



ANNUAL REPORT 2023



Time is Precious at Cowichan Hospice House

As Cowichan Hospice house continued to evolve in 2023, the biggest milestone was the opening of the final three of ten beds. All beds are now occupied consistently, and we are operating at full capacity. The house is fully staffed by the best Cowichan Hospice and Island Health team you will ever meet. Families who walk through the doors are awed by the beautiful setting where their loved ones will live their last days, and are comforted by the personal touches that make it feel like home.

Time at Hospice House is precious, and that informs everything we do. When a patient arrives, Island Health and Cowichan Hospice work as a team to help make them comfortable and familiarize them with their new home and support team. Next, we bring their caregivers and family into focus and help them transition from caregivers back into their roles of wife, daughter, husband, friend, brother, etc., so they can concentrate on this cherished time with their loved one.

John was one such caregiver.

John's wife was a patient in Hospice House, and even though there was a dedicated team caring for her, John still did her cooking, ensured she ate, cleaned her room, and stayed all day and night. It became clear to the team that he was becoming exhausted as he held on to the role of caregiver, so we all gently began our interactions by focusing on him first. Little by little he let the nurses do more and allowed himself to have more moments to himself. As he began trusting his support team, he returned to his role as husband, confidant and best friend.

It is a privilege to be a part of this team of amazing people. Together, they come together in a beautiful, heartfelt way to support our patients, their families—and each other—doing the work they were meant to do, with those they are meant to serve.

Every day I think, "Job well done." Well done by Island Health and Hospice staff and volunteers, and well done by our community for your ongoing support.

With Gratitude,

—Maureen McKay

Hospice House Support Services Coordinator



WHERE YOUR SUPPORT IS HELPING

76 Chemainus	48 Lake Cowichan
48 Cobble Hill	1 Mesachie Lake
26 Cowichan Bay	20 Mill Bay
22 Crofton	45 Shawnigan Lake
380 Duncan	7 Youbou
1 Honeymoon Bay	9 Out of area
128 Ladysmith	



How Your Generosity Made a Difference in Our Community



In 2023, **1213** people in the Cowichan Region were served by one or more Cowichan Hospice programs:

- 473** Support for those grieving
- 255** Support for people living with serious illness (including 103 patients at Hospice House)
- 386** Support for family members (caregiving and anticipatory grief, including 206 loved ones at Hospice House)
- 104** Advance Care Planning
- 27** Information and referral

The Cowichan Life Cyclers team geared up once again for the 2023 Cycle of Life Tour, setting a new fundraising record. THANK YOU to each fabulous member of the team!



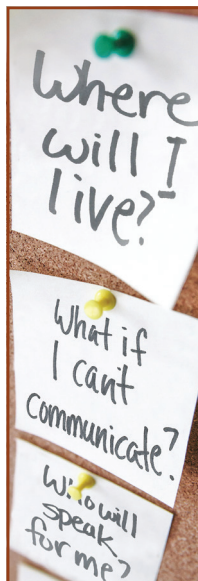
Front row, L to R: Doyle Childs, Mary Hof, Barry Flander, Gretchen Hartley. Back row, L to R: Charlotte Robinson, Bobbi Jean Goldy, Peter Lake, Amanda Pitre-Hayes, Marianne Palou, David Pope.

Advance Care Planning

In 2023, 104 people attended free Advance Care or Speed Care Planning workshops presented by Cowichan Hospice.

Participants considered and discussed their wishes for care at the end of life, including who they would choose to make health care decisions for them, taking with them more clarity and a plan to help others understand their wishes.

Workshops were held in our Community Services Office and in other locations in the Cowichan region.



Please get in touch if you'd like to hear about upcoming workshops or if you would like us to host a workshop for your group.

Pictured on front cover: a gathering of some of our wonderful board members, volunteers and staff.

The Gift of Heart-to-Heart Conversations

I thought Grief Group would be much like it is—full of kindness and true understanding, and a gentle intelligence. What I didn't think of are the lovely friends I've made, with connections I hadn't expected.

In the midst of my excruciating emotional and mental chaos and bewildering disbelief in my loss, I found a soft place to land.

