WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT

Circle of Security (COSP)

PSS offered three *Circle of Security Parenting (COSPs)* programs which had a total of **250** families registered. PSS has also offered the Circle of Security Parenting (COSP) program virtually 3 times for 8 weeks each time.

The majority of attendees were from Northern and Central regions of Vancouver Island and Northern BC. The online delivery of this program provided PSS the ability to reach and serve remote Indigenous communities. 36 parents and caregivers completed the program. 67 children of those who attended the workshops were supported.



Kinship Family Community Events

With the support of the Victoria Foundation we were able to undertake five in-person Kinship family events: Grandparents Day Picnic in Prince George; 3-2-1 Blast Off Party with Nanaimo Science; Survival on the Sea with the BC Maritime Museum in Victoria; Draw, Carve, Create - Art Party, with Kamloops Art Party; Create a Clay Planter with the 4Cats Art Studio in Vancouver. The total attendance at these events was 31 children and 40 adults/kinship caregivers.



Online Children's Camps

We hosted several on-line camps style sessions during the spring break and summer in the previous fiscal year what we learned from families is that with restrictions easing they were eager to enroll their children in the local and in-person spring and summer camps. The summer of 2022 marked our last offering of the virtual children's camps.

YEAR OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



YEAR OF ADVOCACY

This past year the Advocacy & Mobilization Program was established. This team included Advocate-Social Workers Cassandra Strain and Christina Campbell, as well as program manager, Jane Bouey.

Advocacy and Mobilization

Parent Support Services Society has a long history of individual and systemic advocacy. Individual advocacy is carried out on the Help Line, as Advocates help kinship caregivers (grandparents and others raising a relative's child) navigate complex systems.

Kinship Care Help Line Anniversary

October 13th, PSS celebrated the 10-year anniversary of the Kinship Care Help Line (formerly Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Line). We appreciated the attendance of local dignitaries including the Honourable Anne Kang, and video congratulations from the Honourable Mitzi Dean, Minister of Children and Family Development.

Advocacy Works

Years of advocating alongside kinship caregivers - and enabling the recent establishment of the kinship care led, systemic advocacy non-profit group **Fairness for Children Raised by Relatives** - has resulted in some substantive improvements for kinship caregivers. These improvements included significant increases in the funding many kinship caregivers receive and rent supplements available to some youths aging out of kinship care.

Who calls our line?

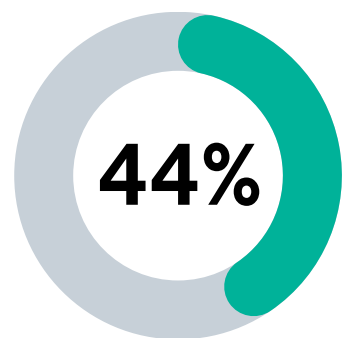
Kinship Care Help Line

This has been a challenging year for the Kinship Care Help Line, in terms of recovering the from the onslaught of effects brought forth by the pandemic.

Despite the challenge to achieve pre-pandemic numbers, the Line has sustained a steady flow of **223 new calls** from April 1st, 2022 and March 31st, 2023.

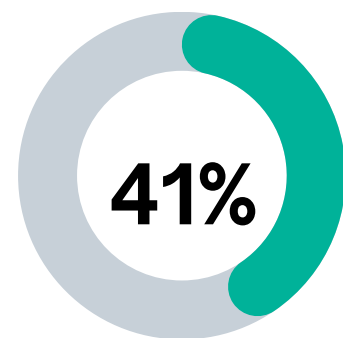
There was a significant increase in kinship caregivers seeking advice on financial assistance and family law matters this fiscal year.

Top two reasons, disclosed by kinship caregivers, for children coming into kinship care were substance abuse at 62% of callers and mental health at 33%.



kinship caregivers **seeking financial assistance advice**

Previous years: 27%, 20%, and 31%



kinship caregivers called about **family law matters**.

Previous years: 37%, 20%, and 14%

Comments From Help Line Callers

"Don't hesitate to call! These people empower, and I ought to know. They have been on the other end of the phone, patient and calm. After I talked to them, I knew exactly what my heart was telling me was the best for my grandchildren."

