



Canadian Mental Health Association
 Cowichan Valley
 Mental health for all

Canadian Mental Health Association
 Cowichan Valley Branch

2014-15 ANNUAL REPORT

WINNING WAYS TO WELLBEING



Your time,
 your words,
 your presence



DO WHAT YOU CAN,
 ENJOY WHAT YOU DO,
 MOVE YOUR MOOD



EMBRACE NEW
 EXPERIENCES,
 SEE OPPORTUNITIES,
 SURPRISE YOURSELF



TALK & LISTEN,
 BE THERE,
 FEEL CONNECTED



REMEMBER
 THE SIMPLE
 THINGS THAT
 GIVE YOU JOY



Canadian Mental Health Association Cowichan Valley Branch

Who We Are:

The Canadian Mental Health Association, founded in 1918, is one of Canada's oldest voluntary associations, and is the only one that deals with all aspects of mental health and illness. The strength of our organization is in its people. We treat all people with honesty, trust and respect, and seek every opportunity to preserve human dignity through equality, fairness, and respecting freedom of choice. The primary focus of this organization, are the rights and needs of persons involved in the mental health system.

Our Mission:

As the nation-wide leader and champion for mental health, CMHA facilitates access to the resources people require to maintain and improve mental health and community integration, build resilience, and support recovery from mental illness.

Our Core Functions:

We fulfill our mission by:

- Building capacity – strengthening the capacity of individuals, families, professionals, organizations, and communities to address mental health needs.
- Influencing policy – influencing the design and implementation of policies and services related to mental health.
- Providing services – providing services and supports that maintain and improve mental health and community integration, build resilience and support recovery from mental illness.
- Developing resources – building the financial and human resources and partnerships required to address mental health needs.

Our Key Values and Principles:

- Embracing the voice of people with mental health issues
- Promoting inclusion
- Working collaboratively
- Influencing the social determinants of health (e.g. housing, justice)
- Focusing on the mental health needs of all age groups
- Using evidence to inform our work
- Being transparent and accountable

President's Report



“A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.”

- [Winston S. Churchill](#)

Our Branch said good-bye and good luck to our Executive Director, Anne Hodge, as her career lead her to Victoria. Staff and Directors responded as optimists and took this as an opportunity to look at ourselves and where we want to go. After an intensive recruitment process, the Board made an offer to James Tousignant (the Housing Manager of Warmland House) to be the new Executive Director.

While the need to recruit an Executive Director changed plans for the Board, I tip my hat to my fellow Directors for the work and sheer effort on their part, and we are not done yet.

So what is all this effort for? Much of the messaging we see and hear is about the extent and impact of mental health and addictions based on statistics like one in five Canadians are affected by mental illness. This messaging is meaningful and has a purpose; however, staff at CMHA Cowichan Valley talk about the challenges and successes of their clients - not as a statistic, but as individuals within our community. For our Branch, the effort is for the individual ... they are what the effort is all about.

The Board and staff are working to be sure CMHA Cowichan Valley Branch is as viable and relevant in 10 years as is it today. Thank you to all our funders, supporters, staff, and volunteers for another successful year in the Cowichan Valley.

Rob Grant

Board President, CMHA-CVB

Executive Director's Report



According to a 2014 study by the Cowichan Community Health Network there are two major groups today in the Cowichan Valley at very real risk: 1) youth suffering from despair, isolation and depression, and 2) the elderly experiencing loneliness, anxiety and deep sadness. Nearly the same challenge affects both the young and the old; they have lost (or never developed) connection to community, to something greater than themselves. Under Anne Hodges, our former executive director, a team of staff and Board members were brought together to respond to these pressing community needs and a strategic plan was developed. Now we need to renew our services in light of this plan and reach out to the ones most in need in the community—make it real!

We know we have good people providing very good programs, such as Bounce Back™ Reclaim Your Health, Living Life to the Full, youth focused Bikeworks and Artworks, and Warmland's Outreach Support Services. These programs work and they make a difference in people's lives.

This year our job is to take these programs out into the Cowichan Valley, to where people live and work; reaching out to those of greatest needs who would not reach out for themselves. We want to reach out before their worlds close in on themselves, and before they lose hope.

It begins with raising awareness of who we are, what we do and what is possible. It begins with you and me. CMHA – Cowichan Valley has been a vital asset to our communities. Our neighbours rely on our passion, experience and expertise. We rely on your membership and ongoing support. This year, let's re-commit to making a difference in the lives of our neighbours, family and friends experiencing the challenges of mental illness, addictions and homelessness. Working together we can promote the health and well-being of our communities and the vision of mentally healthy people living in healthy communities.

