

2020-2021 Annual Report



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About Us

Welcome to *posAbilities*! We are a not-for-profit association that offers community living support services to individuals across British Columbia. Our services are guided by a core set of values that describe how we work with persons served, families, community partners, and each other. They are a part of all that we do, and a reminder of the heart that is in our work.

Our vision

Inclusive communities, enriched lives.

Our mission

We assist persons with developmental disabilities to lead meaningful and healthy lives by partnering with the community to provide a comprehensive range of person-centred services for individuals and the families who care for them.

Our values

Person-Centredness

We are person-centred in our thinking and our actions.

Inclusion

We embrace diversity and believe every person is an equal and valued member of community.

Learning

We encourage innovation, learning and growth.

Excellence

We act ethically and with integrity in all that we do.
We celebrate the best in ourselves and others.



Reflections from Our Senior Leaders

I'd like to begin with my heartfelt thanks for all that the people of *posAbilities* have given to our organization this past year. The last fiscal year was a bit of a rollercoaster, because we didn't know what was coming at us from one moment to the next. That said, we have an amazing team that's worked with what little information was available, so that we could continue to move forward.

It doesn't surprise me that our team was "all hands on deck" as soon as the word pandemic was uttered, even though each of us was pressed personally and professionally. I remember that week prior to the emergency lockdown in March. That entire week unrolled as if in slow motion. The situation we were facing became more threatening, and information to grasp how to manage it kept changing. We'd already started putting meat on the framework of the pandemic response committee, and little did we know that we were building a vehicle that had to carry us for the next two years. COVID-19 required all hands on deck, and all hands have been present since day one.

In the beginning, I would become very emotional whenever I talked about the impacts of the pandemic here at home, and across the globe. It can feel very lonely, when as a leader of an organization, you're confronted with such a mammoth unknown. Recognizing that you are responsible for thousands of lives, not just persons served but also the persons serving them - our team members, and their families. It can be intense.

Throughout the crisis, people found the energy, found the wherewithal, found the strength, found the resilience to march forward and be present every day. The fact is, everyone showed up - across the board.

When our community inclusion programs shut down, those who had worked there gave their time and energy to support folks in their homes so that they could stay safe and keep their bubbles as small as possible. Last Spring, we had no idea as to when effective treatment or vaccinations would come online.

Community Support Workers did all of the grocery runs, the pharmacy runs, things the staff of the homes would usually do but couldn't, because they were isolating. That impressed me quite a bit, how resilient they were. Their programs were closed, and they could have easily said, "I don't work for the next four months," but they didn't. Our position is "there is something to do for everyone," and everyone showed up.

The residential teams showed the utmost resilience and creativity. In their care, persons served were safe, healthy, engaged and content. We all benefited from the stable, calm and caring environment that they created.

Innovation was happening in all of the service areas, driven largely by the disruption caused by the pandemic, and supported by the technology we already had in place. Laurel, for example, was able to continue serving folks through digital platforms. As in person meetings were greatly reduced, time was freed up to serve even more folks. It's almost like we were being catapulted into the future. As much as it's been challenging, these major disruptions that happen in the world can really propel us forward in unexpected ways.



Fernando Coelho,
CEO

One major effect of the pandemic is that it affected everything from our front lines to our back office support. As a result, we had to pivot much of our efforts to the digital world. We'd had something of a digital platform before, but we had to fully transition our work and services there. Someone used the metaphor of building a plane as it was flying. Not completely from scratch, but we did have to move very quickly.

There are a lot of pitfalls that come with this. Not everybody has access to that virtual world: hardware, software, connections, know-how. It highlighted a lot of gaps for the sector as a whole, and a need to improve tech literacy and accessibility in our community.

That said, pivoting the way we did highlighted the importance and potential of this work. With it, you can reach people beyond your neighbourhood, to other parts of British Columbia and Canada: remote, rural, and urban centres can be accessed equally, opening up the world for persons we support beyond those bigger cities. Doing work virtually eliminates those barriers.

One notable example of this is in our CoMakeDo initiative, a collaboration between *posAbilities* and other organizations in the community that offered weekly virtual hangouts to neurodiverse individuals. It's been home to book clubs, coaching, as well as music and dance groups. Initiatives like CoMakeDo have provided connection and sanctuary in the time it was needed most.

I'm optimistic for the future, but I was optimistic before this. When this time is remembered, we will recall how we brought people together, and teams together. We coalesced to make this new reality work for everyone concerned--the people we support, the staff who do the support, and the families of both. I'd like us to remember the can-do attitude. Sometimes, we stand in the way of our own good ideas. The pandemic didn't have time for us to debate things, to see if they were good ideas or not. We just marched on. Some ideas worked, some didn't, but when they didn't, it wasn't the end of the world.

We're currently three years into a long-term vision (Vision 2028), that being our 12 Stretches, and the idea of valuing and delivering more than the basic necessities of life. I'd like to believe that the pandemic has highlighted the importance of having a full life, that a good life isn't just having a roof over your head and food on the table. That's very important, but a good life includes connections, friendships, experiences, and moments of joy. I think we've all come to realize how important that is.

Our mission, community living as a whole, is about inclusion. Inclusion goes beyond the group home or the day program. It goes to participating in the day-to-day activities that occur all around you, and being part of those actively. Not just sitting on the sidelines. It hopefully makes people beyond our community living world understand what these organizations are trying to do, because they've experienced it for themselves. They're all bursting at the seams to flesh out more meaningful moments in their lives.

I would like to once again thank the people of *posAbilities* that make this organization what it is. Each of you made cherished contributions. As we move forward, I hope we remember the way everyone came together in a brilliant show of resilience and support.



Fernando Coelho,
Chief Executive Officer,
posAbilities Association
of British Columbia

Reflections from Our Senior Leaders

Once again, it has been a great honour to serve on *posAbilities*' Board of Directors. On behalf of the directors, I'd like to extend our deepest thanks to Fernando, his leadership team, and all of the *posAbilities* employees who were unwavering in their efforts to provide meaningful support to persons served and their loved ones.

Over the past year, we zoomed into our board meetings and were kept well informed of the pandemic related challenges that arose. We were also impressed by the Association's actions and pivots in response to them. Initially, we heard about the difficulty securing Personal Protective Equipment, concerns over food security, and complexities surrounding the implementation of public health orders and guidance. We observed a tremendous amount of additional work, pressure, and the continuous lengthening of the runway towards what used to be 'normal' operating conditions. All the while, this team didn't miss a beat. You all succeeded through collaborating with partners, being creative and well, your sheer stamina. As your board, we were confident that our stakeholders were in good hands.

posAbilities has a long, proud history of providing responsive community living services. We are sure that its resilience will continue to serve the community well, as we all strive to "build back better" from this pandemic.



