



COMMUNITY  
CONNECTIONS

# Annual Report

## 2019-2020



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## *Message from the Management Team*

Executive Director: Nancy Reid



The 2019-2020 fiscal year was certainly full of changes and challenges.

The early part of the fiscal had the previous management team of Kim Levie and Gwen Noble preparing for their retirements and the search for an Executive Director began. Staff, Board and Management engaged in Strategic Planning sessions which resulted in great conversations, a new strategic directions and a commitment to transparency and communication.

In March, I moved into the Executive Director role and Tesha Head was promoted to a newly created position of Office and Quality Assurance Manager. Changes to the layout at Cranbrook Family Connections were made to increase staff safety and control of traffic flow. We finished up the fiscal year with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic which was a new experience for all of us. This called for leadership and crisis communication to keep us connected while apart. I am so thankful for the cooperation, ingenuity, and flexibility the CCS team has exhibited in working from home and delivering service in new ways.

COVID-19 funding became available from various sources and we were able to access financial support for all the cleaning supplies, distancing stickers, technology, and renovations needed. We all became adept at “Zooming” and some of these uses of technology will prevail beyond the state of emergency.

I look forward to what the next year holds in financial stability, new pursuits, and continued team engagement. I am excited about our team and the future of our organization. Together, we are making a difference in the lives of the people and communities we serve.

Looking forward with anticipation of good things...

Nancy Reid

Executive Director

## *Board Chairperson Report*

Board Chair: Laura Wilson

I would like to thank my fellow board members for their continued dedication and commitment to the society. And also, for the tremendous support and encouragement they have given me over the last year. Thank you so much.

As I look back at the last fiscal year – April 2019 to March 2020 – I have to acknowledge the ongoing challenges the society continued to tackle, and then meet and deal with new ones. The sacrifices made by staff due to the 10% reduction in hours, the challenge of delivering services in fewer hours, the spending freeze, the uncertainty that arose when Gwen and Kim, our former management team, announced their impending retirements and then, if all that wasn't quite enough, the pandemic crisis entered our lives.

While the board continued to monitor the positive upward trend in our financial situation, the change in the management team challenged the directors to reassess our role as a board and our relationship with our program coordinators and staff. The joint meetings with coordinators in November and February paved the way for improved communication and the sharing of concerns, ideas and suggestions. The board is hopeful that these shared experiences and the improved communications will continue to provide us all with opportunities for dialogue as we encounter future growth and adapt to within the society.

I must take this opportunity to acknowledge the retirements of Gwen and Kim since our last AGM. Gwen and Kim have both left a lasting legacy to the society in so many ways. The Child Development Centre, the Family Connections hub, the collaborative connections with so many other services in the region and the relationships with other community groups are just a few to mention. Their compassion and willingness to help and support both clients and staff will always be woven into the fabric and history of Community Connections.

As the fiscal year end drew closer, the board hired Nancy Reid as our new Executive Director in early March. We have been very impressed by Nancy's ability to leap into a new position in the midst of a global health crisis, while managing to quickly take up the reins and assimilate herself within the society, and responding efficiently and compassionately to staff and their concerns. CCS is a complex organization and the learning curve is steep. The board is confident that the realignment of the administrative staff in both buildings will provide the needed support, consistency and growth required as programs continue to change and diversify as our communities and regions are required adapt to ever changing protocols, guidelines and rules.

In the early part of 2020, the board met again with Bob Johnstone (Johnstone & Associates) to continue our work on Board Governance and Strategic Planning. The clarity and guidance that we gained from our sessions with Mr. Johnstone has aided the board immensely in realizing and validating our role as a governance board, while adapting and learning during times of challenge and change.

It is with much gratitude that the board recognizes every staff member's perseverance, allegiance, and dedication to Community Connections.

As I said last year, and I have no reservation in repeating myself, I look forward to the next year with renewed enthusiasm.

Thank you.

## *Board of Directors*

Laura Wilson (Chair), Brenda Blair (Vice Chair),  
Rene Boileau, Paul Knipe, Doug McLachlan, Maggie Schrader

## *FOUNDATION STATEMENTS*

### *Our Mission*

*Enhancing the well-being of the diverse people of our region.*

### *Our Vision*

*A recognized leader in providing a wide spectrum of services that support individuals and families.*

### *Guiding Principles*

- *Inclusion*
- *Collaboration*
- *Transparency*

### *Strategic Priorities*

- *Providing quality, innovative programs and services*
- *Working collaboratively towards social and systemic change*
- *Being a sustainable, continually evolving organization*
- *Maintaining a culture of care and respect*

## *Management Team:*

Nancy Reid (Executive Director), Tesha Head (Quality & Assurance Office Manager)

Gwen Noble (Executive Director; Retired), Kim Levie (Assistant Director; Retired)

## *Administration Staff*

Katherine Petersen (Bookkeeper and Payroll Administrator),  
Brian Jensen (Administrative Assistant), Candi McMahon (Receptionist)



*We would like to acknowledge that we are on Ktunaxa ʔamakʔis, the territory of the Ktunaxa people*

## *Thank you to our funders*

- |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| ✧ BC Gaming                                    | ✧ Legal Aid Society                  |
| ✧ BC Housing                                   | ✧ Province of British Columbia       |
| ✧ Columbia Basin Trust                         | ✧ Public Health Agency of Canada     |
| ✧ Community Foundation of the Kootenay Rockies | ✧ Regional District of East Kootenay |
| ✧ Federal Government of Canada                 | ✧ The Law Foundation of BC           |
| ✧ Interior Health Authority                    | ✧ United Way                         |

Look for us at:

- ✧ Website: [www.ccscanbrook.ca/](http://www.ccscanbrook.ca/)
- ✧ Facebook: [www.facebook.com/CommunityConnectionsSociety/](https://www.facebook.com/CommunityConnectionsSociety/)



## Program Highlights

### *Bellies to Babies Pregnancy Outreach Program*



Coordinator: Becca Nicholson

#### Bellies to Babies (BB):

Through combined and integrated funding and programming between Interior Health, United Way and Community Connections Society (Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) funding), BB offers support, information and resources to pregnant women and families with babies to 1 year of age in Cranbrook/Kimberley area. These services are provided through: individual connections with participants on site and in outreach, through group programming and weekly group drop-ins, and through community development projects. In 2019-2020, 110 participants were enrolled in the Bellies to Babies program. Several priority areas were addressed and highlights of this work includes:



Becca, Pat and Jenn

#### New Program Coordinator:

- ✱ After 20 years of coordinating the Bellies to Babies program, Pat Chisholm, RN, retired at the end of June 2019 and Rebecca Nicholson, RN, BScN, took over the position.
- ✱ Bellies to Babies celebrated Pat's retirement and the 30 years Bellies to Babies has been running.
- ✱ Rebecca Nicholson has been an RN for the last 14 years, working the majority of those years in maternal and child health.

Collaboration with Cranbrook Family Navigator (Cranbrook Early Years):

- ✱ During the 2019-2020 fiscal year a partnership developed between BB and the Cranbrook Family Navigator to transition families with children over 1 year of age to new programs and supports.
- ✱ Once transitioned, the Cranbrook Family Navigator continued to offer families early years drop-in group programs, weekly car seat clinics, referral to child development professionals, and outreach supports.

Intensive Support for High Needs:

- ✱ Nurse Family Partnership (NFP) Program: this IH program is co-located within BB offices in order to further integrate access to services for vulnerable families.
- ✱ Outreach to Kimberley: 4hours/week of direct service time for prenatal and postpartum support. BB covers cost of participants' use of Kimberley Transit to come to appointments and group drop-ins in Cranbrook.

Mental Health/Trauma:

- ✱ Collaboration with IH Adult Mental Health provides individual counselling sessions at CFC for women dealing with perinatal mood disorders. Barriers to accessing service such as transportation and child care are offset by BB so that the women are able to attend counselling appointments.
- ✱ 'Building Connections' program is an 8-week group session for women with current or past trauma in their lives. The program supports women to develop healthy relationships in their lives; especially with their children. In collaboration with CAPC and the Cranbrook Family Navigator, 2 sessions were provided this year.

Food Security:

- ✱ Collaboration with Diabetes Canada provided an 18-week Prenatal Food Skills for Families (FSF) during our Beautiful Bumps prenatal group drop in and a 6 week session during Baby & Me postpartum group.
- ✱ FSF was funded as a component of the Farmer's Market Nutrition Coupon Program (FMNCP). In 2019, participants in the program received \$21/week to spend on locally grown food at the markets.
- ✱ A garden was developed at CFC in 2019 by participants and staff. The food grown was utilized by families and for group lunches.

