

Network of Inner City  
Community Services Society  
Annual General Report  
2020



## **Who We Are:**

NICCSS is a consortium of community-based organizations, residents groups and consumer organizations that work together in the coordination and delivery of programs and services to children and youth, families and individuals. These programs are all similarly focused toward assisting people living in the inner city of Vancouver and addressing gaps in existing social services for residents living in these neighbourhoods. The range of services that we provide includes early childhood development, youth and family support, seniors' support and social enterprise projects. Our programs frequently involve a number of community organizations working collaboratively to address a single issue that is affecting our community on many levels.

## **History:**

In 1999, Network Two, now named Network of Inner City Community Services Society (NICCSS) was formed to provide a single contracting source with the ability to coordinate among multiple experienced grassroots agencies. As a network, NICCSS has grown from providing training for women in the inner city as teaching homemakers, for families, to a group of community-based organizations working together to deliver and coordinate multiple services to children, youth, seniors and families, all in a place-based model.

NICCSS continues to work with member organizations, helping coordinate and secure specialized responses and resources to address the underlying issues of vulnerable seniors, children, youth and families, which require broad community coordinated responses.

## **What We Do:**

NICCSS has provided a number of programs using a collaborative, place-based model. These programs are designed and carried out with the involvement of residents of the inner city and NICCSS is proud to use financial support received to employ residents in some of the programs offered. NICCSS embraces diversity in all of our programs and accordingly has services available in several languages, including Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Spanish, French and English.

## **These programs include:**

Home Support Services (Supervised Visitation Access, Teaching Homemaking, and Homecare Services including employment and training initiatives for women).

Child and Youth Services and Child and Family Referrals (HUB Family Support, Bright Family Futures and Vancouver Roving Leaders Program).

Nurse Practitioners Clinic through RICHER (Health service for residents including seniors, families and community support services planning with BC Women's and Children's Hospital).

Social Enterprise Initiatives (incubated reboot Vancouver and VANOC Lost and Found/ Asset Disposal program and our Fee for Service Supervised Access program).

Micro-lending program to prevent homelessness as well as, assist women fleeing violence and youth who have aged out of care.

## **We also partner with a number of strategic community initiatives:**

**Our Place:** a collaboration of residents, community-based organizations, and service providers committed to ensuring that children living in Vancouver's inner city have every opportunity for success.

**RICHER Initiative:** Responsive Intersectoral Children's Health, Education and Research Initiative is a community-based primary care healthcare service specifically designed to meet the unique needs of children, youth and families in Vancouver's inner city neighbourhoods, specifically Grandview-Woodlands, Strathcona and Downtown Eastside.

**Moresports Children and Youth Program:** an inclusive, sustainable neighbourhood-based community sports program so that all children and youth have an opportunity to develop fundamental life skills and a love of sport and physical activities.

**Vancouver Urban Core Community Workers Association:** A network of organizations and individuals working together to meet the needs of the DTES residents and community.

**East Side Boxing Club:** An organization that promotes healthy living for youth.

## **NICCSS Programs:**

### **Home Support and Supervised Access:**

NICCSS Home Support Services offer home support, supervised access and transportation for families involved with the Ministry of Children and Family Development and Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society. To do this important work in the most beneficial way for our community, we train and employ inner city residents (primarily women). We offer on the job training, clinical support and flexible work while providing quality care for children

and families. All our home support staff attends training provided both internally and through our community partners.

NICCSS Home Support strives to provide culturally appropriate services to clients and is able to provide services in Cantonese, Mandarin, French, Spanish and English.

We currently employ 5 individuals in the Home Support Program and are working with approximately 4 families per day. Home Support is recruiting more staff for this program.

**Our Fee for Service Supervised Access program** provides a range of access services for families involved in high conflict divorce, difficulties access their children and reunification issues. Visits are organized after a comprehensive intake procedure, which ensures that visits are facilitated in the safest, most child-centered and neutral way possible. NICCSS is currently intake new clients to this program.

