

2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Our vision: A healthy and inclusive community where complete respect for all individuals is an ordinary, everyday occurrence.



About Nelson CARES Society

Background

In 1974 a group of dedicated Nelson residents came together with a single vision: create a fairer, safer, and socially just community.

They were activists, volunteers, politicians and service providers with a common commitment to a caring, civil community.

Five decades later the organization they created, now called Nelson CARES Society, continues to work towards that goal. We have grown into one of Nelson's largest and most diverse non-profit organizations. We act as a catalyst for community and program development, and advocate for people living in poverty.

OUR VALUES IN OUR NAME

Community

Advocacy

Residential

Employment

Services

Our Mission

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.

Our 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

It is difficult to limit what I'd like to say to between the April 2024 to March 2025 time frame, so, I won't. By the time you read this I will have finished my 17th year as an NCARES Director, my 75th year on this planet, and it really is time to move on.

What about a short recap?

Serving our community as an NCARES Director has been a wonderful and challenging experience. It started when the irrepressible Kitty Wright suggested I meet with Donna MacDonald for an interview. I had to sell myself to get on the Board! I was elected at the September 2008 AGM.



The NCARES office was at 182 Baker Street and Rona Park was the Executive Director (ED). It was cramped. Rona was calm, cool and focused on moving NCARES forward. She took the 'build it and they will come' leap of faith and NCARES moved to a larger location on Vernon Street. Programs and funding began to percolate, expand and the space quickly filled up with staff and programs. It wasn't long before we were out of room.

On January 11th, 2011, a fire destroyed the Kerr Block on Victoria Street. An errant spark landing on the roof could have been the end of Ward Street Place (WSP). The fire created another type of spark that landed on the Board. The Directors had to answer the question "Do we keep WSP or sell it?" The building was in rough shape and needed a huge amount of work, but we couldn't let this affordable housing disappear from downtown Nelson. We decided to carry on operating Ward Street Place knowing changes had to be made. That fire, that spark - though untimely - pushed NCARES into the community's consciousness.

In the Fall of 2011, Jenny Robinson arrived as the ED and she followed a careful strategy of focusing on leveraging NCARES' strengths - passionate caring staff and building solid reputations with core program funders.

NCARES took on the affordable housing buildings of the Nelson and District Housing Society in 2012. This not only assured that the properties remained community assets, but it showed BC Housing that NCARES had capable and passionate management skills. In addition, Jenny set her intention that NCARES would become the best landlord in Nelson.

While this significant acquisition was going on, Jenny was working in the background finding financial supports from BC Housing and Columbia Basin Trust to begin vital electrical and fire suppression upgrades as well as increasing Ward Street Place rental units in the space vacated by Stepping Stones.

Letter From The Board Chair

NCARES had reserves to seed the funding, but we wanted to get the community involved so that they would have a stake in the success of the building.

We engaged a professional fundraiser to help us approach the community for funding. Our initial community campaign goal was \$450,000, but a slick professional campaign just didn't feel right. By the end of 2012, we made test presentations to the Lions, Rotarians, Chamber of Commerce and the Ward Street Place commercial tenants. After each presentation, our simple narrative and Power Point were fine tuned. The cost estimates changed too. Our final fundraising target was \$690,000; \$15,000 to refurbish each of the 46 rooms became the goal for our Room to Live campaign. Fifteen minutes after our first one-on-one presentation, the potential donor returned with a \$5,000 cheque. That was when we knew it was all possible.



Hall Street Place

We turned the corner in February 2015 with the first Coldest Night of the Year (CNOY) walk. We reached our \$690,000 goal at the 2017 event. Since then, CNOY has allowed NCARES to provide a true Housing First service; safe, stable and affordable housing with one-on-one supports for residents. CNOY was, and still is, embraced by the community and the community has become a true partner in the services we deliver.

