

ANNUAL REPORT 2019



...as we have

opportunity,
let us do good to all people...



Galatians 6:10

Who are we?

Bethesda exists to support people with diverse abilities and thrives in reciprocal relationships, inclusive communities, and lifestyles rooted in true belonging. As an organization committed to Jesus' call for unity and diversity in the body, we live interdependently, esteeming everyone's value and contribution because "in fact, God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as He wanted them to be." 1 Corinthians 12:18

At Bethesda we believe that we are only capable of thriving when we thrive together. An inclusive world that makes room for people of all abilities and needs is a world in which we can all grow together. By creating relationships with people from all walks of life, we can access the richness of true community.

Bethesda Christian Association is a non-profit registered charity that provides an array of services throughout British Columbia for people with disabilities and their families. Bethesda services include Supported Independent Living, Home Share, Residential Homes, Affordable Housing, Intentional Community, Community Inclusion, Employment Services, Family Support Services and Summer Camps.

"In response to all He has done for us, let us outdo each other in being helpful and kind to each other and in doing good."

Hebrews 10:24 (TLB)



Vision

People of all abilities belonging to communities where they are valued and empowered to share their God-given skills and abilities.

Mission

As an expression of our Christian faith, we support and empower people with disabilities and their families, experiencing the joys and challenges of life together.

Strategic Plan

In June 2018, Bethesda launched our new 2018-2023 5-Year Strategic Plan. The following five priorities were identified:

1. Capacity to Respond to Service Needs
2. Effective Marketing and Communications Systems and Practices
3. Effective Staff Leadership Development and Succession Practices
4. Engaged and Equipped Staff
5. People Receiving Services Empowered as Leaders and Decision-Makers

For each area, specific objectives were defined, and targets established for the first year of implementation. We have reached 22 of the targets.





Message from the CEO

Living our Mission:

"As an expression of our Christian faith, we support and empower people with disabilities and their families, experiencing the joys and challenges of life together."

I am excited to share this year's Annual Report with you. We are celebrating another year of God's provision and as we look back over the past year, we can see how God led us in so many ways that are often only recognized in hindsight.

We all know that it is essential to measure outcomes to remain accountable for the work we are entrusted with, but we also know that there are many things that cannot be measured, like the joy and pride both the people we support and staff feel when they witness each other experience true belonging or when something they have been working so hard on becomes a reality. Whether that is employment, experiencing success living independently, becoming so integral to a community that you are missed when you are not there, or making that friend you have ached for most of your life. These things are what give us purpose and meaning in our work.

We have weathered a year marked by significant recruitment challenges. Across the sector, agencies are struggling to find and retain staff to support the people who use their services. At Bethesda, staff shortages in some of our services have stretched our staffing capacity, but I am grateful to all the staff who have gone over and above during this time to ensure people are supported well.

We are still waiting to start building our new Provincial Office. This has been an exercise in patience as we wait longer than anticipated for City approvals. In the midst of this sometimes challenging path, we know God continues to lead and to provide.

We engaged with a Branding Consultant this year and are excited to share our new brand look with you at the AGM on September 19th. Here is a sneak preview of our new logo...



We are so grateful for our employees who are committed to thoughtful, creative and intentional support that empowers people to lead lives of great value in their communities. We are also privileged to have a skilled and engaged administrative and technical support team, Leadership team and Board of Directors who faithfully commit themselves to the service of others.

We are equally grateful for the opportunity to support others in achieving their goals and to grow together as we continue to wrestle with what it means to truly belong.

Jody Siebert, CEO

Bethesda's Leadership

The Board of Directors

George Boer, President
Eric VanderGriendt, 1st Vice President
Alan VandenBerg, 2nd Vice President
Ray Olthuis, Treasurer
Leslie Scholtens, Secretary
Angela Nierop, Director
John Nieboer, Director
Nick Hogewoning, Director
Rachel Ludwig, Director
Walter Nordeman, Director
Kevin Pastoor, Self Advocate Representative
Jody Siebert, Chief Executive Officer

The Executive Team

Jody Siebert, Chief Executive Officer
Greta Nicholson, Chief Financial Officer
Tori Dalair, Chief Operations Officer
Dan Steenburgh, Chief Operations Officer/HR
Darlys Carlson McDonald, Chief HR Officer
David Naples, Business Administrator
Joyce Vander Hoek, Family Support Director
Ann Trudeau, Regional Director
Dawna Braun, Regional Director
Steve Walsh, Regional Director
Francine De Jong, Regional Director
Darlene Davy, Regional Director
Greg Harris, Regional Director



In Pursuit of a Self-Directed Life

Walking into Janna's home, the first thing you notice is the 2 large sliding barn doors. Janna is very pleased with how they look.

