



# 2021 – 2022 Annual Report

## *Resilience & Reconnection*

Since 1972, Nelson Community Services has been offering counselling & support in and around our community. With each person & family we assist, we focus on our vision of a compassionate & empowered community where families, youth & individuals receive the supports & services they need to live dignified, resilient, and hopeful lives.

# A Message From Our Board Chair & Executive Director

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This past year we continued to journey through the effects of the pandemic. Our staff teams worked diligently to ensure the well-being of our clients and each other as we made our way through the uncharted territory of the global pandemic. Together, we found innovative ways to meet the growing needs of individuals and families in our community. This would not have been possible without the staff of NCS and their unwavering commitment and readiness to respond to challenges.

With COVID Recovery Funding through the Federal Government, we have been able to enhance our Stopping the Violence Counselling and Women's Outreach programs to meet the increased needs of those experiencing gender-based violence in our communities.

The overall theme we have chosen for this year's Annual Report is 'Resilience & Reconnection'. We warmly invite you to read reflections from each of our program areas in the report that follows.

The Board of Directors would like to acknowledge and thank Kathleen Newson who was appointed Executive Director in October 2021. With great respect and appreciation, we thank her for the fresh perspectives she brought to the agency along with her collaborative approach to leadership.

As the newly appointed Executive Director of NCS, I would like to thank the Board of Directors, management team, and all staff for their commitment to the community and to the clients we serve. Your extraordinary dedication is what got us through this difficult time and is also what will move us forward as we reconnect with each other. I look forward to celebrating our resilience and reconnecting in new and different ways in the year ahead.

As NCS Board Chair, it has been a privilege to be a director for NCS and as it is my last term on the board, I am grateful for the experience. It has been an honour to serve the community by supporting such a committed agency. NCS provides quality services within the region, and I have been greatly humbled by the staff's commitment to their clients. I enjoyed working with the board members who have been engaged and committed to the agency. They're a great group of people who serve with integrity and commitment. I will miss everyone but hope to stay connected. I wish the board, Anna, and the staff all the best. I thank you for sharing your professional lives with me.



Cathy Leugner, Board Chair




Anna Maskerine, Executive Director





1,133

In 2021 -2022  
NCS served 1,133 clients  
(families, youth, individuals)  
across 13 programs.



# ‘Resilience & Reconnection’ Reflections From Across Our Programs

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## AIMEE BEAULIEU TRANSITION HOUSE

It is always difficult leaving an abusive situation and the COVID-19 pandemic presented additional barriers for women and children in doing so, including concerns about exposure to health risks, uncertainty about the state of services, to name a few. In spite of that, women reached out for support, accessed safe shelter and support in an effort to keep themselves and their children safe, and showing great determination and resilience.

COVID presented challenges for the Transition House program itself with fluctuating COVID requirements, the necessity for longer stays and extended support in order to respond to the increase and severity of domestic violence.

Through this time, the staff at Aimee Beaulieu Transition House demonstrated extraordinary commitment to the work they do and to supporting one another. What a testament to their own resiliency and the importance of connection.

As I look to the work ahead, it gives me great pleasure to welcome Milena Bieri as the new Program Manager of Aimee Beaulieu Transition House and to know that the program is in both compassionate and capable hands.

*~ Anna Maskerine & Milena Bieri | Aimee Beaulieu Transition House*





## CICADA PLACE

Throughout the pandemic, the youth residing at Cicada Place have seen their daily lives shift in challenging ways. For a large portion of the pandemic, Cicada Place residents were not allowed guests over and had to follow strict protocols within the building. For youth seeking independence and trying to establish a new path for themselves, COVID-19 created an even more difficult journey on the road to adulthood. As a team, we are proud to have walked with them along the road during the arduous journey over the pandemic with the extra hurdles COVID created. The youth at Cicada have displayed exemplary resilience and perseverance over the last year.

As we round the corner of the pandemic, Cicada Place Programming is starting up again. The weekly group is underway, where Cicada Place residents meet weekly to connect, share a meal and gain important life skills. During the first few sessions, our team noticed the youth were on their devices minimally, willing to use their own time to engage in groups longer than expected and form new friendships with each other. It's a privilege for our team to witness a natural and organic connection with program participants after a long year of no group sessions. One of the residents said it best as they left the group "my face hurts from smiling and laughing so much."