Celso A. A. Boscariol,
President,
posAbilities Association
of British Columbia



Celso A. A. Boscariol,
President
posAbilities'
Board of Directors

posAbilities'

Board of Directors 2020-2021

Celso Boscariol, *President*

Linda Eaves, *1st Vice President*

Lorie Sherritt, *2nd Vice President*

Nicole Moore, *Treasurer*

Chris Doerksen, *Secretary*

Directors at Large:

Trish Burleigh

Stuart Carmichael

Jo-Anne Gauthier

Vincenzo Guerriero

Anita Lee

Helen Premia



L-R, Jo-Anne Gauthier, Lorie Sherritt.

An Overview of Programs and Services

What a year it's been. This pandemic has touched all of our lives in countless ways, and has left impacts that resonate for years to come. With the light at the end of the tunnel, what shone most brightly for me is how in the face of this unprecedented challenge, there have been continual examples of achievement and growth.

Change is a constant, though never before have we had to change so rapidly. This was demonstrated throughout the agency by every program, every service, and every person served, staff, and family member. They found ways to not only adapt, but thrive. Resourcefully, they continued to advance our vision of Good and Full Lives For Everyone.

All of our teams have exemplified dedication to those we support and a commitment to ensuring delivery of quality services. This was highlighted by the way staff stepped up and continued their programs during active outbreaks. Such an act meant working long hours, wearing full PPE, and, in the case of the Emergency Response Team, coming into programs and supporting people they were unfamiliar with. Community Inclusion teams were also pivotal in ensuring programs and individuals who live independently had all the food and supplies they needed. It was a true team effort.

It is also important to note that resilience was demonstrated in the day-to-day. This was seen in so many ways, such as finding new strategies for safely engaging in community, continuing to make strides in helping individuals achieve their goals, supporting persons served in finding employment in a pandemic landscape, initiatives to connect and spread joy to neighbours, seniors, and families, providing behaviour supports to programs and families supporting those struggling with the change in routines, engaging with those who were unable to participate in in-person supports through the development of resources and kits that could be used at home, and collaborations with community partners. And that's just to name a few!

The way technology was used by all programs and services changed significantly, for some more than others. Through maintaining connections with loved ones for persons served living in our Community Housing, we celebrated everything from birthdays, to special events, to holidays. Technology also enabled those we support to continue to have opportunities to learn new skills, build new social connections, and have new experiences. This shines through in the work done by our Outreach Services, including supporting persons served in hosting online events, offering training opportunities throughout BC, and facilitating virtual meet-ups.

As we move forward, it's important that we do not forget the valuable lessons, successes, and adjustments we have been able to make along the way. And most importantly, that none of this could have been possible without all of you. My deepest gratitude for the daily reminders of how nothing is more resilient than the human spirit.



Vinita Prasad,
Director of Programs

**“They remind me every day of the resilience
and hope that resides in the human spirit”**

- Lee Woodruff

Pivots and Pandemic Learnings

What a year: the rising cost of social inequities, acts of hatred and inhumanity, the politics of fear and division. A global pandemic. It's been a hard and uncertain year, to put it mildly. And while most of us have had to change something significant about how we live or work, those with the least, at the margins of our communities, have been most exposed to the worst of it. It puts me in mind of a beautiful author and artist, Charles Mackesy, who I came across this year, and something he said:

"Sometimes," said the horse

"Sometimes what?" asked the boy.

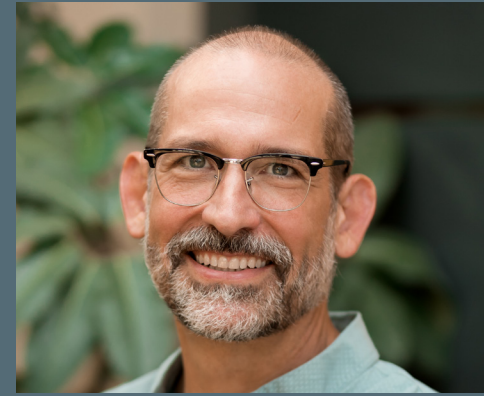
"Sometimes just getting up and carrying on is brave and magnificent."

I'm constantly humbled by those everyday brave and magnificent souls who roll out of bed again and again to wrestle with poverty, isolation, inequity, discrimination, oppression, health uncertainties, and/or more.

So, what has the past year taught us? I mean, beyond the fact that there's a lot of rebuilding ahead of us—as individuals, as an organization, as a society. For me, it's a reminder that vulnerability is a prerequisite of resiliency. That vulnerability isn't necessarily a bad thing, or something to overcome; it's human, and sharing this characteristic together makes cooperation, reciprocity and interdependence possible. It can unite us, bring us closer together, make us stronger. Give us an opportunity to be better humans.

Responding to the circumstances of this past year, we've tried to rebuild on the fly—such as moving from in-person experiences and coaching with [Kudoz](#) to virtual connections through [CoMakeDo](#). We've begun testing neighbourhood organizing roles as an alternative to traditional service roles, because belonging to a place is just as important as belonging to communities of interest. Disasters like COVID illustrate that point especially well. We've called upon artists to help us figure out social connection in times of physical distancing, and to create bridges across borders of difference. We tried to learn in real time what was going on throughout the pandemic, so that we could get better at figuring out what to do then, now, and in the future.

We also published a book, [The Trampoline Effect: Redesigning Our Social Safety Nets](#), which tells the story of our innovation journey and proposes a blueprint for the future. Despite the inability to have an in-person book launch, the timing seemed right, given how world events were revealing the cracks in our social systems and policies.



Gord Tulloch,
Director of Innovation

"It's not too late for a new beginning."

- Eleanor Brown

All to say, our work in innovation has ramped up and intensified, which is to be expected when a crisis happens, our context changes and/or our usual approaches can't be applied in the same way. And I'm so incredibly grateful to the people and partnerships who continue to make these efforts possible.

Highlights of our Progress

New Platforms

- The Kudoz, Meraki, and Real Talk experiences were pivoted to online, and were bundled together as CoMakeDo.
- Birth of ArtRise, showcase of artistic projects and partnerships.