Katharyn Ofosu, who came to NICCSS from the newStart program as a supervised access worker in 2010 manages both our Home Support and Fee for Service Supervised Access Program. Thank you to all the staff for their dedication, energy and enthusiasm for their work.

Chantal Montreuil continues her outstanding work as NICCSS administrator.

## **Hub Program—Child, Youth and Family Support**

This program provides direct support for families living in the Grandview-Woodlands, Downtown Eastside and Strathcona neighbourhoods. We continue to provide services to families in our community in collaboration with our partners, including the family support staff and youth workers in Ray-Cam Cooperative Centre and Strathcona Community Centre, the physicians and Nurse Practitioners involved in the RICHER Initiative, volunteers and practicum students UBC, Langara, newStart program and Vancouver Community College. Thank you to the Province of BC through MCFD for providing much of the funds for the HUB work and to our partners in the North Hub Consortium for their ongoing work and collaboration.

Outreach services are provided to families in Chinese and English, with support from volunteers in Spanish and French. Families require extensive support concerning housing issues, health services, and accessing early childhood supports. We provide assistance for families in accessing MCFD, VACFSS, BC Housing and other agencies to ensure appropriate supports are in place for families and to document gaps and obstacles families are facing.

We are excited to continue our connections with the family support staff and youth workers at Ray-Cam Cooperative Centre to coordinate support for the families living in the inner city. We continue our partnership with the RICHER Initiative (Responsive Intersectoral Community Children's Health, Education, and Research Initiative).

The HUB program continues to support the Bright Family Futures in a partnership with Ray-Cam Cooperative Centre and RICHER Initiative to host a weekly, evening, drop-in out of Ray-Cam Cooperative Centre for young parents which includes health services provided by adolescence physician and nurse practitioners and weekly workshops in topics of interest. It also includes connections to community services including Roving Leaders, staff from community family palaces and volunteers with expertise in FASD, childcare, parenting and nursing. The drop-in has been very successful and with a target of young parents and their peers between the ages of 15 to 30, has pointed to the need for community-designed health services for young people in accessible, youth friendly spaces more often across the inner city. NICCSS is proud to employ 4 local youth to support this program.

### **Vancouver Roving Leaders:**

The Vancouver Roving Leaders program is a flexible, community-based initiative that connects and engages vulnerable, at-risk children and youth in the Grandview-Woodlands, Hastings Sunrise and Downtown Eastside neighbourhoods. The Roving Leaders Program is about active connection and inclusion of our children and youth. We focus on connection with the children and youth where they are, building a relationship and then helping them to integrate into neighbourhood programs, services and education opportunities. The program focuses on children and youth age 12-17 years of age and works with them, their families and their community.

Over the last year, the Vancouver Roving Leaders program worked with over 435 children and youth; our community based outreach worker has involved children, who were otherwise excluded (due to social or economic reasons) in positive activities, breaking down barriers they may face in accessing programs or services in their community and developing their strengths, talents and interests.

Participants in the program access personal supports on a one-to-one basis with their Roving Leader. Examples of personal supports include accompanying youth and their families to court, assisting youth and their families with the intake and completion of treatment programs (through youth justice), referrals to nurse practitioners and adolescent physicians for pregnancy and sexual health issues, disclosure of abuse to Roving leaders and assistance with follow-up with MCFD/VACFSS, assistance and intervention in domestic violence and self-harm situations, referrals to A&D workers and CART for suicidal ideation.

Youth focus groups and interviews continue to include references to how important relationships with Roving Leaders were for assisting them and their families. Phrases used to describe to worker include “safe”, “supportive”, “healthy mentor”. A Community Agency Surveys and interviews with partner agency, workers continue to point to flexibility and

innovation of the Roving Leaders and their ability to fill the gaps in existing services and have an important “on the ground” knowledge. The majority of participants were assisted to engage in or supported to continue in school/education, pre-employment and recreation/community programs and services through the Vancouver Roving Leaders.

