


2023

ANNUAL REPORT



CONNEXUS

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Message from the Board Chair

This past year has had a few less challenges than the preceding years. I am pleased to say that our dedicated management staff and team members continue to provide essential supports and services to the communities we serve. Once again, a job well done.

For over forty years, Connexus has been a bridge to hope and potential for our communities. Providing over twenty-five innovative programs and services designed to help people at every stage of life. We are constantly evolving to meet the needs of our communities. Our team plays a vital role in helping people thrive, right in their own community.

ParkView Place is fully occupied and provides twenty independent apartments for seniors. Once fully operational, Aurora Home will provide eight shared living spaces for older adults with dementia, filling a giant gap in senior services in our community.

Construction continues on a new 36-unit seniors housing complex for Fort St. James.

We continue to provide services and support for those who live in and around Vanderhoof, Fort St James and Fraser Lake. We are proud to be able to say we are truly a regional service provider.

Connexus continues to be fully accredited through the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) having undergone re-accreditation in September 2022. This accreditation is a testament to the ongoing professionalism of our organization and the team strives to provide the very best service to our clients.

Finally, on behalf of the Board, I would like to thank our Executive Director Tyrell Arnold and his team for another amazing year.

Tom Clement
Board Chair

Message from the

Executive Director

As I contemplate writing this, my final annual report, I am taken back to the opportunities, challenges, and successes, I have seen in my role as the executive director at Connexus for the past twelve years. As I begin a new chapter in my life, leaving Connexus in the summer of 2023, I am filled with gratitude for my involvement with such an amazing team and organization.


This past year has again been filled with so many opportunities to live our vision and mission to be a bridge to hope and potential. This year our team of dedicated staff have helped and supported hundreds of individuals and families. We are honoured to be part of their lives, to provide support, guidance, healing and growth, from infant development consultations and early years groups and resources to mental health counselling and family support programming. This year we supported over 130 individuals, families and seniors through safe and affordable housing.

In June 2022 we broke ground on a beautiful new 36-unit housing resource in Fort St. James for seniors. This project began with a land blessing ceremony that forged the foundation for this new home to be a haven and refuge for those who enter its doors. In honouring the seniors that will live there, we have partnered with the the Carrier Linguistic Society by Nak`azdhi Whut`en to develop its name: Neguni Ghunli-Un or Knowledge Keepers. Completion of this home is expected in the fall of 2023 with residents moving in around the end of 2023.

In concluding my remarks and my time at Connexus I want to thank my team, colleagues and mentors. My time with Connexus has been extraordinary; I will always cherish my time here. The friendships and partnerships that were formed to the hard work and dedication of hundreds that have come through these doors during my tenure. Thank you! This organization is in good hands with so many passionate and dedicated team members.

My friends, Adieu!

Tyrell Arnold, M.Ed., R.C.C.
Executive Director
Connexus



"Be strong, be fearless, be beautiful.
And believe that anything is possible
when you have the right people
there to support you."

Misty Copeland

Connexus – A bridge to hope and potential



For over forty years, we've been a bridge to hope and potential for community. We've grown to provide dozens of innovative programs and services to help people at every stage of life. And, we're always evolving to meet community needs. We play a vital role in helping people thrive, right here in their own community. We're heading into the next forty years with a new name and renewed passion and potential.



Our purpose – *the reason we exist*

We empower individuals to take healthy steps to improve well-being

Our vision – *the world we aspire to create*
Connected, growing and healthy communities

Our mission – *how we will achieve our vision*

We foster independence, confidence and wellness in individuals and families



Our values – *the beliefs that guide our actions*

Empowering individuals to take healthy steps to improve well-being

We respect and honour the unique abilities and diversity of all people

Ensure services are accessible to individuals throughout their lifespan

We are creative in our approach and strive for excellence in all we do

We are present and accountable at all levels of the organization



“One day you will look back and see that all along you were blooming.”

