



providence farm
A THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITY

Annual Report
2021/22



Our Mission

Trusting in Providence, and building upon the faith-centered heritage of our founding members, we are committed to serving needs and to fostering talents of people in the Cowichan Valley, especially of those not easily accepted elsewhere, through our therapeutic community at Providence Farm.

Our focus shall be upon the renewal of body and spirit and upon people caring for the soil, and the soil, nurturing the people.

It is with gratitude that we express our heartfelt thanks to the Sisters for entrusting the mission of Providence to us, to our founders for building a brilliant foundation from which we strive to build good work upon, and to all those who came before us and walked gently upon this land.

Our Vision

Providence Farm is a leader in demonstrating the therapeutic benefits of nature and community, especially for those who face challenges and barriers in their lives.

Together we steward the earth and care for each other, creating opportunities for renewal and learning in safe and supportive spaces by working with the land.

“One touch of nature makes the whole world kin”
~ *William Shakespeare*



A note from Our Participants

Participant driven focus groups have facilitated the shaping of recognition programming this year. Acknowledging our participants as critical stakeholders in Providence Farm, programs have wisely harnessed participant voices and ideas to influence the spirit of programming and ensure that we navigate forward with genuineness and sensitivity.

Participants wish to share this community workshopped message with 2021-22 Providence supporters:

Dear friends,

It is our ability to love and accept one another unconditionally that creates that special feeling when guests visit the Farm.

We have created a safe place that celebrates kindness and compassion. We offer to others and ourselves the invitation to be “better”. Our legacy will be FARMILY

We are individuals with brain injuries, developmental diversity, neurodivergence, physical disabilities, mental health concerns, diagnoses, and age-related illnesses – our individual uniqueness lends to Providence the beauty of kaleidoscope lenses, experiences, and perspectives.

We are capable, resilient, accomplished, confident, strong, intuitive, genuine, joyful, welcoming, enthusiastic, determined, passionate, patient, tolerant, kind, brave, generous, curious, wise, creative, playful, empathic, optimistic, forgiving, and courageous...

Friendly, **A**ccepting, **R**espectful, **M**indful, **I**nclusive, **L**oving **Y** – we are **FARMILY**.

“The world needs a sense of worth, and it will achieve it only
by its people feeling worthwhile”
~ Fred Rogers



Our Board of Directors

Board Chair: Noelle Philip
Vice Chair: Brenda Kuecks
Treasurer: Danielle Killam
Secretary: Bev Sunderman

Directors: Ron Bogdonov James Kuecks
 Roxie Eremko Linda Love
 Daniel Graham Kristen Robinson
 Gerry Hof Marie Rowland

Dear Members,

Once again it is my pleasure to report on the progress the Board has made on the implementation of the strategic plan since the last Annual Report.

There has been a dedicated focus on the development of a Forest Management plan. We have contracted with forestry experts to provide us with an inventory of the forest... what needs to be protected and preserved and where improvements and safety measures need to be taken. As a Board we agree that we want to preserve the old growth characteristics of the forest and understand that some harvesting may also be part of the plan. We look forward to engaging with First Nations (another pillar in the strategic plan) and the community on finalizing and then implementing the plan.

As I reported last year, we purchased 2 properties on Donnay Drive across from VIPCA property in order to protect infrastructure which includes sewer pipes and access to the dam at the reservoir which needs regular maintenance. I am very pleased to report that easements are now in place to protect this infrastructure. Our plan is now to sell these properties.

The Board has endeavoured to educate themselves about First Nations history and culture with a view to move forward with this pillar of the strategic plan. In addition, there is ongoing work to strengthen our fundraising efforts with a robust, comprehensive fundraising strategy. And, much work has been done in the area of agriculture as the Board makes plans and decisions about how to make the best, most vibrant and profitable use of our agricultural lands.

VIPCA acknowledges that VIPCA is located on the traditional and unceded territory of Cowichan First Nations. We thank Cowichan tribes, the Sisters of St Ann's, our founders, staff, volunteers, past board members, all of our members and the community at large for your continued trust and support.

It has been my privilege to serve as your VIPCA Board Chair since September 2019. I thank the management team and the Board for your unwavering support during my term as Chair. My term on the Board expires this year so effective at the AGM I will be stepping off the Board and out of the Chair role.

On behalf of the Board,
Noelle Philip, Board Chair



A note from Our Management

2021 -2022 invited the Management Team to embrace the spirit of collaboration. Adapting to the absence of an Executive Director, Farm managers Leah (Finance Manager), Stephanie (Program Manager), and Conrad (Site Manager) formed a capable trifecta warmly known as the “Head”, the “Heart” and the “Hands”.

Last winter, we huddled together as a team to echo the changing of the seasons, and paid homage to the land as we reevaluated our responsibilities.

Taking the time to solidify harmonious relationship, we leaned into trust and a shared common goal of promoting the best interests of Providence Farm.

Entrusted with the privilege of harnessing the priceless talents and skills of our Providence Community, we shared leadership as a team and set forth with inspired determination to ensure the wellbeing of our agency and our people.

Together, we continue to foster an inclusive environment that encourages creative release and cultