



Community. Connection. Belonging.

# Out & About

*ICS's Spring/Summer 2025*



**inclusion**  
Chilliwack  
Society

**2025**  
Annual Report



# ICS iConnect Conference 2025: A Day of Connection and Inclusion

On May 21 and 22, ICS employees came together at Shxw̓a:y Village for the 2025 iConnect Conference. Held every two years, this special event is a chance for staff from all departments to connect, learn, and grow together.

This year’s theme, “Inclusion—More Than a Name,” encouraged us to reflect on what inclusion truly means in our work and community. We were honoured to welcome Karla Verschoor, Executive Director of Inclusion BC, as our keynote speaker. Her message was both powerful and inspiring.

Throughout the day, employees took part in interactive learning sessions, enjoyed lunch and refreshments, and had the chance to win exciting prizes. The energy was high, and the conversations were meaningful.

Thank you to everyone who attended and helped make the conference a success. We’re already looking forward to the next one!

The poster for the 2025 iConnect Conference features a blue and white color scheme. At the top, it reads "2025 iConnect Conference" in bold black text, followed by the theme "INCLUSION: More Than a Name" in large blue letters, and the subtitle "Establishing a culture of belonging" in a smaller, italicized font. The Inclusion Chilliwack Society logo is centered below the text. A circular portrait of Karla Verschoor is shown on the right, with her name and title "Keynote Speaker, Executive Director - Inclusion BC" next to it. The dates "Wed. May 21, 2025" and "Thurs. May 22, 2025" are listed on the left, with the time "8:30AM-4:30PM" and registration details "8:30am: Registration" and "9:00am: Start" on the right. A box on the left states "Employees attend one day only, scheduled by Manager". A "What you Can Expect:" section lists: "Interactive Learning", "Meet ICS employees from other departments", "Lunch &amp; Refreshments provided", and "Chance to win prizes". At the bottom, the conference location "Shxw̓a:y Village (44680 Schwegyey Rd)" is provided, along with a QR code and a note to "Link to Map (scan QR Code):" with an arrow pointing to the QR code.



# Celebrating Connection: From Workshop to Conference

What started as a simple idea to help people build personal connections has grown into something much bigger.

Outreach staff Angela Vermeer and Elishah Franckiewicz were developing a six-week Relationship Workshop, inspired by individuals at Outreach who wanted to explore relationships and connection. Around the same time, they received an email from ICS Executive Director Julie Unger, asking for ideas for the upcoming Inclusion BC Conference.

Angela and Elishah shared the opportunity with Meagan Siebert, a key contributor to the workshop’s design. Excited by the idea, the trio reviewed past conference themes and agreed that “consent and boundaries” was a topic that needed more attention.

They submitted a proposal—and within two weeks, it was accepted! Now, with the Relationship Workshop successfully completed, Angela, Elishah, and Meagan are taking what they’ve learned and turning it into a new presentation: Celebrating Autonomy: Navigating Consent and Boundaries in Relationships.

Stay tuned for more updates as they prepare to share their insights at the Inclusion BC Conference!

## About The Cover

Every June, Inclusion Chilliwack creates an Annual Report for our Annual General Meeting. The report highlights people, events, and accomplishments from the past year. A big thank you to Eddie and Nicole for being on the cover and showing the best of what ICS is all about.



# Inclusion Chilliwack Service Awards

Each year, ICS proudly hosts its Service Awards Event to recognize and celebrate the incredible dedication of our team members. This special occasion honors employees who have reached significant milestones in their careers with ICS —starting at 5 years of service and continuing every five years after that (10, 15, 20, 25, 30, and even 35 years!).

It's our way of saying thank you to those who have contributed their time, talent, and commitment to our organization. These milestones reflect not only longevity but also the lasting impact our employees make every day.

Congratulations to all our honorees—we're grateful for everything you do!