Morgan Harper Nichols



Early Childhood Services

Early Years services in our 3 communities of Vanderhoof, Fraser Lake and Fort St. James have been very busy this year. We had 723 adults and 1100 children attend our groups during the year!

We were very excited to have a practicum student work with the team for a short period, helping with an Indigenous focus. The activities they offered our Early Years Centre were counting in Carrier, reading books by local Indigenous authors, crafts and snacks from the Indigenous heritage.

We participated in the Farmers Market in Vanderhoof and Fraser Lake and had many families attend and learn about the Early Years Services. We will be continuing in Vanderhoof in 2023 and starting in Fort St. James. We are looking forward to reaching more families!

One fantastic group we continue to offer is the Infant Massage group. It was a success and will continue to be run as we have 2 staff recently trained in the program. Some of the other programming offered was Wild Wednesday in the summer with beautiful weather, gym time which was enjoyed by many littles, and we had end of summer celebration BBQ's. We started a Spring-Cleaning Clothing Exchange for parents as well and it has been great! Many parents appreciate this as it makes life a bit easier.

This year was exciting with COVID restrictions lifting in the communities. We had Kindergarten readiness days in each community, which all the families enjoyed attending in person. During COVID we had ran it individually so had limited families attend, but now with restrictions being lifted we had the following join

us in this event: Northwest Child Development Centre, School District 91, Carrier Sekani Family Services, YMCA, and the Vanderhoof Public Library involved. The Fort St. James Kindergarten readiness day will be in June 2023.

We continue to have lots of community support for our Early Years programming. We look forward to another successful year promoting community connections and services for children and families.

"Gives my kids time to be creative or let out energy, especially in the winter". "Staff has been wonderful, and I love that snacks are offered."

"I attended the play group at the church for the first time and Desiree made the experience worthwhile, the community coming together for the kids".

"All the equipment was set up safely, was clean, and age appropriate. The staff was friendly and engaged well with the children. What I like most about this program is that it is available at no cost. It is a great program to develop gross and fine motor skills as well as social skills."

"These groups were great! We are from out of town, so they are helpful."

"I come to the Gym Time every week because it is such a great program"

Early Years Program Participants





Child, Youth & Family Services

Clinical Director's Report

Clinical Supervision is professional support and guidance for clinical staff at Connexus. Supervision is available to offer reflection, guidance and training. When recruiting staff for clinical roles, many ask if there is the level of support available at Connexus. We are happy to say we do have this available. When meeting with staff, they use the time to help them offer quality service to clients and community members. We also meet as a clinical team to offer support to one another, as everyone has their own expertise.

Training and Cultural Competency is important to Connexus. We do our best to onboard with consistency, offer as many in-services as possible, and be open minded to support cultural awareness, sensitivity, and competency. We are working toward reconciliation and change through educating, supporting traditional initiatives and events, and changing what we do within our practices.

Community Connections and Engagement is strong for Connexus. We participate in various tables to engage with community partners and respond to community needs. When there is a gap or a need in one of the communities we serve, we work together to help respond to the needs. A perfect example is the level of anxiety we saw in youth after the pandemic. We worked hard at offering anxiety groups in community and schools. Another example is grief and loss that our community members experience. We are offering more and more grief and loss groups to help those through challenging times. We partner with the local Hospice Society, as we are the program coordinators for this program. Together, we can work at offering healing for our community members.

Clinical Services and Family Services

Throughout the past year, the Connexus Clinical Team was very engaged and active in the communities of Vanderhoof, Fraser Lake and Fort St. James. We continue to make adaptations to best serve our communities and continue to offer virtual and in-person options for services. The Clinical team works tirelessly through the year giving direct one to one support and group programming to children, youth, and families.

Child and Youth Mental Health (CYMH), Mental Health Support (MHS), and Sexual Abuse Intervention Program (SAIP)

programs help individuals and families navigate services to promote positive mental health and ensure they can thrive and reach their full potential. These programs are remarkably busy as there is an increased need for services. In the past year, the counselling programs received 115 new referrals requesting support for children and youth.

