



**Canadian Mental
Health Association**
South Cariboo
Mental health for all

2023-2024 Annual Report



CMHA South Cariboo is an accredited organization through Imagine Canada's Standards Program

Agency Profile: Canadian Mental Health Association, South Cariboo Branch, is an autonomous, non-profit, charitable organization with ethical and legal responsibilities to the National and BC Divisions of CMHA. Our mandate emphasizes the importance of people with lived experience of mental illness being involved in the delivery of service and governance wherever possible.

Our Vision: “Mentally Healthy People in a Healthy Society”

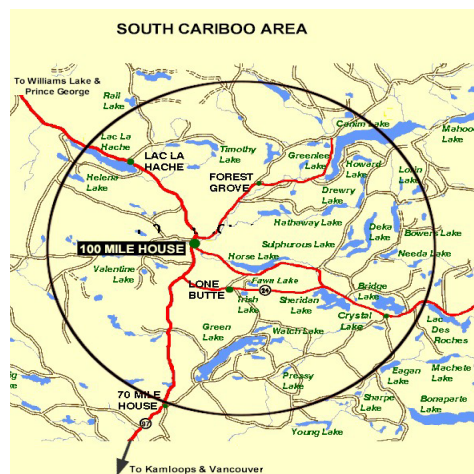
Our Mission: “To ensure that all people in Canada experience good mental health and well-being.”

CMHA South Cariboo Branch believes in:

- Social justice
- Individual and collective responsibility
- Access to appropriate and adequate resources and supports
- Self-determination
- Maximum community inclusion
- Working collaboratively with our community partners

Geographic Catchment area:

The South Cariboo is a sub-region of the Cariboo Regional District in the interior of British Columbia. Its main population center is the Municipality of 100 Mile House, a community of approximately 2,000 residents. An additional 18,000 people live in the South Cariboo. The South Cariboo boundaries are roughly described as 70 Mile House in the South, to Lac la Hache in the North, the Fraser River to the West, and Lac des Roches and Mahood Lake to the East. The region includes 100 Mile House and many smaller communities such as Forest Grove, Buffalo Creek, Lac la Hache, 108 Mile Ranch, Lone Butte, Sheridan Lake, Bridge Lake, Watch Lake and Green Lake.



Board Chair Report:

Wow another year has come and gone. First things first; let's give thanks to our dedicated staff led by Susann and Nicole. Sometimes I forget that we have 16 employees; with all the great work and commitment, I'd swear we had 50 employees. THANK YOU, one and all.

What can I say about the volunteer board colleagues? When we were recruiting new board members they stepped up and found several excellent candidates. When the idea of holding a Gala event was suggested, they stepped up (maybe danced a little) and made it happen. Shockingly, they not only made great memories but also some money for the agency. Congrats to the organizing team.

Board members stepped up and not just attended to all their board commitments, but also actively engaged and contributed. I am so thankful. What's the old adage: it takes a village to raise a child? Well, it takes a dedicated team of staff and board members to move an organization forward.

Some of the boards' goal/s for this past year:

- Starting to plan for our long time Executive Director's retirement in 2025. This past year was more preliminary work, identifying what we need done to create a successful outcome for the transition.
- Raising the organization's profile in the community. Done: a staff person has been dedicated to engaging the public. They write articles on mental health for our local newspaper and have us active on social media.
- Moving the work of our climate change and mental health task force forward. This task force focuses on the impact climate change has on communities and resident's resilience and mental wellness. We have managed to cobble together some monies to create part time work for a staff person to work on our Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) community resilience strategy. This task force continues to meet regularly, looking for funding and connections.
- Establishing an annual fundraising event and plan. Well, I've spoken to the Gala already. Numerous community events were also attended this year.
- Exploring the possibilities of developing more affordable housing in 100 Mile. BC Housing recently reconfirmed that our second stage housing is still a go. Fingers crossed for more concrete action on this. Susann and I have met with a number of landowners on developing their property for social housing. These are very preliminary exploratory discussions.
- Finally, developing and implementing a new strategic plan for the organization. This document needs a bit more work to bring it to the finish line. It's important to have a playbook for the new leader to work from next year while they get settled into the position. Staff also need to know what the direction of the organization looks like.

Respectfully submitted by Marty Norgren, Board Chair

Executive Director Report:

The June 25th, 2024, Annual General Meeting provides an opportunity for our members to take a moment to look back upon and celebrate what we have accomplished over this past year.

As Marty, our board chair has already spoken about our accomplishments and goals in his report, I will just focus on thanking people in mine.

