

Annual Report 2023-2024



Nelson
CARES
Society





Mission

Community

Advocacy

Residential

Employment

Services

Through community collaboration and service excellence, Nelson CARES Society works toward a socially just society by providing programs and initiatives in advocacy, housing, employment, support services and environmental stewardship. Nelson CARES Society aims to be a reflection of the community it envisions.

End Statements

1. Everyone is adequately and safely housed.
2. Everyone has access to support and representation when they need it.
3. Everyone has adequate means and resources to participate fully in community life.
4. Everyone takes responsibility for environmental stewardship.

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LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

Much to the consternation of Pam Loeppky, our Operations Manager, I am creating this report a few days before the Annual General Meeting. This is a report that I wouldn't, or should I say couldn't write. Then, I attended a Thursday meeting last week with the NCARES senior staff and ate lunch Friday with my wife Cath and a friend at the top of Ymir Mountain overlooking Whitewater.

It is not possible for me to report on the 2023-24 fiscal year; life doesn't payout in calendar defined segments. The span of time in which 2023-2024 sits, starts with the arrival and disruption of COVID, continues with the plague of fentanyl, the departure of Jenny Robinson, the arrival of Jac Nobiss, the financial fraud and the resulting challenges that continued after March 2024. To try and summarize or begin to explain all that has happened would require a book. Rather, let me offer the insight I received that permitted me to write this now brief report.


At the end of the hour-long Thursday morning meeting with the senior staff, a realization washed over me like a calming wave. It was crystal clear to me that everyone around the table loves Nelson CARES. That love is the bedrock of NCARES' future. What more can the Board of Directors ask for?

This is probably the 50th report that a NCARES chair has delivered. Half a century of serving the most vulnerable members of our community is a remarkable achievement. It is challenging and often difficult work and yet NCARES continues to attract individuals who are passionate about serving others.

It is important to talk about Jac Nobiss's tenure as ED. Jac arrived and was thrown in the deep end of a very large pool. Then, some shady individuals managed to pull the plug and start draining the pool. Jac instinctively swam to the bottom of the pool and replaced the plug. It can't be overstated how important that single action was in saving NCARES. Jac's approach, their management style, their drive and their passion created a lot of waves in the pool but in the background, the pool was slowly refilling. Ultimately, Jac and the Directors agreed that the pool needed fewer waves. We parted ways in June 2024 and I am happy to tell you that Jac is now an assistant professor in the School of Social Work at UBC. I believe that Jac will thrive in their new environment.

Thank you to all the staff of NCARES who have shown and continue to show their passion for supporting those people most vulnerable in our community.

In particular, I would like to thank Amy Taylor and Zhenia Salikin who have stepped in as co-Executive Directors during this time of transition. It has not been easy but they have both brought an understated air of calm and stability to the whole organization. And, it should be noted that their love and passion for NCARES is obvious to everyone they encounter.

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Thank you also to the members of the Board who over the past few years have been called upon to give far more time to their duties than they bargained for. It has been frustrating, challenging and rewarding. Thank you to Shirley Winning, Nic Parsons and Jack Olson whose personal lives required their withdrawal from the Board. To Nick Toner, Michele Deluca, Aaron Pang and Steve Thompson, thank you for giving your time so generously. A particular thank you to Steve and Michele who, along with Housing Director Joanne Motta, have been shepherding the process that will, we hope, lead to more affordable housing in Nelson.

Now, you are probably wondering what Friday's lunch at the top of Ymir has to do with this report. For 16 years, Cath and I have often contemplated hiking to the top of Ymir but couldn't visualize how to do it without someone to help us. I mentioned trying the ascent to our friend Kathleen who had not been to the top either and she immediately and enthusiastically said "yes". On Friday the weather was right and off we went. Two thirds of the hike was very comfortable for us but once we started the last steep approach Cath's and my knees became weak and doubts flooded our minds. But Kathleen just kept on going up, patiently finding the obscured path and not accepting any doubts. Sitting at the top, we ate and looked in awe at the vistas. It was very uncomfortable sitting on the course and gnarly boulders and we fretted about how we could possibly get back down. Kathleen simply and calmly led the way down. At the car, we looked back at the peak and wondered how we could have managed it without Kathleen.

