



SOOKE FAMILY RESOURCE SOCIETY

Annual Report

April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024

**We respectfully acknowledge the traditional territories of the
Coast Salish Nations and Nuu-chah-nulth Nations of southern Vancouver Island**

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Our Vision

Resilient, Connected People

Our Mission

We provide people of all ages and abilities on southern Vancouver Island, with services and resources that encourage them to enhance skills, address challenges and create a path forward.

Board of Directors

Adriana Martinez Fernandez	Chair	Janice Alexander	Director
Sam Purdy	Vice-Chair	Michael Strong	Director
Brian De Clare	Treasurer	Joanne McCann	Director

2023-2024 Achievements, Adjustments, and Improvements

This past year marked the end of an era as we said goodbye to long running Executive Director, Nicky Logins. Nicky left an indelible mark on Sooke Family Resource Society through her unwavering dedication to serving the needs of community and devotion to leadership through compassion, awareness, and perseverance. While we take comfort in knowing Nicky is still an active member in the Sooke Regional District, her absence is notable, and legacy not soon forgotten.

Our fiscal year 2023-2024 began with a strategic planning initiative that included thoughtful conversations with department staff, an engaging workshop titled The Future Backward, facilitated by The Roy Group, followed by a collaborative effort, over several months, resulting in a re-envisioned 5-year strategic plan.

With SFRS taking a lead role, joint efforts among sector colleagues in the Coalition of Neighborhood Houses progressed the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Initiative, which included inspiring and thought-provoking workshops led by The Power of Discourse.

The Board of Directors welcomed new member Jo McCann this year and continued its efforts to recruit additional members with a focus on diversity and stakeholder representation. Essential work was accomplished by the board hiring committee, with focused efforts to recruit a new Executive Director to implement our new strategic plan.

5 Year Strategic Plan: Guiding Principles

Focus – Listen, identify and meet the changing needs of our communities.

Strengthen – Commitment to culture though equity, wellness, and happiness in the workplace.

Diversify – Build & expand revenue sources with existing and new partnerships.

Influence – Advocate for our community members and model best practices.

Deliver – Steadfast dedication to high quality service delivery.

Collaborate – Support our Board of Directors to guide, oversee and engage.

Health and Safety

Health and safety aligned with accreditation and WorkSafe standards. A comprehensive approach ensures that safety is a top priority for staff and stakeholders. The following health and safety activities were conducted throughout the year:

- Committee Meetings: The Health and Safety Committee convened regularly. We welcomed new members and shared essential protocols and information with them.
- Routine Activities: Regular health and safety activities included committee meetings, procedure drills, safety site inspections at all program locations, fire inspections, and reviews of policies and critical incidents.
- Digital Documentation: The committee continued to utilize digital formats for all required manuals and documents, facilitating quick and easy access for all staff and ensuring seamless updates.
- Virtual Meetings: All committee meetings were held virtually via Teams, enhancing inclusivity by allowing staff to participate from various locations.
- Incident Reports: Thirteen incident reports were filed throughout the year, with a slight increase in interactions involving vulnerable persons.
- Employee Wellness: Ongoing discussions with staff teams focused on developing employee wellness strategies. The Social Committee is planning “Happiness at Work” activities, including staff BBQs, evening walks, and fun events on training days.
- Critical Incidents: Eight critical incidents were recorded in Home Share and submitted to CLBC. SFRS collaborated with Home Share providers and CLBC to determine appropriate actions and improvements based on the information from these incidents.

Strategic Initiatives

- Through a collaborative and multistep process, a new strategic plan was developed.
- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion initiative began with an assessment of current practices, surveys and learning opportunities.
- A review and revision of agencywide training plans and staff engagement opportunities were trialed with positive feedback.
- Implementation of employee-led ‘Social Committee’ offering opportunities for interdepartmental collaboration and team building.

On-going activities from previous strategic plan

- Review of programming space needs for growing Adult Outreach Services department in the Westshore, Bryn Maur Office.
- Review of Operations Budget for 2024-25 to assess funding needs.
- Enhance IT security with multi-factor authentication.
- Implement ORCA for Management and Strategic Planning reports.

Risk Management

- The Risk Management Plans were reviewed and updated in December 2023.
- Regular and on-going risk management activities include review of insurances, criminal record checks, policy revisions, inventory and asset review, board orientation, employee performance, evaluations, all staff and program level training, and maintenance and upkeep of personnel files.
- Continued review of HR policies to ensure equity, best practice, and compliance.

- Review of non-funded programming for sustainability.
- Implementation of IT training plan to inform and educate all staff on potential cyber threats and how to recognize them.
- Internal protocols were refined and implemented to prevent external threats and fraudulent activity.
- Targeted roll out of Non-Violent Crisis Intervention training for front line staff.

Accessibility & Accommodations

- An accessibility assessment of Bryn Maur location identified the need for automated door openers. An application was submitted to the Enabling Accessibility Small Projects Grant fund with the Federal Government and was approved.
- Implementation of equitable policies for non-union employees was achieved. The work to ensure SFRS maintains a fair practice.
- Google translate application software was implemented to support communication and connectedness for EDL & non-English speaking families and individuals.
- A continuing partnership with James Bay Community Project allows SFRS to continue the Bridging the Digital Divide project. This program supports community members to learn and utilize digital technology.
- The Short-Term Community Counselling (STCC) program funded by Island Health began in this period. The STCC service offers clients the ability to self-refer for counseling services and receive 10-12 free counseling sessions.
- The Thrift Store partnered with the Sooke Harbourside Lions to collect coats and hats for children donated by community members.

