

## **Report from the Human Resources Department**

*Submitted by Karen Foster, Human Resources Manager*

### **Introduction**

The purpose of the report is to provide an update to the Executive Director and the Board of Directors of the Society's HR activities and performance for the past year April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009, in accordance with the Agency's fiscal year end. Please find listed below updates on the major areas of the Human Resources Department, including Recruitment and Retention, Orientation and Training, Labour Relations, Benefits Administration and Claims Management, the Attendance Enhancement Program and Wellness.

### **Staffing**

The staffing at GVCSS is complex, as we provide Community Living and Home Support services 24 hours per day, 7 days a week.

Adequate staff is needed to achieve organization outcomes, provide quality service, and ensure client safety. The Human Resources team is charged with the responsibility of hiring employees in a timely manner, to ensure the effective delivery of services. A casual registry is maintained by each separate program, and is utilized to provide coverage for the leaves of regular employees, or provide relief for temporary workload situations.

GVCSS currently has 241 regular, unionized employees, 190 casual, unionized employees and 14 non-union excluded employees, for a total of 445 employees organization-wide.

### **Recruitment, Retention, and Succession**

During the time period of this report, there were a total of 75 new employees hired by GVCSS, of which 4 were regular, unionized employees, 70 were casual, unionized employees, and 1 was a permanent non-contract employee. This is a decrease from the number of employees hired in 2007-2008. The predominant cause of the decrease is the loss of the HandyDART contract. In addition, the Home Support Program froze hiring of casual employees for 3 months in order to maximize the hours of our current staff. Unfortunately due to the loss of the HandyDART contract with TransLink a few layoffs did occur in the Administration department and in the Home Support Program.

Internal recruitment was very active as well, with 60 postings being circulated in the Agency during the year. There were 23 internal vacancies for Community Living, 19 for Simon Fraser HandyDART, 3 for Richmond HandyDART, 12 for Home Support and 3 for Home Support Administration. Of the internal vacancies, 58 were filled by GVCSS employees, one Community Living Supervisor position was filled by an external candidate and 1 Supervisor position in Community Living remains unfilled.

To maintain a large pool of qualified candidates on file, the HR team advertises through multiple venues. In particular, the most common recruitment sources utilized over the past year include the following paid media: The Vancouver Sun/Province, local newspapers (Vancouver Courier, Richmond Review, North Shore News, Burnaby/New Westminster Leader), Ming Pao newspaper, Sing Tao newspaper, the Calgary Herald, BCjobs.ca, and monster.ca.

In the last fiscal year, the cost of advertising for vacancies was approximately \$11700.00. This is a decrease of \$2100 from last year. The cost reduction is due to a very conscious effort to be conservative with advertising spending and also, an increase in unsolicited resumes. Common no cost media used for recruiting display ads include: Human Resources Development Canada website, craigslist.com, S.U.C.C.E.S.S, and the GVCSS website.

The turnover at GVCSS amongst regular employees was very low during this past year, as can be demonstrated below by the Turnover Statistics 2008 table. The turnover rate was just slightly less than the previous year 2007 (6%) at approximately 5% of employees. Voluntary turnover includes resignations and retirements, and involuntary turnover includes terminations, layoffs, and deceased employees. There were 12 regular employees who exited the Agency, which equated to a total turnover percentage of 4.98%, of which voluntary turnover was 3.32% and involuntary turnover was 1.66%. GVCSS has very fair and equitable employment practices, a competitive salary and benefits package, and offers rewarding career opportunities. The satisfaction of our staff is indicative in our low turnover rates and the fact

that almost 50% of our workforce has been employed by GVCSS for ten years or longer. The turnover goal for regular employees is to stay at or below the low rate of 6% set last year.

At GVCSS, effort is made to promote from within whenever possible, to ensure the retention and development of our staff. As a result, there was one non-contract excluded vacancy that was temporarily filled by internal staff this year. In Community Living, the Program Coordinator was promoted to the position of Acting Director, Community Living when our current Director was accepted for Long Term Disability in October 2008. Succession planning is considered by all Program Directors and Managers. Employees identified for future career progression with the agency are coached, trained and guided to

success through the performance management process. At the Board level the Board has a standing Nominations committee which seeks to identify potential Board members who might bring expertise and volunteer experience to the Board; in addition we look for individuals who embrace the core values and mission statement of the organization and who demonstrate genuine compassion and concern for the health and welfare of both our clients and our employees. In the last few years we have added new Board members with a wealth of experience and qualifications in the fields of social work, human resources and specialized medicine. We have also recruited people with physical disabilities who provide an invaluable consumer perspective of the services provided by this Agency.