All this to say that Phyllis Nash has been my Kathleen through all the turmoil of the last few years. She has calmly urged me on and on, one foot in front of the other, with the path obscured and when I thought I couldn't go any farther. I wouldn't and probably couldn't have survived without your gentle but insistent prodding, pushing and pulling. You are the bedrock of our Board. Thank you, Phyllis. And with that, it will soon be time to celebrate NCARES' 50th birthday.

Happy Birthday NCARES!

RON LITTLE

Society President and Board Chair

Board of Directors



Jack Olson,
Vice-Chair



Phyllis Nash,
Treasurer



Ron Little,
Board Chair



Steve Thompson,
Director



Nick Toner,
Director



Nic Parsons
Director



Aaron Pang
Director



Michele Deluca
Director

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This year marks Nelson CARES Society's 50 anniversary. The organization has grown and undergone many changes in those years, including changing its name from Nelson District Community Resources Society to Nelson CARES Society. Building on the foundation established by the many Board members, staff, funders, community partners, volunteers and donors over the years, Nelson CARES Society continued to provide exceptional service in our 2023-24 fiscal year.

The people we serve face many challenges, including increasing costs for basic needs, such as food, shelter, utilities and transportation; lack of safe, affordable, accessible housing; and a toxic drug supply. With our team of dedicated staff, volunteers and supporters, the organization provided emergency shelter for people in crisis; 270 units of housing; legal/practical supports for people dealing with issues related to poverty, family law, tenancy, relationship and sexual violence; light housekeeping, help with transportation, resource and referral information and social programs for seniors; and residential, community and employment supports for adults with diverse abilities. 2023-24 also saw the continued operation of the Coordinated Access Hub, a multi-service drop in centre for people experiencing homelessness, with over 13,000 visits during the year. Sadly, due to lack of funding, the Hub closed its doors in March 2024, however, we are working with community partners to find a way to re-establish this much needed service. In the coming fiscal year, we also look forward to expanding our supported housing at the North Shore Inn and to exploring additional options for affordable housing in our community.

We wish to extend our heart felt thanks to our dedicated Board of Directors, our skilled and caring staff, our funders, fellow service providers and of course the community of Nelson -our 10th "Coldest Night of the Year" walk in February raised over \$100,000 to continue our Ready for Home program to support people who have experienced homelessness to stabilize their housing. This collaboration is truly essential to achieving the vision of a healthy and inclusive community where complete respect for all individuals is an ordinary, everyday occurrence.

AMY TAYLOR & ZHENIA SALIKIN

Interim Executive Directors

Affordable Housing

We focus on diversion from homelessness as well as a shelter program focused on housing for tenancy success and community building. Our program will reach full capacity with the relaunch of the North Shore Inn (NSI) in late fall. We hope to increase our housing portfolio with the addition of a new build with 50+ units.



Garden and Gazebo at Ward Street Place

Highlights

- Restructuring of the Housing Program
- Hire of Housing Director
- Hire of NSI Manager
- Hire of Property Manager (LSP, HSP, CGE, CMC)
- Emergency Housing has been moved under the Housing Director

Challenges

- Staffing challenges and retention at Emergency Housing Services (EHS)
- Lack of available housing
- Increased number of seniors applying for housing and accessing shelter services

"I did not imagine I would find such a wonderful community of people to live in a building with. I have new friends, hobbies, and space to enjoy my life."
(Lakeside Place Resident)



Emergency Housing Services

Providing emergency shelter and supports to people who are experiencing homelessness.

“ I am grateful to the staff at Stepping Stones who make me feel comfortable and supported. I found housing! Thank you to everyone who helped me at the shelter.
- Shelter resident ”

Stepping Stones Emergency Shelter is implementing some changes to the program that will better support staff safety and wellbeing and program participants. We are moving our office, updating our security cameras, and installing a new fencing system around the property. We have changed our menu to integrate the wonderful weekly produce donations into our dinners for current guests.

Stepping Stones will restart the winter bed program in November, increasing our capacity by 6 beds during the colder months. Our beds have been fully occupied daily for the past fiscal year with many emergency bed inquiries being turned away. On average, we turn away 4 people daily due to bed shortages. Despite challenges with staffing shortages, our dedicated frontline staff continue to show up every shift to support our most vulnerable and marginalized community members.

