

# THRIVE

SOCIAL SERVICES SOCIETY

## ANNUAL REPORT



Imagery provided by our CYSN team

# 2022 - 2023

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# INTRODUCTION

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We are a team of social service professionals with a mission to help the children, youth, adults and families we serve live their best lives by providing high-quality services through a variety of programs.

Thrive is a CARF-accredited agency offering a broad range of child, youth, and family services, including:

- family preservation and supervised access
- parenting support
- mental health outreach
- individual and group supports for children and youth with support needs
- services to youth in and out of government care

We also offer a host of services for persons with developmental disabilities, including:

- community-based, community inclusion programs
- individual and group support for persons living independently
- group support for persons living with caregivers but wishing to increase their independence and engagement in the community
- individualized services for persons with high support needs
- supported employment services

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ACCREDITED BY THE COMMISSION ON ACCREDITATION OF  
REHABILITATION FACILITIES





# MISSION, VISION, VALUES

## Mission

We provide services to individuals and families that create opportunities to build skills, strengths and resourcefulness.



## Vision

Our vision is diverse individuals and families living empowered and fulfilling lives.



## Values

### Integrity

We model and encourage honesty that embraces respect, trust and accountability for ourselves, service participants and the broader community.

### Collaboration

We build bridges to improve outcomes through a strengths-based process fostering adaptability, inclusiveness and innovation.

### Courage

We celebrate resilience and advocate with empathy for perseverance and bravery in challenging adversity.



# STATEMENT OF RECONCILIATION

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Our Thrive team acknowledges that our agency stands and works on the unceded Ləkʷəŋən territory of the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations. We also acknowledge the five W̱SÁNEĆ communities: W̱JOŁEŁP (Tsartlip), BOKÉĆEN (Pauquachin), STÁUTW̱,(T sawout) W̱SIKEM (Tseycum) and MÁLEXEŁ (Malahat), as well as the Sc'ianew (Beecher Bay), T'Sou-ke, and Pacheedaht Nations and the Spune'laxutth' (Penelekut) tribe where our work extends.

We are committed to acknowledging our relationship with these unceded lands and communities at staff and Board meetings and during our hosted events. We encourage the evolving learning and awareness of our staff, Board, and the Thrive community, discovering and striving for meaning and personal connection within each acknowledgement.

## INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

We are committed to building and maintaining respectful and reciprocal relationships with local Indigenous communities by prioritizing local Indigenous organizations and businesses when planning and hosting events.

## EDUCATION

We are committed to offering staff and Board members opportunities to learn the history and cultures of Indigenous communities and the impacts of colonization through workshops, resource sharing, and the promotion of community events.

## ACCOUNTABILITY

We are committed to reporting to our teams, managers, the Board of Directors, and our clients on how we are fulfilling the above commitments, which will continue to grow and develop as part of our process toward Truth and Reconciliation.

# MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

## “Attitude of Gratitude”

In reflecting on the past year and my three years as a Board member, I chose a theme of gratitude for this message. When one can easily find so much in the world to be concerned about, an attitude of gratitude can be the “magic pill” for most of what ails us. In my three years now on the Board of THRIVE, I have to say there is much to be grateful for.



I joined the Board in June 2020 at the height of the pandemic. It is hard to believe three years have passed, and we are still working around this very unwelcome guest of COVID-19. Although those peak stressors of the pandemic are thankfully behind us, and the majority of us are protected in large part with the vaccines and boosters, there are trauma scars, mental health issues and ongoing precautions we continue to deal with. Looking back now over these past three years, I have to say how well THRIVE has done to ensure staff, clients, caregivers and volunteers have been able to work in as safe an environment as possible. We need to take pause and celebrate that.

I am grateful to see our new name and brand personality so well-received in the community. This past year has been our first full year working and “thriving” with our new name and overall communications. I am so pleased with the response we have received from folks both internally and externally. The inspiring work of our staff and volunteers and the impact on those we serve is reflected in this exciting new presence and messaging. I am very pleased to say that within our first year, we have had over 200 people decide to follow us on social media. I am also quite happy with my THRIVE hoodie!!

The agency has been in strategic thinking mode, and some promising developments have been happening. We envision this growing community in greater Victoria to have the support and services it requires for children, youth and families to really have the chance to reach their full potential. We want to be one of the agencies to deliver some of those services. This means we may soon be offering services beyond our current “footprint” and that excites us.

# MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

We are assembling the foundational elements to ensure that any growth of services is managed well and sustainable into the future. We are fortunate to have the means to entertain such considerations. For that, I am grateful.

I would like to acknowledge the incredible people that make THRIVE go. Our front-line staff who show up each day to do this challenging but rewarding work; our managers who are the glue that keeps it all these teams together; our Directors who ensure the work gets done while helping steer us in the right direction strategically; and our Board of Directors who provide the additional expertise and governance to complete this picture. I think our recent and very positive CARF accreditation only confirmed that we are operating at a high level on all fronts. How can one not be grateful for all this?

As customary in an Annual Report, we would say thank you to any outgoing Board members, but I am pleased to say that our current team of fantastic individuals is remaining on for additional terms. This level of skill, experience and commitment is so great for THRIVE and its “future self.” As President, it is very comforting to know I have this team to work with going into this exciting time for the agency.

