



S U N S H I N E C O A S T
Community Services
S O C I E T Y

Annual Report

April 1, 2011
to
March 31, 2012

**Sunshine Coast Community Services
Annual Report
April 1, 2011 – March 31, 2012**

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President's Report 2012

While our Board of Directors is behind the scenes of the day-to-day, frontline delivery of service I can assure you that it is never dull or boring. Our role is to “steward” the assets and resources that have been developed over the 38 years that the Society has been in operation and ensure that we meet all legal and ethical requirements that govern non-profit societies. In the past year we have discussed everything from revision of our values and strategic plan, what the coming years will hold in terms of sustaining government funding, innovation and social enterprise, to rodent and termite control.

Some of the actions that the Board has undertaken in the past year to ensure the future sustainability of the society have been:

Succession Planning for Board and Management Staff

- A Staff and Board Planning Day was held in October 2011 with the morning focusing on the dynamics of transition and change and the afternoon examining the big picture of staff retirements, restructuring, partnerships, future funding sustainability and the needs of the community.
- The Board consulted with the Executive Director to develop a new management structure to reflect the increasing complexity of our Society. This is currently being implemented
- The Nominations Committee has worked hard to recruit new Board members who are committed to our values and vision, fill skill gaps on the Board and ensure a succession of senior and newer members for Board strength.

Financial Health Task Force

- The Financial Health Task Force reviewed the Society's financial policies including a document outlining benchmarks of financial health. Scott Hughes from the United Community Services Coop assisted us in this review. As a result the Society can assure its members, partners, funders and the community that SCCSS has excellent financial capacity - the ability to deliver our programs and withstand financial shocks.
- We have strength in property ownership and a social enterprise. April 14th marked the grand opening of our “Community Treasures Thrift Shop“. This social enterprise has the potential of generating more revenue in the future now that renovations are complete and more volunteers have been recruited.
- In the coming year the Task Force will continue to explore our financial sustainability by monitoring the achievement of our financial benchmarks and developing a vision for the use of our assets which are aligned with our Strategic Plan.

Leadership and Community Building

In preparation for the development of our next Five Year Strategic Plan next fall, we were looking for a means to engage the whole of the community in providing input. Three reports produced on the Sunshine Coast in the past year gave various perspectives and recommendations for the future of the Coast but there was no integration of these reports. The Board decided to take a leadership role and planned

the event “A Cooperative Approach to Social Care - A Conversation that Matters to the Sunshine Coast” in order to bring all the various sectors who are stakeholders in social care together. Over 80 community leaders attended to learn about the social cooperative concept, discuss and prioritize social care issues on the Coast and begin dialogues about means to address these issues. The community now has a clear picture of what the most pressing issues in social care are and some follow-up actions from the day are underway. These actions may lead to small and/or large solutions to some of these issues. This day was made possible with funding from the SC Credit Union, the SC Community Foundation, Board Voice and SCCSS’s new Innovation Fund.

In closing I would like to thank the following:

- Our volunteers for the many hours you donate to our programs, our financial and in-kind donors who help support our financially challenged programs, and our community partners who enable us to use resources more effectively. Without all of you SCCSS would not be the strong and sustainable organization that it is.
- Vicki Dobbyn, our Executive Director, and all of our staff whose caring in the delivery of our various services and dedication to our values and guiding principles bring to life the vision of SCCSS - “Creating a Caring Community.”
- Dianne Evans, our retiring Director of Operations, whose dedication, commitment to social justice, and versatile talents have supported the Society’s work for nearly 20 years
- And a very special thanks to the membership and Board for the trust you have placed in me in the last three years that I have served as your President. At the end of this AGM my six-year tenure is up and I will be leaving the Board. It is amazing how fast those six years have flown by! I leave knowing that the organization is strong and that your new Board of Directors has the values, skills, and expertise to continue the legacy of good governance and leadership left by past Boards, and to lead the Society through the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

Gloria Lifton, President
Board of Directors

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FAMILY AND YOUTH SERVICES

Family Support: Counsellors assist parents in their role as caregivers, with the goal of developing parenting skills and strengthening family life. This is a self-referral program and all are welcome provided they have children. The program is open to disseminating information to community members wanting to refer a family; however it is most important that the family contact the intake worker directly for an appointment. Services include short-term counselling, as well as education groups.

Family Preservation: Counsellors provide counselling and parent training to maintain family stability and give children a safe, nurturing environment. Referrals are accepted only from MCFD and C&YMH

Parent Support Circles: Trained volunteers lead weekly gatherings for parents in Gibsons. Child care is provided. This program is a partnership with Parent Support Services Society of BC.

Funder: Ministry of Children and Family Development
Staff: FYS has five Family Counsellors, three of whom work full time, and two who work part time.
Program Director: Chris Denley
Program Coordinator for Family Support Services: Doris Rank
Location: Inlet Avenue, Sechelt, and Farnham Family Place, Gibsons, as well as outreach and home visits from Langdale to Egmont.

Staff development undertaken during the year:

One staff has been working towards obtaining a Masters in Counselling. One staff completed her Masters in Counselling. Two staff attended the FASD conference in Vancouver in April. Two staff attended the Eating Disorder Workshop.

Highlights and accomplishments:

Family Support Services provided service to 103 new clients during this year and every week we supported an average of 22 families

Family Preservation provided service to 63 new clients this year and every week we supported an average of 43 families per week.

Last year it was a goal of the service to manage the reduction of funding without affecting the service. This year we doubled the number of families receiving service for Family Preservation and increased Family Support by 13 families. The staff have reduced expenses and mileage costs whenever possible.

Last year we earmarked office space as an issue for this program. We have since added an office in the Farnham building and have ensured all staff carry a cell phone when providing outreach service.

Family Support Services continues to have a small waitlist at times throughout the year, but the coordinator of the program has managed to keep the waitlist down by triaging for each and every family that calls to see someone. The immediacy of the one to one intake procedure continues to be a very successful caseload management technique. At this time Family Preservation and Reunification does not have a waitlist. The staff has been very diligent about ensuring that those families most in need get service quickly.

Challenges ahead:

- Our outreach program is being jeopardized by the price of fuel.

- Clients continue to be affected by the rising costs of shelter and food.

A success story

Family Preservation: almost each and every family have some measurable success involved with this program. The goals have been established with the Ministry for Children and Families and the family, and the time line for the service is established by the amount of time the family needs to attain the goals. We are honoured to be involved in the process side by side with the family members, and realize the journey and the successes belong to the family.

Family Support Services: this program has benefitted from the triage model for intake. This has greatly reduced the waitlist and increased the time for clients to receive some support. The family meets with the coordinator as soon as possible after the initial call. The coordinator can then help the family establish some goals and provide information and/or referral as needed.

Parent Support Circle: this program has the benefit of a long term facilitator experienced in the facilitation of self help and mutual aid groups. It is consistently offering support to a number of families.

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YOUTH IN TRANSITIONS

Youth Counsellors provide individual and group service to promote independent skill development in youth who are transitioning to adulthood, so that independence may be attained with confidence and success.

Funder: Ministry of Children and Family Development
Staffing: Youth in Transitions is an MCFD-funded program with two part-time employees.
Location: Inlet Avenue, Sechelt, Gibsons, Roberts Creek, Pender Harbour and community outreach.

Staff Development undertaken this year:

One staff attended the FASD international conference. Both staff attended the Eating Disorder Workshop and both staff renewed their First Aid.

Highlights and accomplishments

The Youth in Transitions program delivered 978 hours of direct service to youth and their caregivers. The program supported 10 youth in completing the program with a 100% rate of improved functioning identified in our clients' ability to live independently. In addition all 10 youth had accommodation at time of program completion.

We maintain partnerships with various programs and resources within the community such as the Sunshine Coast Needle Exchange, FASD Round Table and Youth Action Committee. We continue to strengthen partnerships with other resources in the community including the Sechelt Indian Band, Child & Youth Mental Health, Learning and Parenting(LAP) Alternative School program, the Representative for Children and Youth and the Public Guardian of BC.

A Life Skills Group was held in the fall, which ran for 9 weeks for a total 28 hours and was well-attended by a number of youth. Topics included budgeting and money management, housing and tenant rights, social media and networking (safety & privacy), youth/young adult targeted marketing ploys, resume and employment skills, Agreements for Young Adults, post-secondary education and trades training, planning for transition to independence, and goal-planning.

Challenges ahead

- 1) Housing continues to be one of the greatest issues for youth living on the Sunshine Coast. Rent allowances for Youth Agreements, Independent Living and especially Underage Income Assistance do not meet with current market rental rates.
- 2) An increased demand for services to youth as well as an increased demand for services in more rural areas of the Sunshine Coast will require the program to adjust how to meet the needs of all clients in an equitable and timely manner, including the possibility of waitlists.
- 3) The ability to meet client's needs through outreach and community work is being jeopardized by increasing fuel costs.

Success Stories

Amy recently aged out of care of MCFD. She had lived in various foster placements before finding solid housing with family members. Amy struggled with her education due to her learning disabilities but was always a hard worker in any job she had. Currently she has found fulltime employment and has been rewarded with lots of overtime due to her strong work ethic. She is living independently and has been able to buy her dream vehicle with the money she has saved from all her overtime.

Tyrell was couch-surfing at a friend's house for several months. He was unable to live with his father due to his struggles with drug addiction. He is currently on a Youth Agreement and is attending school regularly. He has also begun exercising, doing art and playing guitar. His own drug use has significantly reduced over the past four months and he is looking for employment. His housing situation has been stabilized and he is excited about his future.

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CHILDREN'S COUNSELLING SERVICE
(was Children's Mental Health, Children's Sexual Abuse Treatment Program)

Individual therapy is offered to children ages 3 to 18 who have experienced sexual abuse or trauma, and counselling is offered to family members. Another part of the program which sometimes overlaps is counselling for children in foster care with regard to behaviour and adjustment issues, and work with their foster parents to develop and enhance the specific skills needed in their work as parents to children who have often suffered trauma of various kinds.

Funder: Ministry of Children and Family Development
Staff: One Coordinator/Counsellor - Lynn Mackay
One Counsellor - Rose Clark
Location: Inlet Avenue and Gibsons

Highlights:

This year our highlight has been our remarkable ability to continue serving our clients and their families with minimal disruption despite having to deal with ongoing staff turnover.

Challenges:

This year has been particularly full of challenges for some of our clients. As a result our program has been called upon frequently to coordinate and liaise with many of our community agencies to provide both advocacy and support for our clients through out many difficult circumstances. We are very fortunate to have such a high level of respect and cooperation amongst the agencies and services in or community.

Success Story:

Being available to consult with the community at large and to assist other public agencies in determining what supports are needed and how to make a plan that works for each individual family in need is an ongoing success story. Consults may be on the phone to a distraught and concerned parent or to a community colleague with questions that need an experienced perspective on a troubling scenario. Either way the ability to respond as needed with timely and beneficial solutions is a necessary component to success impacting our clients and the community at large.

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CIRCLE OF SUPPORT PROGRAM

We serve families and individuals living with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) and Complex Developmental Behavioral Disorders. The overall aim of the Circle of Support program: through education, training and support, to strengthen and build capacity within individuals, their families and the community as we respond to the needs of those living with FASD.