And she would know, she is somewhat of an expert in home design from closely watching her favorite show, "Extreme Makeover Home Edition". Janna's personal living space is a large suite with her bedroom enclosed by those stylish barn doors. She shares the home with a housemate, Jasmine, in a purpose-built home at the end of a quiet cul-de-sac in Sardis.

Janna moved here at the end of January. Before, she was living with her parents in the family home in Langley. But she turned 30 this year, and in the words of her mom, 'it is time – you've got to move out'. Janna agreed and she hasn't looked back.

Transitions happen all through life. Moving out of the family home is one of life's major transitions. Flying the coup,

leaving the nest...it's always an exciting time when adult children move out. There's anticipation of the future, some trepidation of the unknown, and maybe some anxiety about how life's challenges will be met. This is true too for people with diverse abilities, but with some differences.

Families, who may have cared for their adult child all their life and know their every nuance, have to reach a place of trust as they release their loved one to professional support workers. It's a big ask. Families have to find a service provider, a suitable home within the agency, and be satisfied that their child will be safe and loved. Getting there is a process, and the beginning of the transition.

When asked what she like most about living on her own, Janna grinned and answered immediately –

'freedom!'

For Janna and her family, the transition was fairly smooth. Joyce, Bethesda's Family Support Services Director, is the primary liaison who walks through this process with families. She understands that success is a matter of trust built on relationship. Together with the families, she navigates topics that people sometimes struggle with – agreeing upon the best support strategies for their son or daughter, adjusting to their changed legal status, and accepting the rights of their adult child.

When asked what Janna likes most about living on her own, she grinned and answered immediately – ‘freedom!’ The freedom and sense of being an adult able to make choices for herself. She went on to talk about the things she likes doing, watching her favorite TV shows, eating the foods she likes best, going to her new church and connecting with her community group at the Wednesday morning Bible study (where there’s a really adorable baby she loves to hold!). Best of all, Janna says, ‘I get to stay up as late as I want’, although that is never past 7:30 pm!

At first, Janna was homesick, especially at night. Her mom visited her each day for a few weeks to smooth the transition. It helps too that Janna makes friends easily and has a natural curiosity that soon overcame any sense of loss.

Shortly after moving in, her family and staff threw a home-welcoming party to

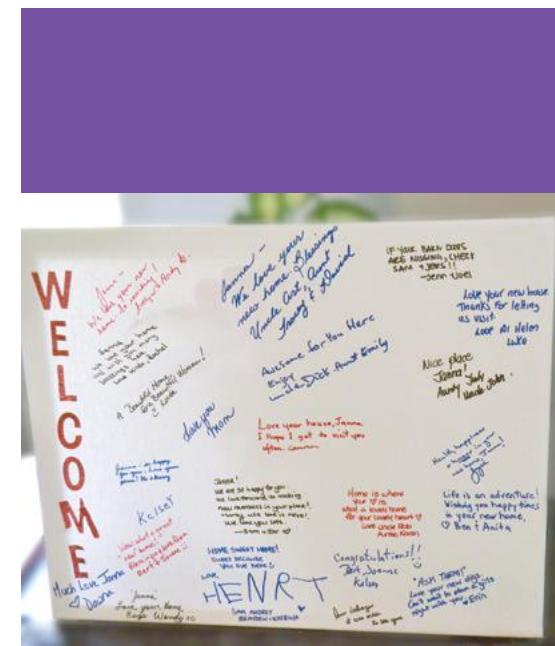
celebrate this big life event with her. Her mom and dad, brothers and sister, uncles, aunts, cousins, and many friends came over. Erienne, her key worker, said she'd 'never seen anything like it in the house. I walked in and it was a full-on roar with so many people talking and laughing.' Janna's special friend, Cameron, who she has known since she was 3, was there too.