#### Safe Rides for Kids:

- ✱ Through a grant from BCAA, and community and cooperate donations, BB was able to provide infant and child car seats to families in need.
- ✱ BB coordinator and many other CCS Child development staff received car seat technician training and are now certified, and able to provide families with up to date child restraint information and official car seat checks.
- ✱ A community car seat clinic was held at Denham Ford in September where certified CCS staff offered free car seat checks to the community. The clinic was well attended, and over 10 car seats where checked by certified car seat technicians. This clinic was supported by the Cranbrook fire department, Mr. Mike's restaurant, the Bumble tree store, and Painted frogs face painting.



#### Nobody's Perfect Parenting Program:

- ✱ Nobody's Perfect parenting Program provides parents of children from birth to age 5 with:
  - A safe place to build on their parenting skills
  - An opportunity to learn new skills and concepts
  - A place to interact with other parents who have children the same age
- ✱ 3 group sessions were offered in Cranbrook and 2 sessions in Kimberley. Each session offers participants 2.5 hours of group time each week for 8 weeks.

Staff and families continue to benefit, on a daily basis, from the many opportunities BB & other Community Connections programs provide through: (1) access to ideas, synergy and a desire to partner with other programs to develop improvements in service delivery and (2) access for participants to a broad range of services/supports all often accessible under one roof.

## *Better at Home Senior's Program*



Coordinator: Laurie Harris

### **BETTER AT HOME: Supporting the Non-Medical Needs of Older Adults in BC**

Better at Home is a program that helps seniors with simple non-medical day-to-day tasks so that they can continue to live independently in their own homes and remain connected to their communities. Our “basket of services” includes light housekeeping, snow shoveling, lawn care, transportation to appointments, grocery shopping assistance and “odd jobs” around the home. The program is funded by the Government of BC, managed provincially by United Way Lower Mainland and delivered in Cranbrook by Community Connections Society of Southeast BC.

We also provide a Social Connections program to address isolation, build support networks and improve community connectedness.

Better at Home is offered in 67 BC communities, including eight in the Kootenay Region: Castlegar, Cranbrook, Creston, Columbia Valley (Invermere) and Arrow Lakes (Nakusp), Grand Forks, Lower Columbia (Trail) and Nelson. The last three were added this year. For more information, and to view the latest provincial news and reports, visit [www.betterathome.ca](http://www.betterathome.ca)

Cranbrook Better at Home begins its seventh year of operation on July 15, 2020.

### **WHO WE SERVE**

This fiscal year we had over 200 active clients. Our demographic profile remains relatively consistent from year to year. The majority are:

- Aged 65-84
- Predominantly female
- Living alone (by a narrow margin)
- White/European ancestry
- Lower/fixed income (i.e. total annual <~\$25,000 (single); <~ \$38,000 couple)

### **SERVICES & FEES**

LIGHT HOUSEKEEPING is completed by two part time staff. LAWN MOWING and SNOW SHOVELING services are provided by a contractor. Clients pay for those services on a sliding scale according to income. The majority are 50-100% subsidized.

Most OTHER JOBS are done on a volunteer basis, with no fees charge. Clients provide equipment or pay for supplies as required. Donations are gratefully accepted.

This year, our DRIVE PROGRAM, which includes help with grocery shopping and/or rides to appointments or social connections received two-year funding from Columbia Basin Trust. 14 volunteers provided 200 rides to 22 clients this year. Drive cards (4 round trips) were sold for \$20. Subsidies were available if needed.

Our SOCIAL CONNECTIONS PROGRAM continued strongly, with weekly Tai-Chi enjoyed by a dedicated small group, and bi-monthly lunches attracting 80-150 people. Sincere thanks to The Dwelling Place for making us feel so welcome in their sanctuary, for offering volunteer help and for inviting congregation members to join. We were blessed with your generosity and help. An amazing volunteer team hosted 18 lunches this year. Average attendance was 70-80 people, with larger numbers at our holiday celebrations (Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas) at the Eagles Hall.

COFFEE TALK ended after 5.5 years. Thanks to volunteers and clients for a great run!

### SPECIAL PROJECTS

Two special projects were undertaken this year.

#### 55+ ANGEL TREE PROJECT

was a volunteer driven Christmas gifting campaign, whereby community was invited to fill “gift wishes” for older residents. 79 people received gifts, which, on average, were double the suggested \$25 value. Special thanks to volunteer team leaders, gift wrappers and delivery “elves”; to the kind people who donated gifts; to funding partners The Legion, Cranbrook Age Friendly, Knox Church Ladies Aid and Kootenay CARP; and to Cranbrook Save-On Foods for brilliantly hosting our Angel Tree!



The BC FARM MARKET NUTRITIONAL COUPON PROGRAM STUDY (FMNCP) was a year-long research project undertaken by the BC Association of Farmers' Markets, in partnership with University of Calgary, BC Ministry of Health and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. The study seeks to better understand the impact of the FMNCP and how it can be improved to support long-term health. Better at Home agreed to support Cranbrook's senior applicants, while Bellies to Babies managed coupon distribution at the Farmers Market (as usual) and the research portion for younger participants. 20 older adults were recruited for Cranbrook. All but two completed. We are looking forward to study results being released in the coming year.

I continue to enjoy hosting practicum students from the College of the Rockies Nursing program, and serving on several community committees (Kootenay CARP, Cranbrook Age Friendly Advisory Committee, Seniors In Partnership, BC CRN, Safe Communities Cranbrook).





*Sometimes the tasks that are needed are as simple as  
putting on a fitted bedsheet or doing a little laundry. ||*

## Serving the Venerable

W: Britt Bates  
P: Pixabay

*How do we revere and support our elders as a culture? How do we band together as a community to take care of them and uphold their dignity and joy as they age?*

These are questions that started to run through my mind recently, not only because my own Boomer parents will eventually age, but because I began to consider the different ways indigenous peoples across the globe care for their elders — who, more often than not, age in their own residences. It seems that our culture, in some ways, has lost touch with that tender dedication and community-based support.

Perhaps not for long, though, thanks to the important work of organizations like Better at Home, which aims to keep senior citizens living confidently and comfortably in their own homes, should they so prefer, and to provide them with the warm sense of community and connection that's so integral to wellbeing.

A Better at Home program run by the United Way is alive and well in Cranbrook — thanks to the compassionate dedication of its local program coordinator, Laurie Harris.

Laurie, who is incredibly warm, open, and friendly, explains to me on a drizzly winter afternoon how the program — now in its fifth year after several pilot programs — is almost entirely funded by the provincial government and operates in 67 communities across British Columbia, including Cranbrook. While government funding covers operational costs and basic necessities,

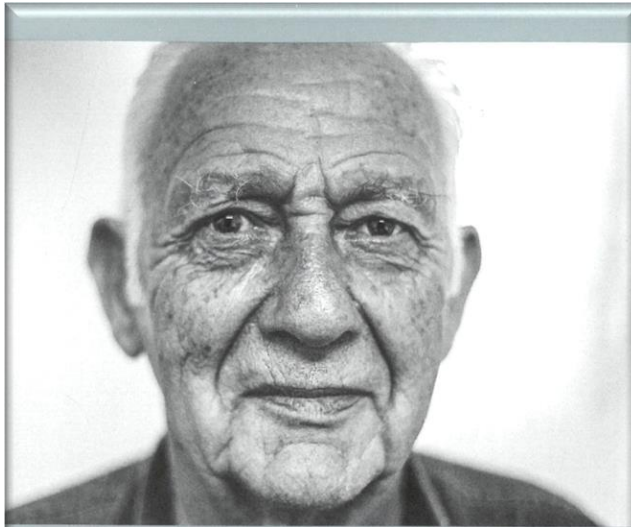
Laurie relies fairly heavily on volunteer support, which is always needed. "A little help goes a long way," Laurie explains with her effortless smile.

Better at Home offers several initiatives, all of which ensure that senior citizens' non-medical needs are met; for example, a program called Drive lets volunteers chauffeur the elderly to appointments, shopping, and social functions. Volunteers can also help with some light snow shoveling, yard work, or offer their trades, as many local seniors are not financially able to hire out these services on their own. Sometimes the tasks that are needed are as simple as putting on a fitted bedsheet or doing a little laundry.

Other programs and initiatives that Better at Home offers are focused less on household chores and more on ensuring that individuals have access to a lively community and social connections. Laurie, along with the help of some youth from local schools and several dedicated volunteers, offers a twice-monthly luncheon, held at the Dwelling Place.

"It's the full affair, and everyone loves it," Laurie happily explains of the event, which drew no less than 77 attendees the day before she and I spoke. "It's a beautiful home-cooked meal, with dessert, drinks, and the works, served on nice china and with fine silverware."

But it's more than the elegant china, delicious food, and the Dwelling Place's high, vaulted, wooden ceilings that make the event so special. It's the opportunity for seniors to get out into the city, chat with others, and build long-lasting friendships and social networks.



