



2023 – 2024 Annual Report

Grounded & Growing

Since 1972, Nelson Community Services has been offering counselling & support in & 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

This past year has seen both challenges and accomplishments and has mostly brought about change. There have been renewed efforts that echo NCS's dedication to staff well-being, which saw several wellness initiatives, including implementing a new Modified Work Week that supports work-life balance. This shift happened following a 6-month pilot that included research to measure the impacts of such a change. An NCS Leadership Development Program was also born out of a commitment to support staff development, growth, and change within the agency.

In alignment with our new four-year Strategic Plan and agency values, there was a renewed focus on thoughtful and purposeful service delivery to families, youth, and individuals. NCS has been successful with several grant applications this period, supporting our work.

The theme of this year's Annual Report is **"Grounded & Growing."** There seems to be no better premise to summarize this year, which marked the 25th Anniversary of Cicada Place for Youth and saw new programs come to the agency: Sexual Assault Services (SAS) and Supported Rent Supplement Program (SRSP), something that hasn't happened in several years.

This year could only have unfolded as it did with the dedication of the Board, Management team, and Staff. I especially want to thank Program Director Joyce Dahms Whiffen for her commitment and for taking on additional responsibilities in my absence. A personal thank you to Joyce, the Board, Program Manager Milena, and all the staff at NCS for their care and support. The NCS Board wishes to personally thank Anna, our Executive Director, for working through a challenging time and Joyce for filling in as Acting Executive Director.

And last, it cannot be said enough that it's all of you who carry out our Mission through your work every day. We are honored to work alongside you and tremendously grateful to all of you.



Tracey Fellows, Board Chair



Anna Maskerine, Executive Director

1,109

In 2023 -2024
NCS served 1,109 clients
(families, youth, individuals)

Inside This Year's Annual Report...

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We warmly invite you to visit our website to learn about our services, programs & more: servicesfyi.ca. Stay tuned to our Facebook page [@servicesfyi](#) for news & updates throughout the year.



Celebrating 25 Years of Cicada Place: A Legacy of Support & Transformation for Youth

On May 1st, 1999, Cicada Place opened its doors to offer a unique supported housing program for youth ages 16-22. Developed to meet the needs of Nelson's youth, Cicada Place was the first purpose-built youth-specific building in British Columbia. Cicada Place has been recognized both provincially and nationally as a best practice in serving youth.

Since opening, approximately 250 youth have called Cicada Place home. Stays have ranged from a couple of months to three or more years; however, the average stay has been sixteen months. With the growing shortage of affordable housing, we are finding youth staying longer as they face the challenges of transitioning into the community.

In Chinese folklore, a cicada symbolizes "rebirth." Cicada Place was built on the property that once housed the Chinese Union Hall. Many youth are seeking rebirth or a second chance on their journey to independence. Youth have made incredible transformations while living at Cicada Place and have gone on to achieve their life goals of becoming teachers, tradespersons, clinical counsellors, parents, hair stylists, business owners, and more.

Paramount to our program's success has been creating an environment where our residents feel safe and supported while they grow and develop into the adults they want to be.



Since opening,
250 youth
have called
Cicada Place
home.

Words & Reflections from Cicada Youth

“Being here has helped me to get on the right track and has taken a lot of stress out of my life because I have a safe place to call home. I have a sense of calm and well-being for the first time in a long time and can now focus on elevating into adulthood. I was a caterpillar when I came into Cicada Place, and now I am a butterfly, continuing to spread my wings, becoming the person I deserve to be!”
- *New resident*

“Cicada was exactly what I needed at the exact time I needed it. A balanced resource that assists in transitioning you where you're at while still granting independence is something to cherish in a community. I am so beyond grateful towards the people there and my experience.” - *Former Resident*

“Cicada place has been an anchoring experience in my life. The life-skills I missed out on growing up I learned here, and I can take them with me wherever I go.” - *Current Resident*





Expanding Support for Survivors: Sexual Assault Services Launches in Nelson & Nakusp

This year saw the dream of having more fulsome services for those who experience sexual assault come to fruition. After several years of grant funding, an opportunity for permanent funding through the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General was successful through procurement. What was previously the Nelson Sexual Assault Response Team (NSART) was replaced by our new permanent Sexual Assault Services (SAS) Program, which launched in the late summer of 2023 and has a geographical catchment area of Nelson and Nakusp.

The SAS program aims to provide vital support and counseling services to survivors of sexual assault in the Nelson and Nakusp areas. It also allows for increased Community-Based Victim Services (CBVS) hours through a subcontract we provide to Nelson CARES (Advocacy Centre). In the future, the third facet of the funding will provide in-person support to survivors who present at Kootenay Lake Hospital. Program staff was hired in August 2023 to continue our commitment to fostering a safe and supportive environment for all individuals affected by sexual violence.

This year saw the dream of having more fulsome services for those who experience sexual assault come to fruition - with permanent funding for the Sexual Assault Services (SAS) program, serving Nelson & Nakusp.

Since the funding announcement, we have made significant strides in developing our SAS program...

Our Program Coordinator and Crisis Counselor have been actively networking with community partners and service providers to enhance program visibility and recognition of this new service. As part of her efforts, we have also undergone a rebranding process, creating new promotional materials that highlight the services offered. These materials have been shared with targeted locations in the community to ensure that information reaches those who may benefit from our program.

Our SAS Coordinator has worked diligently with various local organizations and community partners to ensure our services remain inclusive and accessible. That hard work has shown itself through increased referrals to the program over time.

