

GARTH HOMER SOCIETY

# 17/18 Annual Review



Garth Homer  
SOCIETY

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



## Message from the Board Chair & CEO

### A Year In Review

Despite our current difficulties, we are happy to report that fiscal 2018 was another year of strong service and organizational growth for the Garth Homer Society. By year's end we were serving more than 200 individuals and their families from across greater Victoria, meeting the challenges of aging, rising acuity, and thinner funding with a growing range of innovative programs and services. You can read about some of these in this review through the success stories of three of our clients: Marrou, Colton and Lisa.

### Program Growth

This year was notable for the rapid growth in our community inclusion programs. By August of 2017 we had more than doubled our expected intake for the year. The increase to our programs allowed us to hire nine additional professional staff and support 20 more individuals. Through the year, we continued to build our capacity as a provider of services to clients with very high needs. Individuals who required complex health and behaviour supports initially were served primarily through our residential programs. In 2018 the trend also affected community inclusion. Our COSMOS program experienced the majority of this growth.

We continued to innovate to offer more opportunities for individuals with moderate developmental disabilities where traditional day programs are no longer an option. As a result, our LifeStreams Learning program continued to expand. Providing highly individualized continuing education for young adults recently graduated from special needs programs in high school, LifeStreams helps increase their potential for independence and employment. This year, several LifeStreams participants began moving into employment, proving the value of a learning-based approach.

We believe strongly in ensuring our services are tailored to suit the individuals they serve and as a

result this year saw the integration of our Learning and Employment programs, and a reorganization of what had been our CAT team. The result is a smaller CAT program focussed on individuals interested in volunteering in the community, and a new program, OPTIONS Independent Learning, that helps participants prepare to pursue individualized goals in learning, community inclusion and employment.

Supporting increased individualization, we also began building new "functional programs" available to members of all teams. This year we focussed on fun fit and on expanding the range of arts learning to all teams. We also increased the opportunities for residential clients to participate in community inclusion activities.

### The Nigel Valley Project

The year saw several important developments for the Nigel Valley Project, the redevelopment of the neighbourhood around our facility at 813 Darwin as an inclusive, accessible community. Following consultations with GHS staff to flesh out functional details for the site, preliminary drawings for the new Garth Homer Centre for Belonging were completed by D'Ambrosio architects+urbanism. Seeing our vision for a dynamic, inclusive community take shape on paper has been an exciting step forward and has helped us focus communication of the project to stakeholders, families and clients.

We continued to meet with families to discuss residential options at Nigel Valley for parents and their adult children. Those attending the meeting expressed interest in permanent residential options for their children that provide safety, community and continuity of support as they themselves age. As the Nigel Valley project advances we will ask this group to further communicate their specific interests and requirements.

During our AGM last year, the plans for the Nigel Valley Project were made public and throughout



the fall shared with a wide range of our stakeholder organizations including CLBC, community grant and social housing funders, community associations and the media. We continue to work with our partners on this exciting project as it enters its final approval stages with our municipal and provincial governments.

### Program Reviews

We also looked inward this year, conducting comprehensive reviews of all our programs and policies with external consultants.

Through the program reviews, three key themes emerged. First, there is strong interest from families and clients for social engagement programming outside of GHS regular service hours. Second, many families would like to see improved daily communication around what clients are doing in their programs. And third, many would like more increased engagement with other families who have members in our programs. These themes are consistent with our strategic plan and through this fall we will decide how to proceed with the recommendations, and issues presented. In the meantime, we have begun to respond to some program-specific ideas.

Our policy review is nearly complete and we are now in the midst of revising each policy document, including those that pertain to privacy and security. This work is expected to be completed later this year.

### CARF

We spent a great deal of time in 2017/18 preparing for our triennial CARF accreditation survey. And while this work technically occurred within our current fiscal year it bears saying that GHS was successfully awarded its sixth 3-year CARF accreditation in April 2018. Our residential services were found to be 100% compliant with CARF standards, despite this being the first time we have undergone accreditation for our residential services. GHS now has one of the longest

accreditation records for community living agencies in British Columbia.

### Conclusion

2017/18 was an extremely successful year for Garth Homer that has unfortunately been shadowed by CLBC’s “instructional” review of our residential services, and their subsequent termination of our residential contract. Due to the significant impact this review has had on GHS we have included an insert within this report that provides a brief overview and status update.

