



Community Connections (Revelstoke) Society
Annual Report 2011
“Ten Years in Review”



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Mission Statement

Community Connections (Revelstoke) Society provides integrated, accessible social services to individuals and families in the community of Revelstoke. To respond to community needs we deliver quality services both directly and through community leadership.

Community Connections provides an integrated suite of social services to the community of Revelstoke including:

- Community Living Services for adults and children;
- Clinical Services for families, individuals, children in care, and women or children who have witnessed or experienced abuse;
- Family Support Services for parents;
- Youth opportunities programs for youth; and
- Outreach Programs to the community.

Values Statement

In providing our services we value:

- The diversity, individuality, capacity for change and growth, and strengths of our clients, our co-workers, and our community
- Respect;
- Human dignity;
- Friendship;
- Sense of belonging;
- Including all;
- A healthy environment;

Vision Statement

Over the next five years, Community Connections will continue to be recognized by our community, the region and the Province as a leader in the provision of social services for:

- Providing effective social programs that strengthen individuals and build community;
- Engaging our community by promoting respect for the diversity, capacity and strengths of all individuals;
- Engaging individuals, families and our community in the development of quality client-centred programs and services;
- Developing an organizational culture that values the contributions of all.



**Community Connections
Board of Directors**

CHAIRPERSON	NORM TENNANT	Retired
TREASURER	JIM COOK	Consultant
DIRECTORS	JANET LEMIEUX	Instructional Designer, Thompson River University
	CONNIE BROTHERS	Lawyer & Owner, Constance M. Brothers Law Office
	KARMEN COZENS	Commercial Lender, Revelstoke Credit Union
	ROB LAMONT	Owner, Revelstoke Janitor Services



Organizational Profile

Community Connections is a CARF accredited non-profit agency providing a broad range of services to the community of Revelstoke and the surrounding area. Original services were reflective of the mandates of the two founding agencies—Revelstoke Association for Community Living and the Revelstoke Family and Youth Resources Society. Over the years the number of programs and services have increased dramatically as a direct response to the needs of our community and include:

Staff

We employed 57 staff during 2011 (Unchanged from 2010). Executive staff are Cathy Girling: Interim Executive Director and Diana Kiedrowski Executive Manager Finance and Administration. Administration staff and Managers are: Desiree Giroux, Office Manager and Tian Yuan, Administrative Assistant/Book Keeper. Program Managers are Kristal Bradshaw, Kelly Riguedell, Loni Williams, Doug Egan, Patti Larson, and Cathy Girling. Casual staff, students, volunteers and respite workers also play a very important role in our staffing component.

Board

The Board has up to 12 seats and includes individuals that are representative of the diversity of the community of Revelstoke.

Funding

Community Connections' programs and services are funded in part by Community Living British Columbia, the Ministry of Children and Family Development; the Ministry of Community Services, CAPC Federal Funds; the Columbia Basin Trust; the Ministry of the Attorney General; the City of Revelstoke, Community Futures of Revelstoke; the Revelstoke Community Foundation; the United Way; BC Lottery Corporation; Revelstoke Hospital Auxiliary and a variety of community and corporate donors.

Budget

The budget and revenues for all programs for the 2011 fiscal year was \$3.4 million dollars.



**Report from Interim Executive Director
Cathy Girling**

As we celebrate our tenth year as a Society it's natural to reflect on the changes that those years have brought. In 2002 we amalgamated two smaller agencies; Family and Youth Resources and the Revelstoke Association for Community Living. This amalgamation was driven by two Boards of Directors who believed that strength (both program delivery strength and financial strength) could be found in a larger agency. I'm sure they hoped that the amalgamation would be more than that, but that was the basic premise. Any of us employed here at that time can remember that there was some adjusting to do, some new relationships to forge, and a few bumps in the road. We can also remember how excited we were about improving the way we worked with individuals and community; and we had countless dreams. I believe we've accomplished many of those dreams: our client focused work, our many integrated programs, our skilled staff, our appropriate buildings, our competitive wages and benefits, and our many years of successful accreditation. Thank you to everyone who helped us make those dreams an actuality.

I don't think any of us, however, were prepared for the best outcome of the past ten years: we have learned that people can, and will, change; and they usually end up liking it and thriving in it. We've learned that we can help others to create their preferred lives, and we can use those same skills to create our preferred work relationships and our preferred organization. Because these last ten years, and more, have been about people (the community members who look to us for support, the staff members who provide it, and the Board members who guide it) the change has come with variations we haven't expected (but that's the nature of people!). We've also learned that when people have strengths and resources to draw on they can change beyond their wildest dreams. In the last ten years we have come to know that people are the strength and resource of Community Connections, and will continue to be our strength for the many changes that will occur in the coming years.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our partners in change (who are, after all, just people); The Board of Directors, Program Managers, every Staff member and every volunteer – all of you make Community Connections "business as usual" look easy! Also, I extend a very special thank you to our funders, and our community for valuing the work we do.

*Respectfully,
Cathy Girling
Interim Executive Director*



**Message from the Chair of the Board of Directors
Norm Tennant**

The past year has brought some significant change to Community Connections as an illness to our Executive Director prompted a need to temporarily fill that vacancy. Cathy Girling has stepped in to the role of Acting Executive Director until such time as decisions can be made regarding the position. Cathy brings a wealth of experience to the job, as Cathy has been involved in social services in Revelstoke for over 20 years.

While it is never easy in times when there is a change in leadership, either temporary or permanent, it has provided me with an opportunity to see just how talented and professional the people at Community Connections are. The staff have pulled together to ensure our programs are delivered to the high standard we all expect. I know this will continue during the next year as the leadership situation gets sorted out.

Turning attention to the programs vested within Community Connection, it appears the funding constraints we anticipated are beginning to be implemented by Government. You only have to read a newspaper or watch the news to see how deep funding cuts may be. While we have received some reductions to our budget and more may be coming our way, we will do our best to mitigate their effect of program delivery. Those that have been involved in the social sector for a few years know these things go in cycles and you just have to collectively put your head down and work through it.

In closing I would like to thank all the staff at Community Connections for the great work they have done over the past year. I also wish to thank my fellow Board of Directors who volunteer their time to help make this organization run smoother. Finally I wish to that the people of Revelstoke who support us through food bank donations, coming to our programs and all the other ways they assist us in being a part of this community.

