

Forward House Community Society

Annual Report

2022-23



www.forwardhouse.com



FORWARD HOUSE
Community Society



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President's Message

It is a privilege and pleasure to report on the 2022-2023 year of Forward House Community Society. The entire year has been one of reflection and review. The purpose of a Board of Directors is to set the future direction of the organization and to ensure that all necessary resources are available in order to achieve that future.

The Board initiated an Organizational Review of Forward House. It was a comprehensive and thorough look at all aspects of Forward House: it engaged staff, clients and stakeholders in a meaningful discussion. The process seemed to take on a life force of its own! The intention of this task was to implement an organizational structure that would support the needs of Forward House and expansion such as the new Forward Recovery Centre which opened June 2022.

At the end of March, Sharon Welch, our Executive Director, after many years of service, submitted her resignation. Currently, the Board is in the process of recruiting a new Executive Director and preparing Forward House for the future.

I would like to thank Board members for their commitment to the Forward House family. The sustained energy throughout the year is a testament to this Board's skill set, good will, caring and respect for all. Everything that Forward House achieves happens because of the people who share themselves so generously and with such heart. I refer not only to our Board members but to our Volunteers, our skilled staff, our amazing clients and our community of supporters who share their resources. The Board of Directors joins me in thanking all those who understand the value of our services and support us in different ways!

With gratitude,

Karen Rohats – President, Board of Directors
Forward House Community Society

Executive Director's Message

My message is dedicated to our Forward House clients who have experienced much change and transition this past year.

I have had the pleasure of taking on the interim Executive Director role for the past five months. I thank Myra Rogers, Program Manager, without whom I could not have transitioned into the job so easily. From the first day, I felt welcomed into the family and life of Forward House. I have enjoyed hearing the good natured banter and the fun and laughter ringing throughout the house. Both staff and clients have shared the spirit of Forward House – the sense of belonging, the sense of family, and the connection with a community of caring individuals.

I now more fully appreciate the multi faceted role of the Executive Director, engaging with and educating the larger community about the important work of Forward House, and also nurturing and mentoring a caring culture within Forward House.

The greatest gift that I carry in my heart has been from the clients. Their courage on a daily basis, their strength and resilience are such an inspiration. My hope is that the clients always hold the spirit and strength of Forward House!

With gratitude,

Karen Rohats – Interim Executive Director
Forward House Community Society



*Karen Rohats with a recipient
of the Carol Richardson Award
at this year's Dragonfly Dinner*

Forward House Team

Thanks to our Board Members who served in 2022-23:

Board Executive:

Karen Rohats (President)
Yvette Battistolo (Vice-President)
Kirsteen McLean (Treasurer)
Alyssa Cota (Secretary)

Directors at Large:

Tamie Nohr
Stephen Scott
Elaine Young
Rosemary Bonderud
Laura Snazel
Jeff Vircoe
Lisa Stockton

Thanks to all of our staff, past & present, who have touched lives in 2022-23:



Sharon (former Executive Director)
Myra (Program Manager)

Alana	Tabitha	Evy
Brianna	Andrea	Julie
Hannah	Dave	Kevin
Shane	Catherine	Scott
Sasha	Angie	Diona

Thank you also to our Contractors who worked alongside us in 2022-23:

Sareh (Program Director, Addiction Recovery Services)

Vanessa (Recovery Support Professional)

Doreen 'Coco' (Outreach Nurse)

Rebecca (Music Therapist)

Eileen & Jim (Bookkeepers)

Forward House Mental Health Programs

This past year has been a busy time in the house. As the restrictions due to the pandemic gradually lifted, we were able to welcome a greater number of people to the house and to include more clients in our programs. More clients were able to participate in our meals and in our group activities.

We were able to introduce a number of new programs this year. These included Relaxation Hour, Discussion Time, Women's Group, and Talking Circle. We were also able to reintroduce programs which had been paused during the pandemic, including Karaoke and Kitchen Fun.

Thanks to grant funding, we were able to take clients on several fun outings including Mini-Golf, Bowling, Movies, and Coombs Market. We also took clients swimming several times, had two visits to the North Island Wildlife Recovery Centre and enjoyed three Escape Rooms!