While the past few months have been difficult, the message we would like all of you to hear is this: Garth Homer will survive and continue to grow and expand. The work we do is life-changing, providing the most vulnerable among us with programs, supports and health care so they can live, with dignity and respect, their best lives possible. Each day these individuals overcome untold hurdles. Garth Homer will endure, stand beside them, and continue to provide high quality programs and services in this community.

Sincerely,



**Lynn Pollock**  
Board Chair



**Mitchell Temkin**  
CEO

# A Life, a Home, and a Place in the World – three inspiring client stories...



## Meet Marrou Lamaniere



Marrou joined the OPTIONS program at Garth Homer in July of 2017 - straight out of high school. During some early visits through June, Marrou's Education Assistant told us, "everyone likes Marrou. He is a star at the school - at assemblies and special events. He is like a celebrity!"

When Marrou arrived it was easy to see why. His natural charisma, style and sense of humour were all wonderful attributes that helped him make friends and join the community at Garth Homer.

However, Marrou faced a language barrier. Born in Haiti, his first language is Haitian Creole. His second language (and the language he has used since moving to Canada) is French. English is Marrou's third language, and was his biggest obstacle to making friends and integrating into the community.

Despite this, Marrou was still a popular person amongst his peers. He shared a great love of music with people around him. In dance classes, Marrou demonstrated incredible dance skills (splits included!), and in cooking programs, Marrou displayed exceptional knife skills. His Education Assistant mentioned that Marrou wanted to find a job in a kitchen.

OPTIONS staff worked diligently with Marrou to support his English language development. Using different learning games and augmented communication strategies, Marrou has continued to develop his oral and literacy skills. Through LifeStreams Learning, Marrou worked with a music therapist that used his favourite pop songs as a way to build his confidence using English. And, in the summer of 2018, Marrou started taking sign language classes at Garth Homer. But where most people use English to learn sign language, Marrou is using sign language to learn English.

As Marrou's language confidence grows, so does his ability to meet his goals. He is volunteering independently in a community kitchen in the evenings, and is building more and more relationships with his peers. And one thing you can always expect from Marrou is a great big smile – a smile that needs no translation.



## Meet Colton Brooks



Finishing high school is a great accomplishment, but it can also be a challenging time of transition. With school completed each person faces that daunting question: “what now?” This was the big transition that Colton had to navigate; one that required patience, perseverance, and strength.

Colton came to Garth Homer in August of 2017 at the age of nineteen, was welcomed into the DREAMS program and received one-to-one support for individuals with higher needs. Transitioning into a new program and a new organization can be a steep hill to climb for anyone. For Colton, this journey was made more challenging by some difficult health considerations.

His early days in DREAMS were gentle and supportive. He was given the time and space to process the transition at his own pace. All the while DREAMS staff and fellow clients were there to make him feel welcome, and support his progress.

Then in February, Colton took some big steps. Literally. He decided he no longer wanted to simply sit in his chair, and started to walk around. He wanted to go out and explore. It began with a journey of only a few minutes, down the hallway and back. But the more exercise he got, the stronger his legs became.

Colton started walking around the centre, visiting people and making new friends. He continued to walk, and as the weather got warmer, he ventured out of Garth Homer’s Centre and down the Galloping Goose Trail.

“It’s like we were getting to know the real Colton,” says DREAMS staff member, Dane. “He started making more eye contact and using eye tracking to make more decisions for himself. He had increased strength and energy.”

These were some amazing steps for Colton and today he is reaching even further. If you are walking down the Galloping Goose, you just might spot him riding his bright red tricycle, engineered specifically for him!

“It’s like we were getting to  
know the real Colton”



## Meet Lisa Newell



This past year has been a big one for Lisa.

When she moved to Victoria two years ago from Chilliwack, BC., she was excited to explore the big city. "I love the shopping malls, and all the tourist areas, and downtown too", says Lisa.

She joined Garth Homer in June of 2016, and immediately began setting personal goals and advocating for herself. "I wanted to become more independent and then get a job", she says.

In October 2016, Lisa joined LifeStreams, and got on the fast-track to meeting her goals. In the months that followed, she started an independent volunteer placement with the Salvation Army and learned to travel there and home again independently on public transit.

This past year, Lisa transitioned to another, more challenging, independent volunteer placement at the Beacon Community Thrift Store. In addition to her volunteer duties, she also participated in – and completed – both the Beacon Community Services

Retail Course and Cashier Course. She was given the opportunity to put her new skills to work at the thrift store, and continued to add to her resume.

