



COMPASSIONATE NEIGHBOURS

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

COMPASSIONATE NEIGHBOURHOOD HEALTH PARTNERS SOCIETY



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VISION & MISSION STATEMENTS

Vision

To be the best provider of social and emotional support for older adults and caregivers of older adults.

Mission statement

To increase social and emotional wellbeing for older adults and caregivers of older adults through community education and volunteer facilitated neighbourly connections.



MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

PRESIDENT/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



The Compassionate Neighbourhood Health Partners Society, 'Compassionate Neighbours', has now been a non-profit organisation for 7 years. It is with humble thankfulness to the Lord that I look back over the past year and see how we have been supported in overcoming challenges that often appeared like impossibilities. There were also times of joy when we may see the dedicated teamwork of our staff, Board, and volunteers, the community support that we received from our donors, the collaboration with other community organizations serving older adults, and the unexpected grant opportunities that became available.

The services and programs that we offer to promote the social and emotional wellbeing of our Chilliwack older adults and the caregivers of older adults, could be maintained and even expanded in this year. Later in this report you will read about the Enhanced Social Meals Project that was initiated in April. It provides emotional and social support to socially isolated seniors in our community who are rarely able to leave their homes. We are now also reaching out to our Chilliwack First Nations Elders in offering a monthly group social meal.

The testimonials shared in this report will demonstrate how our organization is providing important and needed services that continue to be appreciated and valued by the seniors and caregivers that we serve.

It is with gratitude that in this past year we were able to rent a small office/storage space and contract 3 part-time dedicated staff members that have helped carry forward the mandate of the organization in their varied positions, contributing many volunteer hours over and above their contracted hours. We will introduce them later in this report.

Our thankfulness is also to our faithful volunteers that have continued supporting our programs and the many new volunteers that have joined us. At this fiscal year end, we would like to especially recognize Marcia and Judith who have now volunteered with us for 5 years. Without our volunteers, we could not offer these services in our community.

For this seventh annual general meeting, the Board will be presenting a three-year strategic plan outlining our way forward in building organizational and financial sustainability. We will be proposing updated organizational vision and mission statements and updated Bylaws, to be approved by the members of the Society. These all were developed with the input of our staff, members, volunteers, and stakeholders. Upon the recommendation of our volunteers and stakeholders, we will be maintaining our long 'official' name but will be using the title 'Compassionate Neighbours' for our everyday use.

In dependence upon the Lord, I look forward to further carrying out our mandate of being a compassionate neighbour in enhancing the social and emotional wellbeing of our Chilliwack older adults and the caregivers of older adults in the new fiscal year before us. There is still much work to do. I invite you to join our team in using your personal gifts and strengths, in whatever capacity, by being a dedicated donor, volunteer, or a Board member, for the wellbeing of our community seniors, Indigenous elders, and the caregivers of older adults.

INTRODUCING OUR STAFF

Janice, Board Secretary, Executive Assistant, Enhanced Social Meals Administrative Assistant:

“I was introduced to the Compassionate Neighbours a couple of years ago when two of my friends, who are also volunteers, encouraged me to help at the Spring Fundraiser. Since then, I have volunteered with the Seniors Connect, the Intergenerational Events and now, in addition to being a contracted part-time employee, I have been appointed as Board Secretary. Some of the committees I have had the pleasure of participating in over the last year are the Strategic Planning committee, the Bylaw Revision Committee and the Spring Fundraiser Committee, all of which were very challenging and rewarding at the same time. I am currently working with Connie Stam, President, on the Enhanced Meals Project. None of these undertakings are without their challenges but the outcome and feedback received from the participants are so rewarding and makes it all worth while. The Society fills a great need for programs and activities for older adults and caregivers of older adults. I am very honored and thankful to be a part of it.”



Marcia, Older Adult Program Coordinator



“I started volunteering with Compassionate Neighbours on September 9, 2019, when I took the workshop offered by Connie. I have volunteered with the Senior’s Connect Café events since that time. I have also been involved with the annual fundraiser, delivering meals and plants or flowers, bus rides with the start of the STARS bus, and occasionally with the intergenerational events and one-on-one calls/visits over the years. I am currently the Older Adult Program Coordinator which involves organizing the Senior Connect café events and calendars as well as arranging topics/speakers for the events. It is very rewarding to see how much our society has grown since I started back in 2019. I think the biggest challenge is finding more volunteers to join our group and maybe a few more hours in a day would also help.”

