

Boundary Family Services Society



Annual 82 Report 4

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All art was created by staff and participants in our programs



# Our Vision

Together, we the citizens of the Boundary area can create a culture of health and well being for ourselves and for our communities.



# Our Mission

We build partnerships with families and community by delivering services which enrich lives and shape our future.



wide variety of programs to meet children, youth, and families interests and needs.
Boundary Family Services (BFS) is dedicated to providing participants with high quality services using a person centred approach that empowers them to define and set goals and assists them to build on their personal strengths and supports.

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Our volunteers are a critical component of the Boundary Family Services Team. Without volunteers, BFS cannot function.

Our Board of Directors, who are volunteers, provide the backbone support of governance, financial oversight and strategic vision for the health and direction of BFS.

Volunteers in our other program streams provide valuable service to participants as well as support in daily operations. The act of freely giving of time, knowledge, and patience sets the tone for not only the operational teams, but for the participants that engage in services

We know that there is a shift societally away from the availability of volunteers, but we are grateful to not be subject to this trend and for the amazing "value added proposition" that ALL of our volunteers provide in meeting our mission.

A very sincere "THANK YOU!" on behalf of all the program streams and the Leadership Team for our amazing volunteers.

Thank you to community partners, residents and local businesses who have donated their time and given resources to enhance our programs.



### Executive Directors Report



The 2023-2024 year at Boundary Family Services provided an opportunity to regroup, reflect and reenergize.

This was shown by the Leadership of the Board coupled with the passion of the Leadership Team we created a strong three-year strategic plan that will guide the Agency through to 2027.

An increase in community awareness of Boundary Family Services and its mission led to several donations by local entities and individuals, and it shows a trust in our Team to do what is right for those that we serve. This paired with another successful Coldest Night of the Year fundraiser have allowed the Teams to aid a wide variety of those in need in our Region. From gas cards to ensure Seniors can get to medical appointments to ensuring those that are precariously housed do not become homeless, these extra funds make huge impacts in the lives of those participants.

A strengthening of ongoing partnerships with other service providers, and a renewed commitment to Integrated Case Management are great reminders that Boundary Family Services is part of a large mosaic that provides an amazing continuum of care. We are excited about the new co-location of services in Rock Creek at the Medical Clinic, and proud to be part of the group that is bringing the Foundry to the West Kootenay Boundary Region.

As the Foundry project grows, we will remain committed to ensuring that there is parity in the service delivery promise of this new and unique model of mental health services for children, youth and families.

While some areas of projected development did not materialize over this period, we remain committed to the ongoing pursuit of excellence in service and an expansion of these services to meet the growing needs of the Boundary Region.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Board of Directors, the Leadership Team, our amazing operational team members, volunteers and community partners.

Darren Pratt Executive Director



### Administration Team Report



Laura Greaves – Financial Officer Linda Stooshinoff – Operations Officer/Program Support April Anderson – Financial Assistant Emma Wiebe – Admin Support and Board Secretary

The Admin team helps to keep the Agency running smoothly by taking care of tasks such as budgeting, payroll, Performance Quality Improvement, ensuring that the programs have the resources that they need, and most importantly, ensuring that our participants are greeted and cared for in a welcoming and efficient manner. Each member of the Team brings their own strengths to the Agency and together, there is nothing that we can not accomplish.

Laura: I have been with BFS for over 19 years. I am a member of the Management team and responsible for financial surveillance, budgeting, financial reporting and human resources support for the agency. I am very proud of all that we have done and continue to do in our community.

Linda: I have been with BFS for over 17 years. I started as a part time receptionist and program support worker. As the agency has grown, so have my tasks. I now work full time and am responsible for Performance Quality Improvement which ensures that the policies and procedures at BFS meet CARF Accreditation standards, data collection, the majority of the Health and Safety tasks, organizing staff training, purchasing resources, numerous BC Housing tasks for both Raven Place and the Safe Stay Shelter, maintenance tasks for the Glanville Centre and generally supporting all of the Boundary Family Services programs and services. I can honestly say that since the beginning of my employment with BFS, every single working day has been different. Each day is filled with new adventures. Some days are challenging, and others are very rewarding, but I always end my day knowing that the BFS staff, through dedication, creativity and skill, have offered Boundary communities the best services possible.