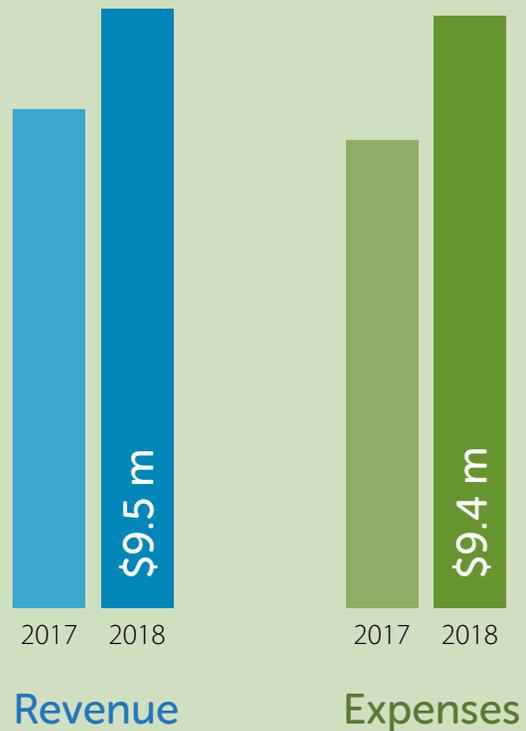
In addition to her strong drive and work ethic, Lisa is also a skilled visual artist. At the beginning of this past year, she joined the ArtWorks program – a comprehensive studio-based art program. Lisa has received training in drawing and painting skills, developed her own portfolio, and has seen her artwork publicly displayed at the Bay Centre and the Martin Batchelor Gallery.

Lisa has been unwavering in her pursuit of employment. This year she added an additional volunteer placement at a coffee shop in the BC Cancer Centre, Royal Jubilee Hospital, and this opportunity springboarded her toward one of her major goals – paid employment. Today, Lisa is a paid employee at the Imagine Café in James Bay.

Despite a very full schedule of work, volunteering, art, and day programs, Lisa is continuing to develop her independence on public transit and through the world of work. She is exploring the city on her own or with friends. Reflecting on her journey, Lisa just smiles, "Yeah," she says, "it's amazing."

"I do a lot of entrepreneurial work.  
... my objective is to eventually earn  
an income."

## Treasurer's report



The 2018 year was a year of growth, investment in capital, and investment in sustainability.

The continued growth in residential services and the expansion of community inclusion services resulted in revenue growth of 20% to \$9.5 million. Annual revenues from residential services were \$4.2 million or 44% of total revenue. Annual revenues from community inclusion services were \$4.4 million or 46% of total revenue while other income from donors and rentals amounted to \$721 thousand or 10% of total revenue. Revenues exceeded expenses by 1% resulting in a net operating surplus of \$128,000.

Expenses grew by 21% to \$9.4 million during the year. Investments were made in technology, vehicles, and in a new operating location for day services. We successfully balanced the competing goals of investing in operations and growth while also increasing our working capital funds and cash reserves. Investment in capital assets grew by 23% and cash balances grew by 89%. Cash on hand is

ear-marked for a stronger working capital reserve, a professional development fund and investment in aging infrastructure.

The organization received a significant gift for the Nigel Valley Project in the fall of 2017. At year end we held \$2.1 million in investments and were able to invest most of the balance in a secure GIC that offered 4% growth over 33 months. We were pleased to be able to maximize the earnings on this donation while maintaining the security of a fixed income investment.

2018 was another year of great accomplishments for GHS. I believe we have managed our growth carefully, and have remained stable and resilient even as our operations expanded rapidly. I would like to express my thanks to management and staff for their work in managing our growth prudently, and to my colleagues on the GHS Board for their support for my tasks as Treasurer, and for their diligent oversight through the year.

Sincerely,

Sandra Sparanese  
Treasurer

## Our Funders



The success of the Garth Homer Society and of its programs and services relies on the continuing support of our community. We would like to express our appreciation and thanks to all of those whose generosity has helped to make so much possible this year.

### Our Funders and Granters

Community Living British Columbia  
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### Our Individual and Corporate Donors

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- The Victoria Floral Artist's Guild

**With special appreciation for the exceptional generosity of the two anonymous donors who together have contributed nearly \$2.1 million to the new Garth Homer Centre for Belonging.**



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