- June

The thought of talking about personal matters to a group was terrifying to me, but because of the way I was welcomed into the group it is getting easier and it helps to talk to people that are on the same journey as I am.

- Peter

The support is absolute in all respects. Knowing you are not alone in your grief helps you to keep a clearer mind.

- Bob

I thought the group would be somber, with a lot of crying and long silences, but even in grief we seem to be able to smile together and laugh. Sometimes it just lifts me up to hear about somebody in the group having a good day.

- Roberta

I think grief kicks the hell out of one.

- Elwyn

People who come to Cowichan Hospice to receive one-to-one grief support may, in time, choose to attend a Grief Support group. Participants in the group come from many different walks of life and the circumstances of their losses vary greatly.

Some have been caregivers for their loved ones through long illness and/or dementia. Others have lost an adult child or spouse suddenly.



Group members often arrive not knowing what to expect.

Over time, they learn that sharing grief with others who understand, listen and offer unwavering support is both healing and comforting. They share tears, laughter and practical knowledge with each other. Every conversation is heartfelt and honest.

Despite our differences we share an inevitable life experience that friends and family who are disconnected cannot understand. A group setting can help by giving more perspective on the process of grieving. I believe this will be a big part of my finding my new life and who I am without my wife.

- Norman

I have an outlet for my fears. I have people who listen to me. Who don't mind me talking about my husband. They give me so much. We all know we are in a new life. It is not the same. We are not the same.

But we don't have to let everything go. We all do things at different speeds.

- Irene

Just being in the environment of caring people of all different walks of life and personalities, experiencing similar feelings of grief, can build strength

in accepting what we all have experienced. Also we have come to enjoy each other in many ways, in laughter and camaraderie as well.

- Linda

I felt that there were no barriers and people were comfortable to bare their innermost feelings with the group. Everyone had a different story to tell about their grief and what helped them feel better.

- Gloria

Caring for the Caregiver



Caregiving for your loved one through serious illness can be overwhelming.

We meet many people in our community who are caring for a loved one at the end of life and observe firsthand how long, complicated and overwhelming the journey of a caregiver can be. In 2023, Cowichan Hospice began a pilot program to support caregivers in a weekly drop-in Zoom group. The group is open to everyone and each participant's circumstances are unique—some are partners of people with advanced dementia and others live with a family member with other medical conditions.

Participants share the common experiences of supporting their loved ones. This helps them feel connected, understood and less alone in the midst of the challenges of caregiving.

The kindness, deep listening and empathy in the group are healing. Grief and frustrations are expressed, and resources shared.

**It reminds me of the benefit of community.
We are stronger because of one another.**

— Heather Ferris

Co-facilitator of Caregiver Group

A Long and Difficult Road

Fran's caregiving journey began 13 years ago when her husband didn't recover properly after open-heart surgery. After seven years, he was diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment and eventually with mixed dementia.

Over those years, Fran and her husband experienced many losses, including his professional career, their dream home, hobbies, parrot, dogs and community involvement. Her husband was placed in long-term care in spring 2023, subsequently moved to hospital and, in early October 2023, moved to tertiary care over 200km from their home, for an uncertain length of time.

To support her partner of 33 years Fran gave up her counselling practice, her home and her community, and moved to a place where she knew absolutely nobody. She has moved four times and still has no idea how long she'll be staying. To say it is difficult is an understatement.

“It was hard for me to meet people in the community—partly because I didn't want to, partly because I had little but trauma and dementia to talk about, and I just wasn't fun. But I thought I could try the online group, at least as a start. I'm so glad I did.

Early on I made supportive connections, and contacts for therapists, counsellors and others I could call on when needed. From one person opening their heart and their home to me, I slowly began to feel less alone.

We all have a deep, abiding love for our loved ones we're caring for, and it's in that space that we can meet, share our stories, our struggles, our triumphs, and know we are not alone. And we learn how to support ourselves through this journey.

There have been many gifts within the Caregiver Support Group, and I'm so grateful to Lisa and Heather, and to the other participants who have trusted, shared, and supported each other. It's a profound experience.

