



# Phoenix Rising

## Time May Fly but so Does This Bird

~ by George Klukowski (GK)

### Inside this issue:

From the Board's Eye View	2
Camosun Awards	2
Race & Those Tricky	3
The Dangers of Sitting	3
Leaving the Nest	4
Coffee Anyone?	4
Municipal Pension Plan Update	5
Topping Up	5
The Other Eleven Months	6
Shiny Side Up	6
Goodlife Fitness Marathon Fundraising	6
Operation Trackshoes	7
Mapping Your Assets	8
Grammar, Punctuation, Proofreading	8
That's the Way	9

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**Krissi Spinoza, Director**

**Maureen Elworthy, Director**

As I burned through the Sawtooth Mountains of Idaho at 190 kph ... wait a second. Was I using my inside voice? Obviously, if I wasn't then my Ducati speedo must be faulty again. Let me try that one more time. As I cruised at the posted speed limit through the Sawtooth Mountains of Idaho this past summer, I began to reflect on how much had happened in the long months since we published our last newsletter back in August 2013. I remember being knee deep in lease forms, realtors, and lawyers as we negotiated a new home for the agency. Since that time, so much has occurred that it all seems to be a bit of a blur. Of course, it would be almost another 2 months before we nailed down a lease agreement that would see us pack up Store Street and move into McKenzie at the end of February of this year. That was a bit of a gong show, as we were treated to about 10 days of intermittent phone and internet service. There were times we could not log onto our servers nor answer a telephone call. Thankfully, we had loads of boxes to unpack and time to hound various IT service personnel.

Prior to that, we had our seasonal celebration at the Sticky Wicket and our employee service awards. That was a great time and it was particularly fun to connect with partners and significant others, some of whom I had never met and others I had not seen in years. It felt very much like a family evening. Just before that, we had just co-hosted the annual South Island Training Initiative conference as well as the first ever (to our knowledge) local conference for administrative support personnel working in the community social services sector. Both conferences were well attended and the overall feedback was exceptional.

It has continued to be a whirlwind since then, what with our preparations for our 4<sup>th</sup> CARF survey, the McKenzie location Open House, the Goodlife Fitness Marathon fundraising activities, a new collective

agreement, joining the Chamber of Commerce, and the departure of Program Coordinator Karen Basi, after 18 years in the 'hood. That's just the tip of the iceberg as so much more was and is always taking place behind the scenes on so many levels. Such is the reality of the typical non-profit in this fast-moving age of information and technology.

The trend is not likely to shift at any point in the foreseeable future. We have a new website to launch, a client information management database to acquire and set up, HR practices to reconfigure, our collective administrative load to define and troubleshoot, our 8<sup>th</sup> AGM to host, and a marathon to run. That's just for starters. Perhaps Arthur Gordon summed it up well in the closing to his book, *Memoirs of a Geisha*, "Whatever our struggles and triumphs, however we may suffer them, all too soon they bleed into a wash, just like watery ink on paper."



## From the Board's Eye View ~ by GK

Our Board of Directors has grown with the addition of two new members. We didn't need the watering can but we did need the sunshine, for both were drawn by the glow of the organization; that and our affiliation with Volunteer Victoria's Youth on Boards Project and our own Leann Finlay reaching into the Emerging Leaders Network in search of board prospects. As a result, we were able to welcome Krissi Spinoza this past May and Maureen Elworthy this past week to the Phoenix Board.

Krissi has served on boards before and is currently a Project Coordinator with the BC Healthy Communities. Her particular interests among others are fundraising and grant development. On a less formal note, Krissi has a wicked sense of humour, an engaging personality, an inquisitive nature, and a deep and meaningful relationship with her bicycle.

Maureen is new to boards but has an experienced hand at volunteering. She also happens to be the Manager of

Youthspace for NEED2 and a Master Trainer for the Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training or ASIST, as it is more familiarly known to us in the community. Maureen's interests are many, including youth work, volunteer recruitment and management, and program development. Maureen recently met the Board for the first time and based on what I observed, she fit right in. Maureen is quick to jump in and engage in meaningful conversations. She also has an excellent sense of humour and can match wits with Gil, which is no small feat, let me tell you.

