

# Annual Report

2024 - 2025





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*Kaslo Community Services works on the stolen territories of the Ktunaxa, Sinixt and Syilx nations. We acknowledge the impacts of colonization, both past and present, and we seek to deliver our services in a manner that honours the land and the Indigenous peoples living here today.*



*Serving the communities of  
North and Central Kootenay Lake  
and the Lardeau Valley*

336 "B" Avenue  
P.O. Box 546,  
Kaslo, BC, V0G 1M0  
(250)353-7691  
Fax (250)353-7694

**[www.kaslo.services](http://www.kaslo.services)**

**[office@kaslo.services](mailto:office@kaslo.services)**

**Kaslo Community Services (KCS) is a registered charity and non-profit society.**

Donations to KCS are tax deductible

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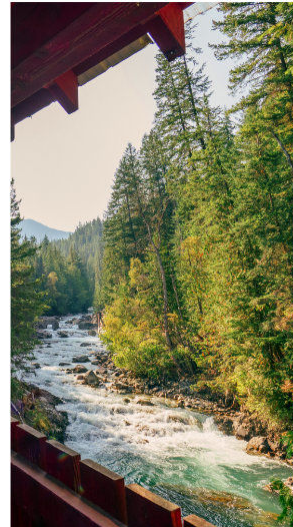
# Leadership Team

As we reflect on this year's achievements, we remain deeply committed to advancing our mission of supporting the community through inclusive and accessible programs and services. Every step we take is guided by our vision of thriving communities where all individuals feel connected, supported, and empowered. We are grateful for the partnerships, dedication, and trust that make this work possible—and we look forward to continuing this journey together.

## Annual Highlights

This year marked a period of exciting growth, strategic partnerships, and deepened community impact. Outcomes achieved in alignment with **Kaslo Community Services's priority actions** include:

- **Securing Appropriate Space**  
We signed a contract for a new building and are actively soliciting renovation quotes. Fundraising and grant-writing efforts are underway to meet both the purchase price and renovation costs.
- **Access to More Funding:**  
With support from the CBT Non-Profit Advisors Program, we engaged consultant Kathleen Ayre to guide our fund development strategy.
- **Expanded Seniors' Programming**  
We secured new contracts to deliver in-person meals and launched a Community Collaborative group to



foster cooperation among organizations serving seniors in Kaslo and surrounding areas.

- **Enhanced Food Hub Outreach Support**

Thanks to funding from the Vancouver Foundation, we hired an Outreach Support Worker to help Food Hub clients pursue personal goals and reduce reliance on the Food Cupboard.

- **Sexual Assault Services**

With funding from the Federal Department of Justice, we now offer counselling and are developing a coordinated, Kaslo-based response for survivors.

- **Program and Service Delivery**

We were approved by BC Housing's Request for Pre-Qualification(RFPQ), positioning us as a potential operator for supportive housing for women and children fleeing violence.

- **Highly Effective Partnerships**

We participated in Koop's (Kootenay Boundary Community Services Co-op) strategic planning and initiated discussions around a potential Foundry partnership.

- **Staffing Solutions**

Two successful staff retreats fostered connection and renewal. We also continued our commitment to equity with the second year of Anaya Lambert's 6-part EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) and Anti-Racism training series.

- **Infrastructure & Comfort Enhancements**

A new heat pump was installed at

the Food Hub, improving comfort for staff, clients, and volunteers. In April, we also took possession of a brand-new Toyota Sienna hybrid van.

- **Emergency Preparedness**

Safe Homes staff completed emergency management and service continuity training, strengthening our crisis response capacity.

The Leadership Team

Jana Gmür - Co-Executive Director, Counselling, Early Years

Patrick Steiner - Co-Executive Director, Food Security, Seniors, Community Engagement

Jane Ballantyne - Co-Executive Director, Finance, Administration, Youth

# Board

**Janet Mayfield, Chair**

**David McCormick, Treasurer**

**Kim Lafortune, Secretary**

**Lynn Gouldsbrough, Director**

**Rodney Arnold, Director**

**Harel Challmie, Director**

This year has been one of meaningful progress, thoughtful reflection, and renewed commitment to our mission.

We began by reviewing and revising our Board Governance policies, ensuring they remain aligned with best practices and responsive to the evolving needs of our organization and community.

A major highlight was our Strategic Planning process, which brought together board members and staff for a two-day facilitated retreat. Together, we revisited and refreshed our vision, mission, and values, and identified five key priority actions that will guide our work through to 2027. This collaborative effort reaffirmed our shared purpose and set a clear path forward.

Our Building Committee made significant strides in securing additional space to expand Kaslo Community Services (KCS) programming and services. This achievement was made possible through strong leadership, effective partnerships, and deep community engagement.

We continued to provide ongoing support to our co-leadership team, recognizing the importance of collaboration and collective wisdom in driving our mission forward.

