

# Annual Report 2023

Community Connections (Revelstoke) Society



Community  
Connections

REVELSTOKE  
SOCIETY

Community Connections  
(Revelstoke) Society

2022- 2023 Community Report

[www.community-connections.ca](http://www.community-connections.ca)



# Content Index

---

- i-ii. Message from the Executive Director
- iii. Board of Directors
- iv. Vision, Mission & Values
- v. 2022 - 2025 Strategic Plan
- 01 Human Resources
- 02 Administration & Quality Assurance
- 3 - 8 Family Services Programs
- 9 - 13 Community Outreach & Development -  
Outreach Social Programs
- 14 - 16 Community Outreach & Development -  
Food Security Work & Programs



The  
Neighbourhood  
Kitchen  
A PROJECT OF COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



Community  
Connections  
REVELSTOKE SOCIETY

# Message from our Executive Director



On behalf of Community Connections, I would like to begin with a message of sincere appreciation to the Board of Directors, volunteers, families and friends for your invaluable contributions in our shared work of supporting our community as a whole! We could not do this work without you.

Our last year of service delivery was complex and brought about some big changes and difficult decisions in our alignment with our mission, vision, and strategic objectives we have set out to achieve by 2025. In order to build accountability and to move forward in meaningful ways, we undertook the project of reviewing and re-writing our values under the strategic goal laid out as:

**We will identify and define our values, and they will serve as a filter for all our decisions including work plans, staff evaluations, hiring practices, and Board attraction and retention.**

The changes and depth of intentional engagement in considering Service Excellence and Sustainability facilitated the shift in program delivery away from Community Living services. This decision was not made lightly, and was handled with as much care as possible with a transition embedded in collaboration and respect for the best possible outcome for all involved. We said good-bye to a large department of dedicated and essential staff and supports for our community, Community Living Services for Adults. We continue to enjoy the relationships we have with those past colleagues and the people and families we had the honour of serving for a many, great years.



## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS (REVELSTOKE) SOCIETY

### MISSION

Community Connections (Revelstoke) Society supports individuals & families in our community to thrive by providing and advocating for accessible, responsive social services

### VISION

People belong and are supported by our high quality, responsive, and socially-just services.

### VALUES

**BELONGING:**  
We value belonging by creating an environment where people are seen and heard.

**COLLECTIVISM:**  
We work together to support equitable well-being.

**INTEGRITY:**  
We demonstrate integrity through relational accountability and commitment.

**CREATIVITY:**  
We cultivate creativity through acts of collective courage and imagination that tend to community needs and honor lived experiences.

[www.community-connections.ca](http://www.community-connections.ca)

*Updated Mission, Vision and Values*



# Message from our Executive Director cont.



Looking ahead at remainder of the current year, we continue to assess the best way to serve the community and those who are up against the biggest challenges in our society and address the impacts of the unaffordability crisis and the rising demand for help, amidst an economic climate that comes with fewer social services dollars, and with a decline in donations. It's a time of great strain and mounting pressure in the lives of people we serve to make ends meet and to live and thrive in healthy relationships. We are raising the alarm to our supporters, donors, and community partners to consider ways to help us help more people. As a snapshot, we have seen more visits than ever before to the Food Bank and the numbers seem to be holding steady at the record highs (1005 visits in June 2023), and see increases beyond what we have the capacity to provide across other programs as well. As much as possible we seek opportunities to work proactively on issues our community faces, and recently our capacity to keep that pace has been diminished by forces beyond our control. This is the critical recovery phase we heard about in the discussions around the impacts of the pandemic, and it effects the most vulnerable sooner, longer, and deeper than other groups. Now, more than ever, we need your support!

To close, a thank you to the staff. It would not be possible to be here for our community if it wasn't for your dedication, creativity, and endless support provided through all you do. A sincere thank you to each and every one of you for the important and wonderful work you do!

And to our community, we invite you all to reach out for connection, support, solidarity, and to share in the belonging we aim to foster in this amazing place and all of the people living here.

**Sheena Wells, MSW, RSW**

*Executive Director*

## **Some highlights from April 2022 – March 2023:**

- Grand opening of the new Food Bank and The Neighbourhood Kitchen
- Grand opening of the Women's Centre
- Start of the Better at Home Program
- Completion of our new 2022-2025 Strategic Plan and Values definitions
- Series of Reconciliation Workshops for staff and community partners, and Indigenous Culture and Wellness workshops for staff
- Return of the Emergency Services Food Drive
- Justice Equity and Inclusion Training
- Continued work and delivery of the Emergency Shelter Project
- Completion of the Harm Reduction Project
- Rise-up Indigenous Summer Camp for Children



# Board of Directors

---

Although 2022 was a year of new challenges in the Not-for-Profit climate, we also welcomed new opportunities to support the community in meaningful ways that recognize all people as experts in their own lives.

We continue to see a rise in those accessing our services: over 3500 local residents received services from Community Connections, representing approximately 40% of the local population. We are continually impressed by the programming offered for newborns, children, youth, families, and seniors, and often hear from the people receiving services commenting on the high quality of the programs and the staff, as well as the important role these services play in enhancing their lives during a vulnerable time.

