



Cowichan Lake Community Services Society

2025/2026 Annual Report

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Executive Director's Report

It has been another successful year of continued service here at Cowichan Lake Community Services Society (CLCSS)! I am proud of the work our staff, volunteers, Board of Directors, and community partners have accomplished together, and grateful for the ongoing support that allows us to respond to the needs of our community.

One of the highlights of the past year was the opportunity to refresh our strategic plan. This process provided an important opportunity to reflect on our organization's strengths, consider the changing needs of our community, and identify priorities for the years ahead. Our updated strategic direction will help guide our decision-making and ensure that CLCSS continues to remain responsive, relevant, and focused on the people and communities we serve.



Stable staffing and consistent program delivery were also significant highlights this year. Our dedicated team has continued to provide reliable, compassionate, and accessible services across our programs. Staff stability has allowed us to maintain strong relationships with participants, families, community partners, and volunteers, while continuing to deliver programs consistently throughout the year.

Across CLCSS, our programs have continued to provide practical supports, opportunities for connection, and meaningful resources to individuals and families in our community. From food security initiatives and community programming to employment services, counselling, homelessness prevention and support, and family-focused programs, our work continues to reflect our commitment to meeting people where they are.

Looking ahead, we are excited about the opportunities before us. The coming year will bring new program offerings, initiatives, and partnerships designed to further serve our community. Guided by our refreshed strategic plan, we will continue to look for innovative and sustainable ways to respond to emerging needs while building on the programs and relationships that are already working well.

I would like to sincerely thank our staff for their dedication and professionalism, our Board of Directors for their leadership and support, our volunteers for the many ways they contribute, and our funders, partners, donors, and community members for their continued confidence in CLCSS.

It is a privilege to lead an organization with such a strong commitment to community. I look forward to the year ahead and to continuing this important work together!

Jocelyn Lundberg

Executive Director

Our Staff



Lori Paquette
Office Manager



Natalie Brown
WorkBC Case Manager &
Employment Counsellor



Pam McNeal
WorkBC Employment Advisor



Marina Mandziuk
Family Development Therapist



Rachel McLauchlan
Child, Youth & Family Support Worker



David Carlson
Family Development Therapist



Cameron Brown
Community Navigator



Chelsea Martel
Program Support Worker &
StrongStart Facilitator



Board of Directors

Chair - Patricia Peters

Vice Chair - Paula MacGregor

Secretary/Treasurer - Karen Brouwer

Director - Jillian Bradley

Director - Stephanie Harper



Cowichan Lake Community Services Society

Strategic Framework 2026 - 2029

Vision

A connected and inclusive community with a shared commitment to each other's wellbeing.

Mission

To provide responsive programming that resources the communities of Cowichan Lake.

Values

Dignity – valuing the inherent worthiness of each individual.

Inclusion – making space for each other's differences.

Connection – creating opportunities for belonging.

Adaptability – responding to the evolving needs of the community.

Goals

A Trusted and Reliable Organization

Adaptable and Responsive Programs

Effective and Diverse Community Engagement

Strategic Priorities

Ensure the sustainability of our organization through funding advocacy and community giving.

Serve as a social safety net by providing accessible basic needs to the community.

Connect individuals with needs to the available resources.

Maintain the adaptive work culture we value to support the wellbeing of our team.

Strengthen the social and mental wellbeing of children, youth, and families.

Foster a sense of ownership within the broader community for the organization.

Provide up-to-date, clear, and consistent policies and procedures.

Challenge stigma in community and create a culture of resourcing.

Year At-A-Glance

September 2025

Awarded **StrongStart** contract with School District 79

Completed our first annual **Sober September Challenge!**

October 2025

Held annual **Family Fun Fair**

Partnered with **Nourish Cowichan** to serve as pick-up location for their grocery program

November 2025

Held 6-week **Social Explorers** group at Lake Cowichan School

Welcomed **Marina**, our Family Development Therapist, to the team

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

December 2025

Held annual **Christmas Hamper** program

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

January 2026

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

Welcome Chelsea, our **StrongStart Facilitator & Program Support Worker**, to the team!

February 2026

Opened **StrongStart** at Palsson Elementary School

Held annual **Community Volunteer Income Tax** program

March 2026

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

April 2026

Developed a new, 3-year **Strategic Plan**, with participation and input from both staff and the Board of Directors

Entered in to new, 2-year service agreement to deliver **Reaching Home** program

May 2026

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

Opened registration for our **Sizzlin' Summer** programming

June 2026

Facilitated **Kidz Games** at Lake Days

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

July 2026

Sizzlin' Summer began!