April: As a full-time financial assistant since 2021, I am responsible for tracking accounts receivable, processing accounts payable, payroll recording for both of our companies, administration support of Raven Place tenants and submitting applications for affordable housing. Raven Place administration details can be challenging for various reasons but our process of sharing our knowledge and problem solving as a team brings solutions to the forefront faster and helps us to continually develop our skills as landlords. Payroll fluctuates between 40 -50 employees depending on the programs running in a pay period. I have recently trained Emma as extra reinforcement to cover payroll during untimely leaves. I love to create more streamlined processes especially for the annual tasks like our financial audit and the annual reviews for the tenant subsidy applications. I'm happy to contribute to the BFSS mission in serving our communities in the multiple ways we do.



Emma: I have thoroughly enjoyed being a part of the administration team at BFS. I have loved getting to know people in our community and helping where needed. I have learned some valuable skills that I will have with me for the rest of my life. One challenge I had was learning computer programs and it is still a learning curve for me. I have enjoyed being pushed out of my comfort zone to learn new things and to help support the day-to-day operations of the Agency.



### Children, Youth, Families and Seniors Supervisor Report



I have had the privilege of being the admin supervisor for the Children, Youth, Families and Seniors programs for the last 2 years and have been with BFS for the last 7 years. I really appreciate my team and how I have seen many of them grow and learn through the tough situations they are a part of. I am encouraged daily by all of them and see their care of the participants they support. Some of my favorite moments have been team building days, coffee catch ups, getting to announce that we finally have housekeeping, volunteer appreciation dinners and just having my door open to be a part of the lives of my team! I am truly thankful for such a wonderful team!

Rachel Warriner



### Family Support Program Report



Hi! We are Nathan Ball and Damon Sutton, the Family Support Workers here at BFS! In our Family Support program, we get the privilege to come alongside parents and work together on things like communication skills, routine building, co-regulation strategies, conflict resolution, co-parenting and so much more! What is special about our Family Support program is that we are able to cater our services to the individual families and work with them to meet their specific needs. Something we have found rewarding while working in Family Support is the opportunity to work with families on the attachment between parents and their children, helping to foster healthy family relationships, and building the foundation and skills for parents to feel equipped and supported!



- "You are the most present and caring support worker I've had, Thank you"
- "I feel like I have hope now, It's been awhile since I've felt that"

### PEACE program Report



My name is Ashley Lacey and I have had the privilege to be the PEACE Program Worker for the past four years at Boundary Family Services. The Prevention, Education, Advocacy, Counselling, and Empowerment (PEACE) Program is for children and youth ages 3-18, who have witnessed or experienced violence and is funded by the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (MPSSG). As the PEACE worker, I admire how the program creates a space for children and youth to develop skills and generate tools that support their overall emotional health and self-esteem after experiencing domestic violence in their home.

In this role, I am able to provide 1:1 appointments and group services for children and youth from Christina Lake to Big White. During appointments, we focus on psycho-educational methods that focus on goals that enhance an individual's skills to understand safety and to keep themselves safe; understand healthy ways of dealing with anger and expressing anger; encourage open communication; understand they are not at fault for the violence that has occurred; and support children and youth by exploring, acknowledging, and validating their responses to violence. In the past year, I have enjoyed providing prevention services through groups in Grand Forks and the West Boundary. These groups have been offered to children, youth, families or caregivers. Please see below the following groups that I have been able to support with as part of the PEACE program:

**Violence is Preventable (VIP):** Focuses on supporting children and youth with understanding healthy living. Topics include, understanding safety, self-esteem, emotional expression, and understanding healthy relationships.

**SCALE (Skills, Connection, Awareness, Learning and Empowerment):** Focuses on skills and resources for caregivers, supports with connection with service providers and other caregivers in the community, and general mental health education.

**My Tween and Me**: A group for parents and their tweens (ages 7-12) to connect and understand healthy developmental milestones and challenges that may arise at this age.