Communications

- The Welcome Home program continues to use and enhance its monthly memo to communicate news and information to Home Share providers.
- Microsoft Teams was expanded to support AOS Outreach staff to communicate and access information and resources when working off site.
- Voice Over Internet Protocol system (VOIP) conversion was initiated at all locations
- Open Futures Learning platform was opened and introduced to support training for Welcome Home, home share providers.

Communities of Practice

The Executive Director, or delegate, regularly participated in local, regional, and/or provincial groups, committees, and/or learning circles to ensure our programs and the people we serve have a face and a voice at sector and community planning tables.

- Neighborhood House Coalition, Capital Region (regional).
- Community Living BC Service Providers (South Island region).
- District of Sooke Health Care Committee (Island Health led with local municipality).
- Sooke Region Communities Health Network.
- District of Sooke Age Friendly Committee.
- Sooke Region Chamber of Commerce.
- Tenants OHS group, Sooke and West Shore Child Youth and Family Centres.

- The Village Initiative (previously SD62 Health Schools – cross sector regional service planning group).
- Bean Counters (Chief Financial Officers Consultative Group - regional).
- Federation of Community Social Services (provincial social services advocacy group).

Technology

The Technology Plan was reviewed in December 2023.

- Implemented a new Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) phone system allowing direct transfer of calls between physical locations. The new system phases out copper-based connections for modern systems and facilitates easy updating and customization.
- Initiate planning to replace the current server infrastructure.
- IT Lead position supported technology emergencies as needed.
- Installed new wireless Access Point in Bryn Maur
- Increases multiple device access to the internet.
- Increases system security by allowing the non-employee users to only access the internet.
- Communicate information to promote IT user awareness organization's monthly newsletter.
- Continued development and implementation of the SFRS bespoke database, ORCA.

Finance

- The post-pandemic economic environment, and unionization of our workforce remain the two biggest influences on how SFRS is funded and the cost-of-service delivery.
- Overall revenues increased 10.47% over the preceding year. The main difference is where the source of funding originated from.
- Total revenue from memberships, grants and donations dropped by 40.30% as there was less pandemic specific funding available and due to the unpredictable economic climate individuals had less disposable income to donate.
- Total revenue from regional government increased by 33.13% due to funding opportunities in the form of a two-year Service Agreement with the District of Sooke, a new contract from Island Health to provide counselling and the eligibility for Island Health Supported Child Development dollars.
- Total revenue provincial funding remained stable. The apparent increase of 9.41% is due to the amount of deferred revenue allocated to funding sources, in addition to wage lifts, as per negotiated through the BCGEU collective bargaining process.
- Total revenue from federal funding increased by 78.70%, due to a one time only funding for 15 months, from the Community Services Recovery Fund.
- Revenue from operations increased due to an increase in Thrift recycling revenue, the running of silent auctions by the Thrift Store and increased fund-raising revenue generated by the Kingfisher Preschool.
- Revenue increased from program delivery due to increased sales in the Thrift Shop due to a re-modelling of the business model and move to a larger retail space in the previous year. There was a decrease in the amount of fee for service counselling provided to clients.
- Significantly, the distribution of types of revenue varied from the previous year due to the financial pressures felt by both individuals and businesses in the post pandemic economic climate.

- Grants and Donations were down by 40.30% over the previous year, while Program Delivery revenue was up by 11.06%.
- Excluding amortization of capital assets, total expense changes were commensurate with total revenue changes when compared to the preceding year.
- Operational and program delivery costs increased by 6.38% and 3.30%. The increases were due to an increase in bank charges, accounting, legal costs and office repair and maintenance.
- Organizational expenses increased by 36.31%. The increase was related to the Community Services Recovery Funding which allowed SFRS to engage the staff in organizational development and to work on increasing staff satisfaction and retention rates.
- Personnel Expenses have increased by 13.70%. This increases due to cost of unionization and wage grid step increases and the ratification of a new union collective agreement and wage grid in addition to changes to staffing models within individual programs.

The bottom line of the Society decreased when compared to the previous year. This is because the Society chose to invest in the following: wage parity, early years, fund development, the Executive Director succession, and strategic planning.

Monetary measures from the unionization of the employees were implemented as of January 15, 2022. On March 31, 2023, the union ratified a new collective agreement back dated to April 01, 2022. Increases in wage rates and changes in health and dental benefits, adoption of union dues, a switch to employer paid LTD and the introduction of the Municipal Pension Plan continue to be significant costs to the organization.

Cultural Competency, Diversity, and Inclusion

The Cultural Competency, Diversity and Inclusion Plan was updated in November 2023.

- Initiatives to support Board Members in growth and learning in these areas were temporarily put on hold in 2023 due to the work involved in developing the new strategic plan and recruitment of new Executive Director.
- Efforts to recruit new Board members from Indigenous and culturally diverse community members is on-going and remains a top priority.
- Professional development and discussion in areas of cultural diversity and decolonization, use of pronouns and gender neutrality and self-affirming practices and anti-bias training are being woven in at the department level.
- SFRS, as a member of the Neighborhood House Coalition have partnered with the Power of Discourse Consulting by participating in a regional initiative to gauge practices and policies for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. Work began by engaging employees at all levels in conversation and surveys.

Succession Planning

The Succession Plan was updated in July 2023.