*"We know now that this sense of connection to others is necessary for mental health," Laurie says. "The lack of it can lead to depression, which comes with a host of physical ailments, too."*

It's clear that Laurie's huge heart is fully extended to the aging members of her community, ensuring that they have the help they need while living life the way they choose. While many local senior citizens are beyond happy to live in care facilities such as Joseph Creek and Garden View, where they enjoy full-service care and accessible opportunities to connect with other residents, many other elderly — who would much prefer to live in their own homes — are what Laurie describes lovingly as "fiercely independent." She adds with a chuckle, "Now those are two words I hear together a lot!"

Laurie works tirelessly to assure that independence is kept intact for as many individuals as possible. Laurie stays a step ahead — even keeping personal necessities such as toilet paper and briefs in her office closet in case she needs to run a quick drop-off, anticipating potential needs and ready to assist whoever needs it.

It takes a fair amount of labour though and incredibly stretched resources to keep Better at Home chugging along in Cranbrook. Laurie is immensely grateful for volunteer help, even if someone can only offer an hour or two every week or month.

"Just like with a child, on the other end of the spectrum, it really does take a village," Laurie says. When I ask her what is most gratifying about this important and community-changing work, her smile is infectious. "I just want to help build the system that will take care of all of us."

And that she is.

*Those interested in applying to volunteer with Better at Home can email Laurie directly at: [betterathome@ccsebc.ca](mailto:betterathome@ccsebc.ca).*

**GO**

## *Community Action Program for Children; Cranbrook*



Coordinator: Niki Sinhart

CAPC Cranbrook offers a variety of free family drop-in groups:

### **Active Start**

Active Start is a free drop-in group for parents with children from birth to 6 years of age. This group meets on Mondays from 10am-11am, in the same space as Tumble Time, at St. Mary's Catholic Independent School.

Active Start was started in partnership with Special Olympics BC for children with intellectual disabilities. CAPC Cranbrook has expanded the criteria for attendance to anyone, parent or child, who feels anxious or uncomfortable attending big groups.

### **Baby & Me:**

Baby & Me is a free drop-in group for parents with babies up to one year of age and their older siblings. This group meets on Tuesdays from 10am-1pm at Cranbrook Family Connections.

Baby & Me has been facilitated by CAPC and IDP (Infant Development Program) for more than ten years. IDP's partnership ended in December 2019, due to restricted hours. Bellies to Babies now co-facilitates the program as well as supplying a free lunch for families and childcare for older siblings.

The singing/rhyming portion of this group is 10 weeks long, three times a year. Bellies to Babies organizes workshops for families in between singing sessions.

### **Wiggle, Giggle & Grow:**

Wiggle, Giggle & Grow is a free drop-in group for parents with children from birth to five years of age. This group meets on Wednesdays from 10am-12pm at Cranbrook Family Connections. It is facilitated by CAPC and FRP (Family Resource Program). At this group families play, eat snack, sing and play outside, weather permitting.

### **Tumble Time:**

Tumble Time is a free drop-in group for parents with children from birth to five years of age. This group meets on Mondays from 11am-12pm and on Thursdays from 9:30am-11am at St. Mary's Catholic Independent School.

Tumble Time is a busy, active play group where children have an opportunity for gross motor play like running, jumping, balancing, throwing balls, climbing, sliding and more.

### **Beautiful Bumps**

CAPC supports the Bellies to Babies prenatal group by assisting with childcare for older siblings, when needed.

### **Breastfeeding Mamas**

CAPC provides childcare for the Breastfeeding Mamas group once a month.

### **Parents in the Park**

In July and August, CAPC and FRP meet with families every Wednesday from 10am-12pm at Rotary Park.



#### Grand-Friends

CAPC invites families to visit grand-friends at Joseph Creek Care Village periodically throughout the year to play guitar and sing songs.

#### Building Connections

CAPC and Bellies to Babies facilitated two sets of 6 weeklong workshops for parents to work on building healthy relationships.

#### Ages & Stages Questionnaires

Starting in January 2019, CAPC received additional funding from Columbia Basin Trust, for an additional 2 hours per week for one year. This funding helped provide parents with Ages & Stages Questionnaires, to inform parents about child development and to give them the opportunity to check their child's development.

#### COVID-19

March 16, 2020 was our last in-person group for this fiscal year, to keep families safe. In March, CAPC Cranbrook developed online groups to replace in-person groups until it is safe to go back to our original model.

## *Cranbrook Women's Resource Centre*



Coordinator: Denise Stewart

1050 women accessed the Women's Centre since April 1, 2019. This number does not include clients accessing the centre by telephone.

In May Denise began sharing her time between the Family Law Advocate (Part-time) position and the Women's Resource Centre (Part-time) position. Denise remains in the Coordinator position.

Due to reduce staffing we no longer participate in the Social Connections lunches with Better @ Home. We continue to work in collaboration with the Mount Baker Sexual Health committee and attend the Wellness tables at Mt. Baker School. This is vital for students to know where to come for resources. We see youth quite regularly for sexual health information.

In July 2019 we collaborated services with Families Canada and Bellies to Babies to host a Financial Literacy Focus Group, which was a national event in only 2 locations in BC (Richmond and Cranbrook). The facilitators were really pleased with the group of Mom's they met, and we were really pleased with the success of this event.

With another year closing we continue to look for funding. We have received funding again from BC Gaming and the United Way and have started to brainstorm about fundraising ideas. The \$20,000 we received from Lotic Environmental last February took a lot of financial pressure off us, but the pressure is on us again to raise money. This continues to be a struggle as staff are very busy meeting the needs of clients.



On Friday November 8, 2019, the Rockin' in the Rockies Car Club held their annual Christmas dinner. Members were asked to bring donation items for the Cranbrook Women's Resource Centre and the Cranbrook Food Bank. Pictured above is Oreen Walker, Treasurer for the Rockin' in the Rockies Car Club and Denise Stewart, Program Coordinator for the Cranbrook Women's Resource Centre a program of Community Connections Society of Southeast BC. We would like to take the opportunity to thank the members of the Car Club for the generosity shown by all the donations collected. Each year the Women's Resource Centre sees many Women in need of support from fleeing abusive situations, legal advice, and/or lay counselling. Donations are accepted all year round and most appreciated and as this time of the year can be exceptionally difficult donations such as what has been received come in a timely manner and are greatly appreciated

## *Early Years Services*



Coordinator: Gina Panattoni

Early Years Services is a new funding stream from the Ministry of Child and Family Development, created to help to broaden the range of supports available to families with children aged zero to six. It provides Family Navigation and Family Drop-in Program services in the communities of Kimberley and Cranbrook. Families with young children can connect with a family navigator through telephone, text, email or in person for support navigating early years resources, programs and services. Family drop-in groups have also been created, for families to meet other parenting families, have a safe place for their child to play, and learn about other community resources. A website was created to provide an online resource directory, as well as social media sites. [www.ekearlyyears.com](http://www.ekearlyyears.com)

## East Kootenay Child Care Resource & Referral



~ Funded by Government of British Columbia ~  
~ Sponsored by Community Connections Society of Southeast BC ~

Coordinator: Rita Romeo



Kacie ~ Colleen ~ Rita ~ Laura ~ Frankie

Find us on Facebook and Instagram



East Kootenay Child Care Resource and Referral (EKCCRR) provides child care information, referrals, and support to East Kootenay Child Care Providers, Families, and Community Partners.

EKCCRR Memberships throughout the East Kootenay region includes:

- Child Care Provider Members: 75: 6 - Registered License Not Required Child Care Providers, 14 - Licensed Family Child Care, 17 - Licensed Group Child Care (Infant/Toddler & 3-5 years), 12 - Licensed Multi-Age Child Care, 13 - Preschools, 11 - Out of School Child Care, 2 - Occasional Child Care (Ski Hills). Total child care facilities in our region is 100.
- Family Memberships: 117
- Community Partner Memberships: 11
- We had a total of 203 registered members throughout the East Kootenay, although we continue to support many other non-members who either call/email and/or drop-into the office.

### Workshops/Networking Meetings:

Four Conferences (Early Years Conference, Circle of Security, Art with Joanna & Early Learning Institute) and three workshops (two within five outreach communities), topics included: Learning Life Skills through Physical Play, Emergency Child Care First Aid Training and Supporting Families – to create a supportive space for LGBT+ families (outreach training to all outreach communities didn't happen due to COVID-19 and social distancing that took place in March 2020)

### Affordable Child Care Benefit (previously Child Care Subsidy) Support:

361 families, child care providers and community partners were supported through the Affordable Child Care Benefit process.

### Newsletter:

440 newsletters were circulated quarterly via email, presently they are circulated monthly; with hard copies distributed to various community partners for families to view while they wait for appointments.





