inclusion Chilliwack Society

Community. Connection. Belonging.

Out & About

ICS Summer 2026 Newsletter

Hope’s Magical Vacation

FEATURE STORY

A Dream Come True at Disneyland!

A lifelong dream becomes reality through the support of caregivers, outreach staff, and determination.

Hope, Angel, and Megan enjoying a magical day at Disneyland.

Our feature story celebrates an unforgettable Disneyland adventure for three women from the ICS Homeshare department: Hope Eastwood, Angel King, and Megan Rodgers.

For Hope, this trip was especially meaningful. She first visited Disneyland as a child and had dreamed of returning ever since. With the support of her caregiver, outreach staff, and representative, that dream finally came true.

The group spent a magical week at the Pixar Hotel on the Disneyland grounds, accompanied by caregivers Kaitlyn and Kelsey.

DISNEY HIGHLIGHTS

FAVORITE RIDE
Mickey & Minnie's Runaway Railway

FAVORITE CHARACTER
Minnie Mouse

WALKING DISTANCE
12 kilometers each day

FAVORITE TREAT
A giant dill pickle!

Before the trip, Hope worked with her outreach staff member, Ellen, to design a custom Minnie Mouse skirt, which she was excited to wear throughout her adventure.

According to Kelsey, Hope was in her element. Every time she spotted a shop or kiosk selling Disney headbands, she excitedly pointed and exclaimed, "Look at this one!" followed by lots of giggles.

Hope purchased a different Disney ear headband for each day of the trip. They are now proudly displayed on her bedroom wall, bringing her joy every day.

She was thrilled to meet Minnie and Mickey, as well as Ariel, Sleeping Beauty, Tigger, and Winnie the Pooh. She even made sure to name every Disney character she spotted throughout the park.

> *"A giant dill pickle!"*
> – Hope, when asked about her favourite Disney treat

The group packed plenty into their week, enjoying the parade, fireworks, shopping, delicious food, and averaging an impressive 12 kilometers of walking each day. Hope and Megan spent most of their time exploring the park hand in hand. When asked about her favorite Disney treat, Hope didn't hesitate: "A giant dill pickle!"

Reflecting on the experience, Hope simply said, "It was so fun."
The day after returning home, she was already found repacking her suitcase, ready to head back to Disneyland. She can't wait for her next adventure!

ICS EXCEL Winner

We are excited to congratulate Julia Um on receiving the Excel Award for exemplary performance by a manager. Julia began her journey at ICS eight years ago as a direct support professional in staff supported homes. She then moved into a manager role for Topaz and Sapphire homes. In 2025, Julia stepped in as manager for Tel Lalem home during a time of crisis. She provided strong leadership, guided her team through difficult circumstances, and advocated tirelessly for an individual while they were in the hospital. During a staff shortage, Julia stepped in without hesitation to provide direct support. Her compassion, professionalism, and dedication have made a lasting impact. Eight staff members nominated Julia for this well-deserved recognition. Julia shared that she was very surprised to receive the Excel Award, but her recognition for Team Leadership made it an easy decision!
Congratulations, Julia!

About The Cover

Hope and her friends enjoyed a memorable Disneyland trip, fulfilling Hope's lifelong dream of returning. Supported by caregivers and staff, Hope fully embraced the experience - designing a Minnie Mouse skirt, collecting Disney headbands, and meeting favourite characters. The group spent a joyful, activity-filled week exploring the park, enjoying rides, food, and events. Back home, Hope continues to cherish the memories and is already excitedly planning her next magical Disney adventure.