<b>TURNOVER STATISTICS - 2008</b>					
<b>Turnover for Regular Employees by Department</b>					
<b>Department</b>	<b>Employee count March 31/09</b>	<b>Number of employees who left from April 1/08 – March 31/09</b>	<b>Percentage of voluntary turnover</b>	<b>Percentage of non-voluntary turnover</b>	<b>Percentage of total turnover</b>
Community Living	64	4	4.69%	1.56%	6.25%
Home Support	151	5	3.31%	0.00%	3.31%
Home Support Administration	10	2	0.00%	20.00%	20.00%
Administration	16	1	0.00%	6.25%	6.25%
<b>Turnover for Regular Employees Organization-wide</b>					
	<b>Employee count March 31/09</b>	<b>Number of employees who left in 2008</b>	<b>Percentage of voluntary turnover</b>	<b>Percentage of non-voluntary turnover</b>	<b>Percentage of total turnover</b>
GVCSS Employees	241	12	3.32%	1.66%	4.98%
* Voluntary turnover includes resignations and retirements. Involuntary turnover includes terminations and layoffs and deceased employees					

Turnover of casual employees was much higher than that of our regular employees. There were 26 casual employees who exited the agency in 2008, which equates to a total turnover percentage of 13.68% of which voluntary turnover was 10.53% and involuntary turnover was 3.16%. This is demonstrated on the Turnover Statistics 2008 table below. The turnover for casual employees in 2008 was much lower than 2007. Last year's turnover rate for casual employees was 35.6%. This greatly reduced turnover rate could be related to three key factors.

One is that the department with the highest turnover last year, Simon Fraser HandyDART has been excluded from our statistics as all employees were laid off at the end of 2008. Also, the shift in our economy has led many employees to stay in their current jobs. Finally last year in an effort to reduce the high turnover for casual employees we introduced exit interviews with all casual employees leaving the agency. Using the exit interview a report was developed for Home Support that examined reasons casual Community Health Workers

were leaving the agency. Methods that have been implemented to reduce turnover this year include ensuring casual job candidates have a realistic expectation of the number of hours of work they will potentially have, revising interview

questions, and offering an easier schedule initially. The target for casual turnover rate set last year was 25% and we have greatly exceeded this in 2008.

<b>TURNOVER STATISTICS - 2008</b>					
<b>Turnover for Casual Employees by Department</b>					
<b>Department</b>	<b>Employee count March 31/08</b>	<b>Number of employees who left from April 1/08 – March 31/09</b>	<b>Percentage of voluntary turnover</b>	<b>Percentage of non-voluntary turnover</b>	<b>Percentage of total turnover</b>
Community Living	32	11	25.00%	9.38%	34.38%
Home Support	152	15	7.89%	1.97%	9.87%
Home Support Administration	5	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Administration	1	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Turnover for Casual Employees Organization-wide</b>					
	<b>Employee count March 31/08</b>	<b>Number of employees who left in 2008</b>	<b>Percentage of voluntary turnover</b>	<b>Percentage of non-voluntary turnover</b>	<b>Percentage of total turnover</b>
GVCSS Employees	190	26	10.53%	3.16%	13.68%
* Voluntary turnover includes resignations and retirement. Involuntary turnover includes terminations, layoffs, and deceased employees					

### **Responsibilities and Roles**

Job descriptions are in place for all unionized and non-contract staff positions. All are current and reviewed and changed if necessary on an annual basis. A new job description was created this year for the position of Director of Project Development. Effective January 2009 Dennis Morgan, former Fleet Coordinator for Simon Fraser HandyDART, was hired for this position. The position is responsible for developing new business opportunities for the Society with particular emphasis on generating social housing strategies that address the needs of our home support and community living client base. He will also be examining other new program development opportunities for GVCSS and will be responsible for examining opportunities for improved marketing, communications and public relations for the Society.

In Spring 2008 the Human Resources department hired an Occupational Health and Safety Consultant on a contract basis to assist with the health and safety needs of all GVCSS

programs. The consultant worked for us for 15 months putting many procedures in place to ensure the agency was in compliance with CARF and WorkSafe regulations.