In quick succession, Lakeside Place and Hall Street Place materialized, improvements continued at Ward Street Place and Cedar Grove Estates was refurbished. Copper Mountain Court is currently being refurbished.

The buildings are the outward manifestation of NCARES in the community, the visible body.

The more important part is the heart and soul; the people who reach out each and every day to support the most vulnerable members of our community.

Over my 17 years on the Board, the staff has almost doubled and the demands and complexities of delivering services has increased significantly. Despite this, the passion, dedication, and love exhibited by the NCARES staff to the people we serve has not flagged.

The leadership of the Executive Directors I have worked with - Rona, Jenny, Jac and now Sarah - has been inspiring, educational and sometimes challenging. Each has contributed unique skills, qualities, and perspectives that have kept NCARES moving forward.

Letter From The Board Chair

April 2024 to March 2025 was held together by Amy Taylor and Zhenia Salikin with the support of the whole management and administration teams. The Directors are very thankful for how willingly and passionately all the staff kept NCARES running so smoothly.

In September 2024, the Directors met with the senior managers to create an Executive Director wish list. We welcomed the arrival of Sarah Magee in March 2025 and have confidence Sarah will rise.

I have served with many Directors, and this has also been a wonderful experience. Some have wanted to roll up their sleeves and get in the trenches with the staff, but they soon learn that we are a governance Board and we have to be disciplined and leave the hands-on work to the staff.

There are too many Directors to name, except for one, Phyllis Nash. The last three years have been particularly challenging. Phyllis has been steadfast in her support of our Board processes, her firm guidance and undying passion for the work of NCARES. Thank you, Phyllis especially for your support of me and all the rides home.

NCARES is in good hands with Michele, Tammy, Dylan, Tobias, Ainsleah, Phyllis, Nick and whomever else step forward in the future to represent the Community as a Director of the Nelson CARES Society.

Thanks for the honour of serving the community.

RON LITTLE

Society President and Board Chair

Board of Directors



Ron Little,
Board Chair



Michele Deluca,
Vice-Chair



Phyllis Nash,
Treasurer



Ainsleah Hastings,
Secretary



Nick Toner,
Director



Tammy Everts,
Director



Tobias Gray,
Director



Dylan Griffith,
Director

Letter From the Executive Director

This past year has been marked by transition, growth and change as Nelson CARES Society navigated challenges alongside inspiring milestones. Our organization continues to evolve and expand to meet the needs of our community, while maintaining programs that have provided crucial services for decades. In March 2025, we welcomed our new Executive Director, Sarah Magee, who has taken the helm of leadership with grace and vision. With the commitment of our Board of Directors, management team and staff, Nelson CARES Society continued to provide exceptional service throughout our 2024-25 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; 261 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 staffed living, outreach, community and employment supports for adults with diverse abilities.

In December 2024, we were thrilled to be able to expand our supported housing at the North Shore Inn, providing an additional 28 homes for members of our community, many of whom have been struggling for some time to find a safe, affordable place to live. 2024-25 also saw the re-opening of a one-day-a-week Temporary Drop-In following the closure of the Coordinated Access Hub in March 2024. The Temporary Drop-In is a scaled back, but much needed service, providing access to food, medical care, clothing, support services and connection while the community works to establish a more comprehensive and sustainable service to meet the needs of people who are experiencing, or are at risk of, homelessness.

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 \$75,950 to continue our Ready for Home program to support people who have experienced homelessness to stabilize their housing. This collaboration is essential to achieving NCARES’ 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

The Advocacy Centre

The Advocacy Centre provides legal information, education and problem solving for low-income residents of the West Kootenays. We also provide specialized victim assistance to victims of relationship violence, sexual assault and child abuse.