James Tousignant

Child and Youth Programs



Report by Dave Ehle

Over the course of the last ten years the child and youth team has experienced a large degree of stability. We have had some staff changes, but not many. We have fine-tuned programs, but no major changes have been made to what programs are being offered. This stability has given us the opportunity to develop a depth of skill and connection within our programs and the community which has yielded the excellent work that all of our staff have provided. There are benefits to stability. The community becomes knowledgeable about what services are available and how to access them. Staff can become familiar with their work, learning about the challenges and obstacles and how to overcome them. Teams learn how to work together in productive ways.

There are challenges that come with stability. Programs can become rigid, or drift away from their original objectives. Staff can become tired of the same routine. The needs and wants of the community can change, and program offerings may not be able to change. The resources of time and money that were sufficient in the beginning are no longer able to meet the need. And at some level, as Garth said in *Wayne's World*, we can come to fear change.

This year has been and will continue to be a year of change for the Child and Youth Team. This change is happening in terms of staffing, and in terms of program offerings. This change also gives us the opportunity to reflect on the things that we have learned in the years that we have been engaged in the work as we have been doing it.



Child and Youth Therapists

Gabriele Ratjen, Karin Stotzer, Kim Ellison, Dave Ehle and Bill Wagg

Disordered Eating

by Gabriele Ratjen, Clinical Counsellor



The Disordered Eating program enjoyed a steady stream of referrals from school physicians, school counselors and parents. The referrals in early summer 2014 strained the capacity of what we could provide. The effective collaboration with the former Woodstone Eating Disorder Facility on Galliano Island and now Looking Glass Residence in Vancouver helped to ease the strain on our services. The opportunity to add child psychiatrist, Dr. Jill Ramstead, for monthly consults and assessments to the services was a gift to the young people and their parents as well as a very valuable professional addition to me. Lastly being able to refer to BC Children's hospital Family Based Therapy augmented support to families.

The provincial resources have grown tremendously and great material is now available through the Eating Disorder Community of Practice's Web portal. The information provided for the professionals greatly strengthens the service provisions throughout the province. Current ProD opportunities are manifold with the addition of regular island-wide and provincial conference calls and the new webinars offered by staff from accredited eating disorder centres. I was able to serve the community with up-to-date and well researched information. A big thank you from the parents to the Kelty Resource Centre in Vancouver as the online resources for parents and youth are now well organized and easy to access.

There are many resources in place now and it is time for me to step down in July this year. After 26 years at the helm of the Disordered Eating Program for Youth in the Valley (since 1993 with CMHA) I look back and see the tremendous growth in this specific field of expertise - from about 13 provincial professionals working with eating disorders to over 250 highly engaged and knowledgeable colleagues. Early on we had hardly any resources, no Centre of Excellence, no practice guidelines, only good will to make something happen for the youth and their families struggling with an eating disorder.

In 1989 local leaders like Mental Health Director, Paul Becklake, then Youth Team leader, Gail Rettalack, and retired psychologist Dr. John Scull, had the foresight and laid the ground work for the first community based eating disorder services in the province. May they be acknowledged and thanked again.

During these years of my engagement of working in the field of disordered eating and eating disorders I had the opportunity to meet exceptional people. I am grateful for the unique conversations with the young people, their parents, siblings, and friends I had the pleasure to work with and for. I admired the strength and commitment they showed and the endurance they had to find in overcoming the most difficult journey of healing from an eating disorder. There is no doubt, that I will miss it all – the young people, the families, my colleagues- near and far, the staff at CMHA CVB, but knowing that the program will continue to grow and develop is reassuring and comforting to know.

Sexual Abuse Intervention

by Kim Ellison, M.S.S.W., RSW



Every year I reflect on the privilege of working with some remarkable young people that have suffered the trauma of sexual abuse/assault. This is a journey of healing that has no definitive timeline or structured path; it is as unique as the child/youth that is walking it. Each client brings their challenges and strengths into the therapeutic relationship, just as I bring my own challenges and strengths, as do we all when we engage in a relationship with one another. We share in acknowledging the challenges whether they are individual or systemic. We share in the strengths and triumphs of the individual and the system. The strategies used are based in research, science, and years of experience. Thinking outside of the box to achieve goals is a required skill. These children and teens show resilience, desire for change, hope and knowledge that their lives are not defined by this trauma but rather that this is just a part of their story.