Shaaron Enright (middle) celebrates 35 years of service with Julie Unger and Meeghen Eaton



Wendy Rasmussen (middle) celebrates 35 years of service with Julie Unger and Kami Edwards



Donna-Lee Rasmussen (middle) celebrates 30 years of service with Julie Unger and Nicole Howard



Julie-Anne Gaines (middle) celebrates 25 years of service with Julie Unger and Jesse Lang

# Jumping into the New Year!

Nowruz Mubarak! Happy Persian New Year! Nowruz (the Iranian or Persian New Year) is celebrated on the spring equinox and this year landed on March 20th. In Persian culture, Nowruz celebrates renewal and prosperity – it is about balance and new beginnings. Nowruz is one of the world's oldest celebrated holidays; it has been celebrated for more than 3000 years, with the customs being passed down through generations to today. This year, Megan Rodger celebrated Nowruz with her HomeShare providers, Parvaneh and Ferydoun (Fred). Megan proudly shows visitors the Haft-Sin table at her home, an important Nowruz custom. The table has a special cloth and 7 items on it all starting with the letter "s" (in Persian). The items on the table carry special meaning: 1. Sabzeh (sprouted wheat, lentils, or barley) – Represents renewal and growth. 2. Samanu (sweet wheat pudding) – Symbolizes patience, strength, and abundance. 3. Senjed (dried oleaster fruit) – Represents love and wisdom. 4. Seer (garlic) – A symbol of health and protection from evil. 5. Seeb (apple) – Represents beauty and good health. 6. Serkeh (vinegar) – Symbolizes ageing, patience, and wisdom. 7. Sumac (crushed red berries) – Represents sunrise and the victory of light over darkness.

Alongside the seven "s" items, many people, including Parvaneh and Fred, add a mirror to reflect on the past year, painted eggs for fertility, goldfish for new life, and candles to symbolize light and happiness. Megan's favourite part of Nowruz was the party she went to the Wednesday before the New Year, where she jumped over a bonfire. Jumping the fire

symbolizes letting go of the past and entering the future with renewed energy, and partygoers recite a poem as they jump: "Sorkhi-ye to az man, zardi-ye man az to" (May your redness be mine, and my paleness be yours).



**JOIN IN ON THE FUN!**



**Shotgun  
Start  
@ 1pm**

**Golf**

**FORE Inclusion**

**2025**

**Hit a  
Hole-in-One  
& Win  
\$25,000!**

**CHARITY  
FUNDRAISER  
TOURNAMENT**

**4-Person  
Scramble  
"Best Ball"**

**SEPTEMBER 10**

**2025**



**Cultus Lake Golf Club  
4000 Columbia Valley Hwy**

**Scan to  
Register**



**Questions:  
604-792-7726**

# Golf Tournament

Tee Off for a Cause: Join the Golf FORE Inclusion 2025 Charity Tournament!

Get ready to swing into action for a great cause! The Golf FORE Inclusion 2025 charity fundraiser tournament is set to take place on September 10, 2025, at the beautiful Cultus Lake Golf Club.

This exciting event promises a day of fun, camaraderie, and community spirit, all in support of inclusion initiatives. Whether you're a seasoned golfer or just looking for a good time, this 4-person scramble "Best Ball" format ensures everyone can join in on the fun!

Event Details:

- Date: September 10, 2025
- Location: Cultus Lake Golf Club, 4000 Columbia Valley Hwy
- Shotgun Start: 1:00 PM
- Format: 4-Person Scramble "Best Ball"
- Questions? Call 604-792-7726
- Scan the QR code on the poster to register!

Don't miss this opportunity to enjoy a fantastic day on the green while supporting a meaningful cause. Rally your team, bring your best game, and help drive inclusion forward—one swing at a time!

# NEOC Update

A big thank you to all employees who participated in our 2024 Non-Profit Employer of Choice (NEOC) survey from November to January! Your input helped Inclusion Chilliwack Society achieve the NEOC Award once again - an honour we've proudly received since 2017.

While we celebrate this achievement, we're also committed to continuous improvement. This year, our HR Department and HR Committee will focus on making improvements in the following areas:

- Career advancement planning
- Employee feedback and involvement
- Coaching and mentorship
- Fair wages and benefits
- Mental health and stress support

Your voices matter, and together, we'll make ICS an even better place to work!



# ICS News



We're excited to welcome Carolyn Kuerbis as ICS's part-time Receptionist. She'll work Wednesdays at the Main Office and support Carrie Sandau as needed. Together, they'll manage reception duties. Carolyn will also reconcile Save-On-Foods and Hofstede's purchases for Accounting. Please join us in welcoming her to the team!

Please also welcome Stephanie Murray as Acting Manager for Bordas and Carleton.

ICS' Homeshare Service said good-bye to Tammy Son, their Admin Support team member, as she has gone on to other work endeavours. Thank you for your time with us, Tammy!

