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**Connecting children, youth and families  
since 1974**

## Message from the Executive Director

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This past year has been one of transition for Connections Community Services. From a change in location, to new staff and additional programs, 2019-20 was a busy year where our agency was constantly adapting. Then of course, COVID-19 hit, creating more opportunities to change and adapt for the upcoming year. In the face of all this difficulty, I am so proud of our incredible staff and volunteers for their dedication and hard work that kept the agency going through challenging times. At the end of it all, I believe we have grown and become stronger as an agency.

I would like to thank our Board of Directors for their leadership during this tumultuous year. Special thanks to Anita Irani, who has served on the Board since 2006 and has been our Board Chair for the past 5 years. Her many years of dedication to the agency has been greatly appreciated. We could always count on Anita to attend our special events to represent the agency. This is her last year on the board and she will be missed.

Throughout this report you will see the impact of our programs and services. This would not have been possible without our staff and volunteers going above and beyond to support and serve the community. Whether they are working with children, youth, seniors or an entire family, the common threads are the connections we build that help our community thrive. As we move forward through unprecedented times, we are here to connect the community to the supports and resources they need.

Best Wishes,



Daylene Jones  
Executive Director



## BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS (BAS)

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Currently we are running four before and after school programs; three in Richmond and one in West Vancouver. Although the last few years had two of our programs running below capacity, we are happy to report that not only are all our programs full, but we have waitlists at each site. We have also had families inquire about space for children who will not be in school until 2024 as they wish to be placed on the waitlist.

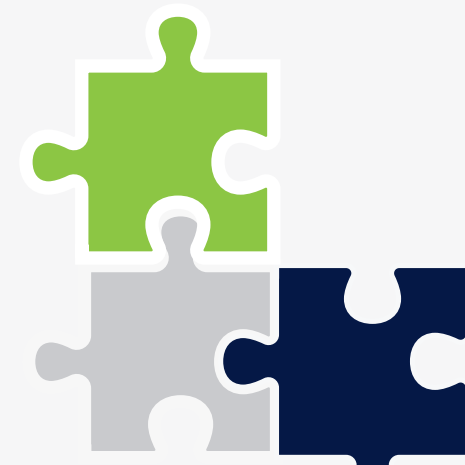
Staffing information: 4 team leads; 3 1:1 workers for children with special needs; 13 part time or on call staff.

## Program Overview

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Caulfield in West Vancouver runs daily from 7am-8:45am and 2:45-6pm (Wednesdays 1:50-6pm), Tait, Blundell and Cook in Richmond run daily from 8am-9 and 2:45-6pm.

All programs are open for full days on Pro-D days and early dismissals. Richmond sites offer camps during winter break (1 week), spring break (2 weeks) and summer (7-8 weeks).



## ■ Caulfield | West Vancouver

Capacity 20 students, over the past year we have had 37 students (32 families served) attend many of which are part time and drop in. And we have 4 kindergarten students on the waitlist for September for full time (before and after care) with a number of other parent packages out and more inquiries coming in.

## ■ Cook | Richmond

Capacity 24 but temporarily moved to a Portable so capacity has gone down to 20 since Jan 1. Over the past year we have provided programming for 31 students (28 families)

## ■ Tait | Richmond

Capacity 18, over the past year this program has served 22 students (20 families) and we have 8 on the waitlist for September. This Program has one Special needs student with autism who is getting support through SCD and has a 1:1 worker with him at all times.

## ■ Blundell | Richmond

Capacity 20, over the past year this program has served 27 students (23 families) and has 2 on waitlist for September. This Program has one special needs student with autism who is getting support through SCD and has a 1:1 worker with them daily.

## ■ Summer Camp | 2019

Many of the program children attended throughout the summer and we also welcomed additional students from the community. In total this summer, we held daily programming for 41 children at two sites in Richmond. Included in this were 16 students who are not part of our program throughout the year but came in from the community.



Numbers were a bit lower than normal because we had to hold our Cook camp at Blundell due to construction at Cook. This meant that several students were not able to get to the Cook location.



