

Annual Report 2023

Empowering People with Diverse Abilities



This is Our Mission





Supporting and empowering people of all abilities and their families.

Bethesda supports and empowers people with diverse abilities and their families through services such as staff-supported homes, home sharing, community inclusion, supported independent living, intentional communities where people of all abilities live, summer camps, LIFE services, children's respite and family support services. At Bethesda we are committed to building communities of belonging—communities where everyone's God-given skills and abilities are welcomed and valued. Starting in Abbotsford in 1971, we now support over 300 people and their families in the Lower Mainland, Okanagan and Smithers. Bethesda is a Christian not-for-profit organization with a staff of approximately 450.

Find our newly updated mission, vision, values statements and more at <u>bethesdabc</u>. com/about-us/.

A New Strategic Plan The Next 5 Years

Bethesda recently conducted strategic planning sessions, facilitated by Dave Blundell from Fullwell Leadership, which involved the participation of the board of directors, executive leadership team and director team.

The sessions began with a thorough review of stakeholder feedback, incorporating input from various sources such as external professionals, families, self-advocates, managers and staff surveys. This feedback helped identify strengths, weaknesses and recommendations for improvement. The organization also refined its vision, mission and values statements, keeping the core essence intact while updating the language to align with current preferred terminology.

The strategic priorities and objectives for the next five years will focus on: 1) sustained growth in person-centred, innovative and diverse services; 2) community development and engagement; 3) a thriving and engaged workforce and; 4) empowerment of people receiving services as leaders and decision-makers.

The sessions resulted in a renewed sense of purpose and collective enthusiasm among participants, providing a strategic roadmap for the organization's confident and resilient navigation of the future.

The next steps involve developing clear goals and measurable targets for each objective, rooted in prayer and aligned with Bethesda's values. Once defined, the strategic plan will be rolled out organization-wide, marking an important milestone on Bethesda's journey. Overall, Bethesda remains committed to its mission and confident in God's guidance for making a positive impact on the lives of those it serves.

Vision

People of all abilities are flourishing in community while sharing their God-given skills and abilities, and being celebrated and embraced for who they are as leaders and decision-makers of their own lives.

Mission

As an expression of our Christian faith, we support and empower people of all abilities and their families to thrive and to cultivate a deep sense of belonging as we journey through the joys and challenges of life together.

Core Values

- Christ-centered, faith-based
- Sanctity of life
- ◆ Self-advocacy
- Trust and integrity
- Valuing relationships & inclusion
- Stewardship

CEO Message

On solid ground.

Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won't collapse because it is built on bedrock. Matthew 7:24-25

In the wake of the pandemic, the world stood at a crossroads, uncertain of what lay ahead. There was no roadmap to guide us through a changed reality shaped by three arduous years of COVID's impact. Many yearned for the familiarity of their former lives.

So, what did this mean for Bethesda? We focused on rebuilding upon our unchanging bedrock. Together, we embarked on a journey of healing and recovery, restoring our connections and services to meet the needs of our dedicated staff and the people we support.

We witnessed resilience returning in those around us, as hope was reclaimed. We leaned on one another and learned how to thrive once again, growing even stronger.

Deep within our hearts, we carry profound gratitude for our incredible staff. Throughout our collective journey of recovery, staff members remained steadfast in their commitment to the people we support, tirelessly working to ensure their safety and well-being. Moreover, we are filled with immense appreciation for our exceptional administrative and technical support team, visionary leadership team, and dedicated board of directors, who selflessly dedicate themselves to serving others.

As we painstakingly rebuilt over the past year, we witnessed the resurgence of strategic priorities and outcomes similar to the pre-pandemic era. This resurgence fills us with great encouragement, as we collectively strive to rebuild something even more extraordinary than before.

Our purpose is clear—to empower people with diverse abilities to lead self-directed lives as much as possible. The privilege of

nose who choose our services and gratitude. Bethesda's existence

sharing life with those who choose our services fills us with profound gratitude. Bethesda's existence revolves around supporting people with diverse abilities, thriving in inclusive communities, and cultivating lifestyles grounded in genuine belonging. We understand that we are only capable of thriving when we thrive together.

In this moment of reflection, our hearts overflow with thankfulness and appreciation. We extend our deepest gratitude to all who have stood unwaveringly alongside us on this journey. Together, we embrace the future, brimming with hope and resilience, as we forge a path towards a brighter tomorrow.