Please take the time to say hello and welcome them both to Phoenix. On that note, I will be organizing a bit of a tour to introduce Krissi and Maureen to the agency staff and programs. If you have any ideas as to how you wish to engage with our newest board members as we go on tour, please let me know. I'm hoping to make the rounds in September.

None of knows what the next change is going to be, what unexpected opportunity is just around the corner, waiting a few months or a few years to change all the tenor of our lives. ~  
*Kathleen Norris*

## Camosun Awards ~ by GK

Once again, this year we had the pleasure of sponsoring awards for graduates of the Community, Family and Child Studies program and the Community Support Worker Education Assistant program. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend both ceremonies as they were scheduled during the CARF visit. Fortunately, I was able to attend the one on the afternoon of June 17, after which I delivered 9 boxes of evidence to the CARF survey team headquarters at Harbour Towers.

Camosun instructor and agency friend, Robin Fast, presented the Phoenix Human Services Award on our behalf to Kristina Vanlierop. I did have the honour of presenting the James Guthrie Memorial Award to Robin Wells. Robin was described as "a strong advocate for inclusion and person-centered supports. He is caring, intelligent, humorous and gregarious; you always know when he is in the room!!! He is a life-long learner with an infectious personality. As Robin moves into employment supporting people with disabilities, there is no doubt he will work with grit and determination to make the world more accessible and more inclusive."



Both Kristina and Robin wrote to us to express their appreciation for the awards. On behalf of the agency, I want to wish them the very best in their future endeavours in this field. Who knows? Perhaps our stars will cross paths again.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has. ~ *Margaret Meade*

## Race and Those Tricky Conversations ~ by GK

I was reading an article in the 'Tee' the other day about a couple from Bowen Island who adopted two children from Ghana. What struck me in particular were the challenges they began to experience as a mixed race family in terms of conversations they had with others about their family.

It reinforced what I have long known which is that we are not particularly adept at having effective conversations when remarks are made that may have discriminatory connota-

tions, particularly in relation to race. This of course applies equally to the workplace as it does to the larger community.

As I read on, the mother of the two children mentioned that her perspective on such conversations was akin to blogger Jay Smooth, particularly his video entitled 'How To Tell People They Sound Racist'. So I took a few moments to check out the short YouTube video (<http://youtu.be/bOTi-gkJiXc>) and found some common sense I thought I would share with you. I encourage you to have a look!!

You don't fight racism with racism, the best way to fight racism is with solidarity. ~

*Bobby Seale*

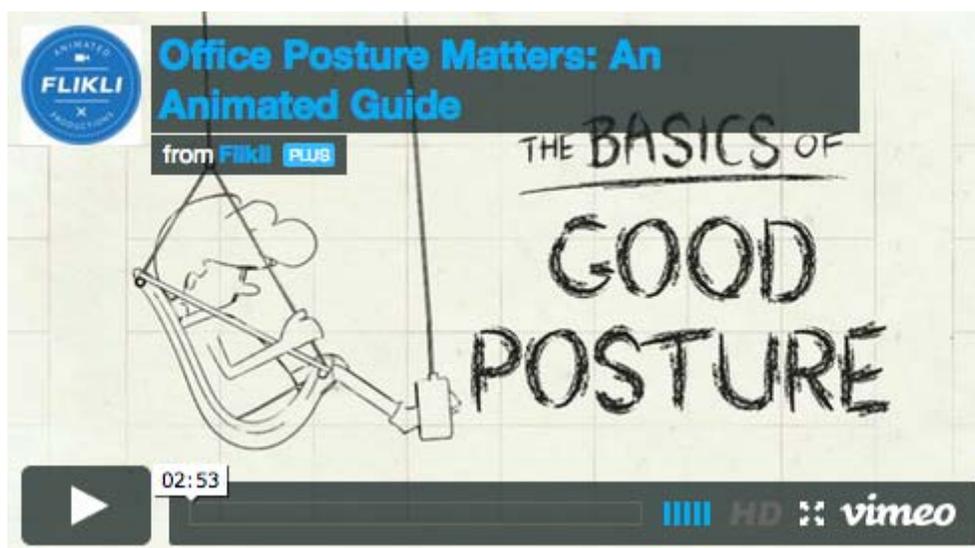
I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality...I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word. ~

*Martin Luther King, Jr.*

## The Dangers of Sitting ~ by GK

This video is courtesy of my chiropractor's newsletter. Have a look!!

