

president's/executive director's report 2021



Reflecting on the Year...

This past year, NACL's 35th in service, has been another one dominated by COVID-19 and our efforts to keep persons served and our staff who care for them safe. We maintained strict protocols, and staff have been diligent and doing their utmost to maintain a quality, effective service under exhausting conditions. We can't thank them enough for their dedication.

Accreditation Successes...

In spite of COVID, we have continued to focus on improving services – this included another Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) accreditation survey held in December 2020, where we received only one recommendation in Childrens' Services and none in Adult Services. This near-perfect score resulted in NACL's sixth 3-year accreditation status.

Additionally, NACL achieved a 97% score in its second-ever WorkSafeBC Certificate of Recognition (CoR) audit in January 2021, an in-depth examination our organizational health and safety systems and staff's knowledge of such.

These are both very proud moments for us over the past year; especially with having both surveys conducted under pandemic protocols.

Strategic Planning...

We have undertaken a "deep dive" Strategic Planning process this year that was grounded in deep engagement of the Board and senior staff, and informed by dozens of in-depth interviews with staff, persons served, and other key stakeholders. Our new Strategic Plan is guided by new Vision and Mission Statements, establishes Strategic Goals in four areas, and commits the organization to realizing those Strategic Goals in a manner consistent with a set of seven core values established as part of the plan.

At the Annual General Meeting we will be formally introducing our new Mission and Vision Statements, providing a brief overview of our four Strategic Goals pertaining to Housing, Employment, Support for Families, and Genuine Connection, and describing the Core Values that will underpin all of the work we do (Person Centered Planning; equity, diversity, and inclusion; respect; safety; sustainability; a socially-entrepreneurial ethos; and accessible communications).

COVID-19 Service Impacts...

As noted last year, the COVID-19 pandemic has definitely caused NACL to "take pause" and where needed, shift how some of our programs operated (and will operate in the future) to best ensure the safety of persons served, staff, and others. Our robust COVID-19 Exposure and Control Plan (still in effect) was developed with that in mind, making adjustments as appropriate per Provincial Health Office (PHO) orders/guidelines and the best interests of persons served, staff, and therefore the community alike.

We've continued to provide regular communiques re COVID-19 and its impacts on NACL and service delivery, distributing these to all employees and our Board; plus, for complete transparency, we have shared all communiques/plans on our website for public viewing at <https://www.nanaimoacl.com/event>.



Housing Updates...

Our new housing development at Uplands has been operating for just shy of a year now. Things are going well, and people are happy in their new homes. We are currently going through the process of subdividing and developing the property next door, with the intent to provide 40 units of new housing. At the same time, we are partnering with Nanaimo Affordable Housing Society (NAHS) to build an additional 40 units with a focus on services for seniors with diversabilities.

We look forward to exploring different types of housing models in order for us to be responsive to the full range of wants and needs of those we serve in that regard.

NACL's 35th Anniversary...

As alluded to above, NACL celebrated our 35th year of service as of July 22, 2021. We're extremely proud of how far we've come and what we've achieved over these last few decades. From our humble beginnings with only recreation and leisure-based day programs and group homes, we've evolved into a truly person-centered agency focusing on providing quality of life.

While we still have staffed residential programs, we also have people living semi-independently in home shares, we opened our first community-style, mixed tenancy townhouse complex at Uplands last October, our Community Inclusion programs have a life skills and employment preparedness focus, we have our Employment Services dedicated to matching employees with diversabilities to employers, and our multi-sensory Snoezelen Room remains fully active and is the first permanent one of its kind on Vancouver Island.

NACL's 35th anniversary attests to our ongoing resilience, tenacity, and creative spirit. We have strong values, and we believe in what we do – supporting people with diversabilities in whatever ways we can for them to lead thriving lives.

In Conclusion/Future Outlook...

None of what we have accomplished this past year would have been possible without the dedication and commitment of our staff, who have endured very trying working conditions with grace and humour. Though not out of the woods yet, we know better times are ahead – and we will come out stronger and better than ever.

Here's to the next 35 years and beyond, in "a world where all people with diversabilities thrive."

Daniel (Dan) Johnston
President

Graham Morry
Executive Director