Adrianna, Volunteer Coordinator

As the volunteer coordinator, I collect and record the number of hours volunteered each month, as well as managing the onboarding of new volunteers. This includes conducting interviews with each applicant by phone, contacting their references, sending them the required paperwork, receiving and filing the completed copies, and conducting orientation workshops. I also look after advertising for new volunteers by posting on various volunteer database websites and keeping in contact with the work experience coordinators at several local schools. Finally, I keep in touch with the volunteers involved in one-on-one connections as well as the seniors they visit to make sure that everything is going smoothly with their visits. I love making sure things are organized, so my favourite part of my job is entering all the numbers of volunteer hours into my spreadsheet each month and seeing all the totals add up in such a satisfying way! This part is also so rewarding, since it reminds me how much time has been spent serving the seniors of Chilliwack. I also enjoy interacting with all of the volunteers and coordinating the different parts of our onboarding process with each new volunteer. One challenging part of my job is trying to balance this work with taking care of my busy 12-month-old, but thankfully I can usually do most of my work during his naps.



Darlene, Volunteer, Purchaser of supplies for Compassionate Neighbours and organizer of refreshments services for the different programs:



I am responsible for purchasing all the food and supplies needed for the different programs we run. I have been with the Compassionate Neighbours since October 2021 and have enjoyed meeting the Older Adults that participate in our programs. It is such a great feeling seeing the joy on their faces while they interact with others and develop new friendships.

Amanda, Volunteer Compassionate Neighbours Bookkeeper



Recently I took over the bookkeeping for the Compassionate Neighbours. I've enjoyed learning the books for a different type of society than I'm used to. I look forward to the next challenge of moving to a new software system and finding ways to streamline the bookkeeping and reporting as much as possible.

THE SENIORS CONNECT CAFÉ

In the past year, 236 seniors have attended the Seniors' Connect Cafe at least once. The bi-weekly luncheons continue to have the largest attendance of which we are nearing capacity, and we would like to thank the New Horizons for Seniors Program grant, the Canadian National Railway Company, Better at Home program, and a generous anonymous donor for donating the cost of one, several, or many meals. Because of this generosity, these luncheons continue to be available for our seniors twice each month. We are also able to provide coffee time with snacks and fellowship each week between the lunches, allowing the seniors to gather every Thursday morning. We started this fiscal year with two different venues. We use the Chilliwack Seniors Activity Center on College Street and the Legion Hall on Vedder Road. In the summer in the weeks that there are not luncheons, we meet in Gwynne Vaughan Park. Chilliwack Community Services introduced a new bus project in the last year available to seniors who use mobility aids or do not drive through the STARS Bus Program. We are grateful and fortunate that some of our seniors can register and book rides to our events and appointments with the STARS Coordinator through Chilliwack Community Services. In this past fiscal year Compassionate Neighbours has helped 29 seniors with taxi rides for a total of 105 different taxi rides, to and from social events, as they waited for their HandyDART paperwork to be approved or because HandyDART had cancelled their rides. We are very grateful for the financial transportation support received from Chilliwack Community Services via the Seniors Social Connector Program, from the Steller's Jay Lions Club, and the New Horizons for Seniors Program grant that have each helped to cover the cost of these transportation needs and enabled these seniors to join the social events that make such a difference in their lives. Transportation to and from events plays a major part in our mission that no senior be left isolated or alone.

"I joined the group as I am by myself with my nearest relative (son) living in Vancouver. I enjoy the group very much and am getting to know a few people. I never miss, unless I get sick, I am here every Thursday. I come every Thursday as I need to get out." (Anna)



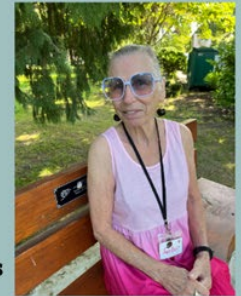
"I joined this group because my husband has Alzheimer's and he is in Valley Haven just a block away from the apartment I live in. Before joining, all I did was visit my husband. My daughter told me I need to get out. I love it and don't know what I would do without it." (Mary)



"Basically, I was taking my wife to these gatherings, she's the one that started. At first I didn't really want to go but I am the driver so I am going and I enjoy it quite a bit. I find it very peaceful here in Chilliwack. I also participated in the cooking classes which I quite enjoyed. I enjoy the meals provided and find it interesting when others tell about their lives." (Gerry)



"There was a time when I was sitting alone for months and months and I was cut off from my friends. I was on my own and knew no one and then I found out about this group (Seniors Connect) and came and it has been a life saver for me. An absolute life saver. I love meeting people and I love the way this has been set up. It is so laid back, so relaxed and so important for seniors to be able to get out and to meet others." (Amber)



THE INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAMS

- A. Bi-weekly Intergenerational group events:** have continued on Tuesday afternoons throughout this year and is only paused for the summer months of July and August. A total of 55 different seniors and 10 different youth have attended these Tuesday afternoon sessions at least once in the past year, with total attendance at each event ranging from 18 to 36 and an average attendance of 23-27 attendees. These seniors and youth continued to enjoy a wide variety of crafts and board games during these events, as will be seen by the attached photos. Most crafts and painting sessions are led by an older adult, but some are also led by a youth that is attending.