Did you know sitting is the new smoking? More and more studies are showing the nasty side effects of sitting. Here is a great video showing how good posture can affect your health.



If you can't view the video above, please go to our website to watch it: <http://vimeo.com/71441709>

P.S. For additional info, CBC's Quirks and Quarks did a feature on the issue that you can view at <http://www.cbc.ca/quirks/2014/03/22/2014-03-22-1/>

Don't forget - we have a couple of standing workstations at McKenzie (Lorraine needs some company). Also, Susie Girling, our Board President, works in a standing-only office and is a good source of information on the subject. Happy Moving About!!

## Leaving the Nest ~ by GK

On July 16, many of us gathered to bid a fond farewell to the esteemed Karen Basi. After 18 years, Karen decided it was time to reinvent the rest of her life and boldly went on her way. This soft-spoken, openhearted, fiercely passionate individual gave to the marrow for her staff and this organization. She had earned her place amongst the icons of Phoenix. That she is a very special person was abundantly evident as some of the well-wishers took the opportunity to say a few words about Ms. Basi. What was also abundantly evident was that she was valued in the organization and throughout the community for her accomplishments and for her caring and collegial essence. Behind many of the words was a deep respect, admiration, and even love for an individual who touched many lives in the best possible way.

Her absence will be keenly felt, for her influence was everywhere and with everyone, for practically everything. Karen was not one to view the scene from the periphery. She was 'stuck in' as the European footballers would say. Karen wanted to influence the life around her. She was an astute observer of people and her big heart and curious soul caused her to probe against the mettle of all of whom she met. At the end of the day, she made a community of admiring and devoted friends and colleagues.

If there is a silver lining here, it is that Karen is on a path of her own choice and her own making and that while she forges this new path, she remains a friend to many of us. After all, Ms. Basi has simply left the nest but not the family. Finally, here's a little poetic dedication to Karen that also applies to the rest of us:

*He who binds to himself a joy  
Does the winged life destroy;  
But he who kisses the joy as it flies  
Lives in eternity's sun rise.*

(from 'Eternity' by William Blake)



It is good to have an end to journey toward, but it is the journey that matters in the end. ~ Ursula K. Le Guin

Friends are those rare people who ask how you are and then wait for the answer. ~ unknown

## Coffee Anyone? ~ by Karlee Grant

The Phoenix Coffee club is an opportunity for all staff, management, and board members to get together to share ideas, share concerns, or to gain perspective of what each level and program of the agency does on a daily basis. It's not like other committees. Rather than having designated individuals on this committee, we encourage staff to attend one, two, or as many of the meetings as they would like to attend. It does not have to be every month and you can drop in for whatever time you can spare, but if you have the time and want to share ideas, please feel free to join us! The next meeting is September 16, 2:15 p.m. at the Joan Crescent location. Hope to see you there!



## Municipal Pension Plan Update ~by Joan Chalmers

If you were employed with Phoenix Human Services and joined the Pension Plan on April 1, 2010, you have up to 5 years to purchase all or part of your past pensionable service with the same employer. The deadline to buy your past pension service from the Municipal Pension Plan (MPP) is **March 31, 2015**.

Your pension is a guaranteed retirement income for as long as you live. It is a defined benefit pension with many advantages, including predictability, stability, and low administration costs. Currently the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and Old Age Security (OAS) will form the basis of your retirement income, but they are unlikely to replace enough of the income you were earning before you retired. By buying past service, you would be increasing your monthly income.



