



Outlook

The Garth Homer Society Newsletter

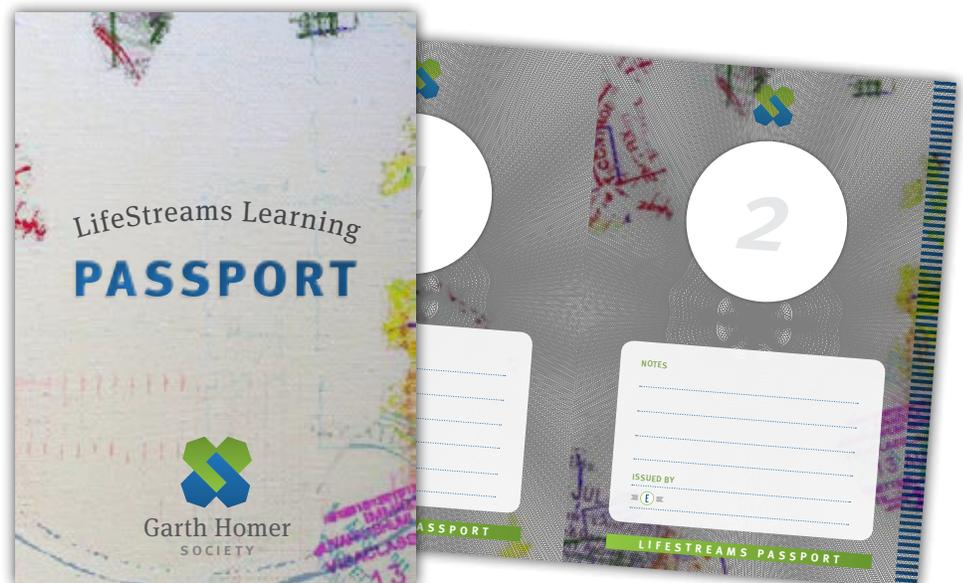
Early Results in LifeStreams Learning

Our LifeStreams Learning pilot program was launched in the fall of 2014 for young adults with developmental disabilities who are interested in continuing their post-secondary education. Each learner has different inclusion, independence, and employment goals that we use to design their personal curriculum. While each learner's program is completely individual, LifeStreams Learning uses lessons in literacy, numeracy, vocational skills and life skills development to help them reach the life goals they have set out.

One year on, the program has already grown beyond our initial expectations. In delivering the program, we are working with Edudata, a research group from the Faculty of Education at UBC. Edudata built the innovative learning management database that is at the heart of LifeStreams. The database not only tracks the progress of our participants, but also measures the effectiveness of the facilitators' strategies. Helena Prins, LifeStreams Learning Manager, explains how it works. "After each session we ask ourselves, did we reach our goal, and if not, what could we do differently next time? LifeStreams Learning responds to each participant's unique learning assets and deficits through intentional, individual efforts. This does make a difference."

Learners track personal achievements with the help of their own LifeStreams Learning Passport, a way for them to see and document their progress. E-badges are awarded to clients as they complete their goals. These go into their Passport, and are endorsed by their educators and community partners.

As we continue to collect formal data that will assist us in the long term, the success of our learners is the best measure of the short-term success of the program. Staff, families and community partners are all recognizing individual achievements of our participants.



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PROGRAM NEWS

LifeStreams Success Stories

Scott, an eager young adult learner, has participated in LifeStreams Learning from the beginning. When he first met with the team last November, he did not initiate conversation and answered questions in monosyllables. His individualized program over the last year has included music therapy, gardening, a volunteer placement at Glendale Gardens, and structured group activities to promote social engagement. Scott has now earned his first e-badge, for Public Transportation Independence, and is successfully travelling by himself to his volunteer placement at Glendale Gardens. Staff and community partners have commented on a noticeable improvement in Scott's speech and self-confidence – he has even begun to initiate conversations.