The Clinical team meets monthly with BC Children's hospital (BCCH) to help children, youth, and families get the specialized services they need. Referrals to BCCH have increased this year and we appreciate the diagnosis, guidance, and consultation from Psychiatry at BCCH. There were 73 referrals for psychiatric assessment and consult. Of these 73 referrals there were 4 referrals from Fort St. James, 22 referrals from Fraser Lake, and 47 referrals from Vanderhoof. Further, 55 referrals were for follow-up appointments and 18 referrals were for new assessments.

Family Connections Program staff support in-person, virtual and telephone visits to maintain family connections between children/youth and their parents/caregivers. The Family Connections staff engage with clients promptly upon receiving referrals through MCFD and supported 72 clients and 170 family members in transportation and supervised visits in 2022.

Family Support and Family Preservation Program saw an increase in referrals in 2022 which speaks to the community need. Towards the end of 2022, the Family Support and Preservation program staff teamed up to develop a Family Virtual drop in where families can call, email, or come into the office to have questions answered, access resources or be provided support on how to access services. We are excited to see this unique service be expanded in the three communities we serve.





Child, Youth & Family Services cont.

The PEACE (Prevention, Education, Advocacy, Counselling and Education) Program is a free, confidential program across BC for children and youth aged 3 – 18 years who have experienced domestic or family violence. The PEACE Counsellor works with individual clients and non-offending parents or caregivers to support their emotional and psychological needs. Another aim of this program is to develop an understanding of violence against women and girls. PEACE Counsellors also engage in community awareness through interactive presentations at local schools. Presentations are in the theme of Violence Is Preventable.

The Children and Youth Care (CYC) and Children and Youth with Special Needs (CYSN) programs experienced many successes this year. The CYC program served 55 children and youth individually and 75 in groups settings. The CYSN program served 12 individuals and 26 in group settings. There were 8 groups throughout the year with 101 children/youth involved. The topics for groups ranged from crafts, cooking, games, and gardening to emotional skills, social skills and grief and loss. Through one-on-one meetings, staff have been teaching children and youth individually about social skills, anxiety, how to deal with anger in positive ways, communication, school difficulties and family relationships.

Feedback from youth is positive; stating they enjoyed the group and are able to better understand their feelings.

"I liked the whole thing."

"I liked everything we did!"

"I liked everything; I got cooking skills!"

"I won't forget to wash my hands."

"To tie long hair back because I have long hair."

Group Program Participants



Program Highlight

Over the past couple of years Connexus has established a Wellness Drop-In at Nechako Valley Secondary School (NVSS) and at Fort St. James Secondary School (FSJSS) in partnership with Carrier Sekani Family Services (CSFS). This year we successfully established a Wellness Drop-In at Fraser Lake Elementary-Secondary School (FLESS) in partnership with Carrier Sekani Family Services. 56 youth attended the Wellness Drop-In during the year. Youth were provided resources, help with filling out referrals and given information on mental health. 15 youth attended the drop-in at FSJSS, and 41 youth attended the drop-in at NVSS.





Adult Services

Community Living Programs

The year 2022/23 can be summarized as a year of growth and opportunity for our Community Living Programs. Through these programs, Connexus provides support to adults who are funded through Community Living BC to achieve their goals. We supported 26 individuals through our Community-Based Programs last year and are going into the new year supporting 34 individuals! This growth meant exciting opportunities for the Community Living team, such as welcoming two new full-time Support Workers and moving to a new space to better serve the needs of the individuals in the programs. The bottom floor of Riverside Place is now a space for individuals in the Community Living Programs to come together, build friendships, and learn new skills. We are grateful to the residents and staff at Riverside (“our landlords”), for welcoming us so warmly.

One of the highlights this year was the Art Show at the library, hosted by the Craft Squad during the month of October. The individuals of the Craft Squad created a variety of arts and crafts in celebration of Community Inclusion month and worked with the Community Living staff to make the Art Show accessible and inclusive. This included the consideration of the height on which works were displayed, a video alternative to written artist bios to accommodate different levels of literacy, and meaningful engagement with the community. Through the hard work of the Craft Squad, Community Living staff, and the generosity of the community, the craft program is now fully funded through proceeds from craft sales and donations.