"I really enjoyed the opportunity to meet and talk to so many different personalities in the older adult community. I loved the activities put on during the events, and through my volunteering, I have learned how to better communicate with people outside of my age group. Thanks a ton!" (Mattias-Youth Volunteer)



"When I first started volunteering with Compassionate Neighbours I felt very welcomed and every single time I came home from the intergenerational events I remember talking to my mum about how cool they were and how much people have been through, throughout their entire lives. These intergenerational events were both fun and eye-opening to how I could even view my own life. I really enjoy listening to everyone's story's and helping everyone out in general. It's puts a big ol' smile on my face and just makes my entire day. To conclude, I absolutely love volunteering with Compassionate Neighbours and greatly look forward to getting back to the intergenerational events when school starts back up again." (Daniel-Youth Volunteer)

Here are some remarks made by some of the older adults who participate in the Intergenerational Programs:

"I like coming, you know, just to meet different people. It is nice to get to know the people in their different areas. Been coming since the start of this. It was an outing to get out of the house because I was looking after my husband who was quite sick. I needed an outing."

"I joined because I came to Chilliwack to live with my daughter and was always alone because she works and I was just sitting outside in the yard and then went to town with my scooter and went through the park, and it was packed with people and then one of the women invited me to join them the following week. That is how I found this out and I really enjoy it. I enjoy everything, talking, meeting the kids, playing games, I enjoy that very much as I am so alone."

"Moved to Chilliwack in 2020 and I come out and have fun and enjoy the chats and our food and appreciate all the volunteers and all the stuff that Connie and Marcia and everybody does for us."

"I like the artwork, it's good and plus meeting the people and it's good to see the young people there. They like our stories of our pasts and some things they don't even know what's going on. I like it, yeah."

"It's a lot of fun. It's interesting in regards to what people can make crafts out of. As a matter of fact, my aunty was quite crafty. I am very crafty. It is a lot of fun."

B. Intergenerational Cooking Classes:



Through a partnership with Leila, the Seniors Community Connector from Chilliwack Community Services, we have seniors and senior high school youth enjoying preparing a warm meal to share together during lunch hour, every other week. At each session there are from 6-10 seniors and 3 youth present. The students decide upon the recipes and ensure the supplies have been purchased. There are also dates when vegetarian meals are prepared. These sessions continue through the summer and have added a new dimension of intergenerational connections.

Here's what some of the participants have to say:



“I enjoy coming here. I wake up in the morning really excited to see what we are going to do and how much fun we are going to have having conversations, any games and making the food that everybody enjoys to eat. And we love it when we get to eat it!”

“Enjoyed the class very much. It is a good social outlet, and I got something to eat.”

“I have enjoyed coming to the cooking class, socializing and learning all about food, nutrition.”

“I just want to say thank you for providing us with these cooking classes. It's very nice to have something to go and do because I am usually at home alone. I enjoy, the food, it has always been really good, and we are learning lots, and it is really nice to get out.”

“This was my first time at the Intergenerational Cooking Class. I enjoyed it. The people are very friendly, and the food was excellent, and it is something I am definitely going to prepare at home.”

“I really enjoy the cooking classes and making different meals and the socializing that goes on afterwards. We all sit together at the tables and have our meal together and socialize. It's a wonderful outing.”

PROVIDING WEEKLY ONE-ON-ONE SUPPORT

THE HOSPITAL DISCHARGE PROGRAM

This 9-month pilot project, which ended in December 2023, focussed on the nutritional and psychosocial needs of vulnerable seniors who had a non-existent or a very small community network of support, as they transitioned home from hospital. During the 9 months of this pilot project, 26 vulnerable seniors received needed support. For most seniors the meals and groceries were the most impactful while a few others especially appreciated the social connection with the volunteer. Two of these seniors passed away in the weeks following their first connection with their volunteer and these volunteers provided emotional presence during their dying process.

We are grateful that this pilot project, after evaluation, has been continued as a program by the Cherish Project in collaboration with Leila, the Seniors Community Connector.