There are those clients that it takes months to build rapport and trust with (especially those with complex trauma). When these clients finally come around to sharing, it amazes me just how much they have been engaging in their own quiet and deliberate way. It serves as a good reminder that while I may question if the therapeutic relationship is moving, it isn't about my timelines or overtly visible changes. The relationship is, as studies have shown, a key to the healing power of connectedness to create change and wellness. Sometimes the changes are subtle, such as a shift in how they come in more relaxed or are able to engage in play. Other changes come from the insights that clients are able to make both about their abuse and their lives.

As therapists we don't always get feedback as to the impact of our work with the youth and their families but those moments when we do, give us joy, encouragement, and validation in the work that we do. In the past year, clients have shared the following: "Her insights and engaging ways were superb and captured both mine and my son's attention."; "Kim was a lifeline in our stormy sea."; "Now I'm doing good in school and not getting sent to the principal's office anymore. I will miss seeing Kim because she really helped me."; "I am coping better with all the stresses."; and, "I don't know how to say thank you, because it feels like nothing I can say will explain the appreciation I feel. I can safely say, I am still alive because of you."

In early 2015, the employees of Island Savings – Duncan Centre Branch made a generous donation that allowed for the program to purchase some much needed therapeutic supplies which could be used in the session as well as some supplies that could be given to clients to use at home. Their generosity will not only enhance the programming but will contribute to the healing of the children, youth, and parents in this community.

Family Capacity



Bill Wagg, M.A.



Karin Stotzer

The Family Capacity Program is as busy as ever. Bill Wagg (Family Counsellor) and Karin Stotzer (Family Outreach Worker) are managing a case load of approximately 30 families. The good news is we have shortened the waiting time to about 8 weeks. This is still too long but our trend is and continues towards reduced waiting time. Presently, we have four families waiting and in the last three weeks we have started with six new families.

One of our family's wrote to say:

"Karin and Bill listened to me; no one had ever done that. They didn't lecture me on where I was going wrong; in fact they told me what a wonderful job I was doing. Week by week, they listened to my struggles and showed me ways to reach my little boy. I have learned so much about how my son processes information, emotions and how I too process the same. Learning about myself has helped me to understand my son and to better handle the struggles as they arise. My son now smiles, laughs and plays with friends with much more ease. His laughter is one of my favourite sounds. He is working hard on regulating himself and "five breaths" has become one of our best working tools. These are new and exciting times for us and, without the support of Karin and Bill, we would still be struggling."

We are now receiving more referrals from the social workers at MCFD. This means more complex, troubled families needing more services and time.

The Family Capacity Program has undertaken to revamp the intake procedure, case review process and closing reports. The goal and hope of this revamping is to obtain a more thorough knowledge and understanding of our clients to enable a better informed application of services addressing our families' struggles and goals.

Finally, evaluations of this program by our families consistently score a high level of satisfaction with our work and the services we provide.

BikeWorks/ArtWorks



Louise Nadeau, Jessica Thom, Cal Hosie, Dave Ehle, Madi Walter (not shown)

After 10 years of operation the BikeWorks/ArtWorks has achieved a degree of rhythm and maturity belied by the antics of its staff. We have, over time, come to find the events and occasions that we can participate in. These have included Earth Day, the Duncan Days Parade, Reality Check, Bike to Work Week, and any number of activities-the list could go on! With the ever-changing mix of participants and volunteers the shops stay fresh and new, while also being a stable resource for our youth and their families. One of the biggest single changes to have occurred this year is the departure of Madi on a year-long globe spanning travel extravaganza. We have welcomed Jessica Thom to the team! We have also welcomed Jason Bell on board, to cover one day a week.

The shops could be compared to a Dojo, with the emphasis on both what the sensei can teach, and also on the participants, who are leaders in teaching us. From our youth we learn:

- from Louise - resiliency in the face of life challenges. Witnessing adults warm-up to the idea of the BIGM (**B**elonging, **I**ndependence, **G**enerosity, **M**astery)
- from Jason - skills and strengths that they have and they may not even know it
- from Jessica - acceptance of self through the past, exploration of life, love, and friendship in the present and hopeful yearning in the achievement of dreams in the future
- from Dave - the need for joy, the need to let go of the weight of responsibility, but not responsibility itself, and the importance of cultivating the natural leaders
- from Cal - patience, compassion, empathy, and an understanding of the diverse needs of youth in the Cowichan Valley

The BikeWorks/ArtWorks are, of course, far more than they appear. Underneath the surface the staff are actively involved in a number of activities that are as, or more important than, bikes or art. Our involvement with Restorative Justice, the Leaders of Tomorrow, Ride Don't Hide, or our environmental actions all have an impact on the youth we serve, and are a valued contribution to the community.

