



# Powell River Brain Injury Society

## Annual Report

April 01, 2019 to March 31, 2020

Prepared for: Vancouver Coastal Health Authority



RIP Donna



RIP Vanessa



RIP Bob



*Add three more to those we have lost*

*Forever in our hearts, joining those who have gone before...*

*Stan Williams, Lawrence Daigneault, Shane Steenburgen, Rick Gration, Harold Brown, Melody Taylor, Mike Clarke, Michele Hill, Brett Enemark, Niki North, Phil Jantz...*

Established 2003

*Mission statement: to promote prevention, recovery, education, community awareness and life beyond acquired brain injury.*

# Powell River Brain Injury Society

## Staff:

Deborah Dee – Executive Director  
Samantha Sherman – Senior Manager  
Sandra Haszard – Project Facilitator  
Catherine Peterson – Project Facilitator  
Rachel Ewan – Project Facilitator  
Ginevra Kuboniwa – Outreach Worker  
Dewar Boutilier – Head Gardener  
Dale Humphries – Janitorial  
Ajay Morehouse – Janitorial  
Jim Wilkins – Peer Support Worker  
Linda Boutilier – Peer Support/Outreach



THE DROP IN CENTRE “BRAINIAC CENTRAL”

## Volunteers:

Jen Nachlas  
Carol Engram  
Melody George

## Board of Directors:

Doug Logan, President  
Jena Lohrbach, Vice-president  
Jim Donnelly, Secretary  
Dan Dyble, Treasurer  
Jerry Francis, Director  
Jurgen Koppen, Director

The Powell River Brain Injury Society is a federally registered not for profit charity providing support, services, education, and awareness relating to acquired brain injury.

## Mission Statement:

**To promote prevention, recovery, education, community awareness and life beyond acquired brain injury**

We acknowledge the financial support of Vancouver Coastal Health



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## INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY SUPPORTS

Support groups:

The Society provides weekly core services including support groups.

Examples of these are:

- Creative Expressions Art and Music Therapy
- Psychosocial Support for the understanding of acquired brain injury
- Peer Support
- Cognitive Enhancement through Physical Fitness Training
- Memory and Anger Management Workshops
- Reading and Writing through Poetry and Song
- Speech training through singing vocal techniques



**Counseling and advocacy services:**

- Provide a variety of individual supports including letter writing, form filling, and crisis management
- Work with other agencies and professionals as appropriate for referral purposes
- Provide a confidential and trusted service that clients depend and count on.

**One-to-one supports:**

- Maintain contact with clients through telephone and Internet reminders
- Post weekly messages about up-coming events and appointments.

Outreach is a priority, as the difficulties faced by this population are well understood by the Society. Some of the issues include social isolation, depression, anxiety and other particular issues and their unique needs. With a recent lift of .2 from Vancouver Coastal Health we have been able to provide an increased Outreach program that now includes 2 afternoons per week at the local Recreation Centre.

Our Outreach worker has trained with the local personal fitness trainer and with a local physiotherapist to learn the techniques necessary to assist our mobility challenged clients to increase their core strength and improve their overall fitness. We know that an improved physical condition leads to an improvement overall in health and wellness. There are many documented cases of persons with acquired brain injury improving in many areas of their lives after the increased oxygen intake of a physical workout.

Our Outreach worker also assists with our clients for a workout in the pool. One of the trainers who does the water exercise for the city offered to train our Outreach worker to work with our clients. There are now 6 clients who regularly attend this program with more expressing interest each week. We received a grant from Walmart Canada to pay for the entrance to the Recreation Complex. More about Outreach later in the report.

### **Information and referral services:**

A reference library containing informational, technical and research materials is available as well as video and Internet education opportunities for our members and their families. There is a large inventory in the general library of craft and art books that encourage creative expression.

Information is available on several social media sites including Facebook and Twitter, and the Society website is kept up to date with a plethora of information ranging from activity calendars to twitter followers to the latest research and technological breakthroughs in the profession.

### **Drop-In Centre Operations:**

The Brain Injury Drop-In Centre is a hub for persons in our community who require support and services.