New Roles

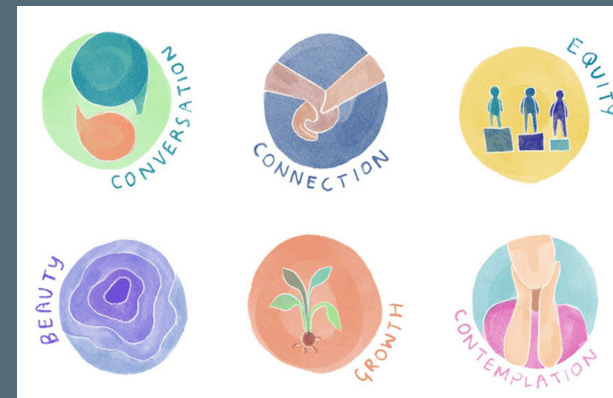
- The Neighbourhood Organizing role was created to establish connections in local neighbourhoods.
- A Lead Community Artist for the Neighbourhood Organizing prototype was recruited.
- Two internal photograph journalists/essayists are capturing the COVID story.

New Partnership

- Sponsored a class at Emily Carr exploring community-engaged art and its benefits.

New Media

- Three spoken word poetry pairs; one pair produced two publications (so far...)
- The Trampoline Effect was published!



Together - Apart, Staying Connected

This year, our team had its first experience working through a health care crisis. I'd like to thank my colleagues Justine Chubb, Alicia Neptune and all of the leaders here at *posAbilities* for making sure the information flow was efficient, effective and responsive. We learned new ways to reach our stakeholders online, and took more time to connect over the phone with those who could not access technology. Our goal was to support the Association, persons served, families and caregivers so that we could remain together, while physically apart.

posAbilities typically participates in about 100 community-based meetings and events each year. Public health restrictions caused us to reach out differently to our future persons served, caregivers, colleagues, and community partners/members. We pivoted to organizing and promoting online events and festivals, and gathering all kinds of helpful learning, entertainment and wellness resources for our stakeholders. It became routine to find ways to reduce barriers to tech, and to support our teams and persons served with participating in the virtual world.

Highlights included the first ever 100% virtual Inclusion Art Show, a virtual poetry reading in partnership with Massey Books, a VIFF film screening and talk back hosted through CoMakeDo, and in-house conversation circles about our learning's from The Trampoline Effect and our Diversity and Inclusion focused Culture Club. We also tested out fun ways to be social, and built community online using Zoom! We referred lots of folks to platforms like CoMakeDo and House Party, adding some much needed connection, learning, entertainment and even some humour to their lives.

By the summertime, we had a new rhythm established, and were able to return some of our project work. We developed additional episodes of the "Good for All" podcast, worked on a new website called ArtRise, and conducted some in house media relations training to boot!

What I found most challenging, was hearing the stories about the impact of ongoing social and physical isolation on people who are medically extremely vulnerable, and their caregivers, many of whom are lone-parenting, and/or unemployed. The lack of routine, access to in person education, therapy, extracurricular programs, extended family, friends or workmates, all took their toll. For youth in transition, an inability to access to practicum placements, employment, post-secondary programs on campus, or to participate in the rituals that surround graduation all caused additional stress.

I simply wish that things were different, but that's not enough. The pandemic exposed the inequity that exists in our systems and our societies. Each of the people and organizations below served as a life line for someone(s) we serve, and I thank them: Meaghen Taylor Reid and Julian Wilson (Fraser Region, Ministry of Children and Family Development); Jeff Malmgren, Burnaby Primary Care Network; Angela Clancy and her team at the Family Support Institute; Linda Perry, Vela Canada;



Monique Nelson,
Director of Community
Engagement

**"Sometimes carrying on, just carrying on, is
the superhuman achievement."**

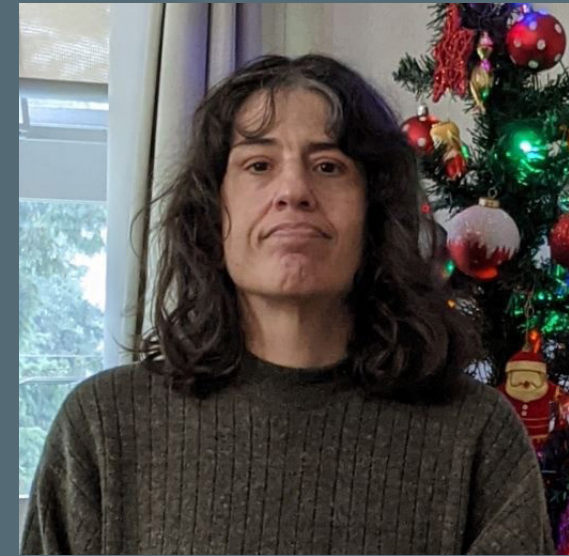
- *Albert Camus*

Joette Heuft, Square Pegs Society; Rachel Goddyn, John Tsang – Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion; and Yuko McCulloch, Liz Cochran with the Vancouver Parents of Youth in Transition.

Additionally, organizations like the Autism Society of BC, Canucks Autism Network, Down Syndrome Resource Foundation, Easter Seals, and Special Olympics - all joined us in rapidly pivoting towards virtual programs, experiences and coaching, so that many of the folks we serve could stay safely at home.

In closing, we know from provincial and national surveys, that most people with disabilities and their families were particularly hard hit by the pandemic, lacking access to the resources they needed to be whole. I'd like to recognize the advocacy and support provided by Inclusion BC, BC Education Access, and PLAN. As is always true in British Columbia, family leaders pave the way. A special thanks to Al Etanski and Vickie Cammack, who through their leadership in the "Disability without Poverty" campaign and a new federal disability benefit, are working towards a basic livable income for all Canadians post-pandemic.

Although there was great disruption, the upheaval provides space to create a new, more just social contract. Our team looks forward to continuing to share stories, resources, and opportunities to connect to movements with you.



Pandemic Time Line – Impacts on *pos*Abilities



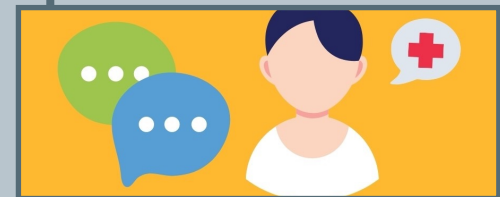
March 2020

- Quickly adapt and close Community Inclusion Programs. Re-deploy (CI) staff to working in homes of persons served.
- Parallel 49 Brewery becomes part of the solution - delivers free hand sanitizer to us!
- We dip our toes into the virtual world...and outreach meetings start happening online.
- Our first COVID-19 stakeholder update is issued from the Emergency Response Team (ERT).



July 2020

- We had staff participate in KN95 mask fitting.