Rainbows

Rainbows is a 12 week long peer support group for children who are struggling with grief and loss after a death or divorce. At the core of each group is an adult facilitator who guides the group through a structured session designed to address different issues each week. Over the last few years the number of volunteer facilitators has been declining, and with it the number of groups that we have been able to offer. While we have participants for the groups, in January we were unable to offer the program as we did not have any facilitators.

Some of the biggest changes that we are experiencing are in staffing. This year we have three long term staff departing: Tania from the School Resiliency program, Louise from BikeWorks/ArtWorks, and Gabriele from the Disordered Eating program.

Tania began work with the School Resiliency program in 2007. Over the 8 years of her time with CMHA Tania has been a dedicated and hardworking employee, who has worked largely on her own in providing support to her clients. Aside from the one to one work that she has provided, Tania has also provided numerous group opportunities in the schools, ranging from Girl Power to Rainbows to Mindfulness training.

Louise began her time at BikeWorks/ArtWorks in 2005 as a volunteer in anticipation of taking a diploma in Child and Youth Care. She returned to us for a practicum and has never left. Over the past 10 years Louise has done more to guide the growth of ArtWorks than almost anyone else. Her endless creativity, energy, curiosity, and willingness to be the “bad cop” have made a tremendous impact on the community. Louise has also, for the last 7 years, been the energy and drive behind the Rainbows program, where she has impacted hundreds of children’s lives, whether as a facilitator or as the coordinator.

Gabriele has been, at 26 years, the longest serving CMHA staff person. Over that period of time it is no exaggeration to say that she has touched the lives of thousands of clients. Beyond her work as the eating disorder therapist, Gabriele has also served time as the coordinator of the child and youth team, intake clinician for the combined CYMH treatment teams of MCFD and CMHA, as well as serving on any number of Eating Disorder network and advisory committees. It would be impossible to overstate the contribution that Gabriele has made to the development of this team and of CMHA-CV as a whole.

In the fall of 2014 the financial condition of the Child and Youth team became acute and unavoidable. For 10 years the team has been functioning with the same contract, and the same contract funding, while the costs of providing services are escalating. For a number of years we had been able to cope by tightening the belt, but the situation had progressed to the point at which this was no longer possible. As a consequence we have begun a process with our contract holder, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, to seek a solution. While we have not reached the end of that process there are several decisions that have been made. First it is clear that MCFD would like nothing more than to increase the funding level of the contract; unfortunately they do not have the financial means to do so. As a result our only option has been to cut services. After long and painful discussions, it was decided that the School Resiliency program would be closed. This program provided mental health support within the school setting, and is more appropriately a program to be provided by the school district. The closure of the School resiliency program, like a forest fire, is a drastic and dramatic event, particularly for the people who have been involved with it. But also like a forest fire, it frees up resources that can be used for other services. Some of the resources will be used to support our existing services. The remainder will be used to support the development of new services targeted at early intervention for children.

Nothing stays the same. And with change comes opportunity. The next year presents many new opportunities. We have become members of *Our Cowichan Community Health Network*, *The Child and Youth Mental Health Collaborative*, and the *Cowichan Integration/Attachment* group. Between these groups there are possibilities around a sobering centre, a school based wellness centre, and a 5-year long community level mental health transformation project. There is also the opportunity to increase the profile of CMHA in the community, and become known as the go to agency for mental health. Stay tuned for more news!

Bounce Back™ Reclaim Your Life Turns 7 in June 2015



Developed by Dr. Chris Williams of the UK, this program was first rolled out as a two year pilot program in 2008. Its success speaks for itself as it continues to help thousands of British Columbians manage mood and worry.

Bounce Back is an evidence-based self-management program for adults experiencing low mood or stress with or without anxiety. It offers two forms of evidence-based self-help:

- An instructional DVD with practical tips on recognizing and dealing with depressive symptoms
- A series of educational workbooks with trained telephone coaches to reinforce the application of cognitive-behavioral strategies for overcoming difficulties such as inactivity, avoidance, worry and unhelpful thinking.

Participant Profile - Sex Ratio = 3:1 female to male or 74:26%; 77:23% for 'completers'; Average Age = 44(±15) years old for all referred; 48(±14) years old for 'completers'

'Completer' Stats - On average, those who complete the program typically partake in 4 or 5 coaching sessions (4.4±1.0) and request 8 or 9 (out of the 16) primary workbooks.