Our organization saw a significant change as the Community Living Service for Adults department was transitioned from Community Connections Revelstoke to a new service provider, Nexus. This transition was strategically completed over the course of many months and involved a high degree of collaboration between the staff and leadership team at CCRS and Nexus.

This year's many successes would not have been possible without the great work done by the Community Connections staff, who brought their endless energy and passion to work each and every day, pushing us forward. We appreciate their unending drive to find empowering ways to serve our clients safely and address their needs in meaningful ways. Their grit and resilience continue to thread through their work in these essential programs. We thank our staff for their ongoing commitment and service; they remain of highest priority to us.

The Board would also like to thank the community of Revelstoke for recognizing the growing need for accessible social services and supporting their delivery through organizations like Community Connections. We are fortunate and thankful for the strong relationships we have with community members.

It is our continued privilege to serve the community of Revelstoke and we look forward to doing so in new and dynamic ways in the year ahead and beyond.

**Donelle Lang**

Board Chairperson

**Michelle Gabriele**

Vice Chair

**Robert Lamont**

Treasurer

**Peter Dixon**

**Gill MacLachlan**

**Aimee Schalles**

Resigned Dec 2022

# Vision, Mission & Values



## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS (REVELSTOKE) SOCIETY

### MISSION

Community Connections (Revelstoke) Society supports individuals & families in our community to thrive by providing and advocating for accessible, responsive social services

### VISION

People belong and are supported by our high quality, responsive, and socially-just services.

### VALUES

#### **BELONGING:**

We value belonging by creating an environment where people are seen and heard.

#### **COLLECTIVISM:**

We work together to support equitable well-being.

#### **INTEGRITY:**

We demonstrate integrity through relational accountability and commitment.

#### **CREATIVITY:**

We cultivate creativity through acts of collective courage and imagination that tend to community needs and honor lived experiences.



# Strategic Plan

2022 - 2025

## OUR GOALS

### 1. SUSTAINABILITY (PROGRAM, STAFFING AND FUNDING)

Community Connections (Revelstoke) Society is sustainable due to excellence in program delivery, human resource practices and financial planning and management.

### 2. SERVICE EXCELLENCE

We are committed to providing excellent services and will not sacrifice quality for quantity.

### 3. INTRA-ORGANIZATIONAL NARRATIVE

We have an internal ecosystem that creates a culture of belonging, celebrates past successes, growth and embeds the organizational values.

### 4. ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

We will identify and define our values, and they will serve as a filter for all our decisions including work plans, staff evaluations, hiring practices, and Board attraction and retention.

### 5. ADVOCACY

We will become more visible in the community by raising our profile and expanding our engagement.





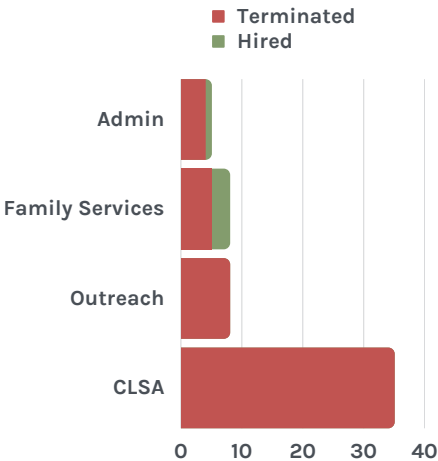
# Human Resources

The Human Resource team recommended and oversaw specific human resources initiatives aligned with Community Connections strategic priorities, organizational structure, vision, and mission with a goal to implement changes as required to increase the organization’s performance and our ability to attract and retain talent.

This year we saw a significant change as the Community Living Service for Adults department transitioned from Community Connections Revelstoke to a new service provider, Nexus. This transition was strategically completed over the course of many months and involved a high degree of collaboration between the staff and leadership team at CCRS and Nexus.

Moving into the next fiscal year, the development and review of Leadership Team workplans will lead to developing associated goals and outcomes for the group and organization wide with a continued focus on succession planning, workplans and strategic organisation HR objectives.

Staff Turnover



Department Closed Down: 1  
Breakdown: CLSA

### Milestones

To our staff who reached a milestone you, thank you for your years of service!



**5 Years:**  
Franziska Widmer  
Kerstin Bell  
Kimberley Bishop  
Marly McAstocker  
Mariane Porlier  
Melissa Hemphill

**15 Years:**  
Erin MacLachlan

*"To know even one life  
has breathed easier  
because you have lived.  
This is to have  
succeeded."*

*- Ralph Waldo Emerson*

# Administration and Quality Assurance



The Administration department provides operational support and guidance to the entire organization. We work in collaboration with Program Co-Directors, funding partners, community partners and staff to ensure all administrative, reporting and contractual obligations are met and within funding guidelines. We provide staff with organized record keeping, systems improvement and all manner of administrative support. In 2023, Health and Safety as well as Quality Assurance and Marketing were added to the Admin team roles.

Community Connections revisited our priorities and service direction in 2022-23 by updating our Strategic Plan into 2025, highlighting our renewed commitment to our Values. We were also successful in several grants that provided the organization two new vehicles (EV and Hybrid, CBT) as well as required IT upgrades for all locations (CBT, BC Housing). We express our gratitude to funders, community partners, and the humans we serve.