It is a vital and vibrant Centre that provides a welcoming and safe environment.

Many drop-in activities are coordinated weekly and all are well attended.

We assist our clients to increase and/or maintain a reading and writing level with a weekly Reader and Writers group. Each week the clients choose a topic and we write a short story about it. When finished we encourage a Haiku on the story and then we all read aloud to each other, sharing our stories and Haiku.





Arts and Crafts is a big part of our programming as we encourage the clients to sell the items they create. Thanks to the Powell River First Credit Union we have 2 booths at the summer Farmers Market and the clients can attend up there for free 2 mornings per week and sell their creations. Alternatives to traditional employment is a big part of what we do at the Centre. Even though the clients for the most part cannot go back to their place of employment we offer every opportunity that we can for them to have a new way to earn money and feel like a part of the community again. Being a contributing member of society is a major goal for us to assist our clients with.

### **Volunteer Coordination:**

Volunteers are the backbone of any community and ours is no exception.

We value and respect the volunteer hours that this group provides and we would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their dedication.

Many volunteers attend at the Centre on any given day to help with Art Projects, to help with the Animal Therapy program, the fitness program, the garden and more. We value the hours they give to us.



## **CLIENT COORDINATION SUPPORTS**

### **Support and service**

The Society provides intense short term and intermittent support to coordinate access to generic services; to support clients in periods of crisis and transition.

We also facilitate and develop service access for members to government and non-government agencies and have developed positive working relationships with the city and region. We work

closely with the medical professionals and when appropriate with other professions to assist in discharge planning and hospital and rehab support. We do what we can to assist our clients in need of housing, however like everywhere else affordable housing is an issue we struggle with.

Workshops are provided free of charge on such topics as:

- pain management
- memory enhancement
- general brain injury education
- fitness training

These assist clients and family members in the transition back to community.



## OTHER SPECIAL PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

### Community Education:

- Created a highly visible community education program that has increased the awareness of acquired brain injury in our community
- Provide education and information through several initiatives each year
- Work closely with the local RCMP detachment to increase awareness of the need for helmet safety and the reduction of traffic incidents
- Provide workplace safety information to City Hall
- Presentations to Mayor and Council
- Participation by invitation to the P.A.R.T.Y. Program
- Participation by invitation to Men's Health Day
- Each Grade 4 and 5 class has open invitation for presentation
- Highly visible advertising campaigns
- "Heads Up Crew" Brain Injury education team
- Community Garden tours



### Support to families:

Family members are encouraged to attend and participate in programming. We are included in the lives of our members. All literature and programming are created with inclusion of the family in mind and encourages the participation of family members.

We are very happy with and proud of the success of this program and the success it has fostered in the lives of our clients.





### **Staff Training:**

The Society actively seeks out and participates in continuing education training and workshops. The Society values the staff and their sensitivity to the needs of the clients. Staff training is accomplished through community fundraising activities.

### **Conference attendance for our clients and staff:**

It is vital for clients and family members to have the opportunity to connect with peers through conference attendance. It is equally important that staff be allowed the opportunity to network and learn what type of work is being done by their peers.

Powell River is an isolated rural community and it is important that we connect face to face. Clients come home from conferences revitalized and enthusiastic to share what they have learned.

This is one of the most important things we do, as it reassures our members that there are others out there who are experiencing the same difficulties in managing the effects of their brain injuries as they are here. It is encouraging when new connections and friendships are made on a peer level.

## THE YEAR IN REVIEW

This has been a year of ups and downs and ended up sideways.

We have had some changes to our staff. We wish Samantha well on her new adventure after graduating with her Bachelor of Social Work. She is now working at the hospital as the smoking cessation director and we are sure that many more will stop smoking thanks to her good work. Catherine came back to join the team and fill the void left by Samantha. The first ¾ of the year actually went pretty well. All summer we had good representation at the Farmers Market and the clients were able to sell lots of their handicrafts and art. We took the Unmasking Brain Injury mask display to Arts Alive in the Park, to City hall for Brain Injury Awareness month, and to the Mall at Christmas. We received email feedback for months after that telling us how powerful the messages were and what an impact they made. We had a wonderful pop up store in the mall at Christmas, and by all accounts this was a successful venture that we will do again. Paintings and baking and soap and carvings, clothing and pottery and all manner of wonderful things were sold.