I am so proud of, and grateful for, the continued hard work and dedication of our awesome staff. It is a joy to see the level of teamwork that exists amongst our staff as they help each other out with whatever is needed; to feel the wonderful atmosphere of team spirit here; and to hear the frequent sound of laughter coming down the hall. While the work we do can certainly be rewarding, it can also be challenging, difficult and even heartbreaking at times. Thank you for all you do, every single day; the work you do to support the wellbeing of the people we serve is so important.

I gratefully thank the CMHA South Cariboo board of directors for their ongoing dedication to the governance of our CMHA Branch. They give so much of their time throughout the year, behind the scenes, guiding the work we do, always with an eye to the future.

Thank you to the people we serve; you are the heart of our organization, and it is our honour to serve you.

Thank you as well to our members; your ongoing support is very important to us, as we work toward our goals of increasing mental health and wellbeing in the South Cariboo.

Susann Collins, Executive Director

History of the Canadian Mental Health Association

Canada's Oldest National Mental Health Charity

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) is one of the oldest national, charitable organizations in Canada and the oldest national mental health charity. Each year, CMHA divisions and branches across Canada provide service to people across Canada through the combined efforts of more than 18,000 volunteers and staff in locally run organizations. Visit CMHA National's website for more information. CMHA was founded in 1918 by Dr. Clarence M. Hincks, Dr. Charles K. Clarke and Clifford W. Beers as the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene. The original goals of the organization centered on war recruits, mental examination of post-war immigrants, prevention, and support for adequate facilities and care for the treatment of mental illness.

CMHA is uniquely positioned in Canada as a charity that brings together community-based experience and expertise on the prevention of mental illness and community supports for the mental well-being of all Canadians. We are not only unique in our mental health promotion approach but also in our ability to speak to issues spanning the broad range of mental disorders and the full spectrum of those affected from those at risk, to those newly diagnosed, those who have been living with a psychiatric disability over the longer-term, as well as family, friends and community gatekeepers.

CMHA South Cariboo Branch

CMHA in the South Cariboo was started by a group of concerned individuals in the late 1980s. The group's early meetings took place in the Rosewood Building on Birch Avenue in 100 Mile House, and included individuals living with mental illness, their friends and family members, mental health service providers and local physicians. As mental health support services in the South Cariboo at that time were very limited, the initial goal for members was to begin to develop resources and a network of support - both for individuals living with a mental illness, and to those who were part of their lives. The branch was incorporated in 1993. The branch's early goals were to be actively involved in the development of psychiatric services to our community, and to find funds to develop a clubhouse or drop-in center where people who live with mental illness could congregate, socialize, and receive the help needed to live successfully in their homes and community. Since its inception, CMHA South Cariboo Branch has grown from a one staff office to a multi-program system. We continue to take pride in our identity as a grassroots organization that adapts to serve the need of our region.

Prevention is fundamental to all of the services we provide and is reflected through the work of the branch during Mental Health Week, Mental Illness Awareness Week and at various community events throughout the year. It is also reflected in the services we provide to individuals who live with a serious and persistent mental illness. The South Cariboo Branch is proud to be among the branches that make up Canadian Mental Health Association BC Division, and part of our nation-wide federation.

The Framework for Support

The Framework is the central philosophy guiding the activities of CMHA. This philosophy holds that the person experiencing mental illness is at the center of any supportive mental health system.

The Community Resource Base outlines a range of possible resources in addition to the formal mental health system which can provide support to a person with mental illness. Housing, income, work and education represent four basic elements of citizenship.

The ultimate goal of the Framework is to ensure that people with serious mental health problems live fulfilling lives in the community. The Framework for Support is referred to as the most comprehensive model for mental health planning by federal and provincial governments, as well as by the Centre for Community Change in the US, and the Government of Ireland.

Scholarship Report

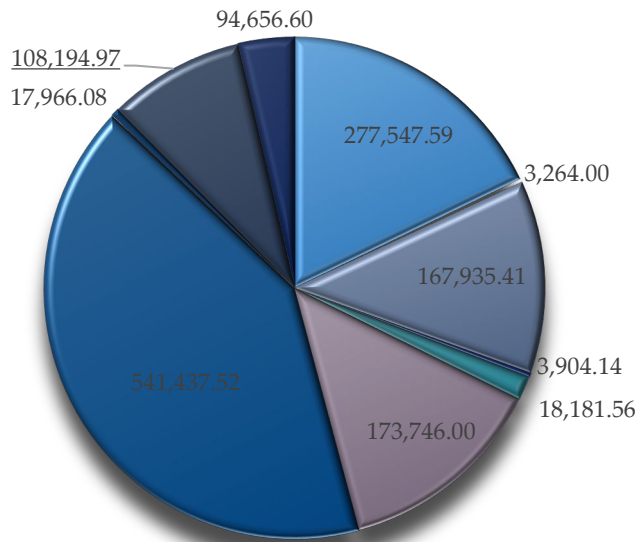
We provide a \$500 Scholarship to help a local student pursuing a career related to mental health (such as psychiatry or Community Mental Health Worker) when we receive applications that meet this criterion. The scholarship was awarded this year.