## Winter Camp | January 2020

Winter camp ran for four days and we had 26 students attend in total over those four days. We permitted this camp to be split to allow families to sign up daily. Not all students attended all four days.

## Spring Break Camp | 2020

We were scheduled to run two weeks of spring break camp and had all our spaces at Blundell filled and had a few openings at Cook but due to COVID-19 we did not run the program.

## GENERATION CONNECT

The Generations Connect (GC) is one of the core programs in the Connections Community Services Society. The GC program works with youth to increase their skills, develop community

awareness, and become involved in the world around them. The program leverages youth volunteers to help increase community connections, reduce isolation, and positively impact the lives of vulnerable children and seniors. The intergenerational interaction benefits children, youth, and seniors. The youth gain valuable skills and learn the benefit



of community involvement. The program also promotes volunteerism as the participants are leaders and teachers for each other. There are a number of different pilot programs under the umbrella of Generations Connect; activities and events during the past year are highlighted below.



## ■ Basic Technology Class:Seniors

The Basic Technology Class for Senior (BTCS) is an intergenerational mentorship program between youth and seniors. The goal of BTCS is to increase engagement and to reduce isolation among seniors and youth through mentorship opportunities that build better communication and life skills.

Seniors in the community have significant knowledge and stories that they share with the youth through interactive activities, and our youth offer skills such as how to work with modern technology and computer literacy. For example, the youth teach seniors to use Face-Time or Zoom to connect with families/relatives who reside overseas.

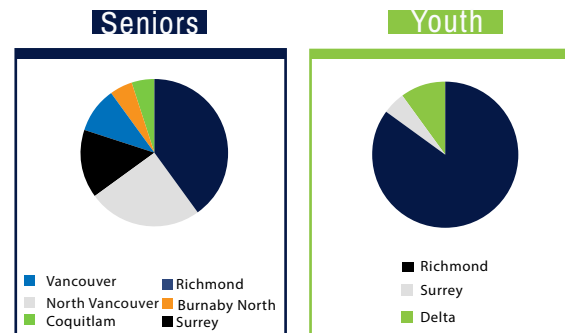


There were total of 3 cycles in the past year – winter, spring, and fall. Each cycle contained 10 sessions, and the program ran every Wednesdays from 3:30 to 5 p.m. in the Connections offices. This program successfully increased understanding and interaction between seniors and youth and amongst different cultural groups in our community.

## ★ Statistics

- ▶ Number of seniors served: 148
- ▶ Number of sessions: 30
- ▶ Number of youth tutor-mentors: 69
- ▶ Number of people on waitlist: 96
- ▶ The youngest youth (volunteer) is 13 years old
- ▶ Oldest senior (participant) is 92 years old

## ★ Geographic breakdown



ALL senior have reported that the program provides a very positive change in their life style and their knowledge and skills about new technology has increased dramatically after attending the program

## ■ Generations Homework Club (GHC)

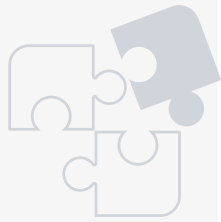
Grade 4-7

The Generations Homework Club (GHC) is a mentorship program that builds social skills, self-esteem, and confidence through homework support, games, and various activities. The goal of GHC is help elementary students, especially those who are at-risk and need additional support and mentorship.

Students will get assistance one-on-one or in a small group to develop the skills they need to make school an enjoyable and positive place. The program has been helping grade 4 to 7 students, particularly those coming from low income families, with their English vocabulary, grammar, comprehension etc.

Each term, the program offers exercise workbooks to each student for different subjects (English, Math, and Social Science). In addition, students and tutor-mentors build strong relationships throughout the program.

The program has helped numerous students, in 2 locations, to thrive and



reach their goals. The GHC currently runs every Mondays in the Richmond Public Library and every Thursdays in the Connections Community Services Society office.