Our relationship with Vancouver Coastal Health remains strong. Thanks to the funding for the Outreach Program we were able to leverage that; we have a 4 day per week program that reaches into the community to provide services and support. The bi-weekly contact with our clients on Texada Island is very successful. The trips to the Island are important to our clients who cannot get here to the Centre for programming or assistance. We have helped with such issues as phone service, doctor appointments, house repairs and ministry visits. A lot of time is spent on the phone with clients who require us to address an issue they are having with any number of things i.e., CRA and tax returns, doctors, lawyers, landlords, or any number of other people. Our Outreach worker also spends time attending appointments, such as the doctor and also facilitates twice weekly in the afternoons when the programming moves to the Recreation Complex for work out in the gym and pool. Our Outreach worker spends time liaising with other health care professionals and of course, facilitating individual and small workshops, helping clients with filling out forms, and filing reports.

We continue to keep in touch with VCH through our quarterly and annual reports and our annual and semi-annual financial reports.

We have a new accounting firm, and for the first time we will receive Review Engagement Financial Reports, a step up from the Notice to Reader, but not quite a full audit. Perhaps one day we will have the necessary funds for a full audit.

During the first quarter of the year we were busy in the office preparing annual and quarterly documents, writing grants to leverage our funding to keep our programming vital, and we purchased and installed a new software program called SUMAC, which we hope will help us keep detailed records and stats on our clients and their visits.

We are excited about the Brainiac baby, born in August of 2019; we love babies.

We worked with a consortium of brain injury providers throughout the province to write a proposal to the Union of BC Municipalities convention that would elevate the visibility of Acquired Brain Injury in our Province. We sent a letter to the Premier asking that brain injury be included in the name of the newly formed Ministry for Mental Health and Substance Use. The proposal was bundled and passed at the convention, and now it sits with the UBCM executive to discuss. We have heard no more on this from the Province since September 2019. We once again made a powerful presentation to Mayor and Council and had June declared as Brain Injury Prevention and Awareness month in the City of Powell River.

The summer saw us attending various festival and art displays and sales around our community. It is very important to us that the general population see and experience the creative Brain Art Studio work. Our clients are very talented and many of them have sold pieces of art and other crafts. The garden is growing very well this year. It is a wonderful asset to our programming. It is a teaching tool, an enhanced social skills venue, a point of community pride for the whole area, and wonderful source of food security for our population. Our garden has had the highest honor bestowed upon it, we had visitors from the hospital and they are building a garden based on our model. We have been in consultations with them and it is wonderful to see another community gathering place that promotes all the things our garden does.

The Farmers Market did very well this year. There are about 10 clients who alternate and sell their arts and crafts. Everything from spice packets to worm compost, to knitting and beading and paintings. It is a good source of alternative income for them. The Fall Fair is the final time for them at the end of September. We look forward now to the Christmas bazaars and more opportunities for the clients to gain a bit of income. It is also an excellent self-esteem booster.

Our board has been busy this year updating the policy and procedure manual, creating some new committee structures and looking toward succession planning. The Board is also looking in to some Visioning Sessions for future planning.

Coming in to the New Year we had high expectations for another successful and productive calendar year. We began our seedlings in the centre windows in early February like every other year. We had our planning sessions and were getting our schedule ready for spring and summer fairs and bazaars. We ended February hearing about a pandemic, and by mid-March we had closed our drop in centre to group programming. We had fully expected to have a complete shut down to at least the end of June. Our Executive Director, our Peer Support worker and our head gardener were deemed to be essential workers. The Centre remained open for phone calls, crisis management, tax preparation, and one to one over the phone when required. Voice mail, email, and snail mail was all checked regularly, invoices were paid, staff had weekly zoom meetings on the latest information for our area regarding COVID-19.