— Fran Ferguson, Duncan

Thank You for Supporting Cowichan



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We have done our best to include everyone who made a contribution of \$200 or more between January 1 and December 31, 2023.
We apologize in advance for any errors or omissions.

Partnerships and Support in the Community

In addition to support for individuals and families, hospice staff and volunteers provide educational opportunities and support for the community through workshops and partnerships with other organizations.

As we continue to build reciprocal working relationships with other groups and organizations, individuals in our community benefit from the sharing of resources, referrals and opportunities for support.

In 2023 these connections included local Parkinson's support and cancer support groups, Clements Centre Society, Abbeyfield House, Ladysmith Resources Centre Association, Cowichan Family Caregivers Support Society and Kwun'atsustul Counselling.

Thank You Hospice Volunteers for your dedicated service to our community!

15 years

Diane (Dee) Pope



volunteer mentor.

Dee brings a kind heart and deep listening skills to her work as a grief companion, group facilitator, and new

Kirk Smith



palliative clients.

Kirk has worn many hospice hats over the years, including providing deeply present support to both grief and

Dedie Tyson



her work supporting grief clients.

In her time with hospice, Dedie has volunteered in many areas, and currently brings her warm smile and inclusive spirit to

10 years

Lorraine MacDonald



to patients and their families.

As part of the Hospice House and Community Palliative Support teams, Lorraine provides support, including Therapeutic Touch skills,

Marg Tames



volunteers.

Marg's beautiful presence and gentle humour bring comfort to her grief clients. She has also served as a mentor to new

5 years

Gloria Ganter



Gloria brings her gentle heart and generous spirit to support her grief and palliative clients.

Honouring Community Grief Workshop

In May of 2023 Cowichan Hospice played a supportive role in the first 'Honouring Community Grief' Workshop in the Cowichan region. The workshop, initiated by Kwun'atsustul Counselling took place over three days on Quw'utsun territory.



In a safe, respectful space, 120 community members, both First Nations and non-First Nations, came together to learn from and support one another and gain understanding of the grieving process from a foundation of local indigenous cultural teachings.

Remembering Two Men of Vision

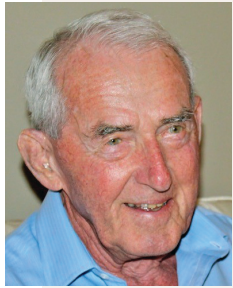
Pat Carson and John Richmond believed in giving back to their community. Each was an early leader in raising funds to build Cowichan Hospice House, making foundational donations that inspired others to follow. It is because of them and others like them that the dream of Hospice House became real.



Pat Carson - October 7, 1930 - March 21, 2023

A stoic man with humble beginnings...

Pat Carson never shied away from hard work. In 1974, Pat moved with his family from Victoria to the Cowichan Valley and, through sheer determination,



continued to build Pat Carson Bulldozing. He was a fair but firm employer, a mentor and a friend to those who did business with him. Pat's work continues to influence Vancouver Island's logging industry today.

A longtime benefactor to healthcare resources in the community, Pat and his first wife Marilyn donated funds to purchase the Cowichan region's first CT machine.

He wholeheartedly believed in the importance of building and supporting his community—traits he worked to instil in his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Continuing that philosophy, Pat's family supported his decision to make a major donation toward the

building of Cowichan Hospice House. Supporting the building of Hospice House was an easy decision for the family, knowing the building would serve as a valuable resource to so many people in our community. To Pat, helping make those resources available to support others was a positive way to give back to a community he loved.

“Being able to play a small role in helping see that through was really important to our dad and to our family.”

— *Deb Savory Wright*

John Richmond - July 2, 1930 - October 2, 2023

A stubborn streak and can-do attitude...

In his decades-long career in the Hudson Bay Company, John Richmond worked his way up the ranks to become the national buyer of men's wear and western buyer of children's wear.

The family moved often in those years, as John was transferred from one major city to another. By 1972, they were ready to settle in one place. They chose Duncan, having enjoyed island life during John's time working in Victoria.