So, I close out my message with such a sense of gratitude for what is in front of us. We are changing lives for the better, and I am proud to say I am a part of all this. I look forward to the year ahead for the many new things we will soon celebrate.

## **Jack Watson**

President of Board of Directors



### **Thrive's Board of Directors**

Clemens Rettich, Hana Felix, Hazel Meredith, Marshal McLernon, Bill King, Janine Durette (standing up)

Jessica Sidhu, Joe Cardle, Jack Watson, Scott Bradford (sitting down)

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

This Annual Report is a reflection on our 2022 – 2023 year, and I am pleased to say that COVID-19 was not the dominating force of the past few reports. That said, I want to recognize our staff team for their dedication to working through those many difficult months – providing such a high level of in-person support to our clients, some of whom have significant vulnerabilities and complex care needs. Organizationally, this past year has been one of continuous learning and improvement. We've had failures and successes all of which are vital to the growth process. I feel this is a courageous organization that wants to find new ways to serve more people with even better services. As the community continues to grow, so do the needs of individuals and families. How THRIVE can play a role in that service delivery, either alone or with network partners, is something we are entertaining.



Some highlights of our collective efforts during this year include:

- **We became THRIVE Social Services on April 5th, 2022.**

After some thoughtful input from staff, clients and the community over a year-long process, we decided we needed a name change to better reflect the work we do. Helping people move toward their potential became the main theme, which led us to the idea that we help people find ways to thrive. We also worked hard to communicate our work and client successes through a new website and social media effort that saw us introduce Facebook, Instagram and Linked-In.

- **CARF Accreditation on January 20th, 2023**

Every three years, we invite accreditation surveyors to our offices who hold us accountable to over 2,000 operational and service standards that apply to our work. We were very pleased with the accreditation report and particularly positive comments from our surveyors referring to THRIVE as the “gold standard” in service delivery and operations.



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- **Continued Board of Directors development**

We have made considerable efforts developing a diverse and competent Board to lead the strategic direction of the organization. I am pleased to report that THRIVE is governed by a 9-person ensemble of community-minded professionals who have a personal connection to our work and a commitment to helping others. Bio's of our Board members can be found on our website at [www.thrivevictoria.org/about](http://www.thrivevictoria.org/about)

- **Staff development, program improvements and community partnerships**

This past year has seen efforts to improve our current programs while developing working relationships with other mission-aligned organizations for new or enhanced service offerings. Each of our program managers has continued to make incremental improvements while testing innovative ideas to ensure the vitality of programs. In terms of staff skills, we continued to put priority on staff professional development by planning and hosting all-staff training days on top of the program-related training that also continues. Finally, we made significant efforts to be part of the social services network in the spirit of "Better Together". As this region continues its rapid growth, we know that needs and challenges will also grow. THRIVE will be there with its partners to help support individuals and families as they strive to thrive.

It is with appreciation that I recognize the great work of our staff, our managers and directors, and our Board. Together, we are making a difference in the lives of those we work with. Here's to a great 2023-2024!!



**Scott Bradford**

Executive Director

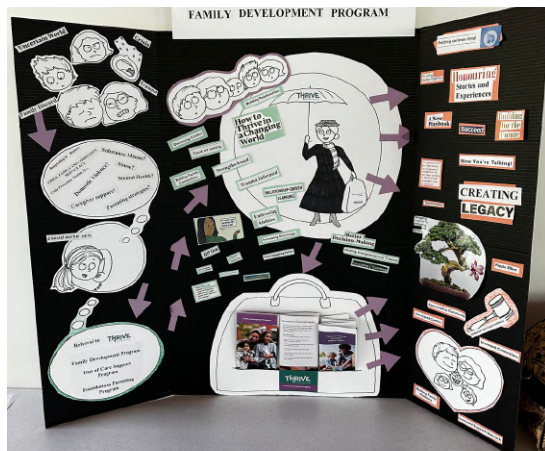
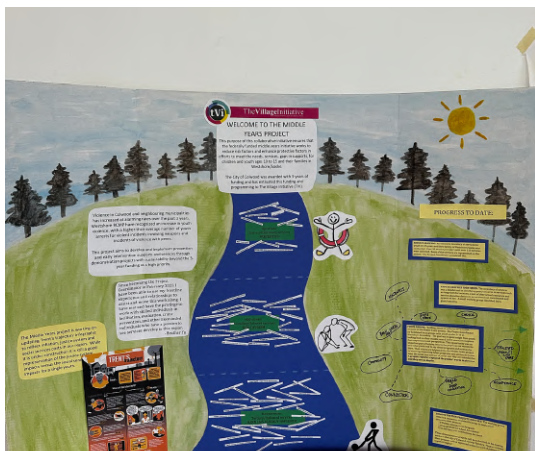
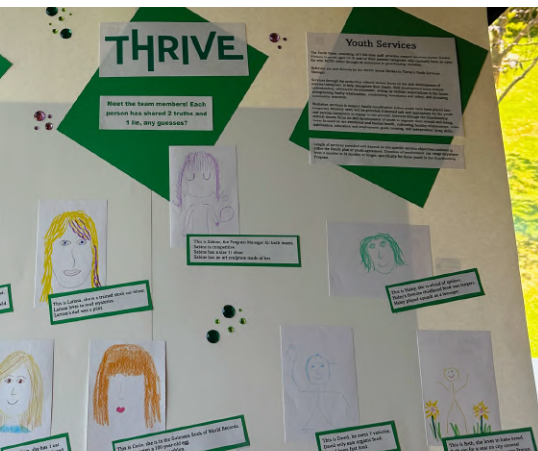
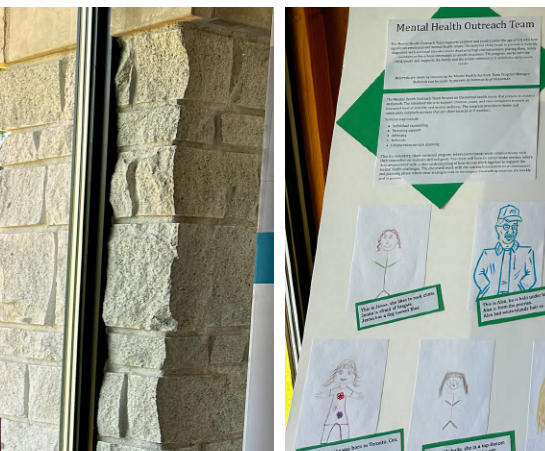
# OUR PROGRAMS