Funder: Ministry of Children and Family Development/Ministry of Health
Staff: Two staff, each half-time, managing a caseload of 9 to 10 families
Location: Inlet Avenue, Sechelt, Farnham Road, Gibsons, family homes and outreach in the community

We would like to welcome our new FASD Keyworker, Erica Gatz.

Statistics

- Circle of Support offered service to 22 families in the past year.
- 19 new children came into the program
- 19 hours of group sessions for an average of 7 families at each session
- 39 hours of workshops were offered, with 175 attendees

Staff Development

With thanks to our funders, Circle of Support program staff were able to attend the Fifth International Conference on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. It was a very informative conference with all the up to date research and provided us the opportunity to continue to develop our program with the most up to date information.

Highlights and Accomplishments

The Circle of Support program has developed a training that has been offered to numerous community agencies. The training has a core component and then the rest is “custom fit” for the agency so that they are getting the most useful information for their needs. It includes a power point developed by staff and packages of information for the participants. The program has received lots of positive feedback through our training evaluations and continues to further develop as the staff receives current information. This year we provided training for educators at two different schools. We also provided training for childcare providers. A new session developed by staff was an 8 week group for parents. This was extremely successful and integrated birth parents, foster parents, and adoptive parents very successfully. Initial concerns that the birth families would feel marginalized did not materialize.

Circle of Support staff have continued to successfully work with families to provide information and support to help them cope with the challenges of caring for an individual living with an FASD. Staff works collaboratively with other community agencies that also support the families. Circle of Support staff will also work with the individual living with an FASD to help them learn about their disability and develop strategies that work for them.

Challenges

Circle of Support continues to experience a significant number of adults attempting to seek access to our program. It is difficult for the adult to understand why they are not eligible for our services. The staff makes every effort to find an appropriate service for the individual but unfortunately many do not meet the criteria for CLBC, which is the only service available to adults at this time.

A continuing trend this year has been the number of moms with FASD needing our services. Because their children do not have an FASD they do not qualify for our program and are losing custody of their children. There are no supports available for these young moms and they don't understand how to deal with the Ministry and the Courts.

Success Story

Circle of Support has continued to have great success with their training. Numerous community agencies have had the training and received the most current information and strategies. The training has created more opportunity for collaboration with community agencies and the community now accesses the staff for their knowledge and expertise in the area of FASD.

Also this year staff put together an eight week support and education group for parents. There were two groups with a total of 19 parents attending.

The effects of this group included a new hopefulness and confidence in the parents. It normalized their issues and built supportive relationships that continued to grow outside of the group time. Most importantly, it led to capacity building in the communities of Gibsons and Sechelt. Parents in the group shared new ideas with other parents in the community struggling with similar issues and we learned that they were recommending future sessions to other parents.

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Sunshine Coast Youth Outreach (SCYO)**

Funders: Town of Gibsons, District of Sechelt, SCR D

Team Leader: Daanish Ali

Outreach Workers: Darcie Murray and Tina Kirshenbaum

Location: Sunshine Coast

Contacts: (604) 741-1129; twitter.com/scyouthoutreach; outreach@coastyouth.com

Description

Sunshine Coast Youth Outreach is a resource in our community, which promotes increased safety amongst youth and aims to decrease high-risk behavior for youth. This program is funded by the SCR D, the Town of Gibsons and the District of Sechelt and receives donations from a variety of sources. The steering committee is comprised of representatives from Gibsons, Roberts Creek, Sechelt and Pender Harbour Community Schools as well as Sunshine Coast Community Services Society who is the employer and financial administrator. SCYO aims to provide youth with healthy options within an unbiased forum to discuss concerns. All youth on the coast ranging from ages 13-23 are eligible to utilize this resource and speak to any of the three outreach staff. Each staff member has formed valuable connections and obtained a positive reputation within the community. All interactions between youth and staff are kept confidential, and youth are met without bias and/or repercussions. Youth connect with outreach workers concerning various topics such as Drug and Alcohol concerns, parent-teen conflicts, housing, food insecurity and more. SCYO continues to establish itself in the community as a trust worthy resource.

Highlights and Accomplishments

In 2011, Outreach began a formal statistics process. During the final quarter of 2011 (Sept - Dec), Outreach had over **300 interactions** with youth. Some of these interactions included: Ministry referral, employment resources, food insecurity, housing services, safe rides and more. We believe that this high number of youth accessing SCYO demonstrates the positive reputation outreach has built since its origins.

SCYO is excited to announce the launching of its website: www.coastyouth.com. It is hoped that this website will be a valuable resource where people along the Coast can visit to learn about exciting events in the community, coast initiatives, and educational resources pertaining to youth.

In the summer of 2011, SYCO participated in the Sea Cavalcade. Outreach staff, along with volunteers, met with many festival goers to remind them about safety, as well as provided many safe rides home.

SCYO was able to build relationships with local businesses. One of these, Subway in Sechelt, has donated several food platters, as well as monetary donations for contact 'keylights'. This business relationship played a key role in the ability of SCYO to successfully provide lunches for youth during youth programming events, and to hand out keylights for use by youth during the darker evenings in our community.

During Christmas 2011 SCYO was also able to secure private donations for youth, who were less privileged, during the holiday season. Five youth on the Sunshine Coast were given gift packages, privately donated by members in the community.

Youth Issues

Providing the opportunity to listen to a youth and to engage almost always results in youth sharing something about themselves or letting us know about youth issues in the community. We have learned the following:

Drugs and Alcohol use:

This continues to be an ongoing issue for youth on the Coast. Through regular contact with youth workers, parents, and youth themselves, there appears to be an impression that drug and alcohol use is on the rise on the Coast. Outreach consistently operates using a harm reduction model and reminds youth of the realistic dangers of drug use. The need for this is only more apparent with the recent ecstasy overdoses in the Lower Mainland.

Family Issues:

Family issues or parent-teen conflicts are a common theme amongst our interactions with youth. We are often trying to find resources that can address any concern directly, through professional services such as MCFD or SCCSS.

Employment Issues:

Employment for youth has been difficult to attain. SCYO is regularly referring youth to employment services, and other programs. SCYO has had success referring youth to the BladeRunner program, currently operating during the day in the Gibsons Youth Centre, offering youth the chance to attain various skills and employment.

Food Insecurity:

More often than previously mentioned, staff is handing out food from the local food bank, community donations and other resources. Staff attempts to connect youth and families to more stable, reliable food sources than one-time drop-offs. It is not uncommon for a youth to call SCYO staff regarding immediate food concerns.

Mental and Sexual Health:

Issues concerning mental and sexual health are common underlying themes when dealing with Coast youth. Many youth that connect with SCYO are living with mental and sexual health concerns. Staff carry condoms and resources for youth regarding sexual health. SCYO is also committed to working with youth from various backgrounds and disabilities. Youth with mental health concerns such as depression, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and Autism are regular users of SCYO services.

Pregnant Youth/Single Parents:

Youth have contacted SCYO regarding health services around pregnancy, healthy babies, youth clinics and contraceptives availability. Many youth who are pregnant or have children utilize outreach for help with basic needs.

Housing:

Staff regularly speaks to youth regarding housing, which is often related to parent-teen conflict, but not always. Without a specific youth housing program on the coast, staff often utilizes MCFD, and SCCSS for professional referral. Some youth are forced to utilize adult shelters in Gibsons and Sechelt. Many youth camp and "couch surf" for housing. For young females in particular, staff has noticed an alarming pattern of "couch surfing" for sexual favours. Staff regularly works to connect youth with proper resources to avoid this type of scenario.

Transportation:

Transportation is a common reason that youth on the Coast refer to our services. Due to infrequent bus service or lack of financial means, youth are often put in a position to commute long distances, often dangerously without proper clothing, along the Coast highway. Youth also regularly connect with SYCO when impaired. SCYO like to offer 'safe rides' when youth are unable to drive. Staff always promotes safe driving practices amongst youth, and promotes arranging 'Designated Drivers' and parent drivers amongst youth before calling SCYO for our services.

SCYO practices a multi services approach and works to connect all youth in difficult situations with any resource that might be beneficial. Thank you for your ongoing support which enables us to do this work.

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ABORIGINAL YOUTH PULLING TOGETHER PROJECT**

This program provides MCFD referred aboriginal youth and their families with the opportunity to learn and connect with their culture. Activities such as canoe journeys, drum circles, feasts and craft groups are used to pass on traditional teachings. The program relies on an Elder and spiritual advisor for guidance and teaching.

Staff: One part-time Coordinator/One part-time program facilitator
One Arts and Crafts Group Assistant. An Elder and spiritual advisor bring their knowledge and wisdom for special events.
Youth group assistant sponsored through partnership with ECD Planning Table

Location: Gibsons, Sechelt

Staff Development undertaken this year

- Megan Fortier (Program Facilitator) attended the Gathering our Voices Aboriginal Youth Conference and the Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder Conference. She also completed her First Aid Training, attended a presentation on Residential Schools and an ECE conference at Chatelech.
- Steve recertified his first aid training and attended an Understanding Eating Disorders workshop.

Highlights and Accomplishments

This past year our program held many gatherings designed to connect the clients and their families with the traditional aboriginal teachings as directed by our Elder and Spiritual Advisor. These included:

Canoe Journey

Greetings taught, Traditional Songs introduced, and Paddle Etiquette

Arts and Crafts Groups

A weekly arts and crafts group is facilitated by Megan where youth do various crafts such as journey books, drum making, beading and dream catchers and share stories.

Feasts/Celebrations

Gatherings are held to mark seasonal changes. Food is shared, songs are sung, and stories are told. It is a time for families and community to meet and lessons to be passed down. Elders and Teachers come to our circles as honoured guests. Their teachings are shared.

One to one

Our program has been able to offer specific services to meet client's needs. This may be in the form of private guidance sessions with an elder or spiritual advisor. We have also enlisted a Genealogist to assist in tracing family roots of clients. Our program facilitator meets with youth individually to meet their cultural needs.

StrongStart Outreach

With a generous grant from the Early Childhood Planning Round table, we were able to provide guest programming at each Strong Start Centre. Aboriginal crafts, stories and songs were shared with the community in our goal to share aboriginal culture.

Thanks

Judy White
Seis^^lom
Wes Nahanee
Barb Higgins
RCMP
Brenda Menard

MCFD
Sunshine Coast Community Services Society
Sechelt Indian Band
Early Childhood Planning Roundtable
IGA Gibsons

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YEW TRANSITION HOUSE

For over 30 years, Yew Transition House has provided safety, shelter, support, advocacy and referrals to women and children whose lives have been impacted by abuse. Staff are available to respond to crisis calls 24 hours per day.

Funded: BC Housing Corporation
Community donations
Fund raising events

Staff: Program Director: Keely Halward
Program Coordinator: Eva Boese
Five regular part-time Women's Support staff
Two regular part-time sharing one position in a Local Agreement
Two casual-relief Women's Support staff
One Child & Youth Support worker

Location: Confidential Location on Sunshine Coast, BC

Yearly Totals: Yew housed **57 women** and **27 children** and received **593** calls.

