

20 Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society 17 Annual Report



VACFSS ANNUAL REPORT



VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY

Our Children, Our Future, Our Responsibility

JUNE 2017





OUR LOGO

Laurence Wilson, from the Nisga'a Nation, designed the Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society logo in 1993. The translation for the logo is "Human and Wolf Child". As the wolf represents family, this is a perfect symbol for our Agency, which has been established to strengthen Aboriginal families. Laurence Wilson was born in 1954 in Nass River, an area located near the North Coast of British Columbia. Laurence has apprenticed under Norman Tait, a highly regarded West Coast artist, for three years and attended the prestigious Native art school, 'Ksan, from the beginning of 1978 to the end of 1979. He prefers to use such mediums as wood, canvas and hide in order to produce original paintings, drums and two-dimensional carvings. With his extensive background in design and form informed by his culture, Laurence Wilson has become one of the many prominent Native artists in British Columbia.

OUR MISSION, OUR VISION

Our Mission Statement

Provide holistic service delivery that culturally and spiritually strengthens Aboriginal children and families.

Our Vision Statement

A balanced and harmonious Aboriginal community.

Our Policy Statement

An Aboriginal perspective will be acknowledged, respected and legitimized through policy. An Aboriginal presence of knowledge and thinking will be reflected throughout VACFSS programs, policies, and practice.

Our Philosophy of Service Delivery

We ensure that the rights, safety, well-being and spirit of Aboriginal children and families are upheld, honored and protected. We strive to eliminate oppression, discrimination and marginalization within our community. We acknowledge and honor the inherent wisdom, capacity and resourcefulness of our community in designing programs and services to care for our own children and families. Accordingly, we are dedicated to planning, developing, and implementing creative and innovative Aboriginal programs and services in collaboration with members of our community and other agencies.

OUR VALUES

Humility

Humility is putting others first by giving up what you think you deserve; Mother Earth for she provides our every need and loves us even when we do not listen to her; a newborn baby coming into this world with nothing but their small presence asking only to be loved and cared for; recognizing what we give in our lives and being thankful for each new day.

Strength Based Practice

VACFSS incorporates a strength-based approach to service delivery. We believe in empowering people to trust that they have both the capacity and mastery to take responsibility for their own healing. By carrying the teachings of our ancestors and incorporating Aboriginal cultural customs within our social work practice, we can facilitate healing opportunities and share in the successes of Aboriginal children, families and the community that are involved with VACFSS.

Respect

Respect flows freely from the Creator to and through everyone and everything without judgment, from the tiniest child to the oldest Elder. It is the basic law of life that allows feeling and showing honor for all the creator's creations; all cultures, all ways and all paths to the creator which keeps the circle flowing in a good way.

Integrity

Integrity is doing the right thing even when nobody's watching.

Belonging

Belonging is creating authentic connections that encourages healthy and caring relationships with our children, families and community.



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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board Of Directors As Of The 2016 Annual General Meeting

Linda Stiller.	Chair
Madeleine MacIvor.	Co-Chair
Richard George.	Treasurer/Secretary
Perry Omeasoo.	Director
Lee Brown	Director
Bernice Discon	Director
Leona M. Sparrow	Director
Virge Silveira	Director
Darlene Willier	Director

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Members:

2017 was another busy and active year for the Board of Directors filled with many accomplishments and challenges.

As we continue to focus on the strategic initiatives, we undertook a review of our Bylaws, specifically to ensure compliance under the new BC Societies Act. The amendments include changing the Special Resolution threshold from 75% to 2/3 to be consistent with new requirements, as well as other changes to further ensure the accountability of our Board. Some of these other amendments pertain to tightening up the qualifications for Directors, as well as new Conflict of Interest provisions. Also, we removed the 12 year maximum term limit for Directors, to reflect VACFSS' value for collective experience and to nurture on-going relationships.

Aside from the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, the Research Committee has also been busy and active. This Committee is responsible for advancing and supporting the Board's strategic priority of "Sharing our Aboriginal experiences in developing and implementing VACFSS Aboriginal child welfare policies and practices". The Research Committee provides an ethical review process to approve and guide research conducted by VACFSS for internal and external researchers and project teams. Areas of research include identifying the pathways of decision making and practice within child protection that are most likely to generate restorative outcomes. Also we will be looking at the implications of the VACFSS Inclusive Foster Care Policy for children in-care and how VACFSS youth engagement programs impact identity and social development. VACFSS is in the early stages of planning a conference in the summer of 2018.

The Finance Committee meets monthly to review expenditures and pressures. This year reflected the greatest shortfall in funding to date. While we have been diligently managing our financial resources, we have had ongoing discussions in partnership with MCFD. I remain optimistic as we go through a standardized costing exercise, and embark on a period of review to ensure that VACFSS is adequately resourced to provide restorative child welfare services for our children and families.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the contributions of the many former and current members who have supported the development and progress of VACFSS. Also, I want to acknowledge and thank all of our staff who continue to provide our families, children and youth with exceptional support and caring.

This year, I look forward to celebrating our 25th year Anniversary of VACFSS' incorporation in 1992!

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Stiller, Chair



MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Heartfelt greetings to our members, partners, community and friends of VACFSS.

Incorporated in 1992, the Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society (VACFSS) is celebrating its 25th year. This milestone calls for our deep reflection on the lessons learned as well as the expression of gratitude to all those who have contributed to our development. Our continued progress as an urban child welfare service provider in the City of Vancouver is about vision, perseverance, community and government engagement, organizational and human resources development, and ongoing policy and practice innovation.

The core components of the VACFSS' story can be attributed to:

The Aboriginal community's advocacy for the establishment of a child welfare agency that would serve the needs of families who were challenged by historical and socioeconomic factors in their role as parents. Mainstream child welfare legislation implemented in the 1950's resulted in another layer of trauma to families who were already impacted by system induced harm. By the 1990's, families who were involved with the child welfare system were third and fourth generation survivors of multiple forms of assimilation policies.

Strong and effective Board of Director Leadership defined by a Complementary Model of Board Governance has been a key factor in stabilizing and developing an organization that carries immense responsibility under the *Child Family and Community Services Act (CFCSA)*. The volunteer Board of Directors are selected through a nominations process based on their specialized knowledge, extensive experience, and who have a strong commitment to the Aboriginal community. The Board of Directors review and monitor their strategic priorities bi-annually through program outcome reporting and compliance to the strategic priorities and risk mitigation.

Partnership with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), the primary and sole source funder, is

another key factor in VACFSS' success. From 1992 to 2003, VACFSS provided cultural support to foster parents caring for Aboriginal children in care and support to families. In the mid 1990's the VACFSS Board of Directors proposed to their membership that they assume responsibility for delegated services. The negotiation of a funding arrangement and a plan for the gradual transfer of services under the (*CFCSA*) was formalized with the signing of the first Delegation Enabling Agreement in 2001. Funding was negotiated based on the principle that VACFSS would compensate their employees at the wages paid by MCFD, that administrative support ratios for child protection and family service teams would be matched, building occupancy and leased vehicle would be covered at actual costs, and child in care costs would be paid at the same annual rate as the Vancouver Coastal Region. Additional funds were negotiated in the area of concrete support costs for families, Family Preservation services and in home support costs. Provincial permanency funding increases intended for staffing in 2009 were directed to increasing concrete needs for families and child specific costs.

With each successive transfer of delegated service starting with Guardianship and Resources in 2002 and Child Protection in 2008, VACFSS utilized a time limited secondment of MCFD staff. The temporary reliance on MCFD social workers reduced service disruption and ensured that the knowledge and skills for the successful transfer and implementation of administrative systems was achieved. The MCFD offices in Vancouver prepared for the transfer of services by co-locating MCFD social work and administrative staff carrying responsibility for services to Aboriginal children and families.

Over the last decade, VACFSS has developed policy and practice congruent with the (*CFCSA*) principles with emphasis placed on client and community engagement, collaborative practice, keeping children connected to family and community including interprovincial placement. Return to parent or extended family is the permanency plan for the majority of children that come into VACFSS' care. Efficiencies generated

from annual staffing vacancies have been utilized to implement child and youth engagement initiatives, hire client support elders and expanded peer group support services.

VACFSS has undertaken specific strategies to recruit, hire and retain employees whose interests are aligned with the VACFSS values and practice. Employee engagement, staff support, in-house critical incident debriefing and the hosting of bi-annual staff appreciation events are an integral part of this commitment. VACFSS implemented its first employee feedback survey in 2016. The feedback was very positive and recommendations arising from the survey are being implemented by a working committee. We are encouraged by the increasing retention of our staff: a factor critical for the development of a supportive and relational work environment, for achieving excellence and shared practice within a restorative child welfare environment, and for the continuity of services to families and children in care.

Creating community for the children youth and families is facilitated through annual gatherings, peer group support, child and youth engagement projects, honoring our sacred bundles, foster parent appreciation dinner, homecomings for children being returned to their parents, sponsorship of cultural events through partner agencies, utilization of out of care options, and accompanying children and youth to their traditional territories. We hold the belief that children in care are part of the community whose parents are on a healing path from intergenerational trauma. The caregivers who keep children connected with family, the Nations who contribute to their plans of care, and all those who value and nurture their connection to traditional knowledge and ancestral ties, are part of this broader community of care.

VACFSS relies on its community partners to access a full continuum of support and therapeutic services that children, youth and families require. Facilitating access from other community providers requires collaboration, relational practice, formalized liaison and committee work.

The nature of child welfare is the most complex area of social work practice and calls for extreme care in the management and allocation of resources. VACFSS has managed to cover its funding shortfall for the fourth consecutive year from efficiencies generated from vacancies between 2008 to 2012 and from efficiencies generated from the use of out-of-care options in the area of residential care costs. Funding for Infrastructure has not been adjusted since 2005 despite the fact that the overall workload for VACFSS doubled in 2008 with the transfer of child protection services. Discussions to address the revenue short fall through the standardized costing process is ongoing.

We raise our hands to our former directors, helpers, and partners, who inspire us, strengthen us, and carry us at times as we continue to uphold the wellbeing and hopes of those we serve. It has been the heart work of many that has made VACFSS' success, continued capacity, and perseverance possible. The immense capacity of our employees is reflected in the management reports attached to the 2017 AGM. It has been a great honor to serve the community through VACFSS, first as a volunteer (1995 to 2000), then as a consultant (2001 to 2002), and now as an employee (since 2003).

All My Relations,

Bernadette Spence, CEO
Kapisimipimotiht Iskwew

DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS

Cole H. McGillivray

As the most recent member to join the VACFSS leadership team, it's both an honour and a privilege to submit the 2017 Director of Programs Annual Report. The Director of Programs works under the leadership of the CEO to support and coordinate the functions of VACFSS' program areas: Guardianship, Residential Resources, and Family Preservation and Reunification Services. The Director of Programs provides mentoring, coaching, supervision and support to the managers of each of these programs. The program managers and I are collectively committed to working together in a collaborative planning and a client-focused, integrated approach to practice, to enhance strength-based and culturally diverse services that are established in a restorative practice approach for Aboriginal children, youth, families, and communities.

Inter-Program Collaboration

PROGRAM MANAGERS' MEETINGS

The program managers and I meet bi-weekly. The purpose of these meetings is to provide an opportunity for the managers to share and discuss new policies, practice trends, initiatives, and to work collaboratively on developing approaches or guidelines to support and improve our practice and service delivery. The managers provide updates from their program areas and as a group we consider and develop strategies to accomplish short and long term goals. These meetings are consistently very productive and have created an environment of shared responsibility for the provision of high quality services for our children and families.

INTEGRATING OUR PRACTICE MEETINGS

The Integrating Our Practice (IOP) Meetings are a highly successful learning initiative that commenced in late 2012. These meetings occur bi-monthly and include all practice leaders at VACFSS: Elders, Director of Programs, Program Managers, Team Leaders, Program Coordinators, Program Consultants, and the Strategic Policy Advisor. The primary purpose of these meetings is to nurture and enhance the relationships among the program areas in order to promote an informed,

cohesive, and integrated approach to restorative Aboriginal child welfare practice within an urban environment. Over the last several years each program has had an opportunity to present and highlight a key aspect of their program and to explore its implications for practice in all the program areas. These are exciting meetings that support growth in our Aboriginal clinical knowledge and practice. In 2016–2017 we had a number of stimulating IOP meetings, many with guest presenters, that focused on restorative Aboriginal child welfare practice such as: "Keeping our Children Safe" "Inclusive Foster Care", "Forum: Wrapping Our Ways Around Them", "Traditional Ceremony on the use of the Chieftain Stick".

There have been some preliminary discussions with continuing with the restorative child welfare practice training and the rolling out of our internal policies and specialized programs such as "Permanency Planning", "Sacred Life-Givers: Working With Substance Using Moms", "Therapeutic Access", "Supervision Model" and the completion of the "Siiyamints" ceremony. The participants have expressed their gratitude for these meetings and have stated the meetings/teachings have contributed to their deeper understanding and appreciation of working from an Aboriginal restorative approach to providing child welfare services, since they see the importance of connecting children and youth to their culture, families, communities and Nations.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Internal Practice Audit and File Review I'm pleased to report the Guardianship and Resources programs are compliant with the entire Aboriginal Operational and Practice Standards and Indicators as of December 2016. In an effort to prepare for future MCFD practice audits, the managers and I are collectively working on an Internal Practice Audit and File Review policy and procedures to ensure we are meeting or beating the AOPSI practice standards throughout the year. The intended outcome of this policy is to ensure that we are not only prepared for the next cycle of the MCFD practice audits but equally important is that we feel confident and are ready for the practice audit.

- Annual notification to Delegated Aboriginal Agencies (DAA)** The Guardianship Program Manager, the Strategic Policy Advisor and I are in the process of developing an annual invitation to be sent out to all the DAA who have children in our care, to assist and have direct involvement in the development of cultural planning for their children and youth. Our intent is to be able to roll this out by December, 2017.
- Placement Review Committee (PRC)** The purpose of this committee to maintain consistent fiscal practices, share resources and work towards the best possible outcomes for children, youth and their families. The PRC is our effort to demonstrate our ongoing collaboration and partnership with MCFD within our Service Delivery Area.
- Vancouver Youth Services Tier One Steering Committee** The purpose of this committee is to develop a response for at-risk-youth and frequent the streets of Vancouver. The committee is made up of several stakeholders who specialize in services for at-risk-youth and to come together to develop joint plans geared towards the specific at risk youth.
- Foster to Adopt Project** VACFSS in partnership with the Adoptive Families Association of BC (AFABC) are working together to explore the possibility of finding permanent homes for our Guardianship children and youth. The initial step towards this goal is to develop a Memorandum of Understanding that is framed within the principles of the four quadrants of permanency planning and a restorative Aboriginal child welfare practice approach, to define our intended partnership and project outcomes.
- Cultural Committee** The purpose of the VACFSS Cultural Committee is to encourage and maintain Aboriginal cultural practices as the foundation for the work at VACFSS. The Cultural Committee considers input from a wide range of Aboriginal perspectives to ensure appropriate cultural practices and protocols are available and to respectfully acknowledge the diversity of Aboriginal children, youth and

families involved with our agency. The primary focus of the committee is to provide information and advice to staff on cultural activities and programming which will strengthen our ability to provide culturally appropriate services to the children, youth, and families receiving our services. The Cultural Committee takes the lead in organizing agency events such as burnings, sage picking and volunteers for program cultural activities including 'Honoring Our Sacred Bundles', 'Honoring the Journey of Our Youth', 'Caregiver camps', 'Touching the Land of our relations', 'the Moose Hide Campaign', and National Child Day'. The Cultural Navigator also assists social workers who need cultural resources for their children and youth such as house cleansings, and individualized work and teachings as well as supports the Youth Advisory Committee when needed. Further, the Cultural Navigator responds to requests from our community partners and stakeholders for cultural resources and referrals for community knowledge keepers.

MOVING FORWARD

As a leadership team we are always reminded to acknowledge the contribution of many, since VACFSS' inception, in light of this, the Program Managers and I have collectively stayed focussed on contributing to the strengthening of the services we provide to our children, youth, families and communities. We have focused on emphasizing a collaborative and integrated approach to practice that is centered on Aboriginal knowledge systems and world view. Our journey on the restorative approach to Aboriginal child welfare has been met with many challenges and successes over the years, but each challenge has presented itself as a creative opportunity to further strengthen our resolve to decolonize our practice—while keeping our children, youth and families' safety, health and well-being as forefront in the work we do each day. We will remain steadfast in adherence to the principles of Aboriginal restorative child welfare practice - keeping children and youth in our care, connected to their culture, families, communities and Nations and will continue developing resources as needed to do so. ■

HUMAN RESOURCES AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

Paul Hucul, Director

Mandate

The mandate of the Human Resources and Quality Assurance (HRQA) Department is to develop and administer programs in the following areas: Recruitment, Selection, Training and Staff Development, Practicum Program, Performance Management, Labour Relations, Employee Relations, Compensation Management, Records Management, Information Management, Occupational Safety and Health, Wellness, Benefits Administration, HR Policies and Procedures and Quality Assurance.

