



35th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

March 2009 marks the 35th year of Nelson CARES Society's service to the community. In celebration of this anniversary and our many accomplishments over the years, we are planning a number of activities. There will be some media articles informing the public of our anniversary, our work, and our contributions to this community. The Board and Staff are hosting an Open House on April 2nd (see details in this newsletter) for our clients & families, colleagues, society members, and dignitaries. We will share with you some of our society's history, and employees with over 3 years of service will be acknowledged at the Open House. Then, look for the anniversary banner in our office window on Baker Street and drop in to say "hello". And finally, there will be a prize draw for the staff who writes the best stories about "Why I love working for Nelson CARES Society!" We are 35 and still going strong!

Message from the Board Chair

35 YEARS! This is a remarkable milestone for a volunteer community society! Born in the 1974 political climate of the Barrett NDP government under their impetus to develop Community Resource Boards, the community of Nelson responded with much energy to establish what was to become the *Nelson District Community Resources Society*. Continuing dedication and, likely, a lot of stubborn determination of lots of people have kept this society vital and growing in our community. Some programs have come and gone as the needs of social supports shift and funding initiatives change. But, central to the integrity of this society, its fundamental objectives remain: *to provide an array of integrated community services to vulnerable populations.*

Stimulated by our challenges to ongoing services and the influences of current political climates, changing times and technology, the "look" of the society has been given a makeover. A new name and logo were introduced last year. Intended to revitalize the society's goal of providing integrated services, we wanted to more clearly present Nelson CARES Society as an entity that provides a variety of services. However, behind this "new look" continues the incredible steadfast commitment of our program directors, managers and their staff delivering strong and remarkable services for the benefit and security of some of the most vulnerable people in our community. Nelson CARES Society remains committed to serving those in need.

After 35 years, we are an agency that is a vital part of Nelson and the Kootenays. We have evolved into an economic entity that has an operating budget of over \$3 million spent within this community. We employ 91 with salaries and benefits of over \$173,000/month. We provide affordable housing for 38 individuals at Ward Street Place, and maintain 17 beds for emergency shelter accommodation at Stepping Stones for Success. The Residential Services for Community Living staff care for 11 individuals who reside in supported living homes in Rosemont and Uphill. Staff in one of the society's long-standing programs, the Advocacy Centre, continue the direct support to those feeling disadvantaged and overwhelmed in the face of conflict. Exciting new and socially critical ventures are being developed by another long-standing society program, Earth Matters and its development of recycling and composting programs. And Earth Matters and in partnership with the Supported Employment program, is development an ECO Retail Store.....Imagine what we will be doing in another 35 years!

We hope you will join us in a celebration of our achievements at our Open House on April 2nd. You can find more details on this event in this newsletter.

Jody Dudley, Board Chair

Nelson Committee on Homelessness

Nelson Committee on Homelessness Community Coordinator, Michelle Mungall, has been working on a major research project that identifies solutions to homelessness in our rural area. "This project has been fascinating," says Mungall who interviewed 15 homeless residents to hear about their experiences and ideas for solutions.

The "housing first plus supports" model came up as a best practice for ending homelessness, along with increased social assistance rates. Participants in the study also talked about co-locating food services, job boards, housing information and other service for easier access. Yet the need to overcome negative attitudes towards people living in poverty was most emphasized in interviews. Valuing all people is at the root ending homelessness, and participants were happy to see NCOH and Nelson CARES take steps to make this happen.



*From the desk of Bev Derby
(Transitional Support
Worker @ Stepping Stones)*

We have an on-going, much discussed concern affecting our community. Affordable housing is very short in supply, and many of our most vulnerable citizens are unable to secure safe, accessible accommodation. Available rentals are often discovered through personal contacts and may never be advertised. Considering this, I appeal to those of you reading this newsletter to contact me if you are aware of any opportunities for low cost housing to help our Stepping Stones clients. Beyond the shelter, I am able to offer on-going support to our clients as well as landlords to facilitate a successful tenancy.

Please contact me should you wish to learn more about this program; I welcome your enquiries. Contact information: Bev Derby at 250-551-3015 or email bderby@nelsoncares.ca.

STAFF COMINGS AND GOINGS...

We are pleased to welcome the following people to the Nelson CARES Society Staff:

Emily Kantymir, Stepping Stones
Liz Hardwick, Stepping Stones
Randy Shaak, Stepping Stones
Anita Rempel, Stepping Stones
Madelene Rutski, SCL



RECOGNIZING YEARS OF SERVICE

There are 91 people employed by Nelson CARES Society, and 40 of them have three years of service or more. 17 staff members have been with the organization for over 15 years! The Board of Directors has renewed its commitment to recognizing this service and dedication and will be making formal acknowledgements at the society's 35th anniversary Open House on April 2nd. Following this event, recognition of staffs' years of service will become a regular part of the society's Annual General Meetings each fall. If you are an employee with three years of service or more, please plan to attend the Open House to receive your service recognition award.

"WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY"

One of the strongest values of Nelson CARES Society is community collaboration and relationship building. Our relationships with other community groups in this past quarter have led to many wonderful things. For example, the Craft Connection generously donated 1% of their Xmas sales to the society. Our spring 2008 direct mail out campaign continued to generate individual donations throughout the year totaling \$6,200 overall.

Our Recycling social enterprise that employs people with disabilities is appealing to the car/truck dealership community and to the community-at-large for the donation of a used car or truck. This business is successfully employing five individuals and two job coaches and is providing an enormous service in 'greening up' our community.

Other partnerships and initiatives underway include a two-year extension of funding from the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (federal government) to further our work in supporting clients' transition from homeless to housed and in coordinating the community's efforts through the Nelson Committee on Homelessness to end homelessness. Meanwhile, our Stepping Stones for Success program is partnering with the Salvation Army in the delivery of six Winter Emergency Beds (WEB) from January to March. At the WEB, people can come in from the cold with zero barriers to entering. At Stepping Stones, clients can now participate in a Men's group and free, on-site acupuncture offered by a private certified practitioner. And finally, Nelson CARES Society has entered into a partnership with the IHA Mental Health and Addictions' Supported Housing & Independence Program (SHIP) whereby Ward Street Place offers up to four units for use by SHIP clientele who receive daily intensive supports provided by IHA outreach workers. This partnership of 'housing plus supports' is one of the key best practices in preventing relapse and homelessness.



HAPPY EARTH DAY!

Earth Matters is coordinating an Earth Day event in Nelson for the whole family to enjoy

Saturday, April 25th at 7:30 A.M. at Lakeside Park things will kick off with an Earth Run (or walk) to the Presbyterian Church Hall (602 Kootenay Street) for a Pancake Breakfast @ 8:30 A.M. Daytime Activities include; Guest Speakers, Information Booths on all things "green" and good for our Planet, Vendors, Local Musicians, and great tasting Healthy Foods and snacks throughout the day.

Join us in the evening, from 7 – 11 P.M., for a Live Concert and Earth Day Dance at the Central School Gymnasium (811 Stanley Street)

... fun for the whole family.

More Info

- Website: www.kootenayearthday.ca
- Phone: Earth Matters @ 250-352-6011 x. 17
- Email: earthmatters@nelsoncares.ca

See you all there!



Partnership between KBCSC and CBT

Nelson CARES Society is one of the founding members of the Kootenay Boundary Community Services Co-operative. The KBCSC recently announced its three-year partnership with the Columbia Basin Trust, including funding of \$200,000 per year and commencing January 1, 2009. The key purpose of the partnership is so that both CBT and the Co-op can use their complementary strengths to work together to address social issues effectively and to strengthen community service organizations in the Basin that are responsible for addressing those issues. This partnership is intended to result in activities that will help organizations build capacity to respond to social issues, incubate new strategies and/or models of service, increase community awareness and support, and develop/enhance working relationships within communities. This is an exciting new venture for the Co-op and its member agencies!

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Board & Staff of Nelson CARES Society Invite you to join us at an OPEN HOUSE

In celebration of 35 Years of
Service to the Community
1974 – 2009

**Thursday, April 2nd
3:00 – 6:00 P.M.**

**Presbyterian Church Hall
602 Kootenay Street
(corner of Kootenay & Victoria)**

Program begins at 4:00 P.M.

2009 Direct Mail Out Fundraising Campaign

Our 2nd annual fundraising campaign is set for launch in late April. Every household and business in Nelson and area will receive an agency brochure in the mail outlining our programs, our accomplishments, our contributions, and the financial support we require for the upcoming year. Along with making a financial contribution, this is an opportunity to become a member of the society which is another way of showing community support for our work.

Watch your mailbox in late April and plan to make a donation. No amount is too small, or too big! And remember, all donations over \$10 are tax receiptable!



Nelson CARES Welcomes Another Member to the Team!

Nelson CARES Society is pleased to announce that Alison Roy has been hired as a Project Coordinator with our Supported Employment program. She has been hired through the Measuring Up and Legacies 2010 Now funding. She is set to deliver an inspired public awareness campaign engaging the community in discussions around the following objectives:

- 1) How can individuals with disabilities more fully participate in the day to day social life of our community?
- 2) How can individuals with disabilities more fully participate in the workforce of our community?

Alison will be conducting a survey to quantify the current level of labour force involvement of individuals with disabilities. From there she will work with the community and local businesses to see if we can bring that number up 10% by 2010 - which is the goal of the Legacies 2010 funding.



Equally exciting is the Call for Proposals that Alison will issue inviting community individuals, agencies, and businesses to submit projects for funding that will help us achieve the above mentioned goals. There is roughly \$10,000 to be awarded.

Alison Roy recently moved to Nelson from Alberta and is bringing a wealth of experience in community development, teaching, and working with individuals with barriers and disabilities to employment.

It is a thrill to have her on board and to announce the start of this important project that will deepen and enhance our role as service providers and as leaders in the area of disability. If you have any ideas or want more information, please call Alison at 250-551-4732.