



**ACT 2 Child and Family Services Society
2019 – 2020 Annual Report
Celebrating 40 years!**



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Since 1980, a small group of committed volunteers have continued the mission/vision of the two founders, Vi Roden and Charmaine Atkinson. What started as support for women involved with the correctional system to move back into the community, is now today a highly-recognized Second Stage Transition Housing in Vancouver, specialized counselling for emotionally traumatized children in Maple Ridge and Tri-Cities, and parenting assessment, education and counselling for high risk families to retain or regain custody of their children in Surrey. Each year the agency continues to grow to meet the emotional and shelter needs of children, youth and adults.

President's Message – Polly Krier

This is my first report as the President of ACT 2 Child and Family Services. With the advent of COVID-19 in March and the declaration of a State of Emergency on March 18th, this report is much different than I would have anticipated when I took the position a year ago!

First and foremost, I extend my well wishes for the health and safety of each of you. My sincerest appreciation and gratitude to Fran for pivoting with the new protocols in this ever-changing environment and leading the team with grace. The entire staff demonstrated considerable nimbleness and flexibility in its response to the pandemic; their resilience and commitment to maintain operations and provide support to clients continues to be commendable.

You will hear from various reports of the work accomplished this past year in today's AGM. I would like to take this opportunity to highlight a few of these accomplishments and work that is ongoing:

2019/20 Highlights:

- Strategic priorities defined in 2018/19 were revisited and updated. Due to funding restrictions and staff challenges with counselling staff recruitment, program expansions remained limited
- A special note of appreciation to BC Housing for providing additional funding to cover residual capital improvement costs at Safe Choice. This was a welcomed relief for the agency. Total funding provided for the overall project was \$775,000. The improvements have increased overall energy efficiency and upgrades have modernized the building

- We are immensely proud to have successfully been awarded another 3 years of CARF Accreditation. Staff are to be applauded on the incredibly positive commendations for the overall operations and service delivery
- When faced with the COVID-19 pandemic, ACT 2 programs were designated as “essential service” and therefore the challenge was presented to create new approaches to service delivery. All programs were able to maintain contact with clients virtually until safety protocols were in place

In partnership with the Ministry of Children and Family Development and BC Housing, ACT 2 Child and Family Services has served and supported families of the Lower Mainland for forty years. The organization continues to be successful because of the dedication and care of our staff, management, volunteers, Board, and partners. Thank you for joining in our shared mission to turn trauma into hope.

Maurice and Vi Roden Legacy Fund

Since it was founded in 1980, Vi Roden marshalled her considerable skills to establish ACT 2 Child and Family Services. The effort required to accomplish this – bringing politicians, social service agencies and the public together, creating a nonprofit society, securing the funds and community support that would allow the doors to open – is almost impossible to convey. ACT 2 continues to transform for the better, lives of those who have experienced the effects of sexual abuse, violence, and emotional trauma. In honor of her and her husband’s life-long commitment, the Legacy Fund was established in 2016. Donations to this fund are designated to provide enhanced support for all our programs.

Program Highlights

Family Program – Surrey (MCFD Partner)

– *Sheri Mills, Program Manager*

The ACT 2 Family Program provides short term (14 weeks) assessment, intervention and education services to parents of children under the age of 6 years where the children have been abused or neglected or the parents have been identified as being “at risk” of abusing or neglecting their children by the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). The program provides parents with an opportunity to receive information, learn new skills and practice techniques and skills with their children under the supervision of staff in a safe environment. Parent Educators focus on providing support, resources, intervention and education around parenting issues focusing on meeting basic needs, positive parent-child interactions and positive discipline.

The program continues to work collaboratively with community partners and MCFD. ACT 2 to be connected to the Surrey CYC, Make Children First and the Surrey Early Childhood Mental Health Collaborative.

Our Parenting Program continued to receive positive feedback from clients and social workers and provides sought after services. Our Counselling Program continued to be well received by clients who access services and we are looking for ways to increase its use within the program. We continue to offer the Circle of Security parenting group to our clients during their involvement with the Family Program or while they are on our waitlist.