*Respectfully,
Norm Tennant
Chair of the Board*



**Community Connections (Revelstoke) Society
Programs**

Adventurers' Summer Day Camp
Children Who Witness Abuse
Clinical Services Programs
Community Advocacy
Community Connectors
Community Garden
Community Kitchen
Community Outreach Program
Counseling Programs
Day Programs
Family Enrichment Program
Food Bank
Housing Outreach Program
Homeshare

Individualized Community Inclusion Program
Infant Development
Jumping Jacks Preschool
Parents and Communities Together
Project Prom
Residential Care
Stopping the Violence
Supported Childcare
Supported Employment
Tenant Support Program
Teen Camp
Volunteer Program
Women's Outreach Program
Youth Services

**Community Connections extends sincere thanks to our
community;
individuals, families and
organizations who have contributed both time and money
to our organization.**

**Without your ongoing support, we would be
unable to provide the quality services we do!**



Finance & Administration

Community Connections (Revelstoke) Society has worked hard during the past ten years to create and maintain a strong and healthy social services organization. This is as a direct result of the wonderful contributions made by all those who are involved with Community Connections; our clients, the Board of Directors, Staff and Volunteers.

As a department, Finance & Administration continues to operate in a very efficient and organized way. In November 2011 we launched our newly designed website. We receive an average of 1,870 views per month and on our launch day November 29, 2011 we had 245 views to the site. Thanks very much to Revelstoke Computer Wiz for all of her hard work and creative skills.

The AGM Report is an opportunity to acknowledge and thank the Finance & Administration staff for their respectful and professional service during the past year; Desiree Giroux, our Office Manager; Tian Yuan, our bookkeeper; and Tennille Barber, our IT specialist. We would also like to thank Gillian MacLachlan for her additional support throughout the year.

*Respectfully,
Diana Kiedrowski
Executive Manager Finance and Administration*





Community Living Services for Adults (CLSA)

Residential (Group homes) Program

In 2011 we celebrated ten years of our “new” Society. These past ten years seem to have gone much faster than the previous ten... I guess that must say something for my age.

Ten years ago we operated three group homes one on Second St., one on Fifth St. and one on Eighth St. We were licensed for thirteen beds and typically had twelve people who called the group residences, home. Today we continue to operate two group homes, licensed for nine and support six individuals residentially and one individual in long term respite. We employ eleven full time employees and four casual employees.

As I reflect back over this past year I find myself smiling when I think how we celebrated in client successes and the feeling of empowerment when I see what we have learned from our challenges. However what I realized as I reminisced over this past year is how much energy was expelled with the impending doom of budget cuts to our programs. It seems to have been the focus of so many conversations throughout the year. Community Living BC (CLBC) indicated early in the year there would be changes to our budgets but were unclear of what they would be and when they would take place. In all fairness the bearer of bad news from CLBC did not have any way of knowing what the cuts would be or when they would take place either. We heard that CLBC would not have their regional budgets until after the HST vote in the summer. It was said that if HST was taken off the table we would see less money going into Social Programs. So when the vote came in that British Columbians were not in favour of the HST I felt our fate was sealed... significant cuts to our budgets were coming.

As a Management team we spent countless hours strategizing and trying to figure out where we could save money throughout our Community Living for Adults Programs. With Health and Safety being a priority and weighing out every possible scenario with the impact it could or would have on the clients we support and the staff we employ we knew had to wait and prepare for the worse.

In November we were given the bottom line, which included how many staff hours we had to work with as well as our updated operating budget. December 1st the new contracts were in place although we were not able to make all the changes until the New Year. Residentially, we have restructured our staffing schedules, which included the abolishment of four positions, and the reduction of hours in four other positions. This is the largest cut to our Residential program that I have experienced during my time with the Society.



Now that I have vented and expressed my political rant I would like to take this opportunity to talk about a few of the staff that have committed and worked incredibly hard over the years to provide optimum care to the people we serve in our Residential Programs. Although I have been fortunate to have worked with many people in my career, I will focus only on those people who have been with the Residential Program for fifteen years or more. In no way does this discount or minimize the contribution of all our Residential employees as I am surrounded by a team of individuals who strive to and who are making a difference in people's lives in our Community.

Marianne Marolf celebrated twenty four years this fall with CCRS where she has worked in Residential Care her entire career. Her focus has been to work within a team to create a welcoming and comfortable home for the people we support. Marianne has volunteered to be part of the Health and Safety Committee for so many years that I don't even have a record of her early participation (BC- before computers).

Kathy Stuart is only a year behind Marianne celebrating twenty three years this past fall. Kathy started her career up at the HUB Centre as the Baking Supervisor, then moved into a full time position in the Day Program and now for many years has worked in our Residential Programs. Kathy is known for being organized and methodical; although she may consider this a negative statement as a colleague, I have always appreciated her ability to organize large camping trips and special events.

Cathy Edmondson is an eighteen year veteran with the Society where she began her career in an individualized residential program. Cathy would say that she was hired because she loved Elvis as much as the lady she was supporting. Cathy transferred into the Day Program where she worked alongside Kathy before going into the Supportive Work (Recycle Depot) Program and now back full circle to our Residential program.

Dayna Donovan joined the Society as part of the original team at the Fifth St. Residence in July of 1997. Dayna has worked in all three of our homes and has supported clients with thoughtfulness and kindness throughout her career.

In closing I would like to thank my teams for their contribution and commitment to the Residential Programs and to the people we so proudly support.

*Respectfully,
Kelly Riguedell
Program Manager*



Community Support Program

The past 10 years have seen numerous changes in Community Living Services for Adults (CLSA) programs, from changing locations (our latest space is by far the best) to decreased Government funding. However the greatest change over the past ten years has been in our service delivery model.

We have seen a shift from traditional Day Programs and Sheltered Work programs. These programs were being transformed with new thinking and new service delivery models that sought to more effectively integrate persons with developmental disabilities into their community.