The Community Living Programs include a 24-hour Staffed Residential Program. The residents living at our Valley View residence thoughtfully celebrate different occasions together and support each other through life’s ups and downs. It is truly wonderful to see the bond between the residents and the staff at

the home. The residents contribute to keeping the streets of Vanderhoof clean through a grant awarded by the District of Vanderhoof. They enjoy trying out new things, such as golf, and continue to rely on old favourites such as walks at the park and meeting their friends for coffee in the community. We are thoroughly excited to have received funding for renovations of the home and cannot wait to report on the results next year!

Victim Service Program supports victims and witnesses of crime and trauma in the greater Fort St. James, Vanderhoof and Fraser Lake area. The workers are based out of local RCMP detachments in Fort St. James, Vanderhoof, and Fraser Lake. Two of the three positions remained vacant for many months in 2022. While successful applicants underwent a lengthy and comprehensive RCMP clearance process before they could begin work. We are happy to report all three communities now have Victim Service Workers!

Homeless Outreach Program supports adults (19+ yrs) who require immediate outreach assistance on a case-by-case basis for a short term. Supports include shelter, food security, and start up items for housing. The dominant type of urgent assistance during 2022 was food security for the 72 clients accessing the program throughout the year and often more than once a month.

Homeless Prevention Program supports adult (19+ yrs) identified at-risk groups facing homelessness on a case-by-case basis. Supports include rental supplements and support services to help individuals access rental housing in the private (non—subsidized) housing market. During 2022, the program provided 112 incidences of rental supplement support to 49 clients within the Connexus service area.





Housing Services

Fort St. James Housing

Pioneer Place

Having taken on ownership of Pioneer Place in 2022, we have continued to maintain 100% occupancy with 12 low end of market independent living units for seniors. This older building is in good shape and is well maintained. Proposed capital projects include converting the aged-out gas furnaces with a more efficient centralized system, updating the common areas, and repairing flashing and eaves troughing.

Pioneer Lodge

On the same site at Pioneer Place, Pioneer Lodge offers two excellent Assisted Living units in collaboration with Northern Health Authority. Sourcing appropriate meals and services for these A.I. tenants has been challenging. The current financial model with only two residents is not ideal. Connexus is working with BC Housing and NHA to look at our options.

Westside Court

This BC Housing complex with 16 rent-geared-to-income, (RGI), units remain 100% occupied with low-income seniors and families. The buildings are in excellent condition with only minor repairs needed. The fencing may need to be replaced in the coming years. As well, we are pursuing a Meals on Wheels kitchen in the common building. Rezoning is complete and we hope to have renovations complete and staff making meals before the end of 2023.

Neghuni Ghunli-un, (Knowledge Keepers)

This is a new jewel of Fort St James, and construction is on pace to be ready for occupancy as early as October 2023. Neghuni Ghunli-un, (Nay-gun-ee Gun-lee-un), is 36 units of independent senior living right next to the brand-new hospital, with many units having fabulous views of Stuart Lake and the mountains beyond. There is a mix of Rent Geared to Income, Deep Subsidy, and Market rents available. Construction has largely remained on pace and on budget. Of the 36 available units, we currently have 23 applicants, and we are confident that the building will be full by year's end.

Up Next

Community Housing is in constant flux, as funding models evolve and community needs change. Connexus is well suited to meet those changes and remain flexible to them. The Connexus Housing Committee is working toward streamlining and improving our processes in all the communities we serve. We look forward to getting better as we grow, while looking to opportunities to provide even more housing to the region.

Riverside Place

Fun things have been happening at Riverside Place over this past year. For example, the building interior was given a fresh look with new paint, brightening up the corridors. We raised funds to build a new patio overlooking the park and this project was completed in the spring of 2023. During the year we were pleased to welcome so many familiar faces back into the facility following three long years of limited access due to the pandemic. The seniors have really enjoyed all the new activities as a result.