Overview

In the 2016/2017 fiscal year, as in the previous year, a significant amount of HRQA activities in the agency were geared towards recruitment, selection and training. Recruitment activities were further refined and drew a great number of applicants to VACFSS. In addition, Human Resources activities in the 2016/2017 fiscal year ensured that vacancies were filled in a timely fashion with continued emphasis on Aboriginal selection. Resources were applied to functions and activities which focused on strengthening initiatives and mitigating risks and a great effort was made toward creating a welcoming work environment. Initiatives included: delegation training, leadership and supervisor training, and violence prevention training. Furthermore, in order to strengthen its practice, VACFSS continued to ground its practices and procedures in Aboriginal cultural concepts and protocols.

HRQA also engaged in a Labour Relations strategy which attempted to balance labour harmony and management rights. Moreover, HRQA continued its client advocacy system through the Quality Assurance Program which resulted in a greater voice for VACFSS clients.

A. STAFFING (AS OF MARCH 31, 2017)

VACFSS had 142 funded positions. Staffing included a mixture of VACFSS Regular Employees (164), a MCFD Secondment (1) and Casual Employees. (12) for a total of 177 employees. In leadership, 61% of Team Leaders/Supervisors and 50% of Managers are of Aboriginal Ancestry. In addition, 57% of VACFSS staff members are of Aboriginal ancestry to reflect the demographics of the clients that VACFSS serves.

Recruitment activities of HRQA have been successful in that there were 598 applications to VACFSS resulting in 22 new employees hired. Eleven (11; 50%) of these new hires are of Aboriginal ancestry. There were also 35 internal selections. The turnover rate for VACFSS was 5.8% in 2016/2017 as compared to 20.0% for the 2015/2016 fiscal year. The 5-year average turnover rate is 11.2%. The 9-year average turnover rate for VACFSS is 12.0%.

B. PRACTICUM PROGRAM

HRQA has developed a very successful Practicum Program at VACFSS to support students in completing their education/training, to assist staff with their workloads, and to encourage future applications to VACFSS.

In 2016/2017 eight (8) practicum students completed their field education at VACFSS. Five (5; 63%) students identified as Aboriginal. From the 2016/2017 cohort, four (4) students have applied for employment. Three (3; 75%) are Aboriginal. One (1) was successful in a term position in Child Protection as of December 2016. The second student applied to a Social Work Assistant posting in March 2017; and is awaiting follow-up. Two (2) additional students have submitted their cover letters and resumes to be considered for the next available position.

C. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Extensive HR sponsored training was provided to VACFSS staff in the 2016/2017 fiscal year. VACFSS continued to provide in-service training programs on Harassment/Anti Bullying and Violence Prevention to fulfill its obligations under the WCB regulations and WorkSafeBC requirements. Twenty-five (25) staff attended. There were two (2) Cultural Camps at Gambier Island. For the introduction to Culture Level 1 there were eighteen (18) participants and for the advanced Level 2 camp there were thirteen (13) staff members that attended. HRQA continued to support Leadership Training under Siiyamints (see-yom-main-ts). Nine (9) staff from the Management Team participated in the leadership training from Taylor Made Solutions. There was one (1) New Employee Orientation day, in which fourteen (14) new employees attended. VACFSS offered a Conflict Resolution Workshop which had twenty (20) staff participate. Agency-wide Privacy Training was offered to all staff and will continue to be required for all new hires and practicum students moving forward.

D. LABOUR RELATIONS

HRQA continued to work out concerns in partnership with the BCGEU. Labour Management Committee meetings were held every two months. Several labour issues were resolved without going to the grievance process. No grievances were filed in the 2016/2017 fiscal year and one (1) grievance was outstanding from a previous fiscal year. There was one (1) sector mediation that occurred between the BCGEU and CSSEA that will affect VACFSS.

E. OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH (OSH)

VACFSS continued to invest significant resources into the OSH program. The infrastructure at all sites is continually

being replenished including Joint Occupational Safety and Health Committees and Emergency personnel, including First Aid. Meetings are held monthly at each location. OSH procedures are in place and the OSH Manual is posted on the Intranet. Emergency fire drills have taken place at sites. Incident Investigation Training was provided to Supervisors, OSH Committee Members and acting staff. The VACFSS Violence Prevention Program continued to be a priority with HRQA providing Critical Incident Stress Management Training and refresher to eleven (11) staff. In addition, HRQA facilitated the Non Violent Crisis Intervention for VACFSS. Approximately thirty-six (36) staff members were trained with additional sessions planned for the following fiscal year. Monthly training in OSH topics were presented by the Managers to their program or department. VACFSS is faced with the ongoing challenge of emergency personnel turnover, continual OSH training, procedure writing and amendments, OSH administration and emergency drills. The main focus will continue to be placed on Violence Prevention in the Workplace.

F. QUALITY ASSURANCE

The Client Complaint Resolution Process (CCRP) was administered by the Quality Assurance Advisor under the Director of Human Resources and Quality Assurance. Twenty-one (21) eligible complaints were made to VACFSS and fourteen (14) were resolved at the Local Resolution Stage. Of those resolved 77% of closed complaints reached Local Resolution within 30 days. The average number of days for local resolution was 21. The process continues to demonstrate that VACFSS has an administratively fair complaints process in place for its clients. The Quality Assurance Advisor will continue to coordinate and assist Program Managers in achieving the 30 day compliance requirement.

A continuation of survey collection from persons-served occurred between 2016 and 2017. 162 Satisfaction Surveys were completed by the community, including 46 from children and youth receiving VACFSS services. 79% were satisfied with VACFSS workers and 74% were satisfied with VACFSS services. The Employee Satisfaction Survey was also completed this fiscal, with a goal of response set for 112 (85%) of staff excluding those on leave. This target was far exceeded, with a final response rate of 125 (95%) completed surveys.

G. WELLNESS: LIVING A HEALTHY ABORIGINAL LIFESTYLE (LAHAL)

VACFSS has continued to support its employees in performing their difficult work by maintaining the following wellness activities:

1. Massage for Stress Reduction sessions were provided to staff at the three (3) work sites.
2. Sewing for Wellness was provided to staff once a month.
3. The VACFSS Clinical Counsellor/Elder, provided emotional, physical and spiritual support for all employees at all three work sites. She provided 588 one – to – one counselling sessions and other interventions with staff. Her work was well received; she also engaged in a number of group interventions.
4. The Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Team continued to provide peer support to workers who experience Critical Incidents.
5. VACFSS continued to support and sponsor employees to participate in the Vancouver Sun Run.

H. CULTURAL TRAINING/CEREMONIES

Cultural training, education and cultural events were provided to VACFSS staff members as follows:

1. Introduction to Cultural Camp I on Gambier Island was provided for 18 new staff.

2. Advanced Cultural Camp II on Gambier Island was provided to 13 staff who had already taken Cultural Camp I.
3. Several events were conducted including; Honouring the Journey of our Youth, Foster Parent Appreciation Dinner, Children’s Christmas parties, sage picking, update meetings, Celebrations of life, Honouring Our Sacred Bundles Ceremony and individual smudging and brushings for staff.

Summary

In the 2016/2017 fiscal year the HRQA Department once again continued to be faced with significant challenges as the result of the challenging work environment in an era of greater accountability and demand for services as well as the opioid crisis. Great emphasis was placed in retention of staff. In addition, the HRQA staff worked extremely hard to provide on-going service and support to all the programs and departments through regular consultation and development of organizational systems and procedures. Agency-wide HRQA initiatives contributed to a welcoming work environment.

Future Initiatives and Goals

The following initiatives will be taken in the 2017/2018 fiscal year:

1. Essentials of Leadership training for VACFSS senior Social Workers will be delivered.
2. Cultural Camps will be held in the Fall and Elders forums will also be provided for staff.
3. A formal Attendance Management Program will be instituted at VACFSS.
4. There will be a continued Aboriginal cultural grounding of HRQA practices and procedures.
5. Occupational Health and Safety procedures will continue to be developed and amended. In

addition, HRQA will continue to provide leadership in the Violence Prevention Program and Bullying and Harassment Prevention Program.

6. The Quality Assurance Program will be further developed with an Aboriginal cultural component to be added to the CCRP to ensure greater accountability to the clients that VACFSS serves.
7. Aboriginal cultural competencies will be formally identified as they relate to VACFSS hiring, evaluation and service delivery.
8. The Restorative Supervision Model will be implemented including a revised Performance Review System for VACFSS employees.
9. Recruitment, selection and retention initiatives will be intensified to ensure that VACFSS staffing levels are at an acceptable level and that high quality workers are employed and retained. In addition, further initiatives will be taken to increase the percentage of Aboriginal employees at VACFSS. ■



CHILD PROTECTION

Anju Sohal, Manager

VACFSS is responsible for child protection and family support and prevention services to Aboriginal children, youth, and families who reside in the City of Vancouver. This includes: providing services that will help strengthen vulnerable Aboriginal children and families, providing practical support to parents and other kinship caregivers who are responsible for the care of children, and receiving, assessing, and investigating reports of child abuse, neglect and exploitation of children. The Child Protection program consists of one Intake Team, four Family Service Teams, and one Collaborative Practice Team that includes two family support Elders. Services are provided under the legal authority of the *Child, Family and Community Service Act (CFCSA)* and with the endorsement of the Aboriginal community to ensure that Aboriginal children are protected and families are adequately supported. Services are managed and delivered within a restorative child welfare framework that includes: a crisis intervention response, capacity to provide essential concrete needs, gathering the family's support circle to develop service plans, coordinated and integrated service planning, and trauma reduction through the involvement of in-house client Elders. Child protection services are guided by the five VACFSS core values of Integrity, Belonging, Humility, Respect, and Strength-Based Practice. Services provided are culturally based and make use of traditions and practices that strengthen cultural identity.

The Child Protection program works collaboratively with the Family Preservation and Reunification, Residential Resources Program and Guardianship Program in order to achieve its commitment to an integrated and restorative child welfare practice. In situations where children are determined to be at risk, the Child Protection program Social Workers prioritize the use of least disruptive measures and out-of-care/kinship placement options to keep the children safe and connected to their family. The Out-of-Care Options Social Worker in the Child Protection program assess and supports kith and kin to care for children when their parents are unable to do so. In some situations these placements

provide an alternative and preferred permanency option for children who would otherwise be placed in foster care. The overall goal of the Child Protection program staff is to support and stand beside families through a healing journey to a place of safety, strength and wellness.

We continue to see an increase in the use of services provided by the Collaborative Practices Team and the client support Elders as both families and staff recognize the tremendous benefits of collective problem solving and culturally grounded supports and processes. The Elders are involved in family led conferences and as well provide direct culturally appropriate support to family members who may be impacted by complex trauma associated with the harmful impact of colonization and historical child welfare involvement. Elders are included in most aspects of our direct work with families as their knowledge and guidance is vital to enhancing and informing our practice development. We strive to increase our capacity to provide cultural supports to our families and many cultural practices are embedded in our practice policies.

Due to the complexities of child protection work, a key initiative in the program is the ongoing support and training of new child protection staff. Also, child protection is a very dynamic field in that policy and practice are regularly changing and shifting. This past year there was an increase in one-to-one mentoring, additional training opportunities, regular group meetings with staff to discuss and de-brief their experiences, and planned direct engagement with senior practitioners and leadership staff to provide support and guidance in the acquisition and growth of their clinical knowledge.

During this fiscal year the VACFSS Child Protection program had the lowest number of staff changes in the history of the program. This provided an opportunity for the program to focus on enhancing clinical practice skills and more consistent service delivery to people served.

CHILD PROTECTION STAFF	POSITION FILLED
CP MANAGER	1
ASSOCIATE CP MANAGER	1
ELDER	1
TEAM LEADERS	5
COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE TEAM LEADER	1
CP OFFICE MANAGERS	2
CP CONSULTANT	1
MENTORS	2
OUT OF CARE OPTIONS SOCIAL WORKER	1
CP SOCIAL WORKERS	30
CHILD YOUTH ADVOCACY CENTRE SOCIAL WORKER	1
COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE COORDINATORS	5
SOCIAL WORK ASSISTANTS	4
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS	7
ACCOUNTING CLERK	1
CASUAL STAFF	3
TOTAL	66

Profiles of Reports Received

Child Protection reports take place when new families come to the attention of the program; new families are primarily assessed by the Intake Team. Child Protection also receives reports on families that the program is already involved with, which are assessed predominantly by the Family Service Teams. Reports for support services are coded as Service Requests (SR), while reports of suspected maltreatment of children are coded as incidents. There were 1796 After Hours memos received that either produced new reports or provided information on situations occurring on open files after regular business hours. From April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017, there were a total of 620 incidents and 103 service requests for a total of 723 reports received. This represents a slight decrease in the number of incidents by 43 and a decrease in the number of service requests by 5.

Incidents are further categorized into concerns requiring an Investigation (INV), or concerns involving a Family Development Response (FDR). Investigations are required for more immediate and severe cases where a parent may not be willing to engage, while a FDR is a protection response that is available when parents are willing to work collaboratively with the Social Worker to mitigate identified safety concerns. A FDR response allows for the Intake Team to be able to provide services

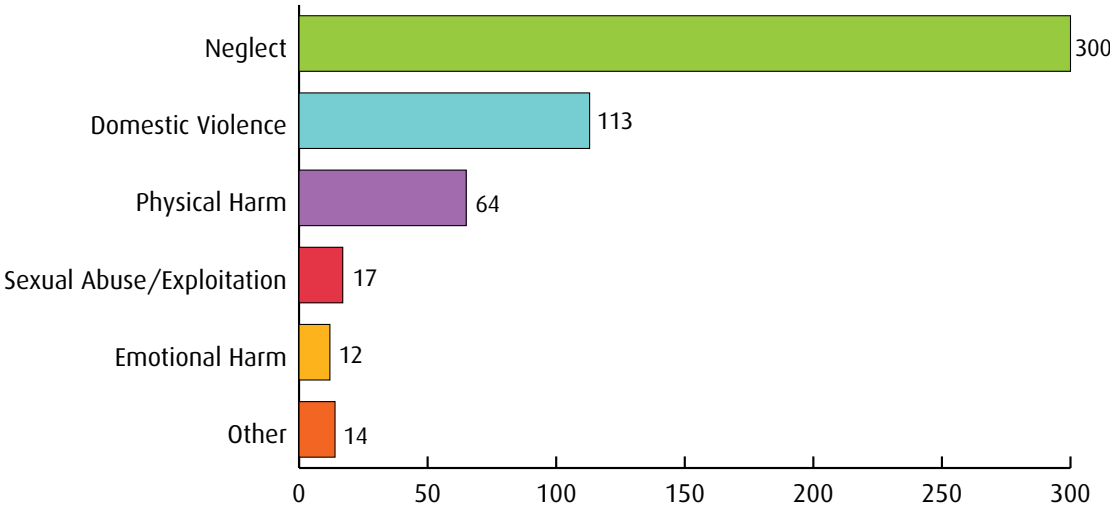
CHILD PROTECTION PROGRAM ACTIVITY REPORTS					
FISCAL YEAR	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
NUMBER OF INCIDENTS	752 (495 OPENED DURING THE YEAR/257 OPEN)	918 (618 OPENED DURING THE YEAR/300 OPEN)	982 (657 OPENED DURING THE YEAR/325 OPEN)	663 (443 OPENED DURING THE YEAR/220 OPEN)	620 (414 OPENED DURING THE YEAR/206 OPEN)
SERVICE REQUESTS	186	173	89	108	103

over a longer period of time, as well as through a restorative practice approach in which families are collaborating with Social Workers in child safety planning. During this past reporting period, 69% (355) of the incidents received were assessed as FDR, 11% (59) were coded as INV, and 20% (103) was coded as SR.

The multi-year trends have been difficult to analyze over the past years with large fluctuations in the data. This has been largely due to multiple changes in the computer databases as well as significant changes in policies surrounding documentation. This past year, with very few changes to policy and database configuration, the numbers are fairly consistent with the previous year. Provided there are no further system changes in the coming years, we can now commence to collect data and recognize trends in a more accurate manner.

