



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

October 8, 2025

We humbly acknowledge that we live and work on the unceded traditional territories of the Kwakwaka'wakw people with 'maya'xala (love & respect). Gilakas'la.

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A Word From Our Board - Ann Hory

It has been an astonishing and expansive year. We continue to grow, breaking new ground and providing more services to clients in the Mount Waddington area, meeting more needs and filling more gaps.

We have just over 60 staff and that is amazing to me. We have filled all our counselling positions and purchased a new van for our programs to use, creating the expansion of services we can provide to our clients.

At New Beginnings we had a Community Outreach worker pilot program. This position was to help aid the clients with getting to meetings, healthy workout options like the gym membership and using the pool facilities. They also did their best to help with transitioning clients with housing and other supports to help them in their recovery.

Better at Home received a Community Connector position, allowing for more supports for our seniors, as well as some food security funding, allowing our Better at Home Coordinator and Community Connector to plan senior meals in Woss, Port Alice, Alert Bay, Port Hardy and Port McNeill.

Our Strong Start program changed up days of operation by moving to Tuesdays to Saturdays for programming.

Our satellite office in Port McNeill is expanding to offer a gathering place for seniors, once the back is finished being renovated. Our preschool program continues to be full and has a waiting list. Having expanded to Port McNeill has allowed for clients from Alert Bay and Sointula to have more access to services.

Foundry is doing an outstanding job, offering 24 hours of drop in counselling weekly, in addition to all that they already offer with Peer Support, Smart Recovery, Walk/Run Club, Foundry Work & Education as well as the weekly Youth Clinic.

Our staff are the backbone of everything that happens at NICCCS and new this year is the staff led Wellness Committee, focusing on keeping our staff healthy and happy.

The agency received the Presidents Award of Excellence from Port Hardy Chamber of Commerce, and the icing on the cake was when Nicki Ranger, our Executive Director, won a 2025 Vancouver Island Wonder Woman award for social change. It truly delights me when our entire staff are recognized for the outstanding job they do, especially by outside agencies.

The Board knows and recognizes how very committed our staff are, not only in doing their best job in the workplace, but also in the loyalty and dedication they show to the agency as a whole. We appreciate every single one of you!

As for the Board itself, I will think you individually. Jennifer, Kris, Sara, Robin, and Allen. Thank you for your time, patience, and willingness but most of all for your compassion in being a part of the NICCCS, in the first place.

Ann Hory

Board Chair

Executive Director—Nicki Ranger



It is once again an honor to be writing another annual report as the Executive Director and reflect on the year we've shared together with the North Island Crisis and Counselling Centre Society. AGMs are more than a required milestone. They are a chance to pause, look back and celebrate what we have accomplished. This past year has once again been a one of growth and commitment and I'm proud to report that together we have continued to advance our mission to empower people in service to our North Island communities. I invite you to see all of our accomplishments as the collective story of what we can achieve together.

With almost 65 employees, we continue to operate 23 distinct yet cohesive programs across the North Island aligned on 7 different teams and in 7 different worksites. This year, we hope to share not only statistics and reports, but stories through the lives supported by the quiet, steady dedication of our Board members, staff, volunteers and contractors.

There are so many highlights over the last year that I am excited to share, it is hard to pick just a few. Most programs saw some kind of growth and development, often driven from the brilliant ideas of our staff. I invite you to take a look through this Annual Report to hear directly from the staff the highpoints of each program. From an organizational point of view, we have been focussing on stabilizing from unprecedented growth over the past few years, particularly ensuring we have the right staff in all of the right places. We are currently staffed at 91% of our positions and have maintained close to that over the last year. Supporting our staff to be the best that they can be continues to be our focus. Some feedback from our employee satisfaction survey this past year included: *I value NICCCS and all the programs/services it offers the North island. I feel we are a credible and respected organization and I am proud to be part of the team and the support from co-workers is top notch. I feel confident and competent because of the team and my supervisor's support.*

We were fortunate to be able to purchase a 10-passenger van for the agency – a definite achievement we are proud of! Remote and rural work can be extra challenging due to transportation barriers for our clients. Having a van has opened up so many doors for the staff to expand their services while removing those transportation barriers for the clients we serve and support. We are so grateful to our funders who made this dream a reality for us! One client wrote: *"we can go hiking in the woods as part of our recovery – I have lived here all of my life and have never hiked in the woods before. It's helping me stay sober"*

This coming year will be the year we renew our accreditation again. This requires a lot of focus and self reflection on our part, and given how we were casually called "Canada's Best Kept Secret" at our last accreditation, we have big shoes to fill again this time around. We are embracing the accreditation process as a means to highlight and celebrate the amazing work we do rather than as a critique or evaluation.

I've said this before, and I will continue to say that I am deeply privileged everyday to work with such a talented and impressive group of people. They continue to inspire me to be a better leader in the way that recognizes the heart, dedication and teamwork that thrives in our organization every single day. I am looking forward to what the next year will bring!

Family Counsellor—Dustin Swain

The Family Counsellor Program has had a good year, overcoming some challenges and celebrating many successes. We continue to move forward, striving to offer meaningful service in a timely manner to all our neighbouring communities across the Mount Waddington Region.

There were some challenges the Family Counselling Program navigated over the last fiscal year. First, the position began the fiscal year off unstaffed. After an exhausted search, the agency made an internal hire and service began to resume in the middle of June. At this time, there were multiple transferred files from the previous counsellor in addition to approximately 50 intakes on the waitlist. This challenge was compounded by the programs broad mandate in an area with limited resources for men and a general shortage of clinicians overall across the region.

Beginning the middle of June, the Family Counsellor Program has provided ongoing individual counselling, couples counselling, and family counselling to our communities, resulting in 33 open files. In addition, this program has been able to offer additional services: a low barrier Men's Wellness Drop In, once per week resulting in 174 contacts, Run Walk Wheel, supporting wellness twice a week to anyone across the region, and some availability to provide one off sessions, as required. These offerings have helped us serve multiple individuals this fiscal year, ranging in age from 22 to 72, across our region, including Port Hardy, Port McNeill, Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations, Kwakiuth Nation, Quatsino, Nation, 'Namgis First Nation, Alert Bay, Sointula and Zeballos. Although most referrals being received are self-referred, many are still being received from a variety of our community partners. As this work continues, we look forward to continuing building on these successes.