Thank you to our valued Admin Assistant and Front Desk worker, Maz Ng.

**Meg Irving**

*Admin. Coordinator*





# Family Services

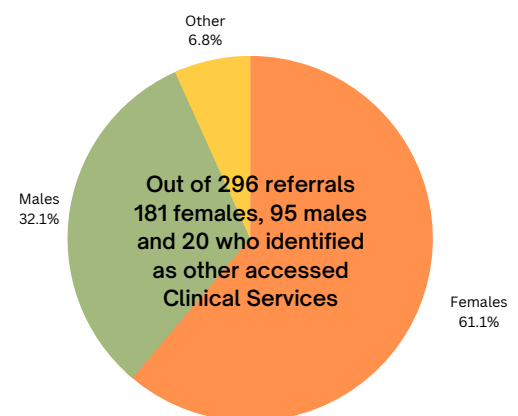
The Family Services team continues to offer services to the community grounded in values and beliefs adopted from Narrative Therapy and critical social work theories. Our beliefs invite us to view people as separate from problems and assumes people have many skills, competencies, beliefs, values, commitments and abilities that will assist them to reduce the influence of problems in their lives. These beliefs influence the development and delivery of all services offered by the Family Services team.

## Clinical Services

Clinical Services provides free and accessible individual, couple, family and group counselling. We have a group of skilled counsellors who provide support to individuals and families who may be facing a number of challenges. These challenges may include; anxiety/depression, sexual, physical and emotional abuse, parent-child conflict, addictions, stress, grief/loss, separation/divorce and violence. The Clinical Services team continues to collaborate with community organizations with the goal of meeting the needs of individuals and families in the community.

During the last year we received over 296 referrals in 2022/2023 with the majority being self-referrals. We saw 181 females access services, 95 males and 20 who identified as other. Clinical Services referrals continued to be received from community partners, including health care professionals, RCMP, MCFD, schools and families, as well as from individuals themselves.

**Lindsay Oberg**  
Clinical Counsellor





# Youth Services

The Youth Services provide accessible services for youth aged 5 to 18 years old. Services include community and school-based supports, through implementation of groups and individual counselling. The services provided are inclusive, intentional and respond to the changing needs of youth and the community.

## Collaborative Work

We continue to work in collaboration with the Ministry of Children and Family Development, School District #19, the Stoke Youth Network and the Indigenous Friendship Society of Revelstoke, to ensure youth have access to the services and supports they need. Direct services include one to one counselling and intentional lunch and afterschool groups.



In collaboration with MCFD we frequently communicated regarding case consultation and services available for youth. We also continued the weekly 2SLGBTQI+ youth group in collaboration with the Stoke Youth Network called "Rainbows and Allies", which continues to increase in numbers weekly, as we discuss queer culture and promote youth advocacy. In support of female identifying youth at Begbie View Elementary, we have also created a drop-in lunch program in collaboration with the Indigenous Friendship Society of Revelstoke. This program offers youth ages 9-12 a place to connect with peers, participate in Indigenous art and land-based activities and utilize the Women's Centre once a week, for 6 weeks.

## Youth Counselling

Youth Services received 58 referrals for individual youth counselling this year. The Youth Services program saw an increase in individual counselling referrals in 2021 (COVID-19) and have been consistent since. The repercussions of COVID-19 continue to impact youth in the community in attempts to return to normalcy. Working in collaboration with the Revelstoke Secondary School counsellors and elementary principals, weekly support in the school's continued throughout the year.



The Family Services team continues to focus on the creation of a youth specific space within the community, considering the logistics of staffing, space, demographic served and community needs. The team intends to maintain focus on this project while being thoughtful and intentional in the process. Our intention is to build a sustainable, inclusive and collaborative space for youth to be. We continue to center community collaboration and actively participate in the Revelstoke Youth Advisory Committee. Supporting local youth and families continues to be a priority for our organization.





# Summer Day Camp

Community Connections has been running Summer Day Camp for over 20 years. Our mission is to provide affordable childcare options to families during the summer months, while maximizing fun and connection for all children who participate.

This important program offers the youth and children of Revelstoke the chance to be involved in a local community based summer activity also fosters social relationships in children and leadership skills in the youth that facilitate our summer day camp.



Summer Day Camp 2022 was another successful year. Each week was consistently full with children aged 6-11. We were able to offer 22 sponsored weeks to families, thanks to the generous donations received from local businesses and donors in our community.



We would also like to thank Revelstoke Credit Union, Revelstoke Community Foundation, and Canada Summer Jobs for providing us grants and ensuring our camp was successful.



A total of 154 children attended camp and enjoyed activities such as Sky Trek, Ghost Town, Splashdown, Williamson's Lake, and Vernon Science Centre to name a few. Our camp leaders planned themes for each week and delivered fun and learning.



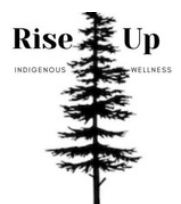
Our camp was fully accessible and inclusive for all children, including the presence of 1:1 support staff.