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- **Day Program**
- **Community Living Services – Adults**
- **Employment, Rise Up Youth**
- **Children and Youth with Support Needs**
- **Mental Health Outreach**
- **Youth Services**
- **Family Development, Out of Care, Foundations**

**Parenting**

# OUR PROGRAMS



# OUR PROGRAMS

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*We gratefully acknowledge our staff who have helped prepare this report*

**Holt Sivak**

Director of Programs

**Jennifer Nelly**

Day Program Manager

**Beth Cowin**

Community Living Services Program Manager

**Jenny Forth**

Employment & Rise Up Program Manager

**Cheryl Sanders**

Children and Youth with Support Needs Program Manager

**Sabine Vanderispaille**

Mental Health Outreach & Youth Services Program Manager

**Laurie Hill**

Family Development Program Manager



# DAY PROGRAM

Reflecting on the past year, the CLS Community Inclusion Day Program embraced many challenges and opportunities. We welcomed the return to normalcy as Covid 19 restrictions eased, and we could once again enjoy more community exploration opportunities and gather together in larger numbers to celebrate our accomplishments and re-establish a sense of belonging.

During the fiscal year, the Day Program participants and staff said goodbye to two full time staff (one of whom went to casual call in) and welcomed three new full-time staff. Due to the ever-present need for casual staff to cover illness and vacations, two additional staff were hired. The program welcomed a new manager in October 2022. With stable staffing in place, the team will be more able to maximize services within the program and the ability to maintain an appropriate staff/participant ratio. Despite the staffing changes, the Day Program team continued to demonstrate their ability to work hard as a team and provide continued commitment to the participants and the programs.

The Individual Support Planning (ISP) process and format was changed this year, moving to a more visually dynamic and inclusive form of planning called Making Action Plans (MAPs). The goal planning focused on what the individuals wanted to learn, try, experience etc., going above and beyond the high-quality daily activities the teams provide. Some goals included development of, and branding for a nail spa, gaining access to AAC devices to increase choice, control and self-advocacy, and increasing independent living skills through cooking to name a few. Everyone has been very receptive to the changes in process, and the feedback regarding the goal development has been positive.

The upcoming year will be a time to continue to learn and embrace the ever-present opportunities and challenges facing our sector, seeking ways to innovate and expand our services. We will continue to provide ongoing support in skill development, promote community inclusion/community connections, and create/teach positive routines, strategies, and safety awareness.

## **Jennifer Neely**

Program Manager

Community Inclusion Day Program

# COMMUNITY LIVING SERVICES

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This year has been a welcomed return to our 'normal' operations, with ups and downs throughout the year entirely unrelated to global health crises.

Most of the 'ups' in this past year were long-awaited gatherings. For clients, we hosted a Summer BBQ at Gorge Park and a Winter Holiday party at the Great Canadian Brewhouse. Between 35 and 45 people attended each event, with great success. Everyone involved: clients, caregivers, and (especially) staff worked hard so all attendees could find their way, be welcomed, enjoy good food and company, and then get home safely afterward. Our holiday dinner at the Brewhouse involved bowling, a turkey dinner, new faces, and all of the hectic festivity you would expect of 45 wonderful people in a small space.

The BBQ was a more relaxed affair in perfect summer weather with lawn chairs and watermelon. We will host both events again; however as our Holiday party completely drained our fundraising account on last year's event, likely this year will be a more home-grown affair.

Our staff team also enjoyed some long-awaited opportunities to gather. All Thrive staff participated in a series of agency-wide workshops on goal setting for clients in the late Spring and gathered again for a full-day agency-wide training day in October. There we saw a presentation by Indigenous Perspectives on reconciliation and culturally-informed service, as well as participating in strategic planning and vision sessions to hone in on Thrive's shared objectives. There are plans for another agency-wide training and a CLS Adults specific team day later in Spring 2023.

# COMMUNITY LIVING SERVICES

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Numbers in individual services remained steady over the year while group services saw an influx of new faces, a continued trend from last year, which kept all groups at capacity with occasional waitlists through the year.

Staffing proved somewhat of a challenge as we felt the sector-wide shortage. It took an unusual 2-3 months to fill both a casual and a full-time position in the summer and fall of 2022. Fortunately, by January, we were fully staffed again and have remained comfortably so until the time of writing. The existing team did an amazing job of prioritizing needs and extending themselves to meet clients when we were short, and the clients themselves responded with flexibility and understanding.