*~ Christine Vanlerberg, Darshan Nicholchuck & Joyce Dahms-Whiffen / Cicada Place*

## CHILD & YOUTH COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH

This past year in reflection has been dynamic and ever-changing. Consistent through this time has been the need for services for children, youth, and families and clinicians and clients adapting to moving in and out of virtual and in-person support.

What stands out the most about this time has been the underlying humanity shown by clients, whether around the use of virtual supports, mask-wearing, or the courtesy of cancelling appointments when illness was present, or if ill, and having comfort in moving to a virtual appointment.

Clinician care of others is a given, but it has been so heart-warming to have the experience of our clients caring regarding our wellbeing in the work as well.

*~ Roger Luscombe / Child & Youth Mental Health Program*

## FAMILY SUPPORT

As I reflect on how to highlight our strengths in coming through to this stage of the pandemic, I can't help but think of the struggles, changes, and adaptations our organization has experienced, which are mirrored and magnified in the lives of the families we work with in the Family Support (FSW) program.

As we seek to find stability and make sense of our ever-changing environments, this too is what our clients are seeking. What I see in our clients is the ongoing need as well as the ongoing effort it takes to keep rising after an upset.

Seeking connection and being bridged to community and others is the best way we can find our tribe and feel supported to rise again ...this is resilience built through connection and reconnection....

Reaching out, being with, as well as offering safety and support - over and over again - until safety, love for self and a supportive tribe can be found. That is the work of the family support team and the way we find joy, hope and the resilience to keep doing the work.

Connection to the families we support, and other professionals supporting our community, keeps us all growing towards a healthier way of living and a more supportive and inclusive community. The Family Support team at NCS holds that vision and continues to support these connections in ourselves, our clients, and our community.

*~ Tara Gray on behalf of the Family Support Team  
(Donna Wright, Desiree Sfyhuck, Krista Robson & Tara Gray) | Family Support Program*

## HOMELESS PREVENTION

One of the highlights of the Homeless Prevention Program over the last year has been the ability to reconnect with clients in person. As many of our services have noted, clients experienced more isolation and disconnect during the pandemic.

Since returning to in-person meetings, the benefits of having the opportunity to be face-to-face and in-person has never been more apparent.

*~ Mike McGaw & Cheryl Smith | Homeless Prevention Program*





## PEACE CHILD COUNSELLING

Adaptability, grit, and resilience have been inspirational hallmarks of the past few years at NCS. In the PEACE child counselling program that provides support to kids, youth, and families that have experienced trauma, these traits were particularly evident in child and youth clients, and also in the response of NCS in finding ways to offer service in the face of COVID restrictions.

For our school-based program, clients discovered new coping skills to feel comfortable returning to school in person in order to be reconnected with teaching staff and peers. Those clients were able to demonstrate resilience to overcome their fears and manage their anxiety to return to their classroom. Many have gone on to join after-school groups and community programming. It has been wonderful to witness their confidence soar.

As people continue to deal with trauma in their lives and come through stressors on a global scale, it is so clear how vital factors such as creativity, connection, strength, and the capacity to give and receive support nurturing resilience; in getting through hard times while staying as well as possible.

As individuals, family, and community members, the resolve to nurture protective factors against trauma and feed resilience in ourselves and the children and youth in our lives will continue to have tremendous, lasting impacts on health and wellness.

May we all keep drawing on this resilience as we face new challenges.

*~ Cathy Swanston, Lindsay Dew, & Roger Luscombe /  
PEACE Program*





## STOPPING THE VIOLENCE

Over the past year, the Stopping the Violence Counselling (STV) program has seen a variety of shifts and changes to better meet our client base. Throughout the pandemic, we have been happy to adapt to new protocols and meet our clients in the best way possible. The flexibility embodied by the STV program has been one of our greatest strengths during this challenging time. This has been a time that has truly embodied resilience and reconnection. As COVID protocols have shifted we have been able to mostly return to in-person sessions with the option of video or phone sessions when appropriate and supportive.

It has always been a priority of the STV program to connect with clients in a way that feels supportive and safe, and so it has been wonderful to reconnect in the office and build relationships in this way again while also holding additional options that may feel like a better fit for some clients.