The first step to purchasing past service is to get an estimate of the cost. The MPP can provide you with an individualized cost estimate. By asking for an estimate, you have no obligation to purchase any past service. You can find the application and additional information at [www.pensionsbc.ca](http://www.pensionsbc.ca). Once you have completed the application, drop it off to Joan or Linda and we will complete the employer's portion and fax it off. MPP will process the application and inform you directly on the costs and will outline the next steps to be taken if you want to pursue the purchase. This is a decision only you can make. It is always a good idea to seek financial advice from someone you trust to help you to determine if buying back service is a sound investment for you.

Intoxication: Euphoria at getting a tax refund, which lasts until you realize it was your money to begin with. ~ from *Washington Post word contest*



The real measure of your wealth is how much you'd be worth if you lost all your money. ~ *unknown*.

## Topping Up ~by GK

We have had a number of questions recently about available casual work and eligibility for full and part-time regular staff to pick up additional work. In an effort to shed some light on the subject, here is some information from the collective agreement.

Article 14.2 (Hours of Work) covers this issue and here are the relevant clauses:

"14.2 (e) To ensure efficient and effective service delivery within a climate of fairness, current arrangements regarding the assignment of additional hours will continue until such time as local issue negotiations on this matter are complete. If no agreed upon arrangements exists the following will apply:

(1) Additional hours up to the allowable straight-time maximum will be offered to employees by seniority in the following sequential order:

- (i) full-time employees
- (ii) part-time employees

(2) Regular employees will be offered additional hours within their classification and worksite before qualified regular employees at other programmes/worksites (see local issues) in that classification. Remaining additional hours will be offered to qualified regular employees in other classifications.

(4) Regular employees requesting additional hours must give the Employer written notice of their desire to work additional hours and their availability."

The most important thing to remember is that you absolutely need a letter indicating that you are requesting to be topped up. This letter will need to include your availability for top ups and it will be kept on your personnel file. You need to let your Coordinator know if your availability changes. Second, you can only top up to a maximum of 40 hours. This also applies to those of you who may have signed a form indicating that you would be willing to work up to 6 days in a week. Finally, you will need to consult the local issues agreement to see what the notification parameters are for responding to calls regarding available work. Please ask your Coordinator for a copy.

I hope that gives you a bit more to go on, should you wish to take on some additional work. If you have any questions about the interpretation of Article 14.2 as it pertains to topping up, I would be happy to answer them for you.

## The Other Eleven Months

~ by GK

It has been a while since we last updated you on the state of affairs in the TOEM fund. As of the fiscal year end (March 31, 2014), we had a balance of \$13,624. TOEM expenditures for the year amounted to \$3,816 (that's a whopping 125% increase over the same period in 2012-13).

In 2013-14, some examples of how TOEM funds were used include creating a Life Book to capture personal and family memories, providing a new mattress and bedding for an adult living in low-income circumstances, enrolling a client in a nature-based counselling experience, providing emergency groceries, offering free bus tickets, purchasing a spa treatment as a grad gift, purchasing baseball equipment to enable a young person to join a team, and sending a client on a key field trip that was crucial to his ongoing development that neither he nor his family could otherwise afford.

Clearly, TOEM has been an important asset for many of our clients. However, while our expenditures have been rising, our Smile Card funds have been dwindling. In fiscal 2012-13, the Smile Card contributions were \$1288.80. In this past fiscal, they were down to \$693.71 or a reduction of 46%. At this rate, it is going to be difficult to keep the fund sustainable looking down the road. Clearly, we will have to find some core funding to keep TOEM afloat.

In the meantime, I would encourage those of you who have not yet joined the Smile Card program to please do so and to remind those of you who have joined to please try to remember to use the card when you shop at Thrifty Foods. Thanks, everybody!!

Nobody can do everything, but everyone can do something. ~ *unknown*

## Thank You!

*A sincere "thank you" to the following who generously donated prizes for our fundraising raffle baskets:*

*Cycles West  
Borden Mercantile  
North Park Bicycle Shop  
Goldstream Bicycles  
The Land Conservancy  
The Butchart Gardens*



## Shiny Side Up ~by GK

Just a reminder that we are taking applications for the 'Shiny Side Up' fund until September 30, 2014. We have \$978.11 in that fund and are itching to get those funds out to one of the many children and/or youth with whom we work. The criteria for the fund include 1) item or activity must have a major impact on the person's quality of life, 2) if request is for an activity, it must be relatively short in duration (i.e. 6 months or less) and will have a demonstrable long-term benefit for the person, and 3) the request needs to be greater than \$500 but less than \$1000 (actually \$978.11). Finally, only one application will be selected. Julie and Dawn have the application forms if you need one. Please forward your applications to me (gklukowski@phoenixhumanservices.org). A winner will be announced on Friday October 10, 2014. Good luck!!