Community Events

Over this past year we have participated in the 100 Mile House Pride Parade and park day, the South Cariboo Garlic Festival, Party in the Park - Building Resiliency, the 100 Mile House Santa Claus parade, the Canim Band Wellness Weekend, the South Cariboo Women's Fair and the Pickle Ball Association's Day in the Park event. We also hosted our 1st Annual Gala Event.

2023/2024 Operations Budget (unaudited)

- Contract Income - IHA
- Grant Income
- Legal Services Contract Income
- BC Housing H.O.W/Subsidies
- STV Contract Income
- Miscellaneous
- Fundraising/Donations
- Rental (CTT)
- Interest Income
- Covid Relief



Revenue :

Contract income - IHA:	\$ 277,547.59
B.C. Housing-H.O.W/Subsidies:	\$ 541,437.52
Grants:	\$ 167,935.41
Fundraising and Donations:	\$ 3,904.14
Rental (CTT):	\$ 173,746.00
Interest Income:	\$ 17,966.08
Legal Service Contract Income:	\$ 18,181.56
Miscellaneous:	\$ 3,264.00
COVID Relief	\$ 94,656.60
Contract income - STV:	<u>\$ 108,194.97</u>

=====Total: \$1,406,833.87

Nicole Bissat - Finance Coordinator

Program Reports

Community Engagement (various funders)

We are excited to introduce the Community Engagement Coordinator position, which was created in October 2023; a brand-new role at CMHA South Cariboo! This role is filled by Kristin Wells. This position is currently in the preliminary stages of development, but its mission is clear: to raise awareness about the valuable programs and services offered by CMHA South Cariboo.

As a nonprofit organization, we want to emphasize that we are not a government entity. Our goal is to ensure the community understands who we are and how we can support them. The Community Engagement Coordinator will play a vital role in this effort, focusing on fundraising and participating in community events throughout the year.

Since the inception of this position, we have successfully hosted our first annual Hearts and Minds fundraising Gala, organized a free community BBQ that was funded entirely by donations, and participated in both the South Cariboo Women's Fair and the Pickle Ball Association's Fun in the Park event.

During Mental Health week, Kristin organized fun events for the staff, including a scavenger hunt, trivia game, baby photo guessing game and a potluck lunch. Kristin also organized a free coffee pop up stand in front of one of our local grocery stores. The coffee was generously donated by The Rise and Grind, a local coffee shop.

Our first annual Gala was a tremendous success, generating a profit of \$3,002.62! With over 40 guests in attendance, the evening featured delicious food, complimentary champagne, a silent auction, live entertainment, and a 50-50 draw. We were honored to have local MLA Lorne Doerkson join us, providing a fantastic opportunity to inform him about the great work we do at CMHA South Cariboo. He was surprised to learn that we are a nonprofit organization. Given the success of our inaugural Gala, we are already planning next year's event, which promises to be even bigger and better.

Our free community BBQ during Mental Health Week was a tremendous success! We had over 100 attendees in just an hour and a half. It was wonderful to see many new faces from the community who are not directly associated with CMHA South Cariboo, attending the BBQ. For the second year in a row, Butcher Bobs generously donated the burgers, with additional support from the Fraser Family. Despite a minor setback with the BBQ not working initially, our team came together, resolved the issue, and ensured everyone was well-fed. We are excited to make this an annual event, as it is a fantastic way to give back to the community and bring some joy to people's day.

Attending the South Cariboo Women's Fair and the Pickle Ball Association's Fun in the Park event was a wonderful opportunity to engage with the community and increase recognition of our organization. These events help us connect with more people and spread awareness about the valuable work we do.

Since establishing the Community Engagement Coordinator position, our social media presence has grown significantly. Our Facebook followers have increased to 159, and we have been actively sharing resources and updates. Additionally, we have joined Instagram, where we are steadily gaining new followers each month, ensuring our community stays informed and connected.

This year has also seen the creation of the monthly CMHA Newsletter! The newsletter goes out around the 15th of each month, providing our followers with an update on all the exciting things happening around CMHA. We are steadily gaining more followers with each community event we attend.

Kristin has also become a part of our local 100 Mile Free Press family! She writes two articles a month on different mental health topics. Some of the topics that have been discussed so far are: breaking the stigma around mental health, supporting a loved one with a mental illness and social media and mental health.