Child and Youth Mental Health Program - Hanna Rosback

The Child and Youth Mental Health (CYMH) program has continued to provide vital mental health services to the communities of Port Hardy, Port McNeill, Alert Bay and Sointula. The program serves children and youth ranging in age from as young as four to nineteen years old., offering both ongoing support and crisis intervention when needed. Strong partnerships with local schools have been integrated in ensuring that services remain accessible and responsive to the needs of young people in these communities.

The CYMH program in Port McNeill supports 25 ongoing clients and offers crisis session to those in immediate need., The presence of a full-time counsellor in this location has significantly strengthened connections within the community, enhancing both continuity of care and engagement with youth and their families. The CYMH program expanded to include two full-time counsellors, allowing for caseloads to be divided by region. One counsellor now provides services to clients in Port Hardy and Port Alice, while the other supports youth in Port McNeill, Alert Bay and Sointula. This strategic division has proven highly effective in maintaining low waitlists and increasing access to timely mental health support across all communities.

A key achievement over the past year has been the continued development of collaborative relationships with other professionals and service providers. These partnerships have played a crucial role in addressing service gaps and improving the coordination of care. By working closely with educators, health professionals and community organizations, the CYMH program has been able to offer comprehensive, wraparound support for clients and their families.

During the summer months, the CYMH team hosted a successful group titled *EmpowHer* in Port McNeill. Designed for girls aged 14-16, this group met weekly throughout July and August. The aim of the program was to foster peer support, build healthy interpersonal connections, promote self-care, and support abuse prevention. Sessions included a variety of activities such as games, art projects, and community engagement,

All structured to encourage open and honest dialogue in a safe and supportive environment. Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive, with many reporting that they formed new friendships and developed valuable life skills through their involvement in the group.

In summary, the CYMH program has made significant strides in service delivery, accessibility, and community engagement over the past year. By expanding staff capacity, strengthening inter-personal collaboration and offering targeted programming, the program continues to play a critical role in supporting the mental health and well-being of children and youth in our northern communities.



Foundry Port Hardy—Christine Swain

Foundry Port Hardy saw incredible changes in its second year of operations. The team grew to include two Peer Support Workers, a Peer Support Coordinator and a Youth and Family Counsellor. Primary Care also became a reality. Foundry Port Hardy continues to offer a range of services with in-kind support from many of our service partners. Island Health supports with Same Day Counselling once a week with their YSTAR and Discovery Youth and Family Substance Use Counsellors. Public Health continues to offer Youth Clinic and Primary Care wouldn't be possible without the ongoing support of the Island Health Medical Lead for the region. We have gained new partnerships this year with North Island Employment Foundations Society implementing the Foundry Work and Education Program contract and First Nations Primary Care Initiative supporting primary care nursing.

Foundry Port Hardy participated in a number of Foundry BC workshops that have never been offered before, including a Rural and Remote Peer Support Network Meeting and a Clinical Leads Network Meeting. The Foundry Port Hardy manager is also participating in a year long learning called Gather Our Medicine that supports Foundry centres to provide culturally relevant programming for Indigenous Youth and Families. Foundry Port Hardy team members participated in many community events, including the Fall Fair, AGM and NICCCS Open House. The team at Foundry Port Hardy also participated in number of professional development opportunities including ASIST Training, De-escalating Potentially Violent Situations Training and San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety Training.

Peer Support is still our most accessed service, with 32% of our youth interacting with a peer support worker. Our Peer Support team does outreach to Port Hardy Secondary School on a weekly basis.

Peer support is critical in the day-to-day operations of Foundry Port Hardy. They are often supporting youth in our centre during ram-bunctious games of UNO, for a warm meal or being a safe place to actively listen to the client.

Foundry Port Hardy hired a Youth & Family Counsellor in 2024. This enabled Foundry Port Hardy to offer Same Day Counselling on a more consistent basis. 49 individual youth were able to access Same Day Counselling and with 125 Same Day Counselling sessions completed. The Youth and Family Counsellor received training in the Foundry Model and Single Session Solution

Focused Brief Therapy to support the work in Foundry Port Hardy. This counsellor was able to see a number of youths on a short-term basis as well, providing on ongoing and familiar person for the youth to explore their goals with. The manager of Foundry Port Hardy would cover Same Day Counselling, as needed and saw a small number of clients on a short-term basis. Twenty three youth accessed short term counselling with 124 sessions completed between the Youth, Family Counsellor and manager. Foundry Port Hardy offered drop-in counselling at PHSS on a weekly basis, building a connection with the students. Discovery Youth and Family Substance Use Services and Youth Short Term Assessment Response Team, with Island Health as well as the NICCCS counselling team, continue to provide Same Day Counselling services at Foundry Port Hardy.

Primary Care made gains over the last year. A medical lead was hired and they have spearheaded the drive to bring physicians on board. Island Health has been instrumental in finalizing contracts for both positions. Foundry Port Hardy has funding for a .5 FTE physician. This can be filled by one physician or a team. The First Nations Primary Care Initiative (FNPCI) has provided, in kind, a rural and remote primary care nurse. This nurse is able to diagnose a treat infections, provide birth control and referrals to gender affirming and substance use care. Youth Clinic, run by Island Health's Public Health nurses continues to operate out of Foundry Port Hardy on a weekly basis, providing sexual health care for youth.

Foundry Work & Education Program was added to our services this year. This is a supported employment program that strives to assist youth in finding meaningful employment or education opportunities. This program is for youth 15-24, who are not well connected to school or the employment market. Funded through Foundry BC by Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, North Island Employment Foundations Society (NIEFS) provides this program in partnership with Foundry Port Hardy and North Island Crisis and Counselling Centre Society. NIEFS is responsible for recruitment, training and supervision of 2 Youth Employment Specialists, as well as all the reporting for this program. Over the last year, Foundry Port Hardy had on Youth Employment Specialist integrate into our centre, with support from NIEFS, on a weekly basis for drop-in employment services. Foundry Port Hardy looks forward to the coming year. With the expansion of the current space and additions to the team, we will continue to offer important services to the youth and families of our communities. Foundry Port Hardy is looking ahead to offer increased capacity to support youth and families in Port McNeill and surrounding areas.

