



*Phoenix*  
*Human Services Association*

**14<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**September 8, 2020**

**1095 McKenzie Avenue  
Victoria, BC V8P 2L5  
and via Zoom**

ACCREDITED BY THE COMMISSION ON ACCREDITATION OF REHABILITATION FACILITIES



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## **14<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AGENDA**

**1095 McKenzie Avenue, Fourth Floor, Victoria, BC V8P 2L5  
and via Zoom  
Tuesday, September 8, 2020**

**4:00 – 5:00 Meet and Greet**

**5:00 – 6:00 Business Meeting**

- 1. Welcome to Members and Guests**
- 2. Call meeting to order**
- 3. Establish Quorum**
- 4. Approval of Agenda**
- 5. Approval of previous Minutes**
- 6. Business arising from previous Minutes**
- 7. Presentation of the President's Report**
- 8. Motion to adopt the President's Report**
- 9. Presentation of the Auditor's Report**
- 10. Motion to adopt the Auditor's Report**
- 11. Appointment of the Auditor**
- 12. Presentation of the Executive Report**
- 13. Motion to adopt the Executive Report**
- 14. Other Business**
- 15. Election of Directors**
- 16. Motion to Adjourn**

# **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

*September 8, 2020*

Welcome to the AGM of Phoenix Human Services.

We began the last 12 months with enthusiasm and expectation of building on the association's successful past. We were engaged in the future and what Phoenix would become using our Strategic Planning platform. We were using all staff meetings to meld operations and to get to know one another better. We were encouraged by these meetings and looking forward to continuing and expanding all services for the people we serve.

The COVID arrival kicked the ladder out from under us. Everything changed in our landscape except:

- We became fluid in our delivery method of services
- We supported each other
- We invented methods of safety
- We looked at how we would continue in the “new normal”
- We remained positive and resourceful

The Board of Directors were kept informed and provided support where we could. Your ED has been an excellent conduit between you and the Board with all questions asked and answered. We are all extremely proud of the work Scott and Joan have done steering the ship through major and minor storms.

The next year will hopefully be more rebuilding as opposed to navigating new territory although you have all shown how adept you are to providing our clients with what they need under any circumstance.

Let's hope that “2020 by Stephen King” is behind us and the lessons learned will serve us well. We are all in this together and stronger for it.

Be safe, be kind and be calm.

Patti Faulconbridge  
Board President

## **MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

This past year marked my first year with this fantastic Phoenix team and I am so pleased to be part of the great work we do here. My goal this past year was to learn about our programs, our partners and our potential. Being new to the region, I also had to do a lot of learning about the communities we are working in. At times, my brain was pretty tired from the amount of information I was absorbing. I also got lost a few times trying to navigate my way around town, but thanks to Google maps I managed to find my way. It's important to laugh at oneself sometimes – it got me through the awkward moments.

I am extremely appreciative to the members of our team for their patience while I did my best to get up-to-speed. I feel we accomplished a lot this past year during this process. Some highlights for me include our staff survey and follow-up work, the good work of each of our committees, our all-staff training day, our strategic planning work and our staff get-togethers such as our summer BBQ, our Phoenix Foodie nights and a pretty rockin' Holiday Bash. Because "Work Hard"....needs a "Play Hard" to keep the balance.

Then COVID-19 arrived and our team was tested in a big way. The overall concern for those we serve was paramount for our staff and I am so pleased to report seeing so many inspiring examples of staff finding ways to ensure everyone in our orbit was ok. I also have to mention our management team and their fantastic work in these challenging times. Everyone stepped up and contributed. I am grateful to be working with these fine people. They make coming to work, even in a world-wide pandemic, an enjoyable experience.

I had expected to be off to a good 2020-2021 clip on our strategic planning work, but that has slowed while we adapt to our new COVID realities. That said, I know our agency will find ways to thrive in the challenging time ahead. We have resolve. We have passionate people. We have much to look forward to.