Outcomes:

- 37 families (42 adults and 46 children) participated (52 new referrals)
- 79% demonstrated progress towards individuals goals
- 81-100% clients surveyed report increased skills & knowledge regarding parenting

“It’s been great attending the program with my daughter. It really helped me with gaining some of my child’s trust and helped me bond with her. It’s a great program for parents like myself that needed help.”

“I get to spend time with my daughter quality, educational and help me understand my child better to meet her needs. Enabled me to become a confident parent.”



Safe Choice Transition House Program (BC Housing Partner)

– Leslie Lewis, Program Manager

The Safe Choice Program provides service-enhanced housing for up to ten women and their dependent children who have recently fled family violence. Safe Choice is a second-stage transition housing program of ACT 2 Child and Family Services that has provided service since 1985 and is located in Vancouver and funded by BC Housing. Most applicants apply from first-stage transition houses; however, we do take referrals from shelters, the Domestic Violence Unit of the Vancouver Police Department, or Stopping the Violence counselors or self-referral. The stay at Safe Choice is for up to 18 months while the women develop and follow through on a plan for their long-term independent living, free of family violence. Some of the services we provide are crisis intervention, ongoing support, safety planning, parenting support, life skills training, referrals to other resources and advocacy.


Goals of the Program:

- To provide safe and affordable short-term housing with support services
- To help participants maintain personal health and safety
- To help participants learn practical life skills
- After residential support has ended to continue to provide service to these families as needed to resolve crises as they integrate into the community and live independently

This year we completed our BC Housing Capital Improvement Project. The final projects included replacing flooring, stairway railings and painting. The program worked diligently to minimize the disruption to the tenants. I would especially like to acknowledge Philomena Jordan for overseeing these renovations. The building looks fantastic and we are continually thankful for all of BC Housing support.

This year we went through our third CARF accreditation site visit. The immense work involved in complying with updating our Policies and Procedures and the OSH manual to CARF standards is onerous and laborious but well worth the work involved in being an accredited agency. The accreditation feedback was extremely positive and I'm very thankful for all my team's efforts in our ongoing success.

We continue to build and strengthen our relationship with Shelter Movers, a volunteer-based non-profit organization that provides moving and storage services at no cost to women and children experiencing abuse to help them transition to a life free of violence. They have continued to support our families as they move into long term housing.



“Feeling safe, no better feeling.”

“Christmas was so special, staff and program manager went the extra mile.”

Program Trends: The demand for single women housing continues to be high, as we are one of the few Second Stage Transition Houses that provides housing for single women. Also, women who are applying for our bachelor unit tend to be in the higher age category.

In comparison to last year, the number of women and children we have sheltered has dropped due to residents staying longer because of difficulty finding housing. In response to this, the program increased the maximum length of stay from one year to 18 months. Conversely, the number of women who applied but not sheltered and those who called for space increased.

The lack of affordable childcare continues to be an ongoing challenge for the women as well.

Outcomes: Safe Choice Second Stage housed 10 women and 11 children in the 2019-2020 fiscal year. A total of 76 women and 95 children were referred to the program during the fiscal year.

Trends: The demand for single women housing continues to be high and the women applying tend to be in the higher age category.

- 72 women and 90 children were referred but not sheltered
- 10 women and 11 children were accommodated.
- 100% occupancy all year
- 221 enquiries for space
- 860 contacts for crisis support services
- 394 program services accessed on-site



“Learning lots of new things, doing things I never thought I could do.”

“I don’t feel stressed out when talking. I feel very relaxed and when I leave I feel a weight has been lifted off my shoulders.”

“The counsellors genuinely care about your goals and follow up to make sure you meet them.”