This week @ FOUNDRY PORT HARDY

MONDAY September 22	TUESDAY September 23	WEDNESDAY September 24	THURSDAY September 25	FRIDAY September 26
Peer Support 9:30 - 5:00	Peer Support 9:30 - 5:00	Peer Support 9:30 - 5:00	Peer Support 9:30 - 5:00	Peer Support 9:30 - 5:00
Same Day Counselling 1:00 - 5:00	Same Day Counselling 1:00 - 5:00	Primary Care 9:30 - 3:00	Same Day Counselling 1:00 - 5:00	Same Day Counselling 1:00 - 5:00
Walk/Run Club 3:45 - 5:00	Youth Clinic 2:00 - 4:00	Same Day Counselling 1:00 - 5:00	Foundry Work & Education 1:00 - 5:00	Youth Mural 2:00 - 4:30
		Walk/Run Club 3:45 - 5:00		

Operated By North Island Crisis & Counselling Centre Society

Stop the Violence—Jolene Hammermeister

The Stop the Violence Counselling Program offers counselling and support to adult female survivors of violence and abuse, including gender-based, family, sexual and historical violence. The program focuses on empowerment, healing and safety. Clients have the opportunity to build resilience, gain control and develop boundaries and self care practices.

This past year, NICCCS Stop the Violence Program was able to provide support to dozens of women on the North Island, including Port Hardy, Port McNeill, Port Alice, Sointula and Alert Bay. This includes the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations, Kwakiutl Nation, Quatsino Nation, 'Namgis First Nation, as well as other Indigenous clients who reside on the North Island. The Stop the Violence program also supports women who access supports from NICCCS Safe Shelter, Kakuxwa'as.

Referrals come from self-referral, victim services, community partners/agencies and other women and family programs in the organization. We were fortunate enough to acquire a second STV counsellor at the end of this year and the two counsellors are able to provide services with little to no waitlist. NICCCS and the Stop the Violence Program, look forward to creating some supportive women's group opportunities in the coming year.



Prevention, Education, Advocacy, Counselling and Empowerment (PEACE)

The Prevention, Education, Advocacy, Counselling and Empowerment (PEACE) program for children and youth experiencing violence, (formerly Children Who Witness Abuse) is a free, confidential program for children and youth aged 3 to 18 who have experienced domestic violence.

PEACE focuses on violence prevention through the Violence is Preventable program, delivered in elementary schools and secondary schools (launching May 2025). PEACE also supports teen digital dating violence supports, bringing awareness to the dangers of digital dating including online luring, intimate image sharing, stalking and harassment. Youth can get support creating technology safety plans and learning about their legal rights and protective factors. Supports are offered to any children and youth in the Mt. Waddington Region.

The PEACE program also works closely with the Stop the Violence Program, to support women and children who are fleeing violence and accessing Kakuxwa'as (NICCCS Safe House).

We welcomed a new counsellor, Allison McKee, in March of 2025 to the program and look forward to continuing to support vulnerable children and youth in our communities.

Sexual Abuse Intervention Program (SAIP) - Kailie Otermanns

The SAIP program provides trauma-informed client-centered counselling to survivors of sexual abuse ages 0-18 and individuals ages 0-12 who display abnormal sexual behaviours. Services include individual, crisis and short-term family counselling. This program offers psychoeducational workshops and support groups.

Many clients accessing SAIP experience complex trauma. The sexual abuse is often one aspect of their traumatic experiences, other including physical and emotional abuse; neglect; grief; attachment disorders; unstable housing; food insecurity; substance abuse; lack of trust in institutions (including mental health, RCMP and education); and dealing with long-term impacts of generational trauma.

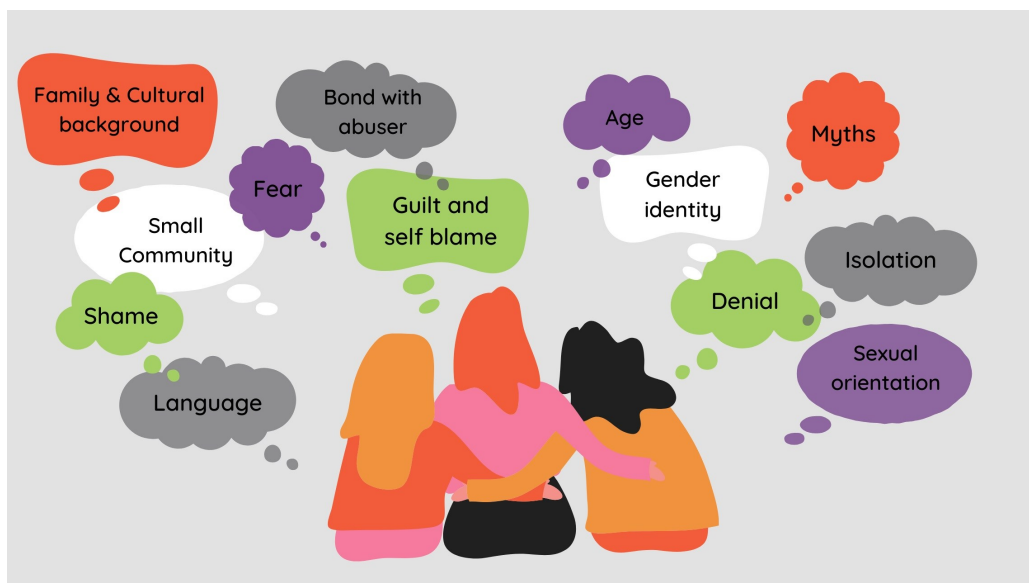
Current client ages range from 8-18, most of whom have at least one caregiver who has experienced sexual trauma, and/or other traumas. The clients primarily reside in the Port Hardy region, the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nation and the Fort Rupert Reserve.

