

2008 Annual Report

THE BRIDGE

Youth & Family Services



Helping Children & Youth
Become Healthy Adults





Healthy Families

President's Report

The past year at The Bridge has been very busy; I can't believe how quickly the year has gone. Accreditation was a huge success with the Society receiving an expedited accreditation from COA. Everybody involved in the re-accreditation process deserves a huge pat on the back for their hard work and dedication to the Society.

The Bridge has seen other success over the past year; we have a dedicated group of volunteers on the Board of Directors and are moving forward with the 4th Annual Night of the Arts. On a very worthy note, Charlie Hodge, volunteer extraordinaire and founder of the Night of the Arts was named a finalist for the Fred Macklin-Man of the Year Award with the City of Kelowna. We are very proud of Charlie for his accomplishments and are honoured to have him as a member of the Society. The Board of Directors has only a single member turnover this year and is a testament to the positive work that is being done on behalf of the community. We will continue to work for children and families in this community and build on the successes of the past. Looking towards the future, we have begun talks with the City of Kelowna about the Family Place concept on the old KSS site. That is a major need in Kelowna and we are taking a lead role in the development of the Family Place with other partner agencies in the area.

2007/08 has been a great year for us and I have no doubt that the next 12 months will be just as great if not better. I look forward to serving the Society for another 12 months and I know that the rest of our dedicated volunteers are excited and ready to provide and expand our services for children, youth and families in the local area and beyond. Have a great year!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jason Ranchoux'.

Jason Ranchoux, BA
President, Board of Directors
The Bridge Youth & Family Services Society



A Year of Success

Executive Director's Report

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit." These lines were attributed to Aristotle over two thousand years ago and I believe it is as true today as then.

Our work is important. We are helping young people become healthy adults, families to be places of growth and development, communities to be safe and livable. If we wish to achieve these objectives, the habit of excellence is an important habit for us to acquire. In fact, this work is so important that every four years we must meet international standards of excellence that have been developed and tested in over 1800 agencies serving over 7 million children in five countries. Imagine looking at every detail of how you operate to ensure that you are in compliance with every one of those standards. Do we treat all people with dignity and respect, is our board active and committed to the work of the organization, are personnel properly oriented, trained and supported, are our finances in good order, is the work environment safe, do we regularly obtain and use feedback about the services we provide, do the service participants benefit from the service and are their rights respected? This is a sample of the questions that we must answer upon review.

I am very proud to say that the board and staff who work tirelessly year in and year out have achieved an important acknowledgement of this ongoing effort. This year the agency was awarded an expedited accreditation by the Council on Accreditation for Children and Families. Based in New York City, the Council is a non-profit organization and a world leader in the accreditation of social service and behavioural health organizations.

An expedited accreditation is one in which there are no areas found to be out of compliance with the standards set out by the Council on Accreditation. This level of achievement is only ever obtained by about twenty per cent of accredited agencies. The experienced reviewers were from Chicago, Illinois and they spoke very highly of the quality of the staff, the volunteers and the board saying that from their experience our agency had set a new benchmark in excellence. It is the continual and ongoing contribution of all the staff, volunteers and board members as well as the confidence and support of all our funders and in particular the Ministry of Children and Family Development that made this possible. I thank each and every one of you.

Excellence is a habit, may we strive to strengthen that habit each and every day. Our work is just too important for anything less.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dennis Dandeneau'.

Dennis Dandeneau, M.A.
Executive Director

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Agency Profile

Since 1969, The Bridge Youth and Family Services Society has worked to promote the development of healthy children and healthy families in our community. We are proud to offer these services and remain sensitive to the changing needs of children and families. In association with the community, we assume the initiative in meeting those needs through the provision of innovative, quality programs.

The Bridge is a registered non-profit organization governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. The Society implements its programs with the help of many highly dedicated and experienced staff and service volunteers. Funding is received from federal, provincial and regional governments, foundations, service clubs, and private donors.