Upcoming Community Events:

Pride in the Park:

- Date: July 27
- Location: Centennial Park
- Activities: Taking part in the parade with a float and having a booth set up at the park

Fundraising Paint Event:

- Date: Saturday, July 13
- Sessions: Morning and afternoon
- Activities: Customizable door mat and cowboy hat painting
- Instructor's Contribution: \$20 of her profit plus \$10 per ticket will go to CMHA

Dinner and Dance Fundraising Night:

- Date: August 17
- Location: Royal Canadian Legion
- Entertainment: Local band "The Markabillies"
- Dinner: Greek cuisine prepared by the Legion
- Additional Fundraising: 50-50 draw

Burger and Beer Fundraiser:

- Tentative Date: September
- Details: To be announced

Kristin Wells - Community Engagement Coordinator

Supported Independent Living Program (funded by Interior Health Authority)

The Supported Independent Living (SIL) Program supports clients to live independently in the community by providing emotional support, encouragement and life skills coaching in areas such as budgeting, nutrition, self-care and wellness. Clients are referred through Interior Health Mental Health and Substance Use Services. A care plan is developed by the client and their Health Team, which can consist of the Treatment, Support and Recovery worker, their doctor, psychiatrist, the CMHA SIL Worker and other health care professionals.

Each client has individual and varying needs. The SIL worker works with the client to meet these needs together and to help the client master these needs independently. Goals are set out in a care plan which is flexible and realistic, and, together, the client and worker do their best to achieve success.

During SIL visits, clients may need advocacy during doctor appointments, assistance with shopping or transportation to the hospital for lab appointments or medication injections. The SIL worker also encourages physical activity for the client's health, such as walking around the marsh, going on hikes together and yoga. Healthy minds and healthy bodies are encouraged. Food from the food bank is also delivered by SIL to clients in need every week.

The SIL program also offers a Work Incentive Program (W.I.P.) for some of our clients. This is achieved by having businesses or groups in the community agreeing to offer training or skills development opportunities to the client for 10 hours a month. And in turn, through this funding, we pay a fair volunteer wage in compensation to them; a win/win situation. This program is paid for by Interior Health and is a much-appreciated program by those who are using it. SIL can also provide much-needed financial subsidies for some of our clients for rent and utilities.

This year in the SIL program, the clients and SIL worker planted the gardens at CMHA with enthusiasm. Also, one of our clients has a W.I.P. taking care of the beautiful flower gardens in front of our building and watering our vegetable garden all season. Much pride is taken in this volunteer work. We also have a CMHA garden plot at the Community Garden in town that client's plant and maintain to feed the community.

We have already joined with Clubhouse program in providing an opportunity to meet with a representative from Emergency Services and hear them talk about wildfire preparedness and have all the emergency contact information for our clients in case of a natural disaster. We are moving forward into 2024 with a safe and healthy program.

Kathy Provost - SIL Outreach Worker

Clubhouse/Activity Program (funded by Interior Health Authority)

The Clubhouse program provides a safe space where referred individuals with a mental illness can drop in Monday to Friday from 12 pm until 3:45 pm. On Fridays during the spring, summer and fall, we rotate from 9 am-1:45pm and 11-3:45pm, as we have access to the SIL van and are able to go for adventures, such as fishing, or visiting the ice caves, Mt. Timothy and Begbie Summit, to name a few.

These fishing adventures have been very popular, and a couple of times we had filled all the seats in the van and we also had multiple vehicles following us to get all our fisher people to the lake; we have had up to 10 people at the lake at a time.

The focus of the Clubhouse program is to encourage social connection and peer support through preparing and sharing a meal together, recreational activities, such as outings, picnics, gardening, etc. Members are encouraged to participate in all areas of the program, such as planning, preparing and cleanup of the lunches, as well as planning the garden, the outings and activities that are chosen.

In keeping with our commitment to recognize and share major holidays such as Thanksgiving and Christmas etc., a full course hot meal was prepared for our clients on these occasions. This brought on much pride as all of the vegetables (potatoes, carrots, brussels sprouts and peas) for our meals were grown ourselves in the CMHA garden out front. The turkeys were donated, and 25 meals were served for the Christmas luncheon.

Interior Health has sent several new referrals to the Clubhouse program, mostly due to social isolation.

We currently have a fun group of 16 active Clubhouse clients right now, and often support 6-8 clients daily.

Budgeting is always a challenge as the cost of groceries is ever rising and our budget for food and coffee has stayed the same for many years.

Rick McKinney - Clubhouse/Activity Worker

Homeless Outreach Program (funded by BC Housing)

The Homeless Outreach Program helps break the cycle of homelessness by assisting people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness.

In the 2023-2024 fiscal year, the Homeless Outreach Program provided 5866 services to more than 2600 individuals, a 20% increase over the previous year. 10% of these individuals were new to our program.