Outcome Overview – Bounce Back consistently proves to enhance mood and quality of life, with remarkably robust effects, such that participants' pre-to post-Bounce Back scores on all measures indicate **significant improvement, with decreases in depressive and anxious symptoms as well as increases in life-enjoyment and physical-health ratings**. PHQ-9 (depressive questionnaire) and GAD-7 (anxiety questionnaire) scores are reduced by 50% from the time of referral to the program to the time of program completion. Thus, **depressive and anxious symptomatology is essentially cut in half**.

These impressive results have led Bounce Back coaches to be interviewed by CBC TV, radio and several Vancouver newspapers. Feature news stories about the program have helped promote Bounce Back in various provincial regions. The program has been selected by CMHA National to be one of four national flagship programs, chosen to help build the collective impact of CMHA across Canada.

Awards for Bounce Back

- Recipient of the 2014 Doctors of BC's Excellence in Health Promotion Award
- Recipient of the 2013 A Healthier You Award in the mental health category in Prince George

Warmland House



Warmland House is a purpose-built, entry-level community facility. It is designed to be a gateway to stable housing and integrated, client focused support services for men and women who are also coping with a variety of challenges such as mental illness, addiction and chronic health conditions.

Our Vision

“A safe, supportive environment, that helps clients help themselves in their transition to stable housing; where all individuals treat themselves, their neighbours and their surroundings with respect.”

The Facility

Warmland House consists of:

- a 30-bed emergency shelter for those who are without housing and would benefit from assistance in meeting their basic needs for food, clothing, shelter, and hygiene
- 24 minimal barrier transitional housing studio apartments designed to accommodate individuals who can live independently yet benefit from support and assistance in stabilizing their lifestyle and develop the life skills to break the cycle of homelessness successfully making the transition to “housing ready”
 - (By definition, minimal barrier transitional housing is flexible, non-judgmental, appropriate housing
 - based on need (and potential for successful transition)
 - with minimal restrictions to lifestyle; responsible substance use (tobacco & alcohol are OK)
 - in a building that is accessible,
 - with some expectation that progress towards lifestyle stability and improved quality of life)
- a day-use common area; shower and laundry facilities; lockers for day use; a resource/quiet room with computers and a small library; there is also a commercial kitchen and dining area that serves up to 50 people, and a community garden with raised beds and a large greenhouse.

Warmland House is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, all year long.

The Emergency Shelter

The following tables describe the use of the emergency shelter over the period April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015. Two perspectives are provided. The first focuses on occupancy, how full the dorms were during this time. The second focuses on the number of unique individuals using the shelter. It is not uncommon for the same individual to be a repeat shelter client many times across the year or use the shelter many nights in a row. Every day is a new day at the Emergency Shelter as clients are required to “sign-in” each night.

Emergency Shelter “Occupancy” Profile

To set a context, if all 30 beds in the emergency shelter were filled every night of the year occupancy would be 100%. For the period of April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015 the occupancy was 106%. The occupancy for the 24 bed Men’s dorm, for the same period, was 111%; for the 6 bed Women’s dorm, 84%.

Occupancy Profile	# of Nights 30 Shelter beds 100% full	# of Nights 30 Shelter beds at least 90% full	# of Nights 24 Male beds 100% full	# of Nights 6 Female beds 100% full	# of Nights people turned away (no EWS)	Total # turned away (no EWS)
April 2014	26	30	29	5	7	14
May 2014	24	28	26	9	4	6
June 2014	25	29	29	5	8	16
July 2014	24	29	29	4	17	49
Aug. 2014	21	28	28	0	12	44
Sep. 2014	12	26	22	6	2	2
Oct. 2014	24	30	23	21	2	3
Nov. 2014	29	30	30	18	9	14
Dec. 2014	29	31	30	20	7	29
Jan. 2015	29	31	30	21	17	49
Feb. 2015	24	28	25	20	9	28
Mar. 2015	27	31	30	10	18	72

Over the last year one or more individuals were turned away from the Emergency Shelter on a total of 112 nights. In almost all of these instances the person who was turned away was a male.

Profile of Individuals Using the Emergency Shelter

In total, 289 homeless individuals used the shelter between April 1, 2014 and March 31, 2015 accounting for 11,916 person night stays in the shelter. A “person night stay” is one person occupying one shelter bed for one night. 80% of those using the Shelter between April 1, 2014 and March 31, 2015 were men. The average number of shelter visits for men was 5.3 and for women, 4.4 visits; a shelter visit is defined as returning to the shelter after having been absent

from the shelter for one or more nights. As seen in the table below, around 46% of shelter users stayed a total four nights or less throughout the year; 54% five or more nights. Nine men and one woman stayed at the shelter for 200 or more nights during the year. Of the nine men, two stayed at the shelter for 300 or more nights.