### ★ Statistics

#### Student's ratio based on grade

- Grade4
- Grade5
- Grade6
- Grade7



- Number of students served: 110
- Number of sessions: 60
- Number of youth tutor-mentors: 106

All the students indicated that they have built a good and/or strong bonding with the youth volunteers in the program

### ■ Super Seniors Support Group | (SSSG)

The goal of Super Seniors Support Group (SSSG) is to allow seniors to use their

knowledge to teach the younger generation, as well as bring seniors together to learn from one another. Some of the skills that this program intends to foster include language and communication, as well as life skills such as cooking and computer literacy.

Bringing together seniors and youth promotes community engagement and builds intergenerational relationships. Seniors and youth can often be isolated, and this project can help to reduce this issue.

In 2019, we had total of 37 seniors and 12 young adult volunteers. The program brings in relevant guest speakers and has occasional outings as well. The group will also work together to do volunteer work for the community.

Some of the topics covered included elder abuse, fraud/scams, first aid, end of life planning, community safety, and support networks. Recently, the group considered fundraising for one of the local charities. There is also an online chat group formed amongst the seniors and youth. The seniors reported they felt better bonding and receiving more support through the online chat group.

### ■ Volunteers & Leadership Management | (VLM)

The more we give, the happier we feel. Volunteering increases self-confidence as well as fostering leadership capacities which provides a natural sense of accomplishment.

Working as a volunteer can also give a sense of pride and identity, helping to boost self-confidence further by taking someone out of their natural comfort zone and environment.

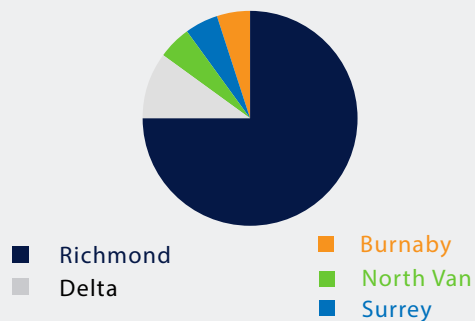
The successes of our programs are entirely reliant on the dedicated work of our volunteers. Programs could not have run smoothly and efficiently without the essential contributions of our volunteers.

In 2019, a total of 181 volunteers contributed their time with Connections Community Services Society. Six of them supported office administration while the rest of 175 supported in programs. It created approximately 9955 volunteer hours valuing over \$149,325 of time, which is almost equivalent to 4-5 full time positions.

## ★ Statistics

- Number of volunteers (program): 175
- Number of volunteers (office): 6
- Number of orientation and training sessions: 6
- Number of volunteers as a recipient of URoc Award: 36
- Number of volunteers as a recipient of Volunteers Are Stars: 17

### Geographic breakdown- Youth



## ■ Sharing Our Voice Youth Talk Show

Sharing Our Voice – Youth Talk Show is a broadcasting program produced in collaboration with CHMB 1320 which is

aired on every Thursday morning around 10:30.

The program has been airing in the community for almost 10 years. Daniel, acting as a guest host, works together with the Program Host to interview youth and/or parents who reside in the Lower Mainland area.

They are invited to share their thoughts current issues related to youth and families, for example, parent-teen conflicts, legalization of marijuana etc.



There are usually 5 to 10 episodes recorded for each individual interview. Sharing Our Voice is also a powerful platform for promoting the agency's programs. Often, there is an increase of telephone inquiries after an episode airs.

There were four youths and one adult that have participated in the show with a total of 60 episodes in 2019.

## ■ Stay In School Program



The Stay in School Program is made possible through a gift from Scotia Capital and supported by Children's Aid Foundation of Canada. It is designed to support at risk, disadvantaged children and youth achieve academic success by recognizing their current efforts and achievements.

Nomination application packages were sent out

### It consists of three components

- 1 Leap to Learning Tutoring
- 2 Stay in School Awards
- 3 Graduation Awards



to the community and local schools in March 2019 and the program received a total of 49 nominations.

Nominations came from different community partners such as Richmond School District, Touchstone Family Association, Pathways Aboriginal Centre, Richmond Addiction Service, MCFD, and Station Stretch.

