

Lend a Hand Campaign

Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. Galatians 6:2



Bethesda
Faith. Service. Inclusion.

April 2024

Lifting One Another Up Through Love

When Jean began assisting Anita in September, she recognized in her someone grappling with fear and pain, reflected in neglect of self-care and social support. Her instinct was to approach Anita with gentleness, drawing from Christ's teachings, as well as behavioral support training. 'It's the tone of your voice. It's looking in the eyes... And if Anita does have a moment, we step back and give her space. It's a Christ-centered approach, and it's beautiful to witness,' she explained. With deep emotion, Jean recounted Anita's journey toward trust and openness, 'It's all through God, that's how this happens.'

Dawna, the director overseeing this service, agreed, emphasizing the importance of listening, honoring, and respecting choices to foster a sense of belonging and enable people to thrive. 'Their spirit is lifted up by being loved.'

This narrative of transformation through love and belonging is a common occurrence at Bethesda, where staff witness remarkable changes regularly. Supporting Bethesda means contributing to these life-altering experiences and positively impacting the world.

Learn more about the Lend a Hand campaign at www.bethesdabc.com/lend-a-hand/



Transforming lives through love

Donations to the Lend a Hand campaign pay for services for people with diverse abilities and their families, services that are not covered by government funding.





Supporting One Another Builds Connection

Family Support Group Offers Strength

"The group has helped me connect with others who have kids with disabilities", says Aimee MacFarlane who has been attending Bethesda's Family Support Group for over 5 years. Aimee is mom to a teen with diverse abilities who attends Bethesda's summer camp. She especially appreciates that it provides a confidential space to share thoughts, and laughs about ways families experience day-to-day living with diverse abilities. Aimee goes on to say the most meaningful part of our group for her is listening to others sharing their concerns, "Understanding that there's different needs at different times, and someone in the group might have helpful insights having been through something similar."

Raising children with diverse abilities can often feel lonely, but connecting with other parents who have similar experiences gives you a sense of belonging, of being heard and being understood. Aimee agrees, "I would encourage other families with children of intellectual disabilities or physical challenges to stay in touch with one another."

Winter Family Fun Night

The moment Liam and Caleb spotted the bouncy castle when they walked into Winter Family Fun Night with their dad, they were off. Racing across the room to see who could get there first! It was the first activities evening hosted by Northview Community Church's Imagine program and Bethesda. Rodney Wiebe, Bethesda's director of community development and family services, describes it as a natural collaboration with Northview's inclusion program and Bethesda's family support. "There's such a need for places in the community where families with kids with diverse abilities can get together and feel accepted." Kids love the freedom to play safely, and for parents, it is a relief to know their child is in a safe and accepting place. Parents too need places to connect with other parents who understand the joys and challenges of their lives. One of the mothers mentioned, "It's just so great to not feel judged." With the success of this first event together, Bethesda and Northview hope to continue Winter Family Night as an annual tradition.



Families participated in the many activities offered at the Winter Family Fun event in February: bouncy castle, games, animal-shaped balloons, crafts, lego building, and unstructured play time in a safe and accepting space.

Collins Home: Belonging and Togetherness

Bethesda has long believed supporting people with diverse abilities with a Christ-centred approach is a gift. Often when we're in the midst of it, we don't appreciate how special something is. So when Bethesda recently took over operations of an existing staff-supported home in Chilliwack, we had a chance to see the power of Christ's love firsthand.

With the challenge of getting to know the women and building trust, the staff leaned heavily on Bethesda's faith-based values and the tried-and-true techniques of their Mandt training. Through their efforts, they soon began to see remarkable changes in their relationships with the four women. Melinda, the manager of the home, noted a tangible difference in happiness, relaxation, and increased social engagement. The women are thriving and it is incredibly uplifting to all.

Collins Home has become a place of love and belonging. How fitting that it was blessed at its opening ceremony with a dedication plaque acknowledging Amazing Grace! [Read more at www.bethesdabc.com/collins-home/](http://www.bethesdabc.com/collins-home/).



Collins Home is a story of transformation where the people who live at the home, and staff, find belonging and togetherness. The women who live in the home are relaxed and truly feel at home. Anita, front, with two support workers, Jean and Sisay.

Summer Camp Impacts Lives

We asked a few campers what they liked most about Camp Bethesda.