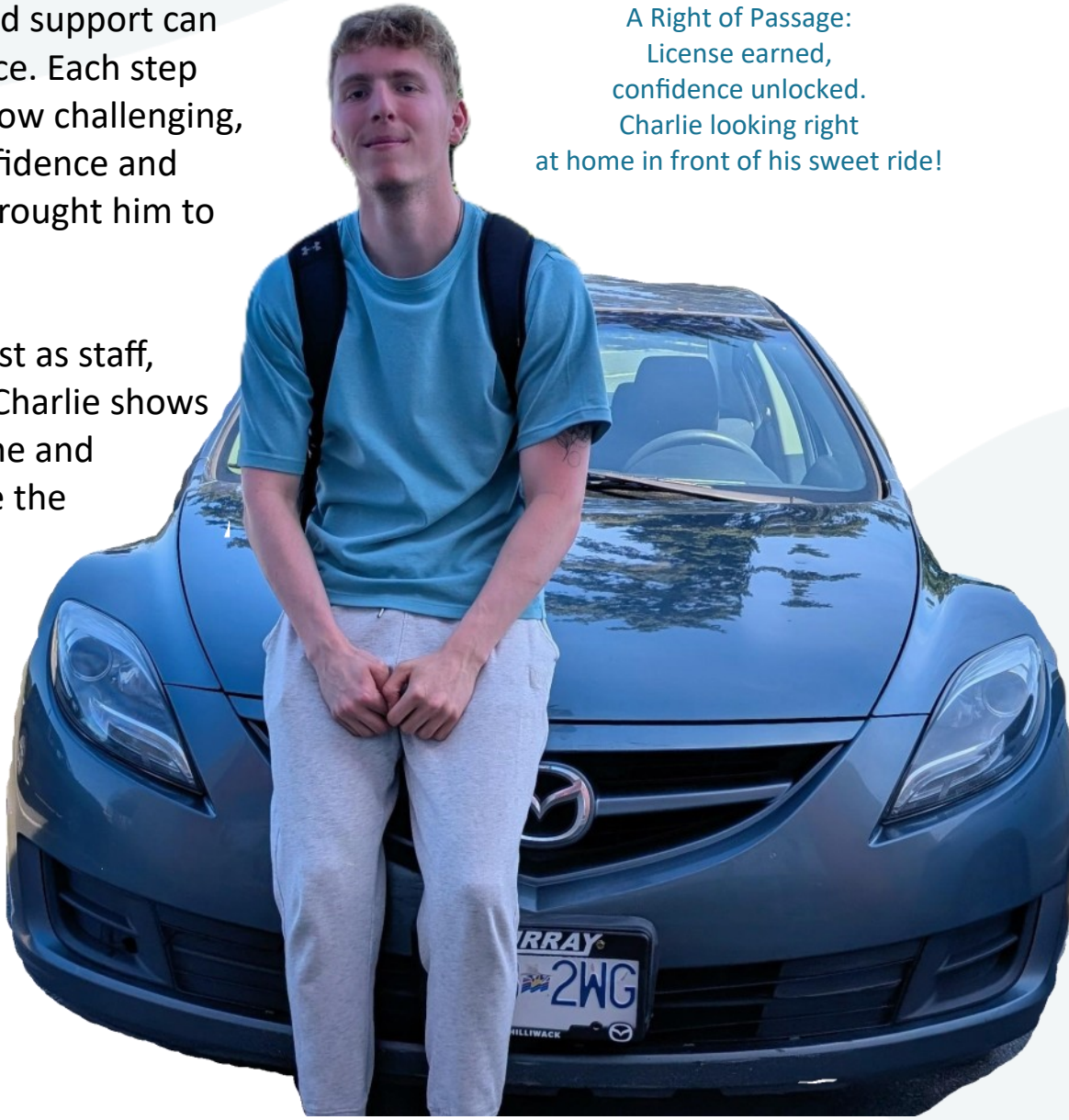
A Right of Passage!

Congratulations to Charlie Betts on earning his driver's license after hard work, setbacks, and not giving up. Charlie would like to thank all who believed in him, including his parents, driving instructors, and his girlfriend.

Gaining his driver's license means greater independence, and a full-circle moment. At six years of age, Charlie started receiving support at CYS, later moving on to BRIDGE & LIFE. He is now driving back to CYS this summer as a Child Care Assistant, giving back to young children and inspiring others to believe in themselves and keep going.

Charlie's journey is a powerful reminder that perseverance and support can make all the difference. Each step forward, no matter how challenging, helped build the confidence and determination that brought him to this milestone.

Now returning not just as staff, but as a role model, Charlie shows that growth takes time and setbacks don't define the outcome. With his positive attitude and lived experience, he is ready to make a meaningful impact and encourage others to keep reaching for their goals.



A Right of Passage:
License earned,
confidence unlocked.
Charlie looking right
at home in front of his sweet ride!

Ashley and Deidra

ICS Managers Ashley Cordsen (right) and Deidra Innes (left) have begun the Justice Institute of BC's Inclusive Leadership Certificate Program, supported through the B.C. Employer Training Grant. They say the program has already introduced new concepts and frameworks for navigating difficult situations and encouraged them to look at challenges through a different lens. The learning is helping them build new tools they can apply in their leadership roles and everyday lives. Their goal is to strengthen their leadership skills, grow their confidence in guiding teams, and continue developing as effective, professional leaders. Both are excited to keep learning, try new approaches, and bring their new knowledge back to support the people and teams they work with at ICS.

CYS Excellence!