Community connection remained a cornerstone of our work. Through outreach efforts—including a presence at May Days, the Christmas Fair, and the summer market—we engaged with both KCS members and the broader community. These events offered valuable opportunities to listen, share, and strengthen relationships.

Looking ahead, 2026 will mark Kaslo Community Services' 50th anniversary—a remarkable milestone. We're excited to celebrate this legacy with the community, so stay tuned for events and opportunities to join in the celebration.

Janet Mayfield  
Board Chair

# Finance

March 31, 2025

- Income \$1,502,163
  - Plus Gain on sale of Capital Assets \$4,481
- Expenses \$1,409,755
- Surplus \$96,889
  - Added to Reserves \$36,648
  - Invested in Capital Assets \$8,212
  - Carried forward for use in 2025-26 \$52,030

Thank you to all our funders. A special thank you to each of our individual donors, who continue to provide generous support for Kaslo Community Services programs, especially the Food Cupboard, which has no core funding. Your generosity is heartwarming!

Jane Ballantyne, MSc. CNAP  
Co-Executive Director – Administration and Finance





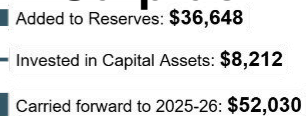
## Income



## Expenses



## Surplus



# Youth

## Kaslo & Up the Lake Youth Network (KULYN)

KULYN is one of 27 youth networks that make up the Basin Youth Network. We acknowledge that we live and work on the unceded territory of the Ktunaxa, the Sinixt, the Syilx, the Lheidli T'enneh, and the Secwepemc peoples.

KULYN provides youth, 12 – 18 years of age, opportunities to participate in programs, events and activities taking place in the community and at the Kaslo Youth Centre, the Kaslo & District Public Library, the Langham, and the Lardeau Valley Community Centre.

**Youth Volunteers of Honour:** Liz Payne, Cece Keenan, Violet Troseth, Kaelyn Cutting, Alex Harvey, Sebastian Ariguznaga-Schell, William Davidson, Millie Cyr, Skylet Lawless, and Solstice Constantine.

KULYN, Kaslo Area Youth Centre (KAYC) & Kaslo Pride Committee partnered up for **Kaslo Pride Celebration 2025**. It was a success! There were about 40 community members who painted the Pride Crosswalk, and about 20 people showed up for the Celebration. We were honoured to have Riot Remple raise the Pride Flag with Kaslo Village Mayor Susan Hewett, on behalf of Kaslo community.

KULYN hosted an **Argenta Halloween Pumpkin Carving Night**. We had a fun creative gathering with 8 youth participating. They carved amazing pumpkins and we supported local farmers. Soup & bread sticks were provided for dinner.





KULYN hosted **Movie Nights at the Kaslo Youth Centre**. Youth expressed a strong 'want' for movie nights and we heard you! We hosted two movie nights and had a total of 32 youth participate. This was a fun and simple activity to plan and the youth showed up!

KULYN, KAYC, and FireSmart BC hosted 2 **FireSmart Challenges** at the Kaslo Youth Centre. Youth had to build the best and worst examples of FireSmart gingerbread houses, and FireSmart natural material homes. Creative as you can get!

The **Youth Art and Culture (YAC)** program hosted 6 Baking Sessions with Stephanie Zacharias at JVH School. Youth love baking! We offered fall and spring sessions with a total of 36 youth participants. The youth learned to make various styles of bread, scones, and delicious squares.

KULYN, YAC, and KAYC contribute to the massive annual purchase of art supplies, which are accessible during all programs & activities hosted at KAYC.

### **Kaslo & Area Youth Centre (KAYC)**

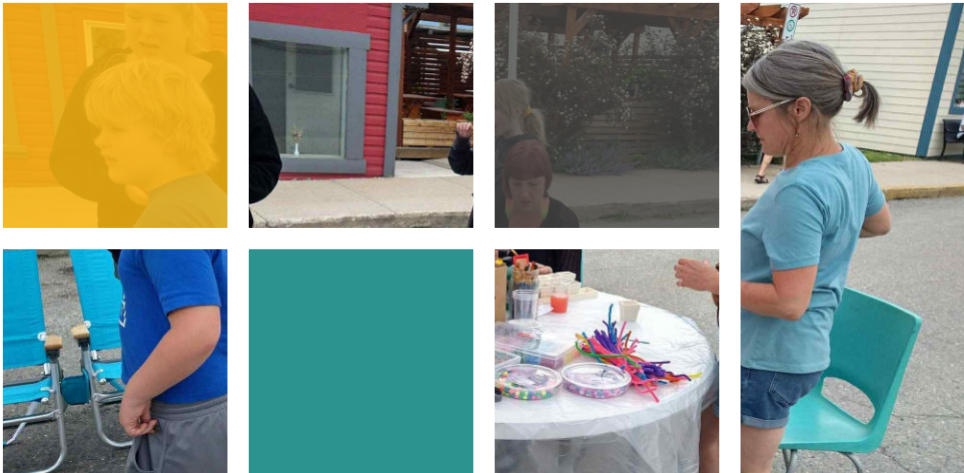
Kaslo Community Services (KCS) provides financial support to KAYC Operations & Management.

