



Outlook

The Garth Homer Society Newsletter



The ANSO team works together on the program design

Garth Homer Society's ANSO Team Helps Design New CLBC Program

The Garth Homer Society's Helena Prins and her team were asked earlier this year by Community Living British Columbia (CLBC) to help them design a new, innovative model of service that CLBC describes as a way "to help people with disabilities access employment and live good lives in welcoming communities."

The CLBC program is called Advancing New Support Options (ANSO). It has brought together creative minds from service agencies across the province to create five "superstar" teams

of people already working towards a similar goal in their own organizations. Together, over a few months, the team worked to design and develop new models of service with personal growth and employment at the core.

It was during a CLBC scouting visit at GHS that the LifeStreams program caught the interest of the ANSO team, after which GHS was chosen to be one of the five participating organizations for its demonstrated ability to deliver innovative services. In June, LifeStreams

Learning Manager Helena Prins and her team – Jessica Humphrey and Drew Ellis from CLBC, self-advocate Lidia White, and Catriona Johnson from Inclusion Works – travelled to Vancouver for a three-day design dive with the other teams. Watch for exciting new things as these bright, creative minds continue to work together – and for the completion of the ANSO program design as a whole in the next year.

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PROGRAM NEWS

Our First Group Home – Haida House



On a sunny street in the heart of Colwood's Triangle Mountain community, the Garth Homer Society's first group home for residential services has opened its doors. Haida House will eventually be home to six high medical needs individuals, and will provide them with their own, completely updated and accessible residential space, and 24/7 care. The opening of Haida House in June 2016 marked a new chapter in our longstanding plan to develop and expand our residential services.

The house caught the eye of Community Living BC (CLBC) when it came onto the market last summer, and the organization was quick to inform agencies they thought might be interested in it. Senior staff at GHS immediately saw the potential in the house. Not only was it a bright, calm residential space in a quiet neighbourhood, it was also already equipped with some of the amenities and equipment necessary for the services we hoped to provide. The original owners of the Haida House were a family providing foster care to teens with complex health care needs. It had been designed with tracking and accessible bathrooms, which worked as a strong foundation for the upgrades necessary to turn it into a licensed, staffed residential home.

BC Housing supports agencies like Garth Homer Society in the purchase of properties so they can keep their funding where they need it – in programming. BC Housing bought the Haida House last year, and we worked with them to create and sign an operating contract.

Thanks to the help of BC Housing, GHS now runs the Haida House. The home is equipped with two bedrooms for ambulatory residents in a bright, sunny basement suite, and fully accessible bedrooms for another four individuals

in wheelchairs on the main floor. Phemie Guttin and her residential team worked on the finishing touches to make the house a comfortable, accessible home for our residents. The final upgrades included some additional tracking throughout the house, wheelchair accessible spaces, sprinkler systems, and staffing to maintain 24-hour support for the newest members of the Garth Homer family.

In just under a year from our initial visit to Haida House, it has become a home for its first residents, and Phemie's team is preparing the space and a great welcome for the rest of the crew. The Haida House project has been a successful collaboration between GHS, CLBC, BC Housing, and MCFD.



Above: Exterior views of Haida House

Below: A peek at the house's sun-filled deck

PROGRAM NEWS

A Ministry of Children and Family Development Contract

Haida House, our first group home for individuals requiring complex health supports, is now home to a wonderful young man, thanks to our first contract with the Ministry of Children and Family Development. Our programs in the past have been strictly in adult services but, with this contract, we are able to give a teenaged client a home with all of the medical supports he needs.

His Haida House home gives him the high level of personalized care that he needs 24 hours a day – and our highly trained team will make sure he is able to continue

to adapt as he moves into adulthood and takes on other life changes.

We're excited to take this new step forward, and to continue to work with the Ministry of Children and Family Development to provide supports for younger people. It's an important step in enabling us to provide a lifetime continuum of support for those we serve.

An Exciting Expansion for GHS Employment and Learning Services

The Garth Homer Society has grown so much in the last few years that our four walls are no longer big enough to contain all of our exciting programs – which is why we're happy to announce a whole new location dedicated to the programs currently gathered under the Learning and Employment umbrella: Employment Services, LifeStreams Learning, and the Community Access Team.