Janna is getting to know her new community as well. Being in a central location, she can walk to her church, shops, A&W and Tim Horton's, and along the trail beside the Vedder River. She's been embraced by the people in her church, and has made new friends and reconnected with some old friends at the Chilliwack Community Inclusion she attends.

She speaks with enthusiasm about this new chapter in her life. She's full of hopes and dreams. As she should be.

Bethesda supports people like Janna to live self-directed lives to the best of their ability, to thrive in safe and welcoming communities, and to follow the plan God has for them.

After four months, Janna is well-settled into her new home in Sardis. She loves living 'on her own'. Her independence gives her a sense of pride and confidence, and she was eager to share her story about what it means to have her own place.

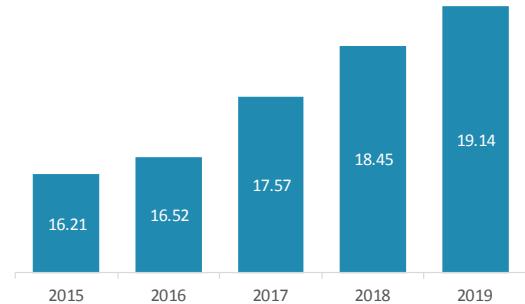


For Janna's home warming party, her family and friends made a poster, sharing their prayers and blessings for her.

Revenue & Expenses 2018-19

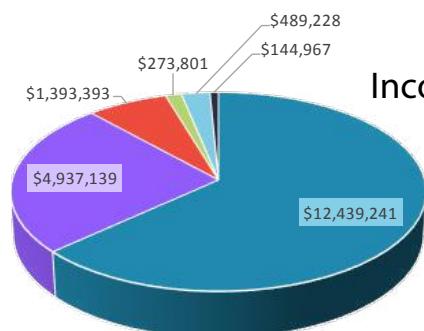


Program revenues
(million \$\$/yr)

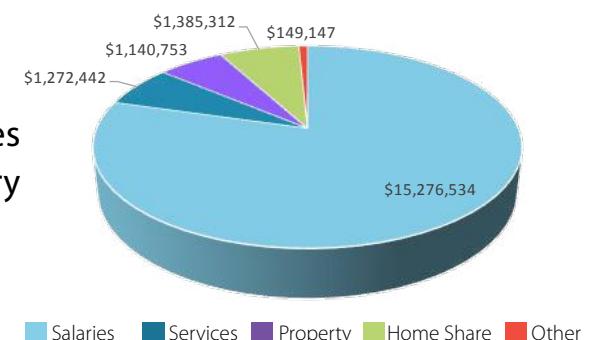


Income by source

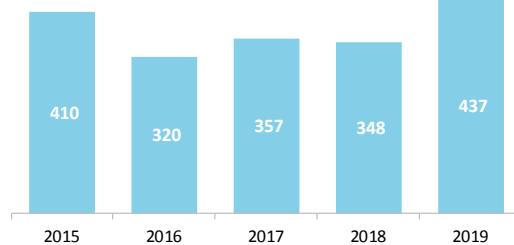
- Residential
- Community Inclusion
- Home Share
- Other Supports
- Donations
- Investments



Expenses by category



Donations
(thousand \$\$/yr)



“Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, his love endures forever.” Psalm 107:1

Donations Impact Lives

Although Bethesda receives most of its funding from Community Living BC, we continue to rely on donations from supporters for services that are not eligible for government support.

Our Lend-a-Hand campaign is the major annual fundraiser for Bethesda. The donations raised every year enable us to offer family support services, summer camps, Supported Independent Living services, employment services, affordable and accessibility housing, community inclusion services, specialized equipment and support for churches.

We are fortunate to have community supporters who partner with us in other fundraising events. Last year, local businesses and friends of Bethesda in Chilliwack raised over \$26,000 to purchase and install air conditioning in people's homes at Vedder Terrace. Students at Langley's Credo Christian Elementary School raised over \$4,400 to purchase a trampoline and other outdoor equipment for our day camps, while the annual Fraser Valley Christian Junior Hockey League

tournament raised over \$2400 for Bethesda's ministry. We are grateful for community-led initiatives such as these. They not only raise funds, but they demonstrate the commitment supporters of Bethesda have for the work we do supporting people with diverse abilities and their families.