**Circle of Security Parenting Program:** An 8 week group that is designed to support caregivers to help them understand their child's emotional world by learning to read emotional needs, support their child's ability to successfully manage emotions, enhance the development of their child's self-esteem, and honor the innate wisdom and desire for their child to be secure.

### CYMH/SAIP Program Report



I have been with Boundary Family Services since 2020, primarily working in the Community Based Child and Youth Mental Health (CYMH) Program and the Sexual Assault Intervention Program (SAIP). As the CYMH Counsellor I work with children and youth under the age of 19 who would benefit from mild to moderate mental health interventions such as psycho-education and skill building, navigating interpersonal relationships, and with identifying and building natural supports; I also connect with caregivers to help them implement mental-health strategies at home. As a communitybased program, I often meet with youth outside of the office such as a park or downtown, or in their local community. In the last school year, I've really enjoyed the opportunity to attend GFSS every other Wednesday afternoon for Outreach Counselling.

As the SAIP counsellor, I support children and youth under 19 who have been impacted by sexual abuse. In addition to meeting with participants one-to-one, I am often connecting with caregivers and providing them with strategies to build a trauma-informed environment at home, as well as meeting with other community partners that are involved to help create supportive, wrap around services as needed. Over the past year I have been able to collaborate with PEACE worker Ashley Lacey on delivering the Violence Is Preventable program to children ages 6-11: a prevention-based program that focuses on emotion regulation and expression, setting boundaries, safety planning, and healthy relationships.

Tamara Schiesser (MA, RCC) Child and Youth Mental Health Counsellor Sexual Assault Intervention Program Counsellor

"I'm finally able to get through a whole day at school"



### Youth Support/Youth Outreach Report



I have been with Boundary Family Services since 2020 and took on this role early this year. I work with youth to achieve goals in a wide variety of formats and spaces. This can take the form of formal one-to-one appointments in office, more informal meetings through the schools and in public, and even through groups such as my Dungeons and Dragons group! This diversity in service delivery has allowed me to not only meet youth where they are, but also to learn a great deal both about and from them. I look forward to continuing my growth in this role, but also to bear witness to the growth and resiliency of the youth in our community.

Damon Sutton

"When I get older, this group will be my favorite childhood memory" - Dungeons and Dragons Participant



### Community Connector Report



I am brand new to Boundary Family Services and I am truly honored to have been chosen to be the first Seniors Community Connector here in the area. As the new Community Connector, I have truly enjoyed meeting great people from all the wonderful communities we have in our area and I have been listening to the needs that our Seniors are dealing with in our province currently. My position has allowed me to spend the time needed to empower our older population to get back to connecting with their communities and the people in them and studies on Social Prescribing shows that community-based support and services help improve the health and wellbeing of a person. As I have now started to meet with individuals, hear their stories and discover ways to help them I am overwhelmed with the gratitude they show and how thankful they are to have someone to ask not "What Is The Matter With You" but "What matters to You?"

Susan Proudman Community Connector



### Better At Home Report



The Better at Home team is thrilled to share some wonderful developments as the agency continues to enhance services for seniors. Boundary Better at Home is expanding its services with a new, Enhanced Housekeeping program. The Enhanced HK Program is a pilot project designed to assist the most vulnerable or isolated seniors and allows for Housekeeping and a social visit twice a month. This will help to ensure that Boundary seniors receive the support they need with two new internal staff, Christina and Heidi. The housekeepers have already made a profound difference in the lives of Boundary seniors. So many of them have reached out to express how transformative this service has already been in such a short period of time. Better at Home has also welcomed six new volunteers to the team, bringing fresh energy and passion to the program.

In partnership with Susan, our new Community Connector, the program is streamlining the referral process for community partners, making it easier than ever to connect seniors with the resources they need. The program is committed to keeping volunteers informed and empowered and will be offering more frequent communication and training opportunities as well as streamlining the required reporting process to support their invaluable work.

Together, these changes will help Better at Home to better serve Boundary communities and create a more connected, caring environment for everyone involved.

Melanie Leslie

I have been working with Boundary Family Services and the Better at Home team for the past year. I am responsible for organizing volunteers and coordinating our House Keeping team in the West Boundary area.