After two years as manager of Hudson's Hardware in Duncan, John opened John's Place Men's Wear at 85 Station Street. As the business thrived, John became part of the fabric of downtown Duncan. He retired from the business after 20 years, but remained very active in the community, serving on several boards and committees including the Cowichan District Hospital Foundation and Duncan Manor, as well as serving nine years as a City of Duncan Alderman/Councillor.

When Joscelyn died in 2014, John surprised his family by attending grief group support sessions at Cowichan Hospice. He had lost his 'rock' when he lost Joscelyn, and it did him good to be with other people who understood what he was experiencing. When his kids suggested he help get Cowichan Hospice House built, it was easy for him to get on board.



“Dad contributed because he understood from his own experience how important end-of-life and grief support are to the community.”

— *Pam Richmond*

Dear Friends,

How wonderful to celebrate another year of the work of Cowichan Hospice.

How is your heart? One could say this question reflects the spirit of our everyday work. Whether it's emotional support in Cowichan Hospice House, or grief support at the Cowichan Hospice Community Services Office, our staff and volunteers continue to meet the needs of individuals and families who are grieving, caregiving or facing life-limiting illness.



Christa Fox
Board President



Monika Kawka
Executive Director

We are immensely grateful that for 43 years now, through the generosity of Donors and Volunteers like you, we have been able not only to continue, but to actively expand our programming and improve our capabilities to serve and meet often very complex needs. With an ongoing opioid crisis, stigmatizing and isolating losses happening in our community,

and so many of us juggling work and caregiving we feel there is another question that could be asked: "How is our community's heart?"

Hospice board of directors, staff and volunteers regularly reflect on how else we could support the Cowichan community during difficult transitions in their lives. How else could we be responding to the evolving and growing needs of our community?

As an example, in 2023 we piloted a caregiver support group. Over the years we have met many people who are caring for a loved one at the end of life and observed firsthand how long, complicated and overwhelming the journey of a caregiver can be. Our caregiver support group was created to help fill that gap.

In 2023 our wonderful, skilled volunteers contributed 5,900 hours of support as we collectively provided compassionate, whole-person hospice care to 1,213 unique clients. It is through You, your commitment and support, that Cowichan Hospice can be there for the members of our community during challenging and tender times.

In these pages, we would like to share with you the work you made possible in 2023. We hope they fill your heart.

Thank you again for your belief in and support of hospice care in our community.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christa Fox".

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Kawka".



Our Vision

Compassionate,
person-centered
end-of-life and
bereavement care
available to anyone,
anywhere in the
Cowichan region.

Our Values

Compassion
Respect
Integrity
Collaboration
Honouring Life

Cowichan Hospice is honoured to provide care in the unceded traditional and ancestral territories of the Quw'utsun, Stz'uminus, Halalt, Lyackson, Puneluxutth' (Penelukut), Ts'uubaa-asatx, Ditidaht and Meluxulh (Malahat) people.

2023 FINANCIALS

Balance Sheet

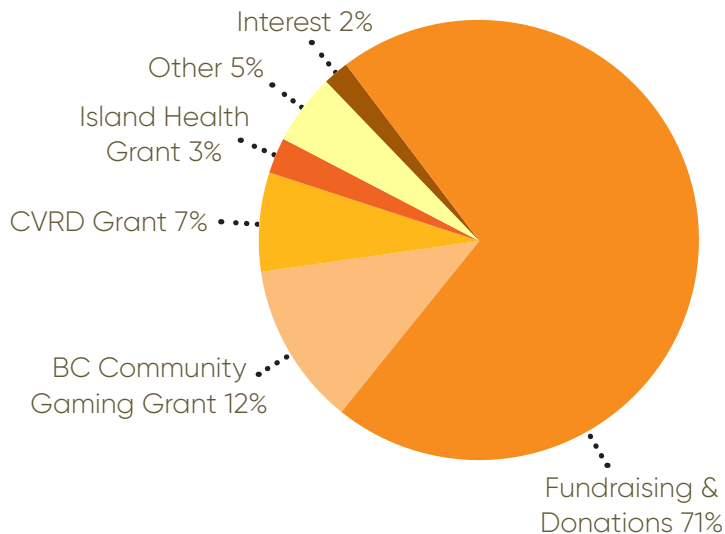
	Operating Fund 2023	Capital Fund 2023	Hospice House Fund 2023	Total 2023	Total 2022
Current Assets	\$ 666,183	\$ 337,831	\$ 1,589,936	\$ 2,593,950	\$ 2,788,616
Current Liabilities	\$ 66,366	0	\$ 1,589,936	\$ 1,656,302	\$ 1,895,486
Net Assets	\$ 599,817	\$ 337,831	\$ 0	\$ 937,648	\$ 893,130
Liabilities & Net Assets	\$ 666,183	\$ 337,831	\$ 1,589,936	\$ 2,593,950	\$ 2,788,616

