

Message From The President and Executive Director 2007

We are pleased to submit the 2006 - 2007 Annual Report for Greater Vancouver Community Services Society (GVCSS). The past year has been one of reflection, assessment and revitalization throughout the organization as the Board and senior management focused their energies on strengthening the Agency's infrastructure to catch up with the phenomenal growth over the past decade. The Board also devoted considerable attention to developing a strategy that ensures GVCSS will have the manpower and financial resources available to manage the anticipated challenges for the upcoming decade.

A more detailed description of GVCSS activities is provided in the following reports section, along with a brief summary of successes and updates in each area of the Society. Here, we would like to highlight several of the major themes which impact the operations and priorities of the Society.

A major priority of the Board was to address the expanding administrative demands of the Society. Having completed our 35th year of operation, GVCSS now provides essential health care and allied community services to over 7,000 individuals each year in the Lower Mainland; we employ close to 600 field and administrative staff, and we manage a global budget of approximately \$25 million. In order to meet the competing needs of such a diverse Agency, it was necessary to re-organize staff and create the new position of Assistant Executive Director. These personnel changes have generated positive results in a number of key areas:

- meeting or exceeding quality assurance standards;
- achieving human resources and labour relations objectives;
- enhancing Agency-wide communications;
- upgrading information management systems;
- creating organizational capacity to develop new projects.

Another focal point of the Society has been to forge even stronger working relationships with our funding sources. In our Home Support program, staff have worked with Vancouver Coastal Health and colleague agencies to design and monitor Quality Assurance protocols that ensure greater accountability in the delivery of home support services. Our collaborative efforts have contributed to a more client-centred delivery model thus ensuring the provision of the best and most appropriate services to elderly and disabled persons who choose to live at home for as long as possible.

Similarly in our Community Living Department, both the caregiving and supervisory staff worked closely with Community Living British Columbia (CLBC) personnel and the assigned health professionals to ensure that the individual needs of our clients were being met in the Society-operated group homes. Recognizing that some of our clients are showing signs of aging, and that they are susceptible to multiple health disorders, the program is looking at alternative living arrangements for residents that can satisfactorily accommodate more acute medical problems. We are also reviewing the need for additional staff training (e.g. palliative care) so that group home staff are better able to deal with health concerns which may arise and affect residents with developmental disabilities.

With regard to the delivery of custom transit services in the Lower Mainland, GVCSS continued to participate in TransLink sponsored workshops which involved representation from all stakeholders for the purpose of improving access to the conventional and HandyDART systems. We endorsed the following recommendations specified in TransLink's Access Transit Plan (ratified by the TransLink Board

on June 27, 2007), and GVCSS publicly supported a number of key service changes that will make custom transit even more responsive to people with disabilities.

1. Custom Transit service levels are to be increased by 30% by year 2010.
2. TransLink will create a User's Advisory Committee to ensure better service accountability.
3. TransLink will design and implement a more flexible booking and registration system for custom transit users to facilitate easier and quick trip bookings.
4. The number of service regions will be reduced from eight to three by 2009 in order to make the custom transit system more seamless and consistent for the users regardless of where they live.

These custom transit initiatives are far-reaching and have long range implications for service providers including GVCSS, however we look forward to the opportunity to provide special transit services to an expanded service area by 2009.

As can be seen from a review of the attached reports, the profile we have achieved as a community organization and the important work that we do on a daily basis for 365 days each year could not be undertaken without strong leadership. In this regard our Board of Directors continues to demonstrate exceptional leadership and sound judgement on a broad range of complex governance issues, and they are diligent in taking whatever steps that are necessary to advance the goals and Mission Statement of the Society. This year Directors Peter Busch and Lois Arber retired from the Board after contributing many years of valuable service. Peter Busch served as the Board Treasurer since 1990, during a time of ongoing program expansion, and with his vast knowledge of both public and private sector accounting practices he has prudently monitored the Society's finances. Lois Arber, with fourteen years of service as a Board Director, will also be greatly missed by the Board. Lois Arber's work history in the health care sector provided us with a unique and compassionate view of how our services should be delivered in the community.

We thank Peter and Lois for their many contributions to the goals of GVCSS.

We would be remiss if we did not acknowledge and applaud the efforts of our Management team, along with the excellent care and service delivered by our compassionate and experienced field staff in all program areas. Together they made a real difference in the lives of so many people who are striving to remain independent in the community.

Our achievements are also dependent upon the funding support of a number of key governmental authorities: Vancouver Coastal Health, TransLink, Community Living British Columbia and BC Housing Management Commission. We are grateful for their on-going support of our programs.

Finally, we may not be able to calculate how many individuals have received assistance from GVCSS over our 35 plus years history, but we feel confident that our presence in the community has enabled many people to lead more independent lives in their own homes, while providing the health care system with more humane, yet less expensive alternatives to institutional care.

Lynn Carter, President

Ron McLeod, Executive Director