72

New Clients -
Community
Based Victim
Services

68

Average
ongoing clients
per month

Highlights

- Continued to provide legal advocacy and Community Based Victim Services.
- Outreach activities included in person clinics in Castlegar twice/month and 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
- Our legal advocacy programs opened 659 files related to government financial benefits, tenancy, debt, family law and other legal problems people with low incomes may face. There were 186 legal aid applications/ consultations regarding Legal Aid BC resources.
- Community Based Victim Services workers assisted 72 new clients through the entire criminal law process, including safety planning, court accompaniment, and coordination with Crown and police. On average, the program had 68 ongoing clients in any one month.

Challenges & Strategies

- Program Manager/Community Law Advocate Amy Taylor took on the co-interim Executive Director role which resulted in reduced front line hours for our Community Legal Advocacy program which is reflected in our statistics for the year. With Sarah Magee stepping permanently into the Executive Director role in March 2025, Amy has been able to resume her Community Law Advocate duties, allowing us to resume regular service levels for the program.

659

Files
opened

186

Legal Aid
applications

Affordable Housing:

Provides affordable & subsidized housing for persons with disabilities, families and seniors.

Highlights

Cedar Grove Estates and Lakeside Place:

- Fully tenanted with no concerns.
- Common space upgrades will roll out over this fiscal year due to the generous support of the Columbia Basin Trust Seniors Livability Grant.

Copper Mountain Court:

- A renovation project began in November 2024 that encompasses a comprehensive upgrade of the building's exterior and internal systems, focusing on enhancing energy efficiency, modernizing infrastructure, and improving occupant comfort. The renovation includes: building envelope revitalization, mechanical system modernization, and electrical infrastructure enhancements.
- Held two tenant meetings to answer questions and address concerns. A comprehensive process was created for quickly addressing tenant concerns due to the renovations onsite.

HAR:

- Fully tenanted with no concerns.
- Our Housing Support Coordinator (HSW) and Transition Support Worker (TSW) continue to support tenants with great success.

Ward Street Place:

- HSW and TSW have supported tenants to maintain stable housing, ensuring zero evictions over the year.
- Building upgrades have also been made possible due to the generous support of the CBT Seniors Livability Grant.

News

Front Street Development:



- Council approved changes to the Official Community Plan and Zoning bylaws to rezone 818–824 Front Street, following a public hearing in June of 2005.
- Council also approved leasing 818–824 Front Street to Nelson CARES. This allowed us to submit our application to the BC Housing Community Housing Fund for support in bringing more affordable rental housing to Nelson.
- The lease is conditional and depends on Nelson CARES receiving funding from BC Housing within a year.

“

"Nelson CARES has given me safety, security, and most importantly, hope for my future, opening up doors for me that I never thought possible."

- HAR Resident

”

“

"I appreciate the way you show up for me."

- Ward St. Place Resident

”



Emergency Housing and Supportive Housing Services

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

“

*"You are my family."
- Stepping Stones Client*

”

Highlights

North Shore Inn:

- A temporary modular building providing housing for 28 individuals was completed, with all residents moving in between December 2024 and March 2025.
- Individuals receive support on site, which helps to maintain stable, ongoing, housing.

Stepping Stones:

- The team is working well together, implementing changes in operations to address neighbour concerns, and receiving training to better address toxic drug poisoning.

7705

*Stays at
Stepping
Stones*

35

*New Guests
at Stepping
Stones*

203

*Guests
supported
at Stepping
Stones*

19

*Indigenous
Status Guests
at Stepping
Stones*

Challenges & Strategies

North Shore Inn:

- Addressed neighbour concerns about North Shore supportive housing through two open houses, tours, and a monthly check-in plan.

Stepping Stones:

- Held regular meetings with neighbours to address concerns.
- Continue to improve programming to enhance a positive presence in the neighbourhood.



Custom Fit Inclusion and Employment

Custom Fit (CFIT) provides person-centered supports to promote well-being, inclusion, and belonging for adults with diverse abilities.