Scott Bradford  
Executive Director

# PROGRAM UPDATES

## CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY PROGRAMS

### FAMILY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

The Family Development Teams that are overseen by this Program Manager encompass Core Victoria, West Shore, Foundations Parenting Program and the Out of Care Support Program. Service was provided to 179 families this year (an increase of 8% from last year) and 95 new referrals were placed for the reporting period of April 1, 2019 to March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020. In addition, this included service interventions designed to enhance the lives of 298 children that had come to the attention of the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). The program continues to be at capacity with referrals waiting and being prioritized by MCFD Team Leaders during our monthly liaison meetings. We continue to have strong collaborative working relationships with our funders from the Contract Manager and the Team Leaders, to the individual Social Workers. These Family Development Programs interface with 7 different regional MCFD Team Leaders, their Social Workers, as well as the Regional Domestic Violence Unit (RDVU) Social Worker, which keeps us all busy.

#### **Core Victoria Team (under 12)**

The Family Development Program continues to be very busy; the program provides service to a variety of geographical areas for the Core Victoria region. We have 3 Family Development Teams assigned to the Core Victoria Area, with one team consisting of 2.25 FTEs assigned to the Saanich MCFD Team and the other 3.75 pooled to provide service to 2 of the other MCFD Teams that serve all of Core Victoria from Fernwood to View Royal. The Core Victoria Team has been very busy this year as they provided service to 89 families, which was an increase from the previous year of 83, and placed 53 new referrals. The team continues to rise to the challenge of the volume and intensity of the demands of the program. They took on extra duties to ensure that service always ran smoothly, and continued to provide exemplary service to the clients we serve. In addition to the referrals from the allocated MCFD Teams, referrals were again accepted from the MCFD Regional Domestic Violence Program and service was provided above and beyond their regular referred caseloads.

#### **Out of Care Provider Program (Regional)**

The Out of Care Provider (OCP) Program consists of 1 FTE that provides voluntary support to caregivers (extended family and friends) who are caring for children that have been placed in their care by MCFD with the potential outcome of permanency in those homes. The OCP program has moved to a regional program assigned to the MCFD Resource Team, and is currently providing services to caregivers from Sooke, the Malahat to Saltspring Island. This change quickly increased the number of caregivers being referred and has greatly increased the requests for service from this program. The program provided service to 29 caregivers in comparison to 22 last year and accepted 15 new referrals. The program continues to be in high demand and there have been requests with MCFD Resource personnel to broaden service to more of the outlying Gulf Islands, and discussions have been initiated involving the desire to increase staffing to accommodate capacity.

## **West Shore Team (0-19)**

The West Shore Team consists of 4.5 Family Development Counsellors assigned to 2 MCFD Teams who have pooled their resources to have global access to the FDCs. Within the allotted FDCs, one FT position is assigned to the Foundations Parenting Program, which allows the other 3.5 FTEs to provide service to the 2 MCFD Teams. Overall, the 3.5 FTEs provided service to 43 families by either providing supervised visits or working on reducing identified risks within the family home, which is a slight increase over last year. This team also runs the Foundations Parenting Program with 2 FDCs facilitating the program this year, both providing part time hours to the equivalent of 1 FTE. This program runs 3 times a year for 10 weeks and provided service to 18 individuals last year. This parenting program is highly regarded by the West Shore MCFD Teams and well received by the participants that are referred by the Social Workers. The West Shore Team continues to see a vast increase in referrals to the FD program, which has resulted in long wait times for services; this appears to be a trend that may continue as the population for that region is quickly expanding.

### **Overview:**

In addition, the FDC program continues to represent our agency across a variety of venues. We are represented on the Camosun College Community, Family and Child Studies Advisory Committee, the Greater Victoria Shared Assessment Committee, Children's Foundation OSH and Tenancy meeting, the Wale Road Community Kitchen Committee and the Parking Lot Committee at the Children's Foundation. Within the agency, the program has representation on various agency committees including Health and Safety, Joint Labour Management, Quality Assurance, and Wellness.

New initiatives for this year included a West Shore FDC representing this agency at the Western Communities Food Security Round table, which is working to enhance the coordination and optimization of meeting the food security needs across the Western Communities. In addition, the program has been involved with other community partners from the West Shore to engage in the preliminary stages of implementing a Neighbourhood House in the Western Communities (this has currently been put on hold due to COVID-19).