A total of 49 students received monetary awards from \$300 to \$400 variously, and a total of \$16,300 was given out to all successful recipients.

## ★ Statistics

Total nomination's application was 49 and all received the monetary awards

Age	Number of Rewards
15	3 awards received
16	18 awards received
17	16 awards received
18	8 awards received
19 & Up	4 awards received

Child Welfare Status Community/living

with their families	45
In care	2
formal youth in care	1
uncertain	1

## Indigenous Program



### ■ Ravens

Connections Community Services Indigenous Program offers free after school activities, outings, snacks, and homework support to indigenous elementary school aged children. This year, 10 children participated in weekly activities and both summer/spring camps.

Outings included Stanley Park, Science World, Rifel Bird Sanctuary, Centennial Beach, P.N.E, as well as many other public parks and playgrounds around the Lower Mainland.

Ravens have also learned earth based living skills like outdoor survival, plant, and animal identification all through an indigenous perspective and worldview.

The children are always being engaged in conversations that promote critical thinking skills and being respectful to themselves, respectful to others, and respectful to the space they are in.

### ■ Oskayak

The Oskayak Youth Program focuses on providing a safe and welcoming space for Indigenous youth to connect with other youth, as well as providing support with education, employment, and health.

The program currently supports 6 Indigenous youth ages 13-24.

In 2019 we saw the reintroduction of the Oskayak Youth, ceremonial protocols, smudging, and talking circles.

Our youth had the opportunity to learn practical life skills like cooking and self care.

Throughout the year the youth participated in many activities, outings, and events like National Indigenous Peoples Day, UBC Botanical Gardens for the Tree Top Canopy Walk, Vancouver Aquarium, Watermania, and trips to the movie theater.



## ■ Pathway Outreach Education Program

This program is in partnership with SD38 and works closely with the district's Aboriginal Success Department to support Indigenous students and help them to connect with cultural programs offered by our agency and the wider community.

Matthew has been working on meeting and getting to know the students in our local schools, many of whom were unaware of our program and what we offer here.

We are also partnering with the schools to offer Indigenous Programs to all students, such as Storytelling, so non-Indigenous children can better understand the history and culture.

## ■ National Indigenous Peoples Day

On June 22nd 2019, we celebrated our first annual "Welcoming the Sun" celebration with our friends at the Cannery.

Our objective was to have a multi-sensory event that was more inclusive and collaborative, thus bringing together the larger community.

The day was filled with Indigenous artists and performers from many nations throughout Canada. The Connections Eagle Dancers closed out the day with a stellar performance which led to much applause. The event was a huge success with over 3400 attendees, and we continue to receive positive feedback.

## ■ Roots to Grow

Our Roots to Grow program provides opportunities for families to come together in a supported environment and participate in art and culturally enriched activities. Over the last year, Roots to Grow has served 14 children, 8 youth, and 6 families by providing weekly family nights and drop-in cultural workshops.

The family nights and workshops provide us a great opportunity to connect with our community and assess how each individual is doing and what supports are needed, if any. Roots to Grow has facilitated numerous culturally focused art workshops and activities over the last year which have included drum making,

west coast art, hide rattles, traditional form line, storytelling, beading, and much more.



## ■ Powwow

Our Powwow dance group has continued to meet every other week throughout the year.

About 10 students participated in the classes this year and our core group is taking their dancing out into the community. Some of our dancers use their skills to compete at Powwows all over BC and Alberta.

We named our group the Connections

Eagle Dancers and our dancers were paid to perform at Pull of the Net and National Indigenous Peoples Day.

One of our longtime student's has stepped up to take over the leadership role and teach the younger students to pass on her skills and expertise.



## Youth Education Support Program

### ■ Station Stretch & Street View

Station Stretch and Street View has served over 80 students over the last year. Every student receives an assessment, integration and exit services, crisis and ongoing support, and referrals to community-based services.

The most common issues that I deal with are mental health and substance related issues, however transition to adulthood

has become a significant issue since students can graduate from Street View.