This year there was some feedback from our clients that they wanted us to offer a greater number of educational programs. As a result, we introduced our Talking Circle which takes place three times each week and looks at different themes such as Mindfulness, Self-Awareness, Gratitude, and Boundaries. A cultural component is included in this program. We also arranged a visit from an RCMP officer who talked with our clients about keeping safe online and recognizing risks and scams. This was a program that our clients requested and found extremely helpful.

Another program that we brought back this year was our HUG meeting (House Unity Group). This is a weekly opportunity for clients, volunteers and staff to meet together, highlight upcoming programs, discuss anything relevant, voice any requests, and do a check-in. It has been encouraging to see our living room full and overflowing, and to have great client, volunteer and staff participation.

We greatly appreciate Maureen from MHSU who offers weekly QiGong and Meditation programs, volunteers Kirsteen and Stephen who run weekly music and bookreading programs, and Charlie who helps with our regular Get Moving program.

Volunteers

We are very fortunate to have a great team of Volunteers at Forward House! These individuals are vital to the smooth daily running of the house.

Our Forward House volunteers assist with facilitating programs, making meals and connecting with clients. Their commitment and support helps our staff to focus on working with our clients and running programs. Many of our volunteers are fabulous cooks and enjoy providing meals that are nutritious, healthy and delicious! These are greatly appreciated by both clients and staff.

In 2022-23 we welcomed 4 returning volunteers and 5 new volunteers. There have also been 5 casual volunteers who have helped with special events or projects.

Our Volunteer Coordinators, Evy and Brianna, have kept in touch with our volunteers and incorporated them into special events such as Thanksgiving, Easter, and Christmas Dinners.

Thank you to all of our volunteers - those who have helped occasionally and those who have shown up every week. We greatly appreciate each and every one of you, your support to our clients and the variety of skills you share with us. We could not do this work without you!

From our Volunteers...



"The clients and staff at Forward House are like my family! I love the time I spend at the house."

"Volunteering at Forward House has given me a greater understanding of mental health."

"The clients at Forward House really inspire me!"

"I always feel so appreciated by the clients at Forward House."

"Coming in to Forward House and spending time with the clients always encourages me. The time I spend here is precious"

Grant Sponsorships 2022-23

Thank you to all our Grant Sponsors this past year:



We received a significant grant from the Government of Canada's **'Homelessness Partnering Strategy' funds** in partnership with Island Crisis Care Society. This grant contributed to our Addiction Recovery Program and provided supplies for outreach and client care packages.



Forward House was the recipient of a **'Strengthening Communities Grant'** for outreach in partnership with the Oceanside Task Force on Homelessness, the Town of Qualicum Beach, the City of Parksville, and the Regional District of Nanaimo. This grant funded our Outreach program, including an Outreach Nurse, Peer Support Worker, and outreach supplies for distributing in the community.



Forward House received a **Recreation Grant** from the Regional District of Nanaimo. This sponsored special outings and day trips for our clients, including visits to Escape Rooms, Bowling, Mini-Golf, Movie Theatre and Nanaimo Aquatic Centre.

We also received a **Community Grant** from the RDN. This allowed us to purchase equipment and supplies for gardening, relaxation, artistic and other therapeutic programs.



The **City of Parksville** gave us a \$300 Grant-in-Aid towards our Dragonfly Dinner event.



Once again this year, we were the recipient of a gas card from the Mid Island Co-op. This helped us greatly with transportation within District 69.

Forward House received a renewal of an **Island Health 'Community Wellness Grant'**. This allowed us to continue to serve the Nanoose community out of the Nanoose Place Community Centre on Wednesdays throughout the year.



Forward House was the recipient of a Parksville-Qualicum Community Foundation grant this year. This funded our 'Art of Health & Recovery' Project which saw us producing two different art calendars for 2023. These calendars showcased the art of twenty of our clients.

Special Thanks to...

Parksville Rotary for their incredibly generous donations to our Recovery Program over the past year.