**Self-Identified Girls Drop In** special guests over the year were: Dr. Chantal Guillemette and Trisha Turner (information session on self-care, sexual health and accessing the JVH clinic); Lisette McCracken (Freedom Quest Youth Service Substance Use Youth Worker); and Michelle Oakley and Kaihen Harwood from the Kootenay Boundary Foundry.

**Friday Night Drop In** – Wow what a year it was. Our Friday night is our busiest drop in and we had a total of 363 youth visits. We typically play games and offer access to the gamut of art supplies.

**Dungeons and Dragons Adventure Club** – We hired a new coordinator for this bi-monthly program and had 87 participant visits for the year!

**Deep Dive Art Sessions**, a new Youth Art and Culture (YAC) program, ran



once a month on Thursdays. We had a total of 50 youth visits. The feedback from youth was that they preferred a drop in model with no registration required.

Overall number of visits to KAYC programs was 711, an increase of 76 over last year programs, including 5 new participants.

- KAYC - Community Events
- Kaslo Light Up – Santa's Workshop hosted by 5 youth elves.
- Winter in the Forest Festival – hosted by 3 youth volunteers.
- Kaslo May Days - Cotton Candy Youth Booth – 8 youth + 4 adults volunteers, and 2 employees raised \$1200 for the Kaslo and Area Youth Centre.

The Kaslo Youth Assistant, Miranda Halliday, was hired and did an incredible job with TAG Announcements, promoting youth programs events and volunteer opportunities, organizing &

cleaning the youth centre, and program & event planning. We will be saying goodbye to Miranda as staff this year, and she now holds the secretary position on the KAYC board!

### **Kaslo District Public Library (KDPL)**

KCS, through support from Columbia Basin Trust, funds programs for youth at the library.

The library was busy again this year with creative skill-building activities for youth including:

- Teen Game night
- Ugly Sweater Craft
- Teen Bingo
- Soap Making
- Make a Mug
- Needle Felting Plants
- DIY Cubby Bins

# Kaslo Food Hub

The Kaslo Food Hub provides food security programs and services including:

- North Kootenay Lake Food Cupboard (Kaslo and Meadow Creek);
- Kaslo Saturday Market;
- Food Hub Outreach Support Worker
- Harvest Share Food Recovery program;
- Culinary Tool Library;
- Taproot Community Seed Library;
- Annual events such as
  - Seedy Sunday,
  - Apple Pressing Party,
  - Edible Garden Tour

## North Kootenay Lake Food Cupboard

Food Cupboard use remains steady. Our dedicated volunteers are doing more than ever to recover food otherwise destined for the landfill but rising food costs still make offering our services a challenge. Volunteers have risen to the challenge by planting and maintaining our gardens better than ever and by saving more food than ever before. Local farmers and gardeners provide generous donations which creates a more resilient community and enhances local food security.

In August 2024, the Food Hub responded to Argenta and New Denver wildfires by keeping Food Cupboard service open Monday-Friday 9am-5pm

- **Food Cupboard visits - 4,111**
- **Volunteer hours 1,146**
- **249 unique individuals served over course of year**
- **Averaged 131 unique clients served per month**
- **Averaged 342 client visits per month**



for evacuees. Emergency food hampers were available from Food Banks BC and free refrigerated and frozen storage space was offered to evacuees.

Holiday Hampers were distributed to 90 recipients in December 2024.

The 2024 farmer's market coupon program had 62 people/households participate. Over \$26,000 of coupons were distributed.

- Edible Garden Tour 2024 –
  - 79 tickets sold,
  - 10 garden sites to explore,
  - 2 workshops delivered,
  - \$2000 income generated for food cupboard.
- Tool Library rentals - 35



## **Food Hub Outreach Support Worker**

The purpose of the Outreach Support Worker is to work 1:1 with clients that are utilizing the food cupboard and connect them to resources that help them increase their financial/food security. The overall goal is clients needing to use the Food Cupboard less. The program served 8 different participants on an on-going basis and 15 participants utilized the service to be connected to a resource as a one-time support. Program participants found having access to this support to be very helpful.

## **Food Recovery**

Food recovery is a partnership between our food cupboard and food retailers like grocery stores, restaurants, farms, bakeries, etc. Unsold or unusable food is donated to the food cupboard where we redistribute it or process it to make value-added food items. Our Harvest Share Food Recovery program received 30,341 pounds donated for a value of \$110,441 (valued at \$3.64/pound by Food Banks Canada food valuation guide 2025.)