## CQI Reports

ICS has created a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) system for all our Service Areas. CQI reports use real data to guide decisions, so teams can fix problems early and improve services faster. These reports also help everyone stay informed, work together, and show who is responsible for making changes. Over time, this leads to better results, stronger

teamwork, and happier people. CQI also helps us track progress, learn from mistakes, and celebrate successes. It encourages a culture of learning and growth. In simple terms, CQI helps us work smarter, stay on track, and keep getting better at what we do every day—making sure we deliver the best possible service to the people who count on us.

## In Loving Memory of Danny

*A Special Tribute from the Parks Family:  
Ian, Farah, Karyssa, Aiden, Gavin & Rylan.*

Danny joined our family just before Christmas 2020. He arrived nervous but excited, ready to embrace a new chapter in his life. Before coming to us, Danny had faced many challenges without the supports he needed. When he entered Homeshare, he was initially overwhelmed by the care and resources available to him, but he soon found his place, especially after joining the Oasis program. Danny would come home beaming, eager to share stories about his day and the activities he took part in. He thrived in our busy household, quickly becoming known to all our neighbours with his outgoing nature, signature wave, and occasional wolf whistle. Ever the insatiable flirt,

Danny left a lasting impression on everyone he met. After years without one, Danny was delighted to have a TV again. He loved catching up on the latest shows and was amazed by Netflix, he couldn't believe you could watch anything you wanted at the touch of a button. He also became a football fan, especially enjoying Super Bowl, not so much for the game, but for the company and the snacks. As Danny faced increasing health challenges, he remained positive, always uplifted by a Tim Hortons coffee. He brought joy, laughter, and warmth into our lives and made a deep and lasting impact. Danny will be greatly missed and lovingly remembered.

# Chilliwack Access For All

We're happy to share that Chilliwack Access for All (formerly known as Chilliwack People First) has recently elected a new executive team! They are also getting ready for their second annual food donation drive in partnership with the Salvation Army—stay tuned for how you can help make a difference in our community.

In March, several of their members attended the BC People First conference, where they connected, learned, and shared ideas with other self-advocates from across the province. Are you interested in joining a welcoming and inclusive self-advocacy group? Reach out to us at our new email address: [chilliwackaccessforall@gmail.com](mailto:chilliwackaccessforall@gmail.com)

## Board Update

*ICS's Board of Directors is elected by the Membership every year at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).*

The Board held its regular meetings on the first Mondays of the month, reviewing reports from the Executive Director as well as annual Health & Safety and Human Resource Reports (for 2024), Compliance Reports and Risk Management Plans. The Finance Committee met in February to review the financial results to December 31st, in April to review the proposed annual budget and in turn reported back to the full board. The membership and nominating committee reviewed new member



Mike Robinson,  
ICS Board President

applications and met with family and community members interested in serving on the board. They presented their recommendations to the board, who have approved the slate of candidates presented at the AGM on June 3rd. The Property Planning Committee is reviewing plans for a major renovation and the development of Sunshine Drive property, as well as renovations for the Alexander Apartments. The board will elect its executive and appoint committees on June 23rd.

# CYS News



Inclusion Chilliwack's Child and Youth Services will be partnering with Canucks Autism Network (CAN) to put several pop-up events over the next few months. While planning is still in the works, the first event will be on July 24 at the Mathieson Centre. Events will include Movie Nights, Games Nights, and Craft & Connect Nights, with separate events for youth 13 to 18 and adults. Sign up will be required ahead of time through CAN and there will be a small charge to attend. The event is open to anyone who identifies as having support needs. More information will be posted on ShareVision in the coming weeks.