Highlights

- Implemented plans to improve security by adding additional cameras and restructuring the site
- Made significant updates to policies to align with best practices and community needs
- Strengthened partnerships through community collaboration to expand support
- Added transitional accommodation rooms to provide more options for individuals seeking stability

” I will miss you all when I go for treatment. I am so happy right now.
- Shelter resident



Challenges

- Staffing retention issues impacting service consistency
- Ongoing opioid crisis exacerbating related mental health issues
- Critical lack of recovery services for individuals in need

Strategy to Address Challenges

- Focused on team building initiatives and actively implemented staff feedback to enhance retention and improve overall service delivery

17
Number of individuals that can be housed, for up to 30 days

The Advocacy Centre

Legal Advocacy

Our legal advocacy programs helped with 821 separate issues related to government financial benefits, tenancy, debt, family law and other legal problems people with low incomes may face. Through our legal aid BC Community partner program staff had 255 contacts with people to either take Legal Aid application and provide information about legal resources.

"The services provided by the Advocacy Centre are crucial for our community. It is so hard to navigate through systems and get needed and dire help. In many cases it cannot be successfully done without the help they provide."

-Advocacy Centre client

Community Based Victim Services

Community Based Victim Services workers assisted 55 new clients through the entire criminal law process, including safety planning, court accompaniment, and coordination with Crown and police. On average, the program had 54 ongoing clients in any one month.

Highlights

- Continued to provide legal advocacy and Community Based Victim Services.
- Outreach activities: In person clinics in Castlegar twice/month; provided service out of Nelson Coordinated Access Hub and Castlegar Community Connection centre to connect with people who experienced barriers to accessing services; regular attendance at Nelson Courthouse to take Legal Aid applications.
- Increased hours for our Community Based Victim Services program to support people who have experienced sexual assault. Provided through partnership with Nelson Community Services Sexual Assault Services program.

Challenges

- Increased cost of living making it more and more difficult for people living on fixed incomes to meet basic needs or extra expenses, including finding and maintaining housing.

Custom Fit Inclusion & Employment Services

31
*community
employment
partnerships*

52 adults with diverse abilities received services to achieve their Employment, Community Based, and/or Supported Living goals.



Picnic in the park – from left to right Rhys Nybo, Tyler McKnight, Cody, Carlson, Shelley Samerson, Stephanie Salviulo

86%
*of persons served
are meeting their
goals for
employment.*

95%
*of persons served
are meeting their
community-based
goals.*

93%
*of persons served
are meeting the
supported living
goals.*



“CFIT has been there for me for over 5 years. I’m truly grateful for everything they’ve done for me to be successful in my career and daily life.”
- Lucas Popoff

Highlights

- Custom Fit (CFIT) ran its first cooking class this past year. Participants learned how to follow recipes, bake and prepare simple meals. The class was a great success!
- The program started a weekly craft club. Participants have enjoyed creating seasonal crafts, learning new skills, and building friendships.
- CFIT in partnership with Services for Community Living (SCL) celebrated their first summer picnic in the park with music and games. The event was well received and has become an annual event!
- In celebration of October Community Living Month and Disability Employment Awareness month, CFIT in partnership with CLBC hosted an Employer Recognition dinner at the Adventure Hotel. Twenty-six Nelson businesses were recognized for providing and fostering inclusive employment opportunities for people with diverse abilities.

Services for Community Living - Residential

Supporting 12 adults with diverse abilities in 3 group homes to live full lives with respect, dignity, and care.

3 HOUSES

1. *Hall Street Residence*
2. *Nelson Avenue*
3. *Rosemont*

Highlights

- 12 out of 12 beds full – 3 residences
- Residents able to age in place
- Recruitment of new employees

Challenges

- Recruitment and retention is ongoing with employment fairs, advertising, and office signage
- Loss of one residence building which included 3 residents and 6 permanent staff

12

*individuals
receiving care*



Nelson Committee on Homelessness



Collaboration with government, service providers, and businesses, to address homelessness and housing insecurity as a community. NCOH meets every month to share vital information and additional meetings are held for specific issues, such as Coordinated Access and the Annual Report Card on Homelessness.