The local **100+ Women Who Care** for their donation of \$29,000 to our Recovery Program.

We are very grateful to all of our donors and supporters for every donation we receive. You are all helping adults experiencing mental health and/or addiction recovery challenges to stay out of hospital, in their homes, and connected to community.

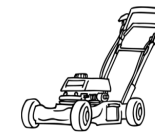
Lawn Services Program

'helping our community by helping others'

Throughout this year, our Lawn Services Program has continued to provide clients with an opportunity for paid employment with Forward House. This year, three of our clients performed lawn care services throughout District 69.

The Lawn Crew also continued our partnership with the SOS's "Better at Home" program to provide lawn care services for their clientele.

We have continued to receive outstanding reviews for their work. Thankyou to Justin and Gordon for their hard work, and to Duncan for his hard work and leadership of the Lawn Crew.



ACE Volunteers

Our ACE Program (Ability through Contribution and Education) is a vocational rehabilitation program. Clients are encouraged to volunteer at Forward House, and they are provided with a small monthly stipend to support this service.

The following ACE programs ran in 2022-23:

- **A twice-weekly art class facilitated by Judy**
- **Birthday & thank-you cards created by Tanya**
- **Baking for birthdays and coffee house by Jane**
- **Groundskeeping by Gayle**

Thank you to these clients for their dedication to our ACE program.

Forward Recovery Centre

We are thrilled to announce the one-year anniversary of the opening of The Forward Recovery Centre, located at 129 Alberni Hwy in Parksville. It has been an incredible year filled with personal growth and wellness for all our clients. We are also pleased to share with you our current statistics that showcase the impact we are having on our community.

For the past year, we have been expanding our services to meet the overwhelming community need. We currently have 180+ clients, 78 of whom were new this year. Since our Centre opened in June 2022, we have made 1,055 client connections either in person or by phone/zoom. We have provided over 400 hours of free counselling and recovery coaching.

We act as community connectors by resource matching, healthcare navigation, referrals to substance use clinicians and community support groups. We have received 165 inquiries regarding substance use recovery navigation, including making referrals to detox, housing and treatment centres. We have 8 professionally led, peer support groups that were attended 405 times with a retention rate of 85% in our pilot 'Recovery Wellness' group that started September 2020.

All of this was accomplished with 2 staff members, dedicated volunteers and generous donations from community members who believe in the work we do.

We have celebrated many recovery milestones and witnessed countless transformations. We have watched clients regain their independence, rejoin the employment force, secure stable housing, repair relationships, maintain their goals and thrive.

And we are just getting started...

Sareh Tracey

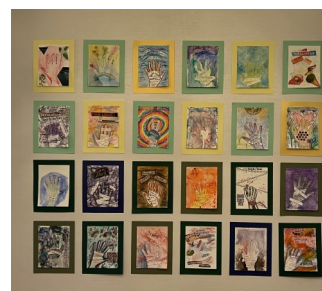
Program Director,
Addiction Recovery Services



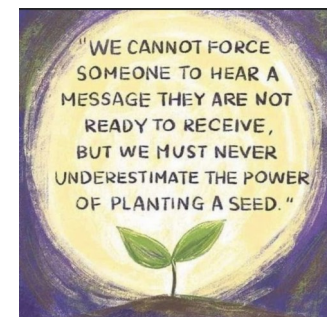
MP Gord Johns visit to the Recovery Centre. Photo: PQB News

Forward Recovery Centre - Highlights

- Mayor and City Council Members voiced support for FRC
- MLA Adam Walker recognizes Forward House and Recovery Month in the House of Commons
- FRC wins the 100+ Women Who Care donation of \$29,000
- Recovery Month Awareness Campaign at Save-on-Foods and QF with over \$5500 raised for FRC
- FRC visited by a group of MLAs including Sheila Malcolmson
- 2nd Annual Recovery Art Show
- 4 new groups started - Disordered Eating, Walking Group, Family Group and 12 Steps
- Creation of the Families Care Program
- Partnership with 'Moms Stop the Harm'
- Visit to FRC from MP Gord Johns
- Dave joins FRC as Support Counsellor
- Completion of the Founding Donors Wall
- Presentation of Donation of \$20,000 from Parksville Rotary by Matt Breedlove
- Planning of new groups to start in September 2023: Men's Group, All Recovery and Mindfulness



Art from our 2nd Annual Recovery Art Show



Recovery Art Show 2022

The 2nd annual Recovery Month Celebration: 'Gifts of Recovery' gallery exhibit was displayed at The Bayside Oceanfront Resort in September.