Length of Stay Summary								
	1 night	2 - 4 nights	5 - 10 nights	11 - 20 nights	21 - 30 nights	31 - 60 nights	61 - 90 nights	91 + nights
Men	17%	2%	13%	10%	15%	17%	8%	17%
Women	23%	16%	13%	7%	13%	14%	4%	11%
Both	18%	5%	13%	10%	15%	17%	7%	15%

The Extreme Weather Shelter (EWS)

An Extreme Weather Shelter (EWS) ran from November 1, 2014 through March 31, 2015 and provided 10 additional overnight beds when weather conditions were deemed severe enough to present a substantial threat to the life or health of homeless persons. Factors taken into account included:

- Temperatures near zero with rainfall making it difficult or impossible for homeless people to remain dry and/or
- Sleet/freezing rain; and/or
- Snow accumulation; and/or
- Sustained high winds; and/or
- Temperatures at or below -2 Celsius
- Forecast of three or more days of consecutive winter rain
- Feedback from clientele of the various facilities may also be considered

Based on these criteria the EWS was activated a total of 47 nights. In total, 426 client beds (not unique individuals) were occupied during the 2014/15 EWS season.

EWS Occupancy Profile	# of Nights the EWS activated	# of Nights the EWS occupied	Total # EWS beds occupied	Total # of EWS beds occupied by females	Total # Turned Away from EWS
Nov. 2014	16	16	133	3	0
Dec. 2014	16	15	162	6	0
Jan. 2015	8	8	69	3	0
Feb. 2015	5	5	42	5	0
Mar. 2015	2	2	20	3	0
Total	47	46	426	20	0

The Transitional Housing Apartments

The 24 transitional housing apartments at Warmland House are minimal barrier housing and are governed under the Residential Tenancy Act; short term leases and behavioural agreements attached to the lease are the norm. Currently there are 18 men and 6 women living in the transitional apartments.

Client and Tenant Support Services

The main goal of Client and Tenant Support Services at Warmland House is to provide support to the community of individuals residing at Warmland House. Support is primarily in the areas of client safety and harm reduction, mental health, financial and legal aid, acquisition of identification documents, housing, addiction, life skills, physical health and hygiene, socio or cultural connections, training and employment. Tenant Support has the additional goal of helping tenants to transition out of Warmland House's transitional apartments, becoming landlord friendly. The Support Services program is also available to homeless individuals within the Cowichan Valley accessing the services on a "drop in" basis.

Some of the more common activities of Support Services include, assisting people with applying for Income Assistance, offering to provide letters of reference to those who have proved competence in work-related activity or housing arrangements with us. Advocacy is provided, on request, individuals experiencing difficulty navigating the steps required by government agencies and outside resources in order to access needed support.

Referrals are regularly made to appropriate companies, agencies and persons who may be able to help clients. Where communication is a challenge, Support Services initiates contact and then gradually transferred back to the client when the groundwork to access the support is laid. Should a client decide to attend a drug and alcohol treatment program, support is provided to help clients overcome personal and circumstantial difficulties in order to make the goal a reality.

Providing opportunities for clients to gain life skills and increase their involvement in healthy, stable life-style choices is another goal of shelter support. Such activities include organized activities that develop vocational skills, housekeeping skills, budgeting skills, gardening skills and more. This is accomplished through a blend of external programs and workshops offered at Warmland House and skill-based activities and opportunities offered by support staff.

The Good Food Box program for example, is one of Warmland's vocational and social skill developing activities in which a group of volunteers who are part of Warmland's clientele, come together for one day, under the direction of a former Warmland client in order to assemble and distribute 100 - 300 or more, boxes of seasonal vegetables, to paying customers in the community of Duncan. Healthy social interactions and a shared meal for those involved are great rewards.



Bags of produce for the Good Food Box Program

The following stories are an example of the hope and success that continue to occur at Warmland House over the past year:

- Fourteen people moved from Warmland to market housing and, of these, 11 are still housed in the community and are doing well. It may not seem like a large number, but to us it represents a lot of hard work on the part of clients and staff.
- One example can be seen in the story of an older gentleman who came to Warmland from a very distressing situation. He stayed in the shelter for half a year or so as he settled and caught his bearing. His next steps occurred when he moved into one of Warmland's transitional apartments. He stayed there for almost 2 years, volunteering and working to regain his health and self-esteem. When he felt ready to make the move to market housing, our CMHA Outreach Team was there to help him find an apartment and work with him to build supportive relationships with the landlord, BC Hydro and community resources. He continues to reside in the same apartment and our CMHA-Outreach Team has stepped back. The relationship the individual has built with the manager appears solid and he is now independent of Warmland outreach and advocacy services.
- A male in his 40's was brought to Warmland by the Outreach team. He was at risk of losing his housing due to his inability to effectively communicate. He ended up losing his housing and came to live at Warmland. His challenge was due to a stroke he suffered a few years back and he continues to experience multiple barriers around speaking and hearing. We were able to connect him with CanAssist, an organization that helps individuals overcome limitations through technology. They donated an iPad and he began to communicate more fluently with staff. We came to discover that he was desperately seeking stable housing and to reconnect with a support team.