Following the December 2023 resignation of the Executive Director, Nicky Logins, the Executive Hiring Committee engaged a third-party recruitment company to secure a new Executive. The first placement was unsuccessful, and establishing a well aligned successor remains a priority for The Board of Directors. In the interim, co-directors Fleur Harvey-Kelly and Kelly Walker are appointed to oversee matters related to Operations and Programming respectively.

Human Resources and Staff Development

The Human Resources Department at SFRS plays a vital role in supporting and enhancing the organization's operations and culture. It is dedicated to fostering a supportive and productive work environment, ensuring that human capital is effectively managed and developed.

- At year end, SFRS had a total of 55 employees, 35 Contractors, and 30 regular volunteers.
- SFRS welcomed 16 new staff members across various departments. The turnover rate remained consistent issuing 24 Record of Employment, 20 terminations including temporary layoffs, and 4 Leaves of Absences.
- SFRS employees completed training through our HR Partner, HR Downloads. New hires completed new hire training requirements, and all other staff completed required annual training.
- Two All-Staff Training days were held in May and November. Topics included Health and Safety, Microsoft Teams, Employee Benefits, Kindness in the Workplace, and the SFRS Happiness Campaign. Program Managers and Supervisors planned targeted training sessions tailored to the specific needs of their clients and staff.
- All SFRS employees participated in probationary or annual performance reviews. Staff are invited to complete self-evaluations, collaborate to set professional goals, and engage in meaningful discussions with their managers.
- Opportunities for lead roles were offered and filled, and temporary assignments in higher-level positions were granted. These opportunities allowed staff to gain new knowledge and strengths by exploring different roles and responsibilities.
- An employee led Social Committee was developed to help promote interdepartmental collaboration through planning and organizing all-staff events, activities, and initiatives. The committee works together with a goal to create connections, celebration, job satisfaction and work-life balance.
- Policies were updated to incorporate gender-neutral and inclusive language. Additional enhancements were implemented for policies 6.22, 6.28, and 6.29.
- SFRS increased benefits for Psychology services across all employment areas within our Benefits Program. Our benefits package remains highly competitive, ensuring that staff receive the best possible care.
- The HR department aims to further strengthen its impact through the continued recruitment and development of employee-led committees aimed at community outreach and raising the organizational profile.

The HR department, in collaboration with the Leadership Team, has been instrumental in SFRS's success by effectively managing talent acquisition, employee development, and fostering a positive work environment. Through strategic initiatives in recruitment, training, and employee well-being, HR has contributed significantly to the organization's growth and operational excellence. HR remains committed to sustaining this support by continuously enhancing policies, promoting a culture of inclusion, and driving initiatives that align with SFRS's goals. Our ongoing dedication to these areas will ensure that we continue to support and advance the agency's mission and success.

Neighborhood House Programs

Neighborhood House functions as a point of contact and resource center for the community by providing the following supports and services:

- Distribution of bus tickets, mail service, fax, photocopying, and public phone access for clients of the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (MSDPR) receiving or trying to access provincial Income Assistance.
- Distribution of food and other donations received at the main reception in Sooke. These donations averaged over \$5,000 a month in value and are distributed through the program staff as needed for families and clients.
- Information about community services and resources in Sooke, West Shore and Greater Victoria.

Reception services for SFRS as well as other building tenants at the Sooke Child, Youth and Family Centre, offering resources and referrals to clients and the public.

- Reception services offered more than 5,200 supportive interactions throughout the year.

Importantly, Neighborhood House provides the administrative functions for all SFRS programs and service locations, as well as the overall agency administrative needs. This includes:

- Reception services for all programs.
- Finance services for all programs.
- Human Resources services for all programs.
- Agency-wide services for Information Technology and technology security.
- Agency governance activities and board support.
- Agency Strategic Planning and Management Plans.
- Agency-wide administrative management (including health and safety, quality assurance, legal requirements, facilities management, etc.).
- Leadership of our accreditation activities.

Bridging the Digital Divide

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, this program was developed in partnership with the Coalition of Neighbourhood Houses Capital Region in 2020.

SFRS and The James Bay Community Project continue to provide technology education and support for older adults and community members in James Bay area. A combination of group and one-to-one meetings help to foster better understanding and techniques to use, access and enjoy technology.

Attendees came to the meetings with questions and devices looking for help and suggestions for a broad range of topics. While some were looking for ways to stay in touch with family members, others were looking for how to access services online, and others were looking for help with a device they were not sure they needed. Staff and volunteers worked in partnership with the clients to provide answers and suggestions for solutions.

SFRS Community Thrift Shop

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle & Reinvest

- Relocation to the new site, in August 2022, has exceeded expectations and delighted our volunteers, staff, customers, and donors.
- The Thrift Store maintained its operating days, four days per week, and increased hours to 9:00am – 3:00 welcoming increased foot traffic.
- The average number of customers served per month is 2600.
- 12-month average of items sold: 15,012.
- Volunteer hours 7250, valued at \$108,750.
- Bimonthly Silent Auctions, targeting a variety of interests are an outstanding success, and our social media presence sees over 2500 shares & likes.
- Wednesday & Saturday are our busiest days, along with ½ price sale occurring twice per month.
- Future plans include installation of a covered area for donation drop-off, enhanced health and safety plans and equipment, and increased security measures.

"I came in from Victoria, as I was told this is the best Thrift Store in South Vancouver Island."