### **Policies and Procedures**

Employment policies, guidelines, practices and procedures are in place to guide the actions of staff and to determine fair approaches in the treatment of staff. Policies are reviewed annually by the Board of Directors and Department Directors and updated as required.

Working alone procedures were developed and implemented this year for the Home Support Program. Using a risk assessment form, clients are classified as either being Minimal (M), Amplified (A), or Serious (S) risk. All Community Health Workers designate a check in buddy who may be a friend or a family member. For minimal risk clients, the Community Health Worker contacts her check in buddy at the beginning, end and midway through her shift. If the buddy

fails to hear from the worker they inform the employee's supervisor who will immediately begin to follow emergency procedures to locate the missing worker. For amplified risk clients, Community Health Workers check in with their supervisor through their day rather than their buddy. Serious risk clients are always assigned two workers at a time. Each pay period workers are responsible for turning in their Working Alone Call Log so their supervisor can ensure compliance with the Working Alone Policy and Procedures.

Ensuring there is an active Labour Management Committee is a requirement of the collective agreement. Each department holds their own joint Labour Management meetings, and HR always attends and is responsible for creation and distribution of meeting minutes. Issues that are brought forward in the meetings are resolved in a timely manner whenever possible.

### **Orientation and Training**

All new staff members receive an initial orientation at head office that is conducted by Human Resources. There are organization policies, procedures and practices that are reviewed, as well as department-specific information. The orientation also includes a review of Health and Safety policies, payroll and benefits information, union contact information, a Q&A session, and the completion of new hire documentation. Orientations are scheduled for group sessions, whenever possible. To welcome employees to the Agency, all new hires receive a gift. The gift that was purchased for this year was a GVCSS rollerball pen. This provides the new employees with GVCSS memorabilia to enhance a sense of belonging to the Agency. At the end of their orientation, employees are given a chance to evaluate the orientation using an orientation feedback form. This feedback helps Human Resources determine strengths and weaknesses of the orientation session and is useful in planning future sessions. The feedback results over the course of the year have been excellent. Overall, employees felt that the orientation has exceeded their expectations in all areas including: organization, facilitator knowledge, presentation style, opportunity for participation, and how well they felt the orientation equipped them to perform their job. To improve the presentation a PowerPoint version of the Orientation manual is used in tandem. The presentation is made more visually appealing this way. In addition, questions that

test for knowledge have been included in the orientation to allow for immediate feedback.

### **Performance Appraisals**

Performance appraisals are the responsibility of the direct supervisor. Human Resources also provides advice related to performance issues as required.

The performance appraisal system addresses the specific requirements, skills, and abilities as laid out in the job description, as well as performance improvement goals for employees as required.

Performance appraisals are completed after the initial probation period and annually thereafter. The annual evaluation process now includes a physical assessment. Employees in each program are observed during the course of their work performing their regular work duties by either the Occupational Health and Safety Consultant for Community Living, or Nurse for Home Support. Any issues arising from the physical assessment are forwarded in a confidential manner to the Program Director and Human Resources, and discussed with employees at a later date after the assessment.

Employees are required to sign and comment on their performance appraisal, and they may choose to either agree or disagree with the appraisal. Should an employee not agree with the content of their appraisal, they have the right to appeal their appraisal. A copy of the signed performance appraisal is placed on the employee's file.

### **Benefits Administration and Claims Management**

The majority of the benefits administration process is completed by Human Resources, which includes enrolling employees on benefits, processing status and beneficiary changes, terminating employees from benefits, answering employee benefit questions, creating invoices monthly. This year the Finance department started performing the monthly reconciliation between the bills provided by our benefit carriers and the amount of deductions from payroll.

The cost of benefit premiums increases each year, and Long Term Disability, Extended Health and Dental premiums are particularly costly. In 2008, Long Term Disability rates increased by

4% . However this year there were no increases to Dental, Extended Health and Life/AD&D rates.