Last November, we were honoured to partner with Brian Doerksen on a concert to benefit Bethesda. In early November, Brian Doerksen and his band performed songs from his new album, *Grateful*, and shared our story in an appeal to the audience. The concert was 90% sold out and raised over \$35,000. We are thankful to those who came out and supported the concert and for all the businesses who sponsored the event.

We are collaborating with Brian Doerksen on another fundraising concert this year. Taking place on November 30, this evening of Christmas music will be an uplifting start to the Christmas season. Tickets are available online at <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/the-heart-of-christmas-with-brian-doerksen-tickets-62789154050>

(see story on page 11 for more information about the concert)



Subscribe to our e-newsletter! Receive stories about the impact your generosity has on the people we support and their families. Plus you'll receive notice of special events so you can stay connected.

Click on the Sign up Now! button at

<https://www.bethesdabc.com/contact.html>

*Your word is
a lamp for my feet,
a light on my path.*

Psalm 119.105



Human Resources

Recruitment & Retention

Recruitment was a significant part of our focus as we searched for candidates for key leadership positions, support workers in resources, as well as Home Share providers. We continue to experience high rates of turnover in casual employees. The turnover incurs Human Resources costs in administration, advertising and training.

Retaining staff is a challenge across organizations in our sector. In response to this challenge we have been experimenting with updated and creative ways of recruiting and retaining new staff.

We have identified key messages in our advertising that highlight our values and distinguish Bethesda as an employer, we have added an employee incentive program for staff that put forward successful referrals, and we are exploring more targeted outreach opportunities. The total number of employees as of the end of March 2018 was 389, in line with the past 3 years.

Staff Training

Staff training is one of the pillars of engaged and empowered staff. Although we offer excellent courses, staff aren't always able to attend when they are offered due to scheduling issues. To improve accessibility, we have been exploring adopting online courses. In the past year, we have selected courses that are a good fit for an online learning format and are tailoring the content for Bethesda. The increased flexibility of online courses will give staff more access to training.

Staff Satisfaction

Feedback from our 2019 Staff Satisfaction Survey was strongly positive. Most employees understand how Bethesda's vision, mission and values are reflected in their work, report a positive relationship with their supervisor, and feel they make a meaningful contribution. Building effective communication and creating a motivating and energizing workplace are two areas we have committed to improving.



Cascading impacts of turnover on Human Resources staff as they process staff changes to benefits, payroll and staff data systems.



Sue, our beloved receptionist of 19 years, is retiring this summer. She has been training Brittany on the many office procedures and systems she will be taking over. We wish Sue God's blessings in her retirement.



Staff & Volunteer Recognition



Last October, 59 Staff and volunteers celebrating their 5-year milestones were honoured at Recognition events in Richmond (left), Abbotsford (centre) and Kelowna (right), for 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, and 35 years of service. We are thankful for the commitment of our employees and volunteers toward the people and families supported within Bethesda's ministry.

Self-Advocates News

An active year for Self-Advocates at Bethesda

In last year's Annual Report, a few Self-Advocates shared their thoughts on what it meant to be a Self-Advocate—having a voice, speaking freely, giving back, feeling confident, or standing up for worthy causes. In one year, Self-Advocates have been actively setting their own direction and living out their hopes and dreams.