The SAIP program offers flexibility in the deliver of services. Transportation is often a barrier for youth and children with working parents. The ability to provide transportation and/or provide sessions in schools increases accessibility. The SAIP counsellor collaborates with other NICCCS counsellors by facilitating workshops, presentations and groups. This allows the counsellors to educate and support a wider range of clients. By collaborating, the counselling team members are supported by each other. Counsellors at NICCCS all receive monthly clinical supervision and in addition to support from their direct supervisor.

During presentations and groups, many youths have disclosed experiencing abuse but are hesitant to seek consistent counselling services due to shame and stigma. Another challenge is scheduling. The 13-18 age group communicates primarily through texting. This often results in youth ghosting messages or scheduled sessions. Clients ages 8-12 are often seen at school, which improves consistency. However, then caregivers are less involved in scheduling and often do not inform counsellor of absences.

This past fiscal year the SAIP counsellor position was unfilled or part-time from July 2024 to February 2025. This significantly reduced available services and those on the waitlist often didn't require support once the position was filled. Being new to the North Island, the SAIP counsellor continues to build trust with the community.

The second half of this fiscal year has shifted with a new counsellor who is working to build trust, connections and engagement with the community. The SAIP counsellor has many plans for increasing services through groups, more accessible counselling services and continuing professional education.



Men's Counsellor –Dustin Swain

The Short-Term Counsellor Program entered the fiscal year staffed and operating with a full complement of open files. This offered the Mount Waddington Region additional resources to support their mild to moderate mental health and substance needs. In addition, there were weekly offerings of a Men's Drop In Program and ISPARC's RunWalkWheel Program helping foster positive outcomes in health and wellness.

There were some challenges faced by the Short-Term Counsellor Program. First, we continued to navigate a high demand for mental health and substance use counselling. This issue was further compounded by the ongoing surplus of vacant wellness positions across the region. In addition, it has proved challenging to navigate the relationship between the funder being the sole referral source and the agency addressing the needs of the region as a whole.

Between one-to-one counselling, Men's Drop In, and RunWalkWheel the Short-Term Counsellor provided service to more than 50 individuals. These clients collectively showed representation across the Mount Waddington Region: Port Hardy, Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations, Kwakiutl Nation, Quatsino Nation, Coal Harbour, Alert Bay, 'Namgis Nation, Sointula, Port McNeill, and Zeballos. The Short-Term Counsellor left this position for an internal posting the middle of June and it stayed unfilled up to the completion of the fiscal year.



At the end of the fiscal year, NICCCS made the decision not to continue the contract with the funder to pursue a funding source that better aligns with the goals of our organization and the needs of the community.

Sexual Assault Response Program (SARP) - Shelby Wilson



The Sexual Assault Response Program (SARP) has more than tripled since it first started in 2023. At the end of 2024-2025 fiscal year, SARP had 19 clients and over 60 referrals to the program total since the program began in October of 2023. Not only has the number of clients grown but so has our community engagement/education sessions. The SARP Coordinator continues to meet bi-weekly with Doctors, Nurses and other Hospital staff at both Port McNeill and Port Hardy Hospitals. She is also continuing to meet with Port Hardy and Port McNeill RCMP Detachments, and will continue to do so when new members arrive. The SARP coordinator also consistently meets with other SARP/SAS programs on the island each month. It is great to have other SARP/SAS programs to confer with about resources, trends and client supports. It is also a wonderful sense of community amongst our group, and provides amazing support. The SARP Coordinator has taken part in quite a few professional development and networking opportunities, both within and outside of community. In February, I took part in Sexual Assault Services (SAS) training in Victoria and most recently successfully completed the Assisting Individuals in Crisis & Group Crisis Intervention Training, in Qualicum Beach. I've also providing Consent presentations to PHSS and NISS, as well as host presenters from Children of the Street, who did a total of 7 different workshops at all three of the high schools. These workshops were called Stand Up, Speak Out and were focused on educating students and staff, on different ways to ask for consent, the harms of toxic masculinity and how to be an active bystander. A key part of providing support to sexual assault survivors is the relationships and connections you make with other resource providers. As example of this is the fantastic relationship between Island Health Forensic Nurse Examiners and SARP, and how we continue to work closely together to support survivors. I look forward to continuing to build relationships with other service provider, both within and outside of community. Despite all of this positive growth, SARP is experiencing some challenges, such as the lack of trauma informed and safe transportation support options for survivors that have to travel down island to receive a sexual assault forensic exam (SAFE). SARP is grateful for the trauma informed and client centered support, from community partners, as no two healing journeys are the same. Gilakas'la to the Kwakwaka'wakw

People for allowing me to work, play, live and support sexual assault survivors o the North Island in their healing journeys.



Shelby Wilson (4th from left) with other SARP and SAS Coordinators from Vancouver Island, EVA BC 2024

Third Party Reporting— Shelby, Donna & Melissa

Third Party Reporting is a service that supports survivors of sexual assault, to make anonymous reports of sexual assault to the police. In this role, we act as support workers to write up a Third Party report, submit it to the police on behalf of the survivor, work as a liaison between the police and the survivor and ensure that the survivor has the necessary supports in place. Working with the Sexual Assault Response Program we ensure survivors of sexual assault are supported. To date we have done 4 Third Party Reports but expect that once word gets out, we will see more use of Third Party Reporting.



Grief and Hospice Support –Vanessa Roach

This past year has been a year of growth and reviving our program. We were able to bring in and train new volunteers to add to our already amazing team.

Our focus as Hospice Volunteers is easing the journey of dying and grieving. We offer support to individuals with advancing illnesses, as well as their families and friends, during all stages of end of life care.

We offer support to those that have lost loved ones and friends, grief has no time limit and everyone experiences grief differently. We are here to help navigate the different stages of grief.