Overall, this has been a very tumultuous year in the program, starting last fall with the passing of one of the agency and FD program's long-standing and much beloved staff members, Rob Hunter. Rob worked on the West Shore FD Team for many years and is sorely missed by his coworkers, this program manager and across the agency. This was followed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the devastating impact upon our families and staff. But in true FD fashion, the teams rose to the challenge and immediately adapted service to wellness checks (via phone) and in person food delivery to ensure our families were managing the best they could under the circumstances, while we continued to accept new referrals.

At this time, I would again like to thank all the staff within this program who continue to demonstrate a commitment to the work we do and have gone above and beyond to ensure the programs run smoothly, while practicing with professionalism and integrity. This was evidenced by their continued efforts to support their families during unprecedented times during a pandemic. It has proven to be a very challenging time and the staff have demonstrated their strength and resiliency by quickly adapting service delivery and continuing to advocate for the needs of their families while having to adjust themselves to a worldwide epidemic.

Also, I would like to thank all of the staff that have supported this agency through various agency committees such as Health and Safety, Joint Labour Management, Wellness, and Quality Assurance. I would like to acknowledge that the success of this program is due to the hard work and diligence that each of the Family Development Counsellors bring in delivery service and representing the agency both internally and externally.

*Written by Laurie Hill  
Program Manager  
Family Development Programs*



## **CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH SPECIAL NEEDS PROGRAMS**

The Children and Youth with Special Needs (CYSN) program is a busy team that consists of 6 FTEs, along with 1 part-time staff. The program has been fully staffed since the fall of 2019. In addition to our regular staff, two of our casual staff ran an additional group in the fall/winter 2019.

This has been an unusual year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, however, in the face of all the challenges that came with COVID-19, it also provided opportunities to try some new ways to deliver our services. Although we look forward to a time when we can return to our usual way of doing things, we anticipate maintaining online service as it has been proven to be beneficial when providing service to those who have barriers to accessing services; such as transportation or distance. Unfortunately, this year we had to cancel our Summer Fun program due to concerns about keeping staff and participants healthy and safe. This was a very difficult decision because we understood the impact that not having the service would have on families. There was a lot of disappointment expressed; however, families understood that the decision was made in the best interest of participant, staff and community health and safety.

This past year, groups have been running out of all three PHSA locations (Joan Crescent, Wale Road, and McKenzie Avenue). We ran a total of 8 groups and 3 rounds of Transition Workshops between September 2019 and August 2020. In response to the pandemic, we extended most of our groups until late June, added an online games group in the late spring and ran an additional round of Transition Workshops, over the summer. Our Transition Workshops have continued to grow and topics continue to be adjusted based on feedback from participants and their families. With COVID-19 remaining on the horizon, we are looking to expand our offering for Transition Workshops as there was much success with providing them online during the spring and summer. In addition, we are looking at the upcoming fall and winter and how best to continue to offer online groups, or small in-person, physically distanced groups.

We have continued to see many participants who have a co-occurring mental health diagnosis such as anxiety and/or depression. Increasingly, we are seeing referrals to the CYSN program which consist of complex children and youth who are at risk and struggling due to mental health, poverty, and/or addictions. The CYSN team continues to educate themselves and seek out training, support and resources for those who have been living with co-occurring diagnoses. In some instances, we have seen that the pandemic and isolation has exacerbated the mental health conditions of some participants and families. In response to this, the CYSN team has offered wellness checks and support to access resources to those on our existing caseloads and to former participants that were identified as being at risk by either internal staff or Children and Youth with Special Needs Social Workers.

Overall, we served 126 clients in 2019/2020 (38 through Individual Services and 88 through Group Services), which is similar to previous years. Our plan this year is to continue to expand on the group services we offer, as groups are most often identified as the greatest need by our participants, their families and their support systems.