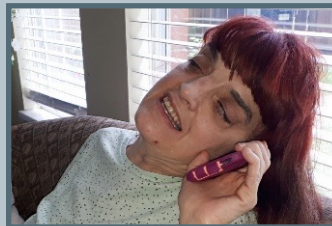


June 2020

- Catherine House is well stocked with PPE by this time.
- Racial tensions begin to surface as the Black Lives Matter movement gains international attention and support. Anti-Asian racism begins to rise in the communities we serve.

April 2020

- Visitor restrictions begin in programs, we "keep our bubbles tight."
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) procurement challenges begin.
- We advocate for listing as a "priority group" for BC Government supplies.
- In the meantime, we team up with BACI and Kinsight to develop a coordinated approach to sourcing PPE for our region - a common stock.
- We embrace the term "Essential Service Workers," so we can access the items in grocery stores that are in short supply due to hoarding behaviour. We are able to access shops during special visitation times for seniors, ESWs and people with disabilities.
- LINK!, PEERS group learnings go online.
- Tele-health becomes a new way of doing business for LBSS consultants.
- We start to close the tech gaps for individuals/families who need it.
- 6000 visitors to our website, most seeking COVID-19 resources.
- One of our peer organizations lost an employee to COVID-19, his name was Warlito Valdez. We all mourned his untimely death.



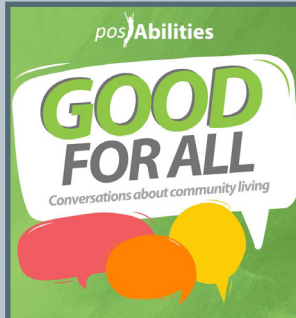
May 2020

- We partnered up with A Loving Spoonful to deliver nutritious meals to people in isolation.
- We got foundation funding to begin our Pandemic Learning Project.
- CoMakeDo was really filling in a much needed gap for persons served who were staying safe at home.
- We started to explore the issue of safety of non-medical, homemade masks in the workplace.
- We started to plan for the reopening of our CIs with new COVID-19/ WorkSafe BC safety plans.
- Galen Robinson-Exo captures Pandemic Portraits of persons served.



September 2020

- New evidence comes forward, and we implement mandatory mask wearing in advance of public health orders.
- Good for All episode 1 is released.
- We begin using phrases like "living with COVID-19"
- Poets with Diverse Abilities goes live!



August 2020

- posAbilities experiences its first COVID-19 outbreak.
- ERT model works well, transmission is contained quickly.



October 2020

- 16th Annual INCLUSION Art Show goes online
- The Trampoline Effect released, relevant now more than ever.



November 2020

- East Side Culture Crawl and many other festivals go virtual.
- We start planning virtual holiday celebrations.
- We review our visitor guidelines.
- Stage Door's "Make Some Joy" premieres on YouTube!

December 2020

- We begin an anti-stigma campaign to support community.
- In Conversation Poetry Book by TK Torme released.
- Virtual holiday parties run across all programs...



Pandemic pay
for frontline
health &
social service
workers



January 2021

- Six months following the announcement, Temporary Pandemic Pay flows to employees.
- posAbilities becomes a member of CCDI – Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion.

February 2021

- Begin education and preparation of persons served/families/employees on COVID-19 vaccinations.

March 2021

- By the end of March, folks in licensed group homes have been offered the first dose of a Covid-19 vaccine, along with some support staff. Vaccination moves forward with various community living employee groups parallel to the age-based roll out for the rest of BC's eligible citizens during "Phase 2."

Behaviour Support Services Embrace Tele-health

This year, our team at Laurel displayed the utmost resilience. They not only continued to respond to the needs of persons served, but were effective in service delivery, creative with our resources, and used technology to keep services accessible.

In fact, despite the tumultuous nature of this year, programs such as LINK! and PEERS experienced expansion thanks to grants! Specifically, more support was given to individuals in North and South Fraser, our Vancouver services expanded scope, and our Nanaimo services received \$76,000 in funding to continue working with adults in the area.

Laurel itself was also home to several collaborations this year, such as with I-CAN, the Indo-Canadian Autism Network, BACI and Kinsight, Real Talk programs in the Okanagan, and the CLBC Policy Team which is currently live!

Currently, Laurel is home to a grand total of 32 consultants, coming from multiple backgrounds and located all across British Columbia, from the Lower Mainland, to the Okanagan, to the Island.

Another major effort for Laurel has been building up the Okanagan region's capacity for service. Training and workshops have taken place for home-share teams, alongside collaboration with CLBC and agency leaders to facilitate the work. Workshops have been held on a variety of topics, from dealing with compassion fatigue to preparing disabled individuals for the reopening of the community following COVID-19. Attendance has ranged from 12 to 75 individuals. Besides this, Laurel ran presentations for various conferences and the community as a whole, including work at a Workshop for Self-Advocates.

Training has also been undertaken with our Persons Served, including running PEERS and LINK! Programs. Despite the events of the COVID-19 pandemic, only one program was unable to be completed--LINK! in Salmon Arm. PEERS and LINK! in the Okanagan and Lower Mainland, meanwhile, as well as the LINK!/PEERS combined program.

Additionally, there's been an increase in requests for 1:1 sessions, and the range of these able to be provided, with one youth in Port Hardy and one on Central Vancouver Island accessing the service.

Looking to the future, Laurel's team has a number of stretch goals in mind:

- To support children with or without a diagnosis
- To strengthen and grow adult services
- To be leaders of sexual education and health in disability sector
- To use technology to increase outreach
- To disseminate behaviour analysis to a larger audience
- To strengthen and build partnerships within the community

Overall, while this has not been an easy time by any means, Laurel has proved not only resilient, but resourceful and creative in continuing to provide to its persons served. Through the power of technology and innovation, it's continued to support the community.



Kavita Kamat,
Clinical Director

Staying Home and Getting Creative:

Community Housing and Community Inclusion Services

What a year it's been, for our Housing and Inclusion programs! While this pandemic turned our worlds upside-down, both we and the people we serve remained resilient. In fact, despite the stressors of the outside world, this was the first year *posAbilities* had zero lost time accidents due to aggression or force. We suspect that the main reasons included consistent staffing as casuals were connected to only one program, getting to know folks better; and the use of creative activities in line with the interests of the folks in the home, *Sportsfest* being one example. Novelty, and bit of fun can chase the blues away!

Our Community Housing staff were able to make lemonade out of lemons! When the world went online, so did activities: the Evergreen house held online art classes and Zumba lessons. They also amped up dinner time by creating an at home Mongolian Restaurant Experience!