It took a couple of weeks to figure out the best process for having the clients remain in contact with each other. It is very important that relationships be maintained, and this population is very supportive of each other. We finally landed on Facebook Messenger Video and twice weekly we would set up video chats with 8 people at a time. Our Peer Support worker kept in constant contact with the clients by phone and other means and scheduled them for the video chats. He also did daily and weekly check ins and reported on the staff log.

Since February we have lost another three of our Brainiac family. We spent a lot of time in TLC mode, with the clients requiring extra monitoring, which we did with open and honest conversation. We made sure staff and volunteers were also monitored as our community is close knit and the losses hit hard. We are lucky to have each other, and this would not be possible without the financial support of Vancouver Coastal Health and our other partners and friends.

As always, we make every attempt to provide what our clients ask for, whether it be assistance with forms and advocacy, or art projects, or any other ideas they have that they believe will improve the quality of their lives. This is our mission plain and simple, be the catalyst that helps our clients navigate the sometimes-murky waters of acquired brain injury.

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New opportunities are always right around the corner and we look forward to seeing what new prospects arise for Brain Injury and the community.

As always, we give a special mention and thanks to the Vancouver Coastal Health team who continue to provide financial and others supports; we could not provide the services we do without you.

I would be remiss to not include a big thank you to our many and varied volunteers. Working in the garden, helping out at the art table, playing cards and talking with clients, helping in the gym and the pool, and so much more. Your dedication is heartwarming and we thank you for all that you do to help with the success of our programming.

*RIP to those we have lost this year...we miss you terribly...*





## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Thank you all for another successful year at the Centre.

Although the world has been turned upside-down by Covid19 on personal, local and international levels, the "Powell River Brain Injury Society" members, staff, and Board of Directors, met our challenges with effective solutions. The Society continued to provide services and communication, as needed.



2019 saw our Society hitting its stride in many areas of support. We successfully promoted our client's arts and crafts business at craft fairs throughout the year, the Farmer's Market, and the pop-up store at Christmas. We provided writing and art sessions, ongoing work in the garden area, and coordinated fitness, nutrition, and other social activities. PRBIS and its staff created many fertile opportunities for clients to develop their skills.

The Powell River Brain Injury Board of Directors saw advancements in new committees. We focused on succession planning, policy work, visioning sessions and approval of our relationship with the social enterprise cannabis store. This will bring increased opportunity for client employment. Our Board took on a renewed initiative with accounting and funding. We continue to work with our new accounting firm, to define transparent accounting and detailed funding information. This is essential to our focus of higher funding levels in the future. When we come out of these pandemic conditions, the Board is truly clear on our plans for even higher levels of support, staffing, and funding.

The new year of 2020 brought challenges with covid emerging, and the creative adaptations we made to ensure service continuity. Our Executive Director took the lead on our new service environment, and skillfully adapted protocols for the changing conditions. I personally want to thank Debbie for keeping everyone in our PRBIS family safe.

Heading into our 18<sup>th</sup> year of service, I want to thank each our Staff, the many volunteers, and especially the Executive Director, Debbie Dee, for their dedicated contributions. I want to thank our many funding sources for continuing to support us during these challenging times. I also want to thank the Board Directors for their diligent efforts to keep us on track. Your participation is much appreciated.

I know the future of the Powell River Brain Injury Society is very bright for the rest of 2020 and into the future. I genuinely believe that this family will strongly persevere though any challenges ahead.

In conclusion, I want to acknowledge the losses in our PRBIS family. The Love within this family is the glue that holds us together and sustains us through grief. It is that Love that will carry us forward. Please take a moment with me to remember, Vanessa Kift, Bob Flewelling, and Donna Newell.

Thank you all,  
Doug Logan,  
President PRBIS.



## MESSAGE FROM THE TREASURER

This has been a busy year getting to know the board and staff of the Society. My first year on the board has also been busy going over the accounting practices and the books of the Society, working with the Executive Director on budgets and other documents and working with the board on visioning for secure future funds.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our funders. Vancouver Coastal Health, Community Gaming, Brain Injury Alliance, ICBC, Walmart, the City of Powell River, and the Federal and Provincial Governments. Continued support equates to continued service provision and support for our most vulnerable citizens. I would also like to thank the citizens from near and far for their generous donations. Your dollars all go towards increasing the quality of life for persons living with acquired brain injury.