Our CYSN team continues to be a strong team that has excellent relationships with participants, their families and our community partners. The team is active within Phoenix, with team members participating in committee work and identifying opportunities to move both our program and the agency forward. When the pandemic first impacted the ability to provide in-person service, the CYSN team was able to pivot quickly to the online format, developing programming to fill the gaps left during the period of

quarantine. Staff found online games, videos, museum tours, and many other online activities that they could engage their individuals and their groups in. Although there were many challenges along the way, they were able to respond and maintain those important connections to the children, youth and families that they support. They truly are a fantastic group of people committed to the participants and the services that they provide!

*Written by Cheryl Sanders  
Program Manager  
Children and Youth with Special Needs Programs*

## **MENTAL HEALTH OUTREACH TEAM PROGRAM**

The Mental Health Outreach Program (MHOT) has had another successful year. This success is credited to the rich background and expertise of its team members. The Family Development Counsellors bring knowledge, kindness and creativity to the table to ensure that each client can benefit from the counselling opportunities and develop skills for coping, resilience and growth.

The team is very well connected in the community with partner agencies and other service providers, and is always looking for ways to expand their professional circle to better support their clients.

Staff are dedicated to the process of ongoing professional development and were pleased when the Ministry of Children and Family Development invited the team again this year to attend their quarterly workshops and network opportunities.

Collectively, the team worked with 83 clients this past year. The team saw 45 new clients, and 38 clients transitioned. The average length of service engagement was 11 months, 2 months less than last year.

Our referral sources remained the same, though there were some differences noticed in the distribution. Where last year 64% of the referrals came from the Ministry's Child and Youth Mental Health clinicians, this year that number went down to 40%, while we saw a 15% increase in referrals from other mental health resources. Combined, they still make up the bulk of our referral agents (71%). The remainder of referrals come from schools (9%), self-referrals (13%) and from the Ministry's Protection and Guardianship streams (7%).

Our waitlist is kept at the Saanich Child and Youth Mental Health Office, where all referrals for MHOT are being screened for appropriateness for the service and put on a waiting list.

Anxiety disorders make up 42% of the mental health presentation in youth referred, with a high number of clients who are unable to attend school related to their often debilitating anxiety. Frequently, those youth have shifted their time previously spent on education to online gaming for the majority of the day and sometimes through the night. This has led to practitioners having to adjust in terms of the pace of service delivery as motivation for change is commonly low.

Hyperactivity Attention Deficit Disorder, mood disorders, and in smaller numbers Autism Spectrum Disorder and trauma related symptomatology make up the bulk of the remaining diagnoses.

Last year, new leadership was brought into the agency just prior to the start of this reporting period. This has proven to be a positive experience for the agency in general, as well as for the MHOT program. Besides a strong commitment to excellence in service, the Executive Director brings a focus on overall staff satisfaction, which has been very well received by the MHOT team.

At the end of this reporting period, we are preparing for our next CARF survey aspiring to our next 3 years of accreditation.

*Written by Sabine Vanderispaillie  
Program Manager  
Mental Health Outreach Team*

## **YOUTH SERVICES PROGRAMS**

### **Youth Protection and Guardianship Services**

The Youth Services Program consists of 3 full time Family Counsellors and a Program Manager.

The program works with referrals from the Ministry of Children and Family Development, more specifically from the Core Victoria office's Youth Guardianship and Youth Protection.

The Youth Protection stream reflects the focus on skill development for parents to facilitate increased stability and/or maintenance in the family, as opposed to a focus on youth skill development and general support for youth in the Guardianship stream.

The Family Counsellors worked with 35 youth/families over the past year. Of these files, 17 files transitioned (3 for Youth Guardianship, 13 for Youth Protection), while we welcomed 8 new referrals (0 from Youth Guardianship, 8 from Youth Protection). Two additional referrals did not materialize in service and were withdrawn by the referral agent.

The trend continues from previous years, where we receive referrals predominantly from the Youth Protection stream. This is somewhat expected, as staff can often remain involved until the youth ages out of the system, while Youth Protection files often close when safety concerns are no longer an issue and family dynamics have stabilized.

The level of complexity of the files is quite high, with staff often having to start working with youth while they are hospitalized for mental health assessment/treatment. This means there can be a delay in goal-directed service; however, time is used productively building relationships as a solid foundation for the work ahead.