## **New to 2022**

This year we partnered with Rise Up, an Indigenous organization in Salmon Arm, to provide one week of free camp for children who identify as Indigenous. Families found this camp to be fun and inclusive. Based on the positive feedback, we are excited to continue to offer this camp in years to come!



**We can't wait for next year's adventures!**





# The Women's Centre

The Women's Centre opened her doors in January 2023 under the wing of the Family Services Team with funding largely from the Canadian Women's Foundation and additional funding through United Way, local donors and fundraisers.

The opening of the Women's Centre has allowed Community Connections to offer drop-in support and to connect with a broader demographic of women in the Revelstoke Community. Over the past several months, the Women's Centre has provided a safe space for women and those identifying as women to connect, access resources and the supports they need.

The Centre has proven to be a resource for women fleeing violence, facing homelessness, and other gender-based inequities. Women of various ages and demographics have utilized the Women's Centre, including youth, mothers and their children, young women, seniors, newcomers, business owners, school teachers, those accessing government assistance, women with diversabilities and so on.

Not only does the Women's Centre provide individual support, it gives voice to the collective experience of all women in the community; advocating for equity and an end to gender-based violence. The Women's Centre is a beacon for all self-identified women to come together to address the needs of women+ of all ages.



## Services and Resources

The Women's Centre enables access to resources, counselling and outreach supports. Other services include:

- computer and printer access
- shower and laundry facilities
- clothing exchange
- diaper change station
- diapers and toys for young children.

## Groups, Events & Special Projects

The Women's Centre has hosted a number of groups and events, including women's health workshops, a celebration on International Women's Day and weekly yoga sessions among other activities. Some highlights include the "Come As You Are" Photo Project leading up to the opening of the Women's Centre as well as our "16 Days of Activism to Eliminate Gender-Based Violence" campaigns. Examples of groups who have visited and utilized the space: the local Girl Guides, and the Rainbows and Allies group from Revelstoke Secondary School.

## Indigenous Partnership

This partnership is an important component of the Women's Centre vision in particular our partnership with Revelstoke's Indigenous Friendship Society to offer culturally sensitive groups and advocacy for Indigenous women. This spring, the Indigenous Friendship Society will utilise the space to run an Indigenous group for mothers and expecting mothers.

## Looking Ahead

The need for the Women's Centre continues. New events and groups are being planned for the coming year. The Family Services Team is committed to supporting women and to the successful delivery of programs and services through the Women's Centre. Funding and ongoing support is needed to see the continued operation of the Women's Centre well into the future.

## COME AS YOU ARE

Expressions of Women resisting societal beauty standards

December 4th and 5th, 2022



Community Connections joins local women photographers to create opportunities for women to express who they are beyond societal norms related to gender and beauty through photography

## "Come as you are" Photo Project

This project created a unique opportunity for local women to be photographed in their natural or preferred way of being and featured women of various ages and life stages. The project created a larger community conversation around beauty and body-positivity.



# Infant Development & Supported Child Development

## Infant Development Program (IDP)

The IDP continues to offer support, developmental consultation, monitoring and assessments to families with babies ages 0-3 years of age. Over the past year IDP was connected with 32 families through various referral sources.

IDP offers regular home or in office visits. We continue to link families to Occupational therapists and physio therapists who have extra experience in pediatrics. Most of these visits occur at the main office with families having the flexibility for virtual or out of town visits. IDP offered direct support to children attending preschool for the 2022/2023 school year. We also facilitated a tummy time play group for parents and their infants. We continue to participate on the Early Years Committee and attend events/workshops in the community that are geared toward children aged 0-6.



## Supported Childhood Development Program (SCDP)

Our SCDP program offers support, resources, consultation, and advocacy to families and children in our community. The program works closely with community partners sharing similar visions and mandates to provide wrap around and inclusive supports to families with children with neurodiversities.

SCDP supported 52 children individually, and provided support through group facilitation in each school in the past year. Some of the groups we facilitated at the schools included a basketball group, board game group, and friendship/connections group.

Some activities that children engaged in within the SCDP program include volunteering, beach days, skiing, swimming, go-carts, and activities within the community. We continued to offer a parent support group for parents of children with neurodiversities as well.

We continue to receive referrals from MCFD, families, schools, daycares, and other community partners. SCDP is looking forward to extending and continuing services for the coming year.

This year, CBT provided funding to host a weekly parent support group which provided families with dinner and access to Child Development and counselling supports. Community Connections and the families of Revelstoke, thank Columbia Basin Trust for their on going support.

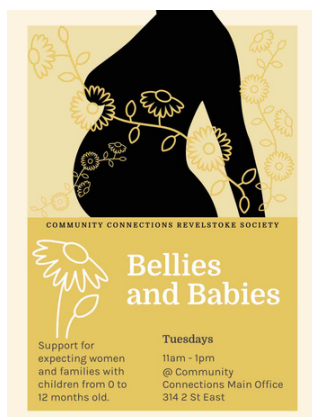






# Parent Support

The Parent Support programs offer a number of group experiences for parents and caregivers where they can attend with their children. The intent of the groups is to provide an opportunity for parents to connect with other parents as well as receive support and resources about parenting and their child's development from group facilitators.