THE ENHANCED SOCIAL MEALS PROJECT

As an organization, we had noted that not all vulnerable seniors can attend or wanted to attend our larger group social events and were spending most of their time in their home with very few socialization opportunities, even when transportation could be facilitated for them. We also had noted in the past years that few First Nations Elders would join our group events although we provided them with a warm welcome. Some who began to attend, stopped doing so. One first Nation Elder shared with us that she “wished there were others that would also be present as I feel a bit uncomfortable being the only (First Nations) Elder present”.

An opportunity was provided by the provincial government through a one-year United Way BC ‘Enhanced Social Meals’ pilot project grant, to explore how we could reach these socially isolated community living seniors and to enhance socialization opportunities for First Nations Elders.

The first branch of the grant obtained is to reach out to these vulnerable seniors and to senior couples where one spouse is the caregiver for their partner. These vulnerable seniors are paired with volunteers who then share a free monthly warm meal together over an hour of social connections. As one senior expressed joyfully to their volunteer: "It has been years since I was able to eat a meal together with someone in my home". Another senior mentioned "how wonderful it was to share conversations while eating a meal."



We are very grateful to the community partnership with the Chilliwack Senior Peer Counsellors organization where 10 of their volunteers also participate with their socially isolated seniors. There is room for more vulnerable seniors and senior couples to join this initiative and we are grateful for each new volunteer who would like to volunteer in this project. We are now 4 months into this pilot project and we have 26 volunteers participating in this branch of the project with 52 unique senior participants.

For the second part of this pilot project, we are partnering with Skwah First Nation in facilitating a monthly social meal for all First Nations Elders living in the Chilliwack area, whether on or off reserve. To date, we have had 94 unique participants coming to these monthly social meal gatherings."

Both branches of this project are learning experiences for us as we explore the benefits and the value that this initiative will have in reducing social isolation and enhancing the quality of life of all Seniors and Elders in our Chilliwack community. An evaluation process will take place at the end of March 2025 to assess the value of the project and the form in which it should be continued.

THE FAMILY CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP



The caregivers of older adults that attend the Family Caregiver Support Group, continue to find value in attending the weekly meetings.

As Sue, one of the caregivers that started attending in this year stated: "I joined the support group in November of 2023 unsure that I would feel comfortable sharing my challenges in life with people I had never met. The group welcomed me with warmth and understanding. Every member has their own story and challenges. This has helped me feel that I am not isolated. We share the sad times, the struggles and the joys. There is empathy for all without judgement. I am grateful to all



those who are sharing their journey through difficult times. I am especially thankful for those who have lost the loved ones they cared for and continue to guide us with helpful advice, warm friendship and much, much kindness. They are an extremely important part of the group for myself, and I am sure for all of us on this journey."

Throughout this year, new caregivers have joined for shorter or longer periods of time. At present we have 14 caregivers who are actively supporting a family member going through a chronic illness journey and 4 attendees who have lost their care recipients but continue to attend and support those who are active caregivers. This is besides the 3 co-facilitators of the support group meetings. A younger person actively caregiving for her mother-in-law, has also joined the group with the desire to become a co-facilitator in the future while at present receiving the personal benefit of the empathetic support of the other members of the group.

At this time the monthly evening sessions have been paused as the only caregiver who continued to attend, was able to transfer and attend the Family Caregivers of BC virtual session.

PROMOTING NEIGHBOURLY CONNECTIONS

As Connie, who facilitated the workshop series in the promotion of neighbourly connections, needed to take on a Board leadership role while continuing as the acting Executive Director, only one workshop series was offered in this past year.



The feedback received from the workshop series again indicated the value of the workshops and, with stakeholder feedback, the plan is to redesign the workshop series and to pilot these in the new year.

As one attendee shared at the end of the workshop series: “I was shy to reach out to an older neighbour wondering whether he would accept my visit. Through taking the workshops, I have now reached out to this lonely neighbour who is so grateful for my visits.”

We would also like to initiate a Volunteer facilitated monthly neighbourly luncheon in different neighbourhoods where all older adults living in a neighbourhood would be invited to join. This would be a means to help build trust and friendship among the older adults living in a neighbourhood. The pilot project would evaluate if this may be a means to enhance the well-being of these neighbours and provide a means of support when a neighbour is facing challenging circumstances. Unfortunately, the grant applied for was not awarded at this time, but further funding support will be sought to be able to make this exploratory pilot project a reality in our community.