# Lifelong Learning!

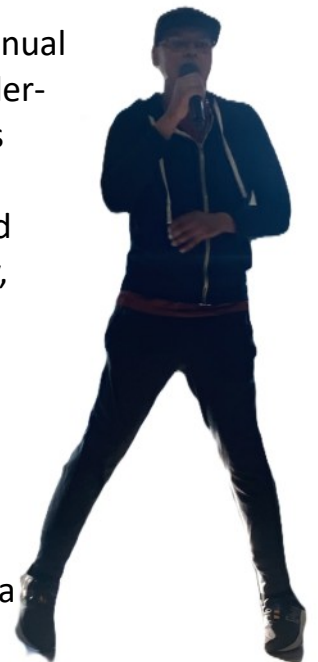
Lindsay Brown, a senior support worker at ICS Outreach services, has completed DSP I, II, and III and is now working on her Front Line Supervisor (FLS) certification. She shares that the E-badge academy training aligns well with ICS values and ethics. Lindsay believes the training enriches the lives of those they support and provides useful information for her daily work with individuals and staff. Lindsay says, "It has helped me in my day-to-day work by giving me information to refer to when supporting individuals as well as staff." She also emphasizes the importance of managing staff well, as it directly impacts the outcomes for those served. The training has boosted her confidence in supporting both individuals and front line staff. She says, "It has confirmed that what we are doing in outreach is for the betterment of the individuals." Lindsay aims to perform her job to the best of her ability and sees the certification as a step towards a bright future within ICS, with opportunities for advancement. She is committed to achieving her goals within the organization.



Lindsay has been working at ICS's Outreach Service Area since 2022

# A Night to Remember at Our AGM!

Thank you to everyone who joined us for Inclusion Chilliwack Society's Annual General Meeting on June 3rd at the Chilliwack Curling Club. It was a wonderful evening of connection, updates, and celebration. New Board Members elected are Chelsea Mueller, Chuck Stam and Tori Smith, who join Lexa Bergen, Karen Steegstra and Aaron Hale for another two year term. Board Members with one year left in the term are Shawn Palmer, Michelle Reilly, Mashal Zafar and David Houghting. A special highlight of the night was a fantastic performance by Young Trillium (right), who entertained and inspired us all. His talent and energy brought a joyful spirit to the event - thank you, Young Trillium! We also shared important updates about our services, celebrated community achievements, and enjoyed reconnecting with familiar faces. Your presence and support truly made the evening special. We appreciate everyone who attended to help make the evening a success.