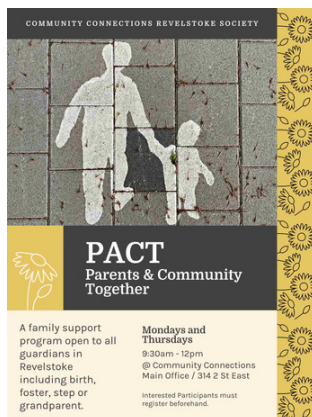


Over the past year, the Parent Support programs have provided a safe space to play and connect for many families. A light, healthy snack is provided, and families have access to information and referral resources such as IDP/SCDP, Counselling, and the clothing exchange which also sometimes includes diapers and formula.

## Current group experiences include:

### Bellies and Babies

A drop-in group for expectant moms and families with babies from birth to 12 months. As the birth rate in Revelstoke continues to grow, so does the number of participants who attend this group. Bellies and Babies is hosted one morning a week at the Community Connections main office.



### Parents and Community Together (PACT)

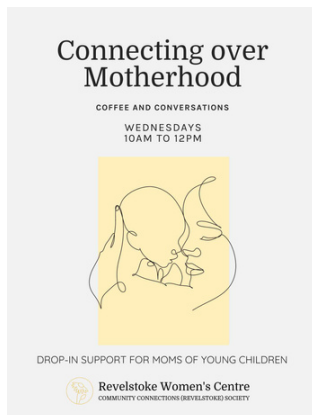
A drop-in group for parents and caregivers of children ages 0-5 in a fun, relaxed and safe atmosphere. For children, our program offers an age-appropriate play environment with dramatic play, imagination toys, and a gross motor play area. For parents and caregivers, we offer a welcoming setting where adults can connect and share their experiences and concerns around the demanding job of raising children. PACT is offered two mornings a week at the Community Connections main office.

Group participants and facilitators are happy to be back running as we were before Covid-19.

## Future groups planned:

### Connecting Over Motherhood

A new Moms Only group that will be hosted at the Women's Centre. The purpose of this drop-in support is to fill the gap in the services provided in our community. From the feedback we received, a smaller and quieter group for moms of newborns was requested. We also welcome families with children of all ages, as the intent is for any mother who wishes to access support and resources feels welcome.







# Community Outreach & Development

---

## **A message from Erin Maclachlan, Co-Director of Community Outreach and Development**

Leading the Community Outreach and Development Department with Melissa Hemphill over the past year has been a pleasure. We continue to try to remove as many barriers as possible between people and the supports they need to lead their preferred lives.

As the Director of the Better At Home Program, Acquired Brain Injury Program, Social Justice Advocate Program, Emergency Shelter Program, Tenant Support Program, Community Drop-In, and the Harm Reduction Program, I feel incredibly lucky to have such a wonderful team of people providing these services to the community of Revelstoke. Along with these programs we supported the Remote and Rural Division of Family Practice to collect information about how citizens access medical services in Revelstoke.

We also captured patient journey maps for a few clients to illustrate the many steps involved in accessing health care services while living in a rural and remote community. We were excited to support our local Family Physicians and the Division of Family Practice. We also participated in two different Indigenous education workshops that spurred many hours of conversations about how we can decolonize our practice as white settlers. Finally, we participated in a research project with a team from Royal Roads University to understand how to decolonize our food systems and how to support future planning to preserve and improve food security in Revelstoke.

As a department, our past year has been one of many opportunities for learning and growth. A huge thank you everyone at Community Connections that made all of our work possible.



*Photo: Aaron Orlando, Revelstoke Mountaineer*

*Grand Opening of the Food Bank and The  
Neighbourhood Kitchen, Jun 2022*



# Outreach Social Programs



United Way helping seniors remain independent.



## Better At Home Program – Deborah Hogan

The Better at Home Program (BAH) is a provincial community-based program funded by United Way that assists seniors (65+) with non-medical supports which allow them to remain independent in their home. The development of the Revelstoke BAH Program began in February 2022. Community partners welcomed the addition of this program to Revelstoke; the services offered by the program were established based on feedback from fellow service providers and local seniors. Currently, BAH offers a variety of services, including: light housekeeping, lawn care, transportation, grocery services, friendly visitors, group events, and snow removal. The BAH coordinator hires contractors to provide some of the services such as; snow removal, lawn care and housekeeping. BAH also hosts group events which have become very popular. We host a weekly coffee group, and facilitate monthly trips to different local attractions.

The program is designed to consider each client's individual context. BAH uses a subsidy scale to determine how much a person will pay for any of the contracted services. Most of the clients supported are largely subsidized. In addition to contractors, we recruit volunteers to support with other services, such as friendly visiting which helps prevent loneliness and isolation while fostering a sense of community and belonging. One client shared that, "I know I can call for what I need and they will help me to figure it out."

BAH currently supports 52 active clients, with hopes of supporting as many people in the community as our capacity allows. After only a year of offering the BAH program there is already a waitlist for support.