Kyra is a young adult with autism who has been a student of LifeStreams Learning since its inception. She has already earned an e-badge in Public Transportation Independence, and she

is currently working on improving her reading skills with Sharon Hoddinott, her Literacy Victoria tutor. "Literacy is power; the power to participate fully in their own lives and in their community," says Sharon, who has earned the title "LifeStreams Angel" from our students.

In LifeStreams Learning, we take a different approach to post-secondary education for young adults with cognitive disabilities. Instead of presenting a one-size-fits-all curriculum, LifeStreams offers fluid learning techniques, based on a trial and error approach that is tracked in detail in



LifeStreams learner, Scott, stands next to his garden at GHS.

the learning database. The result is a completely personalized program that gives the facilitators and learners an opportunity to decide what works best. Ultimately, the data collected will allow us to find out about the best learning approaches for those with developmental disabilities. But for now, the record is telling us a remarkable story of learning potential and personal growth.

As Literacy Victoria's Sharon states, "nothing builds self-confidence like success. There is joy in learning, satisfaction in accomplishment." LifeStreams Learning's foundation is built on this idea, and as our learners continue their path of personal growth, they work towards more in-depth education, community inclusion, and confidence.

If you know someone that might be a good fit for the LifeStreams Learning program, please contact Helena Prins, LifeStreams Learning Manager, hprins@garthhomersociety.org.

Bright Kia Souls Welcomed into the GHS Fleet

In the last few years, Garth Homer Society has grown from having 160 participants to having more than 200. Most of this growth has been in our higher needs community inclusion programs, in which participants spend much of their time away from the Garth Homer Centre taking part in more than a hundred different community events, programs and outings. In addition to serving more people, GHS moves further each year into individualized programming.



The new Kia Souls will soon arrive at GHS.

Both of these factors have created a need to update the fleet, which is why we teamed up with

community partner, Graham Kia Victoria, to find the perfect vehicle to accommodate the changing needs of our participants and programs.

Thanks to their generosity, the fleet has grown to include five new candy apple red Kia Souls. These stylish vehicles are more compact than our vans, but have a unique design that provides exceptional accessibility. Jon Graham has spent most of his life in Victoria, and he has always been familiar with the work of the Garth Homer Society. "I'm thankful to have been approached by Garth Homer," says Graham, "and proud to have our company associated with the organization."

These colourful additions to the GHS team are perfect for getting smaller groups of our participants to and from their programs with our community partners. Give us a wave if you see one pass your way!

PROGRAM NEWS

Meet Our Participants – Alex Mains

Alex first arrived at Garth Homer Society after high school, just over a year ago, and has been an active member of the Discovery team ever since. Walking through GHS with Alex will make you feel like you're walking with a VIP – everyone is excited to see him and greet him by name, and he's always quick to enthusiastically return the hello.

Alex's curiosity has led him to a long list of interests and hobbies. He is always out in the community – exploring the beach, checking out the helicopters and planes in the harbour, or hiking to a new place in Victoria. His favourite spot is the top of Mount Doug. His musical abilities shine through every Tuesday at the Victoria Conservatory of Music (VCM), where he expresses himself by playing drums, guitar, piano, and shares his impressive lyrical knowledge. Music Therapy at VCM was an important part of his childhood, and since he began his sessions again six months ago, his skills have further blossomed alongside his interest in trying new instruments.

Discovery is a program for young, active individuals, and Alex, with his love of sports, fits perfectly. He is always ready for a game of hoops with GHS staff – and he usually wins. Alex and the Discovery team go to the pool a few times a week, and he has already made friends with all of the lifeguards. The activities in the program are tailor-made for Alex's needs and interests, and the team enjoys working with

Alex because, as his support worker says, "he's always up to try something new."

Alex is an integral part of the Discovery team family, and he's ready and willing to lend a helping hand around the program. The team has big plans for this adventurous young man in the upcoming months, including a volunteer placement. Program staff member, Gareth Manning, says that he "can't imagine GHS without Alex." His contagious laugh and upbeat energy are better than "a cup of coffee," says his support worker, and Alex is everyone's cheerleader.