Victim Services—Debbie Klaric

This is the 27th year that the Port Hardy RCMP Victim Service Program has been in operation. The program provides services to Port Hardy, Port McNeill and Port Alice detachment areas. We are also called to assist the Alert Bay detachment, when needed. The program offers relevant information to victims of crime and trauma within the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights and provincially the Victims of Crime Act. Victims have the right to be updated on the status, progress and outcome of their police file, the offender's release conditions and updates on court appearances, protection orders and restitution orders, assistance to navigate the criminal justice system, assistance with victim impact statements, information and referrals for resources and emotional support to help process crime and trauma. The program has one full time employee and on part time employee.

We act as a liaison for victims with crown counsel and police. We have built positive relationships with local crown counsel as well as crowns from down island. Both Port McNeill and Port Hardy have new detachment commanders and many new officers. When time permits, we will participate in community events, providing information about our program. We continue to participate in Situation Table, North Island Suicide & Critical Incident Response Network, Circle, detachment and NICCCS staff meetings.

Our program continues to be very busy, we would benefit from another full time support worker, but we have managed to operate another year without any waitlists. April 2024 to March 2025, Port Hardy had 281 clients, Port McNeill assisted 148 new clients, totalling 429 clients within this time period. Port Hardy has 202 ongoing clients, Port McNeill has 92, Port Alice has 9 and Alert Bay has 7.

Women's Outreach Program - Sandra Winfield

The Women's Services Outreach Program was vacant from April to October 15th, 24. I stepped into this role, providing a wide range of practical and emotional support for women who have experienced , are currently experiencing or who are at risk of experiencing violence in their lives. It has been very challenging to provide a broader scope of service to women in our community, but I endeavor to provide practical assistance for their immediate needs. As an Outreach worker providing advocacy to help women make safe and informed choices that prioritize the safety of themselves and their children. Services provided for shelter and community clients could include but are not limited to:

Emotional supports around safety planning, risk assessments, needs assessment, suicide assessments, women needing support when sponsor's not available to support them, providing companionship and comfort, reassurance navigating the systemic systems, identifying women's strengths and planning around them, connecting women to appropriate services, nation, counselling, medical, police, victim services, SARP, STV counselling, etc.

Court support for parents/grandparents/caregivers who have children involved in MCFD, charges from RCMP/ police, child protection, custody, separation agreements and protection orders.

Community supports have included grocery shopping, food bank, or resources via special programs when in dire straits for food for their children and themselves, employment, mental health & substance use programs, applications for Legal Aid, housing, Income assistance, subsidies, addressing any/all medical/health needs, transportation, financial support (banking, taxes, subsidies, start-up funds), finding safe alternative housing, and on-line access, cell phones, laptops and tablets.

Complex Development Key Worker (FASD)—Shannon Servatius

STATISTICS

Number of clients served: 26

Location of Clients and Families: Port McNeill, Port Hardy, Coal Harbour, Gwa'sala'nakwax'da (Tsulquate)

Average age of clients: 13 years old

ACHIEVEMENTS

- I participated in quarterly Vancouver Island Keyworker meetings. Topics ranged from available training in our field to resource sharing and current studies conducted on FASD and similar diagnosis's
- Attended the Healthy Kids Fairs in Port McNeill and Port Hardy
- Visited the Promising Babies and CAP-C Programs in Port McNeill and Port Hardy
- Participated in Pink Shirt Day to support antibullying and Orange Shirt Day to honour the survivors of Canada's residential school system and the intergenerational impacts
- I created and distributed FASD Info Packs for clients, families and other service providers. They contained printed resources, information and strategies on various topics about FASD and similar developmental and cognitive delays.
- Collaborated with the CYSN Team Lead to coordinate supports and services for clients and their families
- Collaborated with the Ledger Program to create a home and school care plan for a client
- Hosted 2 free community BBQ's to recognize International FASD Awareness month
- Hosted a parent support group, Thrive Together. It was held in both Port Hardy and Port McNeill. A Thrive Children's Group was also developed and implemented in the Port Alice Elementary School
- Participated in professional development trainings which included: Mental Health, Suicide and Autism, ADHD Training, Understanding the Autism Spectrum, POPARD (Provincial Outreach Program for Autism and Related Disorders), ASD Awareness & Practices
- Completed school visits for clients who were struggling in school. I worked with teachers and support staff to help them better understand the student and ways to adjust environments to best suit their unique and individual needs.
- Participated in a community walk to raise awareness for Autism

CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS

- Many children and youth on my caseload are neurodivergent and are experiencing complex development that is very challenging for them and their families and/or caregivers to manage on a daily basis. Aside from the Keyworker Program, other service providers that could support them as well are either not available in our region or have long waitlists
- Some of the more remote places in the Mount Waddington catchment area struggle to receive consistent and appropriate services
- Long wait times or parents not accessing Screening and Assessments results in children and youth attending school with no designations or Individual Education Plans

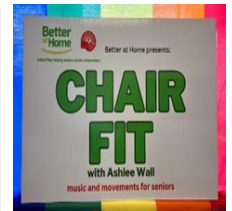
Better at Home—Ashlee Wall

Stats

This year Better at Home served 132 clients. Services were provided by 4 individuals and 4 group volunteers, and by 14 contractors. Clients receive 1 hour of subsidized service per week. New services this year include Digital Literacy Coaching, information and referral, 1:1 meals, prepared meal delivery and social meals. The waitlist averaged 23 clients. 19 clients waiting for service restart (Port Hardy) and there are 10 pending referrals (for various reasons).

Service Delivery

Type of Service	# of service instances	Total Clients Receiving that Service
Light Housekeeping	1515	89
Friendly Visiting	79	10
Group Activities (meals and Chair Fit)	50	Estimated 200+
Light Yard Work	25	11
Heavy Yard Work (part of March Madness)	7	7
Digital Literacy	6	4
Deep cleaning (part of March Madness)	6	5
Transportation (non-medical)	5	3
Transportation (medical)	2	2
Prescription Pick up	1	1



Events, Engagement and Special Funding

Chair Fit—classes in Port Hardy, Port McNeill and the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Elders Center

Social Meals—Wholesome hot lunches in Woss, Alert Bay, Sointula and Port Alice. Also sponsored meal programming in Port Hardy and at 2 Elders Centers.