## Interior Health Acquired Brain Injury Program – Deborah Hogan

The Community Outreach and Development department was successful in their bid to take over the provision of the Acquired Brain Injury Support Program. The Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Program is a part-time position funded by Interior Health that supports individuals in Revelstoke that have an acquired brain injuries which impact their ability to independently care for themselves. The ABI program has 4 active clients, each with different and unique needs. The ABI support worker helps people to maintain the life styles they chose along with support for tasks such as banking, medical appointments, and education around vulnerability. Each client chooses their own goals that guide the type of the support provided by the ABI support worker. Overall, the program receives engagement from all clients.

“ I know I can call for what I need and they will help me to figure it out. ”

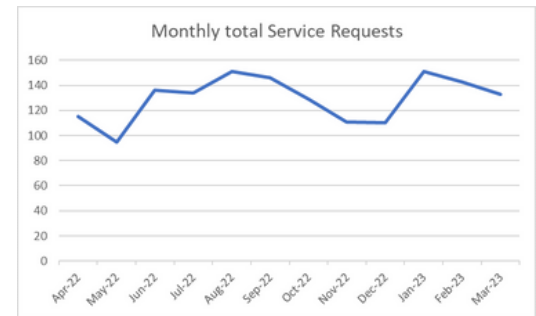




# Outreach Social Programs

## Social Justice Advocate – Siobhan O'Connor

The Social Justice Advocate continued to see people who needed help accessing social welfare supports such as income assistance, persons with disability assistance, applying for affordable housing, administering rental supplements and emergency resources, navigating tenancy disputes, and making community referrals. The Community Drop-In saw over 1600 requests for service from April 2022 to March 2023, and many of these requests were supported by the Social Justice Advocate. This program worked in tandem with the Community Drop-In Assistant and the Emergency Shelter Pilot Program to support people in Revelstoke who are experiencing poverty and/or homelessness. The Social Justice Advocate works closely with many community partners, such as Interior Health, Rise Women's Legal Services, the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, the Revelstoke Women's Shelter, and Service Canada. The Social Justice Advocate created valuable relationships with our community partners who then agreed to provide their services from our location. We hosted the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, the Interior Health Community Social worker, and the Interior Health Community Nurse Practitioner.



## Community Drop-In Assistant – Meg Wheelwright

The Community Drop-In Assistant is the first point of contact for anyone visiting the Community Connections (Revelstoke) Society Outreach Building. The Community Drop-In Assistant is responsible for guiding all clients towards the type of support that would be most helpful by booking appointments, answering questions, making referrals, or monitoring our drop-in hours. As well as creating a welcoming Community Drop-In space with seating, access to computers, up-to-date community information, and free coffee. Columbia Basin Trust funding supported the role of the Community Drop-In Assistant, and supported Digital Literacy supplies and programming. The Community Drop-In space has 3 computers, and a printer that clients can access all week. We also provided access to different workshops using the new technology supplies to support community members to learn digital literacy skills. Additionally, we partnered with the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy to offer digital literacy skills together in our Community Drop-In space. Along with greeting clients, and maintaining our Community Drop-In space, the Community Drop-In Assistant collects important client data related to demographic information, service request type, and frequency of service that informs our service delivery and allows us to apply for funding to further our work. This position has been integral to maintaining quality social service program delivery.





# Outreach Social Programs

## **Emergency Shelter Pilot Program – Ariana Stevenson**

The Emergency Shelter Pilot Program was extended from the original end date of November 2022 to a new end date of July 2023. This extension allowed Community Connections (Revelstoke) Society to provide another winter season of free emergency shelter to people living outside or without shelter. The Emergency Shelter Pilot Program (ESP) rented four hotel rooms that we allocated as needed to people seeking shelter. The ESP worked collaboratively with the RCMP, the Revelstoke Women's Shelter, and the Queen Victoria Hospital Emergency Department to create a referral system that allowed the emergency services to quickly and easily connect clients with the ESP. From April 2022 to March 2023, the ESP supported 81 clients with 823 nights of shelter. The ESP mostly supported people living outside or in their vehicles. We learned that for people to be successful in transitioning from one type of housing to another (from outside to inside, or from independent living to assisted living) required one to two months of emergency shelter access until they could access a new type of housing. We also learned that the majority of people accessing the shelter have lived in Revelstoke for more than ten years.

Despite the ESP ending in July of 2023, we believe that the pilot program provided essential data and learning for our city. One of the original hesitations to an emergency shelter in Revelstoke was based on the belief that it would increase crime in the community. We worked closely with the RCMP throughout the duration of the program and the RCMP reported no increase in calls to their detachment as a result of the ESP. Additionally, we know that free accommodation for one to two months is required as a result of the low availability and affordability of the Revelstoke rental market. With the learning we gained from the ESP we will continue to tackle affordable housing in Revelstoke.



## **Harm Reduction Awareness Program – Erin MacLachlan**

Columbia Basin Trust awarded Community Connections a large social grant to facilitate the connection of people to harm reduction supplies and information. We registered our organization as a harm reduction supply location in order to offer free supplies from our Community Drop-In space. We provided naloxone training to all the staff in our organization and any other community partners that were interested. We created and posted educational social media posts and partook in interviews with local news sources to reduce the stigma surrounding substance use. We connected with the public to provide naloxone training at our local farmer's market, and partnered with Interior Health to provide naloxone training at the Luna Arts festival. After the decriminalization of small amounts of illicit substances on January 31, 2023, Community Connections registered as a Distributed Drug Checking site. This allows us to send small amounts of illicit substances to Interior Health to be tested for drug toxicity, which will add to tracking the areas in the province with the highest concentrations of toxic drugs. With the support of the funding from Columbia Basin Trust, Community Connections was successful in establishing harm reduction access and education in Revelstoke.