Highlights

- Several families were successfully referred to Thyme Second Stage Program.
- Yew provided critical after hours support to several Thyme Second Stage residents throughout the year, assisting them with problem-solving and safety planning.
- Yew strengthened collaboration with Thyme Second Stage to increase continuity and better serve women and their children.
- Staff at Yew was able to provide in depth, longer term support that enhanced a number of residents' safety and assisted with their transition into the community.
- Once again, the Yew staff team was invigorated and inspired by a dynamic overnight retreat that focused on accomplishing key tasks and team-building.
- Staff worked hard in the early spring to expand the flower garden in the backyard for the enjoyment of residents.

Challenges

- Low wages not in tune with cost of living
- Staff working in isolation without paid "cross-over" between shifts
- Some shifts working in isolation
- Many other support services being underfunded and with large case loads, impacts the ability to meet the needs of clients past their 30 day maximum stay.
- Program Coordinator responsible and available 24/7
- Program Coordinator responsible for own JD and serving as a second "back-up" during busy days often covering over night shift on short notice and still keeping following days shift.

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THYME SECOND STAGE PROGRAM/HOUSING

Thyme provides short-term housing, support, advocacy and counselling for women and children who have experienced/been exposed to abuse and who need additional support to rebuild their lives and connect to the community.

Funders: BC Housing
Community donations/ Fundraising (e.g. Women's Giving Circle and TAV Golf Tournament)
Foundations (e.g. Shelter From the Storm campaign)

Staff: Five part time staff, two casual Family Support Workers:
Program Director: Keely Halward (10 hours/week)
Four Family Support Workers (20 hours/week +6 hours from a grant, 14 hours/week and two casual on call)
Family Support Worker: Children's Drop-in Supervisor (20 hours/week +6 hours from a grant)
Maintenance worker (8 hours/week)

Location: Confidential location, Sunshine Coast

Staff Development

BCSTH- conference; Fairy Tales as Tools for work with children; PTSD training

Highlights

This year Thyme provided direct residential and support services to 7 women and 14 children (aged newborn -19 years). In addition, Thyme staff maintained important connections and offered support to several ex-residents and their children through telephone support, drop in consultation and outreach. Thyme staff and residents worked in connection with several SCCSS programs throughout the year, including Women's Counselling, Community Based Victim Services, Family and Youth Services, SC Food Bank and CWWA and Women's Outreach. Thyme staff assisted several women in navigating the legal system (RCMP, Family Justice, Legal Aid, lawyers, etc.), in developing and implementing safety plans and attending health and wellness related appointments on the Sunshine Coast.

The facilities at Thyme are now over sixteen years old. Much work has been done this last year to improve the facilities, grounds and efficiency of maintenance in the long term. Some of this work was done through additional funds sought and granted by BC Housing. We transitioned to a new Property Manager at BC Housing when BCH did a restructuring this past year. We have been successful in securing some non-recurring funds from BCH once again, and also used reserve funds to complete the following projects in 2011/12:

- New leaf blower
- Installation of cedar hedging to increase privacy between Thyme and neighbouring complexes.
- On-going maintenance and improvement of suites (e.g. painting, installation of new flooring)

Staffing

Thyme staff, all on part-time schedules, find it challenging to ensure that they meet regularly with and support all residents. This becomes increasingly difficult when a resident is in more acute need of support, if a resident is working outside of the home, and/or when there is a change of occupancy. With no budget for relief staff, all staff vacation and sick time, as well as professional development days have a direct impact on staff's ability to offer consistent and direct service and one on one support.

That said, Thyme was granted \$25,000 by the Canadian Women's Foundation that allowed Thyme to add 12 additional hours of staff time to the schedule. This has allowed for a greater

level of support to women, children and ex-residents of Thyme. The grant also pays for the acquisition of “welcome items” for each new family including things such as cleaning supplies, household staples and linens.

The Children’s Drop-In Supervisor currently works 26 hours a week thanks to the grant. This allows for the program to be available to moms and children five days a week. Mothers often report this program as being their most important source of support while at Thyme. Thyme’s application for summer student funding from HRSDC was denied for the summer of 2011 since Canada Summer Jobs funding was reduced. Thyme has historically relied on the summer student funds to subsidize additional staff hours during summer children’s drop-in when all our children are out of school.

Program coordination is currently done by the Together Against Violence Program Director. It is a real challenge for this position to ensure quality support to the Thyme Program as only ten hours a week are provided to this program from the TAV program director budget. These ten hours are meant to cover all administration, finances, reporting and staff support, chairing weekly staff meetings, facility management, and policy and program development and maintenance. This structure currently relies heavily on frontline staff to be very skilled, responsible, and able to do some program administration as well as frontline service delivery with minimal support.

Facilities

Because of the age of our facility, we expect increased maintenance issues to arise. It becomes important to plan for long term major capital expenditures (e.g. piping and window replacement). Our biggest challenge with our facilities is that our budget for Thyme Housing maintenance is minimal. BC Housing has several restrictions on the use of reserve funds and therefore costs for daily maintenance are not covered by reserve funds (e.g. a plumber coming to unclog a sink). Our budget for housing has therefore typically gone into deficit due to this. We have been working closely with our Property Manager at BC Housing who has been very helpful in assisting us to navigate funding streams available through BC Housing for repairs and maintenance where possible. We have thankfully been approved to apply some reserve funds to our Thyme Housing budget deficit this year.

We have also been very fortunate to have a multi-skilled and incredibly flexible staff in the Maintenance worker position for eight hours per week. Her skill set and knowledge of the facilities has offered more value than we can expect in a replacement staff should she leave. Eight hours per week allows for most of the work to be done that is needed doing, because of the skilled staff in the position.

We have been envisioning the enhancement of the playground in the back yard to upgrade its surfacing to code as well as to install some new equipment and remove older unusable equipment. We have recently been informed that BC Housing will supplement half the costs of this with the remainder coming from reserve funds.

Success stories

We were able to see a family we supported move to permanent subsidized housing with several on-going resources in place for the mother and her children. The mother reported feeling very empowered because of her experience at Thyme and she believes that she would have returned to her abusive relationship without the support she received while living at Thyme. Thyme also supported a woman as she re-trained herself and secured full time employment. She too is preparing to move into subsidized housing. We regularly have families check in or visit us and report on how well they are doing and how far they have come.

Sunshine Coast Community Services Society
ANNUAL REPORT, April 1, 2011- March 31, 2012
WOMEN'S COUNSELLING SERVICE

Since 1993 qualified counsellors have assisted women to recover from the effects of abuse and violence by providing individual counselling and support groups as funding permits.

Funder: Women's Counselling Services is now under the Violence Against Women branch of the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

Staff: One full time staff, 32.5 hours a week - Marj Brown
One part time staff, 2.5 hours a week - Rose Clarke
Program Director, Keely Halward, 1 hour per week.

Location: We offer services out of our Gibsons office on Farnham Road and our Sechelt office on Inlet Ave. We also do some sessions over the phone when women are unable to get to either location.

Statistics

We offer services to approximately 175 women every year. Sessions are usually an hour and can be weekly, every two weeks or a check in every month or so depending on need. Women can access the service for as long as they need it. Some women work with us for several months at a time, some come in for one or two session. This fiscal year 141 new women were referred to the program. We have managed for the last few years to be able to accommodate all women who request services within a couple of weeks from their initial call. This may change with the reduction in hours. (See challenges below.)

Professional Development

Professional development keeps skills fresh, invites accountability, introduces us to new ideas and connects us to others in the field.

Marj has continued her training in narrative therapy which is not just a therapeutic model. It provides a framework for considering violence, abuse and other problems in a broader social context of inequality and oppression. This year Marj attended a five day narrative therapy conference with narrative therapists presenting their innovative work from many areas of the world.

Marj also took part in a Building Bridges cross cultural training provided by the RCMP. This was an amazing and moving experiential workshop about the effects of colonization on First Nations peoples.

Rose continues to expand and integrate neuropsychology and somatic work, focusing her research and studies in these areas, expanding into Expressive therapies, where she has recently completed a post graduate certificate in Art Therapy.

Highlights

Over the last two years we have reported our efforts to set up and facilitate a support group for community social justice workers. As mentioned in previous reports we organized training with Vikki Reynolds who has been doing some innovative work in finding ways to support and sustain community workers.

Vikki's workshops were well received and several people in the community were keen to start our own solidarity group. Vikki supervises Marj to facilitate the group which includes workers from a variety of community agencies. We have been meeting monthly for two years now. We use Vikki's format and ideas about solidarity, ethics and social justice to discuss and practice ways of supporting and sustaining each other. People who attend the group say it has made a big difference in the ways they work and the solidarity they now feel. The work we do can be isolating and exhausting and finding ways to stand together has been a help to us all.

Marj hosted a day long workshop for the group with Vikki who generously gave of her time to support our work.

We are looking at ways to expand our solidarity and sustaining practices into other programs at Community Services and to others in the community.

Other Highlights

Marj was asked to be a witness and support person for an aboriginal woman in her reconciliation hearing for the abuse she was subjected to in a residential school. It was an honour to attend and to be a witness to such courage and spirit in the face of outrageous and horrendous abuse.

We have long been aware of the need to find more ways to stand alongside our First Nation sisters and this felt like another step in that direction.

Rose completed her post secondary certificate in art therapy, fulfilling a dream she has long held. We have applied for a grant which we hope if approved will fund her to facilitate an art therapy group for women.

Challenges

Challenges remain primarily related to systems that oppress those least able to defend themselves. Poverty continues to grow, affecting women and children disproportionately. Housing remains unaffordable.

These are the conditions that make our work heart-wrenching. Women have more difficulty leaving abuse when they have nowhere to go and no way of supporting themselves and their children. It can be difficult for women to get to appointments, let alone work through trauma and abuse issues from past experiences. It remains an extremely challenging climate in which to work.

Another very unfortunate challenge this year has been in regard to continued insufficient funding for anti violence programs. We appreciate the efforts of Community Services to bring our wages up to par as we have been steadily falling behind. However doing so without a corresponding increase in funding has meant for this program a reduction in hours. Marj's hours were reduced to 32.5 from 33.5 a week and Rose had a reduction from 5 hours a week to 2.5 hours. It was difficult enough for Rose to sustain her practice in 5 hrs. We appreciate her willingness to continue her commitment to this program despite the reduction.

Success Stories.

It is our view that women who walk in our door are all success stories. A woman recently told me that she had made and cancelled several appointments before she felt ready to face the counselling process. People who abuse find many ways to silence those they hurt. It takes a lot of courage and commitment to speak about those things that have been held as toxic secrets often for decades.

When women come in we assist them to break away from the stories abuse has told them about themselves; stories that include shame, worthlessness, and deficiencies. We help them see the ways they have resisted abuse, the strengths and skills they have developed, the resources they carry, the values they hold, the dreams they have kept alive, the spirituality that sustains them.

We offer a variety of somatic, expressive and talk therapies to help women safely work through and acknowledge the emotional, physical and spiritual pain that accompanies uncovering and unpacking abuse.

Here is some lovely feedback from Keely our program director and the coordinator of Thyme Second Stage.

"just saw a woman from Thyme today who said she saw you and she just happened to look amazing in a way I haven't seen her look before. Ever. Like an enormous dark cloud lifted from her so I could see who she really is for a moment. I told her she looked great and she said she

actually felt great for the first time she can remember. She didn't explicitly say that it was because of the counselling, but she happened to drop the fact that she had been to see you. Just thought I'd pass this on in case it validated your experience of a valuable session with a woman today :)"

Women speak of the many ways they feel reconnected to themselves, they feel more whole, fully alive, able to experience a full range of emotions, appreciative of themselves, able to make satisfying connections with others, more able to parent their children and freed from the confines of abuse for the first time in their lives.