- donated by 28 local and regional businesses/organizations
- 3-month food recovery program comparison:
  - Food Recovery April-July 2023 = 8626 pounds
  - Food Recovery April-July 2024 = 9683 pounds (12% increase)



## **Kaslo Saturday Market**

We had another great season in 2024 for the Kaslo Saturday Market. A total of 61 different vendors participated, and most summer dates were waitlisted. The August long weekend was our busiest market - we offered a Saturday and Sunday market and expanded the market size to accommodate the increased demand. We were happy to partner with the North Kootenay Lake Arts Council (NKLAC) who provided music and art offerings throughout the season. The

music and art are a wonderful addition to the Kaslo Saturday Market. We are very appreciative of NKLAC's partnership.



# Seniors

## Kaslo WISE

The Kaslo Weekly Invitation to Seniors and Elders (WISE) programming helps to alleviate social isolation which has been identified as a serious issue for older adults. The program prepared and delivered 1,819 meals to seniors in Kaslo and Area D. The meals are delivered by Elizabeth Brandrick, Seniors' Coordinator, and by Krista Robson, Food Hub Outreach Support Worker. The deliveries provide an opportunity for check-ins and information sharing.

Other WISE activities (which focus on light physical activity and social connection) included:

- A weekly walking group

- Bowling in Meadow Creek
- A 'Life Writers' weekly workshop
- Environmental Water Monitoring
- Monthly in-person luncheons at the Heritage Hall with a variety of presenters.

Our Seniors' Coordinator is available to seniors by phone or email when they have questions, needs, or issues that require assistance.

Kaslo Community Services (KCS) convenes the Senior's Community Collaborative - a group of organizations serving seniors. The group meets to share information about the work we do for seniors and look for ways to collaborate to improve what we're doing. Over 22

- 92 unique participants
- 23 new participants
- 1819 meals served





members have participated in 5 meetings this past year.

KCS participated in Kootenay-Boundary Social Prescribing Task Force, providing recommendations to Kootenay Boundary Division of Family Practice.

**WISE participants comments:**

*"I so appreciate the delivered meal – always the hot dinner of my day (as a widow, living alone) so nutritious and tasty. The info provided by Patrick and the other he engages to speak after lunch which is relevant to our elder living in our rural, small village and most especially the chance to enjoy visiting with friends or making new acquaintances I don't often see! So great a gift to my life and the lives of elder*

*Kaslovians! Thanks to Kaslo Community Services, Food Hub, and especially United Way!"*

*"What I liked about senior's lunches. Great menu – nutritious food. Socializing with other seniors. Resource materials available and announcements made about community events."*

*"I really like the handmade cloth bags that our lunches come in on the Friday delivery day. I don't think I've had the same bag twice. They are so cheery and I look forward to seeing which one I'll receive each week."*



# Support & Outreach Programs

## Child and Youth with Support Needs

### **Support and Outreach Worker**

**Funded by:** Ministry of Children and Family Development

- Currently supporting 3 families.
- Providing goal-oriented assistance to children with diverse abilities and their families or care providers.

### **Focus Areas:**

- Goals are collaboratively developed with families.
- Support is tailored to enhance:
- Social skills
- Life skills
- Other specific skills identified by the family

## Community Living BC

### **Support and Outreach Worker**

**Hours Worked:** 15 hours/week

The Support and Outreach Worker provides person-centred support to adults with developmental disabilities, including individuals diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) who face significant challenges in daily functioning.

- Promotes the overall health and well-being of individuals.
- Stabilizes the living environment to foster safety and consistency.
- Encourages active participation of clients in designing their own services and supports.

Services are tailored to meet the unique needs of everyone with emphasis being placed on empowerment, autonomy, and collaboration.

# Early Years

## Strong Start Parent & Child Time

This year we welcomed Lisa Mooney to our team of Early Years facilitators, joining Barb Cyr, Nicole Brown and Sarah Evans in facilitating programs for families and caregivers with young children. This allowed us to offer our full complement of programs to the communities in Kaslo and Meadow Creek. With the Early Years team, including Child Minders and Facilitators, we were able to offer up to 5 days a week of programming in Kaslo, and 1 day a week of programming in Meadow Creek (though we had a reduction in service for 4 months in Meadow Creek due to a staff shortage). We're grateful for the opportunity to connect with families, and to support and foster relationship and community building amongst young families.

We experienced a change in our contract with SD8 for the Strong Start program this year which resulted in a reduction of 4 weeks of service over the year.