The Family Resource Program

The Family Resource Program (FRP) brings parents together to strengthen skills, promote social networking, reduce isolation, and foster community cohesion. The FRP is grounded in the belief that consistent positive parenting practices and secure, healthy parent-child relationships are fundamental factors in all aspects of healthy child development.

The FRP serves families with children, ranging in age from birth through school-age, living in Local Health Area 62, including: Colwood, Langford, Metchosin, Highlands, and Sooke to Port Renfrew.

This program provides the following services: Parent-Child drop-in groups (Parent-Tot Drop-In, Parent Discussion Group, Neurodiverse Play Group, Family Support Group), Family Support Outreach, Prenatal Education and Outreach, parent education workshops and courses, special family events, and a food program and "free pantry" for participants. The FRP provides support for Sooke School District 62 with: StrongStart Outreach, Ready- Set-Learn events, Early Development Instrument support, and the Transitions to Kindergarten Provincial Pilot Program. The FRP works actively in the community to support Early Childhood Development initiatives and networks.



Program Objectives

- Family support, information, and referrals.
- Play-based learning and early literacy.
- Parent education, including child development, effective parenting, health and wellness, language and literacy, family economy, as well as awareness and reduction of risk factors.

- Increased knowledge of effective parenting skills for parents/caregivers
- Increased level of personal and family support from the community for parents/caregivers
- Gains in children's social and emotional competence through play experiences

Activities and Outputs for 2023 – 2024

- 7 families supported with monthly Good Food Boxes.
- 28 families supported the BC Association of Farmer's Market Coupon Nutrition Program.
- FRP YouTube channel provided craft, cooking and food, and circle time playlists.
- 12 FRP Programming Calendars provided to each community.

Prenatal Education and Outreach

- 26 pregnant women, plus 26 partners, received 72 direct service hours in 4 six-week prenatal course sessions.
- 48 pregnant women, plus 33 partners/family members received 1,300 hours of one-to-one or small group outreach support.

Drop-in Group Participation

- 13,121 provided ECD Information/Referrals/Linkage.
- 3,123 provided Parent-Child mentoring.
- 1,750 provided Intervention/Supportive advice.
- 310 Drop-in groups provided (virtual and in-person).
- Cumulative attendance in Drop-in groups 381 families: 411 adults, 485 children.

Family Support

- 46 families received formal intake and support services.
- 845 FS Information/Referrals and 148 linkages to additional services were provided.
- 3,067 instances of mentoring, supportive advice, and/or intervention were provided for clients.
- 3,514 food supports to families.

Client and Program Participant Feedback

Client and Participant Feedback is gathered formally through a month long “snapshot” survey, at the culmination of one-to-one work or course sessions, and informally in group discussions or conversations with participants. Formal survey results indicated:

Prenatal Education and Outreach Services Outcomes

- 98% of group session clients and 100% of outreach clients indicated they would not have been involved in a Prenatal Program if it were not available in Sooke.
- 100% of group session clients and 100% of outreach clients identified at least ten areas of increased perinatal knowledge as a result of coming to the program.
- 100% of prenatal clientele learned about additional supports and resources in the community, and 100% of outreach clients received additional supports based on need.

Drop-In Group and Family Support Programs Outcomes

- 19 categories of parenting/family/life skills addressed in programming had up to 99% of participants state a gain in knowledge.
- 98% of Children gained social competence and showed development through play experiences.

- 100% of Parents/caregivers expressed an increased level of connection to their community.
- 100% of Parents/caregivers gained awareness of community resources.
- 100% of Parents/caregivers stated they were satisfied with program service delivery.

Trends and Analysis

- FRP group program participants had increased need of the Family Support and Pre/Postnatal Outreach services in this fiscal year. The acuity of need was quite high and took more services hours per client than in past years.
- FRP group programs had an increase of participants that are newcomers to Canada and/or the region.
- Family Support service needs were of an on-going nature and clients maintained on-going service files.
- Postnatal Outreach support needs increased and were of an on-going nature that included transitions to Family Support Outreach.

Achieved Program Quality Improvement Goals for 2023-2024

- Engaged in the new Cap-C Federal Government renewal process.
- Actively participated in the Cap-C committee work regarding this process.
- Focused on “common language” with FRP staff using FRP philosophy to purposeful ECD and family support focus.
- Assessed and made service model changes for the FS and ND groups in Sooke to address community needs.
- Secured grant funding for 2024-2025 Prenatal services.

New Program Quality Improvement Goals for 2024-2025

- Assess and consider service model changes for the Parent Discussion group in Sooke.
- Focus on skill building for new FRP staff in line with an FRP philosophy.
- Give attention to re-building a more connected service partnership with Public Health and MCFD as this diminished over the past year with PH and MCFD staff turnover.

FRP Community Involvement/Partnerships

- Family and Early Childhood Resource Network (Coordinator/Chair for Sooke and West Shore)
- Neighborhood House Coalition; Capital Children Coalition (Cap-C)
- Sooke-West Shore Literacy Task Group
- Sooke and West Shore Lions Clubs
- Sooke Region Food Systems Network/Food Share Network (South Island)
- Boys and Girls Club of Greater Victoria
- Sooke School District No.62: Human Early Learning Partnership (EDI) Community Trainer, Strong Start Support
- Island Health - Public Health
- Membership with: BC Association of Family Resource Programs
- and BC Pregnancy and Outreach Programs

“Love feeling like it’s a community and always feel welcome, learn new things, and never judged as a parent.”

FRP participant, Winter 2023

Kingfisher Preschool

Kingfisher Preschool has been operating since 1987. The Kingfisher program, which is licensed by the Island Health Authority, serves children aged 30 months to 5 years and their families.