Dan is pictured here in the centre, with some of his ICS-CYS team members (Alayna, Dan C. Nelly, Katrina, Nicole and Julia)

Dan Bibby was honoured with the Chilliwack Child & Youth Committee's "Every Door is the Right Door – Individual Excellence" award, recognizing his outstanding commitment to children and youth in our community. As ICS's Associate Director of Child & Youth Services, Dan is known for his strong collaboration and leadership, building meaningful connections across service providers. Before joining ICS in 2021, Dan spent over 30 years with MCFD, many of those as Chilliwack's Community Service Manager. He continues to give back through numerous volunteer roles, including serving as President of the Chilliwack Youth Health Centre Board and supporting initiatives through the Rotary Club of Chilliwack – Mt. Cheam. We are incredibly proud of you, Dan, and grateful for all you do!

Summer'Scapes Off to a Fun Start!

Summer'Scapes is off to a fun and fantastic start! Our campers have been enjoying a variety of fun and engaging activities while building friendships and creating lasting memories.

Over the past week, campers have been participating in arts and crafts, games, outdoor activities, and community outings. It has been wonderful to see new friendships forming and campers supporting one another in a welcoming and inclusive environment.

We are also excited to be gearing up for our first major field trip of the summer to Science World! Campers are looking forward to exploring interactive exhibits, discovering new things, and sharing this exciting adventure together.

Summer'Scapes is in full swing and summer camper, Graysen Weatherford, is seeing things from a whole new perspective!

A highlight of Summer Scapes is the opportunity for campers to try new experiences, build confidence, and develop important social and life skills. Whether working together on a creative project, cheering each other on during a game, or exploring the community, campers are demonstrating teamwork, kindness, and enthusiasm every day. With many more activities, outings, and special events still to come, the excitement is just beginning. We look forward to another memorable summer filled with learning, laughter, and fun for everyone involved.

Good Mentoring

ICS launched the Peer Mentorship Program last year to better support new employees during training and onboarding. Since then, the program has grown to include 37 mentors across the organization, with almost every program now having at least one mentor.

ICS HR Director, Natalie Karam, says “We recognized there was a gap in the training experience and saw the need for stronger support to help improve staff retention. Since the program began, new employees have shared positive feedback, saying they feel welcomed, supported, and more confident in their roles.”

Sam Karim from the Bordas program has played a key role in strengthening the onboarding experience for new staff. As lead mentor, he introduced an orientation binder that programs can customize to create a more consistent and standardized training experience. Mentors also meet quarterly to share ideas, connect, and continue building on the success of the program.

NADSP E-Badges

All 2026 seats in the NADSP E-Badge Academy at ICS have been filled, reflecting a strong commitment to professional growth and excellence across the organization. Employees are actively building their skills as Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) and Frontline Supervisors (FLS). So far this year, ICS proudly recognizes 5 DSP-I credentials, 3 DSP-II credentials, 5 DSP-III credentials, and 5 FLS credentials earned. These achievements highlight the dedication of our team to continuous learning and to delivering high-quality support to the individuals we serve. Participation in the academy continues to strengthen leadership, enhance person-centred practices, and promote professional excellence across services. The enthusiasm shown by employees demonstrates a shared commitment to lifelong learning and to creating meaningful outcomes for the people and families supported by ICS.

ICS News

ICS is pleased to welcome Elaine Brown to the Admin Support Team. Elaine joins as one of our two receptionists at the Main Office, working opposite shifts with Carolyn.

CSSEA has announced that employers have ratified the 2025–2029 Collective Agreements with overwhelming support. In Community Living Services, 96.3% voted in favour of the new agreement.

The agreement includes general wage increases of 3% per year and provides a stable framework to support employees and services across the sector over the four years of the agreement until March 31, 2029.

CARF Survey Results

CARF Accreditation Success! Inclusion Chilliwack Society has earned a Three-Year CARF Accreditation through May 2029, recognizing our commitment to quality, accountability, and continuous improvement. Surveyors praised our teams, dedicated staff, person-centred services, strong community partnerships, and culture of quality. This achievement reflects the passion and hard work of employees, volunteers, families, and community partners across ICS.

ICS STAR Award

The STAR Award was created to recognize employees for excellence in their job as an ICS employee.

Congratulations to Faye Allen from SSH who received the latest STAR Award.
Faye's nominators wrote:

Faye consistently goes above and beyond in the way she supports and uplifts her team. She has a great ability to work with people from all aspects of life while always remaining respectful, approachable, and kind. She creates a positive environment where staff feel supported and encouraged to do their best.
Her calm and caring attitude improves communication and teamwork every day.
She is the kind of staff member who makes both the team and the individuals we support feel safe, valued, and cared for. Faye deserves recognition for the positive impact she has on the team every day. Her kindness, professionalism, patience, and ability to work respectfully with different personalities help create a supportive and positive workplace environment. She truly deserves recognition for the positive impact she has on both the team and the individuals she supports every single day.