In contrast to earlier forms of services that emphasized standardized service options, CLSA has moved to "person-centered" thinking where supports are built around each person's likes and needs. The programs offered underwent significant reconstruction. Rather than funding segregated activities and programs for large groups which offered little to no choice, CLSA adopted a philosophy of individualized planning so that people may choose what best suits their needs.

During this period a major shift was also underway to provide training and support services that enabled persons with developmental disabilities to secure paid employment with local businesses. New programs were developed such as the Supported Employment program, the Community Support program providing one-on-one staff support to individuals, the Individualized Community Inclusion program offering a wide variety of recreational and educational experiences, and the Senior's Activity program.

Services that CLSA now offers provide growth within the community for individuals, giving the option of employment or volunteer opportunities as well as quality of life through individualized options!

In the reality of today's society, we must continue improving services and supports for people with disabilities and their families however you cannot continuously improve interdependent systems and processes until you progressively perfect interdependent, interpersonal relationships. In order to achieve this type of success consistently throughout the years, efforts have been made to keep abreast of new and innovative technologies in program planning. Cooperative and collaborative relationships have been formed and maintained with many community groups and organizations.

Our goal is to make it possible for every person, whatever their ability, to live and participate as a full citizen in our community.



The beauty of our new service delivery model is that we know our programs are successful when you walk into the CLSA space and see that "no one is there." They are all out and about in the community working, playing, learning and supporting the community.

*Respectfully
Loni Williams,
Program Manager*





Outreach Services

Community Connections Food Bank serves Revelstoke residents who struggle with food insecurity, including people working for low wages or who have been laid off work, people with chronic illness and disabilities and living on a fixed income, and people without an income or without a home. We currently have more than three hundred active households registered with the food bank and each week we assist more than 175 individuals, families and seniors and up to 50 children access our services as well.

We had another busy year at the food bank and we worked hard to ensure that we had enough financial and food resources on hand so that people had access to healthy, nutritious food choices each week. In addition we provided the weekly Kids Snack Program and additional donated items such as household supplies, personal care items, donated clothing, furniture and blankets. We provide donated bus tickets, pool passes, diapers, formula and baby food and clothing and vitamins. Although donations were slow to come in at the beginning of the year, we ended 2011 on a stellar note with donations exceeding expectations!

We celebrated many successes at the food bank this past year. During our National Hunger Awareness Day in May several staff members participated in an open house and lunch event at the Main Office. More than 100 community members attended and toured our offices and viewed the informative and creative displays that staff had on display.

The first annual Emergency Services Fight Back against Hunger community food drive was a huge success and we collected 8000 pounds of food and \$1000.00 in cash donations! This event was hosted by a variety of Emergency Services groups and there were more than 100 volunteers who came out in support of the food bank. This food drive has formed a lasting partnership and will become an annual event in our community.

In my role as director on the board for Food Banks BC I hosted the annual board meeting here in Revelstoke on September 21 and 22. In the past, these meetings have always been held in a major city however our committee members were willing to travel the distance and were very impressed with the wide variety of programs and services that we provide to our community. I also participated in many teleconference calls and attended the annual conference in Kamloops this past year. Food Banks Canada has asked for my participation during upcoming national webinars to share tips for success with other food banks. We are one of three food banks from across Canada to be invited and this event will allow the opportunity to bring focus to a smaller food banks that don't normally have a voice.

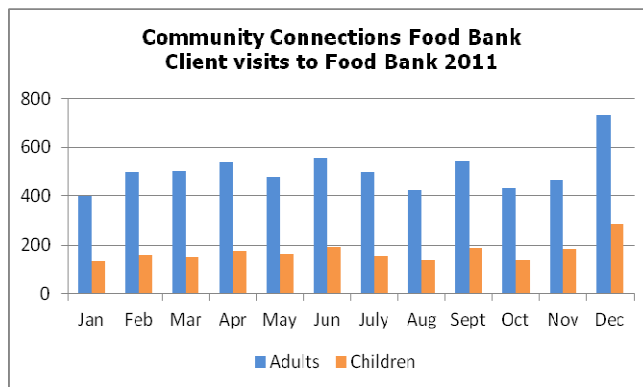


My goal as a committee member with Food Banks BC has been to bring more focus to rural food banks and our unique problems with gathering large amounts of food and financial donations from our local limited resources. At a time when we were struggling with lack of food supplies in June the Surrey and Chilliwack food banks stepped forward and shipped 9400 pounds of non- perishable food to our food bank. These food banks also have committee members on the provincial board and through our many discussions they were able to understand the needs of smaller communities and this in turn encouraged them to share their excess food. Their generous donation allowed us to provide a wider variety of food items in our hampers.

During this past year we have continued our partnerships with agencies that include Canadian Diabetes Association, Revelstoke Farmers Market, Bear Aware Program, Revelstoke Hospital Auxiliary Society and the Community Garden project with North Columbia Environmental Society and the CP Rail Holiday Train.

Looking back over the past ten years and seeing how the food bank has grown and changed and continues to make a difference in people's day to day lives gives me energized passion and enthusiasm for my work. Not only has our food bank become an essential resource for our individuals and families struggling with hunger and food insecurity, it is a well known, respected and vital asset to our community.

I believe that together as a community we can continue to make a real difference and together we will help those in need. We are very grateful to the many individuals and groups who worked hard and gave generously so that we can continue helping these struggling individuals and families.



*Respectfully,
Patti Larson
Outreach Manager*

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Community Living Services for Children (CLSC)

Community Connectors and Respite Program

Our Community Connectors program support children and youth (age 6 through 19) with special needs to participate in community recreation and leisure activities which will enhance their social and life skills, nurture their relationships with peers and their connection to the community. Over the past decade, the programming for the children and youth of our Community Connectors program has evolved to meet the changing needs and interests of participants and their families.

There are 23 children/youth participating in programming – an increase of seven from last year. Of these 23 children and youth, 12 have a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder. This represents a significant increase in the number of participants with Autism.