It has been such a pleasure meeting the elderly folks in this area. I have been making myself and our team known and have become much more aware of the resources currently available to seniors in the west. Seniors around the province are in great need. We continue to meet elderly people who are isolated, frail, and in need of assistance. Bridging the gap between seniors and resources has been both challenging and rewarding. Many people out this way live rurally and are dependent on others for transportation. The feedback I am receiving about our light housekeeping and visits has been extremely positive. Our admin team has done an outstanding job organizing roles and responsibilities for these new services. I am proud to be a part of Boundary Family Services and the Better at Home team!

Sincerely, Ruth Neveu

### After School Sports and Arts Program (ASSAI) Report



This awesome program has been running since 2011. We currently run groups in the elementary schools from Christina Lake to Rock Creek. The goal of the program is to increase connectivity with school and community, through fun and inclusive groups that build on strengths and support challenges.

In art group the focus is on taking creative risks, exploring a variety of art mediums and finding individual creativity. The sports group focus is on moving your body and being comfortable in the gym, as well as building fundamental movement skills and practicing fair play.

The youth that join are invited as there is limited spaces. The program strives to create opportunities for youth that might not otherwise be able to attend groups. The reason youth are invited varies widely, it might be that a youth is anxious, or neurodivergent or simply new to town.

Because we have such a solid team, we were able to run art groups in five elementary schools and sports groups in three. We had over 150 students this year in the program. We hire local artists and sports leaders to enhance our programing.

To be able to support all the children that want to attend art group at the larger elementary schools we run lunch hour groups for the younger students.

#### ASSAI Team

Sports- Damon Sutton, Rebecca Mattick, Megan Gorman, Student Tao Kuromi West : Tanya Dagg and Trisha Paseka

Art- Leta Bak, Rocio Graham, Carol Mitchell, Lena Holmes, Sabrina Rougeau, Rebecca Mattick West: Nora Curiston

#### Highlights

We now have three staff that live in the West which builds relationships. Several staff are artists, their skills are invaluable to hanging and installing the annual art show.

We ran our 13th annual Art Attack at Gallery2. Over 100 youth had art in the show. There was a bus full of youth with some family members that came from West Boundary and Greenwood Elementary schools.

There was a huge crowd at the opening celebration. Afterwards, multiple classrooms toured the exhibit.

Big White school has approached to be included in the 2025 show.

We were able to include youth with diverse abilities through an inclusion grant that supported some education assistances to be involved in program, as well as the support from our highly skilled team. The high school Ultimate frisbee team hosted the wrap party for our sports group.

Carol Mitchell Program Coordinator

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### Early Years Program Supervisor Report



Hello, I am Sandy Podmoroff, the Early Years program supervisor and a member of the Leadership Team. Our beautiful Grand Forks community is where I was born and have raised my three children. I started here at Boundary Family Services in 2010 as a childminder for the Babys Best Chance Program and Parents of Young Children Program. I have been the Early Years supervisor for over 5 years now. I am very proud of our dedicated Early Years team who work together to identify community needs and work wholeheartedly to provide wrap around care from pregnancy to early parenting for the families in our community to meet those needs.

Our Early Year programs are for families starting with pregnancy when children turn six years old. The programs are cost-free and drop-in with exception to our closed six-to-eight-week preregistered groups.

It brings me a lot of joy meeting all our wonderful families who take part in our services and knowing we are providing valuable Early Years programs in our area. I am grateful to all our funders; we wouldn't be able to coordinate and facilitate all the many different programs and groups that benefit our community without their support.

Sandy Podmoroff

#### **Our Wonderful Early Years Team**

**Kristy Kuromi**- Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program Baby's Best Chance Program (CPNP BBC), Family Navigator

Melanie Shenstone-Parents of Young Children, Li'l Explorers, Nobody's Perfect Parenting Program Haley Proudman- Infant Development Program Consultant, Circle of Security

Mary-Ann Dennis- West Boundary Family Connections Facilitator, West Boundary Li'l Explorer Nathan Ball- Just Call Me Dad Program

**Cecile Horkoff**-Food Security cook for the Baby's Best Chance and Parents of Young Children Thursday group

Sayoko Dunnet- Childminder for Boundary Family Services Early Year Programs, Friday Drop-in Group, Summer Fun Group

My goal was to provide participants with a place, a time and opportunity to socialize and spend time with other families and caregivers. My highlight was hearing the participants making plans to get together outside of the program.

