



Cowichan Lake Community Services Society

2024/2025 Annual Report

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Executive Director's Report

This past year has been one of both challenges and accomplishments for our organization—a year that reminded us of the importance of adaptability, perseverance, and community. As we navigated internal changes and shifts in programming, the constant has been the remarkable dedication of our staff and volunteers. Their willingness to step forward, often in times of uncertainty, has ensured that our services remain strong, reliable, and deeply responsive to the needs of those we serve. They have shown resilience and heart in every aspect of their work. We are also fortunate to be supported by an incredible network of donors, partners, and funders, whose trust and generosity make our work possible. It is because of this shared commitment that we are able to carry out our mission, and I am profoundly grateful for all that has been contributed this year.



Among the challenges we experienced this year was staffing turnover; while we worked to minimize the impact this had on our community and the relationships we have built, we did experience some disruptions to one-on-one services and group programs. Funding has also been an ongoing concern, as we continue to advocate for our programs amidst broader budget cuts. In addition, the service realignment of Cowichan Green Community resulted in us taking full responsibility for the continued offering of the reFRESH Market program through grocery pickup and sorting. While this transition has required additional staff resources and resulted in less food variety, we remain committed to ensuring that community members continue to access this vital support.

Alongside these challenges, we also have much to celebrate. We completed a renovation of our front lobby, creating a more welcoming and accessible space for those we serve. Our Christmas Hamper program was once again a great success, reflecting the generosity of our community and the hard work of our volunteers. We also clarified and strengthened our Child, Youth & Family Services, ensuring that families can access the right supports at the right time. Group programs such as Anger Management, Sober September, and our Summer Program were highlights, each providing safe and supportive opportunities for community members to learn, grow, and connect.

Looking ahead, we are excited to focus on strengthening connections with youth and building consistency in our services. Volunteer recruitment will be a priority, particularly to support program sustainability. We are also excited to be the new facilitators of StrongStart in our community, which creates new opportunities to engage with families and support early learning initiatives. With the continued dedication of our staff, volunteers, and community partners, I am confident that we will meet these goals together!

Jocelyn Lundberg

Executive Director

Our Staff



Lori Paquette
Office Manager



Natalie Brown
WorkBC Case Manager &
Employment Counsellor



Pam McNeal
WorkBC Employment Advisor



Terrance Gibson
Child, Youth & Family Counsellor



Rachel Rogers
Child, Youth & Family Support Worker



David Carlson
Family Development Therapist



Cameron Brown
Community Navigator

Board of Directors

Chair - Patricia Peters

Vice Chair - Paula MacGregor

Secretary/Treasurer - Karen Brouwer

Director - Cindy Kruk

Director - Jillian Bradley

Director - Stephanie Harper

Year At-A-Glance

September 2024

Held **Triple P Positive Parenting** program

Became retailer for **BC Transit's UMO** products

October 2024

Welcomed **David**, our Family Development Therapist, to the team!

Held annual **Family Fun Fair & Halloween Dance** fundraiser

November 2024

Applications for annual **Christmas Hamper** program opened, and **Giving Trees** available in the community

Participated in the **Lake Cowichan Santa Clause Parade**

Launched online platform for e-donations via **Canada Helps**

December 2024

Held annual **Christmas Hamper** program

Hosted **Christmas Luncheon**, a delicious traditional turkey meal open to all members of the community

January 2025

Held 6-week **Working with Anger** workshop for men in the community

Reviewed **Child, Youth & Family** services and re-defined program offerings

February 2025

Switched to electronic record management (EMR) for all programs

Held annual **Community Volunteer Income Tax** program

March 2025

All staff completed 2-day training on **The Mandt System**

Created community connection with **Cowichan Family Caregivers Support Society** to offer 1:1 and groups services at our facility

April 2025

Completed the **Hearts of Our Community** mural project

Entered in to new service agreement to deliver **Reaching Home** program

May 2025

Welcomed **Rachel**, our Child, Youth & Family Support Worker, to the team!

Participated in **B.C. Youth Week**

June 2025

Established **Community Access Shuttle** in response to local transit strike

Facilitated **Kidz Games** at Lake Days

Welcomed **Chelsea**, our summer student with Canada Summer Jobs!

July 2025

Completed renovation of reception area/front lobby

Wild 'n' Well summer program began

August 2025

Signed contract to deliver **StrongStart** program in partnership with School District 79

Registration and kick-off for **Sober September Challenge**

Child, Youth & Family Services

Child & Youth Mental Health

12

New Referrals

15

Clients Served

79

Individual Sessions

Our **Child & Youth Mental Health** services are designed to promote the emotional health & well-being of children and families. It is a community-based service for children & youth who are at risk of developing, or are currently experiencing, a mental health disorder. This program is facilitated by David, our Family Development Therapist.