### Kaslo Strong Start

- 103 adult participants
- 92 child participants
- 195 total participants
- 28 fathers
- 1738 participant visits

### Meadow Creek Strong Start

- 15 adult participants
- 17 child participants
- 16 sessions
- 195 participant visits

### Parent comments:

*"[Because of Strong Start] I learned other ways to deal with challenging situations and learned how to be a more gentle parent."*

*"[The Strong Start Facilitators are] AMAZING! One of the best qualities of all of the facilitators is how they check in with each person upon arrival. I always feel that myself and my child are seen and acknowledged by the facilitators, even in a room of 30+ people. All facilitators exude a calm, grounded, caring, helpful non-judgmental presence."*

## Growing with Baby

Growing with Baby offered hot lunch, food vouchers, parent education, referrals, emotional and group support.

*"It makes me feel seen, heard and less alone in the process and has setup a support system going through such an impactful and transformative time in my life"*

This year, the group was able to take part in a five week infant massage class. Infant massage brings many benefits to both parent and baby including enhanced bonding, relaxation, stimulation, attuning to baby's cues, relief of discomfort (such as gas/colic), and more. This comprehensive class allowed parents to learn a full-body massage sequence with repetition, enabling them to bring this practice into their regular home routines with their babies. The class also incorporated parent discussions and activities to support the development of connections among parents.

Parent comments:

*"At first, I wasn't sure how well it would go over, but I feel like it had a big impact on my baby"*

*"It's great! Builds mother/infant bond and skills to relax baby and help with digestion"*

*"I enjoyed that it was a full body course and I learned moves for all parts of the body"*



### **Growing with Baby Pregnancy Support**

- **34 sessions offered this year.**
- **35 adult participants**
- **28 child participants**
- **63 total participants**
- **486 total participant visits**
- **38 food vouchers issued**



## **Speaker Series for Parents**

For the first time since 2022, we are now able to access to a meeting room in the school during school hours. This has allowed us to offer speaker sessions during a time that works for families with young children. We were able to offer three times as many sessions as last year.

Topics:

- Managing Meltdowns
- Nourishing our Families
- Navigating Guidance
- Make a Toy for your Child
- Raising Kids with Money Sense
- Hands-on Freezer Meal workshop

*"[I liked] the presenter's candid style, honesty and humility. The way that children are centred and honoured as whole people throughout the talk."*

*"The instructor's knowledge and openness allowed everyone to be at ease and open up and showed us we all struggle but we are all trying."*

*"The experience was awesome and the free healthy meals at such a hard time of year is a blessing to say the least. Thank you."*

*"[I liked] the friendly environment and easy instructions. Lots of help!"*

### **Speaker Series for Parents:**

- **6 sessions offered this year**
- **34 adult participants**
- **29 child participants**
- **63 total participants**
- **91 participant visits**

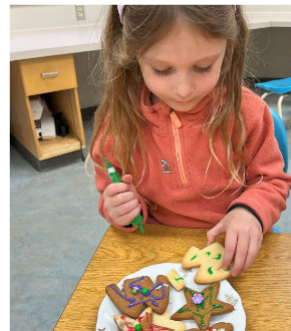
## **Youth Art and Culture**

The Youth Art and Culture Program (YAC) was offered for 6-11 year olds in Kaslo and Meadow Creek this year. The children had an opportunity to try out baking and decorating techniques with a local baker.

*"[In the YAC program my child] looked forward to spending time with her peers and making yummy treats! She was so incredibly proud of the cookies and Christmas present she made us through the program as well! It was a great way to encourage math as well as a love of baking!"*

### **YAC 6-11 year old**

- **4 sessions in Meadow Creek**
- **4 sessions in Kaslo**
- **43 children registered**



# Counselling

## Counselling Program Overview

In the past year, the Counselling Program **received 181 service requests** from individuals seeking support. Referrals came through a variety of pathways, including:

- Self-referrals
- Physicians and Nurse Practitioners
- Primary Care Social Workers
- RCMP
- Nelson Mental Health Services

These diverse referral sources highlight the strong community network supporting mental health and wellness.

## Engagement and Service Uptake

Of those referred, 22 individuals were assigned to a Kaslo Community Services (KCS) program but did not engage in services. This can occur for several reasons, such as:

- Changes in personal circumstances
- The natural hesitation or delay in reaching out for help
- Finding a more suitable or preferred support option elsewhere

This reflects the complex and personal nature of seeking mental health

support, where timing and fit are crucial.

## Referrals to External Services

When individuals required support beyond what we offer directly, 33 clients were connected with external services through a smooth and supported referral process. Our team provided a helping hand to the next step, ensuring that each person felt guided and cared for as they transitioned to the most appropriate resource for their needs.

These referrals included:

- Nelson Mental Health Services – 13 referrals for access to a broader range of mental health programs
- Hospice Services – 11 referrals for grief support
- Primary Care Social Workers – 3 referrals
- Private Counselling – 3 referrals
- East Shore Community Services – 2 referrals
- Family Law Advocate – 1 referral

These collaborative connections reflect our commitment to ensuring no one feels alone on their journey to wellness.