25 Artists who have been affected personally, through a family member or friend, or anyone whose art reflects recovery from substance use were invited to participate. Artists displayed over 65 pieces with works ranging from painting and drawing to sculpture, mixed media, crafts, poetry, and photography. For most, this was their first opportunity to show their work.

Our Recovery Community Art Installation called, "Give & Take" portrayed what addiction takes from our lives and things we gain in Recovery. We held a 2-day watercolour workshop at Forward House and had many wonderful comments from the participants. The stories shared and connections made inspired the group to create the quilt-like display for the Art Show. We thank the Bayside Oceanfront Resort for hosting and promoting the Art Show.

18th Annual Dragonfly Dinner

Our 18th Annual Dragonfly Dinner took place on May 4th at the Bayside Oceanfront Resort. The event was well attended by clients, staff, Board members and supporters who came out to celebrate the achievements of our Forward House clients.

Thank you to all those who sponsored tables, donated gift baskets, door prizes or auction items. Special thanks to Matt Breedlove for conducting our live auction, and to the Bayside Oceanfront Resort for providing the lovely room and a delicious dinner.

This year's Dragonfly Award winners were:

Business Award - M & N Mattress, Parksville

Community Service Award - Kevin Kinnear

Community Advocacy Award - Jane McCormick

Carol Richardson Awards - Gayle Gartside & Bill Hamilton

Forward House in Community

Nanoose Outreach Program

In September 2020, Forward House opened satellite services at the Nanoose Place Community Centre. We worked closely with Nanoose Community Services to develop a program that would complement the work they were already doing in this community. They have been a wonderful partner in building awareness of our new program and ensuring that adults in Nanoose knew about our services.

In spring of 2023 we relocated to St Mary's Anglican Church on Powder Point Road in Nanoose, and continued to offer our services from 1pm—3pm on Wednesdays.

Thank you to Island Health for providing us with a Community Wellness Grant to make this project possible.



Community Outreach



In Spring 2022, the Town of Qualicum Beach in partnership with the RDN, the City of Parksville and the Oceanside Task Force on Homelessness successfully applied for significant funding to provide coordinated outreach services and supports in our District.

Forward House's outreach nurse and peer support worker have been working in partnership with SOS, Island Crisis Care Society and OHEARTS. The team has provided care and support to many vulnerable community members through meals, resources, assistance with paperwork, and other supports. In June 2022, they delivered informative community education workshops in Parksville, Nanoose Bay, Qualicum Beach and Bowser.

We are grateful to our Outreach Nurse, Coco, and Peer Support Worker, Kevin, for their hard work in our community over the past year.

Community Contributions

Forward House has been actively involved in the following community committees:

Oceanside Task Force on Homelessness (OTFH)

Homelessness Outreach Support Team Committee (HOST)

Oceanside Community Action Team (OCAT)

Oceanside Health & Wellness Network (OHWN)

OHWN's Child & Youth Wellness Group

We have also been honoured to work closely with the Town of Qualicum Beach, Regional District of Nanaimo, City of Parksville, and the OTFH on the Strengthening Communities Project.

Forward House also provides community education:

- ♦ **Practicum Placements** for various colleges and universities (3 students contributed 600 hours in 2022-23)

Forward House is always willing to offer:

- ♦ **Community Presentations** for service groups, networking tables, organizations, churches, and school classes
- ♦ **Tours of Forward House** for community members and students

If you would like to arrange a presentation on mental health, addiction recovery, or Forward House programs and services, please call us at 250-954-0785 or email us at execdir@forwardhouse.com.



**FORWARD HOUSE
Community Society**

Lawn Services

"Helping our community by helping others"

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