Affordable housing remains one of our continual significant difficulties. This year, we managed to help move four clients into new homes, some with very needed increased support, but we still have five clients still waiting to leave temporary or unsuitable situations.

We will continue with the aims of client-centred work, increasing social and community connections, and advocating for the diverse population we work with. We are continually grateful for the team and the clients we get to work with and look forward to the coming year.

**Beth Cowin**

Program Manager

Community Living Services Adults

# EMPLOYMENT

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The past year was an exciting year for the CLS Employment Program as it was the first year working under the banner of Thrive Social Services. This positive change corresponded with Covid-19 restrictions being fully lifted and life returning to normal for clients and staff. All clients once again were able to meet their Vocational Counsellors in person to develop their skills, work experience, job development and ultimately find and maintain paid employment.

Thrive Adults Employment Program helped 37 individuals toward achieving successful and sustainable community-based employment. Ninety-two percent of clients were successful in finding paid positions in the last year, and 97% of clients gained more employment skills and training. Our clients have a wide variety of strengths, skills and interests in the following areas: merchandising, childcare, animal care, warehouse and inventory work, office administration, service industry, community care work and delivery driving.

The dedicated employment team worked collaboratively with their clients to develop trust and rapport to achieve the “right fit” employment, ensuring longer employment placements and more meaningful work for our clients.

We did not experience a staff shortage like the previous year. However, staff turnover is still high, with the average employment duration for Vocational Counsellors being about one year. This meant that three new full-time staff required onboarding and training in the last year. Although the training for new staff is time-consuming, each new employee brings in a fresh perspective to job development and energizes the employment team.



# EMPLOYMENT

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The Employment Team continues to work collaboratively and supports one another in all aspects of the job. Vocational Counsellors once again demonstrated creativity and flexibility to best serve clients by not only providing employment support but also providing wrap-around support that is crucial for clients to be independent and employment ready. For example, this last year Vocational Counsellors connected clients with community resources such as Citizens Counselling for mental health support, The START Program & The John Howard Society for free First Aid and Food Safe certification courses. One client was even connected with a local dog trainer so her support dog could be properly trained to support her at future jobs.

Some goals for the Employment Program for the 2023-2024 year are to increase the number of clients in long-term employment. We expect to do this by networking with prospective employers within our community to encourage inclusive hiring. We also hope to achieve this by increasing communication with employers and clients to have a better understanding of the success of client job placements as we recognize the importance of “right fit” employment for both clients and employers. The Job Maintenance Check-In Survey was created last year to address this issue and has already proven to be an effective survey to get a better understanding of employment success.

The Employment Program looks forward to continuing to provide excellent individualized support for clients and working with our community partners to increase employment opportunities and success.

## **Jenny Forth**

Program Manager

Employment

# RISE UP

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The Rise Up Youth Employment Program believes Employment is fundamental for vulnerable youth to develop essential life skills, economic security, support networks and a sense of social inclusion. In the last year, The Rise Up Program has been successful in providing 34 youth with one-to-one individualized service. The program supported 100% of participants to gain job readiness skills and training, 74% of participants to gain hands-on work experience, and 65% of Rise UP participants to gain paid employment.

Rise UP's continued success is due to our commitment to providing highly individualized support for youth. We have found that a one-size-fits-all approach is not the best way to serve participants' diverse needs. Eighty-four percent of the youth in the Rise UP Program face more than one barrier to employment. Not only do our Vocational Counsellors provide employment support, but they also support participants by connecting them with community resources such as mental health supports, housing resources, and medical treatment centres.

Participants are also connected to resources and community members upon exiting our program to ensure their long-term success and independence. In the last year our Vocational Counsellors have helped participants with public transportation skills and supported a youth, who was eligible, to apply and receive BC HandyDart Service. Another participant who struggled with mental health concerns was, with the help of their Vocational Counsellor, connected to Citizens Counselling to receive mental health support.

# RISE UP

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The Rise Up Program continues to receive excellent feedback from clients and caregivers with 100% of clients surveyed being satisfied with our service. Our excellent reputation continues to spread throughout the community as we make connections with other social service organizations, schools, counsellors and continue collaboration with youth employment groups such as YEPP (Youth Employment Program Providers).

There have been many participant success stories this last year in the Rise Up Youth Employment Program but one participant's story stands out. This participant was a youth who experienced generalized anxiety, suicidal ideations, depression and crippling social anxiety all of which made even getting out of bed a struggle for this youth let alone finding and maintaining employment. The participant worked with their vocational counsellor to build a trusting rapport and to build their confidence. The youth and their vocational counsellor worked together to find a job that would work with their barriers. The first position the youth tried was working at a busy movie theatre but the youth found the pace and noise overwhelming. With encouragement from their vocational counsellor and the one-to-one, individualized support the youth persevered and found a position as a customer service rep and merchandiser for Rexall Drug Store. The youth thrived in their new role.

The pace and support at Rexall provided the youth with stability that gave them confidence, a sense of purpose and space for them to believe that they can achieve goals. After almost a year of employment, the youth independently applied for and was hired as a full-time sales associate at a pet store with higher wages and benefits. The youth's goals changed dramatically from the start of service with Rise UP to now where their original goals were to make it out of the house daily to today where their goals are to work full-time and save money in order to move out of their parent's house and live independently.