The Bridge is fully accredited by the Council on Accreditation. The Council is an international accrediting body promoting highest quality services possible through its accredited agencies. Accreditation attests that the Society meets or exceeds international standards of best practice. We are proud to have delivered the following programs during the past year.

Youth and Family Services

Family Counselling

Our family team continues to promote healthy children and families in our community through on going support and community based activities. Over the years, thousands of families have been supported in enhancing their parenting, communication and relationship skills. In 2007, the team worked with 110 families. The team continues to make every effort to accommodate the needs of the family which may include meeting in the family home.

Youth Transitions

We have operated this program since 1988 and it has been of critical importance to young people preparing to live on their own. The team supports young people in the transition to adulthood, through the development of life management skills. These skills may include financial management, job search and maintenance, education and career planning, household maintenance and interpersonal skills. In 2007 the team assisted 42 youth to locate and maintain accommodation within the Kelowna area. Over the years it has been extremely rewarding to see young people make the responsible transition to adulthood.

Kids in Control Group

This service is offered to children with family members who experience mental and emotional health issues. Children are assisted to develop the skills to understand the effects of mental health on their own lives by enhancing their interpersonal relationships, identifying networks of support, enhancing their

problem solving skills and coping with life transitions. The agency held two groups this year. The first was held in July 2007 with eight participants, while the second group was held in February-March 2008 with seven participants attending.

Peer Support Program

This ongoing community-based youth group provides a supportive and safe environment for young people living with mental health issues. Within a group setting, young people develop the skills necessary to anticipate and manage the stressors of daily life and enhance interpersonal relationships. The five participants met weekly during April, May and June of 2007

Summer Recreation Project

This is a lively and specially designed program that provides a positive recreation experience for foster children and youth. Children participate in a variety of summer recreation and skill development activities such as Food Safe certification, nutrition, swimming, sports, crafts, waterslides and field trips to community attractions.



Caregiver Support

Transition Suites

This unique program recruits, trains and supports individuals who provide mentorship to youth. Mentors provide youth with accommodation in a self-contained suite within their home. Seven mentoring homes (some homes with two suites) work as part of a team of professionals to support twelve youth in continuing to achieve their goals towards independence. This year 18 young people participated in this program with an average length of stay of 186 days.

Short Stay Housing (Transitions)

The agency trains and supports caregivers who provide care and supervision, within their homes, for youth who are withdrawing from substance use. This year the homes provided care for 24 youth.

Foster Home Support

Foster parents can experience many challenges when caring for the children. Timely and professional support to these incredibly dedicated families is important. Foster parents receive consultation, crisis intervention, debriefing and mediation; as well as training in crisis management and prevention. Foster parents offer an invaluable service to both the children in their homes as well as the community. This year we were able to support 26 foster families.

Residential

Lawrence Avenue Residence

Lawrence Avenue Residence has provided high quality residential care for hundreds of youth. Each worker at Lawrence Avenue creates with the youth an individualized plan to build on each youth's strengths and works with other involved professionals and family members to assist youth to achieve their goals. This year the residence offered 13 youth with a safe, caring, positive, structured home environment. Young people residing at Lawrence Avenue stay for approximately 195 days before transitioning to family care homes, The Path program or a Transition Suite.

The Path

This year The Path program finished recruitment of three full time foster homes and one respite care home for three youth transitioning from group care such as youth from The Lawrence Avenue Residence. With funding from the Ministry of Children and Family Development, the Path offers youth opportunities to experience greater independence while receiving ongoing support within the family home. Foster parents provide a warm and positive living environment for youth in their homes while receiving the support of a program worker.