These new stories are filled with hope and inspiration. When women get free from abuse they help to break generational chains and create new futures for themselves, their children and their children's children.

We appreciate the opportunity to participate in creating these new futures.

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WOMEN'S OUTREACH PROGRAM**

The Women's Outreach Program provides free ongoing support/practical assistance to women who have experienced abuse or at risk of being abused.

Funder: Ministry of Housing and Social Development
Budget Revenue: \$35,000
Staff: Program Coordinator: Sarah Start
Location: The Lower Sunshine Coast (Langdale to Egmont)
Office located at 5697 Cowrie Lane, Sechelt, B.C. V0N 3A0

Staff development undertaken during the year

Sept 2011

Attended 2011 BCTH Annual Conference and participated in the following workshops:

- Supporting Queer Women Who Experience Violence in Relationships
- How Technology Impacts Women's Safety
- Recognizing and Supporting Women with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
- Understanding Self Injury and Practical Interventions
- Support groups for Women Impacted by Abuse, Mental Ill-Health and Substance Use

October 2011

Completed a 5 Intensive Certificate in Narrative Therapy through the Vancouver School of Narrative Therapy

February 2012

Attended Building Bridges Community Training Conference

Clients Served

The program provided practical support and assistance to 160 women with 187 children in this community last year. From these numbers, 80 women and 103 children were new clients and had never accessed outreach before.

Highlights and accomplishments

The Outreach Program maintains excellent working relationships with other services including RCMP, MCFD, court staff and lawyers. The Outreach Program in our community is seen as a reputable and vital support to women experiencing violence and oppression. The relationship with the Ministry of Children and Families continues to be a positive one with ongoing, consistent referrals and inclusion in family case conferences, mediation, risk assessment and service plans. The Outreach program in our community has been very successful in helping women feel more empowered when dealing with social workers, and bridging greater understanding between service providers of the oppression and barriers women face within these structures.

Outreach has put a great deal of effort into maintaining positive relationships with the RCMP. This year the RCMP has gone from making referrals to Outreach, to contacting the service for feedback on risk assessment and case conferences. There has been a notable increase in their willingness to investigate violence in relationship files with a more dynamic, non-judgmental framework. This is a huge success for our whole community.

Ongoing Challenges

The role of Women's Outreach is always to support and advocate. Our program has been diligent in providing respectful, professional support to ensure that the woman's voice is being heard, that her strengths are recognized and acknowledged. The goal is to make communication between the woman and the social worker feel less adversarial. The challenge here is that the nature of advocating for a client can sometimes be perceived as controversial by social workers, especially if there is already a history of tension between the client and the

Ministry. It is an ongoing challenge to balance the policies of MCFD with the policies of Outreach to ensure that the woman's right to have an advocate is respected and supported and does not end up backfiring against her. Outreach continues to attend MCFD staff meetings twice a year to develop and maintain working relationships with our local office. This has been an asset to the program, to the women who access it and to MCFD.

The majority of the women who access the program for support with MCFD are first nations. There continues to be systematic discrimination and lack of sensitivity to cultural history within government agencies, structures and services. Although there has been a noted increase in collaboration from the Ministry, there are still undoubtedly systematic biases towards First Nations families.

Trends Seen

There is a serious gap, certainly locally and provincially, in services to women with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS). Although there are services for children with FAS, there seems to be little support for parents with FAS. This being said, many of the women who access the service for advocacy because their children have been removed due to abuse and/or substance abuse are actually women who have FAS themselves. What is most concerning about this is that when examining their case with the Ministry, the FAS is either overlooked completely, or used as a factor in determining why the woman can not be a safe or adequate mother to her children. In most cases, these women could be wonderful, loving and safe parents to their children if they had more resources for support.

Challenges ahead

- Outreach is a much needed service with very limited hours. The lack of consistent availability of the service on a daily basis creates barriers to women who may need immediate support. .
- The lack of family law lawyers on the coast continues to be an issue. The Outreach worker continues to learn and expand her knowledge of the family court system in order to be a more effective advocate to women.
- Continue to work and collaborate with MCFD to follow best practices and provide service to women from a place of empowerment and support.
- Continue to educate the public and other service providers of the realities, special circumstances and challenges of women who are struggling to exit an abusive relationship.

Successes

The successes of the Outreach Program are really most evident in the relationships and collaboration with other services on the Sunshine Coast. For a small, semi-rural community with limited hours this program receives tremendous amounts of referrals and is seen as a vital service to women. Collaboration has been a community effort and a real reflection of the passion, professionalism and level of commitment from services such as Outreach, CBVS, PBVS, RCMP, Transition House, MCFD, Mental Health, Crown Counsel, Family Justice, Coastal Health...to name a few. These services excel in their willingness to put the safety of women and children above all else and to see the value in working together.

The working relationship between Women's Outreach and Community Based Victim Services is a tremendous asset to the women who access both services. Many of the female clients who are referred to CBVS also have custody and access issues, and/or require advocacy with the legal system or the Ministry of Children and Families. On the flip side, many of the women who access Outreach, may require the expertise with CBVS to speak to the police or understand criminal court orders/charges.

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CHILDREN WHO WITNESS ABUSE**

Counsellors support children and their families through the healing process after experiencing violence or abuse, and provide tools to help boys and girls develop skills to break the cycle of abuse.

Funder: Ministry Of Housing and Social Development
Staff: One Coordinator/Counsellor - Lynn Mackay
One Counsellor
Location: Inlet Avenue, Sechelt, and Farnham Road in Gibsons

Highlights

An agency wide highlight has been the adoption of a wage grid. This program has lost many good counselors due to the wage scale in the past. It is hoped that this new step will alleviate that problem.

Challenges

One of the primary challenges this year has been staffing changes. There is an ongoing waitlist for our program and time taken away from direct service that is needed to hire and train new staff makes it more difficult to attend to clients in need in a timely way.

Success Story

Success is a child learning that their parents' fights are not their fault. Success is parents learning how to focus on their children's needs rather than be lost in their own fighting. Success is learning respectful communication and basic personal rights in relationships. Success is learning that mistakes are not all bad, that strengths may appear hidden at first and that healing is a possible path to choose. This is the daily story of success in the Children Who Witness Abuse program.

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COMMUNITY-BASED VICTIM SERVICES

Community-Based Victim Services provides confidential and free services to female and male survivors of family and sexual violence including: adult survivors of violence in relationship, sexual assault, criminal harassment, and survivors of childhood physical and sexual abuse; child and youth survivors of physical and sexual abuse, child and youth witnesses of violence in relationships.

The program provides support services to people who may or may not have reported the crime to police or be involved in the criminal justice system.

The objectives of the programs are:

1. to lessen the impact of crime and trauma on victims and their families and to assist in their recovery;
2. to increase victim safety and to help reduce the risk of further victimization;
3. to increase the level of participation and sense of empowerment for victims throughout their participation in the criminal justice system; and
4. to increase the effectiveness of a victim while acting as a witness in court proceedings.

Funder: Ministry of Public Safety, Solicitor General

Staff: Program Coordinator: Julie Gibson
Support staff: Sarah Start

Location: Sechelt

Highlights & Accomplishments

Since 2009 when Judge Rounthwaite left her seat in the Sechelt Provincial Court, there has been a substantial decrease in Court time resulting in a serious backlog of files, charges being stayed due to delay arguments, and spousal files taking months to get to Trial which increase the level of risk to women experiencing relationship violence. Our program actively participates on the Prevention of Violence Against Women (VAWIR) Coordinating Committee, and in October 2011 Judge Challenger was invited and attended our VAWIR meeting to hear about this very important issue. In January 2012 the Crown Counsel advised our VAWIR Committee that since Judge Challenger's visit she gave direction to the Court to deal with spousal "K" files within 90 days. Since then there has been a definite improvement in the time frame in which these files are heard and are brought to completion.

We have noticed increased attention being placed by RCMP on notifying the Complainant on spousal files when an accused is arrested on a warrant or released on bail. For many years this has been an issue raised by our program with both RCMP and the Crown office. The sooner a woman knows of an arrest and/or release the safer she will be.

The Coordinator attended the Sexual Assault training for nurses at St Mary's Hospital last April and provided information regarding the CBVS support available to people who have experienced sexual assault as well as information about the other agencies in our community responding to sexual assault.

We continue to maintain and build relationships with RCMP. The attention and effort is definitely benefitting clients as we have regular contact with police, discuss high risk files and receive information for our clients in a timely manner. RCMP have also been involved with us & other agencies in case conferences in order to develop safety plans for clients.

We continue to invite RCMP members to our office for the initial meeting with a woman. This is sometimes easier for our client than going to the detachment. It also allows for the member to see where we work and to meet our staff.

We continue to meet twice a year with both Sechelt and Gibsons MCFD staff teams. This is always an interesting meeting that generates lots of useful discussion and questions. We have found that we consistently receive referrals from Child Protection workers.

Maintaining strong working relationships with Court Registry and Sherriff staff members is most helpful when we need to access the Court in order to provide a court orientation for clients. They are accommodating, kind and informative to our clients.

There has been half as many women charged with spousal violence this year compared to last year. We attribute this to RCMP members receiving relationship violence training and their more consistent use of the Primary Aggressor Policy. We also feel that our years of advocating at a community and provincial level about this issue are partially responsible for this important change.

Clients Served

Throughout the past fiscal year we opened 68 new client files. These files consisted of the following issues:

Relationship Violence Assault:	27
Child Abduction:	1
Adult Sexual Assault:	3
Youth Sexual Assault:	2
Child Sexual Assault:	2 children + 2 mothers
Historical Sexual Assault	4
Criminal Harassment/Stalking	8
Threats	17
Child Protection Issues	1
Partner Suicide	1
Total	68

Women charged with assault 4 (50% decrease from previous year)

There were also 76 client files remaining open from previous years that we were supporting.

Challenges Ahead

Trying to deliver an effective program without enough funding to cover all the costs presents a consistent challenge for us. We are lacking in program hours for staffing, for crossover time and for adequate relief coverage. As well, there is minimal funding for staff development, program resources for clients, mileage costs for transportation, and office expenses.

One of our serious challenges is the expectation of the Ministry that our program will always allocate 80% of funding to wages and benefits. This creates a real difficulty for us. For example, if our program were to receive a one time grant of \$10,000, \$8,000 of that would have to go to wages and benefits, rather than being used to offer a wider range of services to the people who come to us for assistance. Our wages and benefits are already set, and while a new group, for example, might require a few more hours of staff time to organize, it doesn't equal 80%. This expectation means that we can never significantly increase our program expenditures, because whatever increase is provided only 20% of it is available for program development and enhanced service. A relaxation of this expectation would allow us a great deal more flexibility in tailoring our service to meet the demonstrated needs of the people we serve.

Due to the drastic cut backs to Legal Services men accused of spousal assault and other "K" file crimes are frequently self-representing at trial. This puts our client in a very vulnerable position. It is very common for an abuser to use the Family Court system to continue to control and manipulate the woman and sometimes her children. He will refuse to participate in Family Justice Counselling mediation when it is offered and instead will file hearing after hearing dragging her back to court on minor issues. If she is represented by a Legal Aid lawyer the time

allotted is quickly used up. Over time her emotional, physical and financial resources are all drained. We see this as another opportunity for him to continue to control and abuse her.