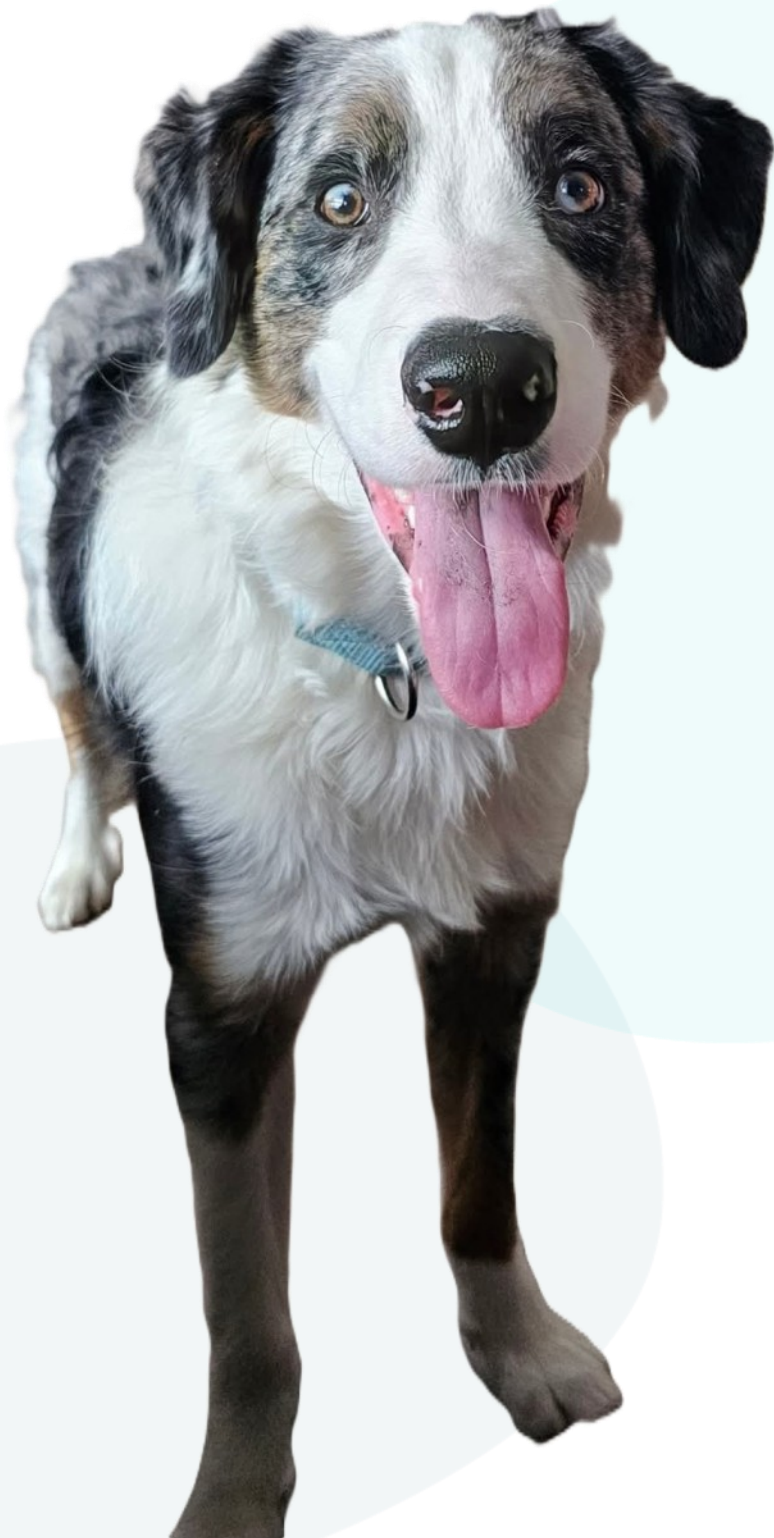
# Arthur & Audrey

Written by Audrey Cross (daughter of ICS employees):

“This is Arthur, an 11-month-old “border aussie” (border collie x Australian shepherd) puppy and the lovely pet of Audrey. Arthur was added to the family in July of 2024 as a birthday gift for Audrey.



## ICS Wonderful World of Pets



In the time he's lived with Audrey and her family, Arthur has grown very close with Judy, (the family's 9-year-old Pitbull) and the two spend most of the time playing together.

While Arthur is extremely smart, cute, and fun to be around he's certainly a menace. From jumping on counters, spilling water dishes, and messing spitefully in the house just because he can, Arthur is a busy pup and a lot of work.

He's a very friendly boy and wants to make friends with everyone! Especially the cat that lives with the family, which may be one-sided. Arthur loves hiking, rolling in stinky things, playing with his favorite toys, and most of all swimming.

He loves the water to the point as soon as he sees a puddle he's splashing around in it!

While he may be a troublemaker, a bit stinky, and definitely noisy, Arthur's family can't help but love the little guy's unique and fun personality.”



# By the Numbers

As of June 1, 2025

**inclusion**  
Chilliwack  
Society

# of  
**Individuals**  
Supported:

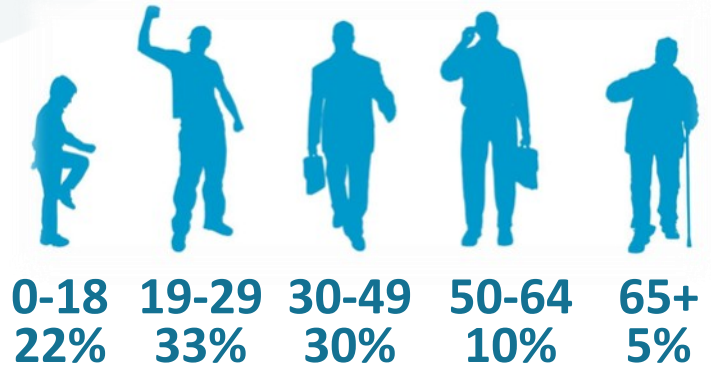
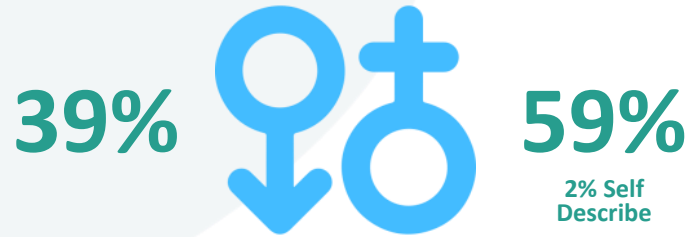
**567** ●●●●●●●●

# of  
**Employees**  
Working:

**396** ●●●●

# of  
**Caregivers**  
Active:

**132** ●●



## Serving Communities in:

- Chilliwack
- Sardis
- Hope
- Yarrow
- Agassiz
- Harrison
- Deroche
- Greendale
- Cultus Lake
- Sunshine Valley