Over the course of the program year (September 2010 – June 2011) the thirteen Youth Care Workers involved with the program plan and organize a variety of social, leisure and recreational activities for participants. Most of our activities are organized as groups – and sometimes, group members invite friends to join their activities. Over the year, our activities have included hiking on Mt. Revelstoke, walking or riding bikes along the green belt, enjoying pirate treasure hunts, flying paper airplanes and kites, learning to apply makeup, trying new hair styles, going to the pools at the aquatic centre, bowling, snow shoeing, skating, cross country skiing, hitting golf balls on the driving range, playing board games, creating with paper maché and clay, planting gardens, and touring museums as well as the fire and police stations. Program participants also received support to participate in Girl Guide, Zumba, dance class, the City's street banner painting program, swimming and skiing lessons, soccer, a variety of baking and cooking classes offered by the City, numerous Pre-Teen events, and courses such as Home Safe and Basic First Aid.

This year was the fifth year the Begbie Boys group met and, over the years, the group has grown such that nine young men enjoy getting together for weekly activities. In September, the group was split into two – the Begbie Boys (grade six and seven) has three participants with two staff while the Little Begbie Boys (grades one to five) has six participants and three staff. In September, we also created the Revy Girls group which has four participants (another of our clients is still "being recruited") and three facilitators.



Of the families eligible to receive Respite services, there are ten families currently using Respite on a regular basis. Families are having their Respite Care Providers take the children and youth to swimming lessons, drop in sessions at the Revelstoke Acrobats and to a variety of community events and activities. Some families use their Respite so parents can go dancing, out for dinner and a movie, coach or attend sibling's extra-curricular activities and for weekends out of town. There are six staff members who provided Respite; the other families have grandparents or other relatives providing care.

Youth Care Workers: Laurie Jones, Sandra Murray, Donna van Dyck, Lisa Belsham, Patsy Walker, Andree Rioux, Kai Bogglid, Ray Peterson, Kaitlin Larson, Courtney Kaler, and Laura Gallagher.

Autism Programs

Revelstoke is very unique in terms of the programming available for the children and youth with Autism. Community Connections recruits and trains the staff who deliver programming developed in collaboration with the family, a Behavioural Consultant and other community professionals (Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech Therapy). We have also created a Lending Library so families can borrow resources – sensory equipment, books, DVDs and other resources – prior to purchasing them. Our agency also provides all the financial and Human Resource Management required by a large staff group. In most communities in our province it is the family who is responsible for recruiting and training of staff and overseeing all the financial and Human Resource functions. Over the last decade, our Autism programs have experienced significant growth!

We currently provide two streams of service for children and youth who have been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. For the children under six years of age, we provide up to fifteen hours a week of Intensive Behavioural Intervention (IBI) delivered primarily through playful activities and games. During our time with the children, we are systematically teaching specific skills (such as looking at the person you're talking to, asking appropriately for things, matching items, increasing vocabulary, following instruction and developing life skills.) Once the children have acquired a skill, we work to ensure they have mastered the skill in a variety of environments (in a daycare or preschool, at home, and on the playground). We begin working with a child shortly after they receive the diagnosis (generally between the ages of three and four). We have seen tremendous progress in the children receiving this type of service! This year, we had two boys "graduate" from their IBI programs as they turned six; we continue to provide IBI programming for two other boys.



As part of our Intensive Behavioural Intervention programs we offer a variety of group experiences including social skills groups, a gymnastics group and a yoga class. For two afternoons a week, we bring our recent graduates and the two currently involved in an IBI program together and facilitate social skills groups where they learn taking turns, referencing (make appropriate eye contact), following the rules of a game and how to take direction from teachers and/or peers. In our gymnastics group, we practice waiting, being close to friends without bumping them, taking off and putting on our socks and shoes (and outdoor wear), using our words, jumping on trampolines, navigating an obstacle course and climbing. In our yoga class, we are learning a variety of yoga poses and using "belly breathing" to calm our bodies.

Our second stream of Autism programming is focused on those over the age of six. The eleven children and youth in this program have a Youth Care Worker who supports them to participate in a group activity (Begie Boys or Revy Girls) in addition to a variety of community recreation and leisure activities. The goal of our work is to enhance social skills by facilitating relationships and interactions with peers. We also facilitate the development of life skills and connection to our community. The children and youth of this program enjoy the same recreation and leisure activities as those in our Community Connectors program.

Intensive Behavioural Interventionists: Patsy Walker, Andree Rioux and Courtney Kaler.

Children's Adventure Summer Day Camp

This was our fifteenth year operating the Children's Summer Day Camp! We offered eight very successful weeks of Camp. Most weeks were full and some had waiting lists. This year, children between the ages of 6 and 11 occupied 130 spots in the camps and fifty six individual children participated over the course of the summer. Of the 130 spots, 28 were for children with special needs and 16 spots were sponsored.

Each week, the events and activities of the camp are organized around a theme. Themes included Games and Science, Art, Wet & Wild Water, Sports, Exploration and Discovery and Nature.

This year, during Games and Science week, the campers made rockets that really flew, water tornados and volcanoes (which were also a tremendous hit)! The highlight of the week was a whole day excursion to Blanket Creek where they swam, caught frogs and tadpoles and roasted hotdogs.

During Exploration and Discovery week we "explored" the Ghost Town and railway Turn House at Three Valley



Gap. Some of the campers even swam in the chilly water of the lake! We discovered how using a magnifying glass, binoculars and telescope helps us see small (and unusual) creatures.

During Nature week, Ducks Unlimited volunteers helped us make bird houses and the Parks Canada Naturalist guided our walks through Giant Cedars and Skunk Cabbage walks in Revelstoke National Park. We also listened to a very humorous (but important) presentation by the Bear Aware lady.

At the end of each day of Art week, campers took home their art projects which included a kite (that really flew), a canvas shopping bags and a gift for someone special. One day, the project was done as a "team effort" where each team added something to a project started by another team. These "creations" were lots of fun and displayed at the end of the camp.

During Sports week the children went swimming, played basketball, cricket, volleyball, badminton, tennis and soccer. Some of the team games were done as relays which made them really fun and different. The campers also spent an entire day at Blanket Creek.

Our fearless leader, Nick Potocki, returned for his second year as the head leader; Meighan Phelps and Samantha Messaros returned as leaders. This year we welcomed Sandy Van Kleek and Kaarina Duncan to the team. Sandra Murray, Laurie Jones, Gorette Imm, Andree Rioux and Patsy Walker also worked as part of the team when the children with special needs required some additional support to fully enjoy all the program activities. The staff team came together as a very dynamic and energetic team who all said they would like to return again next year!