These programs moved earlier this year to the collaborative and open space at 480 Tennyson Place. The closeness of the teams, in both proximity and goals, has given all of the participants an opportunity to connect with clients from the other programs. Already, our staff has witnessed new friendships forming and new connections being made. The interchange in the programs encourages clients to try new activities and meet new people. This helps participants develop the life skills they want and need for a successful future as they explore their options for increased independence and employment. A social board hangs in the hallway of the main entrance, inviting clients to create groups and meetings about topics that they're interested or knowledgeable in, and inviting clients from all programs to join in. The board is already filling up with activities like a social club and fun fit sessions at the YMCA. Regardless of the program they are in, participants are given a space for experiential learning, peer to peer experiences, and social engagement with others who are the same age and have the same interests.

The Employment and Learning Services facility will continue to expand as a hub for related programs. Stay tuned for more news in the fall, when the programs will team up for an open house to show off all of the great progress that's been made since the move!



Above: A view from outside of the new centre

Below: A look inside the centre at the growing LifeStreams Learning wall

MEET OUR CLIENTS

LifeStreams Learning: Ted

Ted knows a thing or two about computers. When he was eight years old, his equally knowledgeable dad started to teach him all about them and, only one year later, he was already “hacking” into his favorite computer games to make them more interesting. Since then, he’s traded game coding for a newly discovered talent of his, information technology (and he’s also realized that he’s definitely not a fan of networking).



Ted participates in Garth Homer Society’s LifeStreams Learning program, where he’s working on honing his IT skills for future employment. He spent screen time with Victoria’s Smart Dolphins, a local IT company that lent GHS much-needed computer space for LifeStreams students. Along with a friend, Ted successfully completed an IT Essentials course through Cisco Network Academy. Thanks to his new credentials, Ted is now completing work experience at Boomers Computers once a week, where he uses his incredible knowledge of computers to help his customers’ systems run smoothly.

Ted isn’t sure where the future will take him, but he’s ready to “go with the flow,” he says. In the meantime, you can find him chatting with customers at Boomers, playing video games at home, or playing board games in a new social club he and some friends from GHS have started at the Interactivity Board Game Café.

MEET OUR STAFF

Corinne McGregor Quality Assurance Manager

Corinne McGregor has been with GHS for almost a year now, in a variety of roles. She started at the reception desk, and now works as the Quality Assurance Manager. More recently, she also took on a temporary position coordinating personnel functions.



Her professional career began after she graduated with a Bachelor of Social Science from the University of Ottawa. Over the next 20 years, Corinne worked in health sciences, including clinical research, trial coordination, and research quality assurance for the pharmaceutical and health care industries. She was also a 2nd Lieutenant and drill commander in the Royal Canadian Air Force reserves.

As the child of a military family, Corinne has lived across the country and in Germany, but she always felt the call of Vancouver Island. She’s lived here with her two boys and husband for ten years now, and when she isn’t working at GHS, she’s busy creating and selling her own pottery from her home studio, or teaching the craft at home and at the Esquimalt Recreation Centre.

Vickie Weber Health Services Manager for Day and Residential Services

Vickie is a registered nurse who brings thirty years of experience to the new position of Health Services Manager for Day and Residential Services at GHS. She began her career working on the front line and, eventually, managed complex medical needs in a multitude of environments, as well as supporting and educating staff in all areas of health care.

Vickie is a foster parent who has fostered over twenty children with special needs in long-term placements. One of her foster children still lives with her, and, at twenty-five years old, she’s become an important member of the family. When Vickie finds some spare time, she enjoys the outdoors – so much so that she’s a senior manager and trainer for one of the Search and Rescue teams on the Island.

CHAIR'S REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2016

Eyes on 2020

I am very pleased to be able to report that the Board of the Garth Homer Society has just approved an updated strategy that sets exciting new directions and goals for the organization from 2016 to 2020.