Food Security Targeted Funds—\$175 grocery gift card for each client, and supported hot meal programming.

2 by 2 Grant—helped to make service as affordable as possible

The Giving Tree—provided gifts and grocery gift cards to more than 100 seniors

Challenges

Finding sufficient and reliable service providers in Port Hardy is a continuing challenge. Creative and collaborative solutions are in the works.

Successes

Community Connector—North Island Better at Home was one of the first in the province to welcome a Community Connector and the Social Prescribing program.

CBSS Celebration—Provincial Meet-Up in November. Ashlee was asked to speak as a panelist

March Madness—Deep cleaning, gutter cleaning, additional services and more!

Men's Shed—Better at Home facilitated the start-up of 2 Men's Sheds. The sheds are a safe and familiar environment for men (in particular retirees) to connect. They provide an activity with a social aspect, and as a side-effect, positively impact older men's mental health.



Better at Home Community Connector—Trez Ostrowska

Social prescribing is a global movement towards healthcare professionals, prescribing non-medical activities and resources that promote wellness and ultimately improve health outcomes. The North Island Crisis & Counselling Centre Society's program is being implemented by the Community Connector, Trez. Trez accepts referrals from anyone 55+ in need of supported information and referral services.

Beginning in August of 2024, the Community Connector collaborated with many community organizations who were excited about the onboarding of the Social Prescribing program, as well as, worked to help initially reluctant clients to embrace supports.

A continuing challenge has been getting the health care system on board with the program, but looking forward to developing better relationships in the future.





OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY

A Year in Review

The OH&S committee consists of 8 fabulous members that represent each of our 7 worksites and consists of both employees and an employer. We meet every third Thursday of each month at 1:30 pm in our Executive Director's office.

Over the past year we've seen a steady amount of incident and hazard reports needing to be reviewed. This consistent level of reporting shows an abundant appreciation for safety and healthy among our incredible NICCCS employees. Well done everyone!

The committee has enjoyed ensuring that facility safety checks are completed, facilitating training, completing practice drills for emergencies, updating first aid kits and supporting Nicki, as she updated the Emergency Response Plan along with supporting documents. In addition to our regular OH&S duties we've also been up to some pretty exciting things. Ashlee obtained certification that will allow her to provide ergonomic assessments of work stations. We're excited for this opportunity to improve employee wellbeing and to reduce the risk of workplace injuries. At an all staff meeting we also had Lieutenant Chris Ranger from Port Hardy Volunteer Fire Department, come and demonstrate how to effectively/safely use a fire extinguisher.

We created an OH&S email to make it easier for employees to report incidents and/or to inquire about anything OH&S related.

With the support of the OH&S crew, Nicki completed a workplace safety/hazard assessment for each worksite. This was a significant task and we're grateful for all the time and effort that was put into completing it.



Wellness Committee

The Wellness committee is dedicated to bring wellness to NICCCS and all it's fabulous employees. We've taken the time to discuss what our hopes and goals are for the committee, as well as what structure we might need, in order to best support the committee and its members. For example, we commit to fostering a positive, supportive and inclusive environment through 8 different principles. These principles are respect, communication, encouragement and participation, positive attitude, open-mindedness, consideration, support and addressing misaligned behaviours. We currently consist of four members and meet once a month via zoom.

We've created a quarterly newsletter. Each quarter we gather different ideas to include in the newsletter, to share with NICCCS employees. Some of the things that you can find in each newsletter are, healthier recipes, different wellness activities(like how to make a bath bomb), highlighting different wellness resources in our benefits plan and more. These newsletters are sent out on Wednesdays, which we like to call Wellness Wednesdays. Each month we've also been doing birthday shout outs, consisting of a wonderful poster that highlights that particular month's birthdays for employees. (totally voluntary to participate)

For some, part of wellness is feeling recognized and seen. We hope to continue to do this each month for our colleagues. "Stars and Storms" was recently implemented at each worksite. It is an activity where you can share the "stars" for the moments where you feel like you had a win and want to celebrate it and "storms" represent a challenging moment or something to reflect and grow from. You write either of them on a piece of paper and put it in the corresponding jar. We will read them as a group, each quarter.

We are looking forward to seeing what else our Wellness Committee can do to bring more ideas to life over the next fiscal year.



Elder in Residence—Maggie Sedgemore

As part the North Island Crisis and Counselling Centre Society’s commitment to Truth and Reconciliation, as well as providing culturally safe practices for our Indigenous clients and families, we have welcomed Maggie Sedgemore to our organization, as the Elder in Residence, in November 2022.

Maggie, affectionately known as Auntie Maggie, is a Kwakiutl elder who is strong in traditional cultural ways of being. With a background as a clinical counsellor, Auntie Maggie has a strong understanding of the work NICCCS does across our many programs.

Since her tenure as our Elder in Residence, Auntie Maggie has supported NICCCS staff and their clients. Auntie Maggie has been a welcome, weekly presence at Let’s Play Daycare, where she engages in story time with the children and has also attended monthly lunches with residents at the New Beginnings house. Staff have utilized time with Auntie Maggie for advice and support for their clients in session. We have been honoured to have her join us for many exciting events hosted by NICCCS, from celebrating Christmas with us and being present regularly at Foundry Port Hardy.

We are grateful and fortunate to have Auntie Maggie as the Elder in Residence for NICCCS and we look forward to her continued participation with our programs and staff in coming years.



Youth Programs—Sue Haskins

🏠 FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Celebrating Community, Connection & Creativity
2024-2025

🌸 A Year Full of Fun & Connection

Once again, we're proud to celebrate the heart and soul of the **Family Support Program**—our amazing clients, dedicated staff, supportive volunteers, and the vibrant community around us!

Over the past year, we've stayed busy with enriching activities that help foster connection, learning, and FUN. From community outings to cozy campfires, we've made countless memories together.