At Kingfisher, we believe that children learn best in a safe, secure environment, with age-appropriate challenges to their physical, intellectual, emotional, and social development. Our aim is to nurture the child's natural creativity and curiosity through play. We encourage the development of a positive self-image, self-esteem, and high self-acceptance through open ended activities where exploration, discovery, and repetition can happen at the child's own pace. The curriculum supports play-based learning and early literacy, with emphasis on social and emotional development. We offer an inclusive program that addresses the needs of each child and provide additional staffing for children who need extra support. In Kingfisher, groups of 20 children attend with 2 or 3 qualified staff. Positive relationships with children and parents/caregivers are developed and nurtured.

Program Objectives

- Children gain social competence and learning through play experiences.
- Parents/caregivers increase the level of personal and family connection within the community.
- Preschool staff help to identify if an early intervention referral is needed.

Activities and Outputs for 2023 – 2024

The SFRS reporting year spans two programming years for the Kingfisher Preschool.

- Starting in September 2023, 60 spaces were made available with a 74% program registration rate throughout the 2023-2024 preschool year.
- Kingfisher Preschool was involved in the SD62 Sooke Early Years Transition to Kindergarten pilot program.
- 2 SFRS Newsletters and 10 Kingfisher Newsletters and programming calendars provided.
- Communication with parents was maintained through online distribution of newsletters and Early Childhood Development information in addition to a private Kingfisher Facebook page, phone and face-to-face connections.
- Parents were invited to orientation sessions and families were provided with individual family tours prior to the start of preschool to create connection and cohesiveness regarding the Kingfisher program and health related protocols.
- Families with children “graduating” from Kingfisher attended a wonderful ceremony celebrating their children.

Client and Program Participant Feedback

Parents are offered the opportunity to provide formal evaluation of the Kingfisher program at the end of the program year. Informal feedback is solicited regularly from parents and children in the classroom.

Formal survey outcomes indicated

- 97% rated the happiness of their children in the program as good-excellent.
- 96% found the staffs skills to be excellent; 97% found the quality of the program to be excellent.

- 100% found the safety of the environment and procedures to be good - excellent.
- Informal feedback outcomes emphasized:
- Staff knowledge, open communication, and program environment are greatly valued and appreciated.
- Parents emphasized the value of a play-based program with lots of outside time to develop their children's social/emotional development.
- Parents expressed strong appreciation for the provision of a 4-year-old program with the extended hours.
- The children love Kingfisher Preschool - their teachers, playing outside, circle time with songs, dance, and stories, and the daily play activities-especially crafts!

Program Trends and Analysis

- Preschool parents expressed continued appreciation for the program and value a quality play-based preschool opportunity for their children within their community.
- Parents expressed value in having an early learning program that accepts and support children with additional support needs.
- An average of 18% of the children in the program have identified additional needs.
- An average of 63% of program participants receive the Affordable Child Care Benefit.
- The Kingfisher team continues to see a need to give increased attention to children's development of self-regulation and social/emotional development.
- The Kingfisher team continues to see a increase in support needs for children with identified or unidentified needs. With the decrease in Provincial supports for these children in preschools, meeting these childrens needs has become more difficult for child care settings.

Achieved Program Quality Improvement Goals for 2023-2024

- Gave focused attention to fundraising – 3 to 4 activities throughout preschool year to help support the preschool: funds for staffing for support needs, material supplies, rent.
- Provided guidance and modeling from senior staff for junior staff due to staff shifts in the 2023-2024 preschool year.
- Managed impact of the changes in the government's provision of SCD service for children with additional support needs
- Offered new service model for T/Th AM class to families for 2024-2025 registration.
- Re-worked how we provide the Meet the Teacher and Open House events.

New Program Quality Improvement Goals for 2024-2025

- Fundraise – 3 to 4 activies throughout preschool year to help support the preschool: funds for staffing for support needs, material supplies, rent.
- Recruit a volunteer to help in the preschool.
- Provide an additional support staff through outside funding for children with additional support needs that are not supported through SCD.
- Support Kingfisher Supervisor to have time to connect and collaborate with other child care providers in our community.

"I really appreciate the professionalism, patience, and perspective that is the care provided to the children and families that are at Kingfisher Preschool. This was such a great choice for our little boy."

Kingfisher Parent - 2023 -2024

Child Care and Resource Referral

The Sooke-Westshore Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) has been a program of Sooke Family Resource Society since 1997. The Sooke-West Shore CCRR serves families and child care providers living in Local Health Area 62, including: Colwood, Langford, Metchosin, Highlands and Sooke to Port Renfrew.

This program provides the following services: recruitment of and support for Child Care Professionals, parent referrals for child care, workshops and training courses for parents and care providers, consultations on child development and child care issues, drop-in playgroups for children and care providers, network information about and support with provincial child care programs, initiatives, subsidies and other community services, equipment and resource lending for care providers and families, as well as support and health/safety site visits for Registered LNR care providers.

The CCRR provides support for Sooke School District 62 with consultation and support for their child care development, initiatives, and services.

Program Objectives include

- Support registered LNRs to maintain the criteria to be included on the Provincial LNR Registry.
- Parents receive up-to-date referral, subsidy (ACCB), and child care resource information in a timely manner.
- Licensed caregivers can access support.
- Child care providers/workforce and parents receive access to training to increase knowledge of quality care giving.
- Give attention to recruitment into the child care profession and encouragement and support to creating new child care spaces in our community.