Neglect and the likelihood of physical harm resulting from exposure to domestic violence are the leading categories of maltreatment recorded in the 414 incidents received for this past fiscal period. A breakdown of the Section 13 concerns of the Child, Family and Community Service Act, the legislation that guides child welfare work, indicates that neglect was recorded a total of 300 times as a significant risk factor, followed by likelihood of physical harm due to exposure to domestic violence and actual incidents of physical abuse combined, was recorded 177 times as the second leading risk factor for maltreatment. Sexual abuse or exploitation was recorded 17 times and emotional harm was noted in 12 incidents.

CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS



The category of physical harm is comprised of two groups: allegations that a child may have been physically harmed and allegations that a child was in the home during a domestic violence altercation. Therefore, the category of physical harm ranks higher and is not indicative of children actually being physically injured. Therefore, the data was

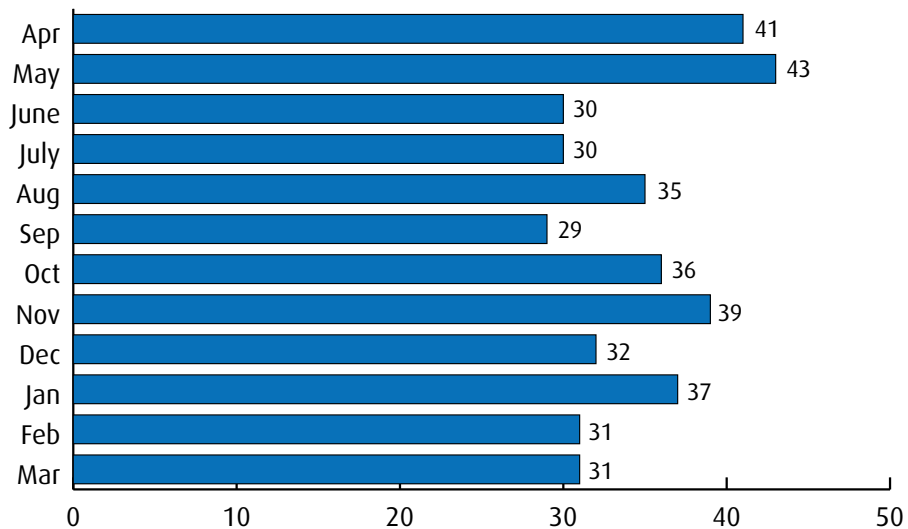
delineated to show how many instances of physical harm was reported against children as apposed to the likelihood of physical harm due to domestic violence. This data reveals that of the incidents coded as physical harm, 36% were due to reports of children being physically harmed and 64% were due to concerns of domestic violence.

INCIDENTS BY MONTH

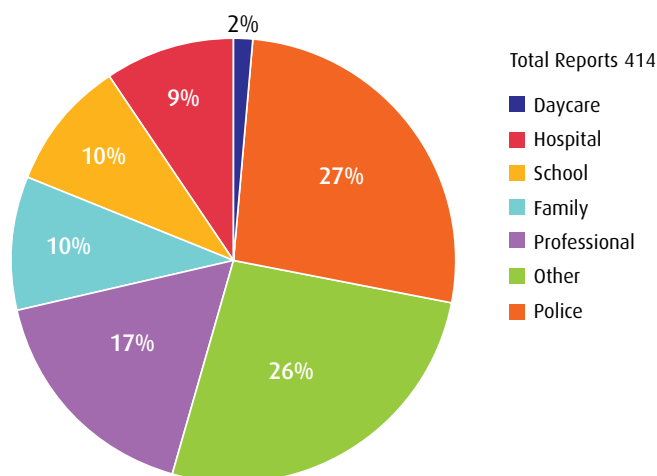
	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	YEAR TOTAL
INTAKE FILE (IRI)	19	18	12	12	14	16	23	14	13	13	17	19	197
FAMILY SERVICE FILE (IRJ)	10	6	4	3	6	4	3	9	4	3	3	4	56
FAMILY SERVICE FILE (IRK)	4	9	7	3	2	2	5	7	2	2	3	2	48
FAMILY SERVICE FILE (IRL)	8	7	4	8	6	5	2	8	7	9	5	8	77
FAMILY SERVICE FILE (IRH)	0	3	3	4	7	2	3	1	6	4	3	1	37
CP TOTAL	41	43	30	30	35	29	36	39	32	37	31	31	414
AFTER HOURS MEMOS	161	166	145	131	163	127	136	157	172	159	134	145	1796

A month to month comparison of incidents received shows higher reporting during April, May, November, and January, which often coincides with the start and end of the school year.

INCIDENTS: MONTHLY TRENDS



INCIDENTS: REPORTER TYPE



INCIDENTS: REPORTER TYPE YEARLY

REPORTER TYPE	2013	2014	2015	2016
POLICE	181	178	117	111
OTHER	122	171	102	109
PROFESSIONALS	84	103	70	70
FAMILY	114	93	67	40
SCHOOL	63	56	46	40
HOSPITAL	41	49	34	38
DAYCARE	13	7	7	6
TOTAL	618	657	443	414

Caseload Profile

As of March 31, 2017 there were a total of 480 open service files. Of these, there were 271 Family Service (FS) files, a slight increase from 261 the year previous, 130 Child Service Files (CS) files, consistent with last years 131, and 79 Out-of-Care Options files, an increase from 60 the year previous. Out-of-Care Options files are designated for children who are not in the care of their parents, but are placed under the various provisions related to alternatives to care, including the Extended Family Plan (Section 8 Agreements), Temporary Transfer of Custody under Section 35(2) (d), and 41(1) (b), and Permanent Transfer of Custody under Section 54.01, of the *CFCSA*.

The 271 open FS files this reporting period represents a total of 1693 persons served by Family Service Teams: 1027 adults and 666 children. Sixty-six percent of the FS cases met the criteria for "High Risk and Complex" in the child protection program. These cases require intensive resources and can result in an out-of home placement for children due to the presence of concurrent and high risk factors, such as parental substance misuse, family violence, parental mental health disorder and or limited cognitive capacity to provide safe care for vulnerable children. Complex cases are given preference to senior staff and are distributed amongst the 22 FS caseloads in the program. The nature of caseloads is dynamic and changes at any given time during the course of the year. During this past reporting period, a total of 75 new cases were open and 68 cases were closed. The number of closed case files represents families that no longer require mandated child welfare services as they were able to resolve the need for ongoing child protection FS involvement.

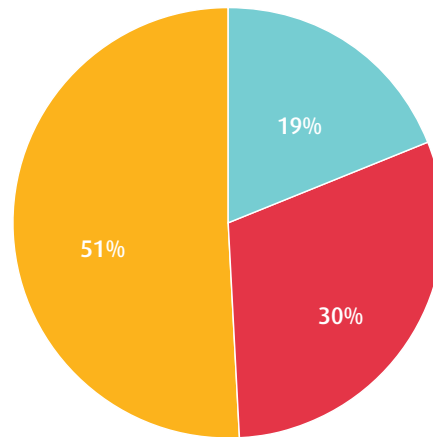
Children Out of Care

One of the key initiatives of the Child Protection program is the use of least disruptive measures and out-of-care/kinship options. The Out-of-Care Options Social Worker enhances restorative practice by assessing relatives, extended family,

and community to care for children when their parents are unable to do so. In some cases various Out-of-Care Options provisions are a “doorway to permanence” for children who would otherwise be placed in foster care. This is an important role in our effort to continue to promote least disruptive measures in utilizing the various options available under the legislation and Out-of-Care Options provisions. The use of alternatives in care options continues to be a central goal of the Child Protection Program. Currently, both temporary court ordered agreements available under Out-of-Care Options are available for up to two years depending on the age of the child. Once the time frame for Out-of-Care Options expires, and if the parents are not able to resume care, Section 54.01 allows for the permanent transfer of custody of children to a proposed guardian, with whom the child has a significant relationship and/or a cultural connection to, without the need for a continuing custody order.

Supporting kinship caregivers in their efforts to address the needs of children provides an opportunity to improve the lives of many children who have already experienced trauma and are at risk of entering the foster care system. For the current reporting period there are 79 children receiving services under the Out-of-Care Options program compared to 60 children the previous year. Of the 79 children, 15 are placed under the provision of Kith and Kin or Extended Family Program (previously known as Child in Home of Relative Program or CIHR), 40 are placed under section 54.01, 24 are placed under transfer of custody under section 35(2) (d) and 41(1) (b). With an emphasis on least disruptive measures and the alternatives to care as a vital component to restorative practice, it is anticipated that the Out-of-Care Options program will continue to be used as a care alternative. Currently there are 54 homes located throughout the province where children are being cared for by their extended family members. Due to the geographical distance of these homes, support is sought through joint case management with other Delegated Aboriginal Agencies and/or MCFD.

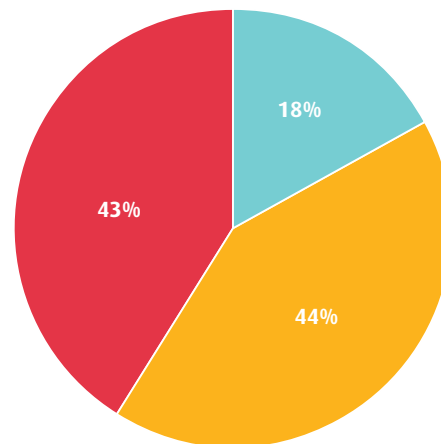
LEGAL DISTRIBUTION



Children in Out of Care Options: 60

- Extended Family Program (Section 8): 15
- 35.2.d (3) & 41.1.b(13): 13
- 54.01: 29

AGE DISTRIBUTION



Children in Out of Care Options: 79

- Age 13 to 18
- Age 6 to 12
- Age 5 and under

CHILDREN IN CARE: AGE DISTRIBUTION BY YEAR

AGE	2013	2014	2015	2016
AGE 5 AND UNDER	53%	49%	58%	59%
AGE 6 TO 12	32%	34%	30%	35%
AGE 13 TO 18	15%	17%	12%	6%

Children In Care

As of March 31, 2017, there were 130 children in care with the Child Protection Program. This is fairly consistent from last years 131. There were 6 Voluntary Care Agreements and 6 Special Needs Agreements this year. During this reporting period 87 children were removed compared to 114 for fiscal year 2016, 94 for fiscal year 2015, and 98 for fiscal year 2014. While the number of children removed decreased this year, the number of children placed in Out-of-Care Options increased.

A further breakdown of the 130 children in care, Child Service (CS) files by age category indicates that more than half of the children in care, 76 (59%), are between 0 and 5 years of age, another 46 (35%) are between 6 and 12 years of age, and the remaining 8 (6%) are between the ages of 13 to 18.

As of March 31, 2017 there were 9 children under a Continuing Custody Order (CCO) compared to 8 children from the previous year. During this reporting period, 16 CS files were transferred from the Child Protection Program to the Guardianship Program. For the previous reporting period 25 were transferred to Guardianship. With the use of Out-of-Care Options, it is anticipated that the file transfer rate to Guardianship will continue to remain at a lower number as more children are having long term placements with extended family or community.

Collaborative Practice

The Collaborative Practice Team receives a large volume of referrals for facilitated meetings and requests for Elder involvement predominantly from the Child Protection program as well as other programs across VACFSS namely the Guardianship program. The Collaborative Practice Team continues to build on the collaborative practice approach of bringing people together to make plans for children that involves parents, extended family, and the community. During this reporting period, there were a total of 120 referrals to the program. There were 71 Family Group Conferences, 81 Integrated Case Management meetings, 66 Family Case Planning Conferences, and 44 mediations facilitated predominantly by Aboriginal mediators.

	2015	2016
REFERRALS	101	120
FCC	73	71
ICM	56	81
FCPC	42	66
MEDITATION REFERRALS	60	44
ELDER REFERRALS	32	48
HOMECOMING CERMONIES	11	1*

*10 HOMECOMING CEREMONIES ON HOLD FOR 2016

The Collaborative Practice Program continues to increase the capacity to offer cultural support to the families served. This past reporting period, the Elders were involved in the lives of countless families, by working closely with them or by engaging with the families through a variety of cultural supports. We continue to value our Elder involvement in all aspects of the work, as their knowledge and guidance is vital to our practice approach. Elders have been involved in family led conferences, Ceremonies, community events, and one-to-one direct support to family members; families value Elder involvement as they are impacted by complex trauma due to colonial history and assimilation policies such as residential school, the foster care system, cultural genocide, and other historical atrocities that have led to challenges that Aboriginal families currently face. For this reporting period, there were 48 Elder referrals. The number of referrals for Elder involvement in all areas of practice is expected to increase due to a commitment VACFSS has in restorative practice, and in demonstrating and understanding the use of culture as healing for families engaged in the child welfare system. We will continue to seek guidance from our Elders to strengthen our cultural grounding in order to provide better service to families. Furthermore, the opportunity for Elders to participate in the Social Work Delegation Training will be maintained to enhance their guidance and wisdom, and to provide information to them on the legislation, practices, and policies of child welfare work.

CULTURAL SUPPORT
FACILITATED ELDER TRAINING FOR STAFF
FAMILY HEALING CIRCLE
BLANKETING BABY IN HOSPITAL
WELCOMING CEREMONY FOR YOUTH
HOMECOMING CEREMONY
CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY
ATTENDANCE AT FAMILY GROUP HOME CONFERENCES
BRUSHING AND SMUDGES OF HOMES FOR FAMILIES

Ceremony plays an integral part in the Collaborative Practice Program. In this past reporting period, Collaborative Practice held two Honouring Our Sacred Bundle Ceremonies to honor babies in care born within the year. Collaborative Practice also supports Homecoming Ceremonies where parents are honored for their: perseverance, for continuing their healing journey and completing the required steps to have their children return home. In order to maintain support of the Homecoming Ceremony and to find cultural community and family support to care for children who are not residing with their family, the position of a Kith and Kin Connections Worker (KKCW) has been created. The KKCW will be situated on the Collaborative Practice Team and work closely with Intake and

Family Service Social Workers, as well as the Out-of-Care Options worker. The KKCW will locate extended family, connect parents and children to their home communities, create genograms, and work to establish local urban cultural supports. We look forward to filling this position and expanding cultural services to our families.

Final Thoughts

The multiple challenges faced by Aboriginal people involved in the child welfare system are a direct impact of assimilation policies and colonization in all its various forms. Therefore VACFSS staff work tirelessly in their efforts in helping to establish an indigenous framework of holistic practice based on the core values of Respect, Humility, Integrity, Belonging and Strength-Based Practice which are at the heart of shaping a unique urban based and holistic restorative child welfare service delivery agency.

We give thanks and gratitude to all the individuals, community organizations and partners that have collaborated on the various initiatives of the Child Protection program. We raise our hands to the children and families that we are honored to work with for their courage, perseverance, and spirit. At the core of the values of VACFSS is the belief of the child as a sacred bundle and a gift from the Creator. The recognition of the sacredness of childhood, the strength of culture, and the role of family, extended family and community in preserving this sacred gift are at the center of our work. ■

FAMILY PRESERVATION AND REUNIFICATION SERVICES

Kathryn Priest-Peries, Manager

The Family Preservation and Reunification Services provides goal orientated and home/community-based counseling and support services to VACFSS families to address parenting issues that may place their children at risk. The program operates with C3 Delegation and focuses on client engagement and collaborative planning with families and the other VACFSS programs. Services are based on assessed need and are available to families in the Child Protection, Guardianship and Residential Resources Programs. The over-riding purpose of the Program is to work collaboratively with the referring offices to clearly articulate any Section 13 (child endangerment) issues which may exist and to collaboratively develop goals with professional case planners and the referred family in order to reduce these identified risks. There is an ever-increasing need to raise the clinical skills and interventions of the Family Preservation and Reunification Counselors as cases increase in complexity. Examples of goal areas include:

- Improve parenting confidence and abilities
- Prevent children from coming into care
- Promote safe, timely, and lasting reunification or family connection for children placed out of their homes
- Support families in connecting to their unique Aboriginal culture to enhance their sense of identity and self esteem
- Supporting confident and calm navigation of child welfare-related systems (e.g. court, meetings with Child Protection or Guardianship, explaining of legal documentation, etc.)

The program consists of Family Preservation and Reunification Services (Counseling, Integrated Response and Therapeutic Response) and Associated Services (In Home Supports, Group Work and Cultural Education events).