Parent Education and Support

Special Deliveries, Giggles and Hugs, Tots Making Tracks

These parenting education and support groups have been providing a continuum of services to families with young children (0-6y) since 1994. These weekly pre and post natal groups are offered in collaboration with Public Health Nursing. Parents are assisted in their parenting role through songs and rhymes, interactive play activities, nutrition education, and discussions on various positive parenting themes. All participating families enjoy a nutritious meal while pregnant women receive additional support in the form of food vouchers and prenatal vitamins. On site child minding and transportation subsidy (as needed) is available. This year, total of 112 parents and 127 children benefited by the parent education and support offered over 205 sessions at three different locations (Kelowna, Rutland and Westbank).

Pre-Natal Wellness Education

The program is offered, in partnership with the YM-YWCA, to expectant women and their partners with the goal of wellness in pregnancy and after the child is born. Fun activities include fitness, healthy lifestyle and nutrition, body image, stress management and information on community resources. This year 158 participants enjoyed the above activities by attending forty five sessions at the two program sites (Rutland and Westside).



Family Resource Program

The Central Okanagan Family Resource Program is hosted by the Kelowna Child Care Society, in conjunction with The Bridge Youth & Family Services and the Okanagan Boys and Girls Club. On the Westside the Family Resource Program is offered by The Bridge. As a gateway to family development, the Family Resource Program follows the parent-child drop-in format based on the principle of universal access. The group provides an opportunity for parents to enjoy creative fun with their children, connect with other parents, access a toy lending library and receive information on community resources.

The program recorded visits from 2096 parents and 2784 children who attended 74 sessions at one central location in Kelowna.

Parent Talk

This program provides a weekly drop-in forum for parents to discuss and learn about various parenting topics while their children engage in creative fun and play activities. We are proud to facilitate this initiative in five locations, namely Kelowna (Martin Ave. Centre), Westside (Westbank United Church), Peachland (Peachland Community Centre), Rutland (Willow Park Church) and Lake Country (Boys and Girls Club).

This year 699 parents attended 136 sessions while 932 children were looked after by caregivers, on-site.

Strong Start

This exciting drop-in group was initiated at AS Matheson, offering early learning opportunities for preschool children and their families living in the neighbourhood. The program is offered five days a week, in collaboration with the Clubhouse Child Care Centre. A total of 123 parents and 129 children benefited from the group. The program recorded 850 parent visits and 1935 children visits over 123 sessions.

BC Farmers Market Nutrition Coupon Project

The Bridge Youth & Family Services was proud to participate in BC Farmers Market Nutrition Coupon Project piloted this year by the BC Association of Farmers Markets. The project provided a total of \$7,000 in coupons over the summer months to low-income families, for buying fresh farm products from BC farmers at the farmers' market. Providing families with food security in the form of coupons while raising awareness of the importance of fresh wholesome foods for a healthy balanced diet was a win-win situation.

Invest in Kids BC

As an affiliate for Invest in Kids in BC, we supplied over 1500 Welcome to Parenting Boxes to families with young children living in the province. We also offered the Kids Have Stress Too! (Preschool and Facilitator) Training Institutes in Prince Rupert, Prince George and Saskatoon.

Over 100 professionals attended the training.



Night of the Arts

The 3rd Annual Night of the Arts fundraiser was held November 15, 2007 at the Kelowna Community Theatre. The evening was enjoyed by over 600 people and featured talented musicians and artists from around the Okanagan who gave their time and energy to support the work of the society. Their contribution was greatly appreciated and we would also like to thank the many volunteers who helped to make this event a great success. Funds raised were used to improve the quality of life for youth in our community. Special thanks are in order to Charlie Hodge, who has led the last three fundraisers. This has become an annual event with plans in place for 2008 with growing community support and an expanding volunteer base.



Stakeholders Feedback Report

Introduction

The Bridge Youth & Family Services is committed to ensuring all services are of the highest quality possible. As part of this ongoing commitment to continuous quality improvement, a stakeholder feedback process has been implemented since 2003. The 2007 study replicated the previous studies by gathering feedback from referrers and participants of all program areas. The data was collected by survey method.