Another trend that appears to continue to grow is the use of hard drugs within this client population and the culture and lifestyle that often comes with it, putting them in high risk situations such as being homeless and being exploited.

The staff is well-connected with partner agencies and regularly meet as a support and advocate for their clients in multidisciplinary meetings. The passion for the work in the field and the efforts put forward by this team to support the youth and families is tremendous.

As I write this update, we have been hearing about a pending pandemic to hit the country and are starting to make preparations for alternative ways of providing ongoing quality service

*Written by Sabine Vanderispailie  
Program Manager  
Youth Services Team*

## ADULT PROGRAMS

### COMMUNITY LIVING SERVICES FOR ADULTS – COMMUNITY INCLUSION AND OUTREACH

The 2019-2020 year for Community Living Services for Adults began with enthusiasm for a group program we were planning for young adults over the summer. In 2018, over half of our individuals under age 25 had identified “making friends and social connections” as a personal goal. However, most of the individuals we serve have multiple challenges developing and maintaining friendships independently. Many depend on supports, other friends, or caregivers to facilitate all of their social activities. In response to this, CLS Adults proposed and piloted a Young Adults social group. This group was initiated by staff, who noted the desire for friendships among our young adult clients.

Individuals and staff who participated in our program considered it a success. The group met to play board games, had cooking classes, and went go-karting, among other activities. It seemed that activity based programming, rather than unstructured meet-ups, serves to deepen relationships between participants and help create lasting friendships. Following the success of the summer group, in November we piloted an adapted Crossfit class for people of mixed abilities. It is clear that there is client appetite for social activities in group settings. In the New Year we started a Tuesday afternoon Art Group, which was shifted to an online Art Group later in the spring.

During these pilot programs, we observed that true community inclusion is not having a support worker direct a diversely-abled individual, but a community instructor welcoming diversity in a creative way. Community members are keen to be inclusive, but often don't know how. Support workers can become ‘connectors’ and facilitate the new relationship between individuals we serve and their neighbours in the community. In the future, we want to pursue grant funding to hire community instructors to teach in their fields of expertise and provide essential connections and skill building for persons served. The funding would cover staffing for support workers and cover program costs of community activities (fitness, art, hobbies, etc.) that might otherwise be financially inaccessible.

Our current Group programs are continually full with a short waitlist, and Individual Services fluctuates with the needs of the community and available funding through CLBC. This has kept numbers relatively stable over the past few years; however, the program is vulnerable if the clientele numbers decrease, as individuals are self-referred once funding is approved through CLBC. Possibilities for expansion include studying fee-for-service models and increasing community awareness through media presence and advertising/marketing.

Generally, CLS personnel and persons served are a stable group; however, each year brings a few new changes. One of our fulltime staff moved away from Victoria in October. Due to a small decrease in client hours we did not fill the position with a new hire, but distributed the hours between current regular and casual staff. We have gained some new clients and seen a few leave as well. With sadness, we acknowledge the deaths of two of our participants in the past year.

In early September, the CLS team took an overdue team building day together. We enjoyed a tour of the Robert Bateman Centre, a scavenger hunt downtown, and a Q-and-A session with our CLBC Analyst. In November, we attended an all-staff Phoenix training day featuring an external speaker and internal presentations by each of the programs.

Both days were a benefit and encouragement to the team. Barring future pandemics, we plan for both to continue as annual events in the future.

Christmas saw a series of small parties for groupings of friends and peers, including a Christmas rendition of an increasingly popular painting party. The painting party is hosted every few months by one of our Community Inclusion participants and their regular worker in the McKenzie office board room. Persons served, as well as office staff and managers, look forward to these gatherings.

Housing remains precarious for a number of individuals, and has been a particular area of need in recent years. This year, through advocacy and perseverance, four individuals were moved into secure housing to meet their increasing support needs. All have seen an increase in quality of life after the moves.

This was a year of trying new things and adjusting programming to client needs. While at present we have taken a detour from normal life during the COVID-19 pandemic, we are still dreaming about future programs and continue to offer effective, meaningful service to those we serve.