*Respectfully,
Kristal Bradshaw
Program Manager*

Jumping Jacks Preschool

Jumping Jacks Preschool is a fast paced, fun filled inclusive preschool for 3 to 5 year olds. We offer two morning classes, a Monday, Wednesday and Friday class and a Tuesday/Thursday class. Twenty children participate in each program. Over the last decade, we have noted that our classes fill very quickly once we open registration



for the upcoming year and almost all of those in our Tuesday/Thursday class move onto our three day/week program. As an inclusive program, we want to ensure all the children are able to participate in all program activities. Additional support is provided through the Supported Child Development Program.

Each month our program offers a minimum of 2 themes per month. We have our favourite yearly themes which include all of the holidays and seasons, hibernation, dinosaurs, our five senses, music, pets, transportation and Community Helpers just to name a few. Each year we try to develop new themes so during the past year we had two very successful themes - one focused on space and another featured our oceans. During each theme we try to incorporate all of the different centers in our classroom, theme related puzzles, fine motor activities, drama center, sensory tables, arts and crafts, songs and finger plays, stories and games and gross motor movement. During the last month of our school year everyone looks forward to Graduation - a culmination of fun and learning poured into a small musical performance and pot luck celebration for the children and their families. This past year we said good bye to several families that we had the privilege of teaching three or more of their children through the years. We are still the only preschool in our community to offer the Seeds of Empathy Program and have done so for the past five years. Our Seeds of Empathy Family is Shannon and Kertis Broza and Baby Isaac. Shannon is a Community Connections staff member who works with our community's youth.

This past year has been a busy one for taking on practicum students. I believe it is important to accept students into our facility to provide practical experiences for their learning. Over my time as the Manager of our Preschool, I have noticed an increase in requests to have practicum students - particularly from Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs. This year we had a student from an ECE program, two Education Assistants and a Work Experience Student from Revelstoke Secondary. I am happy to report that one of the Education Assistant Practicum students (Stacy Sanchez) now works with us.

Throughout the school year we try to provide our children with a wide variety of experiences. My staff and I strive to come up with new and creative ideas and are often lead by the children's interests. I thoroughly enjoy working and seeing firsthand how these experiences ignite curiosity and wonder in each child's eyes. My thanks to Community Connections for giving me the opportunity to work at a job I thoroughly enjoy.

*Respectfully,
Rosetta Bernava
Manager of Care*



Infant Development Program

The Infant Development Program is a program that supports infants from birth to three and their families. To receive on-going early intervention, infants must be at-risk for a developmental delay, developmentally delayed in one or more skill area or have a diagnosed disability. The program is voluntary and free of charge and we have clients from all socioeconomic levels. Our program offers a variety of services that are uniquely tailored to each family's needs and desires.

As always, the IDP caseload fluctuates throughout the year. The program is designed to be responsive to families' needs. For this reason, service delivery is very fluid and dynamic. This year the IDP caseload ranged from 9 to 13. Best practice for our position is a caseload of 12-14 families. This helps to explain our need to waitlist new referrals. All families are offered a developmental screening, whether on the active caseload or waitlist, to determine the level of service required. The number of families on the waitlist fluctuated between one and ten. We receive referrals from a number of community partners including Public Health, family physicians, the MCFD, our Speech Language Pathologist and other programs offered at Community Connections. This year, the reasons for referral included psychosocial risk, scoring low on a developmental screening (Ages and Stages Questionnaire), doctors noting developmental milestones are not being attained and a biological risk – exposure to drugs and alcohol prenatally.

Service Delivery

IDP Consultants are home visitors. Alternative arrangements are made if a family is uncomfortable with a visitor in their home but this is not ideal. During home visits a Consultant,

- Celebrates new and exciting things an infant is doing
- Encourages the work that parents have been doing
- Reviews and discusses any past activities that were suggested
- Offers new and different ways to work on goals, often utilizing what's available in the home
- Shares upcoming community events and workshops
- Invites family to share with the Consultant how they can be most helpful
- Suggests referrals when there is concern
- Models play and interaction
- Assesses an infant's development using the Gesell, AEPS, ASQ or ASQ-SE

Most families involved in IDP this past year have received **active service** (home visits at least once a month) and **monitoring** (home visits every 2 months).



Developmental Screening, Assessment and Therapy Services offered through the Infant Development Program

Families involved in the Infant Development Program are offered developmental screening and assessment. Children are typically screened using an Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) questionnaire which is completed by a parent. A child's development may be monitored for several months using an ASQ. If a more in depth assessment is required, the family will be offered a Gesell Assessment. The Gesell is a combination of parent report and observation of the child by the Consultant. This assessment can determine the developmental age of skills across each domain of development. Either of these tools can lead the Consultant to make a referral for specialty therapy services. A Consultant can also provide families with a screening tool for social-emotional health, the ASQ-SE. **Last year, 25 ASQ's were completed with families, 7 Gesell assessments and 2 ASQ-SE's.**

Our program has the benefit of contracting with an Occupational Therapist (OT), and a Physiotherapist (PT). Jocelyne Willms, PT, works with a number of families who are concerned about their child's gross motor development. Delays in this domain are identified quite early by family doctors and other medical practitioners. The IDP worked with Shannon Densmore, OT, from Salmon Arm until Whitney Kendrick returned from maternity leave in November. **Last year, 15 PT assessments were offered and 4 OT assessments.**

IDP Consultants often give families ideas on how they can support the development of their infant's language until twenty-four months of age. If, at that time, the infant's language continues to be delayed, a referral is made to Carolyn Duncan, Speech and Language Pathologist (SLP). Last year, one referral was made from SLP to IDP.