Strengthening Families

23

New Referrals

63

Clients Served

816

Individual Sessions

The **Strengthening Families** program is focused on promoting the overall the well-being of families. This program is facilitated by Rachel, our Child, Youth and Family Support Worker, who takes a family-centered approach to supporting children and families, focusing on strengthening the overall support system to help families navigate challenges and create a positive environment for growth.

Child, Youth & Family Services

4

Family Preservation
Referrals

The **Family Preservation** program is designed for families whose children are at risk of removal from their homes, or whose children have been removed with a plan for return to family. The intent of the service is to reduce the immediate risks for children, stabilize the family environment and increase families' ability to manage their individual circumstances. Referrals for this program must be made by the Ministry of Children & Family Development (MCFD). With a high staffing turnover at MCFD, referrals to this program have been lower this year as we work to establish awareness amongst local offices and their service providers.

5

Supervised Access
Referrals

Supervised Access provides a safe, supportive, and structured environment for children to maintain and strengthen their relationships with non-custodial parents or family members. The program is designed for families involved in child protection, family reunification, or court-ordered services where supervision during visits is required to ensure the safety and well-being of the child. The goal is to promote positive parent-child interactions while prioritizing the child's physical and emotional safety. Referrals for this program must be made by MCFD.

6

Occupational Therapy
Referrals

Occupational Therapy aims to promote physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health in all the environments where we play, grow, learn, and work. We offer extended therapy for early years and school aged children through this program, for families with access to private funding. Services include: assessments, consultation & observation, direct intervention, equipment justification letters, and transition planning. A relatively new program to Cowichan Lake Community Services, a barrier we have noticed is follow-through on setting up third-party funding after the initial referral.

Child, Youth & Family Services

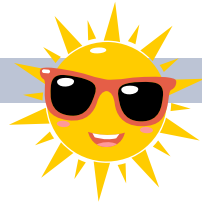
Group Programs



The Clubhouse



While this program took a brief hiatus over the winter due to staffing shortages, we were pleased to once again open The Clubhouse in April 2025! Open to for youth 9-12 years old, The Clubhouse is drop-in program that provides a safe and inclusive environment while promoting social connection, creativity, and personal growth. Whether looking for a quiet place to unwind, someone to talk to, or an opportunity to join group games, art projects, youth are free to choose how they spend their time.



Wild 'n' Well

New this summer, Wild 'n' Well was a twice weekly full day camp for children ages 8-18. This program was well attended throughout the summer, and we successfully reached our registration cap of 12 children. With the support of our summer student, Chelsea, Rachel led this group on both local and out-of-town adventures. Some highlights included visits to a local farm and disc golf course, as well as day trips made possible by our exceptional volunteer drivers, including visiting Malahat SkyWalk, WildPlay, and Port Renfrew.



Lunch Bunch

This program also took a brief hiatus over the winter but was offered at both Palsson Elementary School and Lake Cowichan School from April-June. Led by a Child, Youth & Family Support Worker, the group engages students in cooperative games and movement-based play that promote communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and emotional awareness. Activities are adapted to meet the developmental and sensory needs of each child, with a focus on building confidence, friendships, and a sense of belonging.

Early Years Play Group

With no StrongStart centre in our community this year, we saw a gap in early learning programs. We developed this play group as an opportunity to promote connection and healthy child development, while offering a safe and supportive environment to navigate the joys and challenges that come with parenthood.



Community Programs



Christmas Hampers

Our annual Christmas Hamper program once again reflected the incredible generosity of our community. Thanks to the outpouring of donations and support, we were able to provide food & toy hampers to families and individuals in need, ensuring they could enjoy a warm and nourishing holiday season. We are deeply grateful to every donor, volunteer, and community partner who helped make this program a success.

159

Hampers Provided



Community Partners:

Country Grocer
Lake Cowichan Fire Department
Lake Cowichan Pet Emporium
Bosley's Duncan
Toys, Toiletries & Toques
Lake Cowichan Kraken
Laketown Ranch
Mensch Kitchen & Catering
Thrifty Foods
Save-On-Foods
IDA Pharmacy
Vancouver Island Regional Library - Cowichan Lake Branch
Palsson Elementary School

Lake Cowichan School
RE/MAX Generation
Pemberton Holmes - Lake Cowichan
Jake's At The Lake
Lake Cowichan Chiropractic
Lake House Physio + Therapy
Lake Cowichan 50+ Activity Centre
Lake Cowichan Food Bank