"Just a shout out to the Kinship Care help line. Very knowledgeable, compassionate and patient staff. I had a terrific conversation this afternoon that helped a lot and made me feel better. Thanks! "

"Christina gave me the words and courage to listen to my heart. She is empowering, kind and patient. I have not had a chance to work with the other 2 ladies, but I trust they too have our children's, our grandchildren's best interests at heart. Much love to these people and the work they do."

"Christina has been wonderful to talk to when I have needed help with a difficult issue. Thank you."



EDUCATION ON KINSHIP CARE

"Thank you, and thank you again for facilitating such an engaging workshop, I have reiterated the importance to my coworkers and am positive they will participate in future workshops! I look forward to attending the circle meetings!"

— WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT

Indigenous Child Welfare Legal Education Workshops

Indigenous child welfare legal education workshops (with lawyer Caity Goerke) were delivered 7 times with 114 registrants; representation from 13 Nations attended the advocacy discussion group and 8 Indigenous serving urban community organizations participated.

Kinship Workshops

Advocate Social Workers were invited to Alert Bay by Namgis First Nation for a community visit. They worked in collaboration with representatives from K'wak'walat'si Child and Family Services and the Whe-La-La-U Area Council to collaboratively develop a workshop on kinship care that was attended by band council, community members and community-based organizations including the RCMP.

The Advocacy & Mobilization team delivered workshops on kinship care services and supports to the Ministry of Children and Family Development Client Relations Branch; the Adoptive Families Association of BC; and the social service agency, S.U.C.C.E.S.S. They also co-hosted a conference on kinship care on Vancouver Island with Fairness for Children Raised by Relatives (FCRR). As well, they did a joint presentation with FCRR to First Call Child and Youth Advocacy Society.

Community consultation

Staff participated in the community consultations of the Select Standing Committee on Finance; the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction; and the Ministry of Children and Family Development consultations on the Child and Family Community Service Act. We also represented Parent Support Services on the Front-Line Advocacy Communities of Practice project with West Coast LEAF.



COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Community Collaboration

Help Line Advocates, Christina Campbell and Cassandra Strain have also hosted a regular Cross-Nation Knowledge Sharing on child welfare matters. This is an opportunity for Indigenous community leaders from across BC who are engaged in the child welfare system to have the opportunity to collaborate, learn, inspire and support one another.

Cassandra is taking the lead on a project, funded by the Victoria Foundation (Advocacy & Permanency), to collaborate with 2-3 Indigenous communities in holding kinship care family gatherings that will take place over the summer and fall of 2023.



YEAR OF VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

"I enjoy being a volunteer facilitator. I get to talk to people who live in other places besides Victoria and pick up information related to their town/city re: available services."

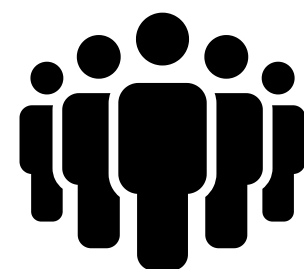
— MARY, VOLUNTEER FACILITATOR

Volunteering Program

Like many other charitable organizations and the non-profit sector in Canada, the pandemic has had a challenging impact on our volunteer program. With the switch to online Parenting Support Circles, and closing of several other in-person programs, volunteers hours have since been in a state of recovery. While this year's volunteer numbers are not as high as they were pre-pandemic, our commitment to meeting the needs of families across BC, through our programs has not changed.

Our commitment in working with diverse families and communities across BC would not be made possible without the huge support of our dedicated volunteers including; circle facilitators, book club facilitators, steering committee members, and special event volunteers.

Our volunteers have donated 3,057 of their priceless hours. In October 2023, two volunteer recognition events were held to celebrate our volunteers and their dedication and length of service. 36 volunteers were recognized.



117+ volunteer inquiries
26 new volunteers provided with training



Our longest volunteer has been with us for 13 years!

5 individuals have volunteered with us for **5 years and over**.

3,057 Volunteer Hours Donated

To our volunteer circle and bookclub facilitators, steering committee members, special event volunteers, and more — thank you for your commitment, compassion, leadership, and expertise. We sincerely appreciate your support during this period of recovery.