Altesse and Lakeside had virtual bingo games and movie nights, and took in safe outdoor activities like a visit to Sunflower fields in the summer, and to Vandusen Gardens during the holiday season. When birthdays came around, those at the Catherine House celebrated through family window visits, and those at Altesse celebrated through video sharing.

One of our new roles, Neighbourhood Organizer was piloted at Montgomery house. Using art and food may just be the way to a connect! The home has offered use of the community garden in their backyard, sent out recipes for neighbours to try and scattered painted rocks around the neighbourhood to engage others.

If you've ever wondered how to connect without verbal language, check out what the team at Vista has been up to! They have handed out an American Sign Language (ASL) flyer with the sign for "hello," and the ASL alphabet to bridge communication between neighbours and a Deaf person served who lives in the home.

Another valuable give back endeavor, is hosted by Selkirk Centre for Community Engagement, Creekside and Maple Ridge houses in Maple Ridge. They've been participating in the Cobb's bread sharing program, picking up bread every two weeks and sharing it within the programs and the local community food bank.

During the holidays, many homes continued the distanced joy through Virtual Christmas Parties. Other highlights include a virtual date night between homes and musical exploration nights with a music therapist.

The Supported Living Network also had no shortage of events. "A Loving Spoonful" offered up frozen meals for folks who could not make it to physical stores. The outreach team also facilitated a very uplifting card exchange!

Youth with #Limitless, and persons served in our Community Inclusion Programs Roots and Aegis West created large window paintings to convey messages of hope, beauty to community.

The Aegis team also took on the role of "Pottery Ninjas," a delightful twist on the typical Neighbourhood Small grant. These little pots of care, painted by persons served and filled with plants were distributed to community members



anonymously! Another highlight, was the use of these funds to provide Christmas Care Packages for local Seniors.

Alternatives Art Studio had a number of unique solutions too! A traffic circle at Napier/Lakewood became home to a number of seasonal artistic installations. Trick-or-Treating was all but cancelled, until Alternatives used this space, and put up a "Help Yourself!" sign, with pencils, bouncy balls and temporary tattoos created by the artists on offer! Whoville characters in collaboration with the Vancouver Bright Nights, also popped up there.

The studio also won an arts competition put on by the East Side Culture Crawl Visual Arts Festival, which led to Alternatives arts on mobi-bikes all over downtown Vancouver.

Of course, this time was not without its challenges and frustration. To help the artists process this, staff put together a piñata to represent COVID and allowed artists to fight back. Paper-mache piñata was made with messages to the virus on its sides and a disposable mask on top. Once COVID was "beaten," artists could take home little trinkets/treasures inside the piñata to celebrate.

A workshop on Eco art in collaboration with a local artist, Desiree Patterson moved online too. The Mac computer was set up on a table that is mobile and the persons served interacted with her "avatar". They did some leaf rubbings and then after they were finished with the leaves, as part of the workshop the artists and staffs returned the leaves back into nature and gave thanks. The team also ensures that artists learn about Indigenous history, and participated in a Ribbon Skirts Protest.

Our Stage Door Theatre Troupe, meanwhile, thrived through video performances. Meetings began again in July 2020, over Zoom, and eventually this moved on to recorded productions in person, with a limited number of actors and social distancing protocols in place. Overall, a total of seven videos were made. Even more incredibly, they were done "in the dark," while the Stage Door building was under construction and wrapped!

In addition to all of the film work, theatre games / improv, art, crafts, and video trivia, were some side activities. The troupe also took time to focus on mental wellness. They went out on community walks and created a Magic Garden with figurines at the base of a neighborhood tree. They continued with wellness moments of exercise, movement and meditation.

Last but not least, a big shout out to the Shared Living team and the 100 caregivers who went above and beyond their typical contract arrangements to ensure that everyone stayed staff during the pandemic. For many of the individuals supported, these life sharing arrangements have been in place for 20+ years.

Overall, staff, caregivers and persons served alike displayed the resourcefulness, creativity, and resilience times like these require.



Photo Credit: Cindy Mateush

Virtual Reality: Explore and Building Caring Communities Reach Out Online

This fiscal year, our **Explore** service continued to thrive in connecting and supporting those with developmental disabilities on the path towards employment. Explore was home to one Journey Coordinator, two Journey Facilitators, and a total of 37 participants.

Our Journey Facilitators worked alongside about 14 of these participants to co-design 14 action plans. They also attended six “Communities of Practice,” bi-monthly opportunities from various services given to four agencies (BACI, inclusion Powell River Society, Kinsight, and posAbilities). Our Journey Coordinator also completed an online course at the University of Alberta about Indigenous individuals in Canada.

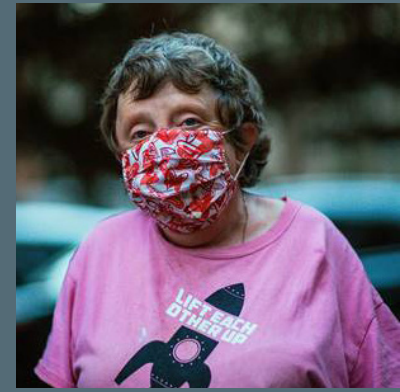
When it comes to the services we provided, like many, we pivoted to the online world of Zoom and other platforms. It was not an easy transition, but we found ways of readapting old discovery tools to be effective online, and what we could not make fit, we replaced with new tools and approaches that thrived in the online environment.

In this online environment, Explore collaborated with participants to redesign maintenance to involve monthly, lightly facilitated sessions that correspond to the typical content of Explore, such as reflective practice, building autonomy, mindfulness, and so on. We also hosted a number of online roundtables where participants could present action plans to a community of professionals and their support system members.

One major highlight of this service stream this year is collaboration. Explore and Building Caring Communities came together in the early pandemic days to create Activity Kits for a number of hobbies, from gardening to pen pals. Explore’s Journey Facilitator also participated in some roundtables the BCC led on the planning of SIXpo—a Sexuality Inclusion eXploration expo, with a steering committee of self-advocates.

Building Caring Communities (BCC) itself thrived on a number of partnerships and collaborations. This fiscal year, five Community Connectors worked with a total of 59 participants. The participants received an average of 14 months of active service, and 6 months of maintenance. They were referred from a variety of services, with over half coming from CLBC, a fair number coming from Explore, and a small group coming from internal recommendations within posAbilities.

Meanwhile, one of the BCC’s Community Connectors, Galen Robinson-Exo went on to become a posAbilities “Artist in Residence,” and created a photography project known as *Portraits in Place*, capturing individuals in the depths of pandemic isolation.



BCC also hosted a number of weekly online “Virtual Hangouts,” with themes including Girls Nights, Open Hangouts, Relationship Chats, and Identity Chats. Working with CoMakeDo also led to more weekly events to come about, such as karaoke and scavenger hunts.