Homeless Prevention Program (BC Housing Partner)

– Lina Barerra, Housing Coordinator

This is the Homeless Prevention Program’s fifth year running. The demand we continue to receive has increased and we receive agency referrals as well as self-referrals on a regular basis. Most of the HPP clients received rental supplements. This allowed them to maintain or attain market housing. During their time in the program participants receiving rental supplements work on accessing or being referred to resources. The plan is that by the end of the year they will no longer need the rental supplement. Our clients also received support with finding employment, starting or returning to school, securing childcare, and accessing community and family resource programs. New relationships continue to be established with other agencies, and previously-made relationships continue to be strengthened. Through our relationships with housing agencies, some of our clients who started in market housing ended up securing subsidized housing. Through the Access to Transit project coordinated by the Homelessness Services Association of BC and Translink, our clients were able to attend critical appointments such as job interviews, meetings with potential landlords, and medical appointments, when they otherwise would not have been able to. At the end of the fiscal year we started to see the demand for the program increase as the effects of the pandemic were beginning to be felt. Many people including some of our clients were laid off, but we hope and will work to ensure that all of our clients maintain their housing during this tough time.

Outcomes: This year we served a total of 28 women. 97% of our clients were women and children fleeing domestic violence, our main target population. All clients continued to be housed after six months of being in the program, and have maintained positive relationships with their landlords. Through connecting our clients to other agencies that can provide further support and fill gaps in service, our clients have built support networks. This continues to be an important aspect of the program as our clients have accessed support services such as employment training, job coaching, counselling and family support. Many of our clients have been able to accomplish their goals of continuing their education and securing employment. They have also continued to access essentials such as food and furniture.

Clients continue to express their satisfaction of the Homeless Prevention Program, and the positive impact it has had on their life and the lives of their children. Clients have reported feeling more confident and independent by the end of the program. The hard work, perseverance and change demonstrated by our clients, continues to be a source of inspiration.



“Helps me to understand how I am affecting my family with my behaviour.”

“Keep doing what you’re doing because you really do make a difference in people’s lives.”

Clinical Counselling – Maple Ridge (MCFD Partner)

– Nyree Hipol, A/Clinical Counselling Team Leader and Sandeep Bhandal, Clinical Counselling Team Leader (returned from leave in February 2020)

In Maple Ridge, the demand for counselling through our program continues to be high and wait lists are an ongoing concern. This is due to a combination of complex needs of the residents and restricted funding.

To streamline the high volume of referrals from MCFD, less complex cases are referred to other agencies. As a result, there were 227 referrals compared to the 172 in 2018/19. There has been a noticeable increase in the complexity of the referrals including the family dynamics which included multiple family members requiring counselling. Note that several of the clients from 2018/19 were still receiving counselling services into 2019/20. The age and gender groups are as follows:

- Females- 66%; Males- 34%
- Highest age groups: Females: 7 – 13 yrs and 19+; Males: 7 to 13 yrs
- Ethnicity: Caucasian 75%; Aboriginal 18% and Other 7%

Individual client surveys indicated very high satisfaction in the services that they received. 80% of the children, youth and families that received services either fully or mostly met their individualized goals.



"I feel respected and valued when I'm here and it's helped me work through a lot of my problems."

"It's a place for family to be heard, find some solutions and peace for better emotional living."



Clinical Counselling - Tri-Cities (MCFD Partner)

– Nyree Hipol, A/Clinical Counselling Team Leader and Sandeep Bhandal, Clinical Counselling Team Leader (returned from leave in February 2020)

In Coquitlam, referrals remain consistent due to the demands of counselling, especially since ACT 2 is a specialized trauma service unique to individual needs.

In comparison to the previous fiscal year (220), there has been an decrease in referrals with 107 referrals received in 2019/20. The age and gender groups are as follows:

- Females- 69% ; Males- 31%
- Highest age groups: Females: 14-18 yrs; Males: 7-13 yrs
- Ethnicity: Caucasian 24%; Aboriginal 8%; Other 17%; 51% (not recorded)

Additionally, 83% of the children, youth and families that received services either fully or mostly met their individualized goals. This percentage of clients who completed counselling with ACT 2, excludes those who terminated prematurely, or did not engage in services.

Overall, we are pleased to report that clients in both counselling programs continue to report feeling satisfied with the service they receive at ACT 2.

Family Counselling Program – Affordable Private Pay

Family and individual counselling is available for a fee based on income. No referral is required. Areas of counselling provided include: depression; anxiety, abuse and trauma; grief & loss; self-harm; marriage or relationship challenges; parenting and behavior management. We have increased capacity for this program.