Civic Engagement in Chilliwack

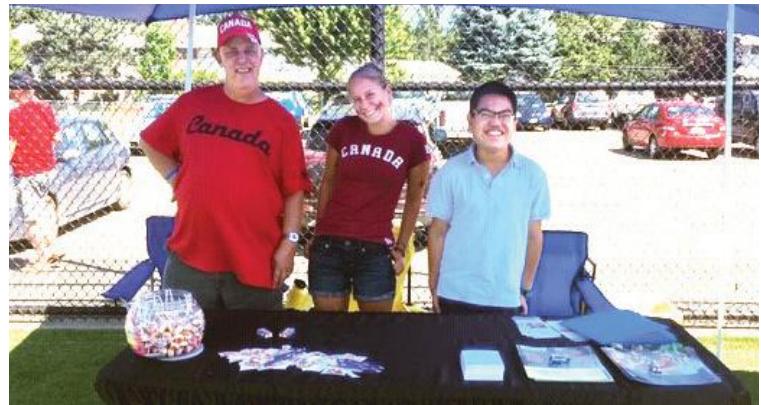
It started with a meeting back in January with Chilliwack's new mayor, Ken Popove. He was so impressed with the group of Self-Advocates from Chilliwack and their commitment, that he invited them to continue a dialogue with the city. Since then, they have toured the offices of the City Hall, and are working with the transit planning department on how to improve the bus system.

Community Participation

The Self-Advocates in Chilliwack are not just about talk. As fully involved citizens, they give back in hands-on ways too. They have recently become Adopt-A-Block stewards along the stretch of Vedder Road between Stevenson and Promontory Roads. They actively represent Bethesda and Self-Advocates at local events such as the Canada Day celebrations in Chilliwack.

Guiding the Organization

Self-Advocates have an active voice in Bethesda. They participate on the Board of Directors, the Self-Advocates Advisory Committee to the CEO, and the Fundraising Committee, as well



Self-Advocates set up a booth at Townsend Park in Chilliwack on Canada Day. They offered Canada Day tattoos, outdoor games and prizes.

as advising in organizational planning. Some of the initiatives they are involved in include strategic planning, staff training, and the development of language awareness guidelines.

What's Next

With the success of self-advocacy in Chilliwack, we are starting a Self-Advocates group in the Abbotsford/Langley area. A kick-off BBQ is being held in late August where both groups can come together and socialize and share ideas. From there, each group will be meeting monthly in their own regions to plan goals for themselves and celebrate being Self-Advocates. The opportunities for their growth are exciting. We wish them well.

Inclusive Employers Empower & Transform Lives



Stephen proudly accepts an Inclusive Employers award on behalf of his employer, Produce Gone Wild.

It's a big moment in someone's life when they get a job. Finding a job empowers people, bringing a sense of personal value and worth. It represents those things that give us a full life within community—being valued, having responsibility and autonomy and contributing and belonging as full citizens. For people with diverse abilities, a job lets them use their abilities to shine as God intended.

This spring, Bethesda, along with Rotary at Work and Mission Association of Community Living, recognized employers who hire people with diverse abilities. The Inclusive Employees Awards event to honour these employers was held last May at *The Stage* in Mission. Between the three organizations, 70 employers in the Abbotsford, Maple Ridge and Mission areas were recognized for valuing and supporting all people for who they are.

The event started with a sit-down dinner served by one of the Inclusive Employers, *Eleni's Restaurant* in Mission. For job seekers and employers and staff from the three organizations, it was a time to share their stories and to learn about each other.

After dinner, the awards were given out. Each employer spoke a few words about how having people with diverse abilities on staff has impacted them personally, their business, their customers and staff. Employees that were present shared their support, applauding and cheering on their bosses, leaving no doubt the impact inclusive employers have in transforming lives.

Inclusion transforms our communities into places of love and equality, where no person is left behind. All that were present that evening bore witness to the powerful impact of inclusion on our lives.



Bethesda is partnering with Christian singer and songwriter Brian Doerksen in a major Christmas concert in Abbotsford to raise awareness and donations in support of Bethesda's ministry.

The concert is on November 30, the evening before the start of Advent. Brian will be debuting his first Christmas recording, *The Heart of Christmas with Brian Doerksen*, a collection of new original Christmas songs and classic favourites.

Brian talks about working on the music, "it's been a wonderful experience working on these songs that tell the story of Emmanuel; how God is with all of us in the mess and magic of our ordinary lives."

"For you whose hearts are struggling with the season because you are missing loved ones or if you are searching for the perfect gift for loved ones still here; these Christmas songs are for you."

Appearing with Brian are special guests, violinist Calvin Dyck leading a string orchestra, the Pacific Mennonite Children's Choir and other surprise musical guests.