Alongside the UCC Candidate for Ordination Frances Kitson, BCC put together a weekly online Christian Coffee Shop, for people to consider new Christian perspectives on relationships and sexuality.

With the Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion (BACI) design team, BCC put together dating profiles and a matchmaking system for its program participants.

Finally, with BACI and Kinsight, we created the Pandemic Learning Project, a collection of stories and lessons learned from living through a globally traumatic event. What a year, so much exploring and connecting was done!



It's Time: Community Employment Services

In a time when many were losing their positions, *posAbilities* Employment Services team secured 50 competitive employment opportunities for persons served! Our hats go off to the teams in Burnaby, Maple Ridge and Vancouver for making this happen.

In 2020/21, the team continued to roll out the three year IMPACT Youth Employment Research Project with the University of British Columbia. They also implemented a mentor lead Job Club for youth and young adults across the province; connected virtually with employers, job seekers and family members, and developed COVID-friendly job coaching strategies.

One of their pivots included developing activity boxes to promote the discovery process for job seekers!

Exploring Through Activity Boxes

Contributed by Layla Truong, posAbilities Employment Service

The pandemic has affected many people's lives, but the employment team at *posAbilities* did not let this affect job seekers on their employment journey.

Employment Specialists use various games, exercises or role-plays to engage with job seekers to achieve this. Although the pandemic has changed the way we all interact, physical distancing did not stop the employment team from providing service supports to eager job seekers.

One of the most important pieces during the employment process is Discovery. Within this step, job seekers and their Employment Specialist look at the skills, abilities, interests, and learning styles that each job seeker possesses. This process helps to provide valuable information in order to explore the various employment opportunities that will provide a good fit for both employer and employee.

In a sector where personal development and discovery is so heavily reliant on human connection, we had to think of new ways to interact and engage while being apart from one another. Zoom and phone meetings were resourceful options, but not always beneficial for everyone and we wanted to find something that would provide job related activities throughout the week. This meant that we had to find creative ways to assess skills and interests while also being interactive and fun.

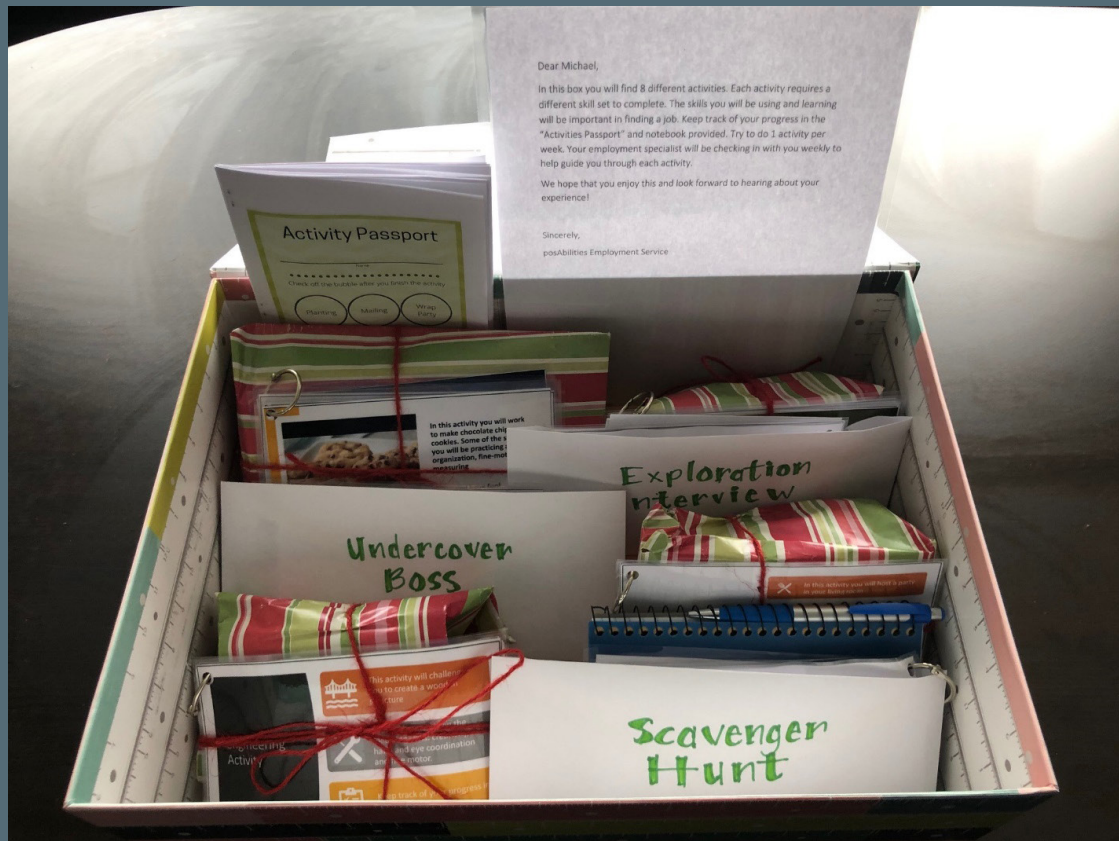
IMPACT Youth Employment Research Project



Welcome Activity Boxes! These beautiful, fun boxes were hand delivered (physically distanced of course!) and contain eight different activities to be completed over eight weeks. All activities come with materials, step-by-step instructions as well as a guide book to help record the journey. These well thought out activities were designed to be accessible and fun but still related to exploring a job seekers employable skill set.

Some activities include planting tomatoes, a grocery scavenger hunt, baking chocolate chip cookies, and interviewing a friend. You may see cool and exciting activities but Employment Specialists are using their keen eye to seek out skills such as problem solving, time management, hand-eye coordination, and organization.

By creating these boxes, we hope that job seekers can reflect on the activities and their skills, leading to their dream career. But most importantly, we hope that these boxes bring joy during these challenging times.



Resilient Systems

This last year has been challenging, to say the least! But nothing makes me prouder than the way our teams rose to face it, our persons served and families rose to face it, and so did some unsung heroes I would like to recognize – our **systems**, which allowed us all to get by the way we did.

A system is resilient if it continues to carry out its mission in the face of adversity. *posAbilities* did exactly that. The systems we had in place allowed us to navigate service delivery during a global pandemic, while also continuing to advance our Strategic and Operational Plans. We really didn't miss a beat!

ShareVision, ComVida, and Relias ensured our programs and teams remained up-to-date, and information, data, and training were available in real-time, regardless of location.

