

Abbotsford

HOSPICE SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT
MAY 2020-APRIL 2021



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

This past year has come with an immense number of challenges and opportunities, all of which had to be navigated across all programs and services. The staff have risen to each one of these challenges with great resilience, creativity, and flexibility to ensure our community continued to receive the support needed during these uncertain and difficult times. To prepare for the extra complexity of grief and loss due to the pandemic, our program staff have completed additional education on trauma and mental & emotional health, to provide the support needed to individuals and families as these layers unfold.

Staff have been fluid, flexible, and adaptable with their work schedules as well, changing plans weekly, sometimes daily in accordance with the changing dynamics of BC Health and Fraser Health. Their priority always being the continued engagement of clients, volunteers and families while providing safe and sustainable services through the ever-changing guidelines, protocols, and procedures.

Our fundraising efforts had to move into creative online and drive through models to keep within health guidelines yet continue with our goals of sustainability for the organization. Adjusted or newly created events, third party fundraisers, increased grants, generous families and committed donors all provided contributions to sustain our financial health. The wage subsidy from the government also proved as a valuable source of revenue for our organization. We were grateful to be able to provide continued employment for all our staff through the pandemic. The new protocols revealed the essential need for greater communication platforms and a technology upgrade for our organization to navigate continued connections with staff, donors, volunteers, and clients. This became an immediate need in our ability to carry out our programs, support, training, and communications in a safe and effective manner.

We were encouraged to see things start to re-open for palliative, events, office, and other volunteer roles to reengage all our volunteers in 2021. Our palliative volunteers along with AHS staff were given the opportunity and priority to be vaccinated with the Fraser Health staff early 2021. This gave us the ability to have volunteers return to service on the palliative floor, as well as our staff.

We are grateful for the privilege of being able to care for and serve our clients and families through the challenges of this past year, with the continued added support of the board, donors, and community. We look forward to things opening more so we can continue to engage more volunteers, donors and businesses in the vision, mission, and values of the Abbotsford Hospice Society, expanding our reach in our community.



A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Andrea Critchley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

ANDREA CRITCHLEY
Executive Director

IN HER OWN WORDS

"After losing my husband to a heart attack on our vacation and coming home to an empty house, I felt hopeless, lost and had no reason or purpose to physically even carry on. If it wasn't for the Abbotsford Hospice Society, I know I would not be here today. The companioning sessions and widows support group were instrumental in saving my life and giving me hope to carry on. Today, I continue to volunteer for anything and everything at the society, because I want to give back for the care and support I received at such a critical and pivotal time of my life. I will forever be grateful to AHS and the impact it had on my life and has on so many others."



-**Tannis**, former AHS client, current AHS volunteer

BOARD CHAIR'S STATEMENT

As I look back upon my first year as board chair, there has been much that's happened to us and the world. This past year has been unprecedented in terms of social disruption and pandemic-driven changes to our operations methods of service delivery. At the same time, we have transitioned to a new executive director as well as some changes to our board of directors. Through all of this, I am proud and humbled to see the resilience of our team in ensuring that we continue to do all we can to offer positive grief support to our community. We have found new ways to deliver support, by offering telephone and online support groups and program delivery methods during times when we could not be together in person.

We have been able to pivot the way we fundraise, and we are very blessed to have received strong financial and moral support from our community. Our team, led by Andrea, has been able to keep a close eye on monitoring our costs and ensuring that donor dollars are used as effectively as possible. We have been able to maintain or increase our fundraising efforts, and have seen great positive strides toward becoming more self-sustaining from a corporate donor, grants and major gifts strategy and less dependent on fundraising events. This has directly aligned with the board's mandate to shift toward a more sustainable fundraising model. This helps us not only maintain and expand our programs and services, but also gives us the cash flows needed to maintain our facility and plan for future capital replacements.

We are seeing continuing changes to our environment as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Times will continue to change and we are learning new ways to provide programmatic care and support services. I look forward to maintaining the strategic focus that our board has to ensure our actions are aligned with our long-term vision and objectives.



All of this would never be possible without the fantastic team that we have in place; their contributions, capabilities and commitment cannot be understated. We are fortunate to have the team that we have, and I am grateful to be involved with such a positive organization that brings peace, comfort and hope to so many in our community.

RYAN CALDER
Board Chair

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

It has been a challenging year and yet there have been many opportunities for growth and new ideas. Many non-profits have seen a significant downturn in engagement and donations during the past year. I am encouraged with our financial position and feel that our community has rallied around us and recognized the vital services that we provide. We have been creative in event organization and attendance, resulting in many new introductions and donations to our organization. Thanks to our donors, partners, government support and careful management of expenditures, our year ended with \$153,900 in excess of revenues over expenses from operations.