Early Years Play Group started for the summer

August 2026

Attended **Sunfest Country Music Festival** and sold 50/50 tickets, earning over \$3000 for our organization!

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

Year At-A-Glance



Team building at Exit in Nanaimo!



Our annual team costume at the Family Fun Fair in October 2026 - the Addams Family!



A community fundraiser for our Christmas Hamper program, hosted by Lakelifitness & Nutrition.



Walking in the Lake Days parade, June 2026.



Our staff with some of our incredibly generous community donors (L-R, Royal Canadian Legion Branch 210, Laketown Ranch Benevolent Society, and Mid-Island Co-op)



Child, Youth & Family Services

Child & Youth Mental Health

23

New Referrals

25

Clients Served

214

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 both David and Marina, our Family Development Therapists.



Strengthening Families

20

New Referrals

9

Closed Referrals

386

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

1

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.

3

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.

7

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. With the end of the diagnosis-based Autism Funding program on March 31st, 2027 as well as changes to the School-Aged Extended Therapy funding offered through the At-Home Program, we are anticipating a substantial impact on occupational therapy services in the coming year.

Child, Youth & Family Services

Group Programs



The Clubhouse

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. The program ran consistently from September 2025-June 2026, and was closed for the summer. In September 2025, we averaged approximately 6 participants per week and by the end of the school year, that number had increased to an average of 18. The support of our Program Support Worker, Chelsea, was integral to making this programming possible and ensuring we could operate consistently and at capacity.



Lunch Bunch

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. This program was offered at both Palsson Elementary School and Lake Cowichan School from September 2025-June 2026.



Early Years Play Group

This group ran during July and August on Monday from 9:00am-11:00am. It was designed 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. It was facilitated by Chelsea, with support from our volunteer, Sophia.



Open Learning

We facilitated monthly workshops for students in the Open Learning Program at Lake Cowichan School. Through crafts, games, and shared meals, these workshops supported relationship building among youth, school staff, and CLCSS staff, while helping us better understand how to support this group and connect them with our available resources.

Child, Youth & Family Services

New Programs!

Sizzlin' Summer

Recognizing the value of providing opportunities for children and youth to connect, participate, and enjoy summer together, we rebranded our summer programming and expanded its focus to be open to the entire community. This year, CLCSS brought back Sizzlin' Summer, building on the program's history as a popular and well-loved summer initiative in the Cowichan Lake community. A variety of activities and events were offered throughout the summer, with program fees structured on a sliding scale to help ensure that cost was not a barrier to participation. This approach allowed community members to choose a fee that was comfortable for their circumstances while ensuring that everyone had the opportunity to take part. Participation and community response provided valuable insight into the types of programming families are looking for, with activities designed for children 6–8 years old emerging as the most popular offerings.

StrongStart



This year, CLCSS was pleased to enter into a new contract with School District 79 to deliver the StrongStart BC program at Palsson Elementary School. StrongStart is a free, drop-in early learning program that provides children from birth to school entry, along with their parents and caregivers, with opportunities to learn and play together in a welcoming school environment. The program supports children's early development and school readiness through play-based learning, literacy and language activities, creative experiences, physical activity, and positive social interactions, while also helping families build connections within their community. The program opened in February 2026 and ran in accordance with the school year, ending in June 2026. Following a successful first year, CLCSS was pleased to renew the StrongStart contract for the 2026–2027 school year, continuing our partnership with School District 79 and our commitment to supporting young children and families in the Cowichan Lake community.

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.

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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 Benevolent Society
Mensch Kitchen & Catering
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