This year the program has increased in capacity due to additional limited funding. We now employ three part-time counsellors, although likely for a limited time. This has created a shorter wait time for clients and creates greater connection and support for the counsellors employed.

The STV counsellors have continued to undertake additional study and professional development in relation to the work of relational trauma. Within this last year, it has been a time of learning in terms of personal self-care and sustainability within the work as well, and we are happy to acknowledge a greater understanding of the holistic practice of taking care of ourselves in order to be fully present for others in our positions.

Overall, the greatest example of resilience and reconnection we have witnessed has been in working with our clients. Time and again we have witnessed profound resilience and the deeply human need for connection and how that can drive all of us to move toward growth and healing.

As always it is an honour to sit with the clients we serve and walk with them on their journey.

*~ Jessica Cole, Melanie Jones & Brittan McClay | Stopping the Violence Program*



## STREET OUTREACH

It was remarkable watching the downtown streets come back to life. The sidewalks seemed to fill with a unique mix of caution and celebration. It wasn't long ago that the parking spaces on Baker St were mostly vacant. Food was served to patrons through doors that only opened momentarily. There was a critical scarcity of washrooms. I was taking zoom calls in my car and meeting clients in empty parking lots. A skeleton crew of support workers would venture out, albeit in a cityscape that verged on apocalyptic. The people we served were still out there and the need was greater than ever before.

Reflecting back, it feels surreal. Now the streets are buzzing – cramped even – and it's a struggle to find parking. The shops and restaurants are full. People can be overheard talking about parties and concerts.

It was an extraordinarily difficult world for a moment. The everyday challenges of survival felt even further away – behind even more closed doors. Many people in our community did not have a safe place of their own to shield themselves from exposure. Those who did, often still relied on other services to meet their needs. People congregated in camps, at the downtown drop-in space, in city parks, and on the otherwise quiet streets.

It's good to have everyone else back. It takes an entire community to care for those most vulnerable. It's comforting to see people sharing meals at the same table without plexiglass. It's refreshing to book in-person appointments and to offer rides to the dentist. It's nice to pass a phone to a colleague without soaking it in sanitizer. The hardships faced by those we serve are astounding. It feels a tiny bit better when we can see each other smile.

*~Ryall Guilianno, Lyann Hunter & Jeremy Kelly | Nelson Street Outreach Program*

## FAMILY COUNSELLING

As we emerge from the COVID pandemic, I've had the remarkable experience of meeting clients in person whom I had come to know from (often grainy) screen images. This has raised my awareness of the value of face-to-face connection. I do feel that I understand them more deeply now.

On the other hand, I've been struck by how much we were able to accomplish by phone, zoom, and so on. If at first, it felt like the pandemic was going to be an overwhelming challenge to the work we do, I've discovered that both my clients and the agency have been capable of a degree of adaptability and flexibility that I wouldn't have anticipated. Humans find a way.

*~ Toumbi Heynen | Family Counselling Program*



## WOMEN'S OUTREACH

Women have been disproportionately affected over the last number of years. Not only due to the rise of domestic violence but also by carrying much of the unpaid emotional and domestic responsibility of caring for families and communities. I am continually amazed at the strength, courage, and ability to adapt and transform adversity that the women we support continue to have despite the immense challenges they face.

As we move through these changing times we will continue to empower and hold one another up in the fight against gender inequality.

*~ Joanna Talecka | Women's Outreach Program*

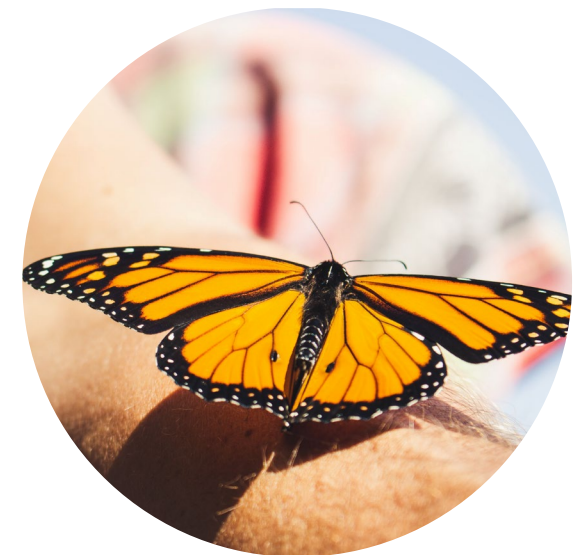
## YOUTH OUTREACH

Since the January launch of the Youth Outreach Counsellor position 46 youth have received support services and over 160 of clients' service goals have been achieved. A key service goal has been integrating youth at risk back into attending school on a full-time basis.