## Goodlife Fitness Marathon Fundraising

There is still time to register for participation in the race in the 8K, the half marathon, or full marathon. Register at [www.runvictoriamarathon.com](http://www.runvictoriamarathon.com).

If you haven't already seen the flyers posted around the McKenzie and Joan Crescent offices, here's a quick update on what's happening.

Raffle: draw date October 7. Five gift baskets to be won! One ticket is \$2; book of tickets is \$20. Tickets available from Alison (amarques@phoenixhumanservices.org).

Fernwood Inn Pub Night: Monday, September 15, starting at 6:00 p.m. Tickets are \$20 each and include appetizers and entry into door prize draws! Tickets available from Julie or Lois.

Bake Sale: Wednesday, September 24, at McKenzie office, from noon to 1:30 p.m. Bakers, contact Lorraine for details.

More events to come; details to be announced.



## Operation Trackshoes ~ by Nicole Coutts

"What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead." - Nelson Mandela

Operation Trackshoes is a non-profit society that relies heavily on community support in the form of donations from many local businesses as well the time and talents of approximately 600 volunteers in order to organize this amazing sporting event for individuals with developmental disabilities.

This is the third consecutive year that our Children and Youth with Special Needs team (formerly known as CLS Children) has participated. We have become such valuable volunteers that when we proactively petitioned to secure an outdoor event, we were told by an organizer that there was no way he was giving us up. Although initially a bit disappointed, upon reflection, it was clear he recognized our proficiency with operating the stopwatches!

Team members Karlee, Desiree, Rebecca, and I, along with friends and family members, came together for two hours to share in the triumphs of athletes young, and young-at-heart, who, when the bell went off, put everything they had into their swim. We also had the good fortune to provide well-wishes and congratulations to those we have had the opportunity to support over the years.

I understand what it means to have an opportunity to challenge myself and the rewards of accomplishment and confidence that come from doing something I never thought I could. I am a recreational runner and have experienced firsthand the significance of community support and its impact. In so many events I have been encouraged by total strangers who kindly told me that I looked "great" when I clearly did not, assured me that I was "almost there", and cheered when I went past them as if they were there just for me. Whether we participate, cheer, or volunteer, athletic events create a venue to acknowledge the strength of the human spirit and provide a reason for strangers, families, and communities to support one another in a positive way.

I truly appreciate that there are events such as Operation Trackshoes and that I am fortunate enough to be able to give back a bit of what others have given to me. Watching each athlete, I was reminded in a very profound way that we are all more alike than we are different. We hope that many of you will join us next June for this amazing experience.

### Program Name Change

With all the buzz of accreditation, fundraising for the GoodLife Fitness Marathon, and the general anticipation of long weekends and cool beverages on the local patios, a significant change may have gone unnoticed. The program formally known as "Community Living Services for Children" was re-named "Services for Children and Youth with Special Needs."

What does this mean you ask? Well, it means that after almost 14 years of using one name on an almost daily basis, I am going to have to work hard to get the new one to roll off my tongue as easily. But while some things change, others stay the same, and more significant than a new name are those who represent the name and that group of dedicated individuals remains the same.

## 2014 Annual General Meeting

Phoenix will be having its Annual General Meeting on Thursday, October 16, 2014. It will be held at 1095 McKenzie Avenue, 4<sup>th</sup> floor, with a meet and greet from 4:00 - 5:00 p.m., and the meeting from 5:00 - 6:00 p.m. Invitations to our community partners will be sent closer to the meeting date. All staff are welcome to attend.