### Lending Library:

1000+ items are available to borrow from the lending library and are available to view at <http://ccrr.ccscranbrook.ca/>



### Crafty Creations:

An assortment of non-toxic craft supplies is available to purchase and are available to view at <http://ccrr.ccscranbrook.ca/>

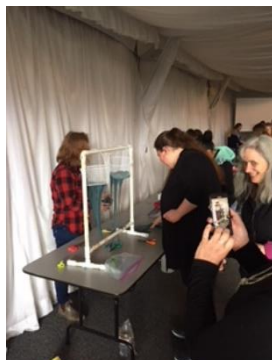
### Laminating:

Laminating service is available every Tuesday; Cost is .75 cents a linear foot for registered members and \$1.00 a linear foot for non-members – we hear this is a great price/service 😊

### Community Partnerships:

EKCCRR partners with several community tables to bring forward information on Early Childhood Care and Learning through information sharing and by supporting projects. CCRR staff attend several community meetings: EK Supported Child Development Regional and Local Advisory Committee, EK Childhood Coalition of Partners, Safe Communities Cranbrook, Community Social Planning Society of Cranbrook & Area, Cranbrook & Kimberley Early Years Committee, COTR - Child, Youth, and Studies Program - External Advisory Committee, Cranbrook Age Friendly Committee, Poverty Reduction Committee, East Kootenay Early Years Conference and Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee.

Your community's *best* source of child care information and resources



## East Kootenay Infant Development Program



Coordinators: Jackalin Lightfoot, Charlene Stropky and Greta Joy

The Infant Development Program serves children from birth to three years old who are at risk for, or who already have, a delay in development. IDP Consultants work with parents to provide a range of services to help children overcome developmental challenges. These are home based services and participation in the program is voluntary and family centered. IDP works closely with other pediatric therapy services including Speech and Language Pathology, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, and Pediatricians. Three consultants (2.08 FTE's) provide service throughout the East Kootenay region. Jackalin Lightfoot (31.5 hours/week) serves Cranbrook, Kimberley and north to Canal Flats. Charlene Stropky (31.5 hours/week) serves Cranbrook, and east to Elkford. Greta Joy (10 hours/week) serves Invermere and the Windermere Valley south to Canal Flats.

### 2019/2020 Program Highlights:

- ✳ 63 new referrals
- ✳ Total average # of children on caseload is 114.  
Reduction in number of referrals can be attributed to referral on to other therapies that have smaller wait lists as well as family navigation starting to do some initial screenings and support of families. It is also a reflection of reduction of direct service hours we have available to provide support.
- ✳ Co-facilitated Baby & Me group for parents with infants up to one year of age, in partnership with CAPC and Bellies to Babies. Reduction in hours resulted in IDP ending their 20-year contribution to this partnership as of September 2019
- ✳ Participated on Early Years Community Committees, East Kootenay 2019 Early Years Conference Planning Committee, and the At Home Review Committee
- ✳ Provided developmental screening, information, and support to various parent participation programs throughout the region
- ✳ Provided community training in the use of *Ages and Stages:3*, and *Ages and Stages Social-Emotional:2* Developmental Screening Questionnaires to community service providers
- ✳ Launched the weekly IDP playgroup, utilizing space made available with relocation of the BI program. This brings families together for social connection and support, as well as providing more opportunities for families to access developmental support and early intervention services

- ✳ Presented our first 8-week Circle of Security Parenting© program, with financial support of Regional educational grant to cover additional wages, and child care costs. We partnered with Early Years Coordinator to help with childcare costs.
- ✳ Promoted and organized our staff, therapists and other community partners to take part in Infant Mental Health 15 part certification series, providing access to research-based training as well as opportunity to come together to see how we can apply the information within our teams and our community.
- ✳ Initiated involvement in the Cranbrook Early Years collaborative. This group's purpose is to create a system by which there is increased communication and case management of like families, and to create a system for families that is more efficient and supportive for family while helping address the overwhelming caseloads of the agencies involved.
- ✳ Scrambled, along with everyone else, to respond and adapt to the abrupt changes in service delivery methods necessitated by Covid-19 restrictions.

Making friends at play group.





## *East Kootenay Supported Child Development Program*



Sponsored by Community Connections Society of Southeast BC  
CARF Accredited-Community Services: Child & Youth Services



Coordinator: Beth Carter

From April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019 to March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020 EKSCD provided 12,778 hours of direct support to children in 30 different childcare programs in 9 communities throughout the East Kootenay region. We received 66 referrals in the timeframe and provided direct and/or consultant support to a total of 104 children under the SCD contract during the fiscal year.

### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS:

- June 2019:
  - The 2019 program satisfaction surveys were distributed online to parents, childcare programs and community partners, and the annual staff satisfaction survey was distributed at our annual in-service to all staff in positions. Overall, we received many positive and acknowledging comments and any concerns or issues were addressed as applicable; summaries are available.
  - Leslie Hein resigned from the Golden consultant position after 19 years with the program – Leslie was such a long-time dedicated, resourceful, skilled, caring and valuable team member. Katie Jewitt was hired for the position and brought a wealth of experience, knowledge and skills to the role.
  - Val Hellewell retired from the support worker role after 20 years with the program – Val was caring, compassionate, skilled and committed to her work with the children; another valuable team member.
  - Because of the ongoing challenges in getting child care agreements signed and keeping them current due to ongoing staff changes, we created a new policy (24), “EKSCD Providing Services to Child Care Programs”, along with a document outlining the role and responsibilities for child care programs when accepting our services and a poster for them to display with key reminders.
- May–September 2019: Consultants facilitated the transition to kindergarten for 29 children in 3 school districts - SD5, SD6 and SD8.
- October 2019: On October 5<sup>th</sup>, EKSCD & EKCCRR co-hosted the ‘Circle of Security: Abbreviated – with a focus on strengthening parent/caregiver-child relationships facilitated by Rebecca Mitchell. We had a total of 97 participants with our program sponsoring 14 staff and 3 parents to attend.
- November 2019: 2017-2019 Performance Management Outcomes Report submitted to CARF
- January 2020: After 24 years of having a regional steering/advisory committee (RAC) in place a decision was made to disband the committee. There were numerous reasons for ending the committee with a key ongoing challenge being able to recruit and retain RAC members, especially parents.

- March 2020: Jen Atchison-Cunningham is our new permanent administrative assistant with a primary focus on managing our extensive regional resource lending library.
  - We had our annual consultant meetings on March 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>, and our staff in-service on March 6<sup>th</sup> in Cranbrook. This is our only opportunity for staff from all over the region to meet together with a focus on training and review of competencies; accreditation standards/survey; program policies & procedures; staff breakout stations for feedback/discussion and, very important, celebrating staff's years of service and time to share stories, debrief, learn and grow together as team.
  - 20 yrs – Jannub Halber and Jen Atchison-Cunningham
  - 15 yrs – Sandie Anderson
  - 5 yrs – Nikki Hay

#### THROUGHOUT THE YEAR:

- EKSCD Coordinator maintained all applicable accreditation required standards and worked with CCS colleagues to support the agency's path to accreditation.
- Consultants and support workers participated in a variety of workshops and professional development over the year, usually supported by the program's professional development funds.
- The program coordinator organized and facilitated consultant meetings and regional staff meetings online throughout the year which kept everyone connected and updated.
- All staff met applicable occupational, health & safety requirements – on-site child care emergency drills & hazard assessments; WHMIS; regional office emergency evacuation drills & inspections.
- EKSCD consultants collaborated with many stakeholders to facilitate team meetings, consultations and case coordination; provide child and family support; offer presentations and training; participate in joint strategizing and planning; and offer professional guidance, support and referrals as needed.
- EKSCD coordinator continued to be involved in committees, conference calls and working groups, including Friends of Children Disbursement committee, At Home Review committee, Joint Occupational Health & Safety committee, SCD Interior Region conference calls, etc.
- The program continued their partnership with Ktunaxa Paqmi Nuq'yuk Aboriginal Early Years to provide consultative and direct support for 2 children from April-June and an additional 4 children for the summer months with all contracts ending August 31st, 2019.
- Our 5 Local Allocation Committees (LAC) are still in place in each community and will continue in the same role and also be available for feedback/advice when needed

#### PHOTOS FROM THE IN-SERVICE



*Hannah, Siri & Hailey*



*Sandie, Kristie, Lynda, Tami & Tea*



*Geri, Jen, Shirley, Rachel & Nikki*



*Tamara, Serina, Korri & Val R.*



*Anna, Erika, Kim & Audrey*



Staff In-Service: March 2020

Having time together that is productive, and fun is definitely a highlight of the year for all of us!