Survey of Service Participants

	*One to one: Agree / Strongly Agree (n=40)	**Group: Agree / Strongly Agree (n=41)
Participant ratings of location of services		
Location is easy to get to	95%	95%
The place feels safe to me	92%	100%
The place is comfortable	95%	95%
The place has a welcoming atmosphere	90%	97%
Participant ratings of staff		
Respectful of me (age, gender, culture, etc.)	100%	98%
Supportive of my strengths	100%	95%
Sensitive to my needs	95%	98%
Open to my feedback	98%	98%
Skilled and do their job well	100%	100%
Well-organized for sessions and activities	100%	93%
Participant ratings of services received		
Introduction to program helpful	98%	95%
Purpose of the program clearly explained	93%	100%
Full involvement in setting goals of service	95%	73%
Sessions/activities helpful to meet goals	95%	88%
Would recommend service to others	100%	100%

* The survey was administered to current and past participants of Family Services, Youth Transitions and Lawrence Avenue Residence via telephone contact and hand delivery.

** Giggles and Hugs (Rutland and Downtown), Tots Making Tracks, Special Deliveries (Pre/Post Natal Support Group) and Prenatal Wellness.

One to one comments include:

- Counsellors are “awesome”, “very supportive”, “super” and “very, very organized and professional.”
- Discussions “offered a lot of insight” and were “right on target.”
- The program is “inclusive”, “good [and] well rounded” and “includes much necessary information and knowledge”
- Participants also appreciated that service could be delivered “in their own home”.

Group comments include:

- Others stated that “the many resources offered have been invaluable.”
- Parenting groups are “a great learning environment” to share “ideas, feelings, meals and resources.” Participants enjoyed “meeting new people...it’s easy to talk about problems.”
- Group facilitators are “well coordinated”, “very interactive”, “respectful of opinions and views” and “very supportive when participants are having a tough time.”
- One participant would recommend the group to “anyone that I know- it’s great!”



Survey of Referrers

The survey was administered to current and past participants of Family Service, Youth Transitions and Lawrence Avenue Residence via telephone contact and hand delivery.

Referrers' ratings	Agree / Strongly Agree (n=21)
Response to referrals is prompt	100%
Screening/admission processes are effective	90%
Orientation meetings are useful	67%
Assessment processes are thorough	90%
Service planning is effective	95%
Case review meetings are well-organized	89%
Communication with The Bridge is good	100%
The Bridge staff have good knowledge and skills	100%
Interventions with youth/families effective	100%
Written status reports are useful	94%
Overall satisfaction with The Bridge services	100%

Comments include:

- Staff are “very knowledgeable” and have “excellent skill level!”
- Report writing is “professional” and of “good quality.”
- The agency “has always been able to provide...qualified staff in the areas requested.” Interventions include “excellent rapport building” and are “hands on and creative.”
- Agency strengths include “being able to re-initiate with an old counsellor” which “provides for stability and continuity of service”, “involvement with a variety of community connections” and having an “atmosphere of acceptance, energy and enthusiasm.”
- The Bridge Youth & Family Services has been described as “diverse [with] commitment to youth and families” including “in-home support, flexible hours, family/client centered [approach] and goal oriented services.”



Media Release

2008 Re-Accreditation

The Bridge Youth and Family Services is Accredited

The Bridge Youth and Family Services Society has received notification that it has been reaccredited by the Council on Accreditation (COA), according to an announcement made to Dennis Dandeneau, Executive Director of the organization, which is located at 1829 Chandler Street, Kelowna, BC.

COA Accreditation attests that an organization meets or exceeds the highest international standards of best practice and is delivering the best quality services to the community it serves. The Bridge Youth and Family Services Society is proud to join COA's Community of Excellence, which is comprised of more than 1,800 non-profit and public organizations that serve over 7 million children, youth and families in North America. In Canada there are just over 55 COA accredited agencies with over 40 of them in British Columbia. The Bridge Youth and Family Services is the only COA accredited organization in Kelowna.