RECOGNIZING OUR VOLUNTEERS

Thank you so much to each one of our wonderful volunteers! You have made a significant difference in the lives of the seniors we support, and we would like to thank you on their behalf. From the volunteers who help with serving refreshments or assisting the seniors at our events, to those who make regular weekly phone calls or visits or share a monthly meal with a senior, to the behind-the-scenes workers who take pictures and make posters to help spread the word to more seniors and the ones who help with raising money to support our programs, you are the ones who do the work on the ground to support the seniors of Chilliwack. While I sit in my office sending emails, collecting paperwork, and recording volunteer hours, you do the work that is our *raison d'être*: calling and visiting seniors and facilitating events to provide the social and emotional support that we strive to provide for the older adults and caregivers in our community. Without you, we could not provide the support we do to the number of seniors we do, and we are so grateful for the part you have each played in the last year. You have shown our seniors that you care about them and that they matter, and that is a priceless gift. Thank you!



We would also like to highlight a few volunteers who have reached special milestones: Judith and Marcia have both completed five years of volunteer service with us! Thank you, Judith, for the time you have spent helping with the family caregiver support group, and Marcia, for your time at the Seniors Connect Café events as well as the many extra hours you have worked since taking on your role as Older Adult Program Coordinator. Finally, a special thank you to Angelina for her skillful calligraphy work on each new volunteer's name tag. They look beautiful!

In total, we have welcomed 34 new volunteers in the 2023-2024 year, and thanks to all of our volunteers, we have completed a total of 4,137 hours of volunteer work! The table below breaks down how much time was spent in each of our program categories:

<u>Program Categories</u>	<u>Total Time</u>
SCC: Seniors Connect Café events	869.50
1-1: One-on-One Visits and/or calls	568.00
IGP: Intergenerational Program events	295.50
FCS: Family Caregiver Support group events and one-on-one support	302.00
SIS: Short-term/Serious Illness Support	13.00
ESM: Enhanced Social Meals Project	98.75
W/T: Workshops and/or training	114.25
VM: Volunteer meetings	107.50
FR: Fundraising activities	281.25
Adm: Administrative tasks	1341.85
Misc: Other volunteer tasks	145.50
TOTAL	4137.00

RECOGNIZING OUR DONORS

On behalf of all of us at Compassionate Neighbours, we would like to take this opportunity to say a warm thank you for supporting our mission. It is because of dedicated donors like you that our organization can create a growing impact in our community.

SHARING OUR ABBREVIATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Compassionate Neighborhood Health Partners Society Balance Sheet as of 31 August 2024

	Year-End August 31, 2024	Year-End August 31, 2023
Assets		
Cash and Cash Equivalent	\$ 130,054.37	\$ 41,901.00
Restricted Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 37,716.37	\$ 25,721.00
Capital Assets, net of accumulated depreciation	\$ -	\$ -
	<u>\$ 167,770.74</u>	<u>\$ 67,622.00</u>
Liabilities & Fund Balances		
Deferred Revenues	\$ 37,716.37	\$ 25,721.00
Deferred Capital Contribution	\$ -	\$ -
Operating Fund	\$ 130,054.37	\$ 41,901.00
	<u>\$ 167,770.74</u>	<u>\$ 67,622.00</u>

Total Grants received during the fiscal 2023-24 year = \$62,500.00

Total Donations and Funds Raised for the fiscal year 2023-2024 = \$69,353.71

GROWING OUR PROGRAMS IN THE NEW YEAR

The programs offered by Compassionate Neighbours are expanding and the venue used for the downtown Chilliwack monthly luncheons, is nearing capacity. For the coming year, financial support is being sought to expand our luncheon offerings to three monthly luncheons with two being in the downtown area on different days of the month. This added luncheon would explore the use of a facilitated themed 'table talk' format while the other luncheon opportunities would continue with presentations that are of interest to the attending older adults.

We are also seeking to add another monthly non-luncheon event for a smaller group, that would permit a chair exercise component. This has been a wish expressed by seniors living with low income and/or with mobility challenges.

The Enhanced Social Meals Pilot Project will be completed at the end of March when a careful evaluation will take place as to the difference these two branches of service are making in the lives of vulnerable community dwelling seniors and for First Nation Elders. If the evaluation results indicate that the project has made a true difference, then new funding will be sought to continue this as a program offering.

As already mentioned, in the coming year the hope is to direct more attention to the Neighbourly Connections Program, knowing what a difference neighbourhood support can make for vulnerable seniors living with challenging circumstances.

SHARING SPECIAL MEMORIES

Seniors Connect Café – Chilliwack Activity Centre and Vedder Legion



Seniors Connect Café – Gwynne Vaughan Park



Celebrating Heritage Day – Gwynne Vaughan Park



2024 Spring Fundraiser



Intergenerational Events



Intergenerational Cooking Class



Enhanced Social Meals Project