Chilliwack Access For All

Chilliwack Access for All (CAFA) would like to thank everyone at ICS for their generous donations to our Salvation Army Donation Drive. It was a big success with over 1,500 items collected. CAFA is taking a well-deserved summer off but will be back full of energy in September in time to participate in the Golf Fore Inclusion Fundraiser. Members will also be presenting a talk about self-advocacy at ICS's Annual General Meeting on September 15. So many things to look forward to! Contact us by emailing: chilliwackaccessforall@gmail.com

Board Update

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

Lexa Bergen
ICS Board President

The Spring Meetings for ICS Board of Directors were held on April 13, May 4 and June 15. The board's attention was focused on annual budget review, CARF Accreditation preparation and survey participation, and review of audited financial statements with ICS's auditor, KPMG. The board completed their policy review and approved several annual reports including the organization's Risk Register/Risk Management Plan, Compliance Report, Summary of Complaints and Accessibility Plan. They reviewed the quarterly updates to the Organization Improvement Plan (OIP) and progress towards Strategic Plan goals. These reports all help to inform the board as they carry out their responsibilities to direct and protect the organization. Preparing for the fall Annual General Meeting (AGM), the board has identified a slate of board nominees to be presented to the membership. AGM agenda, annual report, audited financial statements and board nominations will be sent out to ICS members this summer in preparation for the September 15th AGM.

CYS News

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Our CYS Summer Youth Employment Bootcamp is now full! Running from July 8 to August 28, this program was created in response to families seeking employment preparation for youth aged 16-19 as they transition from school to work. It also builds on the success of our REACH pilot program delivered in partnership with SD33.

Led by our Youth Employment team, 10 participants will explore career options and discover their right fit. Through structured sessions (Tuesday –Thursday, 9am–3pm) and Monday check-ins, youth will build confidence, independence, and workplace skills through social development, bus training, and job tours, supporting a successful start to their employment journey.

Living Life LOUDLY!

Getting to know
Rebecca Van Agteren

By Ceara Jensen

Hi, it's me, Ceara!

I'm back and excited to introduce you to Rebecca Van Agteren for my latest newsletter article.

Rebecca is guaranteed to brighten your mood with her silly energy. She is a kind and funny 24-year-old woman. She enjoys her time at Early Risers, and people around her can see a real, positive change. She is growing in confidence and doing things that are big and bold. Rebecca has a dream that will hopefully become a reality: to have a job where the people are, at the Cineplex movie theatre.

Rebecca enjoys summer and has been going to Zajac Camp, where she has been making memories since she was a little girl.

> *"I want to have a job where the people are, at the Cineplex movie theatre."*

REBECCA'S FAVORITES

- Loves when it's raining
- Enjoys an interesting drink combination of Coke and root beer
- Loves storybooks about kindness and hugs

THREE FUN FACTS ABOUT REBECCA:

1. She loves when it's raining so she doesn't have to go for a walk.
2. She likes an interesting drink combination of Coke and root beer together.
3. She loves storybooks about kindness and hugs.

FAST FACTS	
Favourite weather	Rain
Favourite drink	Coke + Root Beer
Favourite activity	Zajac Camp
Dream job	Cineplex Movie Theatre

You'll likely spot Rebecca wearing something bright and fun to match her personality. Overall, I highly recommend that if you see her around town, you say hello to her. Keep an eye out for Rebecca around town—*her energy, kindness, and enthusiasm make every conversation a little brighter.*

Meet Bailey!

ICS Wonderful World of Pets

In February, Ruth from ICS's Homeshare Department traveled to Alberta to bring home her newest family member, a Bernese Mountain Dog puppy named Bailey. Shortly after arriving home, Bailey spent two weeks visiting the ICS home office while she began her training. During this time, she quickly became a favourite among staff, brightening everyone's day with her sweet personality and adorable puppy antics. Now five months old, Bailey is growing like a weed! Ruth describes her as sweet, goofy, clumsy, and calm. She can often be found lying on her back in the most hilarious positions or stretched out on her stomach with all four feet pointed behind her. Her favourite place is to be close to her family. She bonded instantly with Ruth and her family and has a remarkable gift for connecting with people. Ruth says Bailey is incredibly in tune with emotions. Wherever they go, community members often stop to say hello - especially those who may be having a difficult day. Bailey is always ready to share affection, comfort, and plenty of tail wags. When Bailey turns one, Ruth plans to enroll her as a volunteer support dog, with hopes of visiting a seniors' home and bringing joy to those who need it most. With her gentle nature and loving heart, Bailey is already making a positive impact wherever she goes.