*Phoenix  
Human Services  
Association*

**250-383-4821**

1095 McKenzie Avenue  
(4th Floor)  
Victoria, BC  
V8P 2L5

**Fax: 250-386-7142**

*The opinions expressed by those interviewed or those contributing are not necessarily those of Phoenix Human Services Association or its management.*

## Mapping Your Assets ~ by GK

A reminder to please complete your asset map questionnaire ASAP and send to Karlee (kgrant@phoenixhumanservices.org). The asset map will be collated by the Diversity Committee and used, among other things, as a springboard for Lunch and Learn trainings, two of which are already scheduled for the fall, Trans\*Inclusion (September 16, 11-1) and Psychotic Disorders (October 15, 1-2:30).

While these two events have not arisen from the agency asset map because we don't have enough responses at this time, the next series of Lunch and Learns will be planned on the basis of themes arising from the asset map. At this point, we will feature a training every month until the end of the year, after which we'll review the whole process to see whether it is meeting our needs in terms of content and also cross-pollination of agency staff and ideas.

The asset map is a great idea and especially exciting given that, for the first time, we will be able to see, understand, and keep track of the assets of the agency's personnel at a glance and understand our strengths and resources to better inform us about what we need and how we can get there. As my pappy used to say, "Let's get it done."

## Punctuation, Proof-reading, & Grammar

~by Julie Briant

Are you not sure how much proofreading, good grammar, and punctuation make a difference? Here are some examples:

- It takes many ingredients to make Burger King great but the secret ingredient is our people.
- Sign in laundromat: "Automatic washing machine. Please remove all your clothes when the lights go out."
- A student at the University of Southampton (UK): "Tackling climate change will require an unpresidented response."
- The Loire valley inspired the chef to cook delicacies such as salmon, elves, and lamprey.

Take a moment to proofread what you've written. It lets you see if you've included everything you want in the document and will help you catch typos, and punctuation and grammatical mistakes. After all, you don't want something like this to happen: "Our teachers make a diffrance." (sign at Portage Community Education Center - USA)



**ONEDAY**  
together  
**SEPT 6th**  
ONEDAY

From 11:00am to 3:00pm at Topaz Park in Victoria, there will be live music and performances on stage, children's Fun Zone, BBQ lunch, refreshments, arts and crafts Marketplace, celebrity kickball game, and special guests.

One Day is a day to celebrate the diversity that exists in our communities; where citizens - young and old - can dance together, play together, and eat together. One Day, We are One. . .

For more information visit:  
[www.onedaytogether.com](http://www.onedaytogether.com) and find us on at the group: One Day

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## “That’s the Way, uh huh uh huh, I Like it”

~ by GK

Congratulations Phoenix peeps!! You are the proud recipients of a 3 year accreditation award from CARF. Here’s a bit of what CARF had to say about you:

“The commitment, passion, dedication and skill of the staff members are remarkable. Despite the challenges of the past three years, including transitioning in another agency and financial challenges, the staff members remain dedicated to the mission of the organization. The staff members together serve as a trademark of the organization and provide a positive role model for the clients and their families.”

“Clients and families give high praises to the organization. During the survey process, they shared comments about how wonderful the staff members are in working with them and how safe they feel in their programs. Many spoke of the excellent communication and tremendous personalized support received, which has resulted in positive outcomes within their families.”

“The organization has a positive presence within the community and utilizes community resources to assist clients. Community collaborations are evidenced in the many efforts to both enhance and streamline services to clients.”

Not much else to say except:

**“Great work, you made the difference, wow, thanks you, way to go, brilliant, impressive, beautiful, congrats, you did us proud, I’m proud of you, are you good or what?, the stuff of champions, simply superb, poetry in motion, class act, tremendous job, the cat’s whiskers, I just can’t thank you enough, what a group of superstars!!”**

Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishment toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results. ~ *Andrew Carnegie*



Today you are You,  
that is truer than  
true. There is no one  
alive Youer than You.  
You are you. Now,  
isn't that pleasant? ~  
*Dr. Seuss*



Why do bananas  
wear sunscreen?  
Because they peel!



Common sense and a  
sense of humour are  
the same thing, moving  
at different speeds. A  
sense of humour is just  
common sense,  
dancing. ~ *William  
James*