Our program managers were very creative in how they continued to support clients; thus, resulting in cost savings given that in-person gatherings and events were limited and much of their time was spent virtually and creatively connecting. We shifted our operations and adjusted our budget in order to continue to provide for our community when they needed it most.

Once again, we received \$140,000 from the Community Gaming initiative and we were able to receive excellent support by way of the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy.

Our building is now 5 years old and, with that, we see an increase in facilities costs. For our leased space to Fraser Health, we have repainted much of the second floor walls, handrails and high-traffic areas and we have also repaired many of the sofas in patient rooms. We are looking ahead to what is required in the years to come and budgeting accordingly.

We are beginning the 2021-2022 fiscal year in a strong position with several in-person events and new initiatives coming in the summer months.



Submitted by:
Flo Kehler
Finance Director

Presented by: **Jay Kang**, Board Treasurer



PALLIATIVE SERVICES

We will all have our own story to tell about how a worldwide pandemic affected us in every area of our life this past year and half! Abbotsford Hospice Society certainly did not escape the consequences of this virus and actions that needed to be taken to keep everyone safe.

As Palliative Services manager, I can unequivocally say that what I grieved most was the fact that we were no longer able to support persons at the end of life along with their families in the hospital, Holmberg House Hospice and in the community, in the way we have done for 35 years. Yes, the nurses were amazing and continued to give wonderful, compassionate care despite challenges that they also faced. When I spoke with family members, this always came up..." the care was fantastic", "it was top notch" ...BUT, "we felt isolated". That statement broke my heart.

There are many facets to palliative care, not just dying. It is more than "end of life" medical care; it is personal. This is the role I play alongside volunteers and care providers; as a team we care for the whole person by showing that dignity plays a very important role in our support. We recognize that it is important to show kindness, a sense of calm, to build relationships and help them maintain a sense of personhood. Palliative care is not just statistics of who, what, or how many lives we impacted at their end-of-life journey. Rather, it is a compilation of stories, it is a recognition of what an honor it is to bear witness to the strength and courage of people in care and those that love them.

During the past year I needed to change how AHS could still be there for the community at a very vulnerable time in their life. I offered phone support for anticipatory grief and had several families take advantage of that. I supported the nurses with coffee and treats and sometimes lunch on hard days. I connected with volunteers on a regular basis to check in on them. As program managers, we held Zoom meetings as well to keep volunteers informed and to show our appreciation even during a challenging time for all of us. Gradually, volunteers have been allowed back on the hospice floor and are able to visit persons in care and their family. They can be present to listen to the stories, to bring a cup of coffee or play a game. The difference this has made to the atmosphere is palpable! You feel it the moment you step off the elevator. And this, the smile I saw on a face of a lady who just had her nails polished by a volunteer, brought a tear of joy to my eyes! Or a family member stopping by on their way out after their loved one died, to say how much they valued the calming visit from the volunteer the day before.

That is what it is all about...honoring and walking alongside those who have lived, loved, and laughed; providing dignity and acts of kindness at this sacred time on their journey.



Submitted by:
Tina Van Ry
Palliative Services Manager

101
PATIENTS
IN CARE



ADULT GRIEF & LOSS SERVICES

In the past year, Adult Programs & Services has pivoted like many other aspects of life, and we have continued to deliver programs & services, albeit modified, while continuing to meet the high quality of support we expect of our work and the community has come to know & anticipate.

In the past year, even with the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions & protocols, Adult Grief Support Programs & Services provided One to One Companionship Support Services, traditional style support groups, as well as a drop-in group, our annual Christmas Memorial on what turned out to be a very snowy night, as well as very successful Summer '20 & Spring '21 Scavenger Hunts, both new to AHS.

COVID-19 has definitely opened a door to greater conversation around end of life and end of life wishes & planning. Our Advance Care Planning workshop series has been incredibly well received and attended as was our Wills & Estate Planning Seminar. We offered the Advance Care Planning Series 3 different times in the past year. From this evolved our first Wills & Estate Planning Seminar. Between these 2 educational pieces, we had close to 500 participants.

The Adult Grief Support Program has continued to offer opportunities to volunteers across support services, education & events. We continue to receive referrals from outside resources – community agencies, family, friends, the medical community, & others.

The feedback we receive from clients often reminds us of why we do the work we do...we truly impact the lives of those grieving & seeking support

Submitted by:

Cyndi McLeod, Grief & Loss Services Manager



"I am so grateful to you (Cyndi), Randy, Nav and your team for this amazing and valuable course. Your guidance has taken me from feelings of overwhelm to relief and knowing that I am not alone in handling my Advanced Care Planning. Thank you for all you give!"