# RISE UP

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As the need for youth employment programs increases in our community so has our waitlist. It has always been a priority for the Rise UP Program to keep wait times down to a minimum as we believe that youth can lose momentum when they have to wait. We currently have a 5 to 6 month wait time for our program. In order to address the wait time, Rise UP Youth Employment has started to add employment tips and advice on our social media. We are also in the process of adding more involved job readiness tips to our website in hopes of providing youth on our waitlist with employment activities for immediate support. We also hope, in the near future, to connect youth on our waitlist with certificate programs such as FoodSafe or 1st Aid & CPR so they can complete these courses prior to starting the program. This would speed up program completion times for youth once they are in the program freeing space up for those on our waitlist.

The Rise Up Youth Employment Program looks forward to another successful year in providing flexible and individualized employment support to our community's vulnerable youth population.

**Jenny Forth**

Program Manager

Rise Up Youth Employment Program



# CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH SUPPORT NEEDS

The CYSN program supports children, youth and their families who have been referred from the Ministry of Children and Family Development through the Children and Youth with Support Needs stream. The CYSN program supports children and youth with support needs and their families to develop independent living skills, build parenting skills, access community resources, and develop social skills and community connections with the support of CYFSW's through individual and group services.

The CYSN team consists of 7 full-time CYFSW's and a program manager. This year, the program supported 135 participants in both individual and group services. Our program received 115 new client referrals from the Ministry this year while, at the same time, we continue to have several clients who are re-referred back to both individual and group services as needs change or they are ready to progress and learn or practice new skills.

This year, it feels like we have happily left the COVID-19 pandemic behind us, and the program is moving forward. Over the past year, there has been a focus on updating the curriculum for all of our groups and developing information and resources to support the children, youth and families that we serve. CYSN staff continue to demonstrate their creativity and flexibility in developing programming that supports our participants and their families when gaps have been identified. This year, we piloted a parent group that focused on supporting families with transition-aged youth and familiarizing them with resources that they may be able to access as one their youth moves into adult services. Additionally, all of our groups are continually reviewed and updated to ensure we are current with best practices and using evidence-based strategies and resources.

# CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH SUPPORT NEEDS

Our program continues to see a significant portion of new referrals that have an identified or suspected mental health diagnosis with few resources in the community that will provide support to someone with a diagnosed intellectual disability or autism. Our staff continue to support participants and their families to connect with mental health experts who provide service to children and youth with co-occurring diagnosis and who can evaluate the individual's needs however there are pressures for our program staff to attempt to fill those gaps by families who are desperate for support.

We are continuing to see referrals for participants who are experiencing complex life events such as caregivers with substance use and/or mental health issues, family breakdown, children/youth in care, and families living in poverty. We expect this trend to continue as it has over the last several years. When able, our staff will provide support to the family to access resources in the community to address these complex situations.

The CYFSW staff continue to demonstrate a commitment to the children, youth and families whom we serve and they are the driving factor behind the success of the CYSN program. Additionally, the CYSN team shows their enthusiasm for being a part of Thrive by participating in agency committees and leading several agency initiatives. I am very fortunate to work with this group of dedicated professionals.

## **Cheryl Sanders**

Program Manager

Children and Youth with Support Needs

# CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH SUPPORT NEEDS

## Summer Contract

In addition to Individual Services and Group Services, the CYSN program historically has also been contracted separately to do a summer camp. In 2022, Thrive determined that we would not be able to run the camp as outlined in the contract due to a shortage of qualified staff. A proposal was made that we would offer five summer groups that would meet once per week.

This allowed for us to hire fewer staff and provide ongoing support to those youth in the summer who have minimal summer peer opportunities. Our summer groups focused on youth aged 13 and older who were no longer eligible for most other community summer programming, offering them an organized and supported weekly group with peers to engage in various activities and socialization.

This programming allowed for us to serve 29 participants weekly over the course of 6 weeks in the summer. Two of the groups ran out of the Westshore and three groups ran out of Saanich. We were able to provide support to families with transportation barriers to support group attendance. Participants engaged in activities such as visits to local parks and beaches, mini-golfing, bowling, the trampoline park, crafts, art, card and board games.

Overall, the feedback received from the youth and the families was positive. We received 16 electronic client surveys from participants and parents/caregivers. Out of the 16 surveys returned, 14 people reported that they were satisfied overall, with 2 reporting that they were mostly satisfied.

### **Cheryl Sanders**

Program Manager

Children and Youth with Support Needs

# CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH SUPPORT NEEDS

## Feedback from Parents, caregivers, and guardians

*"J. was very patient and understanding. She motivated our son to accomplish goals with some visual reminders and a whole lot of weekly support."*

*"Connecting to others with some similarities that aren't in the norm population of parents. Gaining ideas and compassion from parents."*

*"A great platform to learn and/or reinforce help concepts and connect with parents. Really appreciated the platform to connect to parents and talk about things that are working and not working. I felt the facilitator was great at also having us focus on positive things and facilitating us building connections. A wealth of knowledge from the facilitator and parent group"*

## Feedback - Summer Camp

*Amazing group!! All the staff positively connected with the children and made my daughter feel respected and accepted."*

*"My daughter felt like she was just going to "hang with friends"."*

*"Enjoyed that it was all outdoors and in nature."*

# MENTAL HEALTH OUTREACH

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The team consists of seven Family Development Counsellors and a Program Manager. Since the last reporting period, the team has seen some staff changes due to retirement and individual career changes by some long-term employees, which allowed us to welcome three new staff members. We are very fortunate to have a team of caring, dedicated and skillful professionals

The Mental Health Outreach Team has been busier than ever, with an increase of more than 20% in client numbers. The program serves clients between the ages of 6 and 19 (and their caregivers), and over the past year, most of the children and youth were between the ages of 9 and 16 years old.