"And looking at them, Jesus said to them, 'With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." (Matthew 19:26)

I am thrilled to share this year's report with you. It is with a deep sense of gratitude that we celebrate the unwavering faithfulness and abundant provision of God.

Grace and Peace.

Jody Siebert, CEO

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Galatians 6:9

CEO Retirement and Succession

With CEO Jody Siebert's retirement in March 2024, it is a time for reflection and looking forward.

Jody's leadership at Bethesda has been invaluable, steering the organization and expanding its mission. Under her visionary guidance, Bethesda has experienced remarkable growth and success. However, her impact goes beyond numbers, as she has inspired and

empowered people of all abilities, shaping our organization's mission. Jody's legacy will continue to guide and inspire us.

Led by Board President Rachel Ludwig, the search committee is actively seeking a new CEO, considering local and provincial candidates. The aim is to have the selected candidate commence their role on January 2, 2024, while Jody is still in her position, thereby facilitating the onboarding process.

With Jody's mentorship and support, the executive team is well prepared to support the transition. We are confident the transition to a new CEO will be smooth and successful.

Read the retirement announcement from Rachel Ludwig at www.bethesdabc.com.

Our Services in 2022/23

Last year, 320 people with diverse abilities and their families participated in 9 services we offer, some using more than one service.

122 Community Inclusion Ρ 21 Employment Α R 103 Family Support **54** Home Share C **18** Intentional Community 3 Respite Α **84** Staff-Supported Homes Ν 45 Summer Camps **46** Supported Independent Living

As diverse as the services are, they have in common a commitment to inclusion and interdependence. We believe that an inclusive world that makes room for people of all abilities is a world in which we can all grow together.

131 people participated in person-centred planning and set a total of 483 goals in 8 quality of life areas.

61 Emotional and spiritual well-being

47 Interpersonal relationships

30 Material well-being

113 Personal development

125 Physical well-being and mental health

57 Self-determination

44 Social inclusion

6 Rights

Person-centred planning is at the heart of all our services for people with diverse abilities and their families. Person-centred planning asks, "What are the unique goals, gifts and abilities of each person?" Creating a plan is a collaboration between the person supported, their circle of support and their key or primary support staff. It sets out goals for promoting the person's quality of life.

Chilliwack Community Inclusion

In the heart of its community, Chilliwack Community Inclusion (CI) service has been making a profound impact on the lives of its participants. With a steadfast commitment to providing inclusive experiences tailored to the needs of each person attending, this stable and purposeful service has created an environment where seven people can thrive. The service not only offers enjoyable activities but also challenges its attendees to grow and strengthen their existing skills.

One of the service's greatest assets is its dedicated team of long-term staff members. Their intentional and thoughtful support has been instrumental in helping each person flourish. Over the past year, the service welcomed two new people into its group, and the staff has been actively facilitating friendships among all participants. This emphasis on social connections has proven invaluable, bringing a sense of belonging and

enriching every activity undertaken.

Embracing the spirit of community, Chilliwack CI has fostered purposeful connections with other services and homes in the region. Regular get-togethers are now held with five other services, including Sardis Home, Vedder Terrace, Crossroads CI, North Chilliwack, and Chilcotin Home. By extending invitations for joint events like birthday parties and visits to local attractions, the service has created memorable moments and lasting bonds.

The impact of these connections has been remarkable. Lesley, the manager, shared, "Some of the people attending Chilliwack CI have friends in the other services, so these opportunities to get together make any activity they're doing so much richer for them." The excitement and anticipation among participants when meeting their friends from sister services exemplify the unity and closeness that this service is building.





Cassidy, Gaal, and Jonathan (left to right) and their support workers Diana, Lisa and Capri, on the ice at the Valentines Day skating party.

A Few Highlights of our Services

Vedder Terrace Intentional Community - More Than a Place to Live

Vedder Terrace is an intentional community in Chilliwack where 20 people of all abilities live and that offers community inclusion to 9 people. Since 2016, Vedder Terrace has developed into a vibrant community of belonging where people are loved and supported to thrive through relationships, new interests and activities, self-advocacy, and all the while learning to live self-directed lives.