"The death of my husband of over 40 years hit me like a ton of bricks! Abbotsford Hospice Society offered grief companionship support and a place to feel safe and open about how I was feeling. They hung a decoration outside in memory of my beloved husband even though we got hit with a bunch of snow. They stayed and were there to greet me outside safely! I don't think I could have handled Christmas as well without them!"

 One-to-one
companioning
clients

123

Support group
participants 

275

Workshop
participants 

500

 Volunteer
hours

1600

Referrals 
100

CHILDREN & YOUTH

AHS Children & Youth Services was able to continue to run many programs and provide meaningful grief support services to our young community members and their families throughout the fiscal year starting May 2020 and running through to April 2021. Although the protocols and restrictions imposed by the COVID pandemic added duties and meant extra time spent on sanitizing and screening, we were able to modify our programming in meaningful ways to accommodate these needs, while also offering ongoing support services to our children, youth, and families. We continued one-to-one sessions via Zoom or in-person, depending on the clients' preference, and groups were offered in accordance to the protocols of the time. Services included: individual & group companioning sessions wherein practicum students and trained volunteers worked alongside Leanne in creating many meaningful and fun-filled support opportunities.



Submitted by:
Leanne Shuttleworth
Children & Youth Services Manager



Kaamil Sidhu
Children & Youth
Services Coordinator

Activities & Events our kids, youth & families safely enjoyed:

- Teddy Bear Picnic (via family specific time intervals)
- Scavenger Hunt (car event)
- Miniature Donkey Meet & Greets
- Equine Therapy Camps
- Virtual Cooking Classes
- Family Art Connection Nights
- Family Photo Shoot
- Tween/Teen support group
- Saturday Kids' Club
- Curbside pick-up of care packages, activity kits & personalized treats



Some modifications we made were:

- having smaller groups
- using outdoor spaces
- adhering to social distancing
- staggering time slots for event attendance,
- wearing masks at all times (which kids did without complaint)
- shortening program length to align with school cohort times
- offered curbside pick-up
- providing prepackaged personalized snacks for after the sessions rather than during



Along with these many experiences, we also engaged our larger community promoting children & youth grief awareness initiatives through collaboration with schools, universities, other organizations, by offering: Teen Grief Peer Support Training (large room or Zoom format), Workshops (online), & Resource Networking (online & in-person), while also enhancing our own professional development by completing courses on Mental Health/Wellness Interventions and Trauma Informed Practices (online & in-person).

We took a lot of care to continue to provide personally relevant and collectively meaningful supports through creative and engaging ways. We have received repeated thanks from the kiddos and their caregivers for all we did and all we made available to them throughout the pandemic, and all we continue to offer.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteer engagement looked very different, largely due to Fraser Health and PHO guidelines and restrictions. We knew it was important to keep connected with our valued volunteers, to affirm them and to encourage them during a challenging time when we were all facing uncertainty and loneliness. We sent emails, had ZOOM support meetings, delivered gifts and cookies, and made phone calls and sent videos. Our volunteers felt valued and supported.

We were pleased that some of our events allowed for volunteer involvement, including our outdoor, drive-through events. Some of our volunteers were also able to continue companioning by phone, or via Zoom or safely in-person if it was comfortable for both parties.

Early in 2021 we started assisting with screening families and friends coming to see loved ones upstairs. This helped to alleviate some of the pressure for the Fraser Health nurses having to screen all visitors, so we set up a table in the foyer and scheduled volunteers to provide this service. It was great for volunteers, who told us they were so happy to be “back” and able to still help our community in need.



Bev Hofoss

AHS Volunteer since 2010



Our volunteers are a vital part of our organization and the heart of who we are and what we do. We look forward to things opening up further and we can have full participation in all the activities we happily provide to our community.



VOLUNTEER TRAINING

In the last fiscal year the ten-week, 30 hour Client Support Training was offered twice. The fall session had 12 registrants and a new-hire of AHS came from this cohort. This class was largely untouched by pandemic restrictions as participants were able remove masks once seated in the training room and participate fully in class activities.

The winter session had 11 registrants. To comply with the pandemic protocols at the time, this training was offered via Zoom. It was an interesting experience to use this platform and the responses were both positive and negative. It is good to know that online training does have some merit for certain applications. The ongoing shift in the pandemic has challenged the involvement of some of the participants/new volunteers of both the fall and winter sessions.



Myra Lighthouse
Client Support
Training

COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING



The fiscal period of May 2020 - April 2021 brought many challenges to the way we offered our services and programs. We needed to use our communication platforms to their fullest potential to ensure the community was kept aware of all they could still expect from AHS. The ways in which we did that include the following:

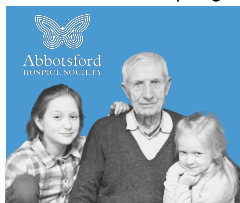
Mass Emails

Emails were sent out via our online database, Etapestry, to our whole contact list of 4,200+ email addresses. These emails were used to communicate new Covid policy in the office, events and general announcements.