Discovery team participant, Alex, enjoys the ocean view.

ArtWorks Showcases the Beauty of Butchart Gardens

Butchart Gardens and the ArtWorks program at Garth Homer Society collaborated this year to inspire our artists through landscapes. Seventeen artists participated in the project, which included a painting session within the stunningly colourful grounds of the gardens. Four of the works were chosen by Butchart Gardens to be sold as greeting cards in their gift shop, and five of the works were exhibited at the gardens for the month of August. Congratulations to all of our artists!



PROGRAM NEWS

Our First Resident Moves In – Meet Colin

Garth Homer Society's emerging Residential Services program accepted its first client, Colin, in April, and he has since settled into his new home in our freshly renovated suite. The GHS residential team prepared tirelessly to ready the space with everything Colin needs to live comfortably and happily.

The Executive Director of Service Operations, Phemie Guttin, worked with her team and Colin's previous caretakers to properly assess his needs. The suite was renovated to provide easier access and comfort for its new tenant. Renovations included larger doorways, a roll-in shower, and the removal of some walls.

The new Garth Homer Residential Services program has given Colin the opportunity to settle into a home with the



Colin greets his guests from the patio of his new home.

individualized and twenty-four hour care he needs. Both staff and family are already noticing positive changes in Colin since the transition. Now that he is settled, communication

comes more freely with Colin, and he says that the future in his new home will be dedicated to "looking after myself, healing my health, and happiness." To Colin, the most rewarding part of his home at Garth Homer Society is the "love and care I have received."

Staff has learned that Colin is a bit of celebrity in the community – no matter where he goes, he always bumps into a friend in Victoria. He volunteers his time at the Saanich Fire Department, and is a huge fan of lacrosse. He loves being in nature, and like others mentioned in this newsletter, his favourite spot is the summit of Mount Doug. He's quick to make a joke, and is always entertaining others. A favourite riddle for staff is, "When is a door not a door? When it is ajar!"

The success of our first resident is a step in the right direction for the Residential Services program at GHS. For Phemie and her team, the most satisfying part in the next stages of the program will be building relationships with new residents and funding partners, and working with them to put the pieces in place to create the best residential program for future clients. For Phemie and staff, the goal of the program is to "ensure that everyone who lives within that program is supported in a way that provides the best quality of life possible."

Garth Homer Centre's New Tube Feeding Facility

Each Garth Homer participant requires different, individualized assistance, and our facilities are always being adjusted to better suit these needs. The recent addition of a tube feeding facility is one example of how we continue to ensure a respectful, dignified place for all of our participants. The facility is a quiet room where staff can administer any individual feeding in private. Each tube-fed participant has a slightly different regimen, and our staff is trained under the guidance of the Health Services for Community Living to create and provide an individual and comfortable feeding routine.



A view of the private tube feeding facility at GHS.

A life, a home, and a place in the world

CHAIR'S REPORT

A Society on The Move!

The strategic planning exercise undertaken by the GHS Board in 2010 laid the foundation for all of the changes you've noticed at Garth Homer over the past five years. The 2010 plan focused on building capacity and sustainability through expanded programs and innovative service delivery.

The vision behind the plan is perfectly expressed in our mission statement – to provide services and opportunities that help people with disabilities to make a life, a home, and a place in the world.

Our progress is evident when you consider the number and range of accomplishments that we've achieved since 2011.

During this time, we have:

- become much more financially stable, with both revenue growth and positive budget performance over several successive years
- established a strong, cohesive management team with an exceptional mix of skills
- experienced a 25% growth in clients served (now more than 200)
- sustained a strong level of grants revenue,
- established innovative and sector-leading programs and services in areas of employment, special needs learning, and geriatrics
- established GHS as a provider of supports to high-needs individuals
- become a residential services provider, with expectations of considerable growth in these services
- built good, cooperative working relations with our funders and with our union
- created a new mission statement and visual identity to capture the new focus and energy of GHS, and
- raised the public profile of GHS as a leader and innovator.