## Adult Mental Health and Substance Use

The Adult Mental Health and Substance Use (AMHSU) program supports individuals facing mental health and/or substance use challenges by offering skills-based sessions grounded in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT), in collaboration with medical and community partners. The program also provides clients with tools to manage substance use and facilitates referrals to appropriate treatment centres when needed.

For the first time, the mental health outreach program was fully integrated with the AMHSU program. Through this collaboration, clients have been supported in developing life skills, accessing community resources, and applying skills learned in sessions within real-life settings. The program recorded over 900 outreach interactions, serving 14 unique clients in Kaslo and 9 on the East Shore.

The Kaslo Clubhouse was also re-energized in 2025, offering renewed opportunities for group connection and peer engagement. (See attached photo from our most recent collaborative client brainstorm.)

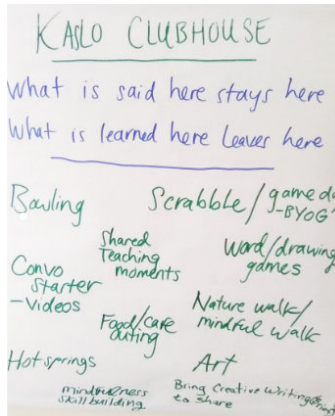
A team member reflected, *“We continue to be inspired by the resilience of those we serve and the strength that comes from community-based care.”*

### **Outreach program**

For the first time ever we have integrated the mental health outreach program with the adult mental health and substance use program. Outreach clients are experiencing the benefits of integrating their work with our adult mental health worker in community with the outreach worker through building life skills, working together in the home, connecting to community resources, and practicing mindfulness through walks and other activities.

#### **AMHSU:**

- 21 new East Shore referrals
- 56 new Kaslo & area referrals
- 302 client interactions on the East Shore
- 860 client interactions in Kaslo & area



#### **Outreach:**

- Over 900 client interactions
- 14 unique Kaslo clients
- 9 unique East shore clients

## **Community-Based Victim Services**

- 34 self-referred clients
- 26 RCMP client referrals (Call Out)
- 60 clients in total
- 33% of participants are male identifying
- 33% of participants are unemployed
- 8 participants under the age of 18
- 5 applications submitted Crime Victim Assistance Program (CVAP)
- 1 CVAP Application approved

The Community-Based Victim Services (CBVS) program provides emotional and practical support to individuals who have experienced trauma or been affected by crime. The program offers education on the dynamics of power, control, and abuse, and supports victims in navigating complex systems. CBVS workers provide information about the criminal justice system, assist with court preparation, and can accompany victims to court proceedings. In cases involving intimate partner violence, CBVS workers also support individuals involved in family law matters by facilitating referrals to appropriate legal resources and services.

## **Sexual Assault Services**

Sexual Assault Services at Kaslo Community Services is a short-term program funded until fall 2026 by the Department of Justice. This initiative supports two key roles within the agency: a Community Coordinator and a Sexual Assault Counsellor. The program is designed to enhance support for adult survivors of sexual assault, regardless of gender, and aims to improve their experience when choosing to disclose. There is no time limitation on when survivors may access services. The program offers guidance on reporting options (including forensic examinations), access to medical supports, and ongoing emotional support and

counselling throughout the process.

A key highlight this year was a collaborative initiative with the Stopping the Violence (STV) Women's Counsellor: a four-week outdoor art-making group for women focused on building healthy boundaries and exploring self-care strategies. The group reached full capacity (10 participants), and participants shared meaningful feedback about the value of peer connection and supportive spaces. Based on the success of this initiative, we hope to continue offering similar opportunities for healing, creativity, and community in the future.



## **Child and Youth Outreach – Art Specialist**

The Child and Youth Outreach Art Specialist role, funded by the Columbia Basin Trust, concluded at the end of January 2025. This position supported children and youth experiencing mild to moderate mental health challenges, using art-based approaches, to foster self-awareness and promote healthy relationships with family, peers, and the broader community.

This program achieved the intended outcomes of:

- Deliver a range of early intervention and prevention and targeted mental health programs

- Increase awareness of mental health issues within the school
- Encourage help-seeking behaviours
- Promote access to mental health literacy and resources
- Build resiliency and capacity within the school to manage mental health issues
- Reduce stigma
- Improve social and emotional well-being of students for better educational and vocational outcomes
- Suicide prevention

Over the years, the role achieved several meaningful outcomes, including individualized one-on-one sessions, therapeutic art workshops, summer group programs, and, most recently, a local partnership with the Langham Theatre to host youth-focused movie screenings aimed at raising mental health awareness.