28

Community
Employment
Partnerships

Highlights

- CFIT started a seasonal gardening group where individuals cultivate and nurture flowering plants, herbs and vegetables from seed to bloom. Participants have expressed that they especially enjoy observing plant growth and sharing the harvest.
- The program started Fun Day Mondays where movie nights and board game nights happen each month. Participants enjoy socializing and building friendships at these events.
- 53 adults with diverse abilities received services to achieve their Employment, Community Based, and/or Supported Living goals.



Gardening Group From left to right Amelia Hurst, Erin Shippy, Flordeliza Corpuz, Lillian Schoeber

Challenges:

- For the reporting year, The CFIT manager took on additional responsibilities as Co-Executive Director of NCARES. This had some impact on the CFIT program's capacity. Since the hiring of our new Executive Director, CFIT has been back to regular operations.

“

Six and a half years of my life has been shaped by the kind folks at CFIT. Without them, I doubt that I would be the driven and confident man that I am today.

-Lee Coates, CFIT Participant

”

Photo of Lee preparing for a D&D learning session. Lee works at Nelson CARES facilitating a weekly Dungeons and Dragons group for individuals with diverse abilities.



74%

of individuals are meeting their employment goals

88%

of individuals are meeting their community-based goals

79%

of individuals are meeting their supported living goals

SERVICES FOR COMMUNITY LIVING - STAFFED LIVING

Services for Community Living (SCL) provides support for people with developmental disabilities and complex health care needs with the aim of helping them live their lives to the fullest. Through SCL, Nelson CARES Society provides individual support and assistance for adults in three homes in Nelson.



Highlights

- Full resident capacity – There are 12 individuals we support in staffed living.
- Full capacity of staffing including casual and permanent employees (50 people.)
- Secured a new training grant for Supervisors and Managers to better support their work in community.

Challenges

- The program has been moving through an important cultural shift, with staff adopting person first language, and building their knowledge of the history of Community Living, autonomy and dignity of risk for the individuals we serve. As a result policies, processes and communication will continue to adapt and change as the program evolves.

“

Jimmy's sisters are grateful for the excellent care he has received for decades from NCARES.

”

50

*People
employed*

**3
HOUSES**

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

12

*Individuals
served*

Nelson Committee on Homelessness

Nelson Committee on Homelessness (NCOH) brings together organizations to address homelessness and affordable housing through collaboration. It supports initiatives, and researches issues to guide effective action. Its efforts have helped launch programs like the Nelson Food Cupboard, Stepping Stones Shelter, and street outreach services.

Highlights

- After the HUB closed, NCOH launched a Temporary Drop-In Center at the Salvation Army, operating 1-2 days a week. The service supported over 2,400 visits with food, clothing, medical care, showers, harm reduction, and referrals. It also serves as a Coordinated Access intake site. Efforts are underway to secure a permanent space and funding.
- Developing Nelson's Coordinated Access system to connect individuals with housing through a collaborative case management approach.
- In April 2025, a partnership with Circle of Indigenous Nations launched a new Aboriginal Community Liaison role. The Liaison supports Indigenous individuals facing homelessness and participates in both Coordinated Housing Access Team services and Drop-In services.



12

Community
meetings

3619

Meals
served

1278

Clothes
provided



Challenges

- Work continues on the Alignment Project with BC Housing and Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada to integrate the Reaching Home Coordinated Access system with the goals of the Belonging in BC initiative.
- Zero% vacancy and limited housing resources continue to be a challenge for Coordinated Access to run more effectively.
- NCOH is actively exploring sustainable funding options for a permanent drop-in and program space.

Kootenay Seniors

Kootenay Seniors provides supports that allow seniors to live with dignity and joy, participate in their communities, and remain in their own homes as long as possible.