## *Family Law Program*



Coordinator: Denise Stewart and  
Gary Eisele

The Family Law Advocate Program is a new program started in May 2019 and funded by the Law Foundation. The program out of CCSSEBC, consists of two advocates; Denise Stewart who is based in Cranbrook, and Gary Eisele working out of Creston. There are approximately 25 Family Law Advocates with other social service organizations in BC, and we are the only area to have 2 advocates rolled into one program. This is an advantage for our Advocates since they can offer support to each other with clients, paperwork, and reports while ensuring the office remains open when one or the other is on vacation.

The Family Law Advocate Program provides family law advocacy services to individuals with assets under \$20,000.00, who are self-representing in Family Court. The advocates work with a Supervising Lawyer (Jamie Lalonde) who provides legal advice/opinion, support, options, and direction to the advocates. Both advocates work with clients to identify legal issues in the areas of guardianship, parenting time, parental responsibilities, child and spousal support, divorce/separation agreements, protection orders, FMEP, relocation, emergency asset restraint and child protection.

The advocates also refer to community programs and Legal Aid as needed, liaise with community programs and legal counsel; and provide legal information workshops to the community. Referrals to other “free” legal organizations such as Access Pro Bono, FMEP, or Interjurisdictional Support Orders are also made, depending upon the needs of the client.

Both Advocates attended intense training in May 2019 and again in November 2019 and continue to participate in various Zoom training sessions. The advocates are required to attend yearly conferences, with this year’s conference being held online due to COVID19.

The Family Law Advocate Program is seeing approximately 20 clients per month and we are expecting this number to increase after the COVID19 lockdown is over. Although we are based in the Creston and Cranbrook area, the clients accessing the program range from throughout BC and Alberta (we even had a call from a woman in New Brunswick).

## Homeless Outreach / Homeless Prevention Programs



Coordinators: Erin Pan and  
Tracy Pound

*"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give"*

– Winston Churchill

The Homeless Outreach Program (H.O.P.) has been operating in Cranbrook since November of 2008 & in October of 2014 the Homelessness Prevention Program (H.P.P) was added to Community Connections Society. H.O.P & H.P.P are a conduit to housing, income assistance and support services. We serve individuals, couples and families that are experiencing some level of homelessness or are at risk of homelessness. We also connect street involved, marginalized, transient and new Cranbrook residents to community services and programs.

H.P.P & H.O.P provide monthly rental supplements with support services enhancing access to rental housing in the private market. H.P.P targets its subsidy support specific to those in marginalized positions in society such as; youth transitioning out of care, women fleeing abuse, people leaving treatment, detox, corrections or the hospital systems and individuals of First Nations or Metis descent. H.O.P has an open eligibility criterion.

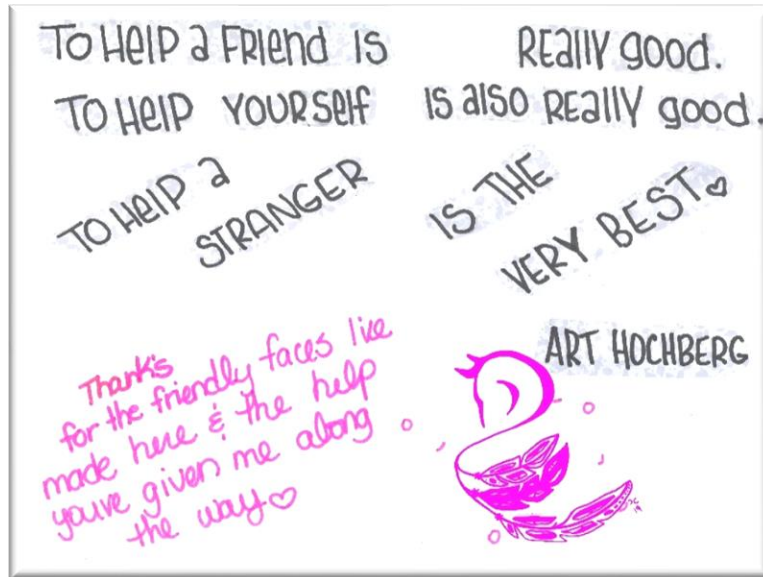
In addition to client centered services, we build relationships and work closely with other community service providers, government agencies, and landlords to ensure services to clients are streamlined. Another important piece of this program is educating the public, raising awareness about homelessness and advocating for more housing options in our community.

The following is a snapshot of activity from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019 to December 31<sup>st</sup> 2019.

- We met 15 new people a month.
- We had face to face meetings with a minimum of 50 people per month and as many as 72.
- We saw on average 14 per month who were absolute homeless.
- We collaborated with other workers on behalf of clients an average of 25 times a month.
- We responded to over 3,000 phone calls.

(This number only reflects the individual we met with not the total family unit)





March 11, 2020 Homeless Count Day  
Brian cuts Hair

## *Just 4 Kids After School Program*



Coordinator: Candice Bennett

We have been closed since the middle of March due to the COVID-19 that closed schools. Schools are now reopening and are providing care till 5:00 for ESW so our program will remain closed until September.

Before closing we had 19 children in our care and 4 staff members. Communicating with families, it looks like 2 children might not be returning come September however we have a waiting list of about 6 children waiting to get in (many are siblings).

## Kitchen Programs



Coordinators: Sophie Larsen (Farm Kitchen) and  
Meredith Funston (Food Recovery)

### Food Programs

As you will see there is A LOT happening at CCS involving food. With food insecurity being a social determinate of health of we continue to add food literacy programming and projects that support our local food system.

### Cranbrook Food Recovery Coalition

In June of 2019 we began collecting food that otherwise would have gone to the landfill. In September we increased collection to 7 days a week. We have created new partnerships with 12 local schools, and 17 different community groups or initiatives who come to our location to pick up food for their programming. Cranbrook Food Recovery has collaborated with the other major groups in town (specifically the Cranbrook Food Bank, the Salvation Army, and Street Angels) to hold semi-regular meetings, find ways to support each other's operations, and streamline recovery efforts. To date we have saved 80377kg of food from the landfill. Redistributed 61063kg of food to 17 organizations and 12 schools; using the food bank rate of \$ 5.70/kg that is a value of \$348,059. Local farmers have also received 19,314kg for animal feed.

To date we have hired and retained 6 part time staff members to deliver the project, and had recruited 17 volunteers who contributed their time weekly. Unfortunately, Covid-19 reduced that number down to 5, but those volunteers are incredibly dedicated and work with us multiple times a week. We have recorded 686 volunteer hours since Sept 2019.

Our website has more information and some videos of our operation at [www.cranbrookfoodrecovery.com](http://www.cranbrookfoodrecovery.com)

### FoodFit

FoodFit was a 12-week program for people who experience barriers around healthy eating and physical activity but who are motivated to make lasting changes to their health. With funding from Community Food Centers Canada, in 2019/2020 we have offered 4 sessions, 2 with community partners Scotty's house (Ktunaxa nation) and the Tamarack Cottage (IH). Since the start of the program (in 2018) we have provided over 660 meals and have had over 300 total participant contacts. 100% of participants have reported that they have learned something new about making meals and snacks healthier and have seen a change in their physical health.

*"challenged my anxiety and PTSD. It supported me to get out, meet people. Challenge my thinking and emotional state. Always helped to make me feel better emotionally if I went to a class with anxiety or a poor mood I left happy"*

*– Cranbrook FoodFit participant*



### Farm Kitchen

Accelerator - Farm Kitchen was awarded \$100 000 in March 2019 from BC Rural Dividend. The project is ultimately to support food entrepreneurs strengthen their business and thus the local food system. Funds were awarded for upgrades, operations, networking events and to pilot a Food Biz Accelerator Project. The space now has new office furniture, coffee machine, 20 Qt mixer and a convection oven. In June we hosted our first “Local Food Producers Mixer” networking event with 23 local food producers in attendance. This was a chance for producers to celebrate successes, identify opportunities and learn from each other. We have often heard that food entrepreneurs feel they are working in isolation, and our program is meant to address that.