This will be the second year Bethesda has collaborated with Brian to raise funds for services supporting people with diverse

Where: Central Heights Church
1661 McCallum Road, Abbotsford

When: Saturday Nov. 30, 2019 at 7PM

Tickets: \$24.50 and available at

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/the-heart-of-christmas-with-brian-doerksen-tickets-62789154050>

abilities. We know we are blessed to be working with such a gifted musician and supporter of people with diverse abilities.

Brian shares his passion for our ministry, "I love the way Bethesda serves people with diverse abilities. Their services make a big difference to whole families impacted by these long-term needs – our family included, as they support our young adult sons with Fragile X Syndrome. I'm thrilled to do what I can so more people know the vital and amazing work Bethesda is doing."

What a great way to mark the beginning of the Christmas season. This is expected to be a popular event so get your tickets now. Advance tickets are only \$24.50.

Bethesda Provides Christian Leadership

Organizations coming together to strengthen and encourage each other

Bethesda hosted the 4th Christian Faith-Based Agency Roundtable from April 15-17, 2019 in Abbotsford. The Roundtable was formed in 2015 with intent of providing a space for Christian organizations in Canada and the United States to support one another and talk about issues that are unique to us as Christian service providers. We have previously met in Ontario, Michigan and California. Next year our meeting will be held in New York.

Over the years we have discussed topics on

- what it means to be a Christian Faith-Based organization
- what makes us unique as Christian organizations
- how do we develop and maintain our Christian culture and ethos
- developing foundational documents

- managing government partners
- nurturing relationships with faith communities
- governance and risk management

This year we hosted 7 agencies. As in other years, the dialogue and

information shared was robust and life-giving for everyone at the table. The relationships and resources that come out of these discussions have become invaluable.



In Memory

Byron Klassen 1962-2018

With great fondness we remember Byron Klassen who went to be with our Lord on November 07, 2018. Byron was one-of-a-kind: a gentle, humorous, courageous man who joyfully lived his life to the fullest at the West Richmond Home. Byron's attitude and ability to "bounce back" were an inspiration to all. His smile, his singing and his spirit will be missed until we meet again.



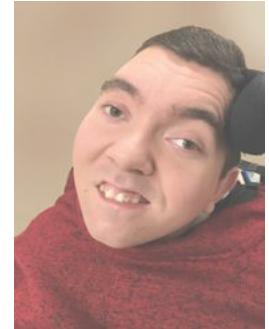
Deena Williams 1998-2018

Deena was part of the Bethesda community from 2014 until 2018. She blessed our lives and taught us much, from learning to enjoy, love, and live in the moment, to finding joy in the small things - such as the way water can fall. Deena will forever be remembered for skipping through the house then suddenly jumping and clapping with the most boisterous laugh because in that moment something was just that funny. Deena has forever changed our hearts and we are blessed by the time that we spent together.



Brandon Wynn 1997-2018

Brandon arrived at the North Kelowna home in April of 2016 at 19 years of age. He was a very handsome and quiet natured young man, and brought great happiness and love to his family and to the people at North Kelowna home. Although his time with Bethesda was short he made a deep impact on the staff who supported him and left us with many warm memories.



Diana Buurman 1958-2019



Diana brought a cheerful and energetic personality, taking every opportunity to enjoy life to its fullest. Her sociable and outgoing nature endeared her to many, fostering lasting friendships. Diana will be lovingly remembered through the Diana Buurman Award which commemorates her being the first person to live at the Mt. Lehman Home in the 1970's.

Bryan Everett 1974-2018

Bryan is remembered as a gentle and courageous man who experienced many joys in his life. Bryan enjoyed life with close friends and family playing sports, getting out in the community and long walks. Bryan demonstrated strength and patience in his daily challenges. Bryan's life touched many lives and he is lovingly remembered.



*"Indeed, we all have need.
I will be blessed through what you can do.
If you would, please take a moment and notice
the gifts that I can share with you.
They may be unique, but I insist.
Their uniqueness is certainly no reason to resist."*

C. Huinink, excerpt from her poem *Some People Say...*



You can donate to Bethesda's ministry at
<https://www.bethesdabc.com/donations.html>
or by mail to 105-2975 Gladwin Rd., Abbotsford, BC V2T 5T4

BETHESDA CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

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