Adult Mental Health

Counselling

27

New Referrals

363

Individual Sessions

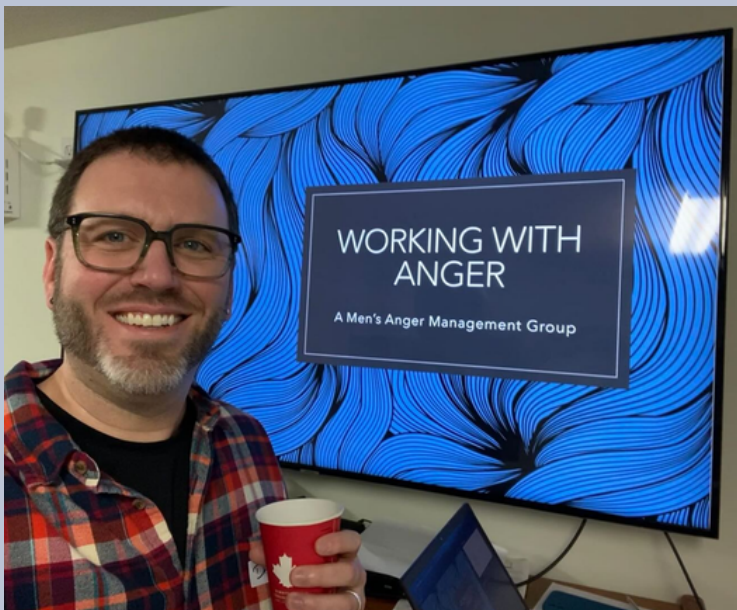
Working With Anger

Last winter we identified a community trend of men struggling to manage their anger in healthy ways. David ran a 6-week Emotional Regulation group for men to better understand and work with the feelings of anger along with ways to cope. It was a successful group with 7 participants; many of which expressed a desire for further sessions or a subsequent group to be run in the future.



Sober September Challenge

The Sober September Challenge is an initiative that came from seeing a need in our community for support around reducing problematic alcohol use. The approach is to create an accessible way for people to take a break from alcohol and examine their relationship to the substance. We've had a good level of interest and people are posting about their Sober September challenge including pictures of their mocktails. To raise awareness and support this initiative, we have turned to social media where David has been creating short videos on alcohol-free drink alternatives, and offering some thoughts on building a healthier relationship with alcohol.



Reaching Home

The Government of Canada's **Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy** aims to prevent and reduce homelessness across Canada by supporting the goals of the **National Housing Strategy**. Cowichan Lake Community Services has received annual funding from United Way B.C. (Central & Northern Vancouver Island) since 2020 to deliver community-based programming in the Cowichan Lake area.



Over three consecutive quarters, our Reaching Home program delivered consistent, high-impact housing prevention and support services to vulnerable individuals in the community. Through personalized casework, emergency interventions, community partnerships, and food security programs, Reaching Home addressed both immediate and long-term housing stability for community members facing economic hardship, housing insecurity, health crises, and systemic barriers.

Our Impact

228

Prevention
Interventions

Includes coverage of emergency essentials (laundry, hygiene, transportation), and rent/utility arrears correction

128

Financial
Interventions

Includes direct financial aid for security/damage deposits, utility reconnection, and rental arrears

92

Navigation
Interventions

Includes assist and support with application planning, advocacy, dispute resolution, and case communications

95

reFRESH
Markets

88

Community
Luncheons

3090

Meals & Groceries
Provided

Reaching Home

Client Success Stories

We saved a senior from wrongful eviction, despite concentrated efforts from her landlord. With our support, she successfully filed for dispute resolution, avoided displacement, and retained housing near her aging mother.

A long-time community member with cognitive challenges post-accident, has been living in a rental trailer in poor condition. This has for long time, put a large demand on him to be seeking his own way to repair and complete maintenance, while living on incredibly limited income requiring resourcefulness. We connected him with health services, assisted his transition into supported housing, and stabilized his situation through multi-agency collaboration facilitated by Cowichan Lake Community Services.

Another community member who was a long-time recipient and participant in our services and programs, faced housing loss after a long-term rental was sold. Her and her son lived together to be able to afford to live off of their meager Person with Disabilities incomes. CLCS support helped her secure pet-friendly housing and avoid unmanageable debt.

Future Priorities

- Secure ongoing funding to scale up proven interventions (e.g., emergency financial supports, food programs).
- Enhance digital support tools for clients lacking computer literacy or telecom access.
- Advocate for integrated transportation solutions in rural areas to prevent service isolation.
- Continue investing in peer-led and culturally attuned service delivery models.

Employment Services

Over the past year, WorkBC Lake Cowichan has continued to provide effective support to those seeking employment in our community. While the year brought its share of challenges—the transit strike being paramount—we also celebrated many milestones and success stories that demonstrate the impact of our programs and the resilience of our clients.