1109

Cleaning appointments

603

Meals provided

400

Rides provided

Highlights

- We continue to expand our weekly schedule of events and programs with consistent growth and attendance. Social meals, wellness classes, fitness classes and special events have had greater participation and community engagement. These efforts help to reduce isolation and promote healthy aging.
- More individuals are accessing our Better at Home Services. The volunteer driver program provides low-cost, reliable rides for seniors to medical and non-medical appointments. Light housekeeping is provided on a sliding scale and supports seniors to live safely and comfortably in their own home.
- These programs and activities reduce the strain on family caregivers and allow seniors to age in place.

Challenges

“The Volunteer Driver Program is invaluable.”

- Having enough volunteers to support the programs.
- Kootenay Seniors relies on core funding that is unsustainable over the long-term.

“I enjoy the socialization and meeting new people. You make us feel welcome and at home.”

“I really enjoy the sense of community.”

276

Events / Activities

2824

Seniors in attendance at events



Coldest Night Of The Year

Coldest Night of the Year (CNOY) raises funds that stay in the community to fund the Ready for Home Program operating out of Ward Street Place. The Ready for Home program supports those residents in navigating healthcare, government documents, and many other challenges that allow them to remain safely housed.



Photos by: Barbarich Photography

2025 marked the 11th year that Nelson CARES Society has hosted the annual Coldest Night of the Year fundraiser.

The goal was raising funds to support the Ready for Home Program that operates out of Ward Street Place and supports those residents to stay safely housed.

With over 35 teams and 220 walkers the event was another success. The board, staff, and volunteers want to give a heartfelt thanks to the community for coming out to support this important fundraising event.

\$75,950

*Raised for
Ready for
Home*

\$24,900

in sponsorship



75

Volunteers

36

Teams

“ Another great event and demonstration of community supporting community. ”



220

Walkers

Coldest Night of the Year Sponsors

Funds raised by the teams, individuals, and sponsors stay in the community to fund the Ready for Home Program operating out of Ward Street Place. The Ready for Home program supports those residents in navigating healthcare, government documents, and many other challenges that allow them to remain safely housed.

LEAD SPONSOR

Nelson & District Credit Union

MEDIA SPONSORS

Kootenay Co-op Radio
Vista Radio

ROUTE SPONSORS

Rod Taylor Design
North Mountain Construction
Nelson Orthodontics
CitySpaces Consulting Ltd.
Nelson Ford
Kootenay Co-op Country Store
Derek Diener & Melanie Ward Mortgage Brokers
Terus Construction

SUPPORTING SPONSORS

Hemlock Homes
Doane Grant Thorton LLP
Harmony Engineering
Nelson Home Building Centre
Ellenwood Homes
BC Housing
Urban Systems

Our Funders



Our Community Partners



Our Donors

Donors from April 1, 2024 - March 31, 2025

Aaron Korbacher	Jason Stewart	Nicholas Parsons
Alexandria Purdy	Jay Wright	Page Wasson
Alison Hutchison	Jim Pattison Development	Pamela Loeppky
Allison Lutz	John Olson	Patricia Rose
Anita Jean Simpson	Joseph Chirico	Pegasis McGauley
Belinda Puttnam	Kathleen Neudorf	Phyllis Nash
Benjiman Portz	Kathryn Newsom	Raymond Simoni
Bruce Gardave	Kathryn Woodward	Richard Bayliss
Carol Ross	Kim Poole	Rita Deane
Catherine Levesque	Kristina Lidstone	Robert De Jonge
Charles Zinkan	Larry Bickerton	Robin Rowley
Cherese Munro	Laura Tiberti	Sadie Yancey
Chester Emery	Laura Zimmerman	Sandra England
Christine Halleran	Len MacCharles	Sandra Klan
Christopher Anthony	Marcella Mugford	Sara Yancey
Colleen and Aldo Doratti	Marcio Teixeira da Silva	Sarah Sherk
Craig Berg	Margot Waterer	Sheila Ann Ziola
Daphne Powell	Marie Boyle	Stephanie Myers
Dave Kikosewin-Holden	Marilyn Somers	Stephen Lones
Deirdre Collier	Mark Smith	Stuart Mackinnon -
Denise Morris	Mary Barnes	Willow Wolf
Dey Stewart	Mercedes Baines	Sue Adam
Donna Macdonald	Merriene Margaret Duncan	Susan Anderson
Dr Deanna Teichrob	Michael Bancroft	Susan Forster
Gail and Nelson Russell/Ames	Michael Lazier	Sylvia Reimer
Heather Yule	Michelle Mungall	Ursula Heller
Jane Little	Miriam Williams	Walter Podmoroff
Jane Merks	Nadia Landry	Wayne and Elizabeth Hohn
	Neil McIntosh	