Dawna Braun, Director of Services, has been closely involved in the community from its inception. She says "In 2014, we responded to a request from families to provide a safe housing community where independence, friendships and natural supports could be established, with Christ at the center of all we do. Looking back over the years, it's incredible the ways Vedder Terrace has impacted those that live there, as well as the broader community."

The people at Vedder Terrace are active in the greater community of Chilliwack. People participate in local events like parades, stewardship initiatives such as Adopt-a-Road, volunteering,

growing food, raising money for Salvation Army, engaging with local civic issues and partnering with a local school on projects. In turn, the community has been highly supportive of Vedder Terrace through donations or helping with maintenance on the property. The connectedness with the community is something that Christine, Lauren's mom appreciates. She says, "I like that Vedder Terrace is community minded, not only within Vedder Terrace, but also by encouraging people to contribute to the greater community."

Parents can rest easy knowing their adult child is in a safe and supportive environment. Cameron, Jack's dad, says, "He's able to make choices and live on his own, and he gets a community as well. We can see how he's grown." Christine says, "Everyone seems to do whatever possible to help my daughter. It's a kind and welcoming environment. She's made good friends there".

Amanda, a resident, says, "It's a relaxed atmosphere. Everyone is friendly, easy to talk to." Micaela, another resident, adds, "It is also very accommodating to all abilities."

Andrew's dad, Carleton, adds, "We love it because Bethesda is a community that embraces Andrew's abilities. That embraces Andrew's faith. Andrew lives in an amazing home, a community that he will be a part of forever."

There's more. Read Andrew's story at www.bethesdabc.com/andrews-story/, see the video at www.bethesdabc.com/vedder-terrace/ or read more about Vedder Terrace at www.bethesdabc.com/vedder-terrace-5-years-on/

Even for people who don't live at Vedder Terrace, it is known as a welcoming place you can drop in on to visit friends and arrange to do something, like visit the Vancouver Zoo. Above, a group of friends, Lauren, Micaela, Arlene, Joanne and Julia spend the day at the zoo.

LIFE Services

In March 2022, CLBC invited 225 agencies across the province to submit proposals to participate in a newly-funded service called LIFE-based services. LIFE is an acronym that stands for Learning Inclusion Friendship Employment. Bethesda was selected as one of 15 agencies to offer the new service.

The service is designed for people who want to be employed but are looking for more than just employment support. Foundational to the LIFE Service approach is the goal to foster a person's confidence and independence coupled with a growing use of natural supports. The service supports a person to direct their own services through active participation in a dynamic planning and evaluation process. It focuses on both goals that a person wants to achieve, and the difference they hope to experience in their lives as a result of achieving those goals.

LIFE Services is delivered one-on-one with a LIFE Services coach, in community, rather than centre-based, and is offered when a person needs it and not on a fixed Monday-Friday schedule.

Over the year, Bethesda created a plan to implement the new service, including anticipating staffing needs and developing training, resources, procedures and protocols. A staff team was hired and the first information meeting for prospective participants was held in November. A kick-off event and dinner was held with 5 participants and their families in March 2023. The service officially started in April with five participants.

Find out more about LIFE Services at <u>bethesdabc.com/LIFE-services/</u> or contact Caleb at 604-866-8995.



People Living Their Best Lives

Person-centred planning is designed to preserve the rights and freedoms of each person and to empower people to fulfill their aspirations.

Here are a few stories of people receiving Bethesda services working on their goals, choices and dreams for a fulfilled life.

Linda started holding tea parties through Tapestry Community Inclusion. Planning and hosting a guest met some of her quality of life goals and intersects with her love of people. Gaby, her keyworker, said, 'Linda picks someone to invite and sends an invitation or asks them in person. Every month, she picks a different treat to bake for the party. She loves baking. February was cake pops month." Being highly social, her tea parties are a great way for Linda to get to know people and expand her friendships.

Darlene (left),
director of
services, was
Linda's (right)
invited guest in
February. They
played a game
of UNO, enjoyed
conversation along
with a cup of tea
and a cake pop
that Linda baked
and decorated.





Stephen (above) worked hard to complete a personal goal: to write and publish his autobiography. Stephen and his father Volker dedicated themselves to bringing Stephen's life story to the page, and after months of hard work, their efforts culminated in the publication of Stephen's autobiography, "I am Stephen: The Adventure of My Life". Through perseverance and support from family and friends, Stephen's unique voice and story now has the opportunity to inspire others and leave a lasting impact.