Income Statement

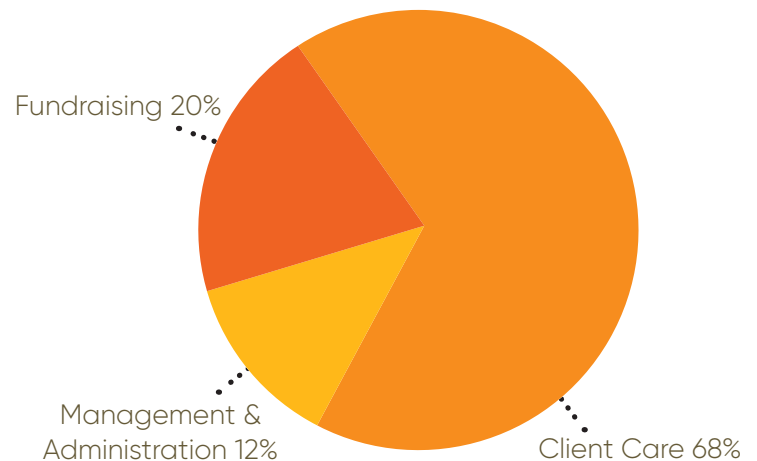
Revenues	\$ 857,604	0	\$ 139,407	\$ 997,011	\$ 835,226
Expenses	\$ 796,902	\$ 16,186	\$ 139,407	\$ 952,495	\$ 812,719
Excess Revenue Over Expenses	\$ 60,702	\$ -16,186	\$ 0	\$ 44,516	\$ 22,507

Volunteers contributed \$118,000 value in 2023 when calculated at \$20 an hour.

OPERATING REVENUE



OPERATING EXPENSES





COWICHAN HOSPICE
COMMUNITY SERVICES

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250-701-4242 • 1-888-701-4242

cowichanhospice.org
info@cowichanhospice.org

Cowichan Valley Hospice Society
Charity BN/Registration number:
11887 8388 RR0001

Open your
Heart
to Hospice.



Sometimes You Can't Do It Alone



When it became too difficult for Linda Onassis to care for her 41-year-old son Adam, her doctor suggested she call hospice for support. Nicholas was fighting inoperable brain cancer, and Linda had begun to worry that she could no longer manage moving and supporting him on her own without hurting him.

“My first impression when I reached out to Cowichan Hospice was that it was an oasis for the dying and grieving—a place, a community of support I hadn't known existed. I felt we had been given a gift when we brought Adam to Hospice House, a place completely devoid of hope, yet so focused on each present moment. It became our safe haven. It was so full of warmth, thoughtfulness and hospitality, I was truly amazed. There were inspirational books to read, puzzles to put together, a place for prayer, a childrens' play room and a kitchen where I could make Adam's favorite pancakes and binge on coffee. All the nurses, staff and volunteers made this our second home where we could simply be with Adam whenever we could and for as long as we wanted.

I try to avoid my memories of Adam's final days, as they cause me such great pain, yet I know I am not alone. The hospice support system appeared like an answered silent prayer for help, and I was given this precious gift of kindness and understanding as I tried to deal with my son's death. I kept asking myself, 'What on earth have I done to deserve all this special treatment? These sessions of Reiki and of grief support?' I still feel like I am groping in the dark, anxious and afraid sometimes, but I have been blessed with all of you, and I know I would be far worse off without you.”

—Linda Onassis, Shawnigan Lake