Activities, Outputs, and Outcomes for 2023-2024

- Membership: 1 Registered License Not Required and 99 Licensed Care Providers
- 477 child care referrals provided to parents; 7,181 community resource referrals provided to parents and care providers; 86 parents/care providers received ACCB support services
- 4 CCRR Newsletters and 2 SFRS Newsletters provided
- 33 Workshops, Training Courses, Network/Appreciation Events provided virtually; 381 participants attended training opportunities and appreciation activities for care providers
- The CCRR Toy Lending Library was used by 110 care providers, parents, and community members.

Client and Program Participant Feedback

Client and program participant feedback is gathered through annual surveys, and at bi-annual RLNR support visits. Verbal feedback is solicited and recorded on a regular basis and at semi-annual networking gatherings. Feedback included:

- The CCRR was very supportive for care providers trying to navigate the relatively new government initiatives.
- The CCRR service provided timely referrals with helpful supplementary information for the process of finding quality childcare.

- The CCRR provided necessary support regarding the completion of the ACCB process for families.
- Appreciation was received for the monthly email updates and quarterly newsletters.
- Child Care professionals and families have expressed gratitude for the learning opportunities provided throughout the year.

Program Trends and Analysis

- ACCB referrals/consultations continue to require more time as client needs are increasingly more complicated.
- Professional support for care givers has seen an increase, as the needs they are faced with become more complicated.
- Provincially, RLNR numbers continue to remain lower than past years. As of mid-March 2024, the Ministry (MECC) stopped recruitment of RLNRs as care category throughout the province.
- The workshop/professional development offered were regularly, full to capacity.

Achieved Program Quality Improvement Goals for 2023-2024

- Developed an annual plan to meet the Ministry's new criteria, including the Q&I fund usage requirements.
- Enhanced service hours to include evening and weekends offerings to meet the requirements of the Ministry's pilot project regarding this contractual obligation.
- Supported/provided the *Year with the BC-EFL* course in partnership with Frog Hollow Neighborhood House
- Successful recipient of the 2024-2027 CCRR contract for SA22 through the Provincial procurement process.

New Program Quality Improvement Goals for 2024-2025

- Streamline CCRR contact points for community through one phone and email point for the region with dedicated staff assigned.
- Develop an outreach model of service for Licensed Family childcare professionals.
- Renew the Community of Practice offering with the mentor project through Westcoast bursary program.
- Work in collaboration with SD62 child care and early years initiatives.

CCRR Community Involvement

- Early Learning and Care Committee
- Communities of Practice Steering Committee – South Island
- Island Health Child Care Facilities Licensing Office and Officers; Island Health Public Health
- Sooke School District No.62
- Ministry of Education and Child Care
- Regional partners: CCRRs on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands

"I had so much fun and learned great ideas from this workshop! Merci! I love how well she described everything making it inclusive for everyone!"

Sooke-West Shore Child Care Provider - 2023-2024

Counselling and Outreach Services

The Youth Navigator and Outreach Program at Sooke Family Resource Society provides mental health support services to youth in the Sooke region. The Youth Outreach Worker provides assessment and services for youth aged 13-18 who are experiencing significant challenges in their everyday lives, including youth with substance use, school attendance and family of origin issues. In addition, the workers help youth in navigating and accessing additional services they may require either in the short or long term to further enhance the likelihood of healthy and successful transitions into adulthood. The program is adaptable in its approach, with flexible hours and sees clients in the office, the community and local schools ensuring that there are no barriers to youth being able to access the services. The Youth Outreach and Navigator Program prides itself on professional support services and building respectful and beneficial connections with both the youth they serve and the local community.

The Navigator team provides the following activities:

- Assessments
- Referrals
- Short term crisis support
- Community outreach
- Support for dealing with mental health, conflict, family and school issues
- Navigation through the mental health, substance use system and other community resources
- Provides up to date information to other community agencies about availability of community programs and resources
- Advocacy
- Facilitation of family meetings

Program Outputs for 2023 - 2024

- 34 new youth were referred
- Approximately 770 hours were spent providing direct service with youth

Program Trends and Analysis

The most common presenting issue for youth continues to be anxiety and depression. The second most common concern is family conflict and worries about the future.

Challenges / successes / changes in 2023-2024

The Youth Navigator took an extended leave of absence and backfill was provided by staff from other departments. The Manager for this program also took an extended leave of absence and duties were maintained by the Program Supervisor and managers from other departments.

New Program goals for 2023-24

- Secure a new Youth Navigator for this role.
- Secure a new Program Manager
- Implement new tools and technologies to provide youth communication and booking options to accommodate expectations and preferences
- Review of program hours and structure to ensure service delivery to reduce barriers for youth seeking supports.

Caring for Community Counselling

The Caring for Community Counselling Program provides affordable counselling to individuals (including youth and children), couples and families living in Sooke and the Westshore. This program is staffed by professional, master's level trained clinicians and students. Fees are offered on a sliding scale dependent on income and family size. There is always a strong demand for this service as other counselling services in the community have strict parameters for admittance, including age, acuity and financial situation.

The Caring for Community Program provided the following services:

Short term counselling for residents of Sooke and surrounding areas. Individual, family, couples, youth and child counselling sessions (10 and over). Group counselling for women experiencing violence and women experiencing anxiety and depression.

Activities and Outputs for 2023-2024

A total of 90 clients were seen in the program. Approximately 59% were female, 30% male and 1% transgender.