There are many employees who have a disability or a variety of health conditions that prevents them from being able to work. Regular unionized and non-contract employees who are unable to work are eligible to apply for Long Term Disability benefits. Human Resources facilitate the process of filing for Long Term Disability. In the last fiscal year there were 23 employees who were receiving Long Term Disability benefits. This is an increase from the 20 employees who were receiving LTD benefits in 2007. Throughout the entire healthcare industry, Long Term Disability claims are increasing. Human Resources, Department Directors/Managers, and the Unions, work with the rehabilitation department of Healthcare Benefit Trust to proactively reintegrate employees back into the workplace through gradual return to work plans. An Early Intervention Program was negotiated into the provincial healthcare collective agreement for 2006-2010. The EIP plan was implemented last year. This collaborative program to assist regular employees who are ill or injured return to work is a joint effort between the employee, employer, the union, healthcare providers and case managers. The hope is that with appropriate case management and early assistance for employees that are ill, that LTD costs will be reduced. 37 employees on sick leave were referred to the EIP Program during the course of the year, double the number from 2007.

**Attendance Enhancement Program and Wellness**

An Attendance Enhancement Program has been developed at GVCSS in order to reduce the amount of sick time taken by employees, in an effort to improve continuity of client care,

minimize service and operational disruptions and to reduce costs associated with sick time. Last year the program was revised and new guidelines were created to ensure the continued success of the program. Instead of monitoring sick time statistics every six months, they are now reviewed quarterly. GVCSS will track an employee's attendance for one year duration to determine an annualized total absence rate before initiating their inclusion in attendance enhancement meetings. In addition, casual employees who cancel shifts due to illness are included in the program as are regular employees that deplete their sick bank and use unpaid sick leave. Though these two groups are not taking paid sick time their absences still disrupt the smooth functioning of the programs. Employees who have high sick time have a meeting with their Supervisor or Department Director/Manager to discuss reasons for the absenteeism and potential strategies for improvement. The Union and Human Resources are involved when there have been multiple meetings with an employee, as this program is progressive, and employees with consistently high absenteeism without bona fide reason may be subject to non-culpable termination. In the last year, from April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009, there were 68 meetings held with employees who utilized an amount of sick time that was above the Agency average.

Employees who have made efforts to attend work on a regular and consistent basis have been recognized for their excellent attendance through an annual recognition program. This year a GVCSS coffee mug and thank you memo was presented to 95 employees who had strong attendance records of less than 4 sick days in the year.

For a complete listing of the number of attendance meetings and number of employees recognized by department, see below.

**Meetings - April 1, 2008 – March 31, 2009**

<b>Department</b>	<b># of Meetings</b>
Administration	1
Home Support Administration	0
Home Support	47
Community Living	20
<b>Total Meetings:</b>	<b>68</b>

**Annual Recognition - 2008**

<b>Department</b>	<b># of Employees Recognized</b>
Administration	6
Home Support Administration	5
Home Support	75
Community Living	9
<b>Total Recognition:</b>	<b>95</b>

In an effort to assist GVCSS employees to maintain a healthy lifestyle in terms of mind, body and soul, Human Resources has arranged in-services on a variety of health and wellness topics. In-services are run in the evening, and all employees are invited to attend. The feedback from staff regarding these in-services has been very positive and there are approximately 10-15 employees in attendance for each session. A popular wellness initiative this year was an Activity Challenge and Bootcamp. The challenge took place in the summer of 2008. Employees who participated were given pedometers and encouraged to track their daily steps taken and other exercise activities on the government sponsored Activity Challenge website. At the end of the challenge, two employees with the highest activity levels were awarded prizes including: Fitness World passes, t shirts, and water bottles. Response to the challenge was outstanding with 36 people participating. Two bootcamp sessions were held for participants as well. The sessions were conducted by certified personal trainers. Information was discussed such as exercise and motivation techniques and initial fitness assessments were conducted. Then the trainers led the group through a series of exercises, all of

which could be performed at home without the aid of expensive equipment or gym memberships. Fitness World memberships are available to GVCSS employees at a group discount rate.

In the fall of 2008, Human Resources invited a facilitator from the Ride to Conquer Cancer to head office for a lunch hour presentation. As a result of this information session, 3 members of the GVCSS administration staff formed a team for the Ride to Conquer Cancer. The riders biked from Vancouver to Seattle in May 2009 after several months of fundraising. Their efforts included a coin drive, bake sale, reflexology sessions, 50/50 draw and a raffle. Each rider was successful in raising the minimum \$2,500 needed to participate in the ride. All donations went directly to cancer research, especially important to GVCSS staff as many of our fellow colleagues and family have been affected by this disease.

It was an exciting and dynamic year in Human Resources and we look forward to the opportunities and challenges of 2009.