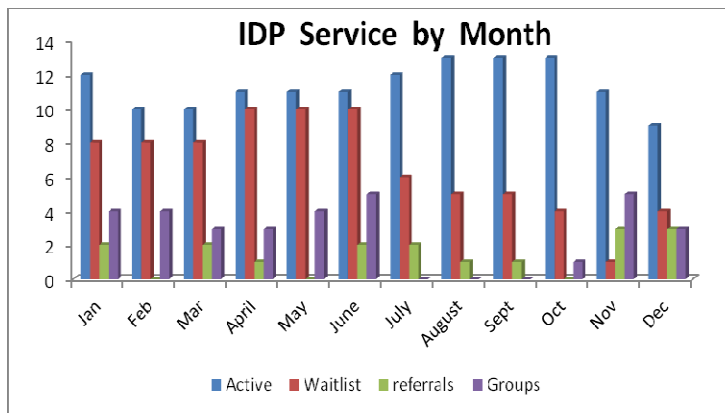
The Infant Development Program and our clients have enjoyed support from a number of community organizations. Revelstoke Trees for Tots, Moose Lodge, Revelstoke Knights of Pythias, Revelstoke Shrine Club No.19 and Revelstoke Food Bank have supported infants and their families to attend medical appointments and purchase special equipment.

Small but Mighty

Our Small but Mighty group came into being after a mother with a premature baby thought it would be helpful to bring together parents whose children had traumatic births. The group provides an arena for parents to share their stories and receive support and feedback from other parents with similar experiences. Kelly Silzer teamed up with this mother to make this group a reality. The group now runs every Wednesday from 1-3



in the playroom at Community Connections. The group operates on as informal drop in. Two facilitators, IDP Consultant (Kelly or Amanda) and ECE Educator, Rosetta Bernava are available to offer developmental screens, discuss development, answer questions and actively listen.



*Respectfully,
Amanda MacIntosh
Infant Development Consultant*

Supported Child Development Program

The Supported Child Development Program (SCDP) assists children who require extra support to fully participate in the programming offered in a child care setting or preschool program. Children require support due to a disability or developmental delay in physical, cognitive, communicative or social/emotional/behavioural areas.

Our work is guided by the goals and objectives outlined in each child’s Individual Support Plan (ISP). These plans are always developed in consultation with families and the centre staff. We are very fortunate to have Physical and Occupational Therapists on contract to assist us in our work. These therapists and our community Speech Therapist, design intervention strategies that are incorporated into each child’s ISP. This year, our



programs started a lending library with the equipment most frequently recommended by the specialty therapists. Our library allows families to try equipment to see if it is effective at meeting their child's needs before actually investing in a specific piece of equipment. To date, our library has weighted vests, weighted lap pads, a weighted blanket, therapy balls used to enhance balance and address sensory concerns, sit discs, equipment that develops hand muscles used in holding scissors, pencils and crayons, equipment used to stimulate oral motor muscle development and a number of fidgets.

There were a number of staffing changes throughout the year. Gorette Imm took on the responsibilities of the program Consultant for the group daycare and Leap N Learn Preschool once Amanda MacIntosh began her second maternity leave (Oct 2010). Gorette left our team in September 2011, but Amanda returned from her maternity leave in early November. Monica Degerness (who worked in Jumping Jacks) began her second maternity leave in March and was replaced by Patsy Walker. Erin MacLachlan (who worked in the daycare) began her maternity leave in May but Jessica Good returned from her maternity leave that same month.

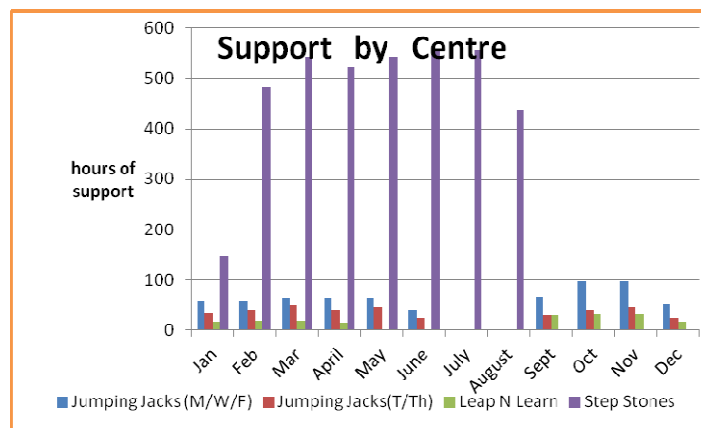
Service Delivery

The SCDP supports children to attend Jumping Jacks Preschool, Leap and Learn Preschool, and Stepping Stones Childcare Centre. Between January and June, our staff supported nine children; we supported 4 children over the summer months; and six children received support between September and December.

- Monica Degerness and Patsy Walker provided shared support for four children January and June 2011. Jessica Good provided shared support for five children between September and December 2011 at Jumping Jacks Preschool.
- Andree Rioux supported 1 child between January and June and this same child between September and December 2011 at Leap and Learn Preschool.
- Jessica Good, Gorette Imm, Erin MacLachlan and Rosemarie Klein provided support at Stepping Stones Childcare Centre for four children from January to September 2011. Some of these children attended full time and some attended only part time.
- Two children from our program were also supported to participate in the Adapted Aquatics program offered through the School District. This program was specifically recommended by the physical therapist.



- Two children participated in our department's Gymnastics Program. The Gymnastics Programs provides a safe and fun way to promote gross motor development and social-personal skills.



Program staff also participated in the School District's Ready Set Learn event, Interior Health's Three Year Old Fair, several Kindergarten Transition meetings (meetings with school district staff and families so the Kindergarten Teachers have an awareness of the strengths and challenges of those coming into their classrooms in September), Regional Program Meetings and training to use the agency's new database system for documentation.

*Respectfully,
Amanda MacIntosh
Infant Development Consultant*



Community Development Team

As Community Connections enters its tenth year as a registered Society our team has looked back at the history of the Community Development Programs: Parents and Community Together (PACT), Social Justice Advocate, Housing Outreach and Tenant Support Worker. Ten years ago only one of these programs existed, PACT, and the others were far in the future. It is important to note that all four of these programs were developed by Community Connections in response to community identified need.

Parents and Communities Together

In the spring of 2001 Family and Youth Resources (before we became Community Connections) was approached by a number of families with the idea of running a group that would focus on supporting parents to meet the demands and stresses of parenting in our busy culture, and provide an opportunity for parents to share their experiences and resources. With initial funding from the Vancouver Foundation we began a weekly drop-in program for families of pre-school children; this popular program has been operating ever since. Our motto "everyone is welcome" has resulted in groups that reflect the diversity of our community, including parents who are new to this province or country, and some who are new to the English language.