I would like to thank the staff for the hours of volunteer work they also put in to ensure the success of our programs. Your compassion for this population is admirable.

I thank the members for your support and to my board peers, I look forward to another year of working with you. This Society is so important in our community and the work we do is from the heart.

I will be working closely with Debbie Dee, our Executive Director to ensure a balanced budget and prudent fiscal responsibility.

Dan Dyble,  
Treasurer



## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Powell River Brain Injury Society continues to play a vital role in the overall health of our region. I am fortunate to work with such dedicated and professional staff members, board of directors, and volunteers. I look forward to continuing the work we do to bring the message of prevention to our community and to raise awareness and the visibility of our Society.



Over the past 17 years we have created many programs that have helped to elevate the quality of life for our population. From art groups to encourage creativity to employment programs to enhance new skills for alternatives to traditional employment, we have endeavored to supply our clients with all the tools necessary to allow our people to thrive and survive long past acquired brain injury.

This year Covid-19 brought uncertainty and fear. Our clients needed extra support to navigate the myriad of information and move forward with the knowledge they required to be safe. We adjusted our programming and found out that indeed we continue to be a vital thread in the community fabric and excel at working through the challenges that come our way. So far, so good; if a second wave hits, we are prepared.

The Centre has always been welcoming, friendly and vibrant. It is truly a place where our members feel comfortable, respected and welcome. For some it is more than a second home, it is their first home. The 2.5-month Covid-19 forced closure of group programs tasked us with finding unique and creative ways of making sure that our clients did not become socially isolated. I am very proud of the work done by the staff and the board to ensure our clients did not go unattended.

As always, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Vancouver Coastal Health Authority for their support. We could not accomplish any of this without your assistance. I would also like to thank our many and valued volunteers, from everyone who comes in for workshops with our members, our dedicated board of directors and last and not the least our clients. We are here because of you and we are who we are because of you. Thank you for giving us your trust.

In analyzing the statistics, we can see that our efforts are paying off in the numbers of visits we get to the Centre. The feedback surveys from the clients are all positive and give us something to work from. I look forward to working with you all during 2021-2022 to further improve the great work we do.

Respectfully Submitted:

Deborah Dee, BMT, FAMI – Executive Director

## STATISTICS

2019/2020	apr-jun	jul-sep	oct-dec	jan-mar	TOTAL
Total people	132	123	122	80	200
named people	106	102	102	73	110
unnamed people/visits	26	21	10	7	90
named visits	631	828	647	539	2613
Total visits	657	849	657	546	2711
Logged calls*	44	34	45	87	247
Clients	66	73	70	65	88
cause					
tbi	54	61	64	60	76
stroke	4	4	2	2	4
aneurysm	4	4	1	1	4
tumor	1	1	1	1	1
anoxic	2	2	0	0	2
unknown	1	1	2	1	1
gender					
male	36	43	40	35	48
female	30	30	30	30	40
mobility					
partially affected	11	6	6	6	10
wheelchair	4	4	4	2	4
ethnicity					
first nations	4	4	4	3	4
age group					
18-34	6	6	4	5	6
35-50	22	29	32	38	50
51-65	38	38	34	22	32
Non-clients	42	38	37	30	50
family/friends	30	27	21	6	29
activity leader	0	1	2	0	2
requesting info	2	4	8	21	12
support worker	6	2	2	1	5
volunteer	4	4	4	2	6
other	0	0	0	0	0

\* clients, family, support, & other regular attendees

\*\*actual calls likely to be much higher

### Example from one client

Gender: Male                      Age: 45+

Ethnicity: Caucasian                      Mobility: Partially affected

Month	Visits	Program	
		Drop in	Appt
Apr-Jun 2019	28	25	3
Jul-Sept 2019	19	17	2
Oct-Dec 2019	36	34	2
Jan-Mar 2020	22	22	0
Total	105		

### MEASURES

There are several means by which we formulate, analyze and measure our services. Structural measures give us a sense of our ratio of service provider to client, process measures allow us to make accurate reflections on the services and support we offer to the clients by way of satisfaction surveys. Outcome measures signify the end result of our work, both with our population and in the community in general. We gather several forms of information to consider how we actually impact the lives of our clients and our community and whether or not we are having the intended effect. Analysis of this allows us to modify current programming if required, carry on the way we are, and gives us suggestions for new and improved services and support.