Use of Supports & Programs

51

Clients Transitioned Into
Sustainment

20

Clients at 24-weeks
of Employment

18

Clients at 52-weeks
of Employment

- The **Wage Subsidy program** was actively promoted and utilized, helping clients secure meaningful employment while providing employers with an incentive to hire locally.
- **Occupational Skills Training (OST)** programs continues to be vital for clients, with multiple individuals completing certifications that have expanded their career prospects. This year, we helped Skills Training clients access a total of \$60,000 in living supports, \$26,500 in tuition, \$9,450 for books and supplies, and \$17,613 for commuting supports.
- Clients successfully completed programs including Educational Assistant, Community Support, HVAC, and Bookkeeping moving into roles where their new skills are directly applied.
- These figures reflect OST programming alone and do not include the thousands accessed for short-term certifications such as Food Safe, Serving It Right, and Medical Terminology, as well as job start supports such as essential work gear and commuting assistance.
- Financial supports and flexible funding have enabled clients to overcome barriers that could have otherwise prevented them from pursuing or sustaining employment.
- While not formally tracked, we continue to provide resume and job search supports for community members who may not qualify for full WorkBC services or are not ready to commit to case management. Sometimes the best support is simply helping someone prepare a resume and allowing them to move forward independently.

Community Engagement

- Hosted outreach tables at **Lake Cowichan Country Grocer**
- Delivered an interview workshop for the **Cowichan Lake Ambassador Program**
- Attended job fairs and employer sessions with **WorkBC Duncan**
- Maintained regular contact with local businesses to share information and ensure employers are aware of the supports available to them

Employment Services

Client Success Stories

HVAC Graduate

Overcoming Barriers and Building a Career

One of the year's best outcomes has been that of a single parent who began with us by completing their GED through our Adult Basic Education program. With determination and support, he went on to complete his first year of HVAC training through our Occupational Skills Training program. After a difficult search and a Wage Subsidy that did not work out, he has secured employment with a Duncan-based company that believes in his potential. This placement has provided him with financial security and the experience and hours required to move forward with his apprenticeship.

Agriculture PBLMT

Building Confidence Through Structure

Two clients facing challenges with social engagement and confidence, were accepted into the Cowichan Green Community's Project-Based Labour Market Training (PBLMT) program. Through structured, hands-on agricultural work, they have not only been developing new skills but also a sense of purpose and routine. For both clients, this program has been instrumental in building the confidence needed to pursue future employment opportunities.

Educational Assistant

Training to Long-Term Success

A single mother with a disability had worked with us closely for over a year before going into OST. She completed the Educational Assistant and Community Support program, excelling academically and during her practicum placements last year. This year, with her certification, she secured employment and has now successfully completed 52 weeks of sustainable employment. Her journey demonstrates the power of persistence, tailored support, and accessible training in creating long-term success.

Thank You!

To every individual donor, community partner, and government funder.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the many individual community members, organizations, and businesses who supported our work this year. Your generosity and commitment made it possible for us to deliver vital programs and services. **Together, we are building a stronger, more connected community.**

B.C. Gaming	Lake Cowichan Community Garden
B.P.O.E. Elks	Lake Cowichan Country Grocer
Cellar Treasure's Thrift Store	Lake Cowichan Fire Department
Cowichan Green Community	Lakeside Property Management
Cowichan Lake Community Forest Cooperative	Laketown Ranch Benevolent Society
Cowichan Lake Pickleball Club	Miller Electric
Cowichan Valley Regional District	Ministry of Children & Family Development
Daly's Auto Centre Ltd.	Ministry of Social Development & Poverty Reduction
Ed's Coffeehouse	Mosaic Forest Management
ETHOS Career Management Group Ltd.	Patricia Thompson - Notary Public
Forrest & Friday Construction	Provincial Employees Community Services Fund
Gas N Go Petroleum Lake Cowichan	Riverside Inn & Best Buy Liquor Store
Golden Agers Society	Royal Canadian Legion Br. 210
Government of Canada	Tarman Roofing & Siding
Happy Campers Childcare	The Butler's Pantry Bake Shop
Hartshorn Mechanical	The Courtnall Society for Mental Health
Honeymoon Bay Community Society	The Firewood Guys
Island Health	The Slopes
Island Pastry Haus	Ubergirl Inc.
Island Savings Credit Union	United Way B.C. (Central & Northern Vancouver Island)
Kaatza Foundation	Valley Fish & Game Club
Kaatza Logging	Vancouver Island Real Estate Board
Kinette Club of Lake Cowichan	Xi Gamma Kappa
Kinsmen Club of Lake Cowichan	Youbou Fire Department



Cowichan Lake Community Services Society

*Our mission is to enhance and support the quality of life
for all Cowichan Lake area residents.*

Contact Us:

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