The Food Biz Accelerator Training program was an 8-week program. Grounded Strategies was hired to facilitate. Six local food businesses registered for the program which consisted of 2 face-to-face workshops with hands on training, 30+ hours of training and materials, 6 live online Q & A sessions, and over 40 links and resources for agri food industry. 100% of participants surveyed agreed that the workshops, online training, live Q & A sessions, resources and networking were either valuable or very valuable. 83% of participants completely agree that as a result of the information and training provided, they have more confidence in their ability to operate a profitable business

*“I would highly recommend your program to any start-up or early stage entrepreneurs. It is eye-opening and it will definitely help them to take their business to a more grounded next level!”*

*Melania, Hungry Bunny Foods*

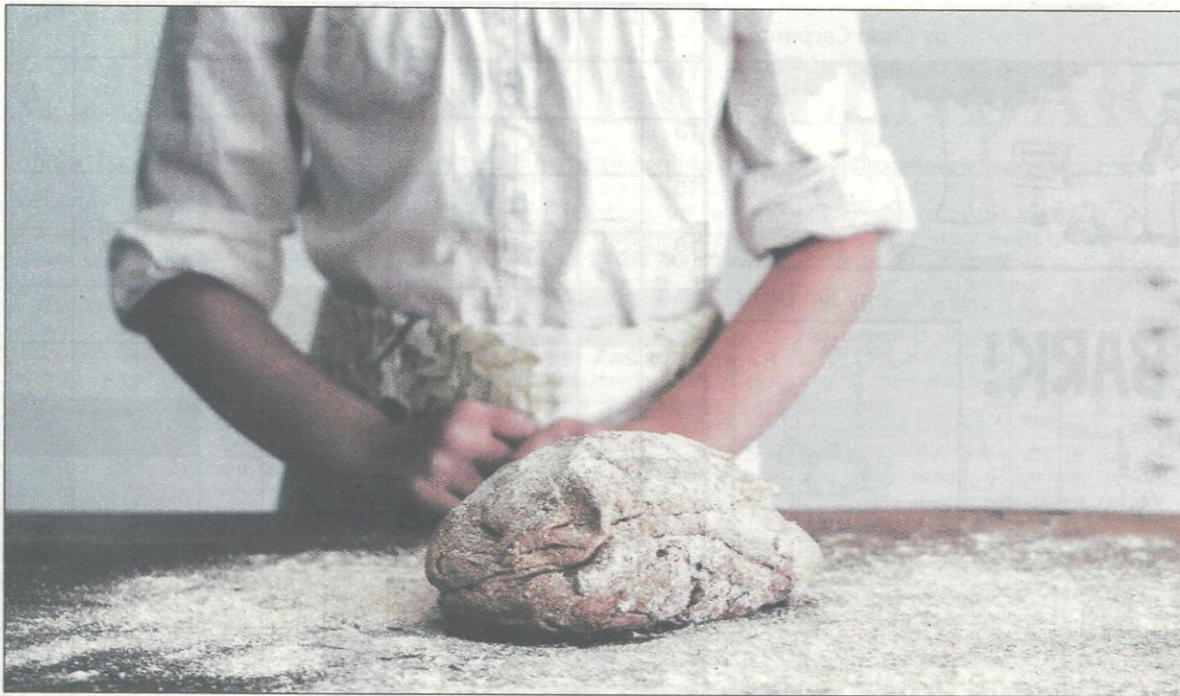
Kids Can Cook – Kitchen offered a Kids can Cook Summer Camp for children 8-12. The camp was an opportunity for kids to connect with food and feel more comfortable in the kitchen. Willow, our summer student was the facilitator did an amazing job. Participant feedback was great, and all 3-day long sessions were fully prescribed with waitlists.

### Cranbrook Food Action Committee

In October CFAC hosted an EAT. THINK. VOTE. event at Auntie Barb’s bakery. All federal candidates were invited. It was a great opportunity to hear each candidate’s and party’s stance and platform on important food issues. A local reporter said that the EAT. THINK. VOTE. event was the best he had been to in the region in terms of format, organization and flow.

### Cranbrook Public Produce Garden

We were lucky enough to have our wonderful summer student Seamus manage the garden. Seamus also facilitated weekly basic gardening workshops. Funding was only for 8 weeks (much shorter than the growing season) so the garden wasn’t quite put to bed in the best manner and may require extra attention next spring. Seamus indicated that the garden had a good growing season. This spring we held a seed giveaway – we purchased seeds from Top Crop and donated a variety of vegetable seeds to 118 community members



## Non-profit offering accelerator program to local food producers

### Submitted

Farm Kitchen, located in Cranbrook is a non-profit kitchen incubator that supports food-focused entrepreneurs in developing, operation, and growing successful businesses.

This interior health approved, commercial kitchen space, is rentable by the hour for everyone including food processors, caterers, and home cooks.

Our commercial kitchen equipment makes your job easier and more efficient allowing you to grow your business and get the job done better.

The list of kitchen equipment is always growing and includes a walk-in cooler and freezer, sanitizer, 6 burner range, convection oven, 20qt mixer, robo coupe, blender, dehydrator, ice wands, vacuum sealer, even a refrigerated truck.

Starting in September Farm Kitchen will be offering an 8-week Accelerator Program Pilot. This Food Business Accelerator Program is designed to assist small-scale food and beverage processing companies gain skills, training and education to run their businesses.

The program provides companies with targeted information specific to the food industry and is complimented with industry expert insight, business coaching, and networking opportunities to guide their decisions and chart a clear course for growing operations.

The accelerator program provides companies with:

- 8 weeks of blended face-to-face and online custom training
- access to program materials online 24/7 to accommodate busy schedules
- live Q & A sessions with industry

leaders

- one-on-one business support
- co-working office space, with unlimited coffee :)
- commercial kitchen access to produce/develop/test products

Participants will be required to commit to a minimum of 4 hrs a week for 8 weeks. There will be one and a half days of face-to-face sessions in Cranbrook with the remainder online. Financial investment is \$149. The program will be limited to 8 companies and starts September 16. Spaces will be filled based on both the order received as well as company readiness for the program so don't delay register today.

Visit [www.farmkitchenconnect.ca](http://www.farmkitchenconnect.ca) for more info and to download the application form.



**WEDNESDAY**  
**FEBRUARY 26, 2020**

**Vol. 74, Issue 24**

# Cranbrook Townsmen

## Cranbrook Food Recovery program celebrates success of food diversion

Community organizations, farmers benefiting from first months of program as food is kept out of landfill

**Corey Bullock**

The Cranbrook Food Recovery program is celebrating success, having diverted over 100,000 pounds of food from the landfill in the first eight months of operation.

In June of last year, the Food Recovery program began collecting food from local grocers and bakeries. They pick up unsold food and divert it to community groups who serve people in need. They operate 364 days a year to connect food to those who need it most.

They program provides food to eight different charitable organizations and six different schools. The program works with Auntie Barbs Bakery, Save on Foods, Cobs Bread, Community Connections, Food Mesh, Cranbrook Food Bank Society, SD5, Street Angels, Salvation Army, Columbia Basin Trust, the Regional District of East Kootenay and Bayer.

The team at Cranbrook Food Recovery has logged over 300 hours of volunteer time, donated \$191,021 in value to charities and provided over 24,000 pounds of animal feed to local small-

scale farmers.

The Food Recovery Program runs out of the Farm Kitchen, which is a shared-use kitchen that supports food-focused entrepreneurs. Not only is the Farm Kitchen a rentable kitchen space, but they also host an array of classes, workshops and events.

Meredith Funston, Coordinator of the Cranbrook Food Recovery, explained that the recovery program and the Farm Kitchen are separate projects run under an umbrella agency, the Community Connections Society.

*Continued on A2*



Pictured are just a few of the employees and volunteers helping to divert food from the landfill in Cranbrook. From left to right: Lacy Macdonald (employee), Meredith Funston (Coordinator, Cranbrook Food Recovery), Dana Kessler (volunteer) and Sophie Larsen (Coordinator, Food Kitchen). (Corey Bullock/Cranbrook Townsman file)

## Cranbrook Food Recovery program celebrates success of food diversion

*Continued from A1*

"Our baseline mandate is to keep food out of the landfill, but we also want to support local programming," explained Funston.

"Before we started, some of these organizations were already working with the grocery stores. We wanted to be able to help, logistically, with the goal of a single point of contact. We're able to occupy that niche and simplify things for both parties," Funston explained.

Dave Burki, Assistant Manager at Cranbrook Save On Foods, says that the shared goal is diverting edible food from landfills and increasing the quality of food for local programs.

"The food that we would otherwise be throwing out, because of expiry dates or quality control, is now being used. We couldn't

ask for a better program. It's a really good initiative and something we'll keep doing. We hope even more people can get on board," said Burki.

Funston says that another benefit of the food recovery program is being able to ensure that food is kept safe and cold until it is distributed.

The Farm Kitchen does just that. The kitchen provides a space for local Farmers' Market vendors to be able to prepare and store their food in an inspected kitchen, which is a requirement of selling.

"When we first started, we thought, how can we support local growers?" said Sophie Larsen, Coordinator of the Food Kitchen. "We have a commercial cooler which can be rented by the hour. This provides growers with a space to

store their food and produce, as opposed to having to [harvest] it every day before it's sold. We also host workshops; we want people to be able to connect with their food."

There are also close to ten farmers that pick up food through the recovery program to use as animal feed. All of the farmers operate small-scale or hobby farms in the area.

Kristin Garratt, a local teacher and small-scale farmer says that the program provides an excellent food source for her animals, especially during the winter months.