The Family Preservation and Reunification Services is currently comprised of 22.5 staff which includes:

- 1 Program Manager
- 1 Family Preservation Team Leader
- 1 Clinical Supervisor
- 12 Family Preservation Counselors
- 1 Immediate Response Worker
- 1 Group Work Coordinator
- 1 In-Home Supports Coordinator
- 1 Client Support Elder
- 1 Supervisor of Administrative Support
- 2.5 Administrative Support Staff

FAMILY PRESERVATION AND REUNIFICATION COUNSELING

The VACFSS Family Preservation and Reunification Counselors work collaboratively with other delegated programs at VACFSS by providing a range of services to assist families whose children are in care or at risk of coming into care. Services include a Family Functioning Assessment, Child Functioning Assessment, family counseling, crisis intervention, community referrals, and service coordination with other agencies to meet the needs of the family. This includes assisting with concrete needs, parenting skills and education, addressing poverty and financial management,

mediating parent-child conflict, and specialized referrals for substance misuse, mental health, domestic violence and anger management. Other services include assisting families in connecting with cultural practices that promote healing, healthy child development, attachment, bonding and resiliency. Counselors work with individuals and/or families for a period of 6-18 months, and service may be extended for families who are actively engaged and working on established goals. Clear, professional, and goal-oriented documentation is generated and provided to the referring social worker at regular intervals using a software system precisely designed for clinical counseling work. The Family Preservation and Reunification Counselors provided 371 families with intensive Family Preservation and Reunification services this year. This is an increase of 19 families from the previous fiscal year.

INTEGRATED RESPONSE

The Integrated Response Worker receives referrals from the VACFSS Child Protection Intake Team and assists the Child Protection Worker with safety planning for children deemed at risk of immediate harm. During critical or urgent situations, the Integrated Response Worker provides short term intensive support to families to resolve child protection concerns, prevent further family breakdown service and help families to provide safety and care for their children.

GROUP WORK

THE STRENGTHENING FAMILIES GROUP

A ten week facilitated program of culturally grounded workshops. It provides parents with education, support and guidance regarding their parenting and provides their children with support to increase social and emotional functioning. Each week the families first share a meal together and then the adults and children meet in separate rooms to work on their own topics. The families reconvene in the final hour to work together on family support skills, cultural sharing and fun activities to improve relationships. The group is facilitated by respected Aboriginal Elders from the community and incorporates cultural awareness and teachings. This past year, three multi-week sessions of Strengthening Families were held with an all-time high new total of attendance of 53 Adults and 56 children participating.

THE STRENGTHENING FATHERS GROUP

A ten week facilitated program that provides parenting skills but also provides fathers access to information on education, employment, and the impact of intergenerational trauma on Aboriginal people. The group is designed to assist men in understanding their role as fathers, where they learn traditional teachings of the role, the importance of interacting with their children, and

moving beyond multi-generational social issues. The group commences with a shared meal for fathers and children to interact with each other, and then the men support and share in each other's successes by providing mutual aid and assistance. This group is also facilitated by respected Aboriginal Elders from the community who provide positive mentorship. This year, there were three multi-week sessions of Strengthening Fathers held with a total of 35 fathers and 27 children attending.

Given the overwhelming popularity of these 2 group programs, an innovative adjustment will be implemented during the Fall, 2017 in order to remain responsive to the need and to raise the clinical effectiveness of the groups: the younger children will continue to receive safe, structured child care while their parents attend the educational portion of the programs. The older children will remain in the educational portion of the programs with their parents and two sessions of the educational aspect will be offered simultaneously in different rooms. This offers an opportunity for facilitated discussion between parents and children about best outcomes for life at home.

THE STRENGTHENING RELATIVES PROGRAM

The Strengthening Relatives Program was piloted this year, in two phases of 7 and 6 sessions respectively. This group is for relatives and kin who are caring for children through an Out of

Care Options or Restricted Fostering plan. The group works to strengthen these caregiving arrangements. The group promotes healthy parenting and strategies to decrease the social and emotional difficulties experienced by children living away from their parents, and to ensure the children stay connected to their family, culture, and identity.

The program is designed to promote mutual aid through group work. It is a place for relatives to meet once a week to focus on challenges they are facing and share in finding solutions. The group sessions are preceded by a meal that includes informal family practice time and group leader coaching. The program consists of:

- A cultural learning component addressing the role of Kinship caregivers within communities; and an introduction to the working in partnership with VACFSS and to supportive network opportunities.
- A positive family component addressing culturally based parenting values including: communication skills to improve relationships; nurturing, harmony and balance; effective and consistent discipline and problem solving.
- Family practice sessions allowing the caregivers time to practice what they have learned in their individual sessions, using experiential exercises, games and home practice assignments.

There were 10 relative/caregivers and 6 children that attended the two-part program.

CULTURAL SUPPORT AND EDUCATION

Our Family Preservation and Reunification Counselors promote healing through connecting families to cultural supports and promoting cultural identity. This year, Family Preservation Counselors supported cultural connection by:

- Assisting families in finding resources, knowledge, and contacts in their home territories
- Supporting families in having homes cleansed and smudged

- Harvesting traditional local medicines for cleansing and healing
- Finding community ceremonies and events for families to attend
- Attending cultural ceremonies/workshops and events along with families

CULTURAL EDUCATION EVENTS

A series of organized workshops in which families served by VACFSS's Child Protection, Guardianship, Residential Resources and Family Preservation and Reunification Programs participate in cultural activities alongside their assigned workers. The workshops are facilitated by Elders or Knowledge Keepers. The goal is to strengthen working relationships and promote healing and resilience by strengthening connections to culture and community, deepen relationships between families and their workers, reducing the perceived power imbalance sometimes in place between social workers and families, and to increase the ability of workers to offer culturally safe practice. These events are steeped in teachings about the materials, the significance of the objects, and the responsibilities of the maker. In this regard, the Cultural Support and Education Series extends far beyond an arts and crafts event.

This year's workshops included:

- Silver pendant making
- Cedar weaving
- Drum making and painting
- Rattle making
- Eagle feather beading
- Making medicine pouches
- Pine needle basketry
- Quilt making

- Button blanket making
- Canvas painting
- Making the Lahal Bone Game and learning to play (our youngest participant – 6 years old, won!!)

This past year, there were 196 participants that were involved in the Cultural Education Events.

CLIENT SUPPORT ELDER

Woody Morrison, respected Elder from Haida First Nations, continues to provide families, and our Family Preservation Counselors with cultural support and guidance. Program Elders are employed by VACFSS to support service plans for children and their families by providing cultural counseling, support and guidance to VACFSS families and client related support and consultation to staff. Aside from accompanying Family Preservation Counselors to office interviews and home visits, Woody attends Collaborative Practice and Integrated Case Management Meetings, and also provides invaluable support and education on the Indigenous world, to assist in creating and facilitating bridging with our clients. This past year, Woody completed C-6 Delegation Training at the Indigenous Perspectives Society. Woody has provided specific case support to 15 families, as well as played a role as key facilitator of the Strengthening Families, Strengthening Fathers, and Strengthening Relatives programs. He also plays a significant role in agency ceremonies, such as the Honouring Our Sacred Bundles, Homecoming, Burning ceremonies and the Cultural Education events.

IN HOME SUPPORTS

The In home Supports Coordinator receives requests for contracted services from VACFSS Child Protection, Guardianship, and Residential Resource Workers. The requests may include transportation to facilitate family visits between parent/child, access supervision, crisis child minding, doula, home making, household management, and various other services. The In Home Support Coordinator

reviews the referrals, assigns the appropriate service provider, and monitors and evaluates the service provision.

FAMILY DAY PROGRAM

Family Services of Greater Vancouver provided a group facilitated day program for a maximum of 10 families referred by VACFSS Social Workers. Services include parent education and skill building in parenting strategies designed to increase competence and confidence in parents. Components include traditional Aboriginal parenting, parent education of child development and age appropriate expectations, teaching activities that enhance child development and improve parent/child interaction, teaching/modeling behaviour management strategies and techniques, problem solving for parents and children, anger and stress management, household management skills, strengthening social support and self care and building communication skills.

THERAPEUTIC COUNSELING FOR CHILDREN

The Pace Program provided 52 families with specialized therapeutic intervention for children as an adjunct to individual family counseling services. Referrals were made in consultation with the delegated VACFSS worker, and supports children with significant emotional and behavioural challenges.

CHILD AND YOUTH INTERVENTIONS

Watari Research Associates provided 59 youth, with multiple high risk behaviour, with specialized intervention. They assisted in the development of goal orientated service plans, provided intensive intervention for up to 10 hours per week per child, promoted the development and reinforcement of social and life skills and connected our children to support services, specialized services and group intervention.

MENTORING

Big Sisters of BC, Lower Mainland provided one to one mentorship for 107 children and youth, with a one year time commitment with an average of 4 hours individual

service every two weeks. Children and youth receive one-to-one support, assistance, advocacy and guidance through relationships with screened, trained and supported volunteer adult mentors. The goal of the mentoring relationships is to assist children and youth to grow into capable, confident and contributing individuals.

SUPERVISED VISITS, TRANSPORTATION AND HOME MAKING

In partnership with the Pacific Association of First Nations Women (PAFNW), Circle of Friends Society (COFS), and the Network of Inner City Community Services Society (NICSS), families and children in the child welfare system were provided with court ordered support to visit their children in a supervised setting. The service promotes the key role families play in the lives of their children by maintaining connection and safety. These partner agencies also provided VACFSS clients with homemaking to support families to assist with household tasks and/or modeling and teaching of home management skills. The service supports, maintains and improves family functioning and/or assist in preventing institutionalization of another form of out of home care. The service is one component of an integrated service plan agreed by the case workers and may include services such as emergency or interim childcare, assistance with concrete tasks such as housekeeping, cleaning and meal prep or skill-based training focusing on home management and parenting skills. This past year, there were 1,469 service requests.

DOULA SERVICES

Drake Medox Health provides a specialization in home education and support to transition from pregnancy to parenthood. They provided emotional and educational support, mother care and companionship, breast feeding support, infant care guidance, sibling care and information on community services. Services provided support to 101 new mothers during this past fiscal year.

REUNIFICATION DATA

At the commencement of Family Preservation and Reunification Services, 4% of the children referred for services

had recently returned home. Referrals were made to provide follow up and ongoing support in keeping their children home.

During the service period, 21% of the children had returned to their family's care with the assistance of the Family Preservation Counselors.

At the end of the service period, a total of 23% of the children had returned to their family's care prior to discharge from working with a Family Preservation and Reunification Counselor.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

This past year has been a steep, and most enjoyable learning curve for the leadership of the Family Preservation and Reunification Program. The Program Manager has just completed a first year in the role and supervisors have been in place less than 1 year. That said, with the support of experienced and long-term program historians and professional clinical staff, the program has flourished.

The employee turnover rate is at an all-time low. This has allowed the direct client service to be consistent, relevant, and at an elevated clinical level.

The Strengthening Families and Strengthening Fathers programs have had a significant increase in participation.

The Strengthening Relatives Program has been piloted in two phases and is expected to resume in the Fall following minor editing in response to client and collegial feedback.

All of our Programs have quickly and collaboratively addressed the Opioid Crisis by providing effective planning for the children as well as clinical, spiritual, concrete, and other supports to families and children who have lost a loved one to Fentanyl overdoses. This is an agency/community issue that has an ongoing impact on the daily work at present.

There has been a significant increase in collaboration and inter-program communication which has resulted in an improved consistency in goals and messaging between case planners and support programs such as Family Preservation and Reunification.

The Family Preservation and Reunification Services Program Policy has been completed and will undergo final revisions based on collegial feedback within weeks.

The “High-Risk Pregnancy Committee” has worked collaboratively with Family Preservation and Reunification to draft a group, facilitated, culturally relevant program called “Supporting Our Sacred Life Givers” which will pilot in the Fall.

Increased collaboration with sub-contracted In Home Support service providers has resulted in joint training specifically related to generating credible, relevant, and timely documentation.

TOP RISKS FACING FAMILIES

Based on a count of 371 families served, the referring Social Workers identified the following as priority issues of potential risk to be addressed in service planning:

RISK	PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES WITH THIS RISK
ALCOHOL & DRUG MISUSE	75%
PARENTING CONCERNS	81%
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	79%
PARENTAL MENTAL HEALTH	57%
CHILD NEGLECT	47%
UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS	43%

TOP GOALS OF SERVICE

Family Preservation Counselors supported families in working on specific goals during the course of service delivery. Based on a count of 371 families served, the following are the top goals that were addressed in case work.

GOAL	PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES WITH THIS GOAL
PARENTING	53%
FAMILY FUNCTIONING	31%
HOUSING	29%
CONNECTING TO ALCOHOL & DRUG SERVICES	28%
OTHER COUNSELING SERVICES	25%
INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS	18%
CONNECTING TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES	16%
STRESS MANAGEMENT	16%
CONNECTING TO CULTURE	13%

GOALS FOR THE UPCOMING YEAR

- Continued review of contracted services, and exploration of alternative models of service delivery
- Continue joint training between Family Preservation and Reunification staff, contractors and Child Protection staff on various topics impacting families to strengthen practice knowledge and how to more effectively deliver services
- Finalize program research for the VACFSS Best Practice Conference
- Implement the Therapeutic Response Counselor role as per the Keeping Our Children Safe policy
- Increase and formalize the implementation of Therapeutic Access (as opposed to supervised visits) as per VACFSS Access Policy Directive – March 2017

In closing, there is no such thing as individual achievement, when it comes to effective social service work. I raise my hands to so many staff, colleagues, and visionaries who have added their wisdom to the Family Preservation and Reunification Program as VACFSS enters its 25th year. It really does “take a whole village to raise a child”. ■

RESIDENTIAL RESOURCES

Donald Robertshaw, Manager

The Residential Resources Program's mandate is to provide safe alternative care for Aboriginal children that promotes and respects their well being and cultural identity. The Residential Resources Program has our children's best interest at the centre of our work. Our focus and teamwork with other programs has resulted in children remaining at home with their families with the provision of respite services, children in care continuing with and enhancing relationships with their parents and families, and children returning home with an extension of their families to include their foster caregivers.

Implementing Restorative Aboriginal Child Welfare Practice remains a cornerstone of VACFSS practice and continues to guide and strengthen our approach to meeting our children and family's needs and aspirations. The Board of Directors and CEO's leadership with promoting strategic and risk mitigation goals and research are guiding the program to focus on improving the lives of our children.

The inter-program collaboration continues to place children at the centre of our work and remains essential to ensure the best outcomes for our children. This is demonstrated by program managers and supervisors actively participating in program managers meetings. This collaboration includes: Integrating Our Practice meetings, guardianship/child protection and resources child placement review meetings, integrated case management meetings, child specific specialized contract review meetings, and staff training.

The Program continues to provide residential services for over 416 children in care (2016 average number) and 89% of these children are living with caregiver families. The average number of VACFSS children in care has risen over the two reporting periods from 409 children in care (2015/2016) to 416 children in care (Apr/2016 to Dec/2016).

Family and cultural connectedness remains a top priority for the program with implementing and/or supporting the following activities: Honouring Our Sacred Bundles, Foster Parent Summer Cultural Camp, and foster caregiver training and cultural training/activities for over 217 foster caregivers.

The Residential Resources Program focuses on three main areas: caregiver recruitment; retention & support; and contract management. We recruit caregivers that meet the range of needs for our children in care. The retention and support of caregivers includes specialized support services that address the need for ongoing knowledge and skill development. We manage resources in an efficient manner to ensure that all children in care have access to their history, their lineage, cultural experiences and receive the best parenting and support in order to realize their potential.