23

New Referrals

147

Individual Sessions

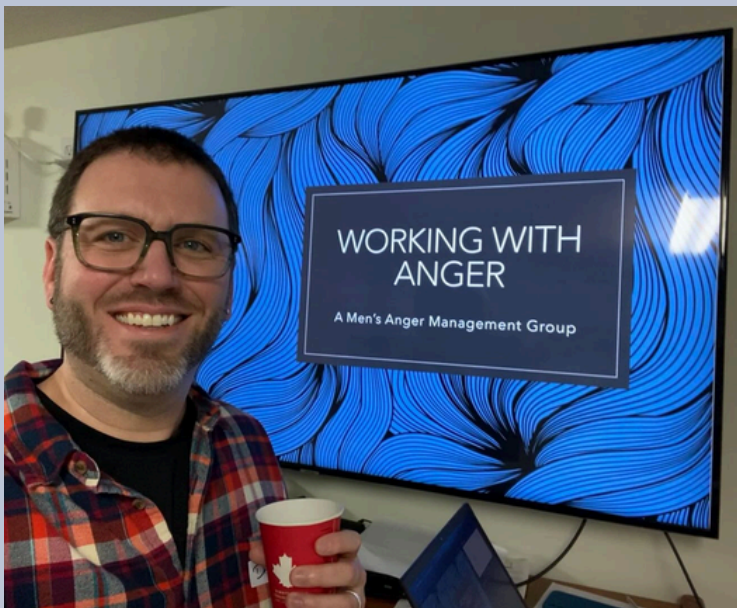
Working With Anger

David once again 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 that ended with 3 participants completing all of the sessions. The men found value in having a place to honestly share what they were facing and receive support and connection from other men.



Sober September Challenge

The Sober September Challenge has kicked off for the 2nd year in a row! This 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. It has been well received again, with 25 registered participants. To raise awareness and support this initiative, we have turned to social media where David has been creating short videos on available resources, while also highlighting our community partners and sponsors.



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

234

Prevention
Interventions

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

114

Financial
Interventions

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

198

Navigation
Interventions

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

45

reFRESH
Markets

96

Community
Luncheons

1951

Meals & Groceries
Provided

Reaching Home

Client Success Stories

Two stories this year capture the crucial importance of the financial support we are able to provide through the Reaching Home program. With attention to our other engagements throughout the 2025-2026, these stories provide lessons in both caution and decisiveness. One involves an evicted single mother in a crisis after multiple months with only Child Tax Credit for consistent income, who I will call Jane. The other involves a community member with significant mental health challenges, which have caused social obstacles both to attaining livable income and maintaining a stable living situation. I will refer to him as John.

As cost of living, and particularly costs of housing, increase exponentially more than incomes, people run into major challenges balancing their family budgets for food, medical related expenses, utilities, transportation, and most importantly rent and other housing costs. As a single mom who had lost her Income Assistance when she moved from Alberta, Jane had passed her Ten-Day Eviction notice by several weeks and was facing a forceful evacuation of her suite. While the father of her children provides some support, their separation has resulted in less dependable household income, making her Child Tax Credit her only consistent income. She had been able to find a place and provide a move out date to her landlord, before she had contacted us. However, she did not have funds to cover both first month and the security deposit, nor had she connected with the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (MSDPR). We discussed, looked into, and contacted, various organizations that may offer support, both locally and closer to the unit she was moving into. Jane put together all the available sources of finance, including family ties and some of these organizations, and we assisted with the remaining security deposits. Jane's family was able to get re-established, she was able to get social work support through Ministry of Children and Family Development, extra support from Island Metis, and is receiving Income Assistance from MSDPR.

When John came to us later that month, he arrived not only with his Ten-Day Notice in hand, but also a "Notice of Dispute Resolution Proceeding Package" from an application he had submitted in desperation. John is diagnosed with schizophrenia, which poses significant barriers to his maintaining of consistent employment. Therefore, he relies entirely on his Person With Disability Assistance. This only amounts to \$500 in Shelter Allowance, and self contained units are posted for at least \$1,000/month at the low end of the market. John had fallen behind in rent after some unforeseen vehicle repairs and owed some money from the previous month. He had already discussed the situation with Cowichan Housing Association's Rent Bank and been approved a loan that covered about 40% of the money owed. We discussed all other possible avenues and prepared for the Dispute Resolution, before using some of our budget flexibility to move the needed funds into our Emergency Financial supports and provide the payment the Ten-Day Eviction deadline. As significant as the challenges are for John to stay housed, it is clear they would become dreadfully worse if he were to lose that housing. Through this intervention we have discussed John's budgeting with him and have successfully encouraged him to keep housing as his highest priority and continue his engagement with his mental health and financial supports.