The lack of Legal Services for women is having a very negative impact on our clients. The qualifying criteria are so narrow that very few women are able to access a Legal Aid lawyer. In Family Court situations there must be a history of physical violence for her to meet the criteria. Emotional, psychological, mental, verbal, financial abuses don't count. When a woman is charged with spousal assault, she is unable to access a Legal Aid lawyer and must use duty counsel and represent herself. The lack of Legal Services creates serious barriers for women leaving violent relationships.

On the flip side, a man accused and appearing on a spousal "K" file who does not qualify for Legal Aid will plead not guilty and set a date for Trial. Many times, on the day of the Trial, once he sees she is there to testify, he'll plead guilty.

Many women describe feeling further victimized when they become involved with the Criminal Judicial System. This is especially true when the report to police was made by someone other than her. She has been experiencing the violence from her partner along with his threats of further violence should she ever tell anyone so she feels that her safety is at greater risk if she speaks with the police. On the other hand, the police need her information in order to complete their investigation.

When the accused does go through with the Trial without a defense lawyer, he has the opportunity to cross-examine her on the witness stand. This situation presents such an incredible power imbalance that furthers her sense of disempowerment. Combined with the impact of the trauma she has experienced from his abuse it's sometimes more than a woman can handle. Some women in this situation will choose not to attend Court, resulting in a dismissal of all charges. Other women find the courage to bravely take the stand, with our support, tell their story clearly and with strong resolve speaking directly to the Judge.

The complexity of client situations has increased. The delays in Court time results in more breaches by abusers, meaning that she is in more contact with RCMP, Crown and the Courts. Longer term support is required for our clients. This combined with new referrals leads to challenges for staff in meeting all the client needs. This also results in additional collaboration with other agencies which required more staff time and focus. Instead of attending court for two or three client files we are now covering six to eight court files per week which means many more follow-up calls to clients and to Crown.

The number of clients who are experiencing mental health issues and/or addiction has increased. It is very challenging for a woman to find appropriate support when she is experiencing emotional distress due to violence in her relationship. or alcohol in order to cope with the abuse. This can create a situation where the focus becomes about the alcohol or drug use and not about the abuse in her relationship and a possible safety plan for her.

Success

When attending conferences or training events in other areas of the province we are proud to speak about the work we do here on the Sunshine Coast. We have a unique community of agency workers who have lived and worked here together for many years. We have strong trusting relationships that have weathered the ups and downs of conflicting mandates while maintaining the common goal of working to end relationship violence and sexual assault. Our programs are often solicited by other agencies for protocols and information about procedures that we follow in our work here on the Sunshine Coast.

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POLICE-BASED VICTIM SERVICES

The Police-based Victim Services Program provides crisis intervention, emotional support, practical assistance, information and referrals for men, women and children who are victims/witnesses of crimes or trauma, and their families. An important function of the Unit is to inform victims and witnesses about the court process and help them navigate the judicial system.

The Victim Services Unit is overseen operationally by Sgt. Mike McCarthy, the RCMP Sergeant in charge of Operations Support, and supervised and administered by the Sunshine Coast Community Services - Program Director, Keely Halward.

Funders: Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Victim Services & Crime Prevention Division; District of Sechelt - yearly grant and Traffic Fine Revenue Grant; and Grant-in-Aid from SCRD

Staff: Program Coordinator: Linda Thorp, 1 casual-relief employee, 2 volunteers, 5 casual crisis support workers

Location: Office at RCMP Sechelt detachment, appointments at Gibsons detachment, and area of coverage from Port Mellon to Egmont

Staff development during the year:

In May, the Coordinator and two volunteers attended the B.C. Police Based Victim Services Association conference in Burnaby.

The initial six Crisis Support Workers all attended several training sessions by the Coordinator in order to prepare them for the work. They also all attended the basic First Aid Training.

The Coordinator and one of the Crisis Workers attended a "Building Bridges First Nations Workshop". The Coordinator also attended a Non Violent Communication Workshop and a Safety with Technology Workshop

Highlights and Accomplishments:

In 2011, our Victim Services Unit completed its 23rd year of service on the Sunshine Coast. A Crisis Support Worker Pilot Project was initiated this year, made possible primarily by funds from the Traffic Fine Revenue Grant. These Crisis Support Workers attend police emergencies after hours in order to support victims on the Coast.

Clients Served:

The Unit opened 120 full service files and assisted 174 clients. Of these incidents, 38% were in the SCRD areas, 36% in the District of Sechelt, 20% in the town of Gibsons, and 6% at the Sechelt Indian Band lands. We responded to 20 emergency callouts, provided assistance to 39 clients requesting immediate services at the front counter, or on pre-arranged appointments.

Challenges ahead:

Our main challenge ahead is to try and retain the Crisis Support Worker Program so that clients can be provided Crisis Intervention after hours. In order to do this, we rely on continued grants.

As well as the challenge of funding the program, we also wish to retain the casual staff we employ and train. Because the work is very sporadic and on-call, this means that there is not a great financial incentive if something more lucrative comes up; also, the traumatic nature of the work is not for everyone.

Successes:

During the past year, we debriefed victims, witnesses and their families on several complex files such as several sexual assaults, two fatal industrial accidents, death of an infant, a few suicides, a stabbing victim, fires, and many sudden death files.

We continue to provide a full range of court support services to our clients which includes: assistance with Victim Impact Statements, explanation and updates on court appearances, providing copies of protection orders, court orientation and court accompaniment.

Our applications for grants (i.e. District of Sechelt's Traffic Fine Revenue Grant and Sunshine Coast Regional District's Grant-in-Aid) have been successful, which kept the program going with casual relief staff during the Coordinator's absences, and also meant that we were able to attend the annual Police-based Victim Services conference this past year. The Traffic Fine Revenue Grant money from 2011 was used to begin the Crisis Support Pilot Program, which included training of the workers.

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PARENT-TOT DROP-IN

This is a popular morning program offered in Gibsons for children from birth to age five and their parents or caregivers. It provides children with a wide variety of play and learning activities as well as the opportunity for parents to take a break, connect with other parents and staff, and get resources and referrals on all aspects of child and family development.

Funder: Public Health Agency Canada: Community Action Plan for Children (CAPC), Ministry for Children and Family Development, Success by Six (MCFD, United Way and Credit Unions), Jean and Arthur Clarke Endowment and community donations.

Staffing: 6 staff, working 64.5 hours per week: 1 regular part time program coordinator and 6 regular part-time Family Resource Workers,

Location: This year, Parent-Tot Drop-In was offered in one location on the Sunshine Coast: at Gibsons Community Centre. Family Resource Workers offered family support two days a week at Sechelt “Tiny Town” StrongStart Centre.

Staff development: Parent-Tot Drop-In staff participated in the Exploration and Discovery conference offered through the Childcare Resource and Referral Program. Staff also took the BC Council for Families, “The Heart of Co-Parenting” training. In addition to the above, the Program Coordinator attended: the Squamish Nation Reconciliation Circle; BC Council for Families training on “Conflict Resolution with the Brain in Mind”; PHAC’s Vancouver Coastal Training on “Supporting Families with Mental Illness”, “Relationship Matters and “Making Sense of Discipline”; and PHAC’s “Face-to-Face” training and networking opportunity for CAPC Coordinators.

Highlights and Accomplishments

We were delighted to learn that Public Health Agency Canada remains committed to the CAPC program and has confirmed ongoing funding until March 31, 2014.

Gibsons Drop-In, located within the Gibsons and Area Community Centre, our one stand-alone Drop-In program, continues to be a vibrant, colourful, warm and welcoming place for families. The program is offered Tuesday through Saturday mornings and is extremely well-attended. This year 797 individuals participated in the program, including 412 children and 385 adults. This represents 300 families and an increase from last year.

Saturday Drop-In continues to meet the needs of working parents who wish to enjoy some time playing with their children and connecting with other fathers. Offering the program on Saturdays is also an important opportunity for single dads who have weekend visits with their children. The numbers of dads participating in Drop-In has increased and we have seen as many as 10 dads visiting on a single Saturday. One-third of all parents attending on Saturdays are dads.

We continued our collaboration with School District 46 StrongStart program; supporting the Sechelt “Tiny Town” StrongStart program two days a week with staff who deliver a modified Mother Goose program.

As our Parent-Tot Drop-In locations have diminished, we have continued to utilize our Public Health Agency Canada funds to provide Family Resource Worker support for families at Bellies and Babies once a week in each of the Gibsons and Sechelt locations.

The 10th Annual Children's Festival and Duck Pluck Raffle was held in June at Dougall Park in Gibsons. The Festival/Raffle gets bigger and better every year and was successful in raising approximately \$5,000 in funds for Parent-Tot Drop-In and Bellies and Babies.

Challenges ahead:

Financial: Success by Six funding decreased for the 2012-13 fiscal year and with it the challenges of securing sufficient alternative funds to run our Saturday Drop-In.

Program: Originally five, with the implementation of StrongStart, we now have one stand alone Drop-In program in Gibsons. Parent-Tot Drop-In had been a coast-wide point of access to Community Services programs and it is unfortunate to have lost this connection with the other four communities. For the first time in years, we did not partner with Halfmoon Bay Community School to offer the summer PTDI program, as they wished to best support families with the continuation of the StrongStart model and staff.

Volunteer: Our long-time volunteer Jean Clarke, 92 years old, passed away February 9th 2012. It was with great sadness that we said goodbye to this incredible woman who was instrumental in the concept and formation of PTDI and in establishing a long musical tradition at Gibsons Parent-Tot Drop-In.

A success story:

What does Parent-Tot Drop-In mean to the families who come? Parents say it best: Comments from "Collated Combined Participant Feedback Results" Sea to Sky/Sunshine Coast CAPC Coalition 2009-2010 (no parent participation feedback was required for 2011-12)

"I appreciate how much my child looks forward to going and asks to go and doesn't want to leave. It has caused me to realize that the hokey pokey IS what it is all about!!"

"We are new in town and I see this as being a great way for my daughter and me to make some connections and gain info about the community as a whole."

"...to see the community come together (share fruit, Jean on piano, the Mayor of Gibsons even brings his kids here)"

"This program has really improved our life. I wouldn't want anybody to miss out on it because it is so supportive and beneficial for kids and parents."

"I struggled with depression in the past and when I start feeling 'those feelings', it helps to have somewhere to go, to get out, where my son is safe and happy and challenged and where I have the opportunity to meet and talk with others."

"PTDI has saved my sanity many a time. Just to sit and have a conversation and a coffee with other adults in a setting where your kids are being educated and stimulated is priceless. I've been a regular for 4 years. It also gives me a sense that I have an extended part of a routine."

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CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL (CCRR) PROGRAM

With offices in Sechelt, Gibsons, and Pender Harbour, the CCRR offers a wide array of services for both families and child care providers along the Sunshine Coast. These services include assisting daycares in the Licensing or License-Not-Required process, child care referral service for parents, child care subsidy packages and information, child care and parenting workshops and training, and a community based toy and resource lending library. The CCRR program also helps educate the public about the importance of the availability of good quality child care here in our community, and it helps parents make good, informed child care choices.