Executive Director's Message – Fran McDougall

This past year has been remarkable in maintaining a high level of service delivery and reaching goals.

Major focus was on preparing for our 3 year CARF survey in September. This is a process that we do look forward to as it validates what we are doing well and provides an opportunity to improve as well. All program sites and practices were reviewed. We were highly commended in all areas. Areas of Strength that were identified included:



“The methods used by my counsellor of coloring while talking helps me to be honest, not awkward.”

“I couldn’t have asked for a more understanding and positive individual as a counsellor.”

- ACT 2 is a shining example of a comprehensive service delivery model, which is appreciated by persons served with great levels of satisfaction. Services provided appear to be very responsible to the needs of very vulnerable families and children.
- ACT 2 has very supportive and involved Board members who have plans to continually work on improving and expanding the organization’s service delivery. The Board indicated that leadership does not take anything for granted and is always working toward continuous improvement in providing services to the people who most need help and working with the community to refer persons to the appropriate programs.
- ACT 2 has a good reputation in the community for being very professional in dealing with referring agencies and other community providers.
- Staff members appear to be compassionate and enthusiastic in their desire to provide programming and services to the persons served. The sites are welcoming, vibrant, and supportive to both staff members and persons served.
- Referral sources spoke highly of the organization’s services to the persons served and its good relationships with community partners, include collaborating with other service providers to help the persons served.
- The commitment of staff members is reflected in the longevity of their services to the organization with some staff staying for more than a decade with the organization.

We were honored to receive a \$1,000 Youth In Philanthropy award from the students at Heritage Woods Secondary in Port Moody.

This fiscal year ended in March with sudden changes due to COVID-19 pandemic. Staff were sent home to work remotely until safety standards were in place. I cannot say enough positive about the resilience, commitment and creativity of staff to ensure that all sites and practices were met so swiftly and efficiently to meet WorkSafe and Public Health guidelines. All current clients were continually contacted to ensure ongoing support. Staff at Safe Choice continued to be onsite and services were expanded to ensure that essential shopping and transportation were available.

Sincere appreciation is extended to our volunteer Board of Directors for the ongoing dedication to this organization. We continue to acknowledge the ongoing interest and support of our founder Vi Roden ... an inspiration to all of us to continue her legacy.

It is an honor to provide leadership for such a dedicated team of staff and volunteers.



Agency Staff (Full and Part Time)

- Clinical Counsellors – 9
- Parent Educators – 4
- Housing Support – 4
- Management & Admin - 6

Recognition of Long Service Staff

Our staff are the best!

Lina Barrera (Housing Coordinator, HPP/Safe Choice) – 5 years

Eva Lopez (Parent Educator, Family Program) – 10 years

Philomena Jordan (Housing Support, Safe Choice) – 30 years!!

2019/20 Board of Directors

Polly Krier, President

Rozina Jaffer, Vice President

Yvonne Gaetz, Director

Archie Tuck, Director

Deborah Best, Past President

Brian Kelenc, Secretary/Treasurer

Grant Lee, Director



Financial Overview

– Brian Kelenc, Secretary/Treasurer

ACT 2 remains in a strong financial position. Our ability to pivot from growth initiatives to weathering potential financial storms is a true testament to the strong team in place. As we continue to identify financial efficiencies and maintain strict controls around operating costs, we are focused on delivering the best services within uncertain times. Although facilities costs continue to be a concern some major improvements were made this past year. The funding of \$775,000 from BC Housing has allowed for major capital improvement of the Safe Choice building. These improvements further enhance the viability of our program and will support both the sustainability of both the building and the program. The next year may bring some financial headwinds and uncertainty to the program. We have made the appropriate commitments to strengthening of our balance sheet over the past few years. With that we are in an excellent financial position to handle any unknowns. Our focus remains turning trauma into hope.

2019/20 Revenue

MCFD	\$1,506,957
BC Housing	\$508,949
Other	\$144,731
Total	\$ 2,160,637

2019/20 Expense

Direct Program	\$1,838,838
Management & Admin.	\$292,187 (15%)
Total	\$ 2,131,025
Balance	\$ 29,612



ACT 2 is proud to be accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (reviews conducted every 3 years)



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