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

- **The Wage Subsidy program** remained a key tool this year, helping clients secure meaningful employment while giving employers an incentive to hire locally. Wage Subsidy presentations were delivered directly to several clients so they could speak to employers about the program with confidence.
- **Occupational Skills Training (OST)** continued to open doors for clients: 5 clients were supported through OST this year (3 complete, 2 currently in training), pursuing certifications including hairdressing, HVAC, Early Childhood Education (ECE), and driving. One client's tuition was covered through a Dual Credit partnership with School District 79, and another had tuition, books, and supplies covered by their First Nations band. In total, OST clients accessed \$35,594 in tuition, \$71,750 in living supports, \$6,419 in books and supplies, \$2,930 in tutoring, and \$5,631 in commuting supports this year. Two additional clients are currently in the process of applying for OST, and 4 clients are registered for the Short-Term Occupational Certification (STOC) courses.
- **The Cowichan Green Community (CGC) Project-Based Labour Market Training (PBLMT)** program remained a strong fit for clients needing structure, confidence, and routine. Two clients completed the agriculture cohort this year, supported by \$48,100 in living supports and \$6,336 in commuting supports. Both have since found employment using the skills they developed — one hired through a Wage Subsidy by their practicum host, and the other landing employment elsewhere. A second cohort has since launched; new clients were considered for referral, though none expressed interest this round.
- Significant **Ministry funding and policy amendments** supported impacted workers affected by the Domtar and WFP mill shutdowns, removing many of the usual barriers to accessing OST and other supports. This allowed our team to move quickly to support this group, several of whom had been in the same role for 20+ years and needed help adjusting expectations to the current labour market.
- Our **private employment room** continued to be well used throughout the year, giving clients a quieter, more confidential space for meetings.

16

Clients Transitioned Into
Sustainment

20

Clients at 52-weeks
of Employment

5

Clients supported through
Occupational Skills
Training

Community Engagement

- Hosted Cowichan Lake's first-ever job fair on Wednesday, April 22nd, 2026 at the Cowichan Lake Curling Lounge. We had 15 employer's in attendance, and approximately 60 attendees.
- Built toward the job fair through a Chamber newsletter employer interest survey, direct outreach to local businesses, physical and social media promotion, ministry-approved marketing materials, and support from the Duncan office's marketing/outreach team.

Employment Services

Client Success Stories

First Step Into The Workforce

A high-barrier client who was brand new to the workforce was supported into a part-time Wage Subsidy placement. Within its first weeks, the placement was already working out well — the client was very pleased, and the employer has proven patient and accommodating, with potential for the position to grow into something longer-term.

Agriculture PBLMT

Two clients who completed the Cowichan Green Community's Agriculture Project-Based Labour Market Training program both spoke positively about the structure and skills gained. One was hired through a Wage Subsidy by their practicum host, while the other went on to find employment elsewhere — a good outcome for a program designed to help clients build structure and confidence.

Hairdressing Certification

A long-time client completed a hairdressing certification through a dual-credit program with School District 79 and WorkBC OST support — cutting it close with 9.5 of an allowable 10 absence days but getting there in the end. Since receiving her certificate, she has moved to Nanaimo and started a part-time paid apprenticeship at a salon, with hopes of picking up more hours as her new position develops

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. Ambassador Program
B.C. Gaming
B.P.O.E. Elks
Canada Helps
Cowichan Lake Community Forest Cooperative
Cowichan Lake District Seniors Association
CRA - Community Volunteer Income Tax Program
Cowichan Valley Regional District
Dale O'Coffey Contracting
Daly's Auto Centre Ltd.
Dr. Kenneth Welch Inc.
ETHOS Career Management Group Ltd.
Forrest & Friday Construction
Gallowynd Enterprises Ltd.
Gas N Go Petroleum Lake Cowichan
GNG Painting
Golden Agers Society
Government of Canada
Hartshorn Mechanical
Island Health
Island Pastry Haus
Island Savings Credit Union
K2 Developments
Kaatza Foundation
Kaatza Logging
Kinsmen Club of Lake Cowichan
Lake Cowichan Community Garden

Lake Cowichan Country Grocer
Lake Cowichan Fire Department
Lakelifitness & Nutrition
Lakeside Property Management
Laketown Ranch Benevolent Society
Mesachie Lake Automotive
Miller Electric
Mid-Island Co-op
Ministry of Children & Family Development
Ministry of Social Development & Poverty Reduction
OK Tire
Patricia Thomson - Notary Public
Royal Canadian Legion Br. 210
School District 79
South Shore Cabinetry
Tarman Roofing & Siding
Telus Future Friendly Foundation
The Butler's Pantry Bake Shop
The Slopes
Town of Lake Cowichan
Ubergirl Inc.
United Way B.C. (Central & Northern Vancouver Island)
Valley Fish & Game Club
Victoria Truss
Xi Gamma Kappa
Youbou Fire Department



Cowichan Lake Community Services Society

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