Our focus now is on five key areas of service delivery.

Employment Services: Our new approach, based on vocational rehabilitation, means that individuals are better prepared for work. An expanded employers network – including many companies that had not previously employed people with disabilities – has resulted in a dramatic climb in placement rates, and in the number of program graduates who are independently and securely employed.

Geriatrics: The geriatrics program has been redesigned with a “gradient of services” to better match the progressive changes people experience as they age.

High-Needs Community Inclusion: Garth Homer is successfully expanding its support for high-needs individuals with complex, multiple disabilities, including autism and FASD, serious behavioural problems, and chronic health issues.

LifeStreams Learning:

This pilot program for young adults with autism and other developmental disabilities provides a comprehensive, highly individualized post-secondary learning path, in order to maximize their potential for both employment and inclusion. LifeStreams Learning integrates literacy, numeracy, and financial and other practical skills with GHS learning and inclusion programs already in place. Early results from the pilot have been exceptional.

Residential: For the first time in our history we have begun to provide residential care. We now support three very high-needs individuals on a 24-hour basis. We expect to expand these services in 2016, and this reflects the importance we feel must be attached to closer integration of day and residential supports.

The Garth Homer Society is truly a “society in motion!” You can expect continued growth, improvement, and innovation in 2016!

Alan Moyes



Alan Moyes
Chair, Garth Homer Society

GARTH HOMER FOUNDATION REPORT

GHF Board Chair Report – October 2015



Bruce Homer
Chair, Garth Homer Foundation

The purpose of the Garth Homer Foundation is to respond to the needs of people with disabilities through programs and facilities which promote personal growth, the dignity of choice and integration in the community. As the Society goes through a period of transition and growth, so will the Foundation, in order to ensure that it continues to provide vital support in the most useful and helpful ways.

First, the Foundation is expanding its Board with additional members who bring new skills, new experience, new energy, and new networks to our mission and our work with the Society.

Karen Kesteloo, CPA, CGA, TEP, C.Dir., is a partner in the public accounting firm of Kesteloo Busse Anderson, Chartered Professional Accountants. As a chartered director, she will enhance excellence in corporate governance.

Owen Madrick, CA, CPA, is currently Director of Finance at RentMoola and Treasurer at the MOVE Adapted Fitness Society of BC. Previously, he was Director of Finance at DFH Real Estate.

Andrew Somers, CA, is an online facilitator at Chartered Professional Accountants Canada. Prior to that he served as an accountant at the holding company for Deeley Harley-Davidson Canada, and as a staff accountant with Hayes Stewart Little and Company.

We welcome Karen, Andrew, and Owen to the Board, with thanks for their willingness to serve, and great anticipation for their contributions.

At the same time new directors are joining the Board, we also have a director leaving. Both personally, and on behalf of the Foundation and the Society, I would like to thank Jenna Anderson for her years of service on the boards of both organizations.

Second, the Foundation is developing a new fundraising strategy. Those of you who have been regular donors to GHF will have noticed that there has been no new fundraising information or requests for awhile. That's because we have been taking time to step back from our accustomed activities to assess the strength of our current activities and look at some exciting new possibilities for the future. In the meantime, if you would like to make a contribution, don't forget that it is always possible to donate online at the Garth Homer Foundation website (www.garthhomerfoundation.org.) Simply click on the "How to Donate" links from any page. Your support is always welcome, and much needed.

Bruce Homer

CEO REPORT

Program Culture and Individualized Services

As I noted in my report for this year's Annual Review, one of the most interesting things to come out of our triennial CARF accreditation survey this past spring was not in the main body of the report or in any of the specific recommendations or comments, but rather in a somewhat offhand remark made by one of the surveyors. He approvingly noted that as you walk around the Garth Homer Centre and move from program to program, it is evident that each program has a distinct culture of its own.

Individual program cultures? I had not really thought about this before. But to my mind it is a significant insight, and one that says and explains a lot about how our programs work and how they support personal growth for individuals.