"We have focused our efforts to keep the food out of the landfills to reduce greenhouse gas emissions," said Garratt. "It is surprising how much packaging is used for fresh food. The program allows us to main-

tain a nutrient-dense food source for our animals throughout the winter and the pigs love the treat!"

The food recovery program has six part-time staff members and 11 volunteers, but they are always looking for more volunteers to help out. The program is supported through grants, in-kind support and community donations.

For example, a local videographer named Mark Loki recently donated his time and expertise to create a video for the Food Recovery program.

"We're grateful to him for that," said Funston, adding that they are always happy to welcome new volunteers.

"Ideally [volunteers] are able to commit to a weekly shift, whether it's one day a week or more. We also encourage taxable donations from local businesses,

which ensures that we are able to continue operating and supporting community groups," Funston explained.

She went on to say that the Regional District of East Kootenay's plans for a regional composting program will also help to divert what little is left after everything gets distributed.

"Once that program rolls out, the very small percentage of organics that is left will go to the regional organics and composting program," said Funston. "We're thrilled about that opportunity. [The food recovery program] feels like a really helpful program and it's great to be able to support the community and have less waste in our landfill."

## *Traveling Advocate Program*



Coordinator: Noelle Goodfellow BSW RSW

Poverty law describes the spectrum of legal areas and legal needs which arise because of an individual's or a group's poverty. The legal needs of the poor include housing law; income-maintenance law (employment insurance, the Canada Pension Plan, welfare, family benefits, workers' compensation, etc); work-related issues (including employment standards, and occupational health and safety); and consumer and debt problems.

One objective of the Traveling Poverty Law Program is to assist with issues that can be overwhelmingly important to the individuals and groups affected. The resolution of a poverty law issue may have serious consequences for the ability of persons to feed, clothe, and shelter themselves and their dependants. This includes the interpretation of the complex and frequently changing statutory and regulatory schemes of government bureaucracies or administrative tribunals.

Another objective of the program is to provide the economically disadvantaged with information about their rights and entitlements. Socioeconomic discrimination is a silent barrier which can prevent people from bringing forward their legal claims for reasons like the destabilization of their lives by abuse or homelessness; because of illiteracy or a lack of education; discrimination based on markers of social location like race, gender and different-ability; or because they often do not speak English as a first language, if at all.

Here in its 17<sup>th</sup> year in operation, the program has struggled due to technological complexity and instability of the client and statistical tracking database, on the Sharepoint platform, following the launch of the Family Law Advocate Program. Despite the problems with the database and the loss of statistical information, Noelle Goodfellow, advocate and program coordinator has closed at least 90 full representation files, provided advice or summary service on at least 214 separate issues and provided information or given referrals on at least 463 issues.

Jamie Lalonde of Miles, Zimmer and Associates continues to supervise the program programs and we remain grateful to Mr. Lalonde for his expertise and guidance.



## Other Programs and Staff

### Community Action Program for Children; Kimberley



Coordinator: Verena Tarves

### East Kootenay Behavior Intervention Program



Coordinator: Mandy Scarpelli

Program was shut down in June 2019.

**FRIDAY**  
**MAY 10, 2019**



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**Vol. 73, Issue 57**

**Cranbrook  
Townsmen**

## Behaviour Intervention Program has to close

**Barry Coulter**

A program that offers therapy and other services to children with autism and other developmental disabilities in the East Kootenay is having to shut down.

Community Connections Society of Southeast BC announced Thursday it was closing the East Kootenay Behaviour Intervention Program, which since 2011 has offered behavior intervention services to children with developmental delays or disabilities.

"It is with deep sadness that we must announce the closure of the East Kootenay Behaviour Intervention Program," read a release from Community Connections (CCS).

*Continued on A3*

*Continued from A1*

"Well-trained and dedicated staff have provided services to children diagnosed on the autism spectrum and their families throughout the East Kootenay region since 2011."

According to CCS, the closure is due to a provincial funding model that does not work for a facility-based program such as EK Behaviour Intervention.

"We are unable to cover our overhead costs and despite advocacy to the province it appears that the model will remain as is," CCS said.

Community Connections is a large non-profit umbrella organization that provides services to families and individuals in Cranbrook and the East Kootenay region, overseeing more than 15 programs and contracts.

"It is critical that we manage this situation on behalf of the whole agency, and not allow one program to place us in financial jeopardy," the CCS release said. "Our Board of Directors is supporting this very difficult decision."

The closure of the program will take place June 28, 2019.

"It is a parent driven program and it is our sincere hope that families that we serve will understand why we are making this decision."

The East Kootenay Behaviour Intervention Program (EKBIP) began in 2011 with the goal of providing a regional therapy program for children with autism and other developmental disabilities based on the principals of Applied Behaviour Analysis.

Vol. 73, Issue 59

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THURSDAY

MAY 16, 2019



# Cranbrook Townsmen

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## Autism program narrowly avoids closure

Phil McLachlan  
The Free Press

A program that supports families and the needs of their autistic children will cease to exist in the East Kootenays next month

amid mounting costs. Last week, families received a letter explaining that due to a provincial funding model, the East Kootenay Behaviour Intervention Program will end due to a worksite

closure. The last day of operations is set for Friday, June 28.

The letter further explained that they are unable to cover their overhead costs and despite advocacy to the Province, the

funding model will remain unchanged.

Families with children on the autism spectrum currently receive provincial funding from the Autism Funding Unit to help support the therapy their

child will need.

The Behaviour Intervention program, provided by umbrella agency, Community Connections, and largely driven by parents, has provided services to children diagnosed on

the autism spectrum since 2011.

"But in that funding model, there's no room for facility costs," said Community Connections Assistant Director Kim Levie. "Our program is

amazing. I have nothing but great things to say about the program and about our staff, but it's just about the funding model. We just cannot cover the costs."

*Continued on A3*

## Autism program avoids closure

*Continued from A1*

Levie said they are not the only child development centre in the Province; there are others that also follow the same funding model.

"Many agencies are having the same discussions but the Province isn't willing to look at it as facility-based, or create a separate model for a facility-based program," she said.

The EK Behaviour Intervention Program is one of many programs that Community Connections provides to the East Kootenay region. There are two locations for the program – one in Fernie and one in Cranbrook.

When they started the program, it was attended by just two children. They now service 73 families. Levie hopes the families can continue to receive the strong support that they need.

Shortly after the letter was sent out, two employees of Community Connections issued a release with a newly formulated plan of action to help continue services for children and their families.

In light of the closure, they have decided to create their

own private service, which they hope will allow services to continue for the families they previously supported.

Behaviour Consultant and Clinical Adviser, Simone Bourassa, and Regional Senior Behaviour Interventionist Tabitha Simson are two of four behaviour interventionists that work in Fernie, alongside three other staff in Cranbrook.

In Fernie, the program is currently run out of Max Turyk and in Cranbrook, the Child Development Centre.

Bourassa started as a behaviour interventionist in the Elk Valley about 15 years ago. Working alone, she drove 1000km a week, going from house to house. She didn't have anywhere to prep her work or a support system, aside from a supervisor in Kelowna.

When she started with Community Connections Society, Bourassa says she discovered the benefits of working in a centre-based behaviour intervention service. She thinks it's important for staff and very valuable for children, and families.

Bourassa says it provides amazing education opportu-

nities for children to develop their social and play skills, while staff have a support network; each other.

"With the pending closure of the East Kootenay Behaviour Intervention Program, such an immense need in these communities, Tabitha and myself didn't hesitate to establish a plan and develop a new program," said Bourassa. "So that is Branch Out Learning and Behaviour Therapy."

"We're really passionate about what we do and we really care about these families, and our communities and the children. I couldn't see the program just dissolving and melting away. I couldn't sleep at night," she added.

The funding for the program will remain the same, at least on a provincial level. Bourassa and Simson, however, will be paying out of pocket for all startup costs associated with Branch Out.

That being said, the two explained they will be hosting some fundraisers and will need the community's support in order to offset some of these overhead costs.

They plan to continue to provide the same level of

care, support and community-minded behaviour intervention services under a new, more viable framework.

They will also be focusing on 'branching out' their service model to provide inclusive summer camps, open to all children in the community, as well as behaviour intervention training programs, special interest groups and expanding on connecting kids through specific interests.

As a registered autism service provider with Autism Community Training, Bourassa will be working to provide workshops and community education sessions.

The group hopes that the transition from the EK Behaviour Intervention Program to Branch Out will be seamless.

"The Behaviour Intervention Program plans to close June 28; we would like to open June 29," said Bourassa.

The group hopes to continue at the same locations in both Fernie and Cranbrook. They will be inviting any previous staff members to transition to the new Branch Out program.