### Baby's Best Chance Report



The Baby's Best Chance (BBC) program at Boundary Family Services provides individualized continuous pre and postnatal support to families to ensure their healthiest and most enjoyable parenting journey possible. I have had the privilege of working with pregnant and newly parenting people since 2006. As a registered doula, certified prenatal instructor, trained lactation educator, and skilled and experienced facilitator, my knowledge and experience base in this life season is broad; families of the Boundary can be confident that they will get caring, person-centered service when they access the Baby's Best Chance Program.

Families from across the Boundary are invited to access the BBC program in the format that best suits their personality and needs at any stage of parenting, between their positive pregnancy test until their youngest child is 2 years old. BBC offers small and large group settings and one-to-one appointments. Participants have access to current and evidence-based information regarding healthy pregnancy and parenting, labour and delivery, breast and chestfeeding, attachment, early parenting skills, and supported referrals to other community programs as appropriate.

After a thorough intake to determine their individual needs, participants can choose to access any combination of:

- weekly drop in groups
- private, registration only groups (Motherwise mental health groups, Prenatal Class, Circle of Security Parenting program)
- individual support in the location that feels safest for them
- cooking clubs
- prenatal classes
- breast or chestfeeding classes

As no two pregnancies or births are the same, no two journeys with Baby's Best Chance are the same.

I am proud that the Baby's Best Chance continues to be accessed by most birthing families in the Boundary each year. Participants often return to the program for subsequent pregnancies and frequently refer friends and family members. With strong working partnerships with other community partners, BBC helps families to confidently access quality support for all areas of their early parenting journeys.

Kristy Kuromi Baby's Best Chance Program Coordinator

> "Thank you so much!! We were talking on the way home about how great you were and how easy it was to talk and ask questions."

"I remember when I left the first group, I just felt so good after"

"Thanks again for our meeting, I left home with tears of joy!! What a wonderful support group. I had no idea it existed."

### Infant Development Program Report



I have really enjoyed working for Boundary Family Services through the Infant Development Program for the last 4 years. It has been such a wonderful experience getting to work with the young families in our community and watching their children grow and accomplish so many things. I've helped connect families with services (physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy) both here in Grand Forks as well as in the West Boundary. I've worked with families to develop strategies to help their children reach milestones, provide assessments, advocate for families, provide resources, and parent education through groups and one on one. I recently ran my first Infant Massage Class which received wonderful feedback about how the parents felt it helped their connection with their baby and they loved having knowledge for one-on-one time with their baby. We've been able to bring 3 complete sessions of Circle of Security Parenting to both Grand Forks and the West Boundary where parents have said they have increased knowledge of themselves and their child's behavior. I love getting to know the families in our community and look forward to working with more in the future!

Haley Proudman

"T'm so grateful for this program, I have seen so much improvement in my son since we started seeing you and speech and language"



### West Boundary Community Action Program for Children Report

I have been a member of BFSS for a couple of years. I came to BFSS with various experiences including being a mother and grandmother. Since my time with BFSS I have been able to continue growing in experience and training which I have the privilege of sharing with the families that I work with.

#### West Boundary Family Connections (WBFC)

There are families attending this group that really connected and have become friends. Most have moved from the city to live in a small rural community and some live quite remote and isolated. A number of them have chosen to home school. Since coming to the group, they are becoming more familiar with community partners and various resources available to them. The children are always excited to come and play with their friends and to meet new ones.

#### West Boundary Lil' Explorers

The Lil' Explorers outdoor playgroup was very well attended in the summer months. The same families that came to WBFC also attended along with more from surrounding communities. There were up to 30 people attending the group.

There were comments made on liking the child-led activities and how much fun everybody had. There will be more families coming to the Family Connections group.

Mary-Ann Dennis

"We feel so welcome here and the kids really look forward to playing with other children."