AM STEPHEN

Watch his book launch speech at www.youtube.com/watch?v=EIVTyAIY3Lg.

Copies of Stephen's autobiography are available for \$25 by calling 604-850-6604 or email at life@bethesdabc.com.

Terrace for a paint night. Anticipation filled the air as nine participants, some with no prior painting experience, approached their empty canvases. With the guidance of an instructor, they embraced the opportunity to unleash their inner artists. The room was mostly quiet as people focused on their technique. From time to time there were bursts of laughter or the occasional comment as their brushes started filling in the empty spaces on their canvases.

As the evening progressed, their

Last fall, a group of self-advocates gathered at Vedder

As the evening progressed, their artworks came to life, revealing their creative talents. Surprise and pleasure radiated from their faces, as they realized what they were able to create.



These self-advocates have not only created a piece of art to adorn their wall, but also memories of a fun and rewarding evening together. Learn more about self-advocates at Bethesda and their fulfilling lives at www.bethesdabc.com/self-advocates/.

Circle of Friends offers people with diverse abilities in the Fraser Valley a unique opportunity to gather and worship in a place where everyone present can truly be

themselves and celebrate their faith. It's held each Monday from September to the end of May.

Ever since Circle of Friends started again, after shutting down during the pandemic, interest has exploded. Just through word of mouth alone, people are showing up from other organizations. Attendance at recent services is reaching up to 250 people. The success of Circle of Friends revolves around fostering a truly inclusive and



accepting place for people of all abilities to worship freely, with musical expression and engaging stories that celebrate the joy of the Lord. People are invited to speak, to share their story, a special scripture, a prayer, or whatever's on their hearts. It is a beautiful testament to the belief that everyone is made in the image of God.

Watch the video of the end of year BBQ at Mill Lake www.youtube.com/watch?v=T-FQDx9VYKY.

Change can present itself as an opportunity for transformation, and such was the case when the men from Abbotsford Home moved into their recently renovated residence, Kingfisher Home. Recognizing this moment, the staff used the chance to encourage positive shifts in behavior, leveraging the new home setup to promote new practices. The results of this transformation have been remarkable, significantly enhancing the quality of life for at least one of the men involved. Read more about one of the men's journey on our blog, bethesdabc.com/blog/.



Some of the residents and staff enjoying their first meal together in their new home.



Last fall, Justin, one of the people living in the Ladner Home, received a recognition award for delivering the local Delta Optimist paper. He started the job last summer. Thomas, the manager of the home, said, "He doesn't love doing the job that much, but he enjoys the rewards he receives for finishing the route each week."

In recent years, staff have committed to supporting Justin with a person-centred approach that supports him with the things he enjoys and affirms him in doing the things he doesn't enjoy as much. He has responded well to the changes in approach. Finding a path that Justin and his team can walk along together has been a process of learning and discovery for all of them.

We Remember

But our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power which enables him even to subject all things to himself." Philippians 3:20-21.



Philip



Lindsay



Kit



Brad



Patricia



Sharon

We remember these dear lives, forever burning bright in our hearts and memories. They leave a deep impact on the many people they touched with their love and unique spirit. Until we meet again.

2022/23 Strategic Targets

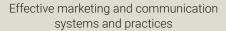
Year 5 of the 2018-2023 Strategic Plan

Strategic Plan Year 5

% goals completed in 5 priority areas

Capacity to respond to service needs

91%*



100%



Effective staff leadership development and succession practices

100%



Engaged and equipped staff

93%



People receiving services empowered as leaders and decision-makers

100%



Bethesda's 5 year strategic plan came to a sucessful close in 2023. Each year we set targets in the five priority areas identified in the plan: service capacity, marketing and communication, staff leadership development, engaged and equipped staff and empowering self-advocates. These are the strategic targets reached in 2022/23.

Respond to Service Needs Targets

- Purchased new property in Cloverdale for a staff-supported home.
- Met with churches in Abbotsford and Chilliwack to strengthen community connections.
- Developed new LIFE Services and launched it in April 2023.
- Implemented a community development plan.
- · Developed a training module on advanced care planning.

Marketing and Communication Targets

- Added short stories to newsletters demonstrating Bethesda's core values.
- Held 3 CONNECT meetings to bring staff and senior leadership together in collaborative dialogue.
- Participated in Inclusive Employer Excellence awards.