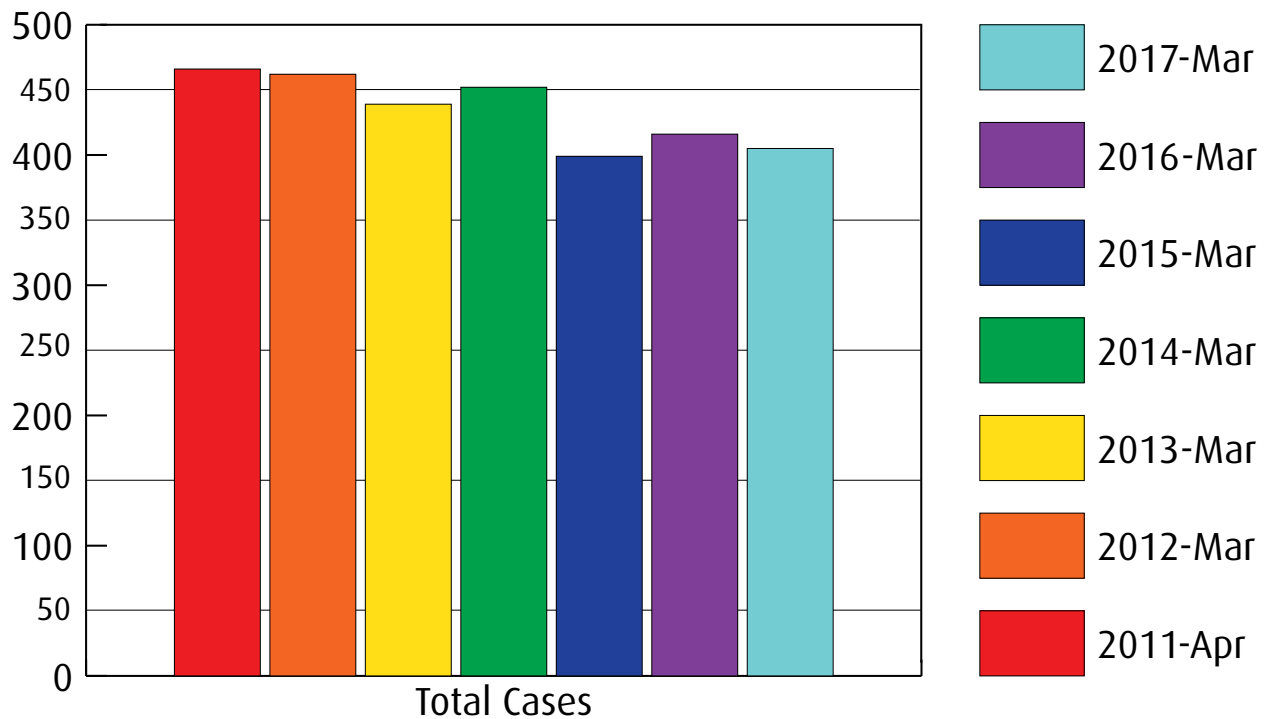
PROGRAM ACTIVITY

The Residential Resources Program is composed of three teams with four to five social workers and a team leader. The Program also has a manager, resource financial clerk, shared supervisor of administrative services with the Guardianship Program, and three administrative support staff. One team is focused on the placement of children, foster caregiver recruitment, including foster caregiver SAFE home studies. The other two resource social work teams are dedicated to supporting and monitoring foster homes and staff specialized resources (contracted skilled full-time caregivers with extensive support services and staffed group homes). The Program's 2016-2017 budget was \$15,496,754 and the expenditures were \$15,801,753.

CHILDREN IN CARE STATISTICS

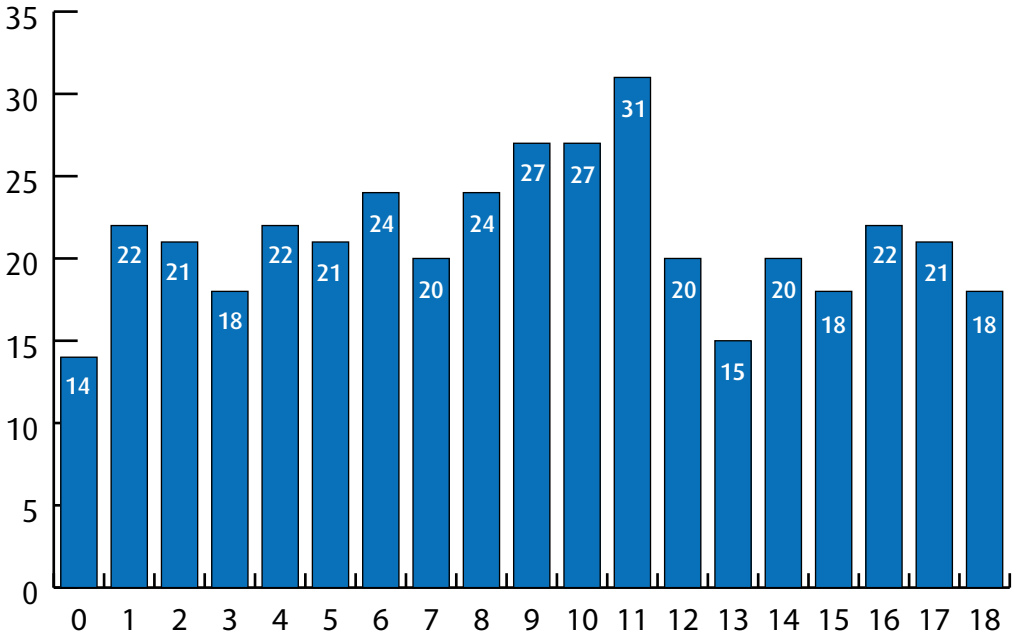
The average number of children in care has decreased over the last 5 years, from 489 (2010-2011) to 416 (2016-2017). During this last year there has been an increase of children under 12 years who are predominately new admissions to care, from 122 children (2015 - 2016) to 135 children (2016 - 2017).

VACFSS CHILDREN IN CARE OVER TIME:
APRIL 2011 TO MARCH 2017



The numbers of children in care by age has changed with a decrease of numbers of adolescents (15-18 years) and increase of numbers of children less than 15 years. The 15 to 18 year old group has decreased from 144 children (2010-2011) to 79 children (2016-2017). The 10 to 14 year old age group has increased from 78 (2010 -2011) to 113 (2016-2017). The 5 to 9 year old group has increased from 78 children (2010-2011) to 116 children (2016-2017). The 0 to 4 year old group has decreased from 116 children (2010-2014) to 97 children (2016-2017). The infant group (0-12 months old) has fluctuated over the years and is currently at 14 infants (2016-2017).

VACFSS CHILDREN IN CARE BY AGE: MARCH 2017



The percentage of children in care residing with foster caregivers is currently 89% which has been quite consistent over the last six years. Monthly averages for children over the last year residing in the following care situations are: children in staffed group home care (12 children), foster placement in other provinces (11 children), children on independent living (7 youth), and children living with family or friends (13 children). The number of children in child specific placements is on the rise from a monthly average of 8 children (2010-2011) to 17 children (2016-2017). We would like to thank all the foster caregivers for their long term commitment to our children.

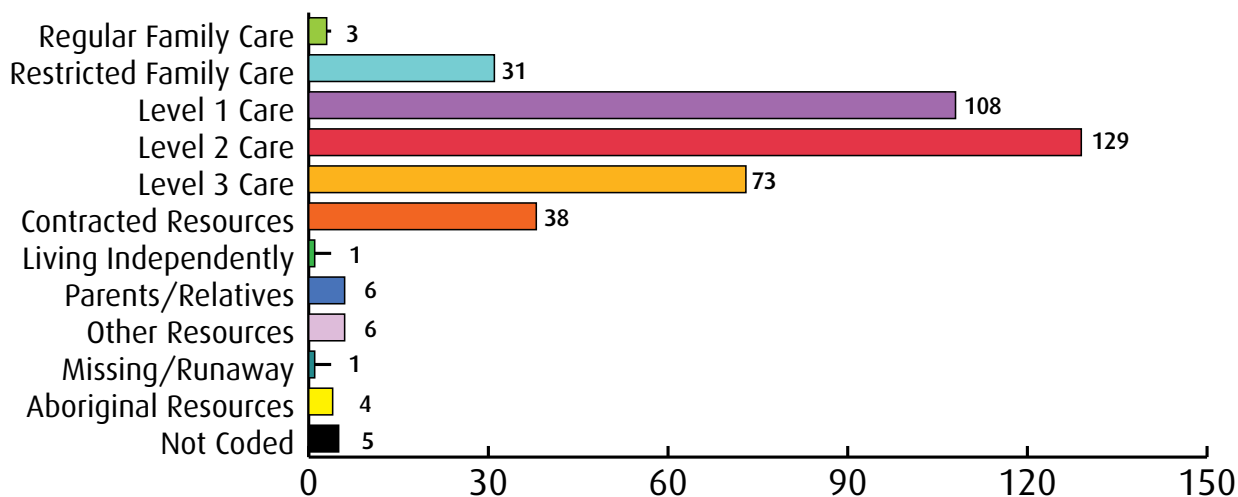
FOSTER CARE PROGRAM

The program remains committed and responsive with 172 foster parents. The skill level of the foster caregivers, as indicated through the “Levels of Care System”, remains quite equitable with between 36 to 51 foster caregivers in each level. The Levels of Care System is quite helpful in providing caregivers with proactive support, monitoring, training, and mentoring.

The program facilitated 175 child placements (2016–2017) which is up from 171 child placements in 2015–2016. There are varied results in the child placement by age groups. There was an increase with child placements by age groups from 122 children (0–11 yrs.) in 2015–2016 to 135 children (0–11 yrs.) in 2016–2017. The number of children aged 12 to 18 years of age has decreased from a high of 76 child placements in 2011–2012 to 40 child placements in 2016–2017. The numbers of unplanned child moves due to infant medical specialised care, and caregiver capacity limitations has decreased from 46 child placements in 2013–2014 to 31 in 2016–2017.

The collaborative planning consultations and caregivers’ commitment to placing siblings together has resulted in 9 children being placed together with their siblings during the reporting period. Family group decision making was also used extensively to support a number of our special needs and high risk/complex children and youth.

VACFSS CHILDREN IN CARE BY PLACEMENT TYPE – ALL CASES MARCH 2017



CAREGIVER SUPPORT PROGRAM

Foster caregiver support, monitoring, and training are going well with a number of interventions. Guardianship/Resources and Child Protection/Resources supervisors and managers working groups have assisted with improving the identification of high risk/needs children along with assessing & providing additional support for the caregivers. VACFSS resource team leaders and social workers continue to use a structured tracking tool to ensure that all essential tasks are completed, such as contract management, criminal record checks, home visits, annual reviews, annual recordings, relief caregiver assessments, and safety environmental check lists. This approach continues to actively monitor and support foster homes that require additional support, such as in and out of home relief and specialized support for children who have behavioral and mental health issues. The need for enhanced planning and support for foster caregivers to increase the child's contact with their parents, family, culture and community continues.

Hollyburn Family Services provided training opportunities for foster caregivers. 117 foster parents participated in cultural activities such as the Aboriginal past and present lived experience, and cultural experiences/teachings with children.

The Dave Pranteau Aboriginal Children's Village (located in East Vancouver) continues to provide safe and community housing with 10 foster caregivers suites and 3 youth suites. Hollyburn Family Services, who is a tenant in the Village, continues to use this space for a "foster caregiver learning/support HUB". Workshops, community kitchens, ceremonies, and cultural events are held at the Aboriginal Children's Village with inclusion of the VACFSS Youth residing in Independent Living at this location. Lu'ma Native Housing Youth Mentorship program has been extremely valuable for our Youth's transition to adulthood. Hollyburn continues to provide the following services to foster caregivers: foster caregiver support workers, registered clinical counselors, specialized training, support groups, and cultural activities. In addition, Vancouver Coastal Health's, Foundation Program has been extremely helpful with supporting foster caregivers who have children with mental health and suicidal ideation.

FOSTER CAREGIVER RECRUITMENT

Foster caregiver recruitment, and in particular Aboriginal foster caregiver recruitment is a priority for VACFSS. The recruitment social workers have engaged the Vancouver community at over 10 significant events during 2016-2017. Some of these events were: West Coast Night & Prairie Night – Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre, Hobiye, Talking Stick Festival, National Aboriginal Day at Trout Lake, SFU Indigenous Days, Earl Marriott Pow Wow, Italian Days, PRIDE Celebration, and VACFSS Coffee House. The recruitment team is highly motivated to continue with the above events and undertake an intensive social media campaign on Facebook.

A special focus also included recruitment for foster caregiver applicants who can foster infants, infants with special needs, sibling groups of 3 or more, and provide care for children with special needs (significant mental health and development challenges). The number of total foster caregiver inquiries (calls, emails, web requests for information) rose from 393 in 2015-2016 to 649 in 2016-2017. The rate of foster caregiver applications has increased from 40 in 2015-2016 to 48 in 2016-2017. The number of new foster homes opened has remained relatively constant from 19 in 2015-2016 to 17 (5 Aboriginal and 12 Non-Aboriginal foster homes) in 2016-2017.

The program's partnerships remain strong for proactively supporting our caregivers to provide improved lived experiences for our children in care.

PARTNERSHIPS AND STAKEHOLDERS

Partnerships include: Lu'ma Native Housing (housing for foster caregivers and support & mentoring for youth on independent living), Urban Native Youth Association (staffed group home care for female youth), Kiwassa Neighborhood House (foster caregiver housing), Hollyburn Family Services (foster caregiver support and staffed group home care for youth), MCFD foster caregiver services, (Safe Babies Program & Fostering Early Development), Milieu Child and Family Services (staffed group home care for youth, child specific specialized care & FASD support



services), WJS Canada (staffed group home care for youth and child specific specialized care), PLEA (child specific specialized care), Strive (child specific full time and respite/relief specialized care), Children’s Corner (respite care), Vancouver Coastal Health (“Boundaries” and “Foundation” programs for foster caregivers), Community Living BC (residential and support services for developmentally challenged adults), SOS Village BC (housing and foster caregiver support), and BC Housing (housing for foster caregivers and staffed group home providers).

PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS AND GOALS

- Continue to enhance foster caregiver recruitment to target Aboriginal applicants as well as non-Aboriginal foster caregiver applicants (including placements for special needs children)
- Continue to focus on foster caregiver retention and capacity building
- Continue to implement the Inclusive Foster Care planning and monitoring system
- Continue to increase inter-program child focused planning through the Resources/Guardianship and

Resources/Child Protection placement committees

- Continue to review and coordinate child specific specialized placements with Managers and social workers
- Continue to monitor expenditures to respond to budget limitations and advocacy for more funding
- Continue with formal research into VACFSS implementation of Inclusive Foster Care
- VACFSS Resources Staff retention, recruitment and training

We are so grateful and inspired to learn, and participate in VACFSS’s mission to provide holistic service delivery that culturally and spiritually strengthens Aboriginal children and families.

All My Relations,

Donald Robertshaw
 Manager, Resources

GUARDIANSHIP

Holly Anderson, Manager

Program Overview

Grounded in a restorative practice approach, the guardianship program provides delegated guardianship services for urban Aboriginal children in the continuing care of VACFSS. The guardianship program is responsible for taking care of our children in the most sacred way, ensuring the child is surrounded by a circle of support, family, community and culture.

The core of the work with our children focuses on developing holistic care plans with an emphasis on connection to family, culture and community. As part of these plans, we explore permanency for our children through the lens of four quadrants: relational, cultural, physical and legal.

Our team consists of 15 social workers, 3 team leaders, Guardianship Consultant, Lifelong Connections Worker and a Child and Youth Engagement Co-coordinator. We hold a shared vision of reducing the numbers of Aboriginal children in care through a commitment to developing child specific lifelong plans, with an emphasis on returning to family, extended family and community; and to ensuring our children that are leaving the care system are leaving with a strong Aboriginal identity and a leadership vision for their future.

A database has been in place for six years that demonstrate the outcomes of our youth leaving care, and the strengths and challenges that our children and youth face along their care journey. The database allows us to develop an evidence-based framework for our practice and ensure that our practice and initiatives are representative of who our children are, and of their journeys through care. It also places an emphasis on

understanding how our practice in the moment impacts the trajectories for our children and youth. This year, we have started to collect additional information on children that are leaving care through our permanency planning framework, beginning with rescindments, placement with extended family, and a transfer of custody or through adoption.

This year saw a drop in our numbers to approximately 280 Aboriginal children and youth being supported by our program. The decrease in numbers is due to children and youth moving out of care effectively through our permanency framework and receiving less referrals through the VACFSS child protection team.

The majority of our children are represented by Nations in BC (51%), with Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario following in order of decreasing representation.

DATABASE INFORMATION

This report reflects the data of youth that left care in 2016, and comparison data against the previous five years. Twenty-six (26) young people aged out of care this year and into community. Six (6) children left our care through other means this year, effectively navigating through a permanency framework, strengthening ties to their circle, and achieving legal permanency.

For our children leaving care, the information gathered reflects the diversity of our children and youth's lives as they journey through the care system and the complexity of the work undertaken by our social workers, and by those in the child and youth's circles that surround them.