*Written by Beth Cowin  
Program Manager  
Community Living Services for Adults*

## **COMMUNITY LIVING SERVICES FOR ADULTS – COMMUNITY INCLUSION DAY PROGRAMS**

Phoenix Human Services offers three Community Inclusion programs that are tailored to meet the needs of the individuals served. Programming is focused on helping participants achieve their goals, increase their independence, develop new skills and be active members of the community they live in. Programs are based out of the Joan Crescent building with a majority of the activities taking place in the community.

In 2018-2019, the Community Inclusion Day Programs provided services for 33 individuals. Participants enjoyed activities such as sensory and music therapy, dance and music programs, facilitated involvement in local recreation classes, local tours, leisure activities, involvement in a self-advocacy group and assisting clients with personal shopping to maintain their independence. Staff members also provide ongoing supports in areas of access and referral to resources such as counselling, transportation and respite services. On an as needed basis, staff will participate in case consultation with the Developmental Disability Mental Health Team, behavioural consultation, medication reviews, and involvement in developing medical and behavioural protocols.

We continue to see an increase in participants with more complex needs. Participants coming into the program are requiring more supports in Mental Health and many of our long term participants are beginning to require more physical supports due to factors of aging. We continue to offer training opportunities through Relias and other online learning platforms to be able to provide our staff the tools to help support participants with their increasing needs.

The past year has seen a number of changes and challenges within Phoenix Human Services and in the Day Programs. February 2019, Scott Bradford took on the role of Executive Director for the agency. In July 2019, the Program Manager who had been with the agency for over 20 years, left her position and I took over as Program Manager in September 2019. The staff team of 11 full time and 10 casual staff have been very welcoming and flexible with the changes and have helped to ensure a smooth transition. Staff continues to be a dedicated team that are focused on providing the best quality of care and are always having fun!

*Written by Heather Jones  
Program Manager  
Community Inclusion Programs*

## **COMMUNITY LIVING SERVICES FOR ADULTS – EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**

As another successful year of service concludes, the CLS Adults Employment Program reflects on the quality of care provided. This past year, the program served more individuals than ever before. The program launched a new employer recognition program and stepped into a greater role in the Victoria job developer's community. Both participant and caregiver surveys speak to the intent of the program and quality of service that the team consistently delivers. The program also has well-defined goals to work toward this upcoming year.

In 2019/2020, the CLS Adults Employment Program served a total of 39 individuals. This is an increase from the 31 individuals served the year prior. Out of all the individuals served this past year, 85% were able to find or maintain employment. This success comes from the team supporting each other in job development and spending time with participants building trusting relationships prior to employment. The goal of finding not just any job, but the right job for participants is evidenced by 88% of individuals being able to maintain their position for 3 months or longer.

This last year, the Employment Program wanted to find a way to celebrate inclusive employers and encourage their continued hiring practices. An award was designed and presented to three employers. The first went to Adrianna's the Whole Enchilada, the second went to Costa Verde, and the final award went to Imagine Café. All of the awards were well received and it was great seeing employers shine with delight as they received the recognition they deserved. The Employment Program also took a greater role within the Victoria job developer's community by hosting one of the monthly meetings and attending all ten meetings this past year. The connections built with others in the industry expanded our program's visibility within the community and contributed to developing cross operational relationships.

Client and caregiver surveys are used within the program as a quality assurance measure. This past year, the feedback from clients was exceptional. The surveys spoke to the Vocational Counsellor's ability to develop meaningful and trusting relationships with persons served. One person commented that her worker was, *"Easy to talk to and understanding and very friendly. She helped with finding employment and getting job ready."* Often, caregivers see changes in individuals that are subtle, but powerful. One caregiver stated, *"He has learnt about job requirements, improved his interviewing skills, and has gained insight into his personal reaction to situations."* Statements like these are not uncommon to hear, as individuals often experience great change when gaining employment.

Moving forward into this coming year, one main objective is to develop a catalog of workshops that can be integrated together to create a variety of courses. There are three goals of these courses. The first goal is to keep individuals engaged in employment-related tasks. The second is to develop employability skills in individuals who are lacking skills in a specific area. The third goal is to help fill out résumés when individuals have little to no work experience. These courses will also offer individuals an opportunity to connect with peers that are currently trying to achieve similar outcomes. Courses and workshops will be the next step in enhancing our Employment Program, while still fulfilling our mission of individualized service.