We introduced new systems, as well. Through MS Teams, Zoom, Business Connect, WebEx, Google Meet, and Go-To-Meeting, we embraced real-time virtual communication. Business Connect also allowed teams to phone and fax from their computers, alongside hosting virtual meetings.

Systems were put in place to track new risks and mitigation strategies borne from the COVID-19 pandemic, and to track our strategic stockpile of PPE. Systems were put in place to respond to our accreditation body's switch to digitally enabled site surveys, and to recognize members of our team working through outbreaks. Systems old and new made up our organization's foundation, and that foundation allowed us not only to keep our footing, but to stand tall.

Our systems were put to the test, and they passed with an **A+**.

Lastly, I would like to give another **A+** to our "A-Team:" Angelica, Catherine, Hemant, Kevin, Joanna and Nancy. Thank you so much for all your resilience over this last year. You are my system!

Through this invaluable structural work, *posAbilities* thrived. As we leave this pandemic behind, we can't forget how important systems are, and how they endlessly contribute to not just survival, but resilience.



Gina Rowan,
Director of Administration

**"No matter how much falls on us, we keep plowing ahead.
That's the only way to keep the roads clear."**

- Greg Kincaid

Resilient People

Ensuring our team members have the tools and training they need to safely do their jobs has always been important, but certainly became even more so during the pandemic. Whether it was using Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) or abiding by physical distancing rules in the community, our employees did a remarkable job in adjusting to the new reality while keeping themselves and our persons served safe.

Even more remarkably, in all of 2020, we had no injuries resulting in time off from work due to behaviours by persons served. This was a first in the history of our organization. This type of incident has always been our highest occupational risk, and this achievement highlights the work and resilience our team members have shown in a year that was already so challenging.

We also went paperless with all of our HR administration, which enabled us to sustain working remotely throughout the pandemic and provide uncompromised support to members of our organization. Much of our training moved online, and a process is ongoing to shift some of the training modules to on-demand webinars, particularly with respect to our staffing scheduling system.

Unfortunately, we saw a significant drop in recruitment during the pandemic, and our pool of casual workers shrunk by over 10%. The effects of this were not immediately felt, however, as casual workers had been restricted to one Program only, in order to reduce the risk of spreading the novel Coronavirus. We were also able to draw upon staffing resources from our Community Inclusion Programs, which have been operating at reduced capacity during the pandemic.

After running it for five years, we concluded our Not Myself Today campaign which aimed to create a supportive work environment for mental health. Much progress has been made in this area but more needs to be done. A new initiative to promote employee wellbeing is launched in the new fiscal year, including partnerships with programs such as Lifespeak, a renowned, expert-run employee wellbeing platform. Overall, we're looking to the future eagerly, with a drive to continue doing better.

“When we learn how to become resilient, we learn how to embrace the beautifully broad spectrum of the human experience.”

- Jaeda Dewalt



Bouwe Wierdsma,
Director of Human
Resources/Labour Relations

Number of
Employees

547

Number of
Persons Served

1,498

Resilient Resources

It would be fair to say that the Finance Department was not prepared to work from home when the pandemic began. We liked our paper, and working in the office, and working with desktops. We did not have office laptops that we could just pick up off our desk and move into our home.

That said, we were not totally blindsided, either. Two weeks prior, we started organizing in terms of what equipment the team personally had that could be used, until hardware and software purchased by *posAbilities* could be configured. Every member of the team brought what they had to our IT consultant, who did what he had to do so we could safely connect to our network from wherever we were. Home phone numbers, cell numbers, personal email addresses, and more were exchanged in case we needed to reach each other urgently. Processes and procedures were developed for everything. Suppliers and employees continued to be paid. Invoices were issued, rents collected, and a Financial audit completed without a hitch.

Speaking of IT consultants... there has never been a time that we needed Wayne so much. Days and nights mingled into one as he logged onto employees' computers fixing problems, connecting to the network, purchasing new equipment and setting it up, dealing with inventory shortages, trying to explain things to understandably frustrated employees... The list goes on and on.

Everyone did what they had to do in order that *posAbilities* could continue to deliver the invaluable support to our persons served and to the employees. I am extremely proud and grateful to all of them, including: Candice, Jodie, Linda, Lori, Ronal, Serge and Wayne.



Monica Ussher,
Director of Finance/
Information Technology

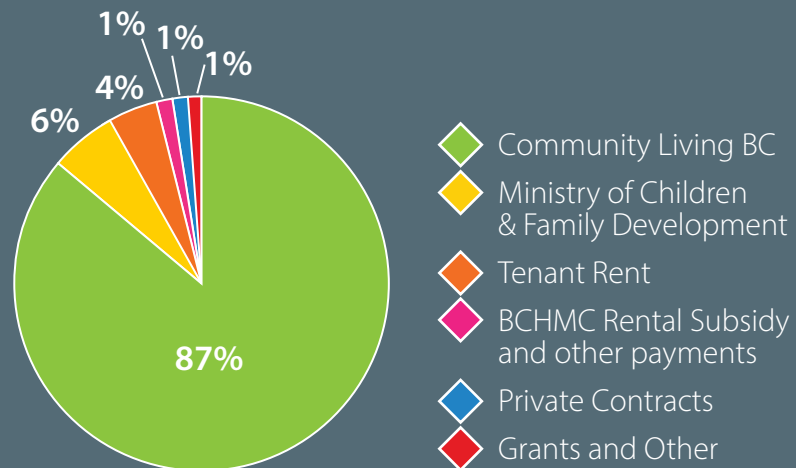
**"Go as far as you can see; when you get there,
you'll be able to see further"**

- Thomas Carlyle

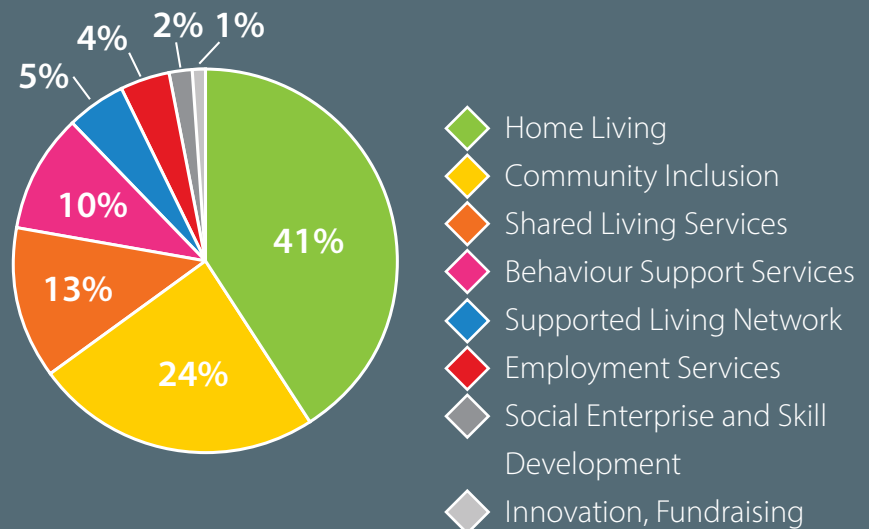
Our Finances

posAbilities is a non-profit community living service provider that receives the majority of its funding from the provincial government. Over 90% of our revenue is spent on direct service, which includes salaries and benefits, property rentals and maintenance and transportation costs.

