



Garth Homer
SOCIETY

Annual Review 2013–14

Message From the Chair

It is always immensely satisfying for the Chair of an organization to be able to report on a successful year. I am able to do so because the fiscal year ending March 31, 2014 at the Garth Homer Society was one in which we made significant progress on many fronts and substantially advanced our long-term plans.

Although I am pleased to be the one called on to make this report, I can only do so with gratitude for those who made it all happen — our capable staff and management who put in all the hard work, and our Board members, who provided steady vision, sound guidance, and effective governance through the year. In particular, I would like to express appreciation to Bruce Homer, who served as Chair of the Board until the end of 2013. The year's accomplishments were in large part the result of his leadership during his term.

The key measure of our progress in 2013–14 was growth — growth in revenue, in financial assets, in clients supported, in staff employed, in facility space dedicated to service, and in the size of our fleet of community inclusion vans. However, while growth is a useful measure of our progress, growth for its own sake is not our goal. It is only important insofar as it strengthens our foundations and helps to provide the resources we need to achieve our organizational goals.

Early in our strategic planning, it became clear that our ambition to drive the mission forward and to enhance and expand services depended on the sustainability of the organization. That sustainability, in turn, could not be achieved without a certain minimum level of growth. This year, that level has been achieved. This was one of

the key targets of the first three-year transitional phase of our planning.

In January, the Board met as it does every year, to check on progress and review our strategic direction. With evidence of growth in hand, it was able to commit to our vision of a GHS offering expanded high needs and geriatric services, new facilities, and innovative learning-based programs for younger clients.

During the year, our vision was vividly expressed to the community in two documents setting forth our commitments for the future. The first of these, *Faces of the Future*, laid out our comprehensive long-term organizational strategy in a clear, direct fashion — accompanied by striking photographs of our clients. Its purpose was to provide an open window onto our planned future; a way for the community to gaze ahead with us. It has been widely distributed and discussed over the last year, and has been instrumental in helping staff open important conversations with stakeholders and funders.

The second of these, developed with the Garth Homer Foundation, is *The Context for Caring — A Development Vision for the Garth Homer Society*. It expresses our vision of future capital development. Again, it is a document that has served an important purpose in helping to launch discussions and conversations with funders, collaborators, developers, and our neighbours in the community.

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

Message From the Chair (contd.)

Important as these documents have been for outreach to the community, the documents have been perhaps even more important in helping us – Board members and staff – to consolidate our own sense of shared vision and to embrace our new logo and mission statement. One of the most important things the Board has done this past year is come to a strong, shared sense of purpose to support this new direction. While the ideas may have been greeted with skepticism at first, the Board has come to see how they are an excellent, concise expression of our vision for the future and how they really reflect the passion and intensity of the successful year just completed.

Our new logo, seen on the cover of this report and on our letterhead, will soon be evident throughout the organization. Our new mission statement – to provide services and opportunities that help people with

disabilities to make a life, a home, and a place in the world – will also be prominent in our contacts with the public. We are excited by these new developments and we hope that you feel as positively about these changes as we do.

We urge you to stay in touch with Garth Homer in the months and years ahead...there is much more to come!

Alan Moyes

Financial Report

I am pleased to report that the fiscal year ending March 31, 2014 was one of the strongest in recent history for the Garth Homer Society. Overall, revenue increased by 7.54% over the previous year, or \$290,701, to bring our total revenue to more than \$4 million. Expenses did not increase at the same rate as revenue, rising only 4.18%, or \$159,070. This produced a surplus for the year of \$214,634 and raised our unrestricted net assets from \$35,356 to \$240,628.

The share of revenue attributable to our Community Living British Columbia contracts increased from 68% to 73%, reflecting a rapid growth in client numbers over the year. In general, we look for revenue from a variety of sources, to reduce over-dependence on a single large funder. We do this by cultivating our fundraising and grant revenue. Last year was an exception to this overall trend, because of the high number of clients.

I am also happy to report that our community grants fundraising had continued success in 2013–14. Our goal is to engage community granters as social venture funders — with their financial help we can develop and launch innovative new programs and services, without necessarily knowing from the outset how they will be paid for in the future. Over time, we develop sustainable sources of funding for these programs. This is how we have been able to grow our geriatric services, for example, and is precisely what we hope to do with other

new ideas. I would like to extend our sincerest gratitude to all the community funders who have stepped up so willingly and generously to help us progress.