Homelessness affects the whole community. Homelessness doesn't have just one cause, or a simple solution- and is too large for any one organization to address on its own.

In 2001 Nelson CARES Society helped start the Nelson Committee on Homelessness (NCOH) to bring together the various organizations seeking solutions. We believe through communication and collaboration among various government, business and service organizations we can make a difference.

Meeting once a month, NCOH shares information about developing issues in affordable housing and homelessness affecting Nelson. The group shares best practices, discusses plans and strategies, supports plans and initiatives of its participants and collaborates to sponsor new initiatives – its own or of participating groups. NCOH also researches issues to help all stakeholder agencies make better and more effective decisions.

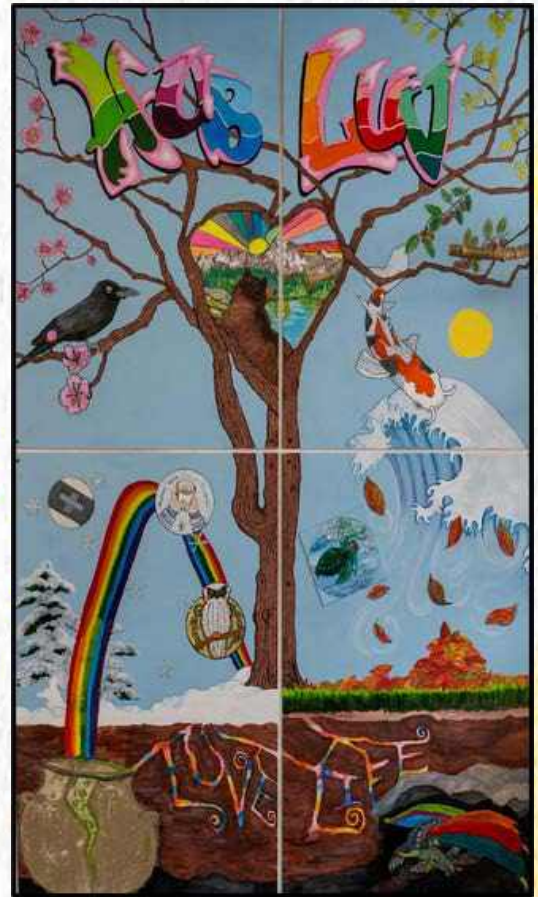
Working with other agencies, NCOH has successfully supported the creation of several community programs. The Nelson Food Cupboard, Stepping Stones Emergency Shelter, Ward Street Place, Our Daily Bread, Adult Support Recovery Beds, Street Outreach, Transitional Support Worker and Nelson's first Homelessness Point-in-Time Count are all examples of initiatives that stem from the NCOH table.

Coordinated Access Hub

A multi-agency collaboration to increase service accessibility, and to support individuals experiencing homelessness and/or at risk of homelessness in our community.

As part of the partnership for the development of the HUB, NCARES and Kootenay Career Development Services partnered to offer the PEERS Employment program. Funded to support people experiencing homelessness to gain employment readiness, the program launched in 2021. As a result of the success, the PEERS program continued from 2022 to 2024. A total of 70 different individuals participated in the program, which consisted of financial supports, health and wellness supports, and 100 hours per peer at a living wage. We could not have completed this program without the help and dedication of NCARES staff.

The success of the HUB, as a drop-in centre, is a model of service that other communities in our region are trying to replicate, including Trail and Castlegar. Many people have contributed with compassion and heart to the operation of the HUB over the years it has existed. So much appreciation goes to everyone who has contributed to this vision of many needed services under one roof.



coordinated
access nelson

Kootenay Seniors

Working to connect seniors to the services they need in Nelson and area.

220

*Transportation
Clients Served*

2530

*Events and
activities,
clients served*

Highlights

- Increase of in-person activity at Lakeside Place
- New programs being offered
- The first senior's expo was held at Lakeside Place
- Applied and received funding from Osprey, BC Gaming and United Way

Challenges

- Light housekeeping staff retention. We are applying for more funding to help cover the cost of staff wage increase
- Volunteer recruitment - We will be using social media to help engage more volunteers



"The activities you put on at Lakeside Place are the highlight of my week coming and socializing with new people"

592

*light
housekeeping
served*

"When my independence was suddenly lost, I have been able to rely on your transportation service. And I can afford it."