Organized activities include the youth drop-in at Britannia CC such as the Hip Hop Drop, Templeton CC, Kiwassa Neighbourhood House and participation in the East-side Boxing Club. Young people who have been part of Roving Leaders have returned to mentor both at Britannia CC and as youth hosts at BFF drop-in for young parents. The Roving Leaders program continues to provide regular community case management meetings with youth workers and community support works to address systemic issues and barriers facing children and families. In addition, the program holds and takes part in Integrated Case Management meetings for youth, with young people and their supports present to assist in planning and accessing resources. We currently have 3 part-time staff working in the program: Andrew Coombs, Jess Boon and a new Roving Leader, Catherin Accardi, joined our team in 2020.

## **Vancouver Inner City Better at Home:**

Vancouver Inner City Better at Home employs women in Vancouver’s Inner City to provide non-medical home cleaning and friendly visit services for seniors in the DTES, Strathcona, Grandview Woodlands, China Town and Vancouver’s Down Town. We employ 9 staff and 2 volunteer seniors to provide home support and outreach for seniors. We are currently seeing 216 seniors, 140 are receiving home making services and 89 are receiving friendly visits. We currently have 40 seniors on our waitlist for services.

Katharyn Ofosu continues as program manager and Yan Ma continue as Case-Manger for our Chinese Speaking seniors. Yan was a home support worker in the program before moving into supervisory positions. We are pleased to continue to work with local community centres and programs, such as newStart, to recruit staff for the program.

We partner with Ray-Cam Cooperative Centre, Yarrow Intergenerational Society for Justice and our newest partner, the SRO Collaborative to deliver outreach, support and friendly visiting to seniors living in the DTES and Strathcona neighbourhoods; Second Mile Society, DTES Women’s Centre, Native Court Workers, and Vancouver Coastal Health to continue as important partners to ensure coordination of services and to address gaps in the community for marginalized and low-income seniors.

We would like to thank our community partners, volunteers and program sponsor: United Way of the Lower Mainland.

## **Vancouver Rent Bank**

NICCSS officially launched the Vancouver Rent Bank in October 2012 in collaboration with the City of Vancouver, Streethome Foundation, Vancouver Foundation, Vancity Community Foundation, UBC Department of Economics and our community partners.

The goal of the Vancouver Rent Bank is to reduce the high cost of homelessness and improve housing stability by providing an option to low-income renters experiencing a temporary financial crisis.

In the past year the Vancouver Rent Bank gave out \$73, 236 in loan capital for 75 interest free loans. The average loan was \$976.48. At the end of the fiscal year we had \$104, 266 in available loan capital with an outstanding loan balance of \$359,574. Between April 1, 2019 and March 31, 2020, the VRB dead filed \$79, 298 in unrecoverable loans. Since 2012 the VRB has given out 837 loans and \$809,007 in loan capital.

The Vancouver Rent Bank is provided financial support by the Giustra Foundation and the Hollyburn Foundation. We continue our very close partnership with the City of Vancouver.

## **Violence Prevention Fund**

The Violence Prevention Fund is designed to assist women and individuals who identify as female who are fleeing violence and/or restarting their lives after experiencing violence and who do not meet the mandate set by the Vancouver Rent Bank. The program is low barrier to assist women fleeing violence to reestablish safe and financially sustainable homes. The program assists women to connect to community services, provide and advocacy and assistance in navigating bureaucratic systems.

The Vancouver Rent Bank and the Violence Prevention programs have demonstrated that people are most successful in maintaining housing and repaying loans when they have access to services based on strong interpersonal relationships which are able to connect them to place-based supports. It is this type of value-added service that has made the Vancouver Rent Bank and the Violence Prevention Fund successful.

## **Chinese Seniors Hub:**

This program engages Chinese Seniors to develop their collective voice to strategies engage in social/political events and activities, create projects and develop activities and solutions created by seniors for seniors. Seniors encourage isolated peers to join in activities and connect them to service provider. It also challenges service providers to move beyond service delivery to true collaborations with seniors. Thank you to our project partners: UBC Learning Exchange, Second

Mile Society, Yarrow Intergenerational Society for Justice and DTES Neighbourhood House and the City of Vancouver for funding.