"COA accreditation is both a significant achievement and a powerful promise. It means that we have met rigorous, internationally recognized standards of excellence in the quality of our services, as well as the quality of our staff and board of directors," says Dennis Dandeneau.

Founded in 1977, COA is an independent, not-for-profit organization. Based in New York City it is recognized as a leading accreditor of social service and behavioural health organizations in the world.

"We received an expedited accreditation which means that all areas of review were in compliance with the standards. We are very proud of this accomplishment as only one in five COA accredited organizations achieve this recognition. We want to thank all of our staff, the board of directors, service volunteers and our funders for their hard work. In particular, we wish to thank our main funder the Ministry of Children and Family Development not only for funding support but the confidence in our organization," said agency president Jason Ranchoux, acknowledging the important support provided by the provincial government.

The COA accreditation process involves a detailed review and analysis of an organization's administrative operations and service delivery against international standards of best practice. All programs contained within an organization for which COA has a service standard are subject to review as COA reviews and accredits the entire organization, not only specific programs.

"In short, COA accreditation is an objective, reliable and ongoing verification that we are an organization that you can trust and rely on. It is one more way that we are demonstrating our commitment to providing the community with the very best services," states Dandeneau.

The Bridge Youth and Family Services Society was incorporated in 1969 and has since been providing residential, family development, youth transition to adulthood and parent support and education services in the Central Okanagan. Formerly Okanagan Families Society, the organization devotes all its efforts to helping children and youth become healthy adults.



Auditors' Report

To the Members of The Bridge Youth & Family Services Society

We have audited the balance sheet of The Bridge Youth & Family Services Society (formerly Okanagan Families Society) as at March 31, 2008 and the statements of operations, changes in net assets and cash flows for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the society's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform an audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation.

In our opinion, these financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the society as at March 31, 2008 and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles. As required by the Society Act of British Columbia, we report that in our opinion, these principles have been applied on a basis consistent with that of the preceding year.

Kelowna, Canada - June 10, 2008

MacKay LLP
Chartered Accountants

Financial Report

Balance Sheet

March 31,	2008	2007
Assets		
Current		
Cash	\$ 179,759	\$ 119,537
Short-term investments	347,602	328,751
Accounts receivable	49,117	77,060
Accrued interest receivable	1,707	1,522
Prepaid expenses and deposits	28,009	29,639
	606,194	\$ 556,509
Property and Equipment	\$ 589,546	\$ 600,549
	\$ 1,195,740	\$ 1,157,058

Liabilities

Current		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 201,115	\$ 251,539
Deferred revenue	198,269	91,232
Current portion of long-term debt	19,512	18,289
	418,896	361,060
Long-term debt	222,952	242,538
	641,848	603,598

Net Assets

Accumulated operating deficit	(43,190)	(36,261)
Internally restricted	250,000	250,000
Invested in property and equipment	347,082	339,721
	553,892	533,460
	\$ 1,195,740	\$ 1,157,058

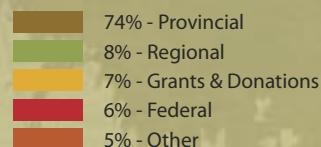
Jennifer Irons

Jennifer Irons - Treasurer

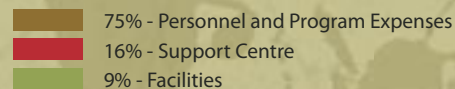
Jason Ranchoux

Jason Ranchoux - President

2007-08 Revenues \$2,431,546



2007-08 Expenses \$2,431,114



Board of Directors

From left to right: From left to right – Jason Ranchoux, B.A., President; Dennis Dandeneau, M.A., Executive Director; Tina Marten, B.A., Director; Robert Whitely, Ph.D., Vice President; Robert Levin, L.L.B., Director; Leona Pedosuk, C.M., B.S.W., Secretary; Ben Wasenius, B.A., Director