Our weekly drop-in numbers have increased to the point of maximum capacity; many days we have over 50 people in the room, we have increased our drop-in from one to two days a week, and have added educational groups when funding is available. For the past 9 years we have received funding from the Community Action program for Children (CAPC) through the Public Health Agency of Canada, and eventually added funding from the Ministry Of Children and Family Development. Although the actual contract amounts have not increased for the past 9 years, we have creatively stretched the existing budgets to increase services. Many of our program goals this year involved the challenges of continuing to provide the same level of service despite increasing costs: continue the summer drop-in program with outdoor activities and events, continue to operate Mondays and Thursdays, continue to provide parenting support and information on family health and safety, and continue to provide healthy snacks. Although food costs have almost tripled in the past ten years we realize that healthy snacks are positive role modeling for healthy eating, many parents comment that their children have tried fruit and vegetable snacks for the first time at PACT and then ask for those foods at home. In the coming year we will pursue other funding to continue our healthy eating program.

When we wrote the first funding proposal for PACT we had no expectation that the program would be so



successful, nor so long lived. This program has been an excellent example of the power of community voices and client driven services.

PACT continued to benefit again this year from the continuing support of Community Action Programs for Children (Public Health Agency of Canada) and the MCFD Family Resource Program.

Social Justice Advocate

This program began in 2005, when the community experienced the closure of several government offices and identified the need for a program that would assist individuals and groups struggling with poverty, life skills, problem solving, income security, disabilities, tenancy issues, and access to government services.

As this program has never had core funding from any government body fund raising has been a constant issue, and operating funds have been inconsistent over the years. The SJA program received its initial funding from the Law Foundation, and Columbia Basin Trust, and has continued to operate for the past seven years.

The SJA program has worked with individuals, groups and families to address their needs and to work together to address community needs. While the program has continued to deliver services regarding family law, health, housing, and employment issues the most common presenting problems during this reporting period were disability, chronic illness, residential tenancy and employment standards.

The Advocate has also taken an active role in identifying both systemic and community social issues, and in the past year has identified Poverty as a major community social issue, and has contributed to the City of Revelstoke Poverty Reduction Strategy. Recent pressures on employment, housing, and food and fuel costs have continue to increase stress on our client community. This pressure has had the greatest impact on those living at the margins; an overwhelming majority of our clients are experiencing poverty, and its long lasting effects. The Social Justice Advocate has worked with various provincial and local agencies, and this year has focused on developing working relationships with Service Canada and their outreach services, the Shuswap Brain Injury Society, and the City of Revelstoke.

This year the part-time SJA program has responded to 618 inquiries; 332 of them requiring more than one appointment. The Social Justice Advocate has become a well recognized community resource for many members of our City. With the support of the Columbia Basin Trust, B.C. Gaming Commission and the United Way we will continue to respond to, and take leadership in, community social concerns.



Housing Outreach Program

In 2008 our advocate program identified a strong need for supports for homeless individuals, and later that year this agency signed a contract with BC Housing to provide Homeless Outreach Services. This innovative and flexible program addresses chronic and/or absolute homelessness and provides supports that ensure individuals with complex housing needs are able to access income security, community based health services, and potential housing units. Addressing the underlying, complex reasons for homelessness can be time intensive; but our focus on the needs of the individual and our strong team work within the community, has led to many clients being successfully housed and maintaining that housing for longer periods of time.

In the past several years the program has identified three issues common to all of the individuals using the program: social isolation, a need for unstructured contact with staff, and a lack of suitable housing units in the community. The HOP worker has created a number of activities that ensure clients can interact with her informally in the community, and during predictable drop-in hours that do not require an appointment. Social isolation is addressed through a weekly drop in breakfast program called Connections Café. The larger challenge of finding housing in a community without emergency shelters or supported housing projects continues to be addressed through developing strong relationships with local landlords and tenants, providing short term housing in motels, and using the small rent supplements to assist clients with financial roadblocks. The HOP program hosts an annual Landlords Lunch to educate, support, and provide resources to local Landlords, which are well attended. Local landlords are experiencing successes with clients maintaining long term tenancies when supported by the Outreach Worker.

The Housing Outreach program is pleased to work in partnership with, and be financially supported by, B.C. Housing.

Tenant Support Worker

The Tenant Support Worker program is also relatively new to our agency. The program signed its first contract with B.C. Housing in late 2008, and was operating in 2009. The need for supports for individual tenants was recognized through a partnership between the Social Justice Advocate program and B.C. Housing. This provincial program assists tenants of B.C. Housing buildings to overcome the various challenges that may arise when living in a social housing environment. The ultimate goal for the individuals is to be successful in their tenancies, and in their lives. The program involves coaching, capacity building, diplomacy, assessment, service planning,



skills teaching, resource identification, referral, and follow-up.

In our first several years of operation the TSW has assisted clients with understanding and solving tenancy issues, applying for income security programs or pensions, moving, accessing education, looking for employment, managing conflict, acquiring furniture or other resources. He has also assisted tenants in accessing community resources such as the food bank, counseling, seniors programs, financial services, health care services and recreation programs. In addition to interactions with individuals the staff member has organized group activities such as a weekly movie matinee; seniors exercise classes, pot luck meals, Canada Day Barbeques, fire safety workshops, tenant orientation sessions, craft workshops, afternoon teas, and regular coffee mornings. The tenants in the building report a safer, friendlier, more welcoming atmosphere, and every one of them has frequently taken the time to sit and talk out their problems with the support worker.

We are sure that this program has had a positive impact on the tenants, and on the larger community, and know that we will continue to deliver the program with the support of B.C. Housing.

*Respectfully,
Cathy Girling
Program Manager*



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Counselling and Consultation Services

As has been the case in previous years Clinical Services has gone through number of changes over the past year including a change in name. The team felt that **Counselling and Consultation Services** better represents the nature as well as the intent of the services provided to the community. The two components of the service remain the same; the **Counselling Program** provides individual, family, and group counselling as well as training and consultation services. The **Youth Services Program** offers events and activities for youth from 9 to 18 years of age, the Summer Therapeutic Camp Program and the Youth Mentoring Program.