The Homeless Outreach Program provided 1748 bed stays to homeless individuals -1400 more than the previous year. While having shelter options is helpful, an increasing amount of people are unable to meet the requirements to stay in our high-barrier motel room shelter spaces. At least 63 hard to house individuals were turned away from our shelters or had their shelter stay terminated because their needs exceeded what we can provide.

BC Housing recently increased our shelter funding, allowing us to continue to provide after-hours emergency support to individuals throughout the year.

Marnie Jensen - Homeless Outreach Worker

Cariboo Trail Terrace - Housing (funded by BC Housing)

Cariboo Trail Terrace is our 25 unit subsidized family housing development, located at 910 Cariboo Trail. Currently, all units are occupied with a combination of four low-end market units and twenty-one rent geared to income units. As there is a housing crisis in this area, there is a long wait list for all units.

Things are going very well at Cariboo Trail Terrace; for the most part we have good tenants who take care of their units.

We did have a very costly year with repairs, due to multiple vacated units. We had a total of eight quick unit turnovers this past year (occupied within a month). This caused us to overspend on building maintenance as well as replacement reserve as we had to replace two furnaces and the flooring throughout one unit and purchase a new stove. We also replaced the furnaces in two other units as recommended during the furnace servicing.

We had multiple water leaks and failing faucets due to calcium build up, and we have had to replace them. Calcium has also caused multiple water leaks from upstairs bathrooms into the ceiling and walls of kitchens below, and from an outside tap into the neighbour's unit, and we are currently working on replacing flooring in the affected unit.

This year's annual inspections went well, as we have kept up on needed repairs over the past few years.

Rick McKinney - Caretaker Cariboo Trail Terrace

Acquired Brain Injury Program (funded by Interior Health Authority)

The Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Program provides support and encouragement for survivors of traumatic brain injuries that result from a stroke, accident, assault or illness, that make it difficult to live independently.

The Life Skills Worker's role is to support clients to develop or regain their ability to perform daily responsibilities, work toward their goals, and to improve their ability to live independently and confidently.

The ABI Program is administered through Interior Health out of Kamloops and Kelowna which provides oversight, referrals, and resources for the ABI worker in our region.

The ABI caseload has increased from thirteen to fifteen, with six referrals pending.

Some of the ways that support can be given include: helping program participants to make and attend appointments, to shop for themselves, access needed government or other services or resources, and to relearn and practice life skills necessary for living on their own. Life skills include cooking, budgeting, coping with stress, developing social skills and decision making; the needs are as individual as the people supported.

Many clients in this program do not have transportation, and live in areas such as Cache Creek, Lac La Hache, Forest Grove, and Clinton and rely on the Life Skills Worker for transportation. Some clients have improved their day-to-day life skills and have reintegrated into community activities, returning to part time work, or volunteering in other organizations and community activities.

The Life Skills Worker supported program clients to form a support group called the Cariboo Brain Injury Association. This support group also welcomes other people that have an ABI, but do not meet program criteria.

Tshidi Machete - Acquired Brain Injury Support Worker

Receptionist/Scheduler (various funders)

The key responsibilities of the receptionist role are to:

- Receive visitors
- Provide information and support in crisis situations by connecting people to appropriate staff

- Act as a safety check-in person for staff working in the community
- Answer the telephone and direct to the appropriate program
- Type and create documents, reports and minutes
- Receive rent payments, issue receipts
- Update staff Outlook calendar
- Maintain records and prepare summary reports
- Schedule shift coverage when required for absent staff
- Other duties as assigned

The receptionist is the first voice and the first face the public sees when accessing our services. Their professional conduct helps to maintain a calm, supportive environment. They also support other staff members during challenging moments of the day. Between April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024, approximately 1,631 front desk calls were received, and the door was answered 1,769 times: an increase from the previous year.

During the 2023/2024 fiscal year we followed all protocols to ensure our staff and clients were safe. We ensured all PPE supplies were on hand for all departments.

Kelly Lafrentz and Natesha Hayes - Receptionists/Schedulers

Community Navigator Program (funded by BC Gaming Commission) and the Legal Aid BC Community Partner Program (funded by Legal Aid BC)

The Community Navigator Program (CNP) was first introduced to the South Cariboo in May of 2018, following the devastating wildfires of 2017. Mill closures, more wildfires, and floods in subsequent years created a further and more urgent need for our rural residents to access more services and programs.

The CNP provides a range of information according to the individual needs and circumstances, such as accessing medical care, income assistance, food security, housing, counselling, mental health and addiction services, transportation, and more.

Government systems can often be complicated for individuals trying to access services. Many of our community's clients do not or cannot afford internet access, cell phones, or have reliable cell phone or reliable internet coverage, which creates multiple barriers. The CNP assists these clients in navigating these barriers by providing access, information, and assistance in navigating these services.