I would also like to thank our hard working staff and management, who were diligent in managing our costs this past year, even as the organization grew and demands swelled. Their efforts have brought us to the fortunate position we are in today. In organizations, as in families, a bit of spare cash is always welcome. The growth in unrestricted net assets comes at an opportune moment for GHS. It is not just our assets that are growing, but also our services. And with the growth in services comes a need to invest in our facility, in equipment and in staff development, to help us serve more clients, whose needs continue to change and increase. The cash we now have available gives us the ability to invest confidently for the future in ways that have not been available to us in recent years.

Russell Lazaruk

Message from the CEO

Looking back at 2013-2014, it strikes me that amid all the ups and downs, comings and goings, and relentless busyness of day-to-day service delivery, two major themes dominated the work of staff and management through the year.

The first of these was capacity building. As noted elsewhere in this review, 2013-14 was a year of rapid growth, not just in the overall number of clients, but also in the number and diversity of higher needs and older individuals. It is always a joy to watch people with very significant challenges come to Garth Homer and thrive as part of our extended family. But that doesn't just happen by itself. A great deal of hard work is needed to make this transition seamless, especially in the midst of growth and change.

Over the past year, much staff effort was focused on a small number of essential capacity-building changes aimed at making sure we have the ability to manage our growth and at ensuring that clients have the best possible day, day after day, when we are supporting them. Key items included:

- Substantial reorganization and expansion of our program spaces. With clever planning, we managed to make available well over 2,000 square feet of new space for services. This has been crucial in providing supports to more people in wheelchairs and to more people needing significant behavioural and health supports.
- Rapid expansion of our fleet of community inclusion vans, thanks to an innovative leasing agreement with Budget Victoria. The new leases have made it possible for us to expand transport capacity quickly when we need to, and have helped reduce lifetime vehicle costs. Good stuff...our thanks to Budget!
- Substantial new growth in front line staffing, with a focus on careful service planning to establish as many durable, full-time positions as possible.
- Increased training to ensure that front line staff are fully equipped to deal with complex behavioral issues.
- Better client information gathering and an improved process for the development of individual program plans, to improve both efficiency and effectiveness by making sure supports are closely matched to each client's individual needs.

Concurrent with these essential changes was an ongoing initiative to involve our service staff and our team coordinators more in service planning and design. This has been a remarkably successful approach over the last year and I would like to thank them all, and particularly our team coordinators, for their diligent efforts to make it all work.

The second major theme in 2013-14 was service innovation. Our strategy in creating and launching new services is to secure community grant funding to pilot programs and prove their worth, and then to try to attach them to more sustainable sources of funding. So far this approach is working. In 2014, three initiatives stand out:

- With ongoing and very generous support from the United Way of Greater Victoria we made great progress in 2013-14 in continuing to develop and enhance our geriatric services, including planning for new residential services.
- With funding from the Vancouver Foundation, we were able to expand our High School Transition program to all Saanich high schools. The program aims to better prepare special needs students in high school for entry into adult services, and is turning out to be very effective. Our experience in Saanich has shown us that we can deliver the program at scale and has set the ground for future expansion.
- With support from the Victoria Foundation, Coast Capital, and the Telus Victoria Community Board, we have readied the platform for the launch of LifeStreams Learning, our post-secondary learning program for young adults with developmental disabilities. In 2013-14, working with a research group from the Faculty of Education at UBC, we completed the development of the online learning tool that will support the program.

Also this year, and working with the Garth Homer Foundation (GHF), we made good progress in enhancing our facility and preparing for future developments. The Vancity Community Foundation and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation provided funds to GHF to support our planning work. Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and Western Economic Diversification provided funds to GHF for restoration work in the Garth Homer Centre and for improvements to accessibility. Our thanks to GHF for moving this work forward, and to their funders for enabling it.

Mitchell Temkin

Our Funders

The success of GHS programs and services relies on the continuing support of our funders and donors. Thank you to all of those who have made so much possible this year.

Community Living British Columbia

The Garth Homer Foundation

All of our Individual and Corporate Donors

With special appreciation for the exceptional generosity of

- The estate of Mr. Roger Reid
- Ms. Ann Nation
- Ms. Rose Plasterer
- Anonymous

Our Community Funders

- United Way of Greater Victoria
- Victoria Foundation
- Vancouver Foundation
- Telus Victoria Community Board
- Coast Capital Community Investment Fund
- Knights of Pythias
- IBM Community Grant Program
- Vancity Community Foundation
- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
- Macquarie Group Foundation
- Sisters of Saint Ann
- Strategic Charitable Giving Foundation
- Britannia Branch Royal Canadian Legion
- BC Provincial Employees Community Services Fund



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