## *Community Connections Society; Year in Review*



Thursday December 12, 2019  
Assistant Director Kim Levie's Surprise Retirement party (with Rita Romeo, left)  
Started: 1997 Retired: 2020





Thursday February 27, 2021  
Executive Director Gwen Noble's Retirement Tea  
Started: 2005 Retired: 2021



## *Minutes from 2019 AGM*

### COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS SOCIETY OF SOUTHEAST BC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING FAMILY CONNECTIONS HUB BOARD ROOM September 18, 2019

#### In Attendance:

Gwen Noble (Executive Director)  
Kim Levie (Assistant Director)  
Brian Jensen (Admin Assistant; CFC Hub)  
Marg Brown (Member)  
Gina Panattoni (Member; C1st Coordinator)  
Denise Stewart (Women's Center Coordinator)  
Denae Defoe (Member)  
Erin Pan (Member; HOP Coordinator)  
Rene Boileau (Member)  
Mark Lawrence (Member)  
Rita Romeo (Member; CCRR Coordinator)  
Jannub Halber  
Frankie Seitz (Member; CCRR Consultant)  
Noelle Goodfellow (Traveling Poverty Advocate)  
Sophie Larsen (Kitchen Coordinator)  
Katherine Petersen (CCS Bookkeeper)  
Beth Carter (Member; EKSCD Coordinator)

Laurie Harris (Member; B at H Coordinator)  
Jennifer Cunningham (EKSCD Worker)  
Charlene Stropky (IDP Worker)  
Tracy Pound (Member; HPP Coordinator)  
Doug McLachlan (  
Shawna Baker (

#### Board:

Laura Wilson (Board Member; Chair)  
Brenda Blair (Board Member; Vice Chair)  
Maggie Schrader (Board Member)  
Paul Knipe (Board Member)  
Celinda Van Horne (Board Member)

#### Guest:

Mike Adams (CPA, CA)

#### 1. Call meeting to order

The meeting was called to order at 5:05 pm by Laura Wilson, Chair

#### 2. Introductions

Laura Wilson introduced the Board members and excluded staff

#### 3. Recognition

Laura Wilson acknowledged two Board members who resigned from the board during the summer – Annette Kainer (5 years) and Debbie Mandryk (4 years). Everyone involved with CCS thanks them for their commitment and service to the organization.

#### 4. Adoption of Agenda

Moved by Erin Pan and seconded by Margaret Browne to adopt the agenda as presented. Carried.

#### 5. Adoption of Minutes

Moved by Erin Pan and seconded by Paul Knipe to adopt the June 21, 2018 AGM minutes as circulated. Carried.

6. Audited Financial Statements for year ended March 31, 2019 – Mike Adams

6.1 Mike Adams of Apex Accounting, Chartered Accountants, presented the Society's audited Financial Statements and answered questions relating to the financial picture of the Society. The board reviewed the audited financial statements at a regular board meeting on August 21, 2019 and passed a motion to receive and accept the statements as presented.

6.2 MOTION: To appoint Apex Accounting, Chartered Accountants to conduct a financial audit for the next fiscal year ending March 31, 2020.<sup>1</sup>

7. Annual Report – Executive Director, Gwen Noble

Gwen Noble, Executive Director presented her written report.

MOTION: To accept the Executive Director's report as presented.

Moved by Erin Pan, seconded by Noelle Goodfellow. Carried.

8. Report – Board Chair, Laura Wilson

Laura Wilson presented her Board Chair report.

MOTION: To accept the Board Chair's report as presented.

Moved by Erin Pan, seconded by Margaret Browne. Carried.

9. Nomination and election of Board members

- There are four vacant positions on the board of directors.
- Laura Wilson, Chair, called for nominations from the floor (three times).
- Paul Knipe nominated Rene Boileau.  
Brenda Blair nominated Doug McLachlan.  
Rene Boileau and Doug McLachlan accepted their nominations and are thereby appointed by acclamation.
- As Laura Wilson and Brenda Blair have already served three consecutive terms, a motion to waive the restriction of Bylaw 8.3 is required.

MOTION: To waive the restriction as permitted by Bylaw 8.3 to allow Laura Wilson and Brenda Blair to serve another term.

Moved by Beth Carter, seconded by Erin Pound. Carried.

10. The meeting adjourned at 5:45 pm.

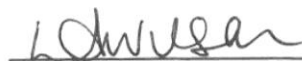
# Financials

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS SOCIETY OF SOUTHEAST BC STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT MARCH 31, 2020

	2020	2019
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Current		
Cash	\$ 336,019	\$ 256,222
Accounts receivable	30,072	82,155
Inventory	7,151	12,259
Prepaid expenses	8,810	4,504
	<u>382,052</u>	<u>355,140</u>
Tangible capital assets (Note 2)	<u>2,027,114</u>	<u>2,063,270</u>
	<b>\$ 2,409,166</b>	<b>\$ 2,418,410</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>		
Current		
Bank overdraft (Note 3)	\$ -	\$ 50,481
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities (Note 4)	207,087	295,687
Deferred contributions (Note 5)	202,783	189,438
Current portion of long-term debt (Note 7)	846,531	874,682
	<u>1,256,401</u>	<u>1,410,288</u>
Deferred contributions related to tangible capital assets (Note 6)	<u>779,028</u>	<u>809,964</u>
	<u>2,035,429</u>	<u>2,220,252</u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
Invested in tangible capital assets	542,087	530,193
Deficit	(168,350)	(332,035)
	<u>373,737</u>	<u>198,158</u>
	<b>\$ 2,409,166</b>	<b>\$ 2,418,410</b>

See accompanying notes to the financial statements

On behalf of the Board:



Director



Director

**COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS SOCIETY OF SOUTHEAST BC  
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2020**

	2020	2019
<b>REVENUE</b>		
Provincial funding and subsidies	\$ 2,671,884	\$ 2,997,304
Private funding	483,050	264,260
Law Foundation of BC	193,629	100,000
United Way	115,050	162,302
Rental income	100,831	88,763
Donations	56,130	55,047
Daycare fees	54,724	40,145
Home services	51,627	129,649
Bingo operations	35,673	115,722
Federal funding	31,856	34,257
Craft sales	31,203	23,727
Fundraising and miscellaneous	30,350	77,085
Interest income	522	776
Membership dues	149	4,425
	<b>3,856,678</b>	<b>4,093,462</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>		
Accounting and legal	51,062	49,074
Advertising and promotion	22,992	6,392
Bad debt	13,204	7,426
Bank charges	4,610	12,657
Bingo prizes	26,945	73,806
Coalition	390	23,460
Food nutrition	72,226	42,146
Insurance	25,539	21,338
Interest on long-term debt	44,011	44,856
Meeting expense	8,600	9,355
Membership, dues and subscriptions	34,439	47,223
Office and miscellaneous	98,186	99,616
Participant costs	38,181	31,328
Projects and supplies	200,372	244,784
Rent	126,110	140,391
Repairs and maintenance	65,417	67,292
Telephone and utilities	75,315	65,459
Training and seminars	50,838	29,123
Travel and vehicle expenses	49,686	73,869
Wages and employee benefits	2,610,637	2,670,598
	<b>3,618,760</b>	<b>3,760,193</b>
<b>Excess of revenue over expenditure from operations</b>	<b>237,918</b>	<b>333,269</b>
<b>Amortization of restricted tangible capital asset contributions</b>	<b>30,936</b>	<b>30,642</b>
<b>Amortization</b>	<b>(93,275)</b>	<b>(91,213)</b>
	<b>(62,339)</b>	<b>(60,571)</b>
<b>EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR</b>	<b>\$ 175,579</b>	<b>\$ 272,698</b>

See accompanying notes to the financial statements





COMMUNITY  
CONNECTIONS

## Community Connections Society of Southeast BC

209A 16th Avenue North  
Cranbrook, BC V1C 5S8

Phone: 250.426.2987

Fax: 250.426.2978

### ~ Membership Form ~

First Name

Last Name

Company

The Society will not distribute or sell membership or donor lists at anytime.

- ☐ Check this box if you give permission to use your photograph publicly to promote the activity of Community Connections Society. I understand that the images may be used in print publications, online publications, presentations, websites, and social media.

Address Contact Fields

Phone Numbers

E-Mail Address

#### Memberships

Price:

Other; Description

#### Annual Society Membership

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Day Home     | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal/Individual |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child Care Provider | <input type="checkbox"/>                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Partner   | <input type="checkbox"/>                     |

#### Membership Active From

- ☐ Society AGM to Society AGM, renewable annually
- ☐ September 1 - August 31 of each Calendar year, renewable annually

### ~ Our Vision ~

*Inclusive, healthy communities where all people live well  
and the right to self-determination is honoured.*



We acknowledge that we are on Ktunaxa ?amak?is, the territory of the Ktunaxa people.