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By the Numbers

As of July 1, 2026

 # of

Individuals

Supported:

604

 # of

Employees

Working:

387

 # of

Caregivers

Active:

178

39% **59%**

2% Self Describe

0-18	19-29	30-49	50-64	65+
22%	33%	30%	10%	5%

Serving Communities in:

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

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is 100%

Non-Profit

11

Services

58

Service/Program Options

Online Presence:

2356 Followers

705 Followers

928 Followers

22817 Views

ICS Reports

Measuring Up!

A short example from an official ICS Report:

CARF Survey

It is recommended that the organization implement written procedures regarding critical incidents that also include timely debriefings conducted following critical incidents.

Health and safety inspections are not being completed on overnight shifts. Comprehensive health and safety self-inspections should be conducted at least semi-annually on each shift and result in a written report that identifies the areas inspected, recommendations for areas needing improvement, and actions taken to respond to the recommendations.

Psychological Safety

Making Psychological Safety Part of Our Culture at ICS

At Inclusion Chilliwack, we've been continuing the conversation about psychological safety, but less as a concept, and more as something we experience in the small, everyday moments at work. In a recent Combined Meeting, leadership and management teams took some time to sit with a fairly simple question: what actually helps people feel comfortable speaking up, asking questions, or raising concerns in their day-to-day work?

What came out of that wasn't anything new or surprising. In a lot of ways, it just confirmed what many people already know. Psychological safety doesn't really show up in big statements or one-time efforts - it shows up in how we interact with each other, moment by moment. When people talked about times when things felt open and workable, they didn't use big language. They talked about what they noticed. Someone taking a moment to listen instead of jumping in. Someone explaining the "why" behind a decision. A colleague asking a genuine question rather than moving straight to fixing something. Someone following through later on, not just in the moment. Those moments are easy to overlook, but they matter. They send a message that it's okay to keep talking. At the same time, people also recognized how easily that can shift. Conversations can close down just as quickly and often without anyone meaning for that to happen. It might be responding a bit too quickly, trying to solve something right away, or focusing on explaining instead of first understanding what's being said. Most of the time, that comes from a good place. One idea that's been useful as we continue this work is simply the idea of noticing. Noticing how we respond. Noticing what seems to open things up, and what might unintentionally close things down. It's not about getting it right or changing everything at once. It's more about becoming a bit more aware of how we show up in those everyday interactions.

What it means

Psychological safety is a team condition where people feel safe to share ideas, disagree respectfully, and admit mistakes—without fear of embarrassment or punishment.

That awareness is often where things start to shift.

Over time, it's those small, consistent moments that build trust. And trust is what makes it easier for people to be honest, to ask questions, and to work through challenges together.

As we continue this work at ICS, the focus stays pretty grounded. Psychological safety isn't something we introduce once and check off. It shows up in relationships, in conversations, and in the way we choose to respond day to day.

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JOIN IN ON THE FUN!

Golf FORE Inclusion 2026

CHARITY FUNDRAISER TOURNAMENT

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

4-Person Scramble "Best Ball"

Shotgun Start @ 1pm

Scan to Register

SEPTEMBER 2, 2026

For questions:

604-792-7726

Cultus Lake Golf
4000 Columbia Valley Hwy

Cultus Lake Golf Club
4000 Columbia Valley Hwy

Rising Star Spotlight: Owen Bosch

Congratulations to Owen Bosch for being recognized with a Rising Star Award for taking the initiative to contribute. Since joining the Outreach team, Owen has made a remarkable impact through his enthusiasm, professionalism, and commitment to learning. He quickly demonstrated confidence in supporting individuals with complex needs, including successfully de-escalating challenging situations using a calm, respectful, person-centred approach. Owen is also helping create new opportunities for inclusion and community connection. By leading the weekly Dungeons & Dragons group and mentoring a participant to facilitate sessions independently, he has helped inspire expansion into a public community program. Owen's adaptability, positive attitude, and genuine care make him a valued member of the ICS team and a deserving recipient of this recognition (the award recognizes new employees who demonstrate initiative, a positive attitude, teamwork, and a commitment to learning).

Inclusion Chilliwack Society

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

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Web www.inclusionchilliwack.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."

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Follow us on Social Media:

Proud members of **Inclusion BC** and **Inclusion Canada**

Your Voice!

Many thanks to Amanda Lord, Ceara Jensen, Nicole Patton, Kim Ramsay, Craig Yendall, Julie Unger, and Natalie Karam for their contributions to this edition.

And, of course, to Hope Eastwood for gracing our cover!

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