It is tempting to think that these distinct cultures come from staff leadership. But while our staff are great, and certainly play a role in nurturing program culture, in fact cultural development comes much more from the program participants and their interactions than from anything that staff do.

Every program is built around the personalities, capabilities, preferences, habits, inclinations, and likes and dislikes of its particular group of participants. And in each program, as in any group of people, the individual participants react to and engage with each other in unique ways, forming an always shifting, dynamic mix of tolerance, cooperation, friendship and engagement. In each program, this mix is unique, which is one of the reasons we spend so much time and effort working with individuals and their families when they join the Garth Homer family. We make sure that every new participant joins the program with the mix that is best suited for them.

Anyone who has ever been part of a high-performance team, or a cohesive social movement, or even just any sort of well-functioning community or neighbourhood group, knows the contradictory magic of group cultures. More often than not, it is in such groups that people find their greatest development and expression as individuals. It is in our relations with others where we are most fully ourselves, and this is as true in our programs at Garth Homer as it is anywhere else.

Group culture is such a powerful human dynamic that businesses spend great sums on HR experts and organizational consultants in an effort to generate the magic of positive team dynamics within their organizations, in the hopes that it will improve competitiveness and

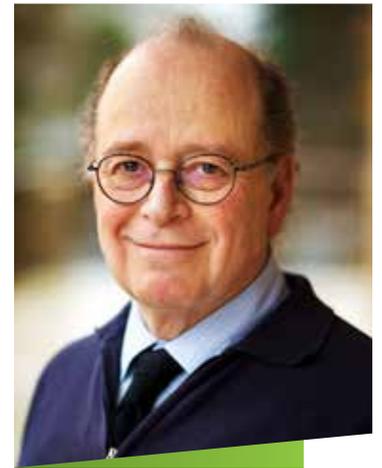
profitability. Best selling books, such as *The Wisdom of Teams: Creating the High-Performance Organization* by Jon R. Katzenbach, for example, have been written on the subject.

But what so many organizations aspire to in order to improve performance is simply what happens every day in our programs at Garth Homer. This is the key to individualized programming as we understand and deliver it. We do not see a participant's individualized program as something defined in isolation from others. Rather, an individualized program is one in which we strive to meet a participant's wants and needs through diverse opportunities for engagement with others, both in their program and out in the community.

In this way, our different program cultures actually serve the individualization of services. And because we offer a large, diverse group of community inclusion day services, we are able to maximize the opportunities for individualization and personal growth for each and every person who comes to us for support.

Our mission at the Garth Homer Society is to provide services and opportunities that help people with disabilities to make a life, a home, and a place in the world. There simply is no way for any of us to make a place in the world for ourselves unless we make it with others.

Mitchell Temkin



Mitchell Temkin
CEO, Garth Homer Society

ANNOUNCEMENTS & EVENTS

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

**Rethinking Self Advocacy
– A Self Advocacy Café**

November 7th

A one-day conference at Garth Homer Centre

**The Garth Homer Society Christmas
Craft Fair and Marketplace**

November 25th

Garth Homer Centre

The Annual Client Christmas Party

December 3rd

Garth Homer Centre

GARTH HOMER SOCIETY ARTWORKS EVENTS

**ArtWorks Group Exhibition at Carole
James Constituency Office**

December 3rd - January 12th

Carole James Constituency Office,
1084 Fort Street

**ArtWorks 5 Year Anniversary Group
Exhibition**

November 26th – December 18th

Opening Reception November 26th
from 7-9 p.m.

ArtWorks is celebrating 5 years of
creativity with a group exhibit at the
Karin Koerner Gallery and Jennie
Butchart Studio at the Garth Homer
Centre, 813 Darwin Ave.

**ArtWorks Group Exhibition at
Martin Batchelor Gallery**

December 5th – January 8th

Opening Reception December 12th
from 2-4 p.m.

Martin Batchelor Gallery

712 Cormorant Street

Phone: 250-385-7919



Garth Homer
SOCIETY

A life, a home,
and a place in the world

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