Leadership Development Targets

- · Launched new Leader-in-Training program.
- · Established succession plan for director roles.
- Continued leadership course offerings: Leading Through Conflict and Difficult Conversations.

Engaged and Equipped Staff Targets

- Partnered with a Trinity Western University student project to study recruitment.
- Started a video series for senior leaders to increase communication with staff.
- Planned new training and resources for staff working on key resource assignments.

Self-Advocates Targets

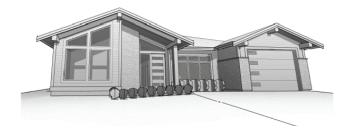
- Established regular self-advocates meetings.
- Introduced a process for gathering self-advocate's feedback on how well Bethesda is enacting its values.
- Incorporated self-advocate directed content for staff training such as "The Importance of Language" video and self-advocate's stories about themselves.

Asset Development

Bethesda is on track with our goal of all Bethesda owned properties being fully accessible to meet the needs of those who live there and as they age. At the start of the plan, Bethesda had 4 multi-level homes to be replaced with accessible homes. Last year we completed one renovation, Kingfisher Home, and are working towards a new build where the former Abbotsford Home is located. Construction will start once the existing home is taken down this summer.

Bethesda acquired a residence in Cloverdale last year as a replacement for our home in Ladner. The refurbishment project focuses on modernizing the interior, ensuring accessibility, and enhancing the surrounding landscape. These renovations will ensure compliance with Community Care Facilities and licensing regulations for staff-supported homes.

In 2021, we began early planning for the construction of an intentional community adjacent to the provincial office on Emerson Street in Abbotsford, with Calibrate Group, the organization submitting the application on our behalf. The application was approved and we are now working on Phase 2 (final stage). We expect to submit the building application to the city of Abbotsford in early 2024. The build itself is expected take 12 to 14 months to complete.



Jackson Home rendering front (top) and back (bottom).



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Save the date

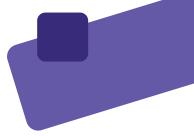
Join us on **September 14** for our AGM at 2775 Emerson St. Abbotsford. **New feature this year** - pop-up market featuring crafts made by self-advocates! Starting at 5 pm, enjoy friends, on-site catered BBQ, and the lively, toe-tapping tunes of the Bethesda House Band. The annual general meeting starts at 6:30 pm.



E-newsletter!

We promise, won't clutter your inbox!

Receive news, updates and stories to your inbox 4 times per year. Sign up for email delivery of our e-newsletter at bethesdabc.com/contact-us/#email-signup/



Human Resources



This year's HR focus was on rebuilding our staffing resources following COVID-related staffing losses. First, we hired an HR manager dedicated to providing a direct connection to managers to keep current on their staffing situations. Additionally, we engaged a subcontractor to assist with applicant prescreening. We also encouraged managers to connect with each other directly to assist in ways they could. Moreover, the implementation of HR automation significantly expedited applicant processing. As a result of these efforts, by the end of March, our HR capacity had increased, and we had established stronger connections between the teams in need of staff and our HR support systems. These changes have enabled us to promptly address staffing issues as they arise. We have made progress in recovering from the staffing challenges caused by COVID and have positioned ourselves to tackle future issues promptly with improved capacity.

Stats At a Glance

450 employees80% female7.7 average years service44.4 years average age135 new employees hired6.4% turnover (of permanent staff)

In 2022/23, the HR department focused on recruitment to replace staff that left during COVID. From April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023, Bethesda hired 135 employees, while 108 employees resigned. The total number of staff reached a record of 450.

The Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHS) continued to work on reducing the two major reasons for injuries: over-exertion or slip/trips/falls. Individual worksite committees met monthly to review incidents and concerns. The JOHS Committee held a safety summit for all health and safety worker representatives to provide extra safety training and guidance on promoting safety in their worksites.

Staff turnover has returned to normal levels (6.4% in permanent staff) from a high in 2021/22 (11.7%), but the turnover rate of new hires (41%) continues to be a challenge. People move around frequently as they may be finding employment that better suits their needs. Our efforts to retain new hires include changes in onboarding, a bonus after 1 year of employment, and greater accessibility of training.

We launched our leader-in-training (LIT) program which offers employees in non-leadership positions the opportunity for orientation, mentorship, on-the-job experience, and formal workshops from Bethesda leaders and community professionals. There were 4 full participants and 3 honorary participants who participated in selected activities. The LIT graduates are prepared to step into leadership assignments both within and outside of their worksite.

