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TOGETHER AT LAST!

By Doris Sun, Director of Communications



As conference organizers around the world can attest, 2022 was a tricky year to plan a large scale event. After two years away from the regularity of in-person meetings, it was difficult to gauge how receptive individuals would be to reconvening. In the case of community social services employers, though, the answer turned out to be *very receptive*. CSSEA's 2022 AGM and Conference, *Together & Forward*, attracted over 260 attendees from across the province. It was heartening to see colleagues reconnect over shared learnings at our various events and plenary sessions. Foremost among them was the session on Truth and Reconciliation, where members were fortunate to learn from the wisdom and perspectives of Xwechtaal Dennis Joseph of the Squamish Nations. The session was raw, emotional and honest- participants asked questions, shared experiences and bonded over a shared desire to incorporate the principles of reconciliation in both their everyday lives and organizational principles.

Members were also dazzled by keynote speaker Colin Angus, a globally recognized adventurer who shared his incredible and often harrowing personal story about crossing three continents and two oceans to complete the first human-powered circumnavigation of the Earth. Colin's incredible and sometimes humorous story of teamwork, overcoming adversity, being flexible in times of change, and mental toughness had attendees captivated.

And we would be remiss if we didn't mention the seventh annual Community Social Services Awards of Excellence. The awards videos and speeches caused more than a few tears but our emcee extraordinaire, Diane Entwistle, kept the mood upbeat and the laughs rolling in. We congratulate our four outstanding recipients and thank Telus for providing the financial support to allow us to continue producing the winners' videos and holding the special luncheon.

We also congratulate this year's new and returning board and panel members (see full list on page 3) and extend our heartfelt gratitude to all sponsors and exhibitors for bringing their presence, energy and support to this year's conference. We look forward to seeing you in Kelowna next year!

STAY IN TOUCH

We welcome all suggestions and comments. Feel free to send your feedback to Doris Sun, Director of Communications, at: dsun@cssea.bc.ca.

TOGETHER & FORWARD: IN PHOTOS



It was all smiles as colleagues and friends connected at our conference reception.



Delegates were fortunate to spend an afternoon with Elder Dennis Joseph and hear his stories and perspectives on Truth and Reconciliation.



Our Awards of Excellence presenters sharing a laugh. From L-R: Gentil Mateus, CSSEA CEO; Jamieson Skinner, TELUS Sales Executive; and Rod Santiago, CSSEA Board Chair.



This year's Awards of Excellence recipients. From L-R: Leader Lise Boughen from UNITI; Legend Kathy Stinson from Victoria Cool Aid Society; Hero Neil Cutler from Nanaimo Supportive Lifestyles; and Angela Vermeer from Chilliwack Society for Community Living.



CSSEA was grateful to welcome back over 260 delegates.



The conference receptions and coffee breaks provided a great opportunity for delegates to catch up over a beverage and compare notes on the sessions they attended.

YOUR 2022-23 BOARD AND PANEL REPRESENTATIVES

Board Members

Chair - Rod Santiago, Executive Director, Archway Community Services

Vice Chair - Ryan Cucheron, Executive Director, Vernon & District Society for Community Living

Treasurer - Dawn Hein, Executive Director, Mission Association for Community Living

Adam Calvert, Executive Director, La Société de les Enfants Michif

Ross Chilton, Chief Executive Director, Community Living BC

Keith Godin, EFO and Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Children and Family Development

Shari Mahar, Executive Director, Community Integration Services Society

Adam McKinnon, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

Robert Pauliszyn, A/Assistant Deputy Minister, PSEC Secretariat

Tim Veresh, Executive Director, PLEA Community Services Society of British Columbia

Indigenous Services Panel

Chair, Melanie Hudson, Chief Executive Officer, Island Métis Family & Community Services Society

Vice-Chair, Adam Calvert, Executive Director, La Société de les Enfants Michif

Kathleen Bennett, Executive Director, Northwest Inter-Nation Family and Community Services Society

Colleen Lucier, Executive Director, Lii Michif Otipemisiwak Family & Community Services

Bernadette Spence, Chief Executive Officer, Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society

Community Living Services

Chair, Tammy Khanna, Executive Director, Independent Living Housing Society of Greater Victoria

Vice-Chair, Dawn Hein, Chief Executive Officer, Mission Association for Community Living

Fernando Coelho, Chief Executive Officer, posAbilities Association of British Columbia

Ryan Cucheron, Executive Director, Vernon & District Society for Community Living

Dana Gorbahn, Chief Executive Officer, Gorbahn Professional Alternative Resources Inc.