The team saw 87 unique clients over the past year. This year, there appears to be a shift from predominantly male to female. 34.5% of our clients identified as male and 52% as female. We observed another increase (14% of total clients) in youth identifying with a different gender identification or expression.

Anxiety disorders, mood disorders and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder are the most common mental health concerns that are cited as the reason for a referral to the program. With the younger children, we have noticed more symptomatology suggesting an Autism Spectrum Disorder Diagnosis and concerns around attachment issues as well as trauma. For the older youth we see predominantly clients with mood and anxiety concerns, and lately also an increase in Eating Disorders.

# MENTAL HEALTH OUTREACH

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Mental health takes not only a toll on a youth's overall well-being, but it most definitely affects other areas in their lives, such as school. Only a smaller percentage of our clients attend school full time while the others go part-time on an adjusted schedule, sporadically or not at all. The Mental Health Outreach Program is a sought-after program by school staff who welcome our team members in their work environment to provide the individual mental health support that they are unable to provide. The Program Manager was invited to be part of a working group to collaborate on strategies to decrease school absenteeism.

The average length of service engagement is between 9 months and 12 months. This number is slightly higher than the expectation due to several files that are waiting for specialized services to become involved. It would be unacceptable to terminate service when no other services are able to step in.

The team continues to network with community partners. An example of this is the partnership with the High-Risk Team that offers our team timeslots to have some of our more complex clients psychiatrically assessed. This cuts the wait time for a client to be seen in the community by a psychiatrist by eight months to a year.

We continue with professional development opportunities and share new learnings in team meetings.

**Sabine Vanderispaille**

Program Manager

Mental Health Outreach Team



# YOUTH SERVICES

The Youth Services Program works with youth who have been referred by the Ministry of Children and Family Development, both from the Protection and Guardianship Stream. The team consists of three full-time Family Counsellors and a Program Manager.

The focus for families from the Youth Protection referrals is on parental skill development to support increased stability in the family, facilitate reunification efforts, as well as general support for the youth in the family environment. For youth in the Guardianship stream, the focus is on independent living skills, providing support for educational and vocational development and successful aging out of the Ministry system. The team is very motivated, highly skilled and committed to working with this high-need population.

As the pandemic has more or less disappeared, social services, in general, have resumed more normal activity which has resulted in an increase in referrals to our service to bring our caseloads back up to what they were before the pandemic.

The Family Counsellors worked with 47 youth/families over the past year. Of these files, 21 files transitioned out of service (3 for Youth Guardianship, 18 for Youth Protection). There were 20 new referrals, five from Youth guardianship and 15 from Youth Protection.

The team maintains excellent partnerships with other community services and is highly regarded by the referral sources.

The complexity of the files remains high. Often, the referred youth are deeply engaged in substance use. However, a trend we've noticed is that youth appear more open to having their substances "tested" prior to consuming. An increased availability of Naloxone kits and training on how to use them for youth and families has been welcomed in the community.

## **Sabine Vanderispaille**

Program Manager  
Youth Services Team

# FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

## Family Development Core Victoria and West Shore

Again, this year, the FDCs continue to face challenging and complex cases. There continues to be an observable increase in referrals for persons served with severe and complex mental health issues, both diagnosed and undiagnosed and/or struggling with addiction. This often poses a significant challenge when engaging persons in risk reduction work and can act as a barrier to developing good working relationships. In turn, moderating access between parents and their children can be very challenging due to the unpredictability of persons-served behaviours. The other identified trend continues to be families with children with complex needs including mental health and support needs. There are either long waitlists for services or gaps in services especially with children with complex support needs which is resulting in family crisis. This also brings a varied skill set requirement for FDC's as each family has different and multifaceted needs.

The Family Development Program also continues to see the impact of the Opioid Crisis on our families, both with persons-served experiencing overdoses and with the tragic death of family members that has left families devastated by the loss of their loved ones. This public health emergency will likely continue to impact this program as the incidence of overdoses has increased dramatically and crosses all age groups, genders, and socio-economic backgrounds.

Despite these challenges, the 9.5 FDCs continued to provide service to 106 families in the Core Victoria and West Shore regions with 50 new referrals and 68 families transitioning out of the program. The number of families served for this reporting period reduced significantly as there were less referrals to the program which may be indicative of lack of staffing stability with the referral source.

# FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

## **Family Development Core Victoria and West Shore**

During this reporting year, the FD Program continued to liaise with MCFD personnel from the Core Victoria, West Shore, and Regional Domestic Violence teams. This ongoing communication assists in reducing wait times for families as MCFD prioritizes families that may require more urgent services.

In addition, the FDC program continues to represent our agency across a variety of agency committees. Within the agency, the program has strong representation on various agency committees including Health and Safety, Joint Labour Management, Quality Assurance, Wellness, SMART goal training, Truth and Reconciliation and Equity, Diversion and Inclusion.