*Written by Bradley Blois  
Program Manager  
Employment Services*



## RISE UP YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

The Rise Up Youth Employment Program serves a variety of youth every year. These youth come with unique qualities, skills, and barriers to employment. It is the customized and individualized service that allows youth to succeed in the program. There are two youth that exceeded expectations this year that are highlighted below.

The first youth to recognize this year is Susan (name changed to protect identity). Susan came to the Rise Up Youth Employment Program already employed. However, she had worked three jobs in the past year, never passing the probation period of each job. As the Vocational Counsellor (VC) got to know Susan, it was noticed that Susan lived with significant anxiety that often overwhelmed her and triggered her to sabotage her job. The VC recognized this barrier to employment and set out with Susan to create a sustainable employment plan. Together, they examined Susan's preferences and applied for work that was meaningful to Susan. Susan quickly obtained a job at a doggy daycare. The VC also developed a job coaching plan with a long-term check-in plan. Usually, a VC will attend a few job coaching sessions until the youth is comfortable. The VC spent two months with Susan to ensure success. After the job coaching sessions were complete and Susan was comfortable in her new role, Susan continued to follow her plan and checked in via text with her VC during and after every shift. This plan was successful and Susan has successfully maintained her doggy daycare job for 9 months. Susan is an excellent reminder that sometimes barriers to employment are complex and require personal, individualized service to overcome.

The second youth to highlight this year is Blake (name changed to protect identity). When the VC and Blake first met, Blake would not make eye contact. The VC spent time building a trusting relationship with Blake and eventually he opened up. As it turns out, Blake had an obsession with shoes and dreamed of one day designing his own line of shoes. The barrier Blake faced was being too shy for interviews and general anxiety. At first, the VC attempted to coach Blake to be better prepared for interviews. After a few sessions, the VC realized that it was not within Blake's ability to attend interviews. The VC went out on Blake's behalf and spoke to various retail shoe outlets. Quickly, the VC found a company that was willing to have Blake attend an unpaid work experience without interviewing. After a month of work experience, the company decided Blake was an asset to their team and hired him part-time. Blake continues to enjoy employment at this high end shoe outlet and his parents commented, "We have seen him become a more confident version of himself."

In 2019, the Rise Up Youth Employment Program served 33 youth. Every youth served came with unique barriers and abilities. Some youth required only a short amount of time in the program to successfully achieve employment, while others needed the entire year. It is this ability to adapt to each youth and serve them individually that makes the program unique in the Greater Victoria Area. Stories like Susan's and Blake's are a reminder of why individualized service is important and that given the proper support, everyone can achieve their goals.

*Written by Bradley Blois  
Program Manager  
Rise Up Youth Employment Program*

## **Mission**

**Phoenix Human Services provides programs that recognize individuals' uniqueness and creates opportunities to enhance their strengths and resourcefulness.**

## **Vision**

**Phoenix is recognized as a community leader in providing accessible and meaningful services to children, youth, adults and families.**

## **Values**

<b>Respect and Dignity</b>	We believe in honouring our differences and respecting people's individual needs.
<b>Potential to Thrive</b>	We believe that every person deserves the opportunity to shine.
<b>Recognizing Capability</b>	We believe in building from people's strengths.
<b>Goal-oriented</b>	We believe in supporting and assisting individuals in fulfilling their unique goals.
<b>Inclusiveness</b>	We believe in supporting individuals to develop strong relationships and a sense of belonging within their communities.
<b>Social Responsibility</b>	We believe in developing our combined strengths as a collaborative force for positive change.
<b>Diversity</b>	We believe in honouring diversity and recognizing that differences strengthen communities.
<b>Caring</b>	We believe in creating environments that are safe, welcoming, and compassionate.
<b>Genuineness</b>	We believe in being accessible, transparent, and fair.
<b>Fun</b>	We believe in the transformative power of play, that appropriate humour heals, and in not taking ourselves too seriously.