Financials

Nelson CARES Society
2023 - 2024 Financial Statement Summary
From the Audited Financial Statements

	2024	2023
Summarized Statement of Financial Position		
Assets		
Current Assets	\$ 3,444,965	\$ 3,614,273
Replacement Reserve Cash	505,129	360,051
Capital Assets	42,614,181	43,981,225
	46,564,275	47,955,549
Liabilities and Fund Balances		
Current Liabilities	19,163,294	19,019,086
Long-Term Debt	25,616,767	26,314,145
Deferred Contributions Related to Capital Assets	1,871,446	1,805,081
Replacement Reserves	505,129	360,051
Fund Balances		
Invested in Capital Assets	(2,467,076)	(1,552,153)
Internally Restricted Net Assets	774,611	781,980
Unrestricted Net Assets	1,100,104	1,227,359
	(592,361)	457,186
	\$ 46,564,275	\$ 47,955,549
Summarized Statement of Operations		
Revenue		
Grants	\$ 8,933,789	\$ 8,418,269
Rent Contributions and subsidies	2,192,612	1,894,553
Donations	158,474	147,110
Fee for Service	171,583	210,830
Interest and Sundry	29,124	19,740
	11,485,582	10,690,502
Expenses		
Wages and Employee Benefits	6,815,780	6,368,368
Telephone and Utilities	610,364	577,302
Repairs and Maintenance	827,657	854,440
Interest	709,548	369,070
Program Costs	360,419	382,475
Rent	205,761	130,986
Special Projects	226,538	265,652
Professional Fees	76,699	81,149
Insurance	307,030	255,446
Replacement Reserve Expenditures	34,904	107,840
Office and Administration	82,278	110,147
Travel and Staff Development	75,970	50,155
Property Tax	115,960	90,945
Vehicle Costs	30,686	39,206
Licenses and Dues	9,552	5,250
Other Expenses and Write offs	-	82,052
	10,489,146	9,770,483
Net Cash Operating Surplus before non-cash items, loan payments or capital purchases	996,436	920,019
Non-cash items		
Amortization Assets	(2,061,639)	(2,025,231)
Amortization of Capital Contribution	143,920	103,497
Additions to Deferred Contributions	(210,285)	-
Gain on Sale of Tangible Capital Assets	22,308	-
BC Housing Loan Forgiveness	59,713	59,713
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenue Over Expenditures per audited F/S	\$ (1,049,547)	\$ (942,002)

Please refer to the audited financial statements for more detailed information

Our Funders



Our Community Partners



Coldest Night of the Year Sponsors

EVENT SPONSORS

Inland Allcare
Nelson Home Building
Hemlock Homes
Urban Systems
Studio 9 Architecture
BC Housing

SUPPORTING SPONSORS

Ellenwood Homes
Nelson Ford
Martin Hospitality Group
Terus (Nelson Readymix)
The Adventure Hotel
Mistiso's Place Vacation Rentals
Rod Taylor (designer)
Lasca Construction Design

MEDIA SPONSORS

Kootenay Co-op Radio, Vista Radio, 103.5 The Bridge

Our Donors

Aaron Korbacher
Allison Lutz
Ashley Elliott
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Bobbi Barbarich
Bonnie Baker
Bruce Gardave
Brad Robertson
Brendan Miles Grant
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Chester Emery
Colleen and Aldo Doratti
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Craig Stowell
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Gracie's Kennels
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Stuart McKinnon
Sue Adam

Susan Forster
Sylvia Reimer
Trevor and Rodica Janz
William & Taras Maslechko

Businesses

Keystone Appraisals
Kootenay Bakery Cafe
Cooperative
Nelson Civic Employees
Association Local 339
Nelson United Church Women
Otter Books
Provincial Employees Community
Services Fund
Rotary Club of Columbia River
Passport
St. Saviour's Pro Cathedral
Anglican Church
Terus Construction
Valhalla Path Realty