🏠 Community Activities

Here are just a few of the things we've enjoyed:

- Monthly **library visits**
- Fun-filled **bowling** days
- Visits to our local **pet store**
- Relaxing **campfires** and walks
- Our beloved **Annual Tea Party**
- **Family Games Night & Family BBQ**
- Trip to Fire, Police, and Ambulance Stations

Each event brings us closer as a community, creating joyful and inclusive experiences for all.



🤍 5th Annual LOVE WALK

Our **Love Walk** just keeps getting better! This year we:

- Handed out **150 valentines**
- Shared **100 gift cards**
- Delivered **150 chocolate bars**

Our **Teen Group** had a blast distributing goodies throughout the community—and especially enjoyed bringing valentines to the residents at **Eagle Ridge Long Term Care**.

A **huge thank-you** to our generous sponsors:

- 🛠️ Home Hardware
- 🍔 A&W
- 🍟 McDonald's
- 🏠 The District of Port Hardy



Your kindness helped us spread smiles far and wide!

🏠 The EGGLOO Adventure

Yes, you read that right—an **EGGLOO!** After 2 years of collecting egg cartons (thank you **Green**

House for your big donation!), we finally had enough to build this cozy, light-filled space in Fall 2024. With lots of teamwork—and a little hot glue—we created a quiet nook where kids and teens could relax and dream.



Even after we took it down in spring, the egg cartons continued to inspire: from building blocks to fire starters, they kept the creativity going! It was more than a fun project, the EGGLOO helped kids develop:

- Teamwork
- Problem-solving
- Sharing
- Gentle social interactions



👧 Teen Program Highlights

Our **Teen Group** is thriving! We currently have a **core group of 6 teens**, with room for more. We also support youth in **Port McNeill** through one-on-one sessions and special events.

We're excited to be developing our Port McNeill space and hope to start a **Friday teen group in Fall 2025!**

The Teen Program focuses on:

- Life skills
- Social interaction
- Transition planning for young adulthood

👶 Child Program Update

Our **Child Group** is full of energy and learning! With **7 clients enrolled** (max capacity is 8), we're seeing strong growth—but also higher needs. Several children require **1:1 support**, and we currently have a **waitlist**.

We're actively brainstorming ways to increase access, despite staffing limitations.

This program continues to focus on:

- **Self-regulation techniques**
- **Social skills and friendship-building**

👏 Staff & Volunteer Shoutout

We are so proud of our small but mighty team:

- **Linda Blanchette**
- **Shauna Topper**
- Volunteer **Tyson Dominy-Lagrosse**

Thank you for your care, creativity, and commitment!

📩 *We're currently hiring!* If you or someone you know is interested in joining our incredible team, please reach out.

🗨️ Stay Connected

Thank you to every family, sponsor, partner, and friend who supports us. Your encouragement helps keep our programs thriving. We're already looking forward to more connection, creativity, and community in the months ahead!

Warmly,

The Family Support Program Team



Youth Outreach—Shay Cox

One of the greatest strengths of Youth Outreach is the strong sense of support and collaboration within the team. Everyone is approachable, non-judgemental and genuinely willing to help. I feel confident reaching out to any colleague for guidance, knowing they will offer constructive support to help me do the job effectively. Another key strength is the flexibility built into this role, it allows me to travel to meet young adults where they are. This mobility ensures that even if a young adult is unable to come to me, I can still provide the support they need in a way that's convenient and accessible for them.

One challenge I've encountered while working with teens is maintaining consistent engagement. There are days when motivation is low, and it can be difficult to coordinate meet-ups or even get a response when trying to make plans. This can make it a challenge to build momentum and maintain a steady connection. Finding stable housing is difficult in general right now, but it becomes even more complicated when young people are not employed or are unwilling to seek work. In these cases, it's extremely challenging to connect them with landlords or housing programs, willing to take a chance on them, which adds another layer of difficulty to providing the support they need.

One of the biggest challenges we face is knowing there are children and young adults in the community who would greatly benefit from the support of a youth outreach worker but not receiving any referrals for them. Even when the program is in place and ready to help, the absence of referrals makes it difficult to reach those who need us most. It's hard to see young people struggling to gain control over their lives when we're unable to assist simply because the necessary paperwork hasn't come through.

One teenager I worked with was living in an unsafe home environment and desperately wanted more independence. One of their goals was to get their driver's license, not just as a milestone, but as a step toward gaining control over their life. We started by exploring safer housing options and after working together, we were able to find a new, stable place for them to live. At the same time, I supported them in studying for their learner's license. We set up a study plan, went through practice tests and stayed focused on their goal. In time, they passed their test and got their "L". They're now living in a secure home, with more freedom and confidence than they had before. It's been incredible!



Kaḱuxwa'as House” - A Year of Transition & Growth at the Safe House—Sue Haskins

This past year has been one of significant transition for the Safe House, and we want to take a moment to reflect with gratitude and hope for what lies ahead.

First, a heartfelt thank you to Marina Hargrave for her many years of dedicated service to our agency and the broader community. Marina’s commitment has made a lasting impact, and we wish her all the best in her well-earned retirement.

Following Marina’s departure, Sue Haskins stepped in as Acting Coordinator, ensuring the continued smooth operation of the Safe House. Under her leadership, we welcomed six new staff members and held a full training day in April. A big thank you to Jolene Hammermeister, Cathie Wilson, and Nicki Ranger for leading the training with their expertise and guidance. The training covered essential topics, including day-to-day operations, answering the crisis phone, and addressing gender-based violence. Sue is now working closely with our STV Counsellors and Women’s Outreach teams to build a well-rounded support system for clients entering the Safe House. This means women and children fleeing violence will have immediate access to counselling and other support services when they arrive.

One of the significant changes this year was our name transition—from “Women’s Safe Shelter” to “Women’s Safe House.” This change reflects our unique role: we are not a shelter or transition house, but rather a short-term safe house for women and children fleeing violence.

We are also honoured to announce the gift of a Kwakwaka name: Kaḱuxwa'as House – meaning *“a sheltered area or bay where you go to wait for the weather to calm down.”*

We are deeply grateful to Auntie Maggie Sedgemore and the Elders for bestowing this meaningful name upon us. It beautifully reflects the sanctuary and support we strive to offer.