Our volunteers represent the following communities:

Vancouver, Burnaby, Coquitlam, North Vancouver, Chilliwack, Surrey, Nanaimo, Kamloops, Duncan, Victoria, Parksville, Errington, Abbotsford, Cranbrook, New Westminster, 108 Mile Ranch, Kimberly, and Port Moody



Provincial Training Workshop 2023

On March 3, 4, and 5, 2023, PSS hosted a successful Provincial Workshop Training at Stillwood Camp and Conference Centre. Despite its 2-year hiatus due to COVID-19, the resurrection of the training was well-received by the PSS community. Over the course of 3 days, volunteers were provided with skill enhancement, development, and consultation. Plenty of networking and fun were also incorporated.

PTW Training Workshops Included;

- Addressing questions about facilitation
- An Introduction of the *Parenting After Separation* Course – presented by Eroca Russell, an appointed Family Justice Counsellor.
- Trauma-Informed Practice – presented by Brenda Dragt who currently works for Complex Trauma Resources with the Complex Care and Intervention (CCI) Team.
- Self-Compassion Workshop – presented by Laure Sabini, mindfulness coach.

THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS

Alexandra Smith
Alina Sobolik
Alma Saplala
Amanda Dailey
Ana Machado
Analiza Racho
Andrew Pauls
Annabelle Tully-Barr
Anne Mattis
Annie Moon
Aurora Lucas
Azucena Martinez Lorenzo
Beth Kope
Bowen Lan
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Ellen Niemer
Esaine Mo
Fernanda Figueiredo
Gina Hortelano
Hairon Del Rosario
Harinder Parmar
Harpal Singh
Hazel Edurese
Heather Best
Helen He
Hibah Kridan
Hongmei Chen
Hyojin (Jenny) Sul
Ji Young (Connie) Gu
Irene Hong

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Jackie Lee
Jeffrey Simons
Jennifer Beckett
Jesus Gonzalez
Jin (Jackie) Lee
Jin Sang
Jiyoung (Kate) Shim
Jodelene Weir
Jonah Fialkow
Josh Rasalan
Josiah Kemper
Joyce Chamorro
Julissa Bernal Mora
Junxia (Helen) Sun
Ka Ling (Sara) Chan
Karen Riley
Karla Susana Garcia Ortiz
Katie Tersmette
Kim Viveiros
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Liana Weinberg
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Lisa Featherling
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Zainab Sumar
ZhaoXia (Jessie) Wu
Zoe Saffery



YEAR OF PARTNERSHIP

Thank you for your support and commitment to our work!

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

- Altruition.org
- Archway Community Services
- Burnaby Neighbourhood House
- Cameray Family Services
- Carney Hill Neighbourhood Centre – Hadih House
- Charity Village
- Community Volunteer Connections
- DIVERSECity
- Immigrant Services Society of BC,
- Information Children
- MOSAIC
- Mt. Pleasant Neighborhood House
- Multicultural Helping House Society
- Namgis First Nation
- New West Family Place
- Our Place Society
- Pacific Immigrant Resources Society
- Progressive Intercultural Community Services Society
- Red de Trabajadores Comunitarios Latinoamericanos
- SHARE Family & Community Services
- Tall Tree Integrated Health
- United Way of BC
- University of Victoria – Social Work Program
- Vancouver Community College - Counselling Program
- Vancouver Island University
- Vancouver Public Library
- Victoria Native Friendship Centre
- Volunteer Kamploops.org
- Volunteer Kootenay
- Volunteer Victoria



OUR DONORS

Thank you for your support!

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| Catharine Schiller | Lagrimas Salazar |
| Chantal Hutchison | Liping Liu |
| Crissy George | Louise Costello |
| Crissy George | Mel Ifada |
| Curtis Derksen of Personal Real Estate Corporation | Orneli Bakajika |
| Elizabeth Bouey | Provincial Employees Community Services Fund |
| Gary Schajer | Rosita Dworschak |
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| | Susan Ogilvy |
| | Wanda Murphy |



OUR FUNDERS

We are grateful to our generous funders whose support makes our work possible.

THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS



THANK YOU TO OUR STAFF, CONTRACTORS, & STUDENTS



OUR STAFF

Thank you for your commitment,
and dedication to our mission!

STAFF

Daniela Alvarado-Torres
Orneli Bakajika
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Jane Bouey
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