The following charts offer a six-year comparison of relevant information:

NUMBER OF YOUTH LEAVING CARE

YEAR OF AGE OF MAJORITY	YEAR OF BIRTH	NUMBER OF YOUTH/ FILES	INDIAN STATUS	CLBC ELIGIBILITY
2010	1991	32	29 (91%)	N/K
2011	1992	40	36 (90%)	14 (35%)
2012	1993	38	32 (84%)	10 (26%)
2013	1994	24	21 (88%)	4 (17%)
2014	1995	33	28 (85%)	13 (39%)
2015	1996	26	19 (73%)	9 (35.8%)
2016	1997	26	24 (92%)	11 (42%)

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL ACHIEVED AT DISCHARGE

YEAR	GRADE 12 (DOGWOOD)	LEAVING SCHOOL CERTIFICATE	GRADE 11	GRADE 10	LESS THAN GRADE 10
2010	15 (47%)	7 (22%)	2 (6%)	5 (16%)	-
2011	10 (25%)	9 (23%)	6 (15%)	6 (15%)	-
2012	10 (26%)	6 (16%)	7 (18%)	6 (16%)	-
2013	12 (50%)	2 (8%)	5 (21%)	5 (21%)	-
2014	11 (33%)	8 (24%)	3 (9%)	6 (18%)	-
2015	12 (46%)	6 (23%)	6 (23%)	1 (4%)	1 (4%)
2016	9 (35%)	9 (35%)	3 (12%)	3 (12%)	2 (8%)

Upon analyzing the information gathered for 2017, some significant data should be noted. Of the youth leaving care this year, 42% were eligible for Community Living British Columbia (CLBC) services, and effectively transitioned to adult services. Upon leaving care, 27% youth remained in their former foster home demonstrating a strong sense of belonging that was achieved through their placement. 30% were successfully living independently, and 31% percent were in a formal CLBC resource.

This year saw another high rate in children graduating with high school diplomas and leaving school certificates. 70% of our cohort achieved this goal, an increase of 1% from last year. This reflects the program's emphasis on education, and the importance of our youth having key life skills as they journey out of care.

The average number of moves, while in care, for this cohort of youth leaving care was 7.2, a slight increase from the previous year. As per previous years, the average number of moves for those that achieved 12 years of schooling was less than those that did not (5.2 moves vs. 11.4 moves).

LIFELONG PLANNING

This year saw an on-going commitment to permanency planning for our children and a focus on reducing the number of continuing custody orders through structured rescindment planning, 54.1 planning, and child specific adoption plans (completed by MCFD partners).

Through the lens of ensuring that permanency is strived for in the four quadrants: legal, physical, cultural and relational, the plans are tracked through our guardianship consultant and meetings held monthly with social workers to consult and update planning. Securing some additional funding through the 5+5 initiative from MCFD, permanency plans were developed and moved forward in the best interest of the child and diligently tracked as they navigated returns to family, or formalizing all ready established kinship ties in the child's circle. Of plans formalized in 2016, one was a rescindment of a care orders, two transfers of custodies were completed and four adoptions plans finalized and transferred to MCFD to complete. The total number of cases that are in the process of being formalized and tracked currently is 33.

CULTURE

This year continued to see strong cultural plans and initiatives developed for our children in care. Supported by our Lifelong Connections Coordinator that ensures children have a strong and meaningful connection to family and community, we saw homecomings and community visits to numerous communities across the province including Wet'suwet'en, Bella Bella, Gitxaala, Namgis First Nation, Mount Currie band, Lillooet Nation, and additional communities on traditional Coast Salish territories. Children, caregivers and social workers also travelled to Kawacatoose territory

and Kinistin Saulteaux Nation.

The policy, Touching the Land of our Relations, has truly been grounded in practice. As we can see by the youth that aged out of care, 85% youth had engaged in cultural homecomings.

Youth are also aging out with a stronger connection and engagement with culture (92%). This is in part due to the Culturally Relevant Urban Wellness Program's integration in the Guardianship program, where the majority of youth aged 12-15 have been through the program and established a foundation of cultural engagement and positive Aboriginal identity in early adolescence.

For the last two years, the program has made a commitment to visit our 14 children placed out of province annually and this year saw the completion of these trips as well.

The program engaged in several local cultural initiatives for our children and youth this year as well including medicine pouch making, rock painting, drum painting, dream catcher making and medicine gathering. Children and their families attended community events such as National Aboriginal Day at Trout Lake, Hobiye, Friendship Centre nights, and local community pow wows.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

The guardianship program continues to promote active, meaningful youth engagement



to create a sense of belonging and positive identity for the young people we serve.

This year, our children and youth participated in the Honouring the Journey of our Youth Ceremony, the Culturally Relevant Urban Wellness Program, rock painting and paddle painting. The Youth Advisory Committee hosted the sixth annual youth conference titled 'Shaping our Paths' 65 youth came to celebrate culture, engage in activities, and be inspired by presenters who had experienced the care system and overcame adversity.

The Youth Advisory Committee continues to be a living example of best practice in Youth engagement. Embedded in the agency, the 12 youth on the committee continue to lead us in best practice, and have input into policy, and advocate in the larger community. The young people on the committee are engaged in developing strong leadership and advocacy skills and

work hard to inform themselves of the issues facing Aboriginal children and youth in the care system.

CHILDREN ENGAGEMENT

In the fall we began to realize the vision of offering cultural programming to our younger children in care. After careful consultation with our cultural committee and knowledge keepers, we started the CIRCLE program: Children's Indigenous Rights, Culture Language and Education. This is an initiative to host an after school program for our children in care that is grounded in an Indigenous approach and focuses on cultural teachings. Partnering with community knowledge keepers, our children have been immersed in age appropriate teachings, activities, song and dance. The children proudly demonstrated some of their new teachings at the first 'The Little Big House Feast' – an event where the circles that surround the children come together to celebrate their gifts and culture. ■

FINANCE

Greg LeBlanc, Manager

Funding

Funding for 2016-2017 has been consistent to prior years with slight increases related to negotiated wage increases and an adjustment under the Economic Stability Mandate (ESM).

Total MCFD funding for 2016-2017 was \$30,913,766. The comparative total in 2015-2016 was \$30,631,443. Shared Resources Revenue, grants, and Deferred Revenue added an additional \$1,402,007 for total revenue of \$32,315,773.

The fiscal year of 2016-2017 resulted in a deficit of \$1,080,435. This was due to increased service delivery costs, lower vacancy rates, an increase in the use of Child Specialized Placements, and a reduction in Shared Residential Resources revenue. The budget forecasted for this period planned for the utilization of past year efficiencies to ensure that our service deliverable objectives were met.

	MCFD 2017	ESM 2017	OTHER REVENUE	TOTAL FUNDING	EXPENDITURES	NET FUNDING
INFRASTRUCTURE	\$1,816,480	\$31,329	\$224,056	\$2,071,865	\$2,407,410	-\$335,545
CHILD PROTECTION	\$6,398,086	\$132,528	-\$56,203	\$6,474,411	\$6,719,194	-\$244,783
GUARDIANSHIP/RESOURCES	\$4,670,338	\$100,625	\$83,801	\$4,854,764	\$5,105,882	-\$251,118
RESIDENTIAL RESOURCES	\$15,125,165	\$51,351	\$1,168,366	\$16,344,882	\$16,344,882	\$0
FAMILY PRESERVATION	\$2,527,304	\$60,560	-\$18,013	\$2,569,851	\$2,818,840	-\$248,989
	\$30,537,373	\$376,393	\$1,402,007	\$32,315,773	\$33,396,208	-\$1,080,435

Departmental Overview

INFRASTRUCTURE

Total MCFD funding remained consistent with the prior year and interest income from investments were reduced due to utilization of invested funds to support increased costs of program initiatives.

Costs were relatively consistent with the prior year. Infrastructure costs were 7.8% of total agency expenditures, and the department is funded at 6.3% relative to the other four programs. This is an efficient utilization of resources to support overall agency cost

requirements such as payroll, accounts payable, collection of receivables, human resources, executive services, and other administrative needs required for the agency.

CHILD PROTECTION

MCFD funding increased by \$132,528 due to the mandated wage increases and ESM. Other MCFD funding remained constant.

Direct program costs increased \$492,000 compared with 2016 due to increased retention of staff. As well, Out of Care Maintenance (OOC) costs have been steadily increasing as utilization of these options are more appropriate for

children in care. MCFD is committed to increasing the funding for OOC to cover actual costs.

GUARDIANSHIP & RESOURCES

MCFD funding increased over the prior year due to mandated wage increases and ESM funding while expenditures remained relatively consistent compared with the prior year.

The department appropriately transferred the Culturally Relevant Urban Wellness (CRUW) initiative to the Guardianship/Resources program from the Infrastructure program, and as a result, increased the overall direct program costs.

CRUW incurred costs of \$111,859 supported by \$70,916 of externally sourced funding, enabling the agency to continue offering this valuable resource to urban Aboriginal youth.

RESIDENTIAL RESOURCES

Residential Resources funding and expenditures were balanced due to utilization of past years efficiencies applied to the current year in the amount of \$684,854. As well, Resource Home Revenue was reduced due to declines in outside agencies utilization of VACFSS bed spaces.

Residential Resources costs rose in the year due to additional demands on Staff Specialized Resources and Child Specific Placements. MCFD is committed to supporting the costs of Staff Specialized Resources and Child

Specific Placements to ensure the needs of these children are met in a timely and appropriate manner.

FAMILY PRESERVATION

Family Preservation total funding was less than the prior year due to reduced available internal funding.

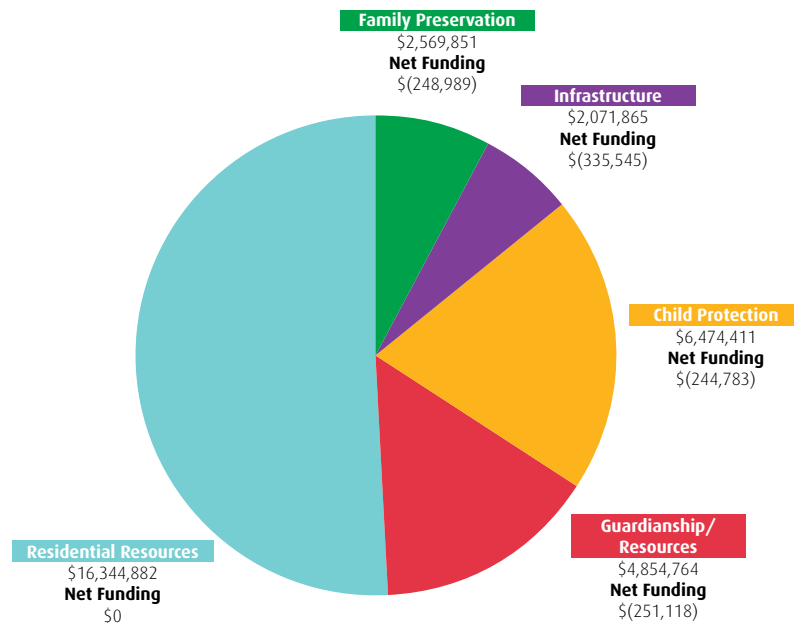
The primary driver of the deficit was the result of increased In-Home Support costs. This is being addressed through an internal review to identify specific causes and to take appropriate steps to manage such costs.

Further investigation will determine how many of these costs relate to other programs, and will be addressed as part of the ongoing funding discussions with MCFD.

SUMMARY

The agency's costs have increased throughout the year due to increased utilization of Child Specialized Placements and OOC costs. Other funding shortfalls relate to increased costs of wages and administrative requirements, and the shortfalls incurred to meet these needs are being addressed with ongoing discussions and meetings with the MCFD to create a spirit of partnership between VACFSS and the MCFD. These are positive beginnings to a renewed relationship focusing on partnership and collaboration to provide better outcomes for our agency's mandate. ■

Below is a graphical summary showing total funding by department and related net funding by program in the agency:



AUDITOR'S REPORT

Enns and Company

VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD
AND FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
MARCH 31, 2017

VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY
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MARCH 31, 2017

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INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Members of:
Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society which comprise the statements of financial position as at March 31, 2017, the statements of changes in net assets, the statements of operations and the statements of cash flows for the year then ended and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

Management Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Canadian Accounting Standards for not-for-profit organizations, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we comply with ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control.

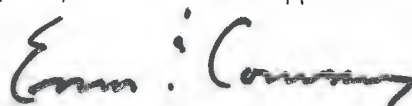
An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Opinion

In our opinion, these financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Society as at March 31, 2017, its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations. As required by the Society Act of British Columbia, we report that in our opinion, these principles have been applied on a basis consistent with the preceding year.

Burnaby, B.C., Canada
June 13, 2017


ENNS & COMPANY
Chartered Professional Accountants
Page 1.

**VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT MARCH 31, 2017**

	2017	2016
ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Cash (Note 2)	\$ 2,495,953	\$ 2,921,195
Short term investments (Note 3)	1,105,701	1,603,806
Accounts receivable	388,645	187,382
GST refundable	37,512	71,474
Prepaid expenses	87,379	72,082
	4,115,190	4,855,939
LONG TERM INVESTMENTS (Note 3)	2,000,000	2,850,000
SECURITY DEPOSITS PAID	45,201	45,201
CAPITAL ASSETS (Note 4)	263,884	288,210
	\$ 6,424,275	\$ 8,039,350

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements

Page 2.


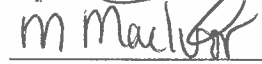


Our Children, Our Future, Our Responsibility

**VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT MARCH 31, 2017**

	2017	2016
LIABILITIES		
CURRENT		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 1,101,772	\$ 1,160,094
Payroll liabilities	366,889	327,577
Withholding and other payroll taxes	-	3,504
Deferred contributions (Note 5)	134,798	852,352
Due to MCFD - net	2,159,928	1,996,552
	3,763,387	4,340,079
DEFERRED CONTRIBUTIONS RELATED TO CAPITAL		
ASSETS (Note 6)	112,635	70,583
	3,876,022	4,410,662
NET ASSETS		
NET ASSETS INVESTED IN CAPITAL		
ASSETS (Note 4)	151,249	217,627
INTERNALLY RESTRICTED - CAPITAL ACQUISITION		
	1,762,641	1,762,641
UNRESTRICTED (Page 4)		
	634,363	1,648,420
	2,548,253	3,628,688
	\$ 6,424,275	\$ 8,039,350

APPROVED BY THE BOARD:


 _____ Director

 _____ Director

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements



**VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY
STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2017**

	Pages #	Revenues	Expenses	Inter-fund Transfers	Surplus (deficit) for year	Surplus transfer/ Deficit recovered	Ending Surplus (Deficit)
RESTRICTED							
Guardianship and Resources	16 - 17	\$ 4,874,961	\$ (5,105,882)	\$ (20,197)	\$ (251,118)	\$ 251,118	\$ -
Residential	20 - 21	16,389,882	(16,344,882)	(45,000)	-	-	-
Family Preservation	22 - 23	2,570,685	(2,818,840)	(834)	(248,989)	248,989	-
Child Protection	24 - 25	6,537,543	(6,719,194)	(63,132)	(244,783)	244,783	-
		\$ 30,373,071	\$ (30,988,798)	\$ (129,163)	\$ (744,890)	\$ 744,890	\$ -
Infrastructure (See below)	18 - 19	\$ 1,942,702	\$ (2,407,410)	\$ 129,163	\$ (335,545)	\$ 335,545	\$ -
TOTAL		\$ 32,315,773	\$ (33,396,208)	\$ -	\$ (1,080,435)	\$ 1,080,435	\$ -

	2017	2016
UNRESTRICTED - Infrastructure		
Balance, beginning of year	\$ 1,648,420	\$ 1,939,116
Infrastructure program deficit for year	(335,545)	(188,583)
Restricted program deficits recovered (Note 10)	(744,890)	(124,149)
Net assets invested in capital assets	66,378	22,036
Balance, end of year	\$ 634,363	\$ 1,648,420

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements

**VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2017**

	2017	2016
FUNDING REVENUES		
Provincial government contributions - Principal funding	\$ 31,002,657	\$ 30,631,443
	31,002,657	30,631,443
DEFERRED CONTRIBUTIONS		
Related to operations - recognized (carried forward) in year	717,554	(107,482)
Related to capital assets amortization	25,393	26,373
Related to capital assets purchases	(67,445)	(24,657)
	675,502	(105,766)
	31,678,159	30,525,677
DIRECT PROGRAM COSTS		
Automobile expenses	164,364	173,615
Child-in-care costs	828,603	802,097
Client assistance	224,532	228,929
Contract services	1,170,579	1,028,628
Caregiver expenses	453,435	508,532
Collaborative practice costs	11,426	9,268
Cultural intervention costs	250,286	221,855
Family support expenses	348,198	534,379
Out of care Children	3,429	5,823
Out of care caregivers	6,941	6,823
Out of care maintenance	668,152	557,798
Program supplies and miscellaneous	34,557	21,034
Residential resources costs	15,679,385	14,673,340
Salaries and benefits	8,213,508	7,714,123
Telephone and cellular	23,237	26,078
	\$ 28,080,632	\$ 26,512,322
NET FUNDING CONTRIBUTION	3,597,527	4,013,355

Continued.....