Absent

Jeff Klassen, B.A., FMA, Director
Jennifer Irons, C.A., Treasurer
Tia-Maria Hoeller, MFA, Director

Staff

From left to right:
Gillian Gibbs, Colin Smith,
Lisa Schechtel, Dave Daley
Lani Soar, Chris Rhodes,
Christa Russett, Erin Scott, Donna
Eliuk, Kim Rougeau, Shari Wilson,
Cheryl Longeway, Susan Foisy,
Greg Hofmann, Fia Andersson,
Danielle Venne, Katherine Barr,
Charles Young, Leigh MacLeod,
Dennis Dandeneau, Anima Anand

Absent

Amanda de Valk
Amanda Donaldson
Anita Gosche
Anne Barnes
Anne Elliott
Anne Monro
Brittany Mitchell
Cameron Bryan

Christine Piasta
Erin Robinson
Heather Yeats
Jennifer Scott
Joanne Boraski
Karen Johnson
Laura Schutz
Lia Wendt

Marianne MacPherson
Marla Benabdallah
Maryland Fiume
Melissa Finley
Michele Hucul
Nadine Edis
Nicole Connor
Nicole MacPherson

Rick Spencer
Sandra Wilcox
Sheryl Sargent
Tracey Begg
Tracy Spittal
Valerie Fichtner
Vicky Moore
Wayne Currier

Acknowledgements

Funding support for the activities of the society is essential to our efforts to enhance the lives of youth and families. The following organizations have contributed substantially to these efforts and, on behalf of the youth and families we serve we extend our warmest thanks.

- BC Association of Family Resource Programs
- BC Schizophrenia Society
- Central Okanagan Foundation
- Choices Market
- Federation of BC Youth in Care Network
- Interior Health Authority
- Invest in Kids National
- Kelowna General Hospital Foundation
- Kiwanis Club
- Literacy BC
- Ministry of Children and Family Development
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance
- Public Health Agency of Canada
- Service Canada
- Success by Six
- Water Play Inc.

We also wish to acknowledge the support of private donors. Your contribution makes it possible to greatly enhance our services to youth and families and allows us to show additional effort to our base offerings.

We are embedded in a caring service delivery environment and appreciate the collaboration and support of many allied community organizations. These organizations also work hard to strengthen the fabric of our community and we are extremely proud of our association with them.

- BC Association of Farmers Market
- Building Healthy Families Society
- Community Action Toward Children's Health Coalition
- City of Kelowna
- Clubhouse Child Care Centre
- Desert Sun Counselling
- Kelowna Child Care Society
- Kelowna Community Resources
- Kelowna Family Centre
- Kelowna Farmers and Crafters Market
- Kelowna Women's Resource Centre Society
- Ki-Low-Na Friendship Centre
- Knights of Columbus
- Lower Similkameen Community Services Society
- New Opportunities for Women of Canada Society
- North Okanagan Youth and Family Services
- Okanagan Boys and Girls Clubs
- Peachland Community Centre
- Penticton and District Community Resources Society
- Poverty and Homelessness Action Team of the Central Okanagan
- Princeton Child Care Society

- Public Health Nursing, Interior Health
- Regional District of the Central Okanagan
- School District No. 23
- University of British Columbia, Okanagan
- University of Victoria
- Westbank First Nation
- Westbank United Church
- Willow Park Church
- YMCA-YWCA

Service to community is supported by associations and organizations that offer a national or provincial perspective on the issues.

We are proud members of the following organizations and networks:

- BC Association of Family Resource Programs
- BC Association of Pregnancy Outreach Programs
- BC Community Action Program for Children Society
- BC Council for Families
- BC Non Profit Housing Association
- Child Welfare League of Canada
- Family Resource Programs of Canada
- Federation of Child and Family Services of BC
- United Community Services Co-op

Final acknowledgment goes to our members who support the effort of the society and to our volunteers and employees who daily work to help children and youth become healthy adults.

2008 Annual Report

THE BRIDGE

Youth & Family Services

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