Seasonal Mail-outs

Donation ask letters were sent out to our entire mailing list in June and December. The June letter focused on the extra need we were being faced with due to the pandemic, while the December letter focused on giving during the holidays. Both campaigns were successful.

June 2020 campaign



December 2020 campaign



Newspaper Ads

We continued to work with The News and placed ads when necessary to communicate to our community. The News continues to be a supportive sponsor, not only at our events, but also offering support in the way of discounted or pro-bono ads.

Banners

We continue to change out our banner that hangs on the outside of our building and use it to highlight certain accolades or campaigns pertaining to the time. This year, we were again chosen as The News 'Charity of the Year' for 2020.



Thank you for Selecting us
Charity of the Year!



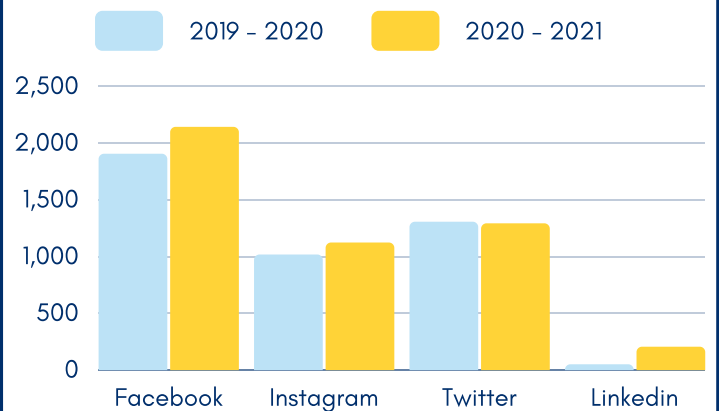
And in 2021, we reached our 35th year so that became the focus.



Celebrating 35 years of providing care and support in our community

"Honouring life and sharing in grief"

SOCIAL MEDIA GROWTH



We continued to grow in our social media followers and posts. The biggest increase was in our LinkedIn account which connects with local businesses, donors and prospective corporate partners. We have been more active this past fiscal year in engaging our community through social media posts and stories across all of our platforms.



Heidi Braun
Communication & Marketing

FUNDRAISING & DEVELOPMENT

It was a challenging year for Fundraising & Development as the pandemic protocols and guidelines often changed. It was difficult to host our typical in-person fundraising and donor appreciation events, as well as personal donor meetings. Our Fundraising team adapted by diversifying efforts to focus more on stable income streams that would not be affected financially by the pandemic, by hiring a grant writer, by switching to online and drive-thru fundraising events and virtual appreciation events. We continued to safely connect with our donors by email, video conferencing, telephone, drive-thru events and our direct mailouts.

We are grateful to our generous community who continued to support us through the pandemic. Although we did not hit the full fundraising target of our budget, we did exceed in our donation budget, helping to offset the protocol constraints that limited the efforts for our fundraising initiatives. Our team was creative, flexible, and adaptive, and showed great initiative in doing whatever was needed to abide by the BC Health protocols to accomplish our goals.

Andrea Critchley, Director of Development/Executive Director



Fundraising Events May 2020 - April 2021

Virtual Hike for Hospice

Community Bottle Drive

Classic Drive-in Movie
Night

\$74,000 raised

Giving Tuesday
\$34,727 raised

Annual Scavenger Hunt

Light up the Night Drive
Through & Virtual Gala
\$149,346 raised

Events:

Our 2020 Annual Gala was cancelled just a few weeks prior to the event due to COVID restrictions. We contacted all our supporters and sponsors and successfully switched the event to a Covid-safe **Classic Drive-In Dinner & Movie** just a few months later.

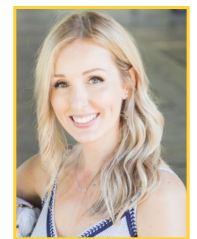
Our 2020 Annual Holmberg Memorial Golf Classic was also cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions. However, we adapted and hosted some very successful events following all BC Health orders. Some of these events proved even more successful than in previous years due to smaller overhead costs. The **Light Up the Night Gala** in April 2021 was one of our most successful in years raising **\$149,346!**



Christina Nelson
Development Officer,
Community Engagement

New Grants for 2020-2021:

This past fiscal year, we received \$37,500 in new grants from generous Foundations across Canada who support the work we do. We actively searched out Foundations focusing their giving to charities struggling with the effects of the Pandemic. We were successful in finding new grants to sustain our grief support programs virtually for our community members going through grief and loss during this challenging time.



Michelle Whalen
Development Coordinator