Our Donors (Businesses)

Donors from April 1, 2024 - March 31, 2025

Bears Furniture & Appliances

CanAm Telecom

Capitol Theatre

CGM Plumbing & Heating Ltd.

Dominos

Kootenay Co-op Grocery

Kootenay Co-op Radio

Positive Apparel

Prestige Lakeside Resort

Rev. David Burrows and the
Congregation of St. Saviors
Anglican church

Save-On Foods

Shambala Music Festival

SHARE Nelson

Nelson International Mural
Fest

Nelson Community Food
Centre

Nelson United Church
Women

Oso Negro

Shoreline Electric

SK Electronics Ltd.

St. Saviour's Pro -
Cathedral Anglican Church

Torchlight Brewing

Provincial Employees -
Community Services Fund

Financials

Nelson CARES Society
2024 - 2025 Financial Statement Summary
From the Audited Financial Statements

	2025	2024
Summarized Statement of Financial Position		
Assets		
Current assets	\$ 5,204,519	\$ 3,444,965
Replacement reserve cash	571,078	505,129
Tangible capital assets	43,943,954	42,614,181
	49,719,551	46,564,275
Liabilities		
Current liabilities	18,058,641	12,947,903
Long-term debt	30,594,158	31,832,158
Deferred contributions related to capital assets	1,860,940	1,871,446
Replacement reserves	571,078	505,129
Net Assets		
Invested in capital assets	(3,064,214)	(2,467,076)
Internally restricted net assets	822,461	774,611
Unrestricted net assets	876,487	1,100,104
	\$ 49,719,551	\$ 46,564,275
Summarized Statement of Operations		
Revenues		
Grants	\$ 8,488,413	\$ 8,723,504
Rent contributions and subsidies	2,268,945	2,192,612
BC Housing loan forgiveness	598,616	59,713
Amortization of deferred capital contributions	183,814	143,920
Donations	148,170	158,474
Fee for service	177,096	171,583
Gain on sale of tangible capital assets	-	22,308
Interest and sundry	26,797	29,124
	11,891,851	11,501,238
Expenses		
Wages and employee benefits	6,441,956	6,815,780
Amortization	2,245,792	2,061,639
Telephone and utilities	632,800	610,364
Repairs and maintenance	974,999	827,657
Interest	694,322	709,548
Program costs	310,858	360,419
Rent	130,660	205,761
Special projects	294,582	226,538
Professional fees	132,917	76,699
Insurance	330,809	307,030
Replacement reserve expenditures	135,296	34,904
Office and administration	112,109	82,278
Travel and staff development	49,070	75,970
Property tax	118,523	115,960
Vehicle costs	23,518	30,686
Licenses and dues	5,535	9,552
Other expenses and write-offs	31,010	-
	12,664,756	12,550,785
Net deficiency of expenses over revenues per audited F/S	\$ (772,905)	\$ (1,049,547)
Items not affecting cash		
Amortization	2,245,792	2,061,639
Amortization of capital contribution	(183,814)	(143,920)
Additions to deferred contributions	173,308	210,285
Gain on sale of tangible capital assets	-	(22,308)
BC Housing loan forgiveness	(598,616)	(59,713)
Operating income before financing and investing activities	\$ 863,765	\$ 996,436

Please refer to the audited financial statements for more detailed information