# Outreach Social Programs

## **Tenant Support Worker – Kimberley Bishop**

Community Connections (Revelstoke) Society is contracted by BC Housing to manage the operation, maintenance, and tenant support for Monashee Court, a 45-unit subsidized apartment building. The Tenant Support Worker position connects with the tenants of the building to support them to have successful tenancy. The Tenant Support Worker creates relationships with all the tenants in the building and advocates for their various needs. Tenant needs vary and the Tenant Support Worker comes alongside the tenants to navigate requests like: understanding tenancy rules and regulations, accessing government social welfare supports, connecting tenants to the property managers, making appropriate referrals to community partners, and hosting social gatherings. The Tenant Support Worker meets regularly with the Community Outreach and Development team to ensure the tenants are access all possible supports offered.

This past year many of the senior tenants were connected with the Revelstoke Better At Home program. This allowed the tenants to access subsidized or low-cost house cleaning services. The Social Justice Advocate and the Better At Home Coordinator attend all of the coffee social gatherings to provide the wrap around support that creates a sense of community and belonging. The Tenant Support Worker is a vital position to the well-being of the people living in subsidized housing; often the tenants are some of the most vulnerable citizens in our city.





# Food Security Work

Our food security work is based around 3 key areas – food bank, community kitchen, and food system work. We aim to provide nutritious foods for households experiencing food insecurity and to contribute to the resiliency of our local food system.

## Food Bank

We continue to see unprecedented demand for our food bank service. Using the Link2Feed Database, we registered 20-45 new households at the food bank each month, with a total of 368 new households registered in the year. Throughout the 22/23 Fiscal Year, the Food Bank served 722 households made up of 1112 individuals, with the following breakdown: 14% children, 60% working-aged adults, and 12% seniors. In total, those 722 households visited our service 8835 times.

### Work that supports food distribution:

Fundraising, education and building relationships are a big part of the work we do to support the Food Bank. In addition to our three weekly food distribution times, Hannah Whitney and Bailey Kublick hosted, co-hosted and collaborated with community partners on many programs and events related to the Food Bank.



Food Outreach served 722 households (368 were new) composed of 1112 individuals through 8835 visits

### Highlights over the last financial year:

- The Grand Opening Party of the new Food Bank and the Neighbourhood Kitchen was hosted in June, with over 100 community members, local stakeholders and community partners attending.
- Farmers Market Nutrition Coupon Program: 80 participants x 16 weeks = \$34,450 into the local food economy and additional nutritious food for food bank clients.
- Revelstoke Credit Union School Backpack Program provided 28 students with school supplies.
- Our Holiday Program raised \$72,500 in donations and provided 156 households with seasonal foods and gifts for their loved ones.
- First Light Farm Fundraiser: \$4000 in fresh, local, organic produce donated to the food bank.
- Emergency Services Food Drive was held on September 13th with over 300 volunteers in attendance and generating 7,500 pounds of food and \$5,000 in donation.
- Spring 'Fill the Van Food Drive' raised 300 pounds of food and \$324 in cash donations.
- The Holiday Train brought in 1793 pounds of food donations and \$10,271 in donations.
- We received \$15,750 from CBC Food Bank Day.
- School visits from grades varying from 4 to 12 stopped in to learn about the environmental impact of food waste and the importance of social services such as the food bank.
- Other visits included the girl guides, various donors, the board of directors from other social service organizations in our region, the Golden Food Bank, and a class from Selkirk College.



# Food Security Work cont.



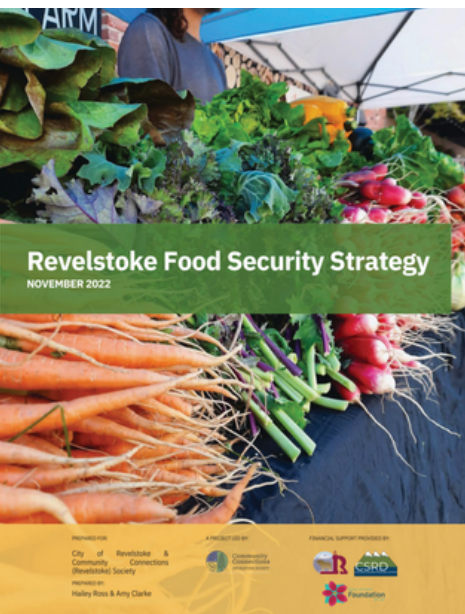
Volunteer Pot luck

- Developed a partnership with Tourism Revelstoke's Destination Management team, where they used their platforms to promote and educate Revelstokians and visitors on the Food Bank and Food Recovery Program.
- Volunteer re-orientation to ensure our 25 helpers have the information to do a great job.
- 20 Food Hamper Deliveries each week – packing hampers and coordinating delivery volunteers.
- Revelstoke Credit Union attended the food bank and provided financial information for clients.
- 'The Accessibility and Equity Guide of Food Banks' and the 'Food Banks Canada Standards of Excellence' both came out in the spring of 2023. We will work towards meeting both the standards outlined in these documents over the next year.
- Attended the Food Banks BC Conference and presented on our new food bank space.
- Received 387 pounds of moose meat through our partnership with the Conservation Officers and Cameron & Sons Butcher.
- Collected 120,411 pounds of recovered food, for a total of 800,058 pounds collected since 2016.