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements



VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2017

	2017	2016
SERVICE COSTS		
Amortization	79,504	95,311
Bank charges and interest	150	390
Contract services	1,373	1,552
Equipment leasing	10,921	10,921
Equipment purchases	8,897	20,052
Office and general	142,932	115,019
Postage and courier	16,472	22,083
Professional fees	-	134
Public relations & community services	3,239	3,190
Rent and repairs	1,290,093	1,355,813
Salaries, labour and benefits	1,150,646	1,135,779
Special events	1,466	841
Staff related costs	88,354	83,123
Telephone, fax and cellular	114,119	86,750
	2,908,166	2,930,958
GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATION EXPENSES		
AGM	1,978	2,359
Amortization	16,584	16,291
Bank charges and interest	6,156	6,003
Board expenses	24,565	26,838
Computer supplies	14,924	7,205
Contract services	29,608	67,725
Equipment leasing	2,220	2,220
Equipment purchases	3,390	7,439
Insurance	17,853	12,856
Office and general	51,662	51,017
Professional dues and membership	10,786	5,608
Professional fees	62,500	91,596
Public relations & community services	17,375	21,626
Rent and repairs	199,405	182,076
Salaries, labour and benefits	1,760,983	1,658,617
Special events	318	5,088
Staff related costs	158,722	150,340
Telephone, fax and cellular	28,381	22,933
	2,407,410	2,337,837
NET FUNDING DEFICIT	\$ (1,718,049)	\$ (1,255,440)
OTHER REVENUES		
Resource homes revenue	439,171	706,905
Other income (Note 9)	198,443	235,803
NET EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES FOR THE YEAR	\$ (1,080,435)	\$ (312,732)
ALLOCATED AS FOLLOWS:		
Restricted programs (Page 4)	\$ (744,890)	\$ (124,149)
Unrestricted program (Page 4)	(335,545)	(188,583)
	\$ (1,080,435)	\$ (312,732)

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements

VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
MARCH 31, 2017 AND 2016

	2017	2016
OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenses for year	\$ (1,080,435)	\$ (312,732)
Add: non-working capital charges		
Amortization of capital assets	96,088	111,602
Amortization of deferred contributions related to capital assets	(25,393)	(26,373)
	(1,009,740)	(227,503)
Net change in non-cash working capital balances from operations	(41,736)	498,941
Increase (decrease) in deferred contributions	(717,554)	107,482
	(1,769,030)	378,920
INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Acquisitions of capital assets	(71,762)	(87,852)
Net (purchases)/disposals of short term investments and long term investments	1,348,105	1,482,995
Capital assets funded with restricted contributions	67,445	24,657
	1,343,788	1,419,800
NET INCREASE (DECREASE) IN CASH	(425,242)	1,798,720
CASH, BEGINNING OF YEAR	2,921,195	1,122,475
CASH, END OF YEAR	\$ 2,495,953	\$ 2,921,195

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements



VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
MARCH 31, 2017

The Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society (the "Society" or "VACFSS") was incorporated on May 28, 1992 under the Society Act of British Columbia . The Society is exempt from tax under current income tax legislation.

The purposes of the Society are to:

- a) supply essential social services to aboriginal children and families who are at risk, and their communities, by:
 - I) providing delegated child welfare and related services on behalf of government agencies.
 - II) acting as a liaison between government agencies and aboriginal children, families and communities.
 - III) assisting aboriginal children and families to reconnect with their communities, culture and heritage.
- b) promote the well-being of aboriginal children and families, and encourage their full participation in Canadian society,
- c) enter into contracts which may be conducive to the Society's aims with any person, corporation or government agency,
- d) solicit, collect, receive, acquire, hold and invest money and property, both real and personal, received by gift, contribution, bequest devised, or otherwise, sell and convert property, both real and personal, into cash, and use the fund of the Society and proceeds, income, rent, and profits derived from any property of the Society in furtherance of the purposes set out above,
- e) purchase, lease, sell or hold such property, equipment and materials as are deemed necessary to accomplish the Society's purposes,
- f) do all such things as may be necessary or conducive to the attainment of these purposes.

The Society must primarily but not exclusively service aboriginal children, families and communities in the lower mainland of British Columbia

1. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of presentation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations in Part III of the Chartered Professional Accountants (CPA) Handbook and include the following significant accounting policies:

(a) Short-term investments

Short-term investments represent guaranteed investment certificates and other savings deposits with maturity dates ranging from 91 days to twelve months from date of acquisition.

(b) Long term Investments

Long term investments are fixed income investments with maturity dates greater than twelve months from date of acquisition.

**VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
MARCH 31, 2017**

1 SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

(c) Capital assets

Purchased capital assets are recorded at cost of acquisition plus any directly attributable cost of preparing the asset for its intended use less any related government assistance.

Amortization for capital assets acquired with non-restricted funds and capital assets acquired with restricted funds has been provided over their estimated useful lives as follows:

Office equipment	30% declining balance
Computer hardware	30% declining balance
Computer software	100% declining balance
Telephone equipment	30% declining balance
Leasehold improvements	Over the term of the lease
Automobiles	30% declining balance

except in the year of acquisition when one half of the rate is used.

(d) Impairment of capital assets

Capital assets are tested for recoverability whenever events or changes in circumstances indicate that their carrying amounts may not be recoverable. An impairment loss is recognized when the carrying amount of an asset is not recoverable and exceeds its fair value.

(e) Net assets invested in capital assets

Net assets invested in capital assets comprises the net book value of capital assets purchased with unrestricted funds.

(f) Contributions

The Society follows the deferral method of accounting for contributions.

Restricted contributions are recognized as revenue in the appropriate fund for the year in which the related expenses are incurred.

Unrestricted contributions are recognized as revenue in the appropriate fund when they are received or receivable if the amount to be received can be reasonably estimated and collection is reasonably assured.

(g) Interest income

Interest income from cash, short-term investments and long term investments including fixed income investments is recognized over the terms of the respective investments using the effective interest method.

VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
MARCH 31, 2017

1. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

(h) Employee future benefit plans

The Society offers a pension plan with a defined benefit provision which covers all employees of the Society. The plan is administered by the Government of British Columbia and annual contributions to the pension plan, as advised by the plan administrators, are expensed when paid (Note 8).

(i) Financial instruments

All financial assets except for investments that are quoted in an active market are measured at amortized cost. Amortized cost is the amount at which a financial asset is measured at initial fair value plus financing fees and transaction costs that are directly attributable to their acquisition. These equity securities are thereafter carried at cost plus the cumulative amortization of any difference between that initial amount and the maturity amount using the straight line amortization method.

Equity instruments, if any that are quoted in an active market are stated at fair value. Changes in fair value are recognized in income in the period the changes occur. Transaction costs to acquire or dispose of these securities are recognized in net income in the period during which they are incurred.

Financial assets are assessed for impairment on an annual basis at the end of the fiscal year if there are indicators of impairment. If there is an indicator of impairment, the Society determines if there is a significant adverse change in the expected amount or timing of future cash flows from the financial asset. If there is a significant adverse change in the expected cash flows, the carrying value of the financial asset is reduced to the recoverable amount that could be realized from selling the financial asset or the amount that the Society expects to realize by exercising its right to any collateral. If events and circumstances reverse in a future period, an impairment loss will be reversed to the extent of the improvement, not exceeding the initial carrying value.

Financial liabilities, including accounts payable and accrued liabilities are measured at amortized cost.

(j) Measurement uncertainty

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and the disclosure of contingent liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenue and expenses during the reporting period. Management reviews all significant estimates affecting its financial statements on a recurring basis and records the effect of any necessary adjustments in the year in which the estimates are revised. Actual results could differ from the estimates.

2. BANK FACILITIES

The Society has a line of credit facility of \$500,000, an equipment financing lease credit line of \$250,000 and Scotia business visa card facilities of \$75,000 which are secured by a general security agreement covering all personal property of the borrower and by an authority to the bank to hold funds for \$500,000 in the form of a long-term non-redeemable GIC. As of March 31, 2017, none of bank's line of credit and leasing credit and \$63,295 of the visa card credit were utilised.



**VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
MARCH 31, 2017**

3. SHORT TERM AND LONG TERM INVESTMENTS

	2017	2016
Guaranteed Investment Certificates at cost plus accrued interest at rates varying around 2% per annum, maturing on varying dates.	\$ 3,105,701	\$ 4,453,806

This is analysed as follows:

Short term investments (Note1(a))	1,105,701	1,603,806
Long term Investments (Note1(b))	2,000,000	2,850,000
	\$ 3,105,701	\$ 4,453,806

One of the guaranteed investment certificates included above amounting to approximately \$500,000 is non-redeemable as it is being used to secure the bank facilities provided to the society (Note 2).

4. CAPITAL ASSETS

Capital Assets - Restricted plus Unrestricted funds				
	Cost	Accumulated Amortization	Net 2017	Net 2016
Assets acquired with non-restricted fund:				
Office equipment	\$ 173,944	\$ 156,462	\$ 17,482	\$ 23,701
Computer hardware	301,220	197,858	103,362	138,881
Telephone equipment	180,765	166,261	14,504	26,451
Leasehold improvements	105,251	100,963	4,288	12,847
Automobiles	82,942	71,329	11,613	15,747
	844,122	692,873	151,249	217,627
Assets acquired with restricted fund (Note 6):				
Office equipment	137,262	121,668	15,594	21,144
Computer hardware	221,795	131,614	90,181	44,804
Telephone equipment	67,531	65,843	1,688	2,289
Leasehold improvements	19,951	16,181	3,770	445
Automobiles	19,500	18,098	1,402	1,901
	466,039	353,404	112,635	70,583
Total	\$ 1,310,161	\$ 1,046,277	\$ 263,884	\$ 288,210

**VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
MARCH 31, 2017**

5. DEFERRED CONTRIBUTIONS

Deferred contributions represent unspent resources externally restricted and unrestricted operating funding received in the current period that is related to the subsequent period.

6. DEFERRED CONTRIBUTIONS RELATED TO CAPITAL ASSETS

Deferred contributions related to capital assets represent the unamortized portions of equipment and leasehold improvements acquired with restricted contributions (Note 4).

The changes for the year in the deferred contributions balances are as follows:

	Family Preservation	Guardianship	Infrastructure	Child Protection	Total
Cost	\$ 39,316	\$ 68,060	297,150	79,653	\$ 484,179
Amortization to revenue	(12,396)	(54,561)	(249,344)	(55,243)	(371,544)
Ending balances - 2017	\$ 26,920	\$ 13,499	\$ 47,806	\$ 24,410	\$ 112,635
Ending balances - 2016	\$ 5,384	\$ 17,438	\$ 20,272	\$ 27,489	\$ 70,583

7. OPERATING LEASES

Office premises

The Society occupies leased premises in various buildings under operating leases. The annual charges consist of the basic rent and the proportion share of operating expenses.

Office equipment and automobiles

The Society also leases various office equipment and automobiles which are held under operating leases.

The future minimum operating lease payments in respect of office premises, automobiles and equipment for each of the next four years are as follows:

	Automobiles & Equipment	Buildings
2018	\$ 25,170	\$ 1,447,675
2019	19,305	1,618,905
2020	-	960,144
2021	-	808,276
	\$ 44,475	\$ 4,835,000

**VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
MARCH 31, 2017**

8. PENSION PLAN

The Society is a member of the British Columbia's Public Service Pension Plan. The plan is considered a contributory defined benefit pension plan covering all employees of the Society. Under the plan, contributions are made by the plan members and the Society. The plan is administered by the Government of British Columbia.

The pension plan has approximately 110,000 active and retired members. At March 31, 2014, the date of the most recent actuarial valuation available, the plan had a surplus of approximately \$392 million.

The Society's contribution to the plan during the current year amounted to \$838,405 (2016: \$746,504).

9. OTHER INCOME

	2017	2016
CRUW grants	\$ 70,916	\$ 64,855
Donations	650	951
Interest income	118,651	134,336
Miscellaneous income	8,226	22,397
	\$ 198,443	\$ 222,539

10. RESTRICTED/UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS

Pursuant to a board resolution passed on March 25, 2014, it was resolved that effective April 1, 2013, future surpluses arising from restricted programs be transferred to the unrestricted fund to be used for any programs that require additional funding. Any deficits in restricted programs will be funded by the unrestricted fund.

11. HEALTHCARE BENEFIT PLAN

Healthcare Benefit Trust ("HBT") is a not-for-profit health and welfare trust that provides group health and welfare benefits on behalf of participating employers for nearly 100,000 eligible employees, their eligible dependents, and beneficiaries employed in health care and social services in British Columbia and the Yukon. The Trust was established in 1979 by the Health Labour Relations Association (HLRA), now part of the Health Employers Association of BC (HEABC),

VACFSS is a member of the Community Social Services Employers' Association that entered into a contractual agreement with the trustees of the HBT as a participating employer to participate in the Community Social Services Group Benefits plan.

Under the agreement, if the Society was to leave the plan for any reason, it will be subject to an exit levy representing its share of any unfunded actuarial liabilities in respect of all the benefit programs that the Society participated in, as of the termination date.

As at March 31, 2017, there was no exit levy payable that was associated with VACFSS.

**VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
MARCH 31, 2017**

12. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

Items that meet the definition of a financial instrument include cash, short term investments, accounts receivable, long term investments and accounts payable and accrued liabilities.

It is management's opinion that the Society is not exposed to significant liquidity risk arising from these financial instruments. The following is a summary of the significant financial instrument risks:

Credit risk

The Society is exposed to credit risk in the event of non-performance by counterparties in connection with its accounts receivable. The Society does not obtain collateral to support the accounts receivable subject to credit risk but mitigates this risk by dealing only with what management believes to be financially sound counterparties and accordingly, does not anticipate significant loss for non-performance.

Market risk

Market risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market prices. Market risk comprises three types of risk: currency risk, interest rate risk and other price risk. It is management's opinion that the Society is not exposed to significant currency risk or other price risk.

Interest rate risk

Interest rate risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market interest rates. The fair values of fixed rate financial instruments are subject to change, since fair values fluctuate inversely with changes in market interest rates. The cash flows related to floating rate financial instruments change as market interest rates change. The Society is exposed to interest risk on its fixed income securities (Note 3) and manages that risk by using a portfolio with varying terms to maturity.

13. ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE

The Society is dependent on the Ministry of Children and Family Development to provide sufficient funds to continue operations, replace essential equipment and complete its capital projects.

The Society is also dependent on non-contractual miscellaneous revenues to subsidize its funding deficit.

**VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY
NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
MARCH 31, 2017**

14. DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

The information requirements, under section 36 (1) of the new British Columbia's Societies Act with regard to the disclosure obligations of the society's directors, employees and contractors remuneration are as follows:

Directors

Amounts paid to directors during the year and the capacity in which each acted, were as follows:

	Amount as a director (Note below)	Amount other than as a director	Capacity
Board Chair	\$ 1,757	\$ -	
Board Co-Chair	537	-	
Treasurer	171	500	Interview panel
Board Member	79	9,500	Program support
Board Member	972	-	
Board Member	1,455	-	
Board Member	78	-	
Board Member	439	-	
Board Member	951	-	

The above amounts shown received as a director represent solely reimbursements of expenses incurred by board members on behalf of VACFSS.

Employees and contractors

The total amount paid in respect of the 10 most highly remunerated employees and contractors during the year was \$6,650,958 as shown below. None of those are actual employees of the society.

Amount	Services provided
\$ 1,502,448	Staffed Residential Resources and Caregiver support
1,045,211	Shared Residential Placements and shared services
907,863	Group Homes and Staffed Residential placements
866,101	Group Homes and Staffed Residential placements
620,770	Group Homes and Staffed Residential placements
593,328	Group Homes and Staffed Residential placements
534,763	Inhome Support and Transportation
254,979	Inhome Support and Transportation
164,896	Respite to Parents
160,598	Foster

15. COMPARATIVE FIGURES

Certain of the comparative figures have been reclassified to conform with current year's financial statement presentation.



**VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY
GUARDIANSHIP AND RESOURCES (R000139809)
STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENSES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2017 AND 2016**

	2017	2016
REVENUES		
Provincial government contributions - Principal funding	\$ 4,770,963	\$ 4,670,338
CRUW grant	70,916	41,660
Other income	575	30,242
	<u>4,842,454</u>	<u>4,742,240</u>
DEFERRED CONTRIBUTIONS		
Related to operations - recognized (carried forward) in year	28,568	(5,438)
Related to capital assets amortization	4,577	6,114
Related to capital assets purchases	(638)	(2,259)
	<u>32,507</u>	<u>(1,583)</u>
	<u>4,874,961</u>	<u>4,740,657</u>
DIRECT PROGRAM COSTS		
Automobile expenses	87,313	74,642
Contract services	140,789	116,466
Cultural intervention costs	196,227	158,519
Donation expense-C Montour	1,000	500
Program supplies	1,046	450
Salaries and benefits	2,993,706	2,949,219
Staff expenses	21,850	10,685
Telephone and cellular	6,997	8,214
	<u>3,448,928</u>	<u>3,318,695</u>
CHILD-IN-CARE COSTS		
Allowances/dental	34,660	30,221
Client minding costs	65,108	68,419
Client travel	123,164	114,830
CIC - Clothing grant	17,410	11,271
Education/school events	66,378	64,789
CIC - Equipment	22,013	16,446
Foods and Household	87,160	87,526
CIC - Recognizing Milestones	2,615	5,008
Medical expenditures	51,826	63,996
Living with family and friends	20,285	24,647
Others	62,821	54,924
Professional support and services	77,918	74,751
	<u>631,358</u>	<u>616,828</u>
NET FUNDING CONTRIBUTION	<u>\$ 794,675</u>	<u>\$ 805,134</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements

**VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY
GUARDIANSHIP AND RESOURCES (R000139809)
STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENSES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2017 AND 2016**

	2017	2016
SERVICE COSTS		
Amortization - Capital Assets	\$ 25,379	\$ 32,622
Bank charges and interest	-	195
Equipment leasing	2,470	2,470
Equipment purchases	4,883	8,649
Office and general	57,928	46,873
Public relations & community services	2,930	3,141
Rent	451,176	455,720
Salaries, labour and benefits	420,737	415,420
Security	516	589
Special events	750	500
Staff related costs	15,321	34,765
Telephone fax and cellular	43,506	33,876
	1,025,596	1,034,820
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES FOR THE YEAR	(230,921)	(229,686)
INTERFUND TRANSFERS	(20,197)	(46,703)
NET EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES FOR THE YEAR	\$ (251,118)	\$ (276,389)

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements



**VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY
INFRASTRUCTURE (R000139810)
STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENSES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2017 AND 2016**

	2017	2016
REVENUES		
Provincial government contributions - Principal funding	\$ 1,847,809	\$ 1,821,658
Other income	122,427	161,716
	1,970,236	1,983,374
DEFERRED CONTRIBUTIONS		
Related to operations - recognized (carried forward) in year	-	25,674
Related to capital assets amortization	9,340	6,949
Related to capital assets purchases	(36,874)	(2,685)
	(27,534)	29,938
NET FUNDING CONTRIBUTION	\$ 1,942,702	\$ 2,013,312

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements

**VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY
INFRASTRUCTURE (R000139810)
STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENSES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2017 AND 2016**

	2017	2016
GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES		
AGM	\$ 1,978	\$ 2,359
Amortization - Capital Assets	16,584	16,291
Bank charges and interest	6,156	6,003
Board expenses	24,565	26,838
Computer support	14,924	7,205
Conference	-	100
Contract services	29,608	67,725
Equipment leasing	2,220	2,220
Equipment purchases	3,390	7,439
Insurance	17,853	12,856
Office and general	51,662	50,917
Professional fees	62,500	91,596
Public Relations and Community Services	17,375	21,626
Rent and repairs	198,479	181,512
Salaries, labour and benefits	1,760,983	1,658,617
Security	926	564
Special events	318	5,088
Staff related costs	158,722	150,340
Telephone fax and cellular	28,381	22,933
Professional Dues & Memberships	10,786	5,608
	2,407,410	2,337,837
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES FOR THE YEAR	(464,708)	(324,525)
INTERFUND TRANSFERS	129,163	135,942
NET EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES FOR THE YEAR	\$ (335,545)	\$ (188,583)

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements



**VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY
RESIDENTIAL RESOURCES (R000139808)
STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENSES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2017 AND 2016**

	2017	2016
REVENUES		
Provincial government contributions - Principal funding	\$ 15,176,516	\$ 15,130,342
Resource homes revenue	439,171	706,905
Cultural program funding	88,891	83,714
Other income	450	525
	15,705,028	15,921,486
DEFERRED CONTRIBUTIONS		
Related to operations - recognized (carried forward) in year	684,854	(424,703)
	16,389,882	15,496,783
DIRECT PROGRAM COSTS		
Automobile expenses	1,576	908
Contract services	102,560	204,071
Cultural intervention costs	4,035	5,504
Program activities and miscellaneous	1,652	2,761
Residential resources costs	15,679,385	14,673,340
Salaries and benefits	89,655	88,666
	15,878,863	14,975,250
CAREGIVER COSTS		
Caregivers expenses	359,167	415,791
Foster parent appreciation night	19,581	19,146
Foster parent recruitment	14,587	13,895
Kiwassa Housing	60,100	59,700
	453,435	508,532
NET FUNDING CONTRIBUTION	\$ 57,584	\$ 13,001

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements

**VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY
RESIDENTIAL RESOURCES (R000139808)
STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENSES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2017 AND 2016**

	2017	2016
SERVICE COSTS		
Automobile expenses	\$ 85	\$ 719
Bank charges	-	65
Equipment leasing	53	53
Equipment purchases	5	157
Office and general	417	433
Public relations & community services	260	-
Rent and repairs	10,004	10,123
Special event	750	(33)
Staff related costs	162	842
Telephone fax and cellular	848	642
	12,584	13,001
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES FOR THE YEAR	45,000	-
INTERFUND TRANSFERS	(45,000)	-
NET EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES FOR THE YEAR	\$ -	\$ -

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements



**VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY
FAMILY PRESERVATION (R000139806)
STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENSES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2017 AND 2016**

	2017	2016
REVENUES		
Provincial government contributions - Principal funding	\$ 2,587,864	\$ 2,527,304
Other income	225	1,500
	2,588,089	2,528,804
DEFERRED CONTRIBUTIONS		
Related to operations - recognized (carried forward) in year	4,132	179,773
Related to capital assets amortization	3,808	1,680
Related to capital assets purchases	(25,344)	(2,807)
	(17,404)	178,646
	2,570,685	2,707,450
DIRECT PROGRAM COSTS		
After hour	168	-
Automobile expenses	21,574	24,430
Client assistance and travel	11,097	14,102
Contract services	877,246	663,506
Cultural intervention costs	26,222	20,868
Program supplies	1,082	346
Program services	213,267	214,827
Salaries and benefits	1,222,373	1,275,191
Staff expenses	-	8
Telephone and cellular	3,878	4,832
	2,376,907	2,218,110
NET FUNDING CONTRIBUTION	\$ 193,778	\$ 489,340

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements

**VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY
FAMILY PRESERVATION (R000139806)
STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENSES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2017 AND 2016**

	2017	2016
SERVICE COSTS		
Amortization - Capital Assets	\$ 8,957	\$ 8,156
Consulting fees	-	134
Contract services	292	330
Equipment leasing	3,089	3,089
Equipment purchases	1,655	3,196
Office and general	16,472	22,083
Public relations & community services	-	49
Rent and repairs	205,993	187,582
Salaries, labour and benefits	164,680	154,276
Staff related costs	18,022	15,650
Telephone fax and cellular	22,773	17,096
	441,933	411,641
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES FOR THE YEAR	(248,155)	77,699
INTERFUND TRANSFERS	(834)	(94,559)
NET EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES FOR THE YEAR	\$ (248,989)	\$ (16,860)

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements

**VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY
CHILD PROTECTION (R000139811)
STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENSES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2017 AND 2016**

	2017	2016
REVENUES		
Provincial government contributions - Principal funding	\$ 6,530,614	\$ 6,398,086
Other income	3,850	160
	6,534,464	6,398,246
DEFERRED CONTRIBUTIONS		
Deferred contributions related to operations - recognized (carried forward) in year	-	117,212
Related to capital assets amortization - recognized in the current year	7,668	11,630
Related to capital assets purchases	(4,589)	(16,906)
	3,079	111,936
	6,537,543	6,510,182
DIRECT PROGRAM COSTS		
Automobile expenses	53,901	73,635
Contract services	49,984	44,585
Program supplies	303	1,353
Salaries and benefits	3,907,774	3,401,047
Staff expenses	7,585	4,572
Telephone and cellular	12,094	12,750
Miracle fund 2014 expenses	(193)	641
	4,031,448	3,538,583
CHILD-IN-CARE COSTS		
Allowances for inter/out provincial transfers	1,619	3,555
Camp costs	5,734	5,493
Client minding costs	65,108	32,053
Client travel	45,325	54,178
CIC - Clothing grant	19,170	22,356
Equipment	5,006	5,300
Education/school events	1,928	7,726
Foods and Household	17,264	24,220
CIC - Recognizing Milestones	1,450	498
Goods and services	6,235	2,500
Medical/dental expenses	20,600	21,245
Others	7,806	6,145
	\$ 197,245	\$ 185,269

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements

**VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY
CHILD PROTECTION (R000139811)
STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENSES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2017 AND 2016**

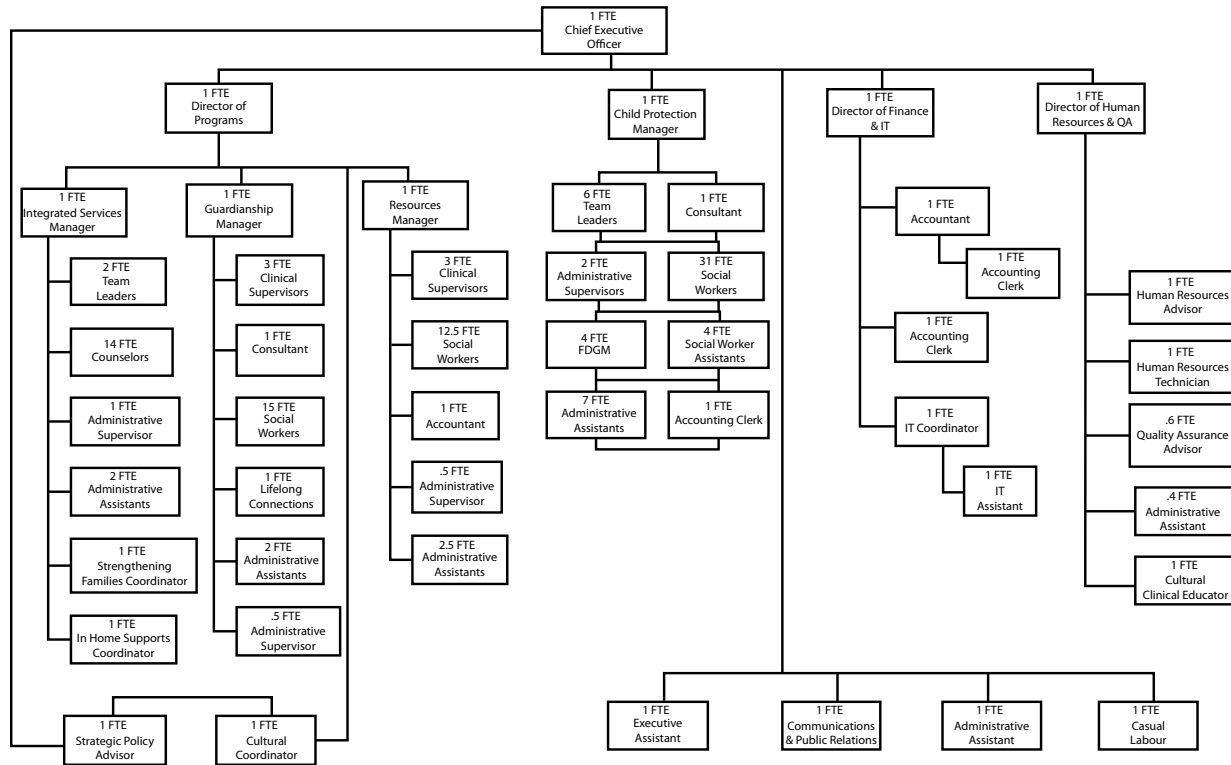
	2017	2016
OTHER PROGRAM COSTS		
Out of care children	\$ 3,429	\$ 5,823
Out of care caregivers	6,941	6,823
Out of care maintenance	668,152	557,798
Family support expenses	348,198	534,379
Cultural intervention costs	23,802	36,964
Collaborative practice costs	11,426	9,268
Foster parent recruitment	500	-
	1,062,448	1,151,055
NET FUNDING CONTRIBUTION	1,246,402	1,635,275
SERVICE COSTS		
Amortization - Capital Assets	45,168	54,533
Bank charges	150	130
Contract services	1,081	1,222
Equipment leasing	5,309	5,309
Equipment purchases	2,354	8,050
Miscellaneous and general	2,947	768
Office and general	81,640	66,945
Public relations & community services	49	-
Rent and repairs	622,404	701,799
Salaries, labour and benefits	565,229	566,083
Special event	(34)	374
Staff related costs	54,764	31,147
Telephone, fax and cellular	46,992	35,136
	1,428,053	1,471,496
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES FOR THE YEAR	(181,651)	163,779
INTERFUND TRANSFERS	(63,132)	5,320
NET EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES FOR THE YEAR	\$ (244,783)	\$ 169,099

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Aboriginal Mother Centre Society
- Aboriginal Wellness
- Asante Centre
- Association of Neighbourhood Houses of British Columbia
- Atira Women's Resource Society
- Baby Go Round
- Battered Women's Support Services
- BC Children's Hospital and Child & Family Clinic
- BC Housing
- BC Woman's Hospital & Health Centre - Fir Square
- Big Sisters of British Columbia
- Boudreau & Jang Ltd
- Boundaries Program
- Broadway Youth Resources Centre (BYRC)
- Building Blocks (ACFS)
- Centre for Sustainable Food Systems at UBC Farm
- Child & Adolescent Response Team (CART)
- Children's Corner
- Children's Foundation
- Community Centres
- Community Living British Columbia (CLBC)
- Connexus Family & Child Services
- Drake Medox Health Services
- DTES Women's Centre
- Family Services of Greater Vancouver
- Federation of Aboriginal Foster Parents (FAFP)
- Federation of Foster Parent Association
- Fostering Early Development
- Fraser Valley Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society (FVACFSS, Xyollhemeylh)
- Greater Vancouver Food Bank Society
- Healthiest Babies (Coastal Health)
- Helping Spirit Lodge Society
- Hey-Way-Noqu Healing Circle for Addictions Society
- Hollyburn Family Services
- Howe Sound Rehabilitation Service Society
- Kiwassa Neighbourhood House
- L'uma Native Housing
- Legal Aid & Family Justice Center
- MCFD Youth Services
- Mental Health Teams
- Milieu Children & Family Services
- Ministry of Children & Family Development (MCFD)
- Mosaic
- Native Court Workers and Counselling Association
- Native Education Centre (NEC)
- Native Health Society (VNHS)
- Nenqayni Wellness Centre Society
- Network of Inner City Community Services Society (NICSS)
- Pacific Association of First Nations Women (PAFNW)
- PLEA
- Public Guardian and Trustee of British Columbia
- Quest Food Exchange
- Rain City Housing
- Ray-Cam Cooperative Centre
- Residential Resources Services, Vancouver Area
- Safe Babies Program
- Salvation Army
- SHEWAY
- Sorella House
- SOS Children's Village BC
- Spirit of the Children
- Squamish Nation, Ayes Men Men (Child and Family Services)
- Stonehouse Child and Youth Support Services
- Strive
- Sunny Hill Health Centre
- The FACES Program
- The Pace Program
- Urban Native Youth Association (UNYA)
- Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society (VAFCS)
- Vancouver Coastal Health Authority
- Vancouver Incest & Sexual Abuse Centre (VISAC)
- Warriors Against Violence
- Watari Counseling & Support Services Society
- WJS Short Stop Home
- YMCA/YWCA

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



VACSS Organization Chart - Funded Positions - 2016/2017 Fiscal Year

FTE	TITLE
19	Executive/Infrastructure
57	Child Protection
22	Family Preservation
20.5	Resource
23.5	Guardianship
142	FTE Total
	31 MARCH 2017

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