An important shift from COVID-19 related restrictions was the Youth Leadership Journey Program which allowed youth to connect in a group setting on a weekly basis. Participants expressed experiencing a significant positive impact in their communication skills and felt empowered to engage in their communities more actively.

Throughout this past year, I have admired clients' resiliency and capability to adapt and evolve to their ever-changing circumstances. It truly is a privilege and honour to witness clients receive their first job, first pay cheque, a driver's license, a passing grade, postsecondary acceptance letter, obtain safe and secure housing, engage in community groups, and discover their gifts and talents within them.

*~ Rick Kutzner | Youth Outreach Program*



# Words & Reflections From Our Clients

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“I’m so grateful for this place and for the offering of cultural programming. The support I received from an Elder was more than I’d felt in years.”

“I am a success story. You should be proud of the work you do. You made a huge impact in my life, and I wouldn’t be where I am today without Cicada Place.”

This was the hardest thing I’ve ever done in my life. I wouldn’t have been able to leave, really leave for good, without the help of Transition House. I can’t bring myself to think of what would have happened to me and my son if I hadn’t left.”



# Artist & Artwork Spotlight

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Next time you visit us at Nelson Community Services, we warmly invite you to take in this beautiful and meaningful art piece, created and gifted to us by Kim Strathopolous (Harvest), and proudly on display in our reception area.

The theme is 'Secure Attachment' and Harvest shares these words on the meaning embodied in the piece, "a mother embraces her troubled child with presence and empathy. Empowered by the interaction the child soon scrambles from her lap to explore once again. This, I believe, is the heartbeat of Nelson Community Services. This piece has been gifted to symbolize the support, healing, and collaboration that NCS holds for its community."

Her work is created from the driftwood, pine needles, and soapstone of this Sinixt, Ktunaxa, and Sylx territorial land. Within it, burned into a piece of wood that came from one branch - symbolizing connection and oneness - are the words NCS staff and board members provided when asked for a single word to describe the intention of their work with NCS.

These words are ~ Empowerment, Intention, Empathy, Heart, Purpose, Love, Health, Relational Reclamation, Integral, Inclusive, Presence, Ingenuity, Hope, Nature, Responsive, Enrichment, Inspirational, Compassionate, inquiry, Curiosity, Acceptance, Authentic, Efficiency, Heartbeat, A Blessing, Empowered, Accountability, Inclusive, Helpful, Compassion, Laughter, Connection, Resilience, Transition, Generosity, Inspiration, Safe Haven.

We are deeply grateful for this gift and to hold it within our welcoming space at Nelson Community Services.





# Financial Breakdown | 2021 – 2022

## 2021 – 2022 Revenue

Ministry for Children and Family Development	880,291
BC Housing	1,043,332
Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General	314,378
Other Grants	349,760
Donations	23,787
Interest/Sundry	20,354
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,631,902</b>

## 2021 – 2022 Expenses

Administration	57,680	2% of budget
Building Expenses	134,683	5% of budget
Program Expenses	341,223	13% of budget
COVID Adaptations	27,740	1% of budget
Salaries/Benefits	2,041,285	79% of budget
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,602,611</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Our Funders

BC Ministry of Children and Family Development, Public Safety and Solicitor General, BC Housing, Interior Health Authority, School District 8, Kootenay Career Development Society, Osprey Community Foundation, Columbia Basin Trust, BC Society of Transition Houses, Reaching Home Funds via NCOH, Women’s Shelters Canada, Civil Forfeiture Office

## Our Donors

We are thankful to all our donors this past year. Your contributions are so valued and directly support families, youth, and individuals within our local community.

# Heartfelt Gratitude

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We could not do all we do without the generous support and donations from our community. We are grateful for our community partners and stakeholders who collaborate with us in this important work.

Nelson Community Services acknowledges that the land upon which we offer our services is the traditional territory of the peoples who have lived here for thousands of years - the Ktunaxa, the Sylix, and the Sinixt. We respect and honour all our relations.



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