- **11 youth accessed individual sessions on an ongoing (weekly or biweekly) 2024-25**
- **8 vulnerable families (including workshop and one-on-one clients)**
- **27 youth participated in 2 summer art groups (2024)**
- **29 attendees across four youth movie screenings**

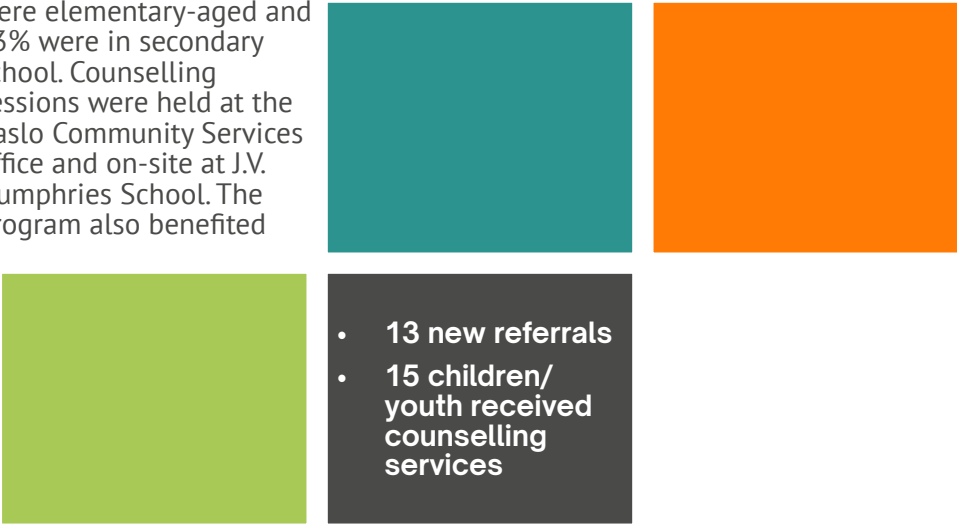
Child & Youth Mental Health

The Child & Youth Mental Health (CYMH) program continues to provide clinical and therapeutic support to children and youth under the age of 19 in Kaslo and surrounding areas. This year, the program responded to a sustained and increasing demand for mental health support, particularly related to anxiety, depression, ADHD, and emotional regulation challenges. To meet these needs, the program collaborates closely with community partners, including J.V. Humphries Elementary-Secondary School and Freedom Quest, to offer a supportive, person-centred approach to care.

Despite a temporary vacancy in the counselling position earlier in the year, the program served a total of 15 clients between July 2024 and March 2025. Of these, 53% identified as male and 47% as female; 47% were elementary-aged and 53% were in secondary school. Counselling sessions were held at the Kaslo Community Services office and on-site at J.V. Humphries School. The program also benefited

greatly from collaboration with other Kaslo Community Services initiatives, including the PEACE Program, Family Support, and Art Therapy.

One youth shared their appreciation for the program’s “casual” approach to counselling, noting it made therapy feel less intimidating and helped them feel truly heard. Emphasizing a flexible and collaborative environment has remained central to the program’s success in supporting growth and healing among children and youth in the region.



## **Family Support**

The Family Support program's main goal is to preserve and promote healthy relationships within the family unit. Empowerment of caregivers strengthens the family unit and most importantly the children can have the opportunity to thrive. Every family system is unique, and the Family Support program has the flexibility to meet families where they are at in their lives and to find creative ways to support them. The program provides home visits or in-person office sessions as well as collaboration with other service providers. The relationships built with our regional MCFD social workers has been incredibly successful and enhances client experiences with systems and opens up opportunities for advocacy and change.

Client quote: *"It is so nice for you to come visit us in our home and*

*for us to be able to be ourselves with no judgement and have support".*

Between April 2024 and March 2025, MCFD referrals jumped from 13% of referrals on the Family support caseload to a fluctuation of 40-50% of referrals on the caseload. The average case load size for the program is 14 families.

60% of clients were impacted by substance use concerns, either for themselves or a close family member.

- **37 families referred**
- **Total of 32 families received services**

## **Safe Home Program**

The Safe Home Program provides temporary shelter for women actively fleeing violence or at risk of future violence, offering stays of up to 10 days.

Staff participated in a 2-day workshop hosted by BC Society of Transition Houses: Emergency Management and Service Continuity. This workshop supported the creation of an

Emergency Management plan in the event of wildfire, flood, or other climate disasters. One challenge the program faces is the availability of operators during the summer months. In partnership with BC Housing – Womens Transitions Housing and Support Program, we continue to seek a suitable location to host a permanent Safe Home program.

## PEACE Program

The PEACE program’s main purpose is to support children, youth, and mothers who have been impacted by domestic violence. The PEACE program defines violence as any form of control in a relationship including, emotional, spiritual, physical, sexual, and financial abuse. The program offers one-on-one sessions to children and youth and includes: building emotional awareness; promoting peaceful communication; and learning about healthy relationships. Building a trusting relationship with a safe adult through art, play, and activities supports children and youth to build self-awareness and confidence. The program emotionally supports mothers and they are provided with psychoeducation on how to best support their children who have witnessed domestic violence.