At this time, I would again like to thank all the staff within this program who continue to demonstrate a commitment to the work we do and have gone above and beyond to ensure the programs run smoothly, while practicing with professionalism and integrity. This was evidenced by their continued efforts to support their families during unprecedented times during a pandemic.

### **Laurie Hill**

Program Manager  
Family Development

# FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

## **Out of Care Support**

The Out of Care Support Program consists of one FTE and a program manager. For this reporting period, the Out of Care Support Family Development Counsellor worked with 21 caregivers, including 11 new referrals and 12 caregivers who transitioned from service. Services are regional and cover the Malahat and Greater Victoria (including West Shore, Peninsula, Saltspring Island). The number of caregiver families that received service was within expected targets in previous years, as was the number of new referrals and caregivers who transitioned out of service.

The Out of Care Support Program FDC continues to carry high numbers of caregivers on her caseload (between 11-13 Caregivers at a time) as the program continues to be in high demand by the Resource team. Waitlists are managed and prioritized by the Resource team so it is unknown as how many caregivers may be awaiting services. As this is a supportive program, the caregiver can determine the frequency of contact which can increase exponentially as crises arise, which increases the FDC workload unexpectedly. In addition, the scope of distance covered by the program increases travel time to caregiver homes throughout the region. An identified trend in location is the increase of caregivers in the West shore however scheduling is based on the availability of the caregiver which can lead to long days and driving to different regions in the same day. These challenges can put additional stressors on the program which may be alleviated by additional service hours to support the program.

# FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

## **Out of Care Support**

The caregivers presented with many challenges such as navigating, biological parent substance misuse, trauma, and diagnosed/undiagnosed mental health challenges while caring for some children with complex care needs; diagnosed/undiagnosed mental health issues, CYSN designation, trauma and other challenges, and limited access to resources within the community. The lack of access to counsellors, affordable housing and drug treatment for biological children, and long waitlist for services for children all increase the stressors for caregivers. However, it is not uncommon to see a caregiver face the challenges before them and provide the best care for the children/youth in their care for as long as they are caring for them.

Despite the challenges faced by caregivers, the Out of Care Support Program (OCSP) continues to have another successful year providing supportive services to kith and kin across the Greater Victoria Region who are caring for children in the care of the Ministry of Child and Family Development (MCFD).

### **Laurie Hill**

Program Manager

Family Development - Out of Care Support



# FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

*"I did get quite a bit of parenting tools and positive parenting. Although I am still learning and practicing on a day-to-day basis."*

## Foundations Parenting

**Client feedback**

The Foundations Parenting program is run by 2 part-time facilitators for the equivalent of one FDC and one manager. The program is designed to enhance parenting capacity and reduce risks to children who have come to the attention of MCFD. For this reporting year the program reduced the number of weekly sessions from 10 to 6 to assess if this was a more manageable time frame than the 10-week commitment. However, the participants were offered additional sessions that incorporated the full 10 weeks material and they enthusiastically engaged in the additional sessions. This resulted in the decision to go back to the 10-week sessions starting in the fall of 2023.

The program presents a variety of topics related to increasing parental skills (see Logic Model) for families with children in the 0-6 age range followed by in-home sessions to work with the families on the integration of the acquired skills with their children. All referrals are made through a referring West Shore child protection social worker.

The program continues to receive very positive feedback from the participants, who expressed how the information and the support from the facilitators has enhanced their parenting skills significantly. For this reporting year only one participant identified child care as a barrier. However, tracking will continue to ascertain if lack of child care screened out participants prior to admission to the program. Overall, the feedback from the participants that were able to successfully complete the program continued to commend the facilitators and the content of the materials that they learned each week.

*"The course was very well-rounded. I think any and all parents could benefit from this information."*

## Laurie Hill

Program Manager

Family Development - Foundations Parenting Program

**Client feedback**

# THRIVE'S HIGHLIGHTS

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- ✓ **Revised values**
- ✓ **Updated Statement of Reconciliation**
- ✓ **1st Anniversary**
- ✓ **Community Kitchen Project**
- ✓ **CARF Accreditation**
- ✓ **Celebrating Pride Month**
- ✓ **Vans replacement**

# THRIVE'S HIGHLIGHTS

## Thrive announces revised values

Thrive is proud to announce our revised values: Integrity, Collaboration, and Courage. These values are at the heart of everything we do and guide our actions and decisions as we work toward our mission.

### Integrity

We model and encourage honesty that embraces respect, trust and accountability for ourselves, service participants and the broader community.

### Collaboration

We build bridges to improve outcomes through a strengths-based process fostering adaptability, inclusiveness and innovation.

### Courage

We celebrate resilience and advocate with empathy for perseverance and bravery in challenging adversity.



Our agency's values were developed at an all-staff meeting on September 26th, 2022. We thank all staff for their input with a special note of appreciation to the working group that put the finishing touches on this work. They include Jenny F, Ella M, Analise C, Mike Y, Heather Y, Lorraine K and Holt S.

# THRIVE'S HIGHLIGHTS

## Thrive's Updated Statement of Reconciliation



At Thrive Social Services, we are committed to fostering a culture of growth, understanding, and positive change.