Client feedback sessions are producing successful results. Phenomenological data is gathered and analyzed through objective reports, both written and verbal. Both qualitative and quantitative results are produced. We have the clients complete service and support surveys, asking such questions as impact on their lives, anything they want to change, anything they want to add or delete and any other suggestions. We also have a survey for staff satisfaction that is completed on a bi-annual basis by the clients.

We focus our measurements on overall attendance, objective reports, and analysis of surveys, general community awareness and knowledge as per the outcome of increased visibility, community policing statistics and health numbers.

By all account we are meeting and exceeding our expectations.



## CONCLUSION

The Powell River Brain Injury Society provides a vital and important service to our community.

We have leveraged core funding by approx. 30% each year through the Brain Injury Alliance, Direct Access Gaming Policy and Enforcement and Annual fundraising campaigns and donations. We are continually seeking new grant and sponsorship opportunities and ways to partner in our community.

Each of our employees provides hundreds of hours a year of volunteer activity for the Society. We are very lucky to have such a dedicated group and I cannot thank each of them enough.

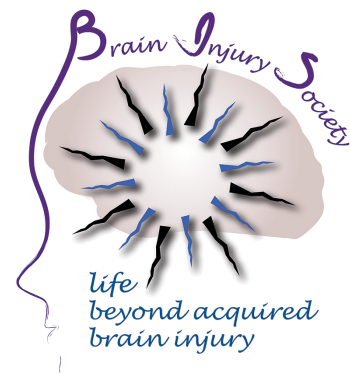
We estimate that our service ratio remains well above the industry standard. We are proud of this number. With a small staff, we have managed to provide service and support for each and every person who comes through our doors with minimal or no wait time.

If one life remains unchanged and uninjured and one family does not suffer the life long and life-altering effects of acquired brain injury then it is all worth it. We will continue to provide excellence in service delivery and support and increase our community visibility with the outcome being a reduction in the number of acquired brain injuries in our region.

Thank you!



*Big THANKS from all of us here...*



Providing service, support, education and awareness since 2003...



## City of Powell River

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File No. 0400-01

### From the Office of the Mayor

June 18, 2020

**Via-Email:** prbig@telus.net

Powell River Brain Injury Society  
#101-7020 Duncan Street  
Powell River, BC  
V8A 1V9

Dear Brain Injury Society Members:

**Re: Letter of Support and Congratulations**

In my official capacity as Mayor and as a citizen, I would like to congratulate the Powell River Brain Injury Society for 17 years of service in our community to raise the awareness of acquired brain injury and the need for prevention.

In 2003, little was known in the community about acquired brain injury. How many were people were living with brain injuries? What symptoms and difficulties did they face? What services were available to them? Brain Injury patients appeared to fall through the cracks of service delivery as their needs were as unique as each brain injury.

Deborah Dee was hired to form a Society for persons in our community who were living with brain injury. She has worked tirelessly since the beginning; alone at first, then with her team to make the Brain Injury Society one of the foremost support organizations in our region. They have a strong board of directors to provide governance and the combined knowledge of this group is impressive. We all know about Brain Injury now!

The City of Powell River is happy to have been a part of the success of this group. We provide an annual Permissive Tax Exemption; grant-in-aid and Powell River Community Forest Corporation funding; proclaim Brain Injury Awareness and Prevention month in June of each year; and I have personally attended several functions of the Society, considering all the "Brainiacs" as family to me.

The City of Powell River looks forward to many more years of working together to ensure the best possible services and supports are available in our community for all our diverse populations.

Once again, congratulations to Deborah and her team. Keep up the good work!

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Formosa", is written over a horizontal line.

David Formosa  
Mayor  
DF/jl