The new strategy is the result of a long process that extended through the 2016 fiscal period. In the earlier part of 2015, senior staff held a series of meetings with the management and supervisory team to identify and raise strategic issues, and to brainstorm possible new directions. These were summarized and made available to a facilitator, who led a daylong planning session for the Board in September 2015. The results of the session then became part of the input to the Board's regular January planning meeting, which focused on longer-term financial matters. The output from the three stages was then organized into the strategy document that was reviewed by the Board in May 2016, and approved in June.

The new strategy envisions a Garth Homer Society that is a leading innovator and a preferred provider of programs and support services for individuals with developmental disabilities and other associated impairments and health conditions. It commits us to developing and delivering a comprehensive range of support services that

- responds to the diverse needs of our clients
- facilitates their individual growth and development, and
- continues to support them throughout their lives as their needs change with age and circumstance.

Within this broad vision, there are four specific long-range objectives.



Employment Services participant, Jenny, helps out at UVic's Mystic Market

The first is to create radically individualized services, with the aim of enhancing quality of life and maximizing opportunity and personal growth for those we serve. We will minimize the extent to which programs dictate each participant's personal plan and daily activities, which will instead be determined more by individual goals, capability, and interests. Programs will integrate with the social and administrative fabric of the Society, as both gathering places and management units.

Second, we will provide solutions for families. Within two years we will have established formal family outreach, support, and advisory services. This is something we already do to a certain extent, but by building it into our strategy we are giving it the recognition and direction it merits.

Third, we will take a leadership role in service innovation and action research. Our aim is to be a provincial leader in the design, development, and launch of innovative new support services. Our first step, targeted for fiscal 2017, will be the creation of a bold new innovation plan based upon service initiatives already in the works, such as the launch of COSMOS, our new program for high needs autism.

And fourth, we will achieve comprehensive sustainability through growth. Ultimately, organizational sustainability – both financial and structural – is the key to ensuring stable and high quality services for those we support, and their families. Though we have grown substantially in the last few years, we feel that we still have a ways to go.

Overall, I feel the strategy points the way to a vital new future for Garth Homer. I look forward to watching it unfold. I would like to thank all the staff and directors who brought their keen eyes and best efforts to the task of plotting the years ahead.

Alan Moyes



Alan Moyes
Chair, Garth Homer Society

GARTH HOMER FOUNDATION REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2016

GHF Board Chair Report – Works in Progress



Bruce Homer
Chair, Garth Homer Foundation

The core purpose of the Garth Homer Foundation is to support the work of the Garth Homer Society through fundraising for items that are not normally covered by the society's contracts for services. This can include a wide range of things, from staff development to facility renovations, or from vehicle purchases to program development research. GHS is a complex operation, so there are always important initiatives on the go that need funding.

We stay in constant touch with management at GHS to ensure that our fundraising is addressing current needs. Right now, there are two pressing issues.

First, the society needs a large van or small bus that can be adapted to carry three or four individuals in wheelchairs, plus support staff. In the past two years, as the society has grown rapidly, much of that growth has come with the intake of individuals with multiple disabilities and complicated medical issues. Many of these young adults use wheelchairs. It will greatly increase their opportunities to get out to inclusive activities in the community if the society has suitable group transport. Having a vehicle that can carry multiple wheelchairs would also simplify transportation planning, and help to free up staff time.

A fully accessible wheelchair bus will cost in the range of \$160,000. It is expensive, but essential.

Second, the society needs funding to continue development of its LifeStreams Learning program. LifeStreams is an exciting and innovative new program that provides unique and highly individualized continuing education for young adults coming out of special needs programs in high school. Its goal is to increase their opportunities for inclusion, independence, and employment. LifeStreams has only been running for a year and a half, but so far it shows great promise. It is imperative that we help the society keep it going.

LifeStreams gets no government funding. To date it has been funded with generous grants from community grant-makers, such as the United Way, the Victoria Foundation, the Hamber Foundation, and the Telus Victoria Community Board. We are grateful to them for helping to get LifeStreams launched, but they cannot be expected to support it forever. The program now employs two staff. Funding is needed to pay their salaries, and to pay for the cost of third-party instruction.

As we look ahead to our fall campaign, our focus will be on the bus and on LifeStreams. But if you want to provide support, you don't have to wait for a request to arrive in the mail. You can always visit our website at www.garthhomerfoundation.org and click on the "How to Donate" menu item to make your gift. In fact, we urge you to do so – the faster we can fund these vital projects, the better equipped the society will be to provide the services and opportunities that help its clients to make a life, a home, and a place in the world.