We're excited to announce that we have updated our Statement of Reconciliation to further strengthen our dedication to Indigenous partnerships, cultural understanding, and community unity.

Our updated statement reflects our unwavering commitment to walk alongside Indigenous communities, acknowledging past injustices and working collaboratively towards a more inclusive and equitable future.

Thank you, Truth and Reconciliation Committee, for this.

Our Thrive team acknowledges that our agency stands and works on the unceded Lək'wəŋən territory of the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations. We also acknowledge the five W̱SÁNEĆ communities: W̱JOŁEŁP (Tsartlip), BOKÉĆEN (Pauquachin), S̱ÁUTW̱ (Tsawout) W̱SIKEM (Tseycum) and MÁLEXEŁ (Malahat), as well as the Sc'ianew (Beecher Bay), T'Sou-ke, and Pacheedaht Nations and the Spune'laxuth' (Penelekut) tribe where our work extends. We are committed to acknowledging our relationship with these unceded lands and communities, at staff and Board meetings, and during our hosted events. We encourage the evolving learning and awareness of our staff, Board, and the Thrive community, discovering and striving for meaning and personal connection within each acknowledgement.



# THRIVE'S HIGHLIGHTS

## 1st Anniversary

On April 5th, 2023, was an incredible milestone: we celebrated our first year as Thrive Social Services!

In 2022, Phoenix Human Services, a Victoria-based not-for-profit charity that provides life-changing services for children, youth, adults, and families, changed its name to Thrive Social Services Society (Thrive). Since 1981, the organization has provided various programs recognizing an individual's uniqueness and creating opportunities to enhance their strengths and resourcefulness.





# THRIVE'S HIGHLIGHTS

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## CARF Accreditation

THRIVE Social Services Society is proud to announce that it has been awarded a three-year accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). The accreditation, which is effective until March 31, 2026, applies to the programs and services provided by the organization. This is the agency's 7th CARF accreditation.

The accredited programs and services include Employment Services, Children and Youth with Support Needs, Mental Health Outreach Team, Youth Services, Community Living Services, and Day Program.

This prestigious accreditation demonstrates Thrive Social Services Society's commitment to providing high-quality services to the individuals it serves. The accreditation report highlights the organization's strengths and offers consultation and recommendations for continuous improvement.

An organization receiving a three-year accreditation has undergone a rigorous peer review process. During an on-site visit, it has demonstrated to a team of surveyors its commitment to offering measurable, accountable programs and services of the highest quality.

Thrive would like to thank its staff, managers, directors and community members who contributed to this accomplishment and are committed to continuing to provide exceptional services.

For more information about the accreditation process, please visit the CARF website at [www.carf.org](http://www.carf.org).

# THRIVE'S HIGHLIGHTS

## The Community Kitchen Project

Thrive is proud to announce its involvement in the new Community Kitchen project for residents of the West Shore. This community-focused initiative aims to unite people and provide cooking instruction based on various themes such as limited budget, newcomers, seniors, and youth.

The pilot project began in January 2023 with eight participants who have children attending School District #62. This first is an Adult-focused Community Kitchen for parents with a limited budget and will run until March. 3.

“For 6 weeks, participants learn about food, experience cooking, eat together and take home additional food for their families. We provide free childcare and a meal for the children attending”, explains Heather Yu.

Partners in this project include SD62, West Shore Parks and Recreation, Food Skills for Families (Centre for Disease Control) and Tina Tulloch (Community Kitchen Facilitator). The program will offer cooking lessons, nutrition education, budgeting, safe cooking practices, and more in a fun and social environment.



# THRIVE'S HIGHLIGHTS

## Celebrating Pride Month

Throughout June, we celebrate Pride Month to honour the historic Stonewall uprising of 1969 in Manhattan. It all began in the early hours of June 28th when the Stonewall Inn, a beloved gay club in New York City, was raided by police. This event sparked a pivotal moment in the fight for LGBTQIA2S+ rights and paved the way for the progress we continue to make today.

Members of our Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee and fellow Thrivers, friends, and family participated in the Victoria Pride Parade on Sunday, July 9th, 2023. It's a moment to stand together, show our support, and embrace diversity.



# THRIVE'S HIGHLIGHTS

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## **Thrive replaced two of the vans with two new Kia Carnival vans**

Our programs have received a significant enhancement to transportation services for our valued clients. We've recently replaced two of our vans with brand-new Kia Carnival vehicles, all aimed at providing even more comfortable and efficient support.

These sleek and spacious vans are more than just vehicles; they represent our unwavering commitment to offering better assistance and care to our community members. To further signify our dedication, watch for these vans as they undergo a vibrant makeover soon, featuring Thrive's distinctive logo.

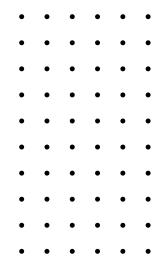
This upgrade is a testament to our ongoing efforts to improve services, empower individuals, and create lasting positive change. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who contributes to making these enhancements possible. Together, we're driving toward a brighter future.

# IN PROUD PARTNERSHIP

As we continue our journey of empowering lives and fostering positive change within our community, we express our deepest gratitude to the invaluable funders and partners who stand beside us.







# THANK YOU



250-383-4821



admin@thrivevictoria.org



1095 McKenzie Avenue, 4th Floor  
Victoria, BC - V8P 2L5



www.thrivevictoria.org



@thrivesocialservices