He is now living in a transitional apartment at Warmland House. He has been referred to the head engineer for CanAssist who has expressed a great desire to continue working with such a medically inspiring individual! We have also received confirmation that the client's application has now been received for the Brain Injury Program and we look forward to continuing supporting him during his recovery!

- A 50 year old male residing in market housing approached the Outreach team requesting assistance with an eviction notice. The client had relapsed, fallen behind in rent, and was facing the risk of homelessness and losing custody of his 15 year old daughter, with whom he lived. The client support worker proposed a different approach: create and institute an affordable re-payment plan with the landlord to get caught up in back rent. The landlord agreed to a small monthly payment until the amount was paid in full, the client agreed to commit to said such monthly payment, and the Client Support worker agreed to monthly check-ins with both parties and provide ongoing supports to all involved.

This solution not only improved tenant/landlord relations, it is also fostering landlord/Warmland relationships. A sense of accountability and accomplishment were achieved and growing monthly with each successful payment. The client has now paid back the amount owing in full to the landlord and the family remains in stable market housing.

A couple more quick examples: three individuals, who began as clients in Warmland's Emergency Shelter, decided to do something to help themselves move forward and were placed in transitional apartments. Each individual took advantage of the support offered by Warmland to tenants. All three have been able to move to other housing alternatives in the Duncan area. They are now more than 6 months in their new residences and all reports indicate that they are doing well.

One gentleman has a major health problem and with the assistance of Warmland he was able to access the proper medical treatment and his living arrangements now meet his needs.

A second individual, when he arrived at Warmland had poor hygiene, an alcohol problem and self-esteem issues. Over time, he has been able to address each of these concerns. Today he is a model resident, his hygiene, personal appearance and drinking does not appear to be a problem.

The third individual presented at Warmland argumentative, appearing to have anger problems, and was very abrasive with other people, including staff. Over time, with support, he was able to adjust his behaviour. Recently, on a follow-up with him and the new landlord these issues appear to be under control and everything is going well.

Additional In-House Services



Heather Taylor, N.P.



Dr. Martin Baker, D.C.

Warmland House currently provides the in-house services of a Family Practice Nurse Practitioner, and a Chiropractor, each on a weekly basis for a four-hour clinic, free of charge to tenant, emergency shelter users, and community members. Each practitioner is available to meet with clients by appointment or drop-in.

A Foot Care Clinic runs once a month on the third Tuesday and in addition, there is a healthy lunch included which consists of home-made soups and sandwiches. The clinic is offered through the generosity of volunteers from local church groups. Community members are also welcome to take advantage of the clinic.

Community Donations

Warmland House continues to be the recipient of numerous voluntary donations from the community. Through the generosity of people living in and around the Cowichan Valley, we regularly receive shoes and clothing of all kinds and sizes, as well as bedding, blankets, towels and dishes for use in the transitional apartments.

We would also like to pay tribute to the many businesses and individuals that are responding to our call for support for Warmland House's Fifth Annual "Show'n'Shine". We expect another great event and opportunity to show our hospitality.



Finally, we would like to say a very special thank you to all those who continue to sponsor our Emergency Shelter food program through a "day of meals a month." Your donations mean we have a little more flexibility and a lot less of pressure on our food budget.



Thank You!

Community Advocacy/Homeless Outreach Report

by David Mitchell



There are many success stories to share about the great work that the outreach team has done here in the Cowichan Valley. However, I had one story that stood out from them all, and I would love the opportunity to share their story with you all. I was impressed with the work that CMHA was able to do for this family, and the community as a whole who pulled together to help the family get back into housing.

In mid-February the outreach team received a call from the Ministry of Social Development regarding a family in desperate need of housing, as the house and all their belongings had been lost in a house fire. We immediately contacted the victims of the house fire and discovered that there were two families living in the large house that was gutted by fire, and they had lost everything.