### **Hip Hop Drop:**

The “Hip Hop Drop” is a weekly drop in space, located at Astorino’s on the corner of Venables and Commercial Drive, where youth 12 to 18 will have the opportunity to learn and participate in multiple elements of the popular Hip Hop subculture. These elements include rapping, breakdancing, art, DJing, and beat-boxing. The Hip Hop Drop functions as a proactive, fun, engaging, and community based program for youth. However, it was also created as a way of engaging with our at-risk youth in a way which would be more susceptible to their needs and through a format which meets them where they’re at. Simply put, Hip Hop is therapy, confidence, community, entrepreneurship, creativity, positivity, empowerment, and expression wrapped into one! We have been fortunate to receive a Civil Forfeiture grant to support the Hip Hop Drop from April 1, 2019 through March 31, 2020.

### **Thank you to our community partners and Funders**

## **NICCSS Members**

Bottom Up Foundation, Britannia Community Centre, Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood House, Eastside Boxing Club, Good Food for All, Inner City Safety Society, Stepping Stone Vision, Lookout Emergency Shelter Society, Mole Hill Housing Society, Ray-Cam Cooperative Centre, Strathcona Community Centre Association, RICHER Initiative, Vancouver Eastside Educational Enrichment Society, Watari Research Association, YWCA Vancouver, WISH Drop In Centre, UBC Learning Exchange

## **NICCSS Membership and Participation Agreement**

Members are in accordance with NICCSS constitution and by-law and the member organizations accept the terms of membership in the Network of Inner City Community Services Society. In the spirit of partnership, these agreements reflect the principles, obligations and benefits of member organizations in a manner that is responsive to interests and priorities. These agreements are subject to continual review and periodic revision in light of the working experience.



# Mission Statement

NICCSS works toward promoting the optimal development of children and youth, and strengthening and supporting families, senior citizens, and other adult individuals living in Vancouver's inner city. We recognize that access to services that work with people and strong interpersonal relationships are the keys to ensuring the health and growth of the people in our communities. We emphasize collaboration amongst community members, building on existing family and support networks within the neighbourhood we serve and developing new partnerships between citizens, neighbourhood groups and social service providers.

## Principles

It is agreed that the following principles will guide NICCSS

1. Strive for equality of opportunity, representation and outcome and promote understanding and cross-cultural diversity;
2. Build on unity and strengths and support existing resources and neighbourhood/ community structures;
3. Strengthen the health of the community and its families, youth, children and individuals through community building and development initiatives;
4. Develop partnerships with community organizations, service agencies, educational resources, consumers, residents and government;
5. Be accessible at a neighbourhood level wherever possible and actively involve consumers and residents in service planning, decisions and program provision;
6. Link and coordinate informal and formal support systems so that natural occurring support systems are enhanced and part of the continuum of service;
7. Meet needs of inner city families, children, youth, seniors and adult individuals through creative and innovative methods that reflect their real needs and provides them with decision making authority.

The partners to NICCSS membership agreement are willing to work together to:

-Adopt a participatory management style and formal agreements of procedures, reciprocity, service partnerships, ownership of production of collaboration and timely conflict resolution, policy development and organizational planning;

- Focus on prevention and optimal child development using an ecological model and team approach to integrated services with early and less intrusive interventions;
- Develop neighbourhood or community based programs that reflect the community, cultural realities, reduce isolation and build a sense of community (e.g. Drop in centres, child care services etc.);
- Develop a continuum of services from support of natural networks to home visits, health screening and partnering education and social development;
- Work to ensure consumers and providers function as partners in planning and delivering an integrated set of services with formal and informal responses (focus on strengths not deficits)
- Supporting the community in advocating on behalf of programs and practices that fulfill principles of NICCSS;
- Ensuring information and assistance that families, youth, children and individuals require to participate in programs received;
- Contribute to planning and securing of resources to endure long-term viability of this community-driven prevention and intervention organization;
- Sharing of achieved goals of NICCSS
- Working together to monitor and evaluate programs to ensure they are meeting community priorities;
- Acknowledge contributions of each NICCSS member