Program Trends and Analysis

The counselling program continued to offer affordable high quality of service to the communities of Sooke and the West Shore. Demand for low-cost counselling continues to increase.

Challenges / successes / changes in 2023-2024

- The program still runs in a deficit and struggles to attract ongoing funding.
- The waitlist for affordable counselling continues to increase steadily
- Acuity of individuals seeking affordable counselling services is higher than previous years.
- The full-time counselor resigned.
- The Caring for Community Counseling program was suspended in Q4 until such time as a sustainable model can be established.

New Program Goals for 2023-24

Conduct feasibility study and secure new funding opportunities to support a sustainable program model.

USTAT- Urgent Short-Term Assessment and Treatment

The Urgent Short-Term Assessment and Treatment (USTAT) program provides accessible free short-term counselling to individuals experiencing serious and urgent mental health issues. Services are provided in collaboration with physicians, psychiatrists and other mental health practitioners. Individual counselling includes crisis intervention and brief psychotherapy treatment on a priority basis as deemed 'urgent' by an intake screener. Services are available to adults in the Sooke area who have received an initial assessment by their physician and referral through Island Health Mental Health Intake Services.

The USTAT Counselling Program provided the following services:

Short term counselling for adults of Sooke and surrounding areas. Counselling for high needs clients who need a referral from their doctor 8-10 sessions offered free of charge.

Activities and Outputs for 2023-2024

- 672 hours of service delivery.
- A total of 92 clients were seen in the program.
- Approximately 72% were female, 26% male and 2% transgender.

Program Trends and Analysis

The counselling program continued to offer high quality of service to the communities of Sooke and the West Shore. Demand for the service continued at a very high level.

Challenges / successes / changes in 2023-2024

The program operated for 6 months without a Program Manager. Clinical supervision was maintained by a qualified subcontractor.

New Program Goals for 2023-24

Collaborate with funder to offer targeted programs & services to meet the need of community. Maintain knowledge and communication channels for new services and resources. Research software and application systems to offer streamlined booking platforms

Short Term Community Counselling (STCC)

The program was rolled out in the first quarter. Referrals were higher acuity than anticipated and the clinician had a full caseload by July 2023. This service offers clients 10 – 12 sessions with no fee. Working alongside Westshore CARES, the screening process was refined to meet the intended scope of the program, however, the intensity presenting issues remained high throughout the reporting period. Presentation for clients self-referring to STCC was primarily anxiety, depression and the impacts of trauma. 75% of clients seen during this period were not actively employed for a range of reasons, with the most common being mental health concerns.

Family Development & Family Preservation

The Family Development Program supports families who have been referred to the program by MCFD. This program is designed to provide families with the help they need to create a safe and healthy home environment for their children and / or an abuse-free environment in which the children can visit family members. Family Development Workers work collaboratively with the Ministry of Children and Families (MCFD) Social Workers and other community members to support families who are at risk of having their children removed, in the reunification of children who have been removed, and in supervised access visits for children in care. Wherever possible, services are offered in a flexible manner, offering access at various locations in the community for the convenience of the family, and flexible service times.

Family Developmental Workers may complete assessments of parenting capacity on the request of the Social Worker and may be called to respond to court subpoenas as needed to report on family cases. Staff provide intensive parenting education that focuses on teaching parents the necessary skills for caring for their children in a healthy way.

The following curriculum / educational components are integrated into the one-to-one sessions with the parents:

- Triple P Parenting
- Siblings Without Rivalry
- How to Talk so Kids will Listen
- Strength-based parenting strategies
- Educating parents around the effects of trauma on their children
- Working with blended families

This program also supports families in accessing community resources such as referrals for mental health, addiction and health care services, Income assistance, neighborhood house programs, parenting support groups, food security and hygiene essentials as well as the SFRS community Thrift Shop for clothing and household items.

Activities and Outputs for 2023 - 2024

Total number of recipients 172
Total number of families 49
Total number of children 107
Total number of service hours 3172

Successes / Challenges through 2023 - 2024

Demand continues to be steady and currently all workers have a full caseload. Housing challenges have been a particularly difficult issue with demand and costs of rentals seeing unprecedented increases. Many of our clients are at risk of losing their housing. Increased food prices resulted in additional pressure on families, with many accessing food bank and food voucher resources. 8 case files were closed.

New Program goals for 2023-24

Advocate for housing, counselling, and social support for program families. Find additional support to increase food security for families.

Supervised Access Program

Due to an absence of referrals, this service was discontinued in May 2023, however due to the nature of this self-referred program, the service may be reopened based on need and availability of qualified staff.

South Island Community Connections (SICC)

This program serves neurodiverse adults with achieving greater independence and inclusion within the community. The program offers skilled and compassionate community support staff who provide person-centered Outreach, Skill Development and Inclusion Supports. Examples of services offered include building life skills (ADLs), financial literacy, shopping assistance, transportation, hygiene, medical compliance, physical and leisure activities. Participants in this program are referred from Community Living British Columbia (CLBC).



Empowering Personal Wellness Adult Activity Club (EPW)

This program offers individuals referred to us by CLBC opportunities for skill development and community inclusion within a group model. In recent years, this program has seen marked growth in attendance and popularity because it unites peers with similar interests and diverse skills. The group setting provides a safe, welcoming environment, engaging activities, and emotional support.