Both families were headed by single parents and between the two women there were six children. Temporary housing was arranged at the Rosedale Manor in Duncan for one week. This provided time which allowed the Outreach Team to look for more permanent housing, as well as send out a call to our community contacts for clothing and household items. By the end of the week we had found permanent housing for one of the families. The other family moved into the Falcons Nest Hotel as a short-term solution until we located an apartment for them.

CMHA ran an advertisement in the newspaper asking for donations for the fire victims, and we received an overwhelming amount of support from Cowichan Valley residents. In fact, the Outreach Team had to rent a five-ton truck and ran furniture/donation pick-ups for one whole week all over the Valley as the donations were rolling in. We continued working with the other family and within the month, we were able to house the second family in permanent housing.

The transition to their new housing was made all that much easier with overwhelming support with donations of furniture and household items. As community-based outreach workers, we connected with several organizations and gathered other items for the families that they required such as specific clothing sizes and under garments, shoes, food and additional support money. Once the families took possession of their new rental units, the Outreach Team assisted both families in moving the donated furniture into their new apartments.

I was impressed at how our community pulled together and we all worked together to assist the two families who lost their home and all their possessions in the house fire. Currently the two families are still healing from the devastating fire and remain in their permanent housing units that we were able to get them placed into. If it wasn't for the efforts of our amazing community to pull together for these two families it would have been a lot more difficult for them to start out in their new apartments.

Our People

Board of Directors

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------|
| ▪ Rob Grant | President |
| ▪ John Scull | Vice-President |
| ▪ Stephen Wiles | Secretary |
| ▪ Angela Harrison | Treasurer |
| ▪ Wendy Shaw | Director |
| ▪ Christine Pollard | Director |
| ▪ Mick Grainger | Director |
| ▪ Bill Baker | Director |
| ▪ Jack MacNeill | Director |

Staff

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| ▪ James Tousignant | Executive Director |
| ▪ Teri Vetter | Financial Officer |
| ▪ Lucy Morton | Communications/Bounce Back Administrative Assistant |
| ▪ Dave Ehle | Child & Youth Team Coordinator & Supervisor |
| ▪ Gabriele Ratjen | Disordered Eating Therapist |
| ▪ Kim Ellison | Sexual Abuse Intervention Therapist |
| ▪ Bill Wagg | Family Capacity Therapist |
| ▪ Karin Stotzer | Family Outreach Worker for Family Capacity Program |
| ▪ Tania Rowland | School Based Resiliency Worker |
| ▪ Louise Nadeau | Child & Youth Worker |
| ▪ Cal Hosie | Child & Youth Worker |
| ▪ Madi Walter | Child & Youth Worker |
| ▪ Jessica Thom | Child & Youth Worker |
| ▪ Jocelyn | Bounce Back Coach for Victoria area |
| ▪ Janet | Bounce Back Coach for Victoria area and overflow |
| ▪ Andy | Bounce Back Coach for Nanaimo area, Port Alberni & West Coast |
| ▪ Andy | Bounce Back Coach for Cowichan Valley & Southern Gulf Islands |
| ▪ Mellissa | Bounce Back Coach for Comox Valley, Campbell River & North Island |

Our People continued

Warmland Staff

- James Tousignant Housing Manager
- Shannon Bieling Administration
- David Mitchell Homelessness Outreach Worker
- Rebecca Belcher Homelessness Outreach Worker
- Jean Flynn Community Outreach Support
- Dan Clements Tenant Support Worker
- Stacey Walter Shelter Support
- Sandi Doerkson Shelter Worker/Shelter Support
- Terry McDonald Shelter Worker
- Kelly Smith Shelter Worker
- Lorie Jackson Shelter Worker
- Isabella Dehaumont Relief Shelter Worker/Shelter Support
- Kim Gallop Relief Shelter Worker
- Jordan Jackson Relief Shelter Worker
- Curtis Skiber Relief Shelter Worker
- Lawrene Collins Tenant Counsellor
- Lisa Redmond Head Cook
- Brie Bond Relief Cook
- Curtis Lomax Relief Cook
- Kingsley Hill Relief Shelter Worker
- Nicole Diakiw Relief Shelter Worker
- Steve Nelson Relief Shelter Worker
- Rob Brackett Relief Shelter Worker
- Evaline Schuler Relief Shelter Worker
- Dylan Adams Relief Shelter Worker
- Tim Miller Relief Shelter Worker
- Heather Wallman Relief Shelter Worker
- Skye Thompson Relief Shelter Worker
- Dan Talbot Handyman



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Cowichan Valley
Mental health for all

2014-15 ANNUAL REPORT

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