A commitment to collaborative relationships remains a key component of this program. As such, the SAS program dovetails well with NCS's existing Stopping the Violence Program (STV), Women's Outreach, and Aimee Beaulieu Transition House (ABTH). The latter (ABTH) holds the 24/7 Anti-violence Crisis line and whose staff are trained and skilled in responding to disclosures of sexual assault. SAS staff is part of the Nelson Violence Against Women in Relationships Committee (VAWIR) and Safe Kids and Youth (SKY).

With support from The Ending Violence Association of BC (EVA BC), SAS took on a lead role in supporting a training initiated by the Nelson VAWIR Committee. That training saw an estimated fifty attendees (School administration, counsellors, police, Support Workers, and Victim Services from across the tri-city area) come together for training on Third-Party Reporting and Responding to Disclosures of sexual assault.

We couldn't be more pleased to include SAS in our portfolio of services for those who experience violence. Special thanks to Cheryl Smith, SAS Coordinator and Crisis Counsellor, for all her work in this program during this period.





New Supported Rent Supplement Program Rolls Out in Nelson

This Spring marked the rollout of the Supported Rent Supplement Program (SRSP) at Nelson Community Services - a collaborative project with BC Housing, Nelson Community Services, Mental Health and Substance Use, Interior Health, and the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction.

The Supported Rent Supplement Program has seen a slow and steady program rollout, along with developing the Coordinated Access for Supportive Housing table in Nelson. This table comprises service providers from numerous nonprofit organizations in our community and Ministry and Interior Health service workers.

The program aims to serve marginalized individuals who are currently experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness with uniquely tailored connections to mental and physical health services as well as cultural, social, and financial support to engage in secure housing in the private market.





Supported Rent Supplement Program Successes

In our first six months of running, our program has supported two clients in precarious housing through our rental supplement distribution. Receiving the subsidy allowed them to focus on their health needs with the security of knowing their housing was no longer in jeopardy.

In the last month, we have also secured housing for two individuals who have been experiencing chronic homelessness in our community. One individual, having been evicted from their home in the fall of last year, has been living outdoors since that time, and the second individual has experienced homelessness for nearly a decade. Both are set to move into their new homes for the month of October.

Supports Offered

For the last six months, we have had the opportunity to provide our clients with landlord mediation, to support open communication between landlord and tenant, assist in creating tenant profiles, support clients in the housing search, build personalized scripts to respond to rental opportunities and provide reliable transportation to view potential properties.

Along with housing support, our clients have been accessing life skills building, including technology support, time and budget management, engagement in healthy dialogue through boundaries and communication practices, warm referrals to numerous community resources, assistance in booking and accompanying appointments, and much more. We are excited to see where the next six months take us!

Special thanks to Leah Thompson, Supported Rental Supplement Program Worker, for all her work in this program during this period.



“Darshan’s ability to triumph over life’s adversities primed him for a career in social services...”

Rising Star: NCS’s Darshan Nicklolchuk Receives Provincial Award

✦ **Rising Star: Darshan Nickolchuk - NCS Family Support Worker** ✦

The management team at NCS is so proud to announce that Darshan, NCS Family Support Worker, received the Rising Star Award from the Community Social Services Employers Association of BC (CSSEA) this year. Below is the announcement published by CSSEA naming Darshan for the award. At the CSSEA Annual Conference held in Vancouver in October, Darshan was formally presented with his award, with his lovely partner and son present along with our Program Director/Acting Executive Director Joyce Dahms-Whiffen. A video on Darshan’s story is available on our website.

As a soon-to-be father, Darshan Nickolchuk came to NCS as a young 16-year-old seeking housing and support. Thirteen years later, after a series of heartbreaking personal losses, his life came full circle when he returned to the agency as a practicum student. Darshan’s ability to triumph over life’s adversities primed him for a career in social services, as he demonstrated a natural ability to connect with individuals, be they youth in distress, women fleeing violence, or homeless individuals. Darshan approaches individuals with authenticity and kindness, using his warmth to forge relationships with community, colleagues, and other agencies. His willingness to help, whether it involves moving furniture or providing vacation coverage, has not gone unnoticed amongst his colleagues and is why the management team simultaneously and unanimously decided to submit his name as this year’s Rising Star.

FINANCIAL BREAKDOWN | 2023 – 2024

2023 – 2024 Revenue

Ministry for Children and Family Development	976,665
BC Housing	1,281,688
Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General	484,908
Other Grants	372,567
Donations	36,508
Interest/Sundry	20,056
TOTAL	3,172,392

2023 – 2024 Expenses

Administration	97,874	3% of budget
Building & Maintenance Expenses	117,578	4% of budget
Program Expenses	386,174	13% of budget
Office Supplies	23,044	>1% of budget
Salaries/Benefits	2,447,526	79% of budget
TOTAL	3,072,196	100%

Our Funders

BC Ministry of Children and Family Development, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, BC Housing, Interior Health Authority, 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.

Working Together for the Better of our Community...

You will find NCS staff out in the community, working collaboratively with Nelson Mental Health and Substance Use, School District #8, Child and Youth Mental Health, Nelson & District Women's Centre, Safe Kids and Youth (SKY), Ministry for Children and Family Development (MCFD), Freedom Quest, Nelson Police Department, Nelson Interagency Committee, Kootenay Boundary Community Social Services Cooperative (KBCSSC), Nelson Committee on Homelessness (NCOH), Nelson Housing Committee, Violence Against Women in Relationships (VAWIR), Integrated Case Assessment Team (ICAT), to name a few.



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