For the 2023/2024 fiscal year, the CNP made over 1241 contacts, and helped over 424 clients. There were 672 referrals provided. We gained 16 new clients. This includes Legal Aid resources as well.

The Canadian Red Cross funding for our second Navigator position ended early in this fiscal year; with that funding ending, the program was reduced to one staff person to assist the people living in the large geographical area we serve, which includes more than 9 communities.

Our primary Community Navigator (CN) had a stroke early in the 2023 fiscal year and was off work recovering. Our second Navigator filled in until the primary Navigator returned to work in mid-October 2023.

The CN works closely with other community resources and providers such as RCMP, RCMP Victim's Services, Interior Health Mental Health, Interior Health Emergency Department, BC Ambulance, Ministry for Children and Family Development, City Council of 100 Mile House, and even provincial politicians to discuss mental health and addiction concerns and awareness in our community.

The CNP continues to take part in community functions bringing mental health awareness, and resources to the forefront, including:

- In May of 2023, we held a "Bee Kind to Your Mind" Community BBQ where we had a bouncy castle, Games, BBQ, toys, gifts, and provided mental health resources, and CN Resources for the attendees.

- In July 2023, The CN/CMHA participated in Pride in the Park, celebrating inclusivity, diversity, love, and pride in our community, while providing resources to all attending.
- In August 2023, The CN/CMHA operated an information booth at a Garlic Festival, which is a well-attended, and much anticipated yearly community event in Lac La Hache.
- In September 2023, the CN/CMHA operated an information booth for “Party in the Park” in 100 Mile House which was a post Covid Mental Health Resilience party hosted by Canadian Mental Health Association South Cariboo, and Deb Scallion from BC Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch. There was a free yoga class, live entertainment, free food, bouncy castle, and story block for the children.
- In November 2023, CNP entered the CMHA float into the Annual Christmas Parade. We handed out hot chocolate and tea packets attached to an information brochure with “5 Tips to Reduce Holiday Stress” The theme was to “Take Time for Me This Holiday Season,” with resources and contact information for anyone experiencing depression, anxiety, holiday stress, or suicidal thoughts. Staff walked beside the float handing out the packets along with glow sticks, candy canes, and chocolates, much to the parade attendee's delight.

The CNP, through the Community Partner program, works with Legal Aid BC and assists clients in accessing Legal Aid resources, and Legal Aid applications. Clients who are fleeing domestic abuse, who have had their children removed by the Ministry, or who have been charged with a crime, can seek assistance in applying for Legal Aid within the community without having the financial strain of having to travel to a larger community to apply.

The CN often liaises with lawyers and Legal Aid intake assisting clients in faxing or emailing documents on behalf of clients.

The CN Legal Aid BC Community Partner also provides clients with resources and referrals to crown counsel, duty counsel, legal clinics, various legal organizations, non-profit organizations, as well provincial and federal government programs, organizations, and services. The CN, at times, while working as a Legal Aid BC Community Partner will also provide that client with mental health resources, addictions resources, Homeless Outreach resources, and food security.

In February 2024, the CN, working as Legal Aid BC Community Partner, worked with 100 Mile House RCMP, Interior Health Youth Mental Health and the Principal and Vice Principal of Peter Ogden Secondary School in 100 Mile House to put on an assembly. The topic of the assembly was regarding age of consent, sharing of intimate images online, online safety, sexual exploitation, harassment, and child exploitation. With an increase in online incidents of harassment/bullying and youth suicides due to online sexual exploitation, the parents, RCMP, and school staff felt it was imperative to present this information to the students. The CN prepared a trauma informed presentation based on material from the Legal Aid BC booklet, “Is That Legal.” Information on the dangers and legal ramifications of sharing/resharing of intimate images of persons under the age of 18, non-consensual sexual activity, harassment, cyberstalking, and exploitation were discussed openly and candidly with the students in an open forum. The RCMP Member and CN provided pizza and pop gift certificates to students who actively participated in the discussion, and chips, chocolate, and water were also provided to the students at the end of the presentation. The presentation was well received by both staff and students. Resources for counselling, legal assistance, and victim's services were offered at the end of the presentation.

The South Cariboo is a hard-working and resilient community that has overcome many life changing events over the past 7 years. Mental health, addiction, and housing issues continue to be major issues for many in our community. The economy has left many financially struggling to make ends meet, and food security is becoming a major issue in our community for many. Our community food bank has seen a significant increase in requests for assistance, and the Navigator program has been able to assist in meeting some of the demands by providing individuals with food security from our own CMHA food cupboard. We see more seniors reaching out for services than ever before.