“ Everything! Swimming - throwing Rodney in the pool! *Matthew*
There's a lot! Swimming and the talent show. *Aaliyah*
Swimming, crafts, singing... *Mairin*
Playing games. *Andrea*
Everything! I wish it was two weeks. The food is good! *Julia*

”



Message from Tori Dalair, CEO



Having worked in this sector in BC for over 16 years, I know that the examples you are reading here of people thriving are extraordinary stories, yet commonplace at Bethesda. I firmly believe it is the way we deliver our services –in our efforts to remain Christ-centred in our hearts and behaviours – that explains the difference. We hear this also from people outside Bethesda. People see the difference that our love in action produces.

By supporting Bethesda, you too are acting out of love and transforming lives, bringing hope and flourishing to people we serve and their families. Your donations make an enormous

difference, allowing Bethesda to continue fostering a sense of belonging and togetherness in so many lives.

As you read the stories in this newsletter, consider donating to our Lend-a-Hand campaign, and remember the many lives touched by your gift.

Thank you for your generosity and for being a part of this transformative journey. We are grateful for the way you support us, so we can support others.

Tori Dalair

Tori Dalair, CEO

Curious? Talk to us!

We invite you into our ongoing story, building a vision of a world in which we can all grow together.

Are you interested in our family support group, summer camp services or becoming a donor and would like to know more? To connect, contact life@bethesdabc.com.

Find us on social media or go to our website.

- @BethesdaChristianAssociation
- @Bethesda.Christian
- @BethesdaChristianAssociation

www.bethesdabc.com



Summer Camp Meets Campers Where They Are

Day camp was a place Cody felt at home. He had been coming for years and knew the rhythm, the routines, and the friendships. His mom, Corinne, talked about how he looked forward to camp. "As summer approached, we'd talk about summer camp, and his face would light up in a big smile." She said being on the autism spectrum and visually impaired, Cody has often been excluded from mainstream activities. However, at Bethesda's day camp, he was able to participate fully in each day's activities and most importantly, enjoy the social interactions with his peers and loving camp workers.

Last summer Cody turned 19 and was no longer eligible to attend day camp.

He was accepted into Bethesda's Tapestry Community Inclusion (CI) service for adults. Yet, transitioning to this new phase presented its own set of challenges. Recognizing Cody's apprehension, Rodney Wiebe, the Family Support director, intervened by extending an invitation for Cody to spend one more summer at day camp to facilitate his transition to CI in the fall.

The summer camp staff rallied to tailor the program to Cody's needs, allowing additional support to accompany him on visits to Tapestry throughout the summer. Though initially daunting, having familiar faces by his side provided Cody with a sense of security

as he explored the unfamiliar territory. By the summer's end, Cody had grown considerably more at ease with the prospect of attending the new CI service.



Cody (middle) felt at home at day camp with friends and staff that accepted and loved him. While he is now getting to know new people at Tapestry CI, he was happy to reconnect with an old school friend who also attends CI.



SUMMER STUDENTS

ARE YOU:

- between 19 and 30 years old.
- enrolled in full-time studies in a related field.
- a driver with a Class 5 driver's licence and able to obtain a Class 4 by date of hire.

GET READY TO:

- make a positive impact on kids with diverse abilities.
- experience personal and spiritual growth.
- gain hands-on experience in social work.

Training is provided.

Work at summer day camp!

LEARN MORE

www.BethesdaBC.com/careers/#current-jobs



Apply by **April 30**

Lend a Hand

Donate today and help a family.



Often people with diverse abilities and their families need a community of support all their lives. At Bethesda we connect families with support groups, help families navigate a bewildering labyrinth of systems and processes, and we respond to various needs, such as respite or other services, to bridge the gap until adult funding is in place.

www.bethesdabc.com/donate/

Bethesda delivers community living services for people with diverse abilities with funding from government bodies such as Community Living BC, a crown corporation that contracts to service providers. The amount of funding received by Bethesda is based on the assessed needs of each person we support. However, there are always gaps. That's where Lend a Hand comes in.

Student Bursaries

Bethesda Christian Foundation provides \$1000 bursaries to post-secondary students engaged in full-time studies leading to work supporting people with disabilities and their families.

Students may apply for the 2024/2025 school year by requesting an application package from Bethesda at 604-850-6604 or life@bethesdabc.com.

Bethesda

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