**inclusion**  
Chilliwack  
Society

is **100%**  
**Non-Profit**

**11**

**Services**

**58**

**Service/Program  
Options**

### *Online Presence:*



**2265 Followers**



**643 Followers**



**883 Followers**



**20283 Views**

## ICS Reports

### Measuring Up!

A progress update from an official ICS Report:

### HR Report Goals:

- Enhance Performance Evaluation and Career Advancement Discussions
- Strengthen Career and Performance Planning
- Expand Employee Wellness Initiatives
- Increase Completion Rates for ICS CORE Trainings and Training Evaluations
- Enhance Employee Onboarding & Orientation
- Improve the Orientation Process for all employees
- Improve the New Hire Onboarding Process
- Reduce Employee Turnover and Improve Retention



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# ICS STAR Award!

Congratulations to Owen Cross (left) who received the latest STAR Award from ICS Associate Director, Michelle Gower. The STAR Award was created to recognize employees for excellence in their job as a CSCL employee.

“Owen is a quick learner, he’s passionate about his work and the people he supports, and he cares about the team he works with very much. He took on a lot of responsibility in a short amount of time and has been thriving and excelling in his role. Owen is a kind and approachable person. He deserves this recognition (but would never ask for it) and he will do many great things this year with the individuals he works with and in helping to create a healthy work environment for the team.”



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# Rising STAR Award!

Congratulations to Chad Charest (left) who received the latest Rising STAR Award from ICS Manager, Jasmine Ashe. The Rising STAR Award was created to recognize NEW employees for excellence in their new job.

“Chad played an integral role in the development and implementation of the SHIFTS scheduling system. Chad is adaptable and willing to try multiple options to ensure the best, most complete final product was offered to ICS employees. Chad always makes himself available and was extremely flexible (demonstrating his dedication to this project and making it a priority). It has been a Pleasure to work alongside Chad on this project.”



# ICS Events...



## BINGO Wednesdays!

**Did you know about ZOOM BINGO?**

Come join us for BINGO every Wednesday, hosted by the gang at Vanmar! Email them for more details!



## ICS Career Fairs

**January to October 2025**

ICS will be participating in Career Fairs hosted by UFV and Sto:lo Nation. We will also be hosting our own too!

## Inclusive Employers

## Inclusive Employer Luncheon

**September 2025**

ICS's Employment Services is proud to host our annual signature Inclusive Employer Recognition event



## Sunshine Community Garden

**2025 Growing Season**

Want to have your own garden for next year? Sign up now to reserve your spot!



## iConnect Conference

**May 21 and 22 2025**

Held every two years, this special event is a chance for staff from all departments to connect, learn, and grow together



## NAOSH Week/COR Month

**May - June 2025**

Safety and Health Week is an annual ICS event that focuses on keeping our worksites accident-free!



## Annual General Meeting

**June 2025**

ICS hosted our Annual General Meeting (AGM) in June 2025.

# Team Vedder Running Strong!

Some of our amazing team members from Vedder recently took part in the 2025 RUN UP for Down Syndrome - and this year was extra special as it marked the event's 30th anniversary! They gathered at Swangard Stadium to join hundreds of others in the annual run/walk, showing our support for individuals with Down syndrome and their families. It was a day full of energy, smiles, and community spirit. Thanks to everyone's generosity, they were able to raise funds to support this important cause. The event was a great success, and we're proud to have been part of such a meaningful celebration.

Way to go, Team Vedder!



## Inclusion Chilliwack Society

Supporting people with diverse abilities, and their families since 1954.

9353 Mary Street  
Chilliwack, BC  
Phone 604-792-7726  
Email [info@cscl.org](mailto:info@cscl.org)  
Web [www.cscl.org](http://www.cscl.org)

*"Our Vision is for a community that values and includes everyone. A centre of excellence that inspires a culture of community, connection and belonging."*



Follow us on  
Social Media:



Proud members of  
[Inclusion BC](#) and  
[Inclusion Canada](#)

## Your Voice!

Many thanks to Julie Unger, Natalie Karam, Dan Celella, Danielle Cross, Richelle Marino, and Elishah Franckiewicz for their contributions to this edition.

And, of course, to Eddie and Nicole for gracing our cover!

Do you have something to say? Let's hear from you! Please contact Jeff Gilbank at [jeff.gilbank@cscl.org](mailto:jeff.gilbank@cscl.org) for your comments, editorials, and/or newsletter ideas.