Where the Money Came From



How We Put the Money to Work



* Our administrative fees are capped at 8.45%, excluding our facility costs.

POSABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

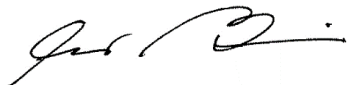
Statement of Financial Position


March 31, 2021, with comparative information for 2020

	2021	2020
Assets		
Current assets:		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 6,951,912	\$ 3,137,306
Short-term investments	3,162,658	3,727,329
Accounts receivable	136,245	123,298
Prepaid expenses and deposits	181,544	169,625
	10,432,359	7,157,558
Investments	-	1,912,751
Investment in associate	100	100
British Columbia Housing Management Commission ("BCHMC") Replacement Reserve Fund (note 2(f)(i))	654,690	601,257
Capital assets (note 3)	5,491,122	5,847,017
	\$ 16,578,271	\$ 15,518,683
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Current liabilities:		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities (note 4)	\$ 5,265,423	4,951,038
Current portion of mortgages payable (note 5)	461,133	576,892
Deferred revenue (note 6)	2,602,185	1,660,447
	8,328,741	7,188,377
Mortgages payable (note 5)	3,441,668	3,692,163
Deferred liabilities	116,869	159,021
Deferred contributions:		
BCHMC Replacement Reserve Fund (note 7)	654,690	601,257
Capital assets (note 8)	442,504	378,576
Autism Spectrum Disorder Research and Development Fund (note 9)	61,867	61,867
	1,159,061	1,041,700
	13,046,339	12,081,261
Net assets:		
Replacement Reserve Fund (note 2(f)(ii))	524,230	503,123
Invested in capital assets	1,725,604	1,779,173
Building Fund	989,577	989,577
Unrestricted surplus	292,521	165,549
	3,531,932	3,437,422
Lease commitments (note 10)		
	\$ 16,578,271	\$ 15,518,683

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

Approved on behalf of the Board:


Celso Boscariol, President


Nicole Moore, Treasurer

POSABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Statement of Operations

Year ended March 31, 2021, with comparative information for 2020

	2021	2020
Revenue:		
Community Living British Columbia /		
Ministry of Children and Family	\$ 32,135,467	\$ 30,509,547
Tenant rent	1,455,393	1,499,201
BCHMC rental subsidy and other payments	436,970	320,901
Private contracts	212,300	319,739
Amortization of deferred contributions-capital assets	20,870	20,870
Interest income	104,860	179,632
Other	289,394	272,132
	<u>34,655,254</u>	<u>33,122,022</u>
Expenses:		
Salaries, wages and benefits	25,837,579	24,707,404
Professional fees and shared living fees	4,497,690	3,896,472
Building costs	1,782,031	1,800,080
Program and equipment	1,696,717	1,824,280
Amortization of capital assets	500,880	535,312
Mortgage interest	134,919	151,778
Office expenses	116,228	133,756
	<u>34,566,044</u>	<u>33,049,082</u>
Excess of revenue over expenses before the undernoted	89,210	72,940
Other income (expenses):		
Gain on disposal of capital assets	5,300	22,409
Excess of revenue over expenses	<u>\$ 94,510</u>	<u>\$ 95,349</u>

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

To view the audited financial statements in full,
please visit our website: posabilities.ca/resources/reports or contact us.

With Thanks To Our Supporters

We thank the following funders, grantors, corporate and community supporters for their contributions to *posAbilities*' programs and services this fiscal year.

Our Funders

- BC Housing
- Community Living BC
- Ministry of Children & Family Development

Granting Organizations

- McConnell Foundation
- Spencer Creo Foundation
- United Way of the Lower Mainland
- Vancouver Foundation

Our Special Event Sponsors and Donors

- A Loving Spoonful
- A.WARE Foundation
- BCGEU – Community Social Services Component
- Cadillac Fairview
- City of Vancouver
- Herband
- Lordco Auto Parts
- Parallel 49 Brewing Company

posAbilities receives many donations from individuals who wish to remain anonymous, and we thank them for their generosity.

posAbilities provides a variety of services in all 21 of Metro Vancouver's municipalities, including: Vancouver, North Shore, Surrey, Delta, Richmond, Burnaby, New Westminster, Tri-Cities, Langley, Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows and Abbotsford through to Hope. We also offer local services on the Sunshine Coast, Vancouver Island and in the B.C. Interior. We served 1,498 unique persons this year, some of whom are enrolled in more than one program or service. We delivered 1,894 services in total.

Our Services

Behaviour Consultation - 882 persons served

- Early Intensive Behaviour Intervention, ages 0-6
- School-aged children and youth, ages 6-18
- Adult services, ages 19 and older
- Social skills development for youth
- Parent, team and professional training
- Family resource coordination

Community Inclusion - 222 Persons Served

- Specialized arts and theatre programs:
 - Alternative Creations Studio
 - Stage Door Theatre Troupe
- Community engagement group programs
- Community connecting service

Employment - 334 Persons Served

- *posAbilities* Employment Service
- Youth employment initiatives

Home Living - 315 Persons Served

- Shared Living and respite
- Semi-independent homes
- Fully staffed homes
- Supported independent living

Our new platform, **Explore**, aims to help individuals understand their options and build agency in shaping their journey. This service connects an individual with a Journey Facilitator to access a menu of our skill development services and initiatives, which may include:

- Kudoz
- Laurel Behaviour Support Services (LBSS)
- Building Caring Communities (BCC)
- *posAbilities* Employment Service (PES)

We served **141 participants** through Explore and Building Caring Communities this year.



Let's Stay Connected!

Sign up for our newsletters, share our stories, volunteer or make a donation to support our work. Your participation in the community living movement advances inclusion and enriches lives.



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Email: info@posAbilities.ca

Ask what our CARF
accreditation means to you.
www.carf.org



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