Some quick statistical information: The **Counselling Program** has experienced a 63% increase in the number of referrals for counselling over the past year. The largest number of referrals is self-referrals. The gender division in clients served was 58% female and 42% male. The breakdown in age range of clients receiving service was; 0-12 years 11%, 13-18 years 34%, 19-29 years 21%, 30-45 years 27%, and 45 and older 7%.

Collaborative ideas continue to inform our work with individuals, families, and community. To that end our work with Revelstoke Secondary School and the Ministry of Children and Family Development continues as we collaborate around new projects and generate new ideas together.

Karley continues to be the lead in our work with Revelstoke Secondary School. Team members are in the school daily providing individual and group counselling to students. The Healthy Relationships Program facilitated by Gorette and Karley is offered to grade 8 and 10 students. Noon hour drop-in groups run twice a week and the team is involved with particular projects such as *Pink Shirt Day* and the welcome back BBQ at the beginning of the year. We appreciate the support we receive from Mike Hooker and his staff including the counsellors Erin and Jody, all the teachers, and of course Brenda.

Our collaboration with MCFD continues to evolve. Our weekly meeting with MCFD has expanded over the past year to include the two counsellors from RSS. It was felt their involvement in the weekly meetings would enhance our work together in meeting the needs of youth and their families in the community. The meetings have become a great forum to share and generate new ideas in providing services to individuals and families.

The **Youth Services Program** continues to provide weekly events and activities for youth in the community. This past year we were involved in GASP, a program initiated by Parks Canada to expose youth to the National Parks System and have them give back to their community. We also continue to provide services to youth



through the Youth Justice Services Program, including counselling, support, and facilitating any community work service requirements. The Youth Mentoring Program has matched several youth with adult volunteers in the community. Unfortunately, the demand for mentors has quickly exceeded the number of adult volunteers available which means youth are eagerly waiting. I am fortunate to work with a group of talented, passionate, and energetic professionals who enjoy their work and are eager to explore new ideas in providing the best service possible to the community. As has been the case over the past few years there have been a number of staffing changes with the team. Shannon Broza left for her maternity leave in May, 2011. Sheena Bell returned from her maternity leave in June, 2011 and then left in October, 2011 for another maternity leave. Gorette Imm joined us in October, 2011 taking on a counselling role with the team. Gorette continues to co-facilitate the PACT Program twice a week. Kelly Silzer joined our team in November, 2011, taking on the Mentoring Program as well as facilitating the Youth Justice Program. Kelly continues to spend her mornings with Jumping Jacks.

We could not provide the services we do to the community without the financial support from the Ministry of Children and family Development, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (Stop the Violence, Children Who Witness Abuse, Women's Outreach), Columbia Basin Trust, Gaming, United Way and of course the generous support from local businesses and individuals.

As always we could not do what we do without the support of our administrative team; Diana Kiedrowski, Desiree Giroux, Tina Yuan, Tennille Barber and Gill MacLachlan.

Team Members:

Gorette Imm
Lindsay Legebokoff
Kelly Silzer
Karley Trauzzi

*Respectfully,
Doug Egan, MSW, RSW
Program Manager*



Community Connections Community Partners

7-11 Revelstoke and Neil Hodgson
Beta Sigma Phi Preceptor Delta Alpha
Columbia Basin Trust
Columbia Shuswap Regional District
Community Futures Development Corporation
Curves
Dan Davis In Memory
Gold Range Lodge # 26 Knights of Pythias
Loyal Order of the Moose #1241
Pharmasave
PT Farm Market
Revelstoke Arts Council
Revelstoke Community Forest Corporation
Revelstoke Community Foundation

Revelstoke Florist
Revelstoke Hospital Auxiliary Society
Revelstoke Masonic Lodge
Revelstoke Mountain Resort
Revelstoke Shrine Club #19
Revelstoke Chamber of Commerce
Revelstoke Credit Union
Revelstoke Early Childhood Development Committee
Revelstoke Fire Rescue Services
Rotary Club of Revelstoke
Royal Canadian Legion Branch #46
Staff of Revelstoke Credit Union
Tim Horton's
United Way

Chantilly Kitchen
Canadian Pacific Holiday Train
Community Connections Staff
David F. Rooney – The Revelstoke Current
Dian Cline (Direct Connect)
Investor Group Financial Services
Ray and Jackie Brosseuk (Partners for Others)
Krista Carnegie (Joy for Tomorrow)
CMH Heli-Skiing—Gothic's Lodge
Mountain Meals
La Baguette

Community Connections would like to thank all of Our Community Partners for their continued support!!



Administration

Cathy Girling—Interim Executive Director
Diana Kiedrowski— Executive Manager of
Finance & Administration
Desiree Giroux— Office Manager
Tian Yuan—Administrative Assistant/Book Keeper
Tennille Barber—I.T. Technical Support Staff

Clinical Services

Doug Egan—Clinical Supervisor
Karley Trauzzi
Lindsay Legebokoff
Gorette Imm
Kelly Silzer

Social Justice Advocate

Cathy Girling—Program Manager
Melissa Jameson—Housing Outreach Program
Doug Hulley—Tenant Support Worker

PACT

Gorette Imm
Stacy Sanchez

Outreach Services

Patti Larson—Program Manager

Community Living Services for Adults

Loni Williams—Program Manager
Kelly Riguedell—Program Manager
Kathy Stuart
Marianne Marolf
Dayna Donovan
Marydell Allain

Cathy Edmonson

Ray Peterson
Erika Holmes
Shannon Moorhead
Angie Martin
Yvette Pendergast
Cassie Brummit
Isabell Diederichs
Maralee Faurot
Shelly Hummelink
Miranda Hermansen
Jesse Davy-Powell
Anna Robbers
Bob Lund
Laura Christie
Brittney Buhler

**Community Living Services For Children
Jumping Jacks Preschool**

Kristal Bradshaw—Program Manager
Amanda MacIntosh
Rosetta Bernava
Kelly Silzer
Gorette Imm
Erin MacLachlan
Laurie Jones
Patsy Walker
Donna Dyck
Sandra Murray
Andree Rioux
Lisa Belsham
Kai Boggild
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Courtney Kaler
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