Shari Mahar, Executive Director, Community Integration Services Society

Tanya Sather, Executive Director, Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion

Anita Sihota, Executive Director, Delta Community Living Society

General Services

Chair, Judy Valsonis, Executive Director, Touchstone Family Association

Vice-Chair, Jaye Russell, Executive Director, Sea to Sky Community Services Society

Tyrell Arnold, Executive Director, Connexus Community Resources

Valerie Janz, Executive Director, Interior Community Services

Ann Kutcher, Executive Director, Westcoast Family Centres Society

Sanjeev Nand, Executive Director, Langley Community Services Society

Rod Santiago, Executive Director, Archway Community Services Society

Tim Veresh, Executive Director, PLEA Community Services Society of British Columbia

THANK YOU TO THIS YEAR'S CONFERENCE SPONSORS AND EXHIBITORS

We thank our 2022 sponsors and exhibitors for bringing their enthusiasm and making *Together & Forward* a success. We extend our gratitude to: BC Housing, Community Social Services Health and Safety Association, Community Services Benefits Trust, ComVida Corporation, Cooperwilliams Law, Federation Association Benefit Plan, EQ Development Group, Healthcare Benefit Trust, Inclusion System, Southern Butler Price, Telus and WorkSafeBC



Rachel Milledge from EQ Development Group ready to engage with conference attendees about her online training offerings.

We Have a Winner!

Congratulations to Bouwe Wierdsma from PosAbilities Association of BC for winning a Samsung tablet computer just for completing CSSEA's post-conference evaluation! We thank everyone for taking the time to provide their feedback on the event and will endeavour to use your comments to make next year's conference even better. Be sure to participate in future post-conference surveys for your chance to win some amazing prizes!

MEET CSSEA'S NEWEST ADVOCATES



Kathryn Rogers joined CSSEA in July 2022 after roles as an Industrial Relations Officer/Investigator at the Employment Standards Branch. Before that, she held a number of legal and consultant positions in forensic accounting, online legal resources, economic crime, and mental health organizations. She received her law degree in London, United Kingdom and articulated in Alberta in 2015.

In Kathryn's spare time, you can find her hiking with her charming Australian labradoodle, George, on the interconnected North Shore mountain trails. Kathryn is fond of knitting, staring at the sea, and enjoying a glass of wine over stimulating discussion with family and friends. Her favourite film is *The Castle* (Australian) and her favourite musical artist has resulted in a tie between Chris Stapleton and Tchaikovsky. She is fond of aged cheddar cheese.

Maria Zacharias joined CSSEA in September 2022 as an HRLR Advocate. Maria comes to the organization from private legal practice and graduated from UBC law school. Before pursuing her legal education and career, Maria worked in a variety of community social services positions including as a Victim Supports Outreach Worker and Crisis Intake Worker in Alberta.

Outside of work, Maria enjoys baking and practicing her food photography, and spending time with her family and demanding cat.



Membership Comings and Goings

CSSEA welcomes the following new members: **Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Vancouver**, **Fraser River Indigenous Society**, **Our Place Society**, **Summerland Community Support**, and **Vancouver and Lower Mainland Multicultural Family Support Services Society**.

We bid farewell to the following agencies who left CSSEA's membership: **Haida Child and Family Services Society** (now an Associate), **BC211** (now an Associate), **Family Services of Greater Vancouver** (now an Associate), and **Seaview Guest Home Ltd.**

And we inform the membership about the following name changes:

- John Howard Society of the Thompson Region is now **Connective Support Society Kamloops**
- Alberni Community and Women's Services Society is now **Sage Haven Society**
- Richmond Society For Community Living is now **Aspire Richmond Support Society**
- Phoenix Human Services Association is now **Thrive Social Services Society**
- Island Women Against Violence is now **Islanders Working Against Violence Society**
- Campbell River and District Association for Community Living is now **Rivercity Inclusion Society**
- North Shore ConneXions Society is now **Intellectual Disabilities Society**