The need for our CN program continues as addiction issues, mental health issues, lack of food affordability, cost of utilities, rent, evictions, and physician shortages continue to rise in our community. You can be assured we will be there to meet our community's needs and find the best resources based on their circumstances.

Kim Fraser and Kristin Wells - Community Navigators

Safe House Program (funded by BC Housing)

The CMHA Safe House Program continues to help break the cycle of domestic violence by assisting women and their children who are fleeing abuse. The Safe House program provides emergency safe housing, groceries, emotional support, safety planning, referrals, transportation to longer term transition houses, and referrals to counselling services, legal aid and other community resources, according to the needs of the individual woman. Safe House Coordinators offer women the information they need to make informed decisions.

A Safe House Coordinator is available 24 hours per day, seven days a week. Back up Safe House coordinator services have been provided by Tshidi Machete and other CMHA staff.

In the 2023/2024 fiscal year there were 84 nightly stays in the Safe House and 18 additional women that did not stay at the Safe House, but were referred to community resources and counselling. All clients were provided with safety planning.

There was a change in client demographics this past fiscal year in that Safe House saw more mature/older rural clients seeking help to leave long term abusive partners. Almost half the clients were over 50 years of age, three of those over 65, with the oldest being 78 years old. Finding longer term accommodation in a transition house that could meet the needs of senior women fleeing abuse has been challenging. Longer-term transition houses have often been at capacity with waiting lists. Lack of bed space and the lack of rental accommodations in 100 Mile House and vicinity makes finding ongoing support and housing for clients extremely difficult. Safe House again often depended on the Homeless Outreach Program to assist in this area, reflecting the need for first and second stage housing for Safe House clients in the 100 Mile area. As in the previous fiscal year, more pets, including emotional support animals, were accommodated.

Four women who were able to leave the community were provided with transportation by bus or assistance with gas for their own vehicle to get to longer term accommodation in transition houses in other areas. For clients who need to go to the Lower Mainland, transportation is more difficult since Ebus took over Adventure Charters bus service for the routes between Prince George and the Lower Mainland and Kamloops. Ebus no longer offers direct travel to the Lower Mainland without transferring and waiting in Kamloops, and allows for only minimal baggage.

The majority of Safe House referrals this past fiscal year have been from law enforcement, and a good working relationship continues between Safe House, the 100 Mile House RCMP and Victim Services. Officers can call Safe House workers directly instead of going through VictimLink. This allows for faster communications in emergency situations. Officers have been helpful and supportive to Safe House clients. Other service providers such as the hospital, Cariboo Family Enrichment Centre and the Ministry for Children and Family Development also have the direct number.

Clients who do not stay in Safe House but are looking for support services are regularly referred to the Stopping the Violence Counselling program, and other community resources.

Roxanne Salinas - Safe House Coordinator

Stopping the Violence Counselling Program (funded by the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General)

The Stopping the Violence Counselling (S.T.V.) Program offers essential services to women who are experiencing or have experienced violence and other forms of abuse as an adult, childhood abuse or sexual assault. The S.T.V. Counsellor and S.T.V. Counselling Assistant continue to work very closely within the same office space and for client management. The S.T.V. Counselling Program offers counselling services to individuals through scheduled, unscheduled, and emergency appointments, for support and follow-up, as well as group services. The S.T.V. Counselling Assistant offers intake support with reception services.

This year there have been referrals and support needs for women/youth under age 19 who have been sexually assaulted.

Trends this year have been complex mental health issues and PTSD, as well, psychiatric and dementia related.

In the 2023/24 fiscal year, the S.T.V. Counselling Program had 858 contacts (increase from 733 for 2022-2023), 260 individual scheduled sessions (decrease from 278 for 2022-2023), 0 group sessions (decrease from 19 in 2022-2023), 388 support follow-up contacts (decrease from 392 for 2022-2023). The STV Counselling Assistant had 74 new intakes decrease-77 from 2022-2023).

Kalika Moody - S.T.V. Counsellor and Tshidi Machete - S.T.V. Counselling Assistant

Soupe de Tour (funded by BC Gaming):

The program supplies soup every two weeks to different organizations and other community groups, who in turn distribute the soup to the people they serve. The soup is prepared by the Chartreuse Moose restaurant and has been appreciated by all.

This program provides soup to the following places: Cedar Crest Society for Community Living, CMHA Clubhouse, Loaves and Fishes, the Friendship Center and to the refugee program (for people fleeing the war in Ukraine).

During the 2023-2024 fiscal year, 569 liters of soup were made and distributed.