Funder: Ministry of Children and Family Development

Staffing: Part-time Program Consultant: Hilary Griffith

Part-time Program Assistant: Tracy Wright

Part-time Program Assistant: Paul Calder

Locations

Sechelt: 5520 Trail Ave.

Gibsons: St. Bart's Church at Gibsons Way and North Road

Pender Harbour: Community School portable at Madeira Park Elementary

Highlights and Accomplishments

In October the CCRR hosted its *Eight* annual Exploration and Discovery Child Care and Parenting Conference. It was a great success over 90 participants this year. Other training opportunities this past year included:

- Childcare Federation Child Care Course; three Registered Licensed Not required participated in the course facilitated by the CCRR Program Coordinator.
- One day work shop on Reggio approach to classroom environments: 30 Child care providers and Early Childhood Educators took advantage of this fascinating approach to developing children's creativity. The CCRR collaborated with School District 46 and other community members to organize and participate in the Early Years Fair. This the year the theme was Having Fun with Family and Friends. There were many interesting activities available for the children to explore.

CCRR continued to partner with Vancouver Coastal Health to provide an information and resource work shop on Germs for parents and child care providers.

CCRR hosted four child care provider networking evenings, plus two caregivers appreciation nights. These events are for all of the Sunshine Coast's child care providers to come together to have lots of fun, sharing ideas and networking. During May Child Care Month CCRR provided an evening of Yoga and refreshment at the Davis Bay Hall for hard working child care providers all across the Sunshine Coast. Child Care providers enjoyed the Yoga and discovered many new ways to stretch and relax after a busy day with children.

CCRR is continuing with the recruiting efforts to obtain Registered License-Not-Required (RLNR) child care providers. We recruited four new RLNR bring our total of RLNR to 11. We are still in desperate need of an infant/toddler group centre in Sechelt. We only have two Licensed-Not-Required who take children under two in the Sechelt area one in Davis Bay and two in Gibsons.

The CCRR is working closely with community partners who sit on the Early Childhood Planning Table to develop a plan to open an Infant and Toddler child care centre. CCRR in partnership with the Early Childhood Planning Table has been conducting a parent survey to determine the needs for child care on the coast. The results of this survey will be available to the public by the end of the summer.

The CCRR was successful in obtaining a grant from Success by Six United Way to develop Aboriginal content resource kits. These resources are available for use by families and child care providers .

Lending Library Usage for the Year

Parents: 957

Child Care Providers: 219

Others: 459

Child Care Referrals: 216

Child Care Subsidy: 365

This shows an increase in the parents and community members using the service, an increase in the number of referrals, a small decrease in the number of child care providers using the service and a decrease in parents requiring subsidy compared with last year's statistics. The decrease in subsidy request could be due to the Government decreasing the income threshold amount which leaves parents unable to claim subsidy.

Challenges Ahead:

To continue to support parents in finding quality care for children under the age of two and a half. The need for infant and toddler continues to grow across the Sunshine Coast. Another challenge is to continue to increase the outreach support to child care providers to enhance quality child care. We are pleased to report that due some strategic planning around staff work loads we have been able to increase the out reach support service by 3.5% this year.

Success Story:

The CCRR has many success stories, but the success story that is constant for CCRR staff is the gratitude and happiness that grand parents and visitors have shown staff when they are able to rent our resources, for example, car seats, cribs, high chairs and strollers, and also to have the opportunity use our resource library which contains books, puzzles, DVD games and many other stimulating fun activities available for entertaining visiting children. The appreciation shown for the service that we provide for our community, visitors and grand parents provides the CCRR staff with a sense of well being and the satisfaction of a job well done.

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BELLIES AND BABIES**

Through individual support and informal groups, this program's goals are to improve the nutrition of pregnant and postnatal mothers and to encourage breast-feeding.

- Funder:** Health Canada, Success by 6
Bellies and Babies is a Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP)
- Staffing:** Kim Oka coordinates and does all the group and individual programming. The coordinator works 25 hours a week.
All the menu planning, food preparation, and cooking for two groups weekly is coordinated by Isobel McPherson. Isobel works five hours weekly and encourages participant participation as much as possible. Joanne Crane works six hours a week assisting the group facilitator in setting up the space for a weekly drop in group; she provides information for community resources, and provides quality child minding.
Participants are asked to be as involved in the programming as possible and a participant is asked to lead the group activities if the coordinator is away.
- Location:** Gibsons and Area Community Centre on Park Avenue, Gibsons, Sunshine Coast
Community Services Society on Inlet Avenue, Sechelt
Outreach provided in various communities along the Coast

Highlights and accomplishments

Bellies and Babies provided services to 87 families this year.

In addition to two hot lunch group meetings every week Bellies and Babies also provides outreach services. This includes prenatal information, support for parents to get to caregiver appointments, healthy lifestyle information, parenting support, breastfeeding resources, and support for Post Partum depression.

Challenges ahead

CPNP base funding has remained the same since 2003 despite an increase of nearly 150% in the number of families coming to the program. More young moms, aboriginal moms, single moms and moms who live in poverty are receiving services at Bellies and Babies and consequently there is a higher need for resources than eight years ago when the funding level was established. Without this static level of funding, there is greater pressure to search for alternate sources of funding, through small grant applications and fund-raising events.

Some proceeds from the annual Children's Festival and Duck Pluck go to support Bellies and Babies, needed more now that some Success by Six funding has been reduced.

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SUCCESS BY 6**

Early Childhood Development Planning Table

About the Sunshine Coast Early Childhood Development Planning Table (ECDPT)

The ECDPT is a local group that exists to champion, develop and implement our community's Early Childhood projects, plans and initiatives.

We adhere to the objectives outlined in the 2010 ECD Strategic Plan:

1. Creating welcoming communities that support healthy and active living for all children & families.
2. Enhancing and developing spaces, places, and services for all children & families.
3. Improving accessibility and affordability for all children & families.
4. Acknowledging and complementing the ECD priorities and planning as articulated by the Sechelt First Nation, the Squamish people, and other local Aboriginal people.

Yearly, the ECDPT distributes the funds received from the provincial Success By 6® initiative for community projects that meet the above objectives.

Funder: Provincial Success By 6® (Ministry for Children and Family Development, United Way of the Lower Mainland, Credit Unions), in partnership with Vancouver Coastal Health, School District #46, Sunshine Coast Community Services Society, Sunshine Coast Credit Union and Ministry for Children and Family Development.

Staff: ECD Community Facilitator/Success By 6 Coordinator

Location: Outreach in the community from Langdale to Egmont

Highlights and accomplishments:

- Partnered with Success By 6® and Sechelt Indian Band to present "Planning For The Seasons", Aboriginal Strategic Planning to 40 participants.
- Brought Early Childhood Educators of B.C. to the Coast to present "An integrated Plan for Early Care and Education" in a public forum.
- Developed and distributed a Child Care Needs Survey for the Sunshine Coast.
- Developed and distributed a Needs Survey for Child Care providers.
- Worked with the Coast Reporter to produce a Resource Guide for Sunshine Coast Families and Children.
- Worked cooperatively with Sechelt Indian Band to present a Cross-Cultural workshop for Early Care providers.
- Funded the purchase of Aboriginal Resources for Child Care Resource and Referral.
- Through Success By 6® funded local projects to address the objectives of the 2010 ECD Strategic Plan.
- Communicated the Sunshine Coast perspective on provincial initiatives and policies through Provincial Success By 6®.
- Participated in the Early Years Community Development Institute and the Early Childhood Roundtable.
- Communicated regularly through meetings and conference calls with the Provincial Success By 6® and Aboriginal Success By 6®.
- Continued to highlight issues and advocate for families through increased participation in community events.

Challenges ahead:

- Sustaining Success By 6® projects with local and provincial changes in funding.
- Moving forward with increased collaboration and innovation with community partners.
- Developing alternate fundraising sources.
- Continuing to build relationships with members of the Sechelt Indian Band and with other local Aboriginal people as well as the local business/union/corporate sector.

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INFANT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The program consultant serves families with children from birth to three years who have or are at risk for a developmental delay or have a diagnosed disability. The program offers home visits, developmental screenings and assessments, play group, toy lending library and connections to other parents, therapists and community resources.

Funder: Ministry of Children and Family Development
Staff: Two staff, one at 26 hours per week; the second at 10 hours per week.
Location: Home visits and community outreach from Port Mellon to Egmont. Office and play group is at Community Services, Inlet Avenue, Sechelt

Staff Development:

- Fostering Early Development Training
- Two day teacher training level one: Parent Child Mother Goose
- Understanding FASD training for professionals
- Assessment Workshop: Assessing the physical development and well being of children
- Autism Training: Detection and Treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in Children under 3
- Reference and Regulate Interventionist Training ASD
- Assessment Workshop: Keys to Children's Mental Health - Assessing Children's Social and Emotional Well-Being
- "Partnerships in Positive Approaches to Behaviour Training Module Workshop"
- Childhood Immunization Workshop

Highlights:

Parents in the IDP have formed a "parent's of kids with special needs group" and are busy making crafts to sell at the Children's Festival in June to raise money for Kids in Motion. They have collected craft materials from generous donors in the community and are very grateful for this as it is providing them with the opportunity to become involved with helping other children as well as their own.

Some Statistics:

- average number of children in IDP at any given time throughout the year: 34
- number of new referrals this year averaged two a month
- average number of foster families: seven
- average number of aboriginal children referred: 11

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BRIDGES - PEDIATRIC OT AND PT

Physical and occupational therapists work in homes, day care centers and community settings with children from birth to eighteen years who have a developmental delay or disability. They provide screenings, assessments, and consultation to parents and caregivers.

Funder: Ministry of Children and Family Development
Staffing: Sarah Doherty/Melanie Miller, Early Intervention (EI) Occupational Therapist, 25 hours per week, (0-5 yr olds)
Deborah Heidebrecht, EI Physiotherapist, 28 hours per week, (0-5 yr olds)
Cris Rowan, School Aged Therapy Program Occupational Therapist, 15 hours per week, (5 - 18 yr olds)
Location: Office and playroom at Inlet Avenue in Sechelt, outreach to daycares, preschools, schools, and homes.

Staff development undertaken during the year

Therapy courses, in general, are very expensive to attend. The Bridges budget provides some financial support for continuing education.

The **SATP Occupational Therapist** and **EI Physiotherapist** attended the Feeding and Swallowing videoconference at Sunny Hill Health Centre. The SATP Occupational therapist and EI Occupational and Physical therapists attended the international Seating and Positioning Conference in Vancouver.

Continuing education was also achieved through journal readings and educational resources offered through the BC and the Canadian Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy Associations journals and library resources as well as the American Occupational Therapy Association.

Highlights and accomplishments

Sarah Doherty has returned to her position as the IE Occupational Therapist and has reduced her hours to 16 per week. At that time, Melanie Miller was working nine hours per week as an EI Occupational Therapist and 13 hours per week as the SATP Occupational Therapist. Melanie went on maternity leave in November 2011 and had a lovely baby boy. Cris Rowan has taken over Melanie's caseload until her return.

The Sunny Hill Health Centre outreach seating and mobility clinic continues to service the equipment needs of clients through biannual visits to the Sunshine Coast.