Housing remains a significant challenge on the North Island. With only a two-bed facility, our priority must remain on serving women fleeing violence, and sadly, that sometimes means we have to turn away others in need. However, NISCCS has long-term plans to expand into transition housing and second-stage housing to better meet the growing needs of our community.

Finally, a huge thank you to our dedicated and flexible team. The nature of Safe House work often requires rapid response and schedule changes. We see your dedication, and we deeply appreciate your willingness to adapt and your commitment to the mission.

Here’s to continued growth, collaboration, and support for those who need it most.

Early Years Programs

Supported Child Development Program

The programs and services collectively known as the Early Years Team have had a productive and dynamic year in 2024–2025. Services were delivered across all communities throughout our region, ensuring broad access and support for families. The team has focused on streamlining intake procedures and providing staff with the tools and resources needed to make informed decisions about service delivery. We have also worked to strengthen engagement with parents and childcare staff through a more holistic, relational approach grounded in early intervention and family-centred practice. Our ongoing goal is to create seamless transitions for families, eliminate wait times, reduce service duplication, and enhance the overall quality of service delivery.

Early Years Family Navigator

Sandra Winfield has transitioned into the role of Family Navigator and has settled into this position with dedication and enthusiasm. In her new role, Sandra is actively connecting with vulnerable families across the region, providing guidance, advocacy, and support to help them access the services and resources they need. She has been instrumental in strengthening relationships between families, community partners, and program staff, ensuring that families experience coordinated, compassionate, and responsive care. Sandra’s work continues to enhance our team’s capacity to identify needs early, reduce barriers, and promote positive outcomes for children and their families.



Early Years Programs

Infant Development Program

This year, the Infant Development Program continued to provide services from our new Port McNeill location, which has proven to be a wonderful enhancement to our program. The improved accessibility of this space has allowed for greater family participation and stronger engagement within the community. The new setting has also supported the delivery of a wider range of services reaching many more families than in previous years.

Kat and Christine have had an exceptionally busy year managing the diverse needs of the IDP caseload while providing families with opportunities for connection, developmental support, and social interaction. During spring break and the summer months, the team successfully hosted a series of pop-up playgroups throughout the community, ensuring continued access to play and developmental opportunities during school breaks.

Together, these relationships foster a holistic, coordinated The Child Care Programs have continued to provide essential early learning and care services in both Port Hardy and Port McNeill throughout the 2024-2025 year. Our programs remain committed to offering high-quality, inclusive, and nurturing environments that support the growth and development of all children while meeting the diverse needs of families within our communities.



Let's Play Infant & Toddler Centre (Port Hardy) and Let Them Play Early Learning Centre (Port McNeill)

The Child Care Programs have continued to provide essential early learning and care services in both Port Hardy and Port McNeill throughout the 2024–2025 year. Our programs remain committed to offering high-quality, inclusive, and nurturing environments that support the growth and development of all children while meeting the diverse needs of families within our communities.

In Port Hardy, the program has maintained strong enrollment and continues to serve as a vital hub for families seeking stable and consistent child care. Staff have focused on creating welcoming and engaging environments where children can explore, learn, and build relationships.

In Port McNeill, our child care program continues to grow in both capacity and community engagement. The team has placed a strong emphasis on play-based learning, outdoor exploration, and fostering a sense of belonging for all children.

Strong Start—Charmaine Hoet

Strong Start is a program funded by the Ministry of Education. We opened our doors in 2007 at Robert Scott Elementary School. The program follows the School District #85 calendar and we are open from September to June. Strong Start tries very hard to make the program welcoming and inclusive to all it's participants. Although the main focus is on children 0-preK, we strive to make the centre family friendly. As a result, we are seeing more and more grandparents and extended family, attend whether they live in community or are visiting.

Our numbers have been bolstered this year by the regular attendance of two group daycares and one family home based daycare. We have tried to make ourselves available as a resource in our community, including now opening on Saturday mornings to support working parents as well. A place to play no matter what the weather and available to all children 5 and under, as well as their siblings.

Changing Results for Young Children is a collaborative inquiry project that brings together community based Early Childhood Educators, Strong Start Facilitators and Kindergarten teachers who are released to work collaboratively in six joint professional learning sessions. I have been part of this group for the last 6 years. It has been very helpful to my practice as an Early Childhood Educator, as it's challenges the educator to examine their practice and to collaborate with other educators. As we mark 18 years of service to the community, we can only hope that funding for this essential program will continue long into the future.



Office Administration—Sandy Tamburini

This year saw some positive changes to our admin department. With the addition of so many staff within other programs our admin crew of 3 was struggling to keep up to the demands, so the decision was made to add to our team. It took a few interviews but we ended up with a gem in our Trish. She has blossomed in her own quiet, unassuming way and we are so fortunate to have her. We did try to hire a 4th person to fill in some of the gaps and to be an admin in the ever growing Port McNeill site but that did not work out. However I am confident an appropriate person will be found when the time is right and if the need is there.

At the beginning of the year I also made the very difficult decision to move toward retirement by cutting my hours from 35 to 21. This has given me the freedom to do some of the “retirement” things I have been wanting to get done without losing the connection to the agency. I am thoroughly enjoying this new balance of work and personal life.

There continues to be much training and learning within our admin team, striving to get everyone familiar with all or at least most of the tasks we have in the event that any of us are out of commission for a period of time. Sabrina has joined me in the Admin Manager role so a lot of learning has and is taking place. Nicole has also taken over some of the major HR and reporting tasks and Trish has lightened Sabrina’s load by taking some of her major tasks including the dreaded payroll. This has been extremely helpful and allows for both Sabrina and I to be more focused on training and to be involved and present in our leadership roles. Being on the leadership team with Nicki and the other strong staff members continues to be a highlight in my job.

Through all of this we have become a very cohesive team embracing the changes in the agency with grace and who show respect to each other and to the other staff and clients we serve. I am so lucky to work with such an amazing group of humans led by the best leader.



Thank you to our Funders



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