East Boundary Community Action Program for Children and Early Years Program Facilitator Report



Melanie Shenstone

Facilitator: Parents of Young Children, Walking Group, Li'l Explorers, Nobody's Perfect, Motherwise, Riding the Waves of Life Podcast

What do these programs provide for the community?

All of these programs enrich young families knowledge of parenting and connection through fun, interactive learning and engaging with community. We focus on striving for families to feel welcome, make new friends and learn new tools for their parenting tool belt to create strong bonds with their children.

We also like to focus on the importance of self and how to navigate life through all of its struggles in a healthy way, especially when you feel like you are drowning. We do this by creating a community of support and talking through strategies together as a group.

Group Highlights:

Parents of Young Children- This year was our first time back to partnering with Baby's Best Chance in an all-day group setting. It has been wonderful to have this available to the community again, and it was very successful.

Walking Group- The families that attend this group are so happy that we have it available. It gives them something to look forward to on Wednesdays.

Li'l Explorers- This was our first year that we had enough funding to run this program all year. It was so wonderful to get to see families have fun and interact with each other and nature in all of the seasons! I feel so lucky that it is my job to get to see adults and children alike learn and play in the wonders of nature.

Nobody's Perfect- We were able to hold an evening session this year, and had more men attend then I have ever had. It was a great balance, the mothers were so happy to have their partners come, and the fathers were happy to get to interact and learn. It was also beautiful to see the families bond and make lasting connections.

Motherwise- The connections and bonds that are made in this group always humble me.

Riding the Waves of Life Podcast- I am very proud of my 'What You Wish You Had been Told Before Becoming a Parent' series that I published this year. I had listeners quote, '*I really needed to hear that today*.'

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### Just Call Me Dad Report



Hi! I'm Nathan and I run the "Just Call Me Dad" group! This is a group for Dads to hang out and create memories with their kids and at the same time coming together as Dads, and supporting each other in the challenges of parenting and life. It has been really cool seeing the friendships made within the group and the comradery between the Dads attending and supporting each other, and of course, whenever you get Dads together, there is always good food involved! Last year ended with smoked brisket and baked mac'n'cheese! (Yes it was good!). This year we will be continuing our group with monthly pool nights and pizza!



"I am so happy that there are so many wonderful programs here!"

"Thank you for engaging with us and caring... I feel like I have a gameplan to fall back on now, and that's encouraging."

### Safe Stay Shelter Manager Report



The Grand Forks Safe Stay Shelter is a low barrier, all gender and orientation shelter. It is now open for twenty-four hour support to our unhoused and vulnerable population. Safe Stay covers a service area from Christina Lake to Big White. It has been operated by Boundary Family Services Society organization for four years. We are currently working through our fifth year, with a high focus on community collaboration. As well as, support for participants and the unhoused vulnerable population. The Safe Stay Shelter management team has set up continuous meetings with community partners to provide on-site supports. These partners include the RCMP, EMS, ANKORS, Adult Mental Health and Substance Use (AMHSU), Interior Health, Circle of Indigenous Nations Society (COINS), Ministry of Social Development and Poverty reductions (MSDPR) and Service BC. The Safe Stay Shelter offers many other services including; three meals a day, hot and cold beverages, clothing, showers, laundry, self care/hygiene products, safe storage for personal items, harm reduction supplies, information, referrals, support, and connection to community via collaboration with our local bus system.

Kristin Tetlock Safe Stay Shelter Manager



### Raven Place Manager Report

I'm Alicia Unsworth the manager at Raven Place affordable housing development.

I tend to the general maintenance and most of the moving parts within the building, making sure everything is running smoothly.

We have had a quick turnover of new tenants in the building recently and are now full! I've had many people tell me it's a wonderful place to live. The people in the building treat each other like family always helping one another in the hard times and the good times. I've seen people offer rides, get people groceries, host dinners, take care of pets and each other when sick.

I'm so grateful to be able to support the people here.





## Our funders



Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) Ministry for Children & Family Development (MCFD) School District #51 Ministry of Justice BC Interior Health Authority United Way Legal Service Society of BC Kootenay Kids Kootenay Boundary Community Services Co-operative Phoenix Foundation