EI clients continue to benefit from participation in numerous community activities(private swimming lessons, MusicMakers, therapeutic horseback riding, private music lessons) that augment their therapy programs with support from funding through the Kids in Motion program.

Occupational Therapists / Physiotherapists Caseloads

Last year Bridges EI (0 - 5 years) Occupational Therapy (OT) served a total of 82 children with an average caseload of 51.

Last year Bridges EI (0 - 5 years) Physiotherapy (PT) served a total of 71 children with an average caseload of 43.

The School Aged Therapy Program (SATP) served a total of 24 children with 22 on the OT caseload and 12 on the PT caseload. The children on the SATP caseload typically have complex needs.

Challenges ahead

The EI PT and OT program has felt a significant increase in service demands over the past year and has, therefore, made MCFD aware of the need for increased funding for these programs. There is a need for continued advocacy in this area as we hope to receive an increase of funding for Early Intervention PT and OT services to be the equivalent of a 1.0 FTE PT position and a 1.0 FTE OT position during our MCFD contract renewal in April 2013.

Ongoing collaboration with the SD #46 District Support Services team to improve the kindergarten transition process. This will be a focus in the fall of 2012.

A success story

The Bridges therapists were instrumental this past year in working with the SCR D and local service organizations to ensure accessibility for the Therapeutic Riding Program and the Sechelt Aquatic Centre. The Sechelt Lions Club donated funds for a tracking lift system that lifts children out of their wheelchairs and onto a horse, and will be working together with the Gibsons Lions Club to fund a ramp and platform system for easier and safer mounting of horses by children with mobility challenges.

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SUPPORTED CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Supported Child Development is a community based program aimed at providing assistance to children who require extra support in order to be fully included in child care settings chosen by their families. The coordinator provides a range of support, including consultation with families, training opportunities for child care providers, individual program plans, extra staffing support where needed, program resources, and coordination of community services.

Funder: Ministry for Children and Family Development
Staffing: One full time staff member
Location: Inlet Avenue, Sechelt, and outreach

Staff Development:

Through partnership with ECE Voice, three workshops were available for staff and families.

Highlights and Accomplishments

- 1) The Teaching Pyramid and Introductory and Intervention Workshops for parents, professionals and child care providers.
- 2) Early Intervention - working on the waitlist to provide support to under 5 years old first and well as using the rating scale - priority to level 3 and 2 first.
- 3) Providing support and mentorship to the Sechelt Indian Band's Aboriginal Supported Child Development Coordinator, assisting with support guide, observations, family visits and program guidelines.
- 4) Supporting parents in choosing their own support workers.
- 5) Managing the budget to reduce the deficit.
- 6) Connecting with the Regional SCD consultants to improve on policies and procedures the program and liaison with the Ministry to voice our concerns with waitlists and budgets.

Challenges Ahead

- 1) Decrease in available child care spaces.
- 2) Decline in qualified Support Workers due to lack of affordable local training and education.
- 3) Shortage of available/qualified Support Workers for families and child care centres.
- 4) Need for increased wages for Support Workers.
- 5) The need for another program or Supported Child Development Consultant to work with 13-19 year old population. Discussion with MCFD to look at this group and work on some strategies that would be beneficial to the child and families.
- 6) Increase in waitlist - priority to the early years support (3-5 years old)
- 7) Continued struggle of inadequate funding.

Success Stories

- 1) Working with families that have children who were recently diagnosed with ASD to attend a workshop on Autism and therefore had the opportunity to connect with each other. Assist a few families that transferred off the Coast to help them connect with the SCD supports in their new community.
- 2) Working with the Early Intervention Team to support a swim program for a number of the families. One family whose child is visually impaired has benefited enormously by having him weight bear in the water which is helping him to start walking.
- 3) Transition to Kindergarten for seven families whose children need support, working with the school to get the best support possible for their children. Helping the parents to be as proactive as possible.
- 4) Working with families and community professionals to recognize that every child is a child first and that they have the right to reach their own individual potential with what every supports are needed.

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SPECIAL SERVICES TO CHILDREN

Child and youth care workers give goal-oriented support to children with mental or physical challenges by working with them individually and in small groups.

Funder: MCFD -CYSN

Staff: 11 part time staff; the hours spent with a client can vary depending on the needs of the client from 2 hours per week to 10 hours per week.

Coordinator: Jen Davey

Location: Inlet Avenue, Sechelt, Gibsons Family Place, outreach in the community, and home visits

Statistics:

Special Services has provided service to 23 children for a total of 4,707.5 hours for the year. The majority of the contracts are 5 hours per week for each child. All of the children are between the ages of 9 and 18, of which 12 are males and 11 are females.

Highlights and accomplishments:

This year has seen a few additions to Special Services. Our Ministry Social Worker has been very actively supporting the program and the families of children living with special needs. The coordinator's position was filled by Jen Davey and together they collaborated with the SCRD Parks and Recreation to provide a summer program that was inclusive yet supported. Meetings are underway for next year's camp after the great successes of this year.

The extra hours for the coordinator has also allowed for more time to be involved in things such as transition planning and school meetings.

Challenges ahead:

- To manage the waitlist as it begins to grow.
- To learn from last year's camp and work to make improvements to this year's camp.

A success story

This year in collaboration with MCFD and SCRD Parks and Recreation we provided two summer day camp opportunities for children with special needs. The children's camp was attended by five individuals and the youth camp had seven participants.

Coastal Kids Summer Fun Day Camp is a summer camp program offered by the SCRD for children aged 6-12. This year Special Services teamed up with the already existing camp to provide an opportunity for children with special needs to experience summer camp in an inclusive environment. Special Services provided two staff to work alongside the camp leaders providing support to the individuals with special needs. The integrated approach used provided children with special needs the opportunity to experience summer camp and develop friendships. The summer camp also gave the children a chance to connect with the community in a variety of settings. The semi-unstructured setting of summer camp also created a space for everyone, children, staff and community members to ask questions and learn from one another.

Youth Choices was a new summer camp program for youth with special needs aged 13-18 years. Special Services provided two staff to support the individuals and the SCRD provided one staff to provide programming. The design of the Youth Choices program is based on choices made by the youth participants. This year youth took on a variety of activities such as arts and crafts, cooperative games, biking, dance, fencing, yoga, baking and outdoor excursions including community tours, hiking, swimming, golfing, and beach days. The camp provided the opportunity for friendships to develop and meaningful connections with the community.

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SECHELT VISITOR CENTRE AND SUNSHINE COAST VOLUNTEER CENTRE

The Centre is located in the Seaside Building on Teredo Street, Sechelt. Trained Tourist Information Counsellors provide assistance and service to visitors to promote our wonderful community. Volunteer Centre staff provides volunteer referrals and community information. This centre has become a hub for both visitors and community members. It builds on our experience in providing community information through our Volunteer and Information Centre which has up to date information on over 400 groups and services. Information can be accessed on both websites: www.scvolunteer.com and www.secheltvisitorcentre.com.

This exciting venture is administered by Sunshine Coast Community Services Society in partnership with the District of Sechelt, Tourism BC, Gaming Commission, Sunshine Coast Regional District and local tourism businesses. We foster community connections by linking people and resources, linking volunteers with opportunities, promoting volunteerism and supporting community events and initiatives for the well being of the community.

Funder: District of Sechelt, Tourism BC, Gaming Commission, Sunshine Coast Regional District, memberships with local businesses and agencies, sales

Staff: Volunteer Referral Coordinator at 14 hours per week, one part time referral assistant
Three part-time Visitor Information Counsellors
Two summer students
Five volunteers from 1 - 4 hours per week

Location: Seaside Centre, 5790 Teredo Street, Sechelt

Highlights and accomplishments

The **Sechelt Visitor Centre** has over 125 members who benefit from:

- o Economical annual membership fee - \$85
- o Website exposure
- o Facebook exposure
- o Racking opportunities for member brochures
- o Referrals from Visitor Centre staff
- o Listing in custom Visitor Centre brochures for Accommodation, Recreation, Retail, and other services.

From January 2011-December 2011 the number of visitors to the Centre declined by 19.2%, however our email enquiries increased by 19% and we had 50,410 visits to our website, which is significant activity. Gibsons and Powell River Visitor Centres also experienced a decline in visitors, the latter 22.6% and the former 18%.

More and more out of town visitors are taking advantage of their smart phones, tablets, and computers to search us online or email us. The Sechelt Visitor Centre's website, Facebook page and email responses have been successful in helping our remote visitors make their decisions regarding visiting the Sunshine Coast and choosing their accommodation and activities. This reinforces the reality that in our rapidly changing world, it has been a benefit to stay current with technology to meet the needs of a population increasingly more dependent on devices for information.

The **Sunshine Coast Volunteer Centre** continues to operate within the Sechelt Visitor Centre, sharing staff and resources. This year we developed a new website which allowed for more interaction with agencies on the Coast. Through the lists of volunteer opportunities, local people can contact an agency offering a suitable position without having to connect with the Volunteer Centre. This allows for more independence in making choices and also a faster time frame for

connecting. Of course, staff persons are still available three days a week to help with volunteer referrals.

Our online directory of over 400 agencies is becoming more user friendly as it can now be downloaded for personal use by organizations. We continue to update it annually.

We were able to offer some grant writing workshops this year, thanks to funding from the Sunshine Coast Community Foundation. One presenter was from the Vancouver Foundation and another from Sunshine Coast Community Services Society. We also offered a governance workshop, facilitated by an experienced director on various boards.

The Celebration of Excellence awards for volunteers occurred this spring, as it does every two years. Nineteen special people were honoured at a gala event following a community driven nomination and review process, coordinated by the Volunteer Centre.

Finally, staff continues to promote the concept of community connections by helping to train visitor centre counsellors in both Sechelt and Gibsons in a manner that complements both tourists and the local community. Counsellors are trained to recognize that many of the events and attractions that draw tourists are a result of the volunteer efforts of many groups on the Coast. It is up to us, as Volunteer and Visitor Centre staff, to make everyone feel welcome and connected, and to showcase all that the beautiful, vibrant and engaging Sunshine Coast has to offer.

**Sunshine Coast Community Services Society
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SUNSHINE COAST FOOD BANK**

A dedicated team of volunteers gathers, stores and distributes food to community members in need on a weekly basis. The Sunshine Coast Food Bank (SCFB) is open every Tuesday and Wednesday from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm, alternating on a weekly basis between food bank groceries, and bread and produce. Clients are eligible to pick up food one time each week. The Food Bank is sustained through generous financial and food donations from the community and the efforts of many supporters who organize food drives and fund-raising events.