The positive responses from staff satisfaction surveys has increased steadily from 76.6% to 86.5% between 2018 and 2023. Using the survey feedback, Bethesda leadership selects areas for improvement each year. The gains in staff satisfaction observed over the years appear to be correlated with these efforts.

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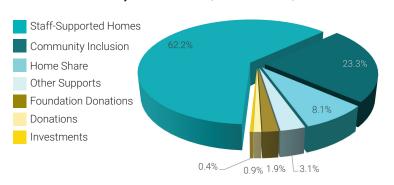
Finance Report

Revenue & Expenses

Revenue from Service Contracts, Donations and Investments

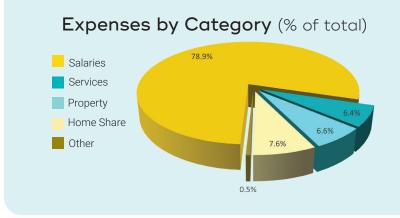
Bethesda's overall revenues increased from \$22.8 million last year to \$25.7 million this year. The increase was from a general growth of contracts with Bethesda's primary funder (CLBC), supported wage increases by all our government contracts; continued operations of Mephi's Place, supported by the Ministry of Children and Families; and our donors.

Revenue by Source (% of total)



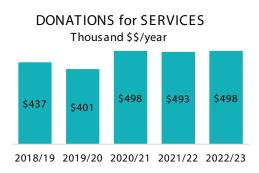
Service Revenues Million \$\$/year \$21.00 \$21.75 \$22.82

2021/22



Donations

We received an abundance of financial donations from supporters in communities throughout BC, as well as contributions from Bethesda Christian Foundation Society. The total donations received for donation-based services by Bethesda this year were \$498,000. The funding covered needs not met by provincial government funding, including personal protective equipment, support for families, summer camps, employment services and support for self-advocates.



Our fundraising cycle started last spring with the Lend a Hand campaign to raise funds for our family support services. The yearly campaign plays a vital role in gathering funds to support essential services

that aren't eligible for government support. Our efforts resulted in a fundraising total of \$134,403, which accounts for 67.2% of

our \$200,000 target. While the total raised is less than last year's achievement of 84.9%, it enabled us to strategize ways to assist families, and by the end of the year, we had reached our annual donation goal. As COVID restrictions eased, we were delighted to resume our week-long Camp Bethesda at Stillwood Camp. Additionally, we had another successful season of summer day camp that provided support to children with diverse abilities and their families.



Chilliwack Christian Junior Hockey League and Fraser Valley Christian Junior Hockey Association faced off in a charity tournament in March 2023. It was an honour for Bethesda to be chosen as the charity of honour for this tournament, and for three of the people we support, Mac, Molly, and Kya, to drop the puck to kick-off each game. We are grateful to have received the proceeds of \$4,371.

Bethesda Leadership

The Board of Directors

Rachel Ludwig, President Greg van Popta, 1st Vice President Nick Hogewoning, 2nd Vice President Andrea Froese, Secretary Charlene Reimer, Treasurer Dan Nicholson, Director James Greendyck, Director George Boer, Director Kris Versluis, Director Stu Bakker, Director Jean Dykshoorn Hooge, Director Meredith Pastoor, Self Advocate





The Executive Team

Jody Siebert, Chief Executive Officer Tori Dalair, Chief Operations Officer Dan Steenburgh, Chief Operations Officer/ Human Resources

Greta Nicholson, Chief Financial Officer Darlys Carlson McDonald, Chief Human Resources Officer

Walter Nordeman, Chief Asset & Development Officer

Rodney Wiebe, Director of Family Support & Community Development
Ann Trudeau, Director of Services
Dawna Braun, Director of Services
Steve Walsh, Director of Services
Francine Lee, Director of Services
Darlene Davy, Director of Services
Mike Strain, Director of Services

BETHESDA

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Receive e-news delivered to your email and save postage. Sign-up at www.bethesdabc.com/contact-us/#email-signup.

Save the date! **Annual General Meeting** - September 14, 2023. Details at https://bethesdabc.com/.

Donate to Bethesda's ministry at <u>bethesdabc.com/donate/</u> or by post.







