

Message from the President and Executive Director

As predicted in last year's Annual Report, 2008/2009 has been a transformational year for Greater Vancouver Community Services Society. Faced with the loss of a major service contract (HandyDART) that was delivered by GVCSS for over 25 years, our Board and staff effectively managed a series of difficult and complex downsizing issues to a successful conclusion. Notwithstanding the considerable pressure brought to bear on the Board to deal with significant restructuring challenges, we worked hard to achieve new goals in the organization while maintaining our commitment to excellence in the delivery of health care and community living programs.

The winding down of our HandyDART operation was planned in collaboration with the funding agent (TransLink), with the final day of service delivery by GVCSS occurring on December 31, 2008. Over 150 driving and management personnel were impacted by the transfer of HandyDART services to a new service provider, however we were pleased to see that an overwhelming majority of those staff were subsequently hired by the new transit operator. We are extremely proud of our accomplishments in the HandyDART sector for the past quarter century, especially with regard to providing the highest quality of services to clients with a broad range of physical and developmental disabilities and doing so in a cost effective manner. Our heartfelt appreciation goes out to all of the HandyDART personnel for the many years of compassionate and professional service provided on behalf of GVCSS. We trust that these dedicated individuals will continue to make a positive contribution in the HandyDART sector.

It is often stated in times of change that "as one door closes another one opens", and this is certainly a truism that applies to our organization. Despite the closure of our HandyDART program our Board has not been deterred from looking at new opportunities that are compatible with our Mission Statement. In January 2009, the Board created an entirely new senior management position, (Director of Project Development, filled by Dennis Morgan) to develop fundraising strategies that will provide future capital replacement and social housing options for the Society; focusing in the short-term on the transportation and renovation needs

of our Community Living Department. We also hope, that by expanding our funding base, the Society will be in a better long term position to weather the economic recession while still making a commitment to deliver high quality services in a responsive manner.

Community Living Program

Another priority of the Board was to prepare for the CARF (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities) survey of our Community Living program. Our original three-year accreditation was due to expire this year, therefore in May 2009 we conducted our second review. We are pleased to report that GVCSS achieved outstanding results in all areas of the CARF review. To quote the CARF report:

"GVCSS does an excellent job of providing quality programs and services to persons served. Guided by strong leadership, able staff, and dedicated board members, GVCSS has a proud history and outstanding reputation in the community. In spite of choppy economic waters, GVCSS still maintains high quality services to persons served. Compassion, caring, and quality aptly describe the organization as it strives for continuous quality improvement in business practices as well as service delivery."

Special thanks to Assistant Executive Director Mary Norris, Human Resources Manager Karen Foster and Acting Director of Community Living Melanie Mendonca for leading our collective efforts in the CARF Accreditation process. They put in considerable effort over the past three years to ensure that our staff were following best practices, that our six group home sites were regularly inspected and maintained, and most importantly that our residents enjoyed the best possible health and quality of life. Thanks to the strong leadership of our management team and the dedication of our staff, we secured the maximum three-year accreditation award in June 2009.

Home Support Program

For the past thirty-seven years our Home Support program has been the cornerstone of the Agency, and GVCSS continues to be an acknowledged leader in the delivery of home-based care for elderly and disabled residents of Vancouver. With close to 300 trained and experienced home support staff, we assist over 2,000 individual clients each year by providing a diverse range of personal care services in the home. In the 2008/2009 fiscal year GVCSS delivered over 385,000 hours of home support service to the community which was a 5% increase over the previous fiscal year. We are particularly proud of the fact that whenever possible we try to match the appropriate worker to the appropriate client, taking into account not only health conditions but also cultural and language preferences and the need for continuity in the worker/client relationship. GVCSS is keenly aware that since our services are provided in the clients' home, it is essential that we offer care in a manner that is respectful, professional and empathic at all times.

It is gratifying to receive external recognition from our funding authority (Vancouver Coastal Health). According to documentation compiled by VCH, the GVCSS Home Support program exceeded performance targets for all service criteria including client and clinician satisfaction surveys, and we consistently achieved these outstanding results throughout the entire year. Congratulations to Program Director Diana Hill, Program Assistant Robin Ostrowercha and all of our home support staff for this remarkable accomplishment.

Strategic Plan

In 2009 GVCSS adopted a new strategic plan that builds upon the strong foundation and

Lynn Carter, President
Ron McLeod, Executive Director

success of the previous three decades, and better positions us to deliver on our mission and remain relevant and vital to the people we serve. Our three year strategic plan will achieve a number of key objectives:

1. Provide motivation and focus for pursuing growth opportunities that are compatible with our philosophy;
2. Strive to heighten the profile of GVCSS;
3. Ensure that the Society maintains an experienced, trained and stable workforce;
4. Take necessary steps to ensure the long-term viability of GVCSS.

While the strategic plan will guide our collective actions in the upcoming years, ultimately our success will depend upon the leadership of our Board and staff, and the capacity to adapt to ever-changing public sector requirements and the needs of clients.

In Closing

The Society's success in delivering high quality health and community living programs to the community would not be possible without the dedication and purpose shown by our caring and professional staff team, an extremely committed group of Board representatives and the ongoing support of funding authorities and colleague agencies. We thank all of you for your involvement with GVCSS, and for enabling us to put our core values to work in the communities we serve.