Bruce Homer



Nicolas (left) works with Literacy Victoria and Scott (right) completes music therapy as part of their individualized LifeStreams Learning programs.



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

CEO REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2016

Thoughts on Service Innovation

What does it mean to innovate? It's a good question, because a big part of our new strategy for the next four years is to become leaders in service innovation. If we don't know what we mean by innovation, then it will be doubly difficult to know how to innovate in services.

One of the definitions that I like best comes from Rosabeth Moss Kanter, a professor at the Harvard Business School. She says: Innovation is the process of bringing new ideas into productive use.

Note the two parts. Yes, innovation is about new ideas, but it is not just about new ideas. Ideas don't count by themselves – we must put them to work.

And for service innovation at GHS, that means putting them to work for people; making sure that we are not dabbling in new ideas for their own sake, but for the difference they can make in the lives of the people we support.

Too often when we think about innovation we think about high tech – about the big, disruptive changes that new technologies like the Internet and biotech have made to our world.

But the fact is, many productive innovations are small, incremental, and human scaled. And sometimes it is the smallest that can make the biggest differences to our lives. One great example famous in the literature is the Post-it note. Post-it notes are actually the result of a failed experiment in glue making. It took a secretary to figure out that a glue that is easy, not hard, to remove might have uses. That simple insight changed the way we work in offices.

Our programs at Garth Homer are full of these small, human scaled innovations. I am frequently amazed when I drop in to visit one of the teams at the clever new ideas that our staff have come up with and put to work. To my way of thinking, the ongoing imaginative ferment of small-scale innovative energy and practice is one of the best indicators there is of a healthy organization.

Two larger initiatives we are working on right now that I feel have innovative elements are LifeStreams Learning and the Nigel Valley Project.

In our LifeStreams Learning pilot program, we have taken the view that the best way to help young adults with disabilities plot a learning path to independence and employment is not to build a specialized curriculum, but to support them in a self-directed, trial and error approach to educational discovery. Now, there is nothing new about

self-directed learning, but what is new in what we are doing is using an online learning management database to track and plan discovery and personal growth. LifeStreams has only been up and running for eighteen months, but the first results are very special indeed.

In the Nigel Valley Project – which on the face of it is just a large neighbourhood redevelopment effort – we are actually taking what we hope will be a fresh look at inclusion. Instead of asking how we can continue to increase community inclusion, we are attempting to create a whole new neighbourhood, so community inclusion is built in from the start, not added as an afterthought.

If we manage to pull this off, it will be a social innovation that is important for organizations other than Garth Homer, and for more people than those with developmental disabilities. As current debates about globalism and economic inequality suggest, inclusion in the broadest sense - in the sense of access for all to opportunity, possibility, and open futures - may be one of the defining issues of our time.

The challenges in the community living sector are serious. Service demand is rising much faster than funding, and it is likely to stay that way for some time. Money alone will not meet the challenges, only imagination, human ingenuity, and a passion to make things new.

Mitchell Temkin



Mitchell Temkin
CEO, Garth Homer Society

ANNOUNCEMENTS & EVENTS

Garth Homer Society Annual

General Meeting

Wednesday, September 14th

4:15 p.m. at the Garth Homer Centre

Speaker: Joe Carreira from BC

Housing

EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING SERVICES

Money Matters Workshops

(in partnership with Vancity)

A five-week money-smart series starting

September 28th at 9:30 a.m.

Pre-register with Wendy Schulz

Phone: 250-704-8194

Email: wschulz@garthhomersociety.org

Mindfulness Mornings

Drop-in sessions on Mondays starting

September 12th, 9:15 to 10 a.m.

480C Tennyson Place

Daniel Gray

Phone: 778-265-9326

Email: dgray@garthhomersociety.org

SELF EMPLOYMENT COLLECTIVE MARKETS

One Day 2016

September 10th, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Topaz Park

Oak Bay Night Market

September 14th, 4 to 8 p.m.

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Garth Homer
SOCIETY

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and a place in the world

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