Riverglen Town Houses

These 34 family units are a huge asset to the community of Vanderhoof. Although there has been some turnover this year, all the units remain filled with several families on our waitlist. Like most older buildings, Riverglen is scheduled to receive some much-needed upgrades and we are hoping to see this work happen in 2023.

Parkview Place & Aurora Home

What an incredible year we have had. Although we have been met with some staffing challenges, we still have so much to be proud of. Since Parkview Place opened its doors last April, we have supported 23 local seniors in finding permanent affordable housing and began supporting 11 local seniors through our Aurora Home Day Program. Despite these positive numbers, we continue to maintain a waitlist which currently has 9 individuals wanting to access seniors' independent living.

Parkview Place offers two floors of seniors' independent living suites, 20 suites located on the second and third floors, as well as a unique Dementia Care program located on the first floor, called Aurora Home.

Currently operating 4 days per week, the Aurora Home Day Program offers seniors a place to gather, build relationships, develop a support network and, most importantly, belong.

Parkview Place is uniquely positioned to act as a bridge between seniors independent living and supportive community-based day services. It offers a unique program engaging both current tenants, as well as, members of the community.



Housing Services cont.

Seniors are engaged to work together to support each other through various social and recreational activities targeting cognition, memory enhancement, independence, social engagement and physical activity. This collaboration has resulted in creating a community network within the building where seniors are supported and partner with other tenants and participants to tackle any issues as a community. Our program has opened doors of communication and engaged seniors in a meaningful way.

This year we have incorporated many new programs into Aurora Home. Some of these include a building wide intergenerational reading program with local grade 2 students, a hydroponic gardening program; in which we sell our plants at the local farmers market and use proceeds to fund day trips, Tai Chi virtual exercise program, Community bus tours and various seasonal activities from holiday celebrations to Mardi Gras.

As we transition towards having 8 individuals, with mild to moderate Dementia, move into Aurora Home, we look forward to show casing and sharing our wonderful Parkview Place community.

Program Spotlight

Neghuni Ghunli-un *"Knowledge Keepers"*

This beautiful new 36-unit seniors housing complex is nestled in beautiful Fort St. James and overlooks the historic Stuart Lake. Construction began in July 2022 and is expected to be complete in the fall of 2023. This facility will provide much needed affordable housing for seniors 55+ in Fort St. James and surrounding Indigenous communities.

Connexus Housing

Neghuni Ghunli-un “Knowledge Keepers” Seniors Housing

36 Units

Riverglen Family Housing

34 Units

Riverside Place Seniors Housing

32 Units

Parkview Place Seniors Housing

20 Units

Westside Court Family & Seniors Housing

16 Units

Pioneer Place Seniors Housing

12 Units

Aurora Home Seniors Housing

8 Units

Pioneer Lodge Seniors Housing

2 Units



Leadership & Donors

LEADERSHIP

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Tom Clement, Board Chair
- Ann McCormick, Vice-Chair
- Dalphena Snively, Secretary-Treasurer
- John Alderliesten, Director
- Kevin Crook, Director
- Carolyn Himmelright, Director
- Eric Scheffers, Director

MANAGEMENT TEAM

- Tyrell Arnold, Executive Director
- Donna O’Bee, Finance and Administration Manager
- Rachel Pritchard, Early Years Manager
- Paula Wylie, Clinical Director
- Kris Nielsen, Family Services Manager
- Marleen Ozel, Community Living Manager
- Sandy Ferguson, Social Housing Manager
- Julie Lidstone, Parkview Place Manager
- Alana Brown, Human Resources Manager
- Amrit Toor, Clinical Services Manager

Connexus Community Resources includes 100 employees and 25 volunteers.

DONORS

The support we received from you changes lives. We are honoured for the continued support we receive from our funders, sponsors and donors; our work with individuals and families is made possible through your support.