Tshidi Machete - Soupe de Tour Worker

Our Board of Directors for 2023-2024

President/Chair: Marty Norgren

Co-Vice Chairs: Kathy (Kitten) Cadrin and Rick Meyer

Treasurer: Rick Meyer

Secretary: Didi Henderson

Fundraising Committee: Kathy (Kitten) Cadrin and Didi Henderson

Climate Change and Mental Health Task Force Chair: Rick Meyer

Directors: Marion Fallding, Trish Hoy and Meagan Reid-Wolfe

CMHA South Cariboo Climate Change Task Force Report

Our Task Force met weekly or bi-weekly throughout 2023-2024 in our continuing focus on the mental health impacts resulting from climate change/environmental disruptions. Our meeting agendas and minutes are on file with Susann, providing a detailed account of our activity, including the record of our efforts described below. We have been humbly challenged, and also painfully affirmed, by our pursuit of the remarkable complexity and severity of the climate related threat to human well-being, the earth and all creatures on it.

- Connection with Denise Silverstone of CMHA National resulting in consciousness raising at their level re: climate change mental health impacts; their initiation of a funding proposal to the National Climate Adaptation Action Plan; their awareness of our South Cariboo branch Task Force activity and their support of our local effort.
- Creation of resource materials including a Climate Distress Resource List, scaffolding document and multiple surveys, book titles, articles and research citations available for staff, and other support; also including a full-time staff job description with funding proposal framework (see below). These will be archived in Susann's Task Force folder.
- CMHA full time equivalent staff position funding proposal for the role of community liaison/facilitator devoted to a diversity of care for South Cariboo residents affected by and vulnerable to climate related mental health effects. The proposal framework and the job description are complete and ready for submission to a funding source. We now are engaged in the continuing task of identifying funding opportunities. In response to Susann's request, Denise Silverstone, of CMHA National, forwarded a list of foundations as possible sources. All of those appeared to fall short, in their donation maximums, of the amount we will need to fund an FTE CMHA staff position. We continue in the pursuit of funding alternatives. The Peter Gilgan foundation rejected our expression of interest submitted under their community resilience funding area. Susann requested feedback and received clarification that our proposal did not include actions toward reduction of emissions, utilizing renewable technologies, or implementing green building, so they resubmitted it under a youth and mental health category, but as it did not include a focus on youth, it did not align adequately with the foundation's priority of the support of youths. Susann has initiated an expression of interest with the Trottier Foundation, and they declined. She has also submitted an expression of interest to the McConnell Foundation.
- Community development initiative. We have concluded to pursue a community development process invested in the enhancement of adaptive resilience via an established working group of community residents, and devoted to the identification and realization of relevant and appropriate community supports, including our priority concern with climate change mental health impacts. We envision an autonomous, self-sustaining committee operating independently from CMHA, though with CMHA support and participation. We've identified Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) as a promising strategic approach. Further research of strategic alternatives is warranted. We've acknowledged this to be a necessarily incremental process requiring careful deliberation and adequate timelines for that. Fortunately, we don't have to fulfill a defined timeline/deadline in our pursuit of this.

The following is a prospective outline of steps we are pursuing:

- Along with the ABCD strategy, research other community development strategies.
- Articulate for ourselves our vision of community development toward introducing that to prospective participants. Study and 'own' our adopted community development strategy on behalf of facilitating a successful initiation of this process. Prepare a 'package' of informative introductory material for potential participants. Our readiness for this will be essential in a successful recruitment of participants. Consider what support we may want to recruit in preparing for this: e.g. consultation expertise in the implementation of an ABCD strategy. Again, our goal will be to initiate this process with the result of its development into an autonomous, self-perpetuating/sustaining working group. See update below.
- Community Development Initiative: We have identified a consultant to assist in our pursuit of an Asset Based Community Development strategy in the South Cariboo devoted to the development of community resilience. Joe Erpenbeck is on the faculty of the DePaul University Asset Based Community Development Institute. Our Task Force committee has met with him

several times via Zoom over the past two months toward our better understanding of ABCD as a strategy and in our preparation for implementing it. With newly designated funding, and with Kristin Wells' assignment in the role of coordinator, we are now poised to approach an engagement with South Cariboo communities. Joe Erpenbeck is providing an initial training for Kristin. She is now engaged in a search for/identification of community connectors and assets. We anticipate then that Joe will provide introductory training for those identified individuals. We also anticipate that Kristin will function as a coordinator/facilitator in support of this emerging process of community development until it has coalesced as an autonomous and self-sustaining working group.

- Focus on expanding research of climate change mental health impacts in the South Cariboo toward the implementation of appropriate action strategies. We are pursuing a remarkable resource in the Connecting Climate Minds organization <https://www.connectingclimateminds.org> in their devotion to a global effort of creating, identifying, and facilitating climate change mental health impacts research with affiliated action strategies.

Rick Meyer - Task Force Chair