## Food System Work

Participation in the City of Revelstoke's Official Community Plan wrapped up in this fiscal year, as did the update to the Revelstoke Food Security Strategy and the completion of a Food Asset map for our community. These documents provide important guidance for the work in the coming years and completed our 3.5 year policy project funded by the Real Estate Foundation of BC.

In her capacity as Food Security Coordinator, Melissa supported local food producers through networking events such as potlucks and the new Farm Tours for Farm Folks event, and supported the operations of the LFI Farmers Market. Work continued in partnership with the City of Revelstoke to develop an area for community food production at the Powerhouse Road Park site. A new research project began in partnership with Royal Roads University, exploring the future of food systems. This project involved delivering JEDI (justice, equity, decolonial practices, and inclusion) workshops for staff and community partners, as well as development of an equity evaluation tool for food system projects, and a future visualization workshop. Learnings from this project and our team's ongoing learning about equity and reconciliation continue to inform and improve our programs and approach to food work.







# The Neighbourhood Kitchen



The Neighbourhood Kitchen  
A PROJECT OF COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

We opened our kitchen in June of 2022 and immediately got rolling with renting to local food entrepreneurs, creating meals for the food bank and community events, as well as hosting culinary workshops. We worked with Moxie Marketing to develop the kitchen's logo and marketing plan to help tell the story of this new community asset. Our kitchen is operated as a social enterprise, providing fee-based services, with proceeds covering the operational costs of the kitchen and surpluses benefitting food bank operations. Over 20 volunteers, including students with diverse-abilities, help Austin, the Kitchen Manager, prepare food for the various outlets, partnerships and programs he leads. Here are some of the highlights:

## School Programs

This year Austin was able to further grow relations with School District 19 and take on baking for all of the elementary schools' breakfast programs. Through working on the Begbie View Elementary Parent Advisory Council and the District Parent Advisory Council, Austin developed relationships with school principals at the elementary schools, helping to streamline the ordering process for nutritious frozen meals. We provided two hot pasta lunches and cookies for Christmas at Begbie View Elementary, as well as a pre-ordered lunch for Ecole des Glaciers.

## Food Bank Meals

Austin utilized 5000 pounds of recovered food and 78 hours of volunteer labour in the creation of over 12,000 meals distributed through the food bank, which are greatly appreciated by clients. The ability to produce in high quantity and order in bulk has made the program a great asset to the community. This is also great for attracting volunteers to work in the kitchen, seeing people with minimal cooking experience, temporary foreign workers, or retired culinary professionals reach out to help feed the community.

Additionally, Bear Aware supplied loads of gleaned apples and plums which were processed and distributed in the food bank and used for baking for the breakfast program, coffee social, and food bank meals.

## Other Fundraising that brought in \$5665:

Christmas cookie kits were loads of fun to make and sell and were very much appreciated by mothers looking to keep their kids entertained over the holidays. Lunches have fluctuated from 5-15 meals sold per week, but the consistency has been good for volunteer engagement, resulting in excess meals portioned and ready for Friday food bank distribution. The equipment lending library had mostly return clients from previous years access the service. We catered lunches and baking platters for different community organizations. Cooking classes were hosted by either us or the Local Food, with Austin and guest culinary professionals teaching the attendees.

## Rental Program

This first year of the kitchen rental program brought in over \$15,000 in fees, which was lower than projected due to the affect that the pandemic recovery and inflation had on small food businesses. We took a staggered approach to the number of renters, allowing Austin to work through challenges with kitchen equipment and our rental procedures. Unfortunately, the kitchen was mostly unrented between January and April as renters either took a break or were forced to close due to inflation. The hope is to further develop rental of our kitchen, as the relatively passive income will help stabilize the kitchen moving forward.







# Thank You Revelstoke.



Community  
Connections

REVELSTOKE  
SOCIETY

**Outreach Building**  
416 Second St West  
Revelstoke, BC V0E 2S0

**Outreach Hours**

**Food Pick-Up**

Monday 10 - 1  
Wednesday 4-6  
Friday 10-12

**Drop In**

Monday 10-1  
Wednesday 3-6  
Friday 10-12

**Women's Centre**  
Suite C, 113 Second St East  
Revelstoke, BC V0E 2S0

**Hours**

Mon to Wed 9am - 4pm  
Friday 9am - 12pm

**Main Office**  
314 Second St East,  
Revelstoke, BC V0E 2S0

**Hours**

Mon to Thurs 8:30am - 4:30pm  
Friday 8:30am - 12:30pm

PO BOX 2880  
Revelstoke BC, V0E 2S0

250-837-2920

[www.community-connections.ca](http://www.community-connections.ca)