Funder: Community donations
Staff: Food Bank coordinator paid 24 hours per week
25 Volunteers, contributing 2,994 hours during the fiscal year March 31, 2011 to April 1, 2012, on a daily, weekly or bi-weekly basis
13,595 persons were served, an average of 1,133 per month
6498 bags were distributed, an average of 542 per month
Location: 5657 Lamprey Lane, Sechelt

Staff development undertaken during the year

We provided workshops/events for volunteers:

- Bed Bugs** provided by Sunshine Coast Pest Control
- Natural Disaster Drill Workshop** provided by Bill Elsner
- Annual Staff/Volunteer Winter Festival Gathering**
- Canada World Youth Play** at Heritage Theatre provided tickets for volunteers to support youth who had volunteered at SCFB.
- Dale Sankey, SCFB Coordinator attended:
 - Workplace Violence Prevention** facilitated by Vikki Reynolds
 - Non Violent Communication Workshop** facilitated by Raj Gill
 - Bed Bugs** provided by Sunshine Coast Pest Control
 - Safe Harbour** workshop facilitated by Capilano University, Literacy Council

Highlights and Accomplishments:

- April 2011 SC Dragon Boat Team "Fill the Boat" Event
- May 2011 Sunshine Coast Roller Girls Donation, Sechelt Public Library Donation
- May 2011 Coasters Car Club Rod Run Donations
- May to October promoted BC Share Coupons newspaper articles and community news.
- May 31, 2011 National Hunger Awareness Day promoted awareness through newspaper article Coast Reporter.
- June 2011 Participated in update of Vital Signs Community Awareness Survey
- June 2011 Sunshine Coast Botanical Garden Society commenced donating fresh garden produce; by September 2011 they had donated over 780 pounds of produce.
- June to October SCFB volunteers collected tomato and cucumber donations from Roosendal Farms, Garden Bay. We shared the abundance with Harvest of Hope, Salvation Army Food Bank, in Gibsons, Arrowhead Centre, Youth Outreach
- July to October 2011 "The Fruit Tree Project" provided fresh local fruit as available.
- July - August 2011 summer camp donations
- July 2011 Sechelt Public Library summer Program visit
- August 2011 participated in Sunshine Coast Botanical Gardens "Harvest Festival", promoting awareness of the growing need in our community.
- August 2011 met with RCMP Dave Dixon and Ashley Taylor to educate about the work of the SCFB and the clientele
- September - June 2011 tri partite with Chatelech Foods classes, SC Botanical Gardens and SCFB the SC Botanical Gardens grows veggies, the students help to harvest the veggies, then create soup or stews which they donate to the SC Food Bank for distribution to food recipients.

- October 2011 Canada World Youth students Janet and Sana arrive for three months volunteering.
- October 2011 worked with Halfmoon Bay School Grade 5 class “Halloween 4 Hunger” Project
- October 2011 partnered with Sandra Middleton, Capilano University Literacy Council to promote literacy with food recipients.
- November 2011 Chatelech Secondary Food Drive
- November 2011 to April 2012 on a bi-weekly we offered homemade soup to food recipients, made from food from the SCFB
- November 25 - December 15, 2011 Extra Foods, “Extra Helping” Campaign; we included a gift basket for raffle.
- December interview with Christine Wood, Coast Reporter
- December 2011 partnered with RBC and Trail Bay Mall raising funds through the Christmas Gift Wrapping Event.
- December 2011 Fundraiser, “CBC Food Bank Day”.
- McKenzie Muscles Dragon Boat Club donation, Lions Club donation \$1000.00. Canadian Tire donation \$1500.00, Westland Insurance Donation, Sunshine Coast Credit Union donation \$1200.00
- December 2011 Sechelt Rotary Club donation, Dale attended meeting and gave presentation.
- January 2012 Sechelt animal Hospital donation
- February 2012 West Sechelt Elementary donations \$500.00
- March 2012 Interview with Ben Ingram, coast Reporter regarding Youth Hunger
- March Hockey Tournament donations Tom Poulton, SCR D
- March 2012 H & R Block to match all client \$ donations to SCFB
- March 2012 Sechelt Public Library Event donations food and \$256.00
- March 2012 completed Food Banks Canada, Hunger Count Survey.
- National Food Drive, “Extra Helping” with Extra Foods April 20 to May 5, 2012
- April Fools Day Run donations

Goals

- To continue to provide workshops for volunteers with Mental Health VCHA to increase knowledge base regarding mental illness.
- To develop our sponsors for our Winter Soup Program
- Nurture our relationships with business donors - Claytons Heritage Market, Extra Foods, IGA, Starbucks, Wheatberries, Casey’s Gardens, SC Realtors, Roxanne Tax Services, Roosendal Farms, H & R Block,
- To continue to partner with SC Botanical Gardens Society and Chatelech Foods Classes
- To continue to partner with Harvest of Hope, Salvation Army Food Bank Gibsons to share the bounty i.e. from Roosendal Farms and in transportation costs of receiving National Food Sharing from Food Banks Canada
- To continue to work to promote local understanding of our neighbours in need and how to contribute with donations with various organizations, schools, faith groups
- To continue to offer volunteer opportunities to organizations such as Canada World Youth, Probation Services, schools, Girl Guides
- To continue to share our bounty with Arrowhead Clubhouse, Youth Outreach, Community Schools when we are able.
- Develop a plan for a new building with larger freezer and kitchen area to make soup.

Success Stories

Although funding was no longer available, during the fall of 2011 and winter of 2012 volunteers created nutritious soups and stews from food items at the SCFB and distributed these on Bread and Produce days. The food recipients truly enjoyed the hot soup or stew and the opportunity to taste new recipes and learn new meals to create. On two occasions we partnered with local businesses to donate to the soup.

In the fiscal year 2011 - 2012 we continued our partnership with Sunshine Coast Botanical Society and Chatelech Food Classes who provided locally grown vegetable and the stews and soups made from this produce to the SCFB for distribution. We have continued our partnership with Arrowhead Clubhouse, sharing food with their program and receiving support for our mutual clients. We have continued to provide volunteer opportunities for Canadian World Youth, Probation Services, schools, faith groups and Girl Guides benefiting all community members through a new understanding of the needs of the SC Food Bank, who the clients are and how to contribute.

Together with the Royal Bank and Trail Bay Mall we hosted the sixth annual Christmas Gift Wrapping Event. This was our most successful event to date.

Spontaneous fund raising events held by individuals, organizations and businesses to support the SCFB were both gratifying and inspiring to experience the ongoing generosity of our community supporting our neighbours in need.

We share with community groups how the simple act of donating a Claytons or IGA receipt grows with other receipts to gain the SCFB credit to purchase food (\$20.00 credit is given for every \$5000.00 of receipts); how, when each student at a school donates one or two cans of food it can grow into a donation of over 700 cans; or when purchasing food at local stores, adding the \$2.00 Share BC coupon to your order can make an enormous difference to our neighbours in need, as the SC Food Bank continues to gather, sort and distribute food in our community; neighbours working with neighbours to strengthen our community.

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Homelessness Project

The objective of this program is to provide short-term housing to individuals, either homeless or at risk of being homeless.

Funder: Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
Staff: Coordinator: Jim White
three part time staff (until September 30, 2011)
One staff, unfunded - (September 2011 to March 31, 2012)
Location: Outreach in the community

Highlights and accomplishments:

We completed the second phase of the project at the end of September, 2011. The project offered us the funding to continue to:

- research the extent of the homelessness issue on the Coast
- Explore sources for safe and secure housing
- Develop and explore emergency housing
- Develop and explore Launch Pad resources for the entire Coast
- Develop a functioning housing registry for low income housing
- Develop secondary resources for individuals being discharged through the court or medical system into homelessness.
- Explore resources for long term funding

Statistics

Between April 1 and September 30, 2011:

- 50 persons were placed in a more suitable housing situation:
 - 64 people received homelessness / emergency prevention services:
- 13 people received services from the street to transitional housing
- 12 people received services to move from shelter housing to transitional housing
- 12 people received services to move from emergency housing to regular housing

Between September 30, 2011 and March 31, 2012:

- 41 nights of emergency housing provided, through community donations.

Challenges ahead

Since federal funding ended September 30, 2011 the program has solicited funds from local municipal governments and the community enabling the single staff person to continue providing service albeit on a limited basis.

A success story

The Homelessness Housing Advisory Committee has amalgamated with the Emergency Housing Committee (EWES). This committee has been very active and creative in finding low cost emergency housing. They are very committed to meeting this need in our community. Pender Harbor has developed a plan that is specific to the needs of their community. We have had many donations since the end of the project that have paid for 41 nights of emergency housing.

Thank you to the EWES committee for their continued support, and to all the donors for their continued support.

Sunshine Coast Community Services Society
ANNUAL REPORT: April 1, 2011 - March 31, 2012
ARROWHEAD CLUBHOUSE

Arrowhead clubhouse completed its first full year in the new space. Clubhouse members, staff of Community Services and the Board of the Arrowhead Centre Society, our partner in supporting the Arrowhead Clubhouse, are working together to promote a community of healing and recovery integrated with work and life skills for the members. This is done by developing the clubhouse program to meet international clubhouse standards. Many individual and business donors helped make the Clubhouse opening a huge success.

Funders: BC Housing, BC Gaming
Arrowhead Clubhouse Society
Donations

Staffing: Jim White, Program Coordinator, part-time
Janet Mulligan, Carey Rumba, Program Assistants, part-time

Location: 5555 Inlet Avenue, Sechelt

Highlights:

Arrowhead Clubhouse is open from 9:30 to 3, Tuesday to Friday. A lunch program is at the centre of each clubhouse day, and many other activities have been initiated. The work ordered day has been the focus and the driving force behind the activities of the clubhouse. There are the beginnings of four work units: the kitchen, administration, gardening and newsletter units. The kitchen program is focused on the lunch program that includes menu planning, preparing food, budget, and cleaning. The administration program is responsible for signing members in and out, the introductions of new members to the program, and any other appropriate administrative duty. The gardening program is well underway with members growing food and maintaining the grounds. The newsletter unit is responsible for coordinating information available to the community and to members regarding what's happening at the Clubhouse and information about mental health in general.

There are two courses which have been offered to the members. The prospecting course was a complete success graduating seven members with certificates and culminating in an excursion to The Pacific Museum of the Earth. A five week gardening course is currently underway sponsored by Capilano College.

Challenges ahead

A goal is to progressively develop the program to meet international clubhouse standards. At the foundation of these standards is a commitment to peer-driven programs that prepare members for employment and community involvement. Provincial funding allows for only part time hours of clubhouse operation, and so another goal is to work with the Arrowhead Clubhouse Society in their efforts to raise funds through grants and donations to expand the hours and activities of the clubhouse to better enable us to meet clubhouse standards.

Sunshine Coast Community Services Society
ANNUAL REPORT: April 1, 2011 - March 31, 2012
LEGACY HOUSING

Eight supportive housing units for persons with a mental illness is located adjacent to the Arrowhead Clubhouse. The lovely and practical studio apartments were furnished with generous community donations.

Funder: BC Housing
Vancouver Coastal Health Authority
Rental income

Staffing: Lori Wishlow, Facilities Coordinator, part-time

Location: 5554 Periwinkle Lane, Sechelt

Highlights

Our community was fortunate to receive eight single housing units, transformed from modular accommodations for Olympic athletes at Whistler into a two storey apartment building. They were modified to be functional studio apartments, with either a patio or balcony. Community businesses and donors all pitched in to help furnish the apartments, and the eight new tenants were delighted to have safe and stable housing.

Residents are local citizens living with a mental illness who qualify for the Supported Independent Living (SIL) program of Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH), which provides a rent subsidy and support from staff of its Mental Health Services. Residents are encouraged to participate in the Arrowhead Clubhouse program.

Challenges

Persons with a mental illness are often at risk for homelessness or substandard housing, and so the creation of eight units of affordable supportive housing was a very welcome addition to the local housing stock. We will continue to support initiatives that add more affordable supportive housing units to keep pace with the need for safe and secure homes for vulnerable members of our community.