GOVERNMENT

- Ministry of Children and Family Development
- Community Living BC
- BC Housing
- Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
- Public Health Agency of Canada
- District of Vanderhoof
- District of Fort St. James
- Village of Fraser Lake
- Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako
- Northern Health Authority

COMMUNITY & CORPORATE (\$500+)

- Prince George Community Foundation
- United Way of Northern BC
- United Way of the Lower Mainland
- Dana Annab
- Federation of Community Social Services of BC
- The Society of BC Transition Houses
- Artemis Gold
- Royal Bank of Canada
- Sinkut Radiator Service
- Northern Development

COMMUNITY & CORPORATE (\$500+) cont.

- Canadian Women’s Foundation
- WesTech Diesel
- Bonnie Elliot
- Alice Roche
- Little Z Mechanics Ltd.
- Westline Ford
- Home Works Painting
- Hill Top Automotive
- Nechako Redi Mix
- Shotgun
- M4
- AMS
- Maverick Enterprise
- Four Rivers CO-OP
- Ace Building
- Sinclair Group
- Canfor Platau
- Canfor
- Norma Fritche
- Elks Club
- Blue Valley

Connexus received numerous donations under \$500 as well and we want to thank all those who provided in-kind and financial support.



FINANCES

Below are summarized financial statements which have been compiled from our audited financial statements. These summarized financial statements do not contain all the related disclosures required by Canadian generally accepted accounting principles. Readers are cautioned that these statements may not be appropriate for their purposes. For more information on the entity's financial position, results of operations and cash flows, reference should be made to the related complete financial statements.

Summary of Audited Statement of Operations

REVENUE	March 31, 2023	March 31, 2022
Grants		
Ministry of Children & Family Development	2,211,370	2,226,153
Community Living British Columbia	1,577,474	1,353,875
Northern Health Authority	705,111	188,099
BC Housing	581,494	468,284
Public Health Agency of Canada	359,655	359,655
Ministry of Justice	337,491	359,856
Rental Income	1,059,843	800,542
Other Revenue	375,122	359,856
Forgiveness of debt	77,450	124,575
Amortization of deferred capital contributions	63,786	172,232
	7,348,796	6,390,762
Flow through funds	(305,540)	(353,966)
Funding recoverable	(388,455)	(222,232)
	6,654,801	5,814,564
EXPENSES		
Salaries & Benefits	4,509,335	4,116,997
Housing & Facilities	1,074,609	785,374
Administration & Program Support	484,245	411,198
Amortization	383,187	261,917
Total Expenses	6,451,376	5,575,486
Other Items	(6,364)	(2,712)
EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES	197,061	236,366

Summary of Audited Statement of Financial Position

ASSETS	March 31, 2023	March 31, 2022
Current		
Cash	955,958	438,961
Accounts receivable & accruals	480,135	448,317
GST receivable	103,646	169,400
Prepaid expenses & deposits	42,245	42,640
	1,581,984	1,099,318
Tangible capital & other long-term assets	21,418,228	18,378,641
Total Assets	23,000,212	19,477,959
LIABILITIES	March 31, 2023	March 31, 2022
Current		
Accounts payable & accruals	2,035,206	2,179,486
Deferred revenue	201,673	178,849
Current portion of long-term debt	204,943	127,608
	2,441,822	2,485,943
Term Loans due on demand	313,623	332,602
	2,755,445	2,818,545
Long-Term debt	5,213,974	1,066,874
Deferred contributions related to tangible capital assets	1,726,404	1,638,832
Forgivable loans	7,683,735	666,598
Advances from BC Housing	-	7,904,317
	17,379,558	14,095,166
Net Assets		
Unrestricted	426,402	520,547
Invested in Tangible Capital Assets	4,221,676	3,836,282
Internally Restricted	579,907	559,413
Externally Restricted Replacement Reserve	392,669	466,551
	5,620,654	5,382,793
	23,000,212	19,477,959



Connexus Community Resources

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COMMUNITY RESOURCES