The prospect of post secondary or entering the workforce is fear provoking for a youth living in a supportive home, but so many students of Street View live independent of their families and are extremely apprehensive about leaving an institute that they have been involved with for most of their lives.

Another significant issue is regulating peer issues. While social media has its benefits, it is also proving to be an extremely destructive medium as the cyber bullying and harassment has resulted in the withdrawal or dismissal of students from their community schools.

These online behaviors often transfer to the classroom and I have worked closely with several youth to work through the conflicts, reduce bullying, or help them work through emotional injury.



## Employment Program

### ■ Youth Employment Connect Program by Ning Huang

#### ★ Statistics

Number of Clients Served	11
Number of New Clients Served	5
Number of Volunteer & Guest Served	2
Number of Workshop	31
Youth on Waitlist	32

#### ★ Community Partners:

- ▶ Youth Unlimited
- ▶ Richmond Chamber of Commerce Strictly networking afternoon tea
- ▶ Pride from Family Services of Greater Vancouver
- ▶ PLEA MCFD TRUST Collective Gathering Richmond

### ■ Youth Works by Michelle Zhou

The YouthWorks program is funded by the RBC Royal Bank Future Launch fund and Children's Aid Foundation of Canada.

The program supports youth from or in foster care between the ages of 16 – 29 in BC with employment and/or educational goals.

In the past year (from April 2019 till today), this program has helped 18 youths to obtain employment and overall helped 93 youth in employment-related ways such as employment counselling, vocational assessments, certificate training and job fairs.

We reach out to our youth weekly at various locations and work closely with community partners and social workers to support at-risk youth in transition to independence.

#### ★ Statistics

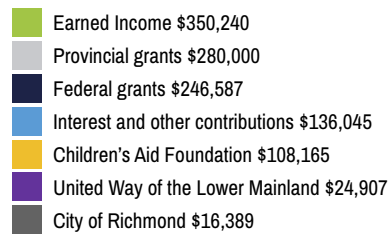
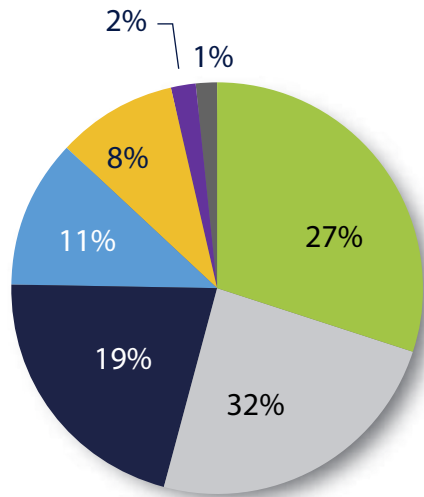
Number of Clients Served	265	from the beginning of the program
Number of New Clients Served	93	Apr 2019 -Apr 2020
Number of Sessions	58	Nov 2019 -April 2020
Number of Outings/workshops	34	Nov 2019 -April 2020



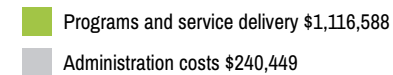
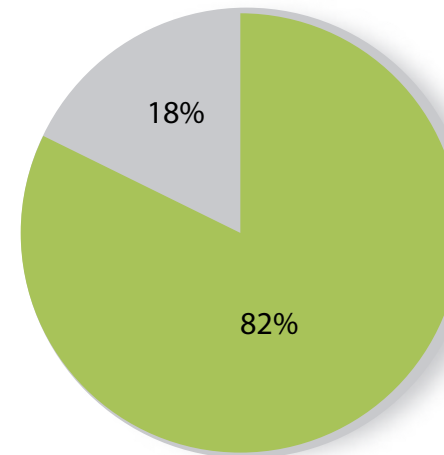
## 2020/2019 Financial Information

Like so many agencies in BC, Connections works to balance both the bottom line and service to the community. We work hard to ensure that we manage costs and maximize revenues.

### 2020 Revenues \$1,292,239



### Expenses \$1,357,037



## With Our Thanks

The following governments, organizations and companies have provided invaluable support to our many programs and services. We are grateful for their vision and commitment.