This year PEACE counsellors were given an opportunity through BCSTH to deliver the Violence Is Preventable (VIP) program to the community. Two counsellors from KCS delivered the program to kindergarten to grade 7

classes, which included 3 separate sessions to each individual class. One PEACE counsellor delivered the VIP to the high school students over 3 weeks, using a casual “drop-in” style education and participation format through games and dialogue.

Client quotes: *“I used my feeling words in the playground today to work out a problem with my friend.” “I wish I could come to the office everyday to meet you and learn about feelings.”*

The PEACE program steadily holds between 7-8 clients and their caregivers. In Kaslo we have the flexibility to hold clients in the program for longer periods due to community size. This enhances trust and relationship building and gives the child or youth the opportunity to gain skills at their own pace. Positive collaboration with our local school and other service providers such as MCFD, and BCSTH transition homes strengthens the clients experience.



## Stopping the Violence

The Stopping the Violence (STV) program received 13 new referrals in the past year. The program operated without a waitlist or session limits and provided both short term and in-depth trauma therapy for women who have experienced abuse. The active caseload was about 14 women. The program offered appointments both in person and online adjusting to client needs. This hybrid approach helped to reduce missed appointments, maintain continuity in care and increase client outcomes. The program continued to use an integrated approach to counselling which included specialized therapies such as EMDR for trauma resolution, mindfulness, somatic and cognitive approaches.

The staff participated in professional development in: Resilience Informed Therapy - A Somatic Approach; Ethics and Risk Management in the Digital Age; First Aid; Decolonizing Therapy; Neurobiological Insights for Therapists; and Sexual Assault Training. The staff also participated in group supervision focused on service navigation in a rural setting.

The STV program, along with many agency staff, created and hosted the first “Shine A Light on Gender-Based Violence” event to raise awareness about the epidemic of

gender-based violence locally and provincially. The event used artmaking and open dialogue with community to envision ways to address gender-based violence. In partnership with our other anti-violence programs offered through Kaslo Community Services, the STV program continues to seek the best model for inter-agency engagement in a rural setting to address gender-based violence in our community.

- **13 new referrals**
- **Total served - 23**
- **Average caseload - 14**

# Staff

## Current Employees (as of September 1, 2025)

**Rae Thomson** - Childminder

**Heather Steinmann** - Family Centre Assistant

**Patrick Steiner** - Co-Executive Director - Food Security, Seniors, Community Engagement

**Arielle Shuman** - AMHSU Counsellor

**Krista Robson** - Food Hub Outreach Support Worker, Seniors Community Connector

**Maddy Maxinuk** - Child & Youth Mental Health Counsellor (on leave)

**Maureen Leathwood** - Community Outreach and Support - CLBC, Seniors Discussion Group Facilitator

**Sarah Lawless** - Childminder

**Roxanne Korobko** - Child & Youth Outreach Worker

**Juanita Kiff** - Sexual Assault Services Counsellor

**Violet Johnson** - Childminder

**Shannon Isaac** - Kaslo & Up the Lake Youth Network Coordinator

**Liz Ingles** - Family Support Worker, PEACE Counsellor, Safe Homes Coordinator

**Laurie Holton** - Women's Counsellor

**Chantel Henschel** - Food Hub Assistant

**Heather Hamilton** - Office Manager, IT Support

**Jana Gmür** - Co-Executive Director - Counselling and Early Years

**Nat Forsyth** - VS Counsellor, SAS Coordinator

**Sarah Evans** - Early Years Coordinator, YAC Coordinator

**Natasha Edmunds** - Mental Health Outreach Worker

**Barb Cyr** - CAP-C Coordinator, Growing with Baby Coordinator

**Donna Cormie** - Clubhouse Coordinator, Lifeline Coordinator

**Erin Carr** - Food Cupboard Coordinator

**Nicole Brown** - Program Facilitator

**Elizabeth Brandrick** - Seniors' Coordinator

**Jane Ballantyne** - Co-Executive Director – Finance and Administration

**Kathy Allaire** - Reception, Market Coordinator, TAPS Assistant

## Employees who left during the last year

**Jasmine Uppal** - Child & Youth Outreach and Support Worker

**Julie James** - Victim Services Counsellor

**Dannika Neville** - School Works Program Assistant

**Lisa de Valk Mooney** - PACT Facilitator, Support and Outreach Worker

**Morgan Bukowski** - Food Recovery Assistant

**Keefer Barnes** - Program Assistant - Food Recovery Program

**Michael Allaire** - Snow Shoveller



# Funders

Western Financial Group  
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Ministry of Public Safety and  
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