Program Goals and Objectives

Short term

- Learn new skills and adapt routines to manage health and wellness.
- Increase independence by learning organization, time management and budgeting skills.
- Improve capacity for self-efficacy, gainful employment, and community inclusion.
- Create and expand safe connections with peers and community.

Long term

- Improve overall physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- Mastery of basic life skills and independence within community.
- Awareness of and confidence to access and utilize community and government resources.
- Strong, reliable support systems and enduring friendships.

Activities and Outputs for 2023-2024

- 55 clients received community inclusion, skill development and outreach services.
- Empowering Personal Wellness (EPW) Adult Activity Club further enhanced programming to focus on important skills such as online safety, healthy relationships, self-advocacy and community engagement.
- A Program Coordinator position was created to support program and department functions.

Client and Program Participant Feedback

Information gathered from the feedback methods is used to monitor participant satisfaction, direct programming, and monitor trends in social determinants of health. Client Feedback was gathered formally through survey and informally by group discussions or talks with participants.

- 90% of respondents were satisfied with their support worker being flexible with meeting times.
- 95% of respondents were satisfied with their needs being understood.
- 80% of respondents were satisfied that they felt they could make their own goals.
- 95% of respondents were satisfied that their worker was accepting and non-judgmental.
- 90% of respondents felt they had made positive changes in their lives.

Favorite memories and activities from Activity Club

- Hanging out with friends.
- Playing card games.
- Colouring, Socializing, having good food & coffee! Bowling! Pizza!
- Bowling, pool, mini golf, camping trip.
- A new romance.
- Outdoor activities.

Program Trends and Analysis

- 10 new clients joined our programs during this period.
- 5 clients left SICC services during this period.
- Most new referrals from CLBC only receive core funding. This basic funding amount is approximately 1.5 hours of support per week with no additional monies for mileage, expenses, food security or staff training.
- SFRS continues to receive referrals for new program participants who live with moderate to high needs and/or dual diagnoses including mental health, addiction and/or personality disorders.

Achievements

Goal: Create efficiencies for outreach staff using IT.

Strategy: Support all staff to become proficient on tablets through one-to-one and team training.

Outcome: All documents have been updated to fillable PDFs, which has increased staff proficiency with the tablets. All paperwork is expected to be completed on the tablet and uploaded directly to the database. Ongoing training continues at team meetings as well as one-one-one training with our Program Coordinator for staff who require extra support.

Goal: Acquire new/additional space for Activity Club.

Strategy: Explore weekly rental options with community partners

Outcome: SICC added an additional rental day at Centennial Centre for a total of two days per week for Activity Club. This space allows the opportunity to have a separate quiet room with colouring, fidgets, and mindfulness activities for program participants who are feeling overwhelmed in the large space. This space is unavailable during summer months and another location at Gordon United has been secured for Q2 in 2024-2025.

New Program Goals for 2024-2025

Goal: Explore new location for Adult Outreach Service Department in Westshore

Goal: Enhance Team meeting with guest speakers and workshops

Goal: Collaborate with Human Resources to develop and distribute staff surveys specific to Outreach services

"I met so many lovely people here. I learned how to live on my own for the first time four and a half years ago and I am so happy that I got taught by amazing people I met so many amazing friends."

AOS participant since 2022

Welcome Home

Welcome Home is a CLBC funded residential option for adults with developmental disabilities. Individuals are matched with the Home Share Provider (HSP) and living arrangement that best suits their lifestyle and needs. Living situations vary from a room in a house with regular involvement from the HSP to independent suites with scheduled visits. HSPs provide a safe and secure home environment and support individuals' needs and goals. This may include helping with meal planning and preparation, budgeting, and time management, as well as connecting them to community resources, employment opportunities, support networks, and public transportation.

Program Activities

- 28 individuals and 27 home share received support services throughout the year.
- 3 home share individuals joined the welcome home program.
- 2 individuals left the service.
- 7 new Home Share Providers (HSCs) joined SFRS.
- 6 HSCs left due to retirement or moved away.
- WH trained and introduced the new Home Share Coordinator (HSC) in Q3.
- The HSC represents SFRS at monthly interagency meetings to share strategies, discuss common challenges/successes, and plan training opportunities.

Home Share Provider Feedback

Home Share Provider feedback is gathered formally through an annual survey and informally through bi-annual Quality-of-Life Reports completed by Home Share Providers. Open communication between HSPs and the HSC is encouraged. The survey for 2024 will be conducted in September.

Achievements

- WH documentation was uploaded to the new Home Share module of the ORCA database. SFRS IT continues to make adjustments to adapt the functionality of the database to the needs of the WH program.
- SFRS received a grant from the BC CEO Network to access training through Open Future Learning for Home Share Providers. HSC accessed a variety of training modules and enrolled HSPs for open access to the material.

New Program Goals for 2023-2024

Goal: Improve monitoring tools and person-centered planning documentation

Goal: Compliment oversight of home shares by implementing quarterly check-ins with HSPs and participants.

Goal: Enhance functioning and accessibility of the Welcome Home database module to include tracking and notification features for annual document expiry.

"SFRS is a community for special needs people who get together and make friends, go to awesome events together, and have a fun time. Teaching us new skills like how to trust if a news reel on a website is real or fake news, or how to write a resume. One of my favorite memories with SFRS is going to Vancouver science world and hanging out with friends."

AOS participant since 2011

Where to Find Us

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Thank You from Sooke Family Resource Society

CAF Canada
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Eric Enger
Government of Canada Community Services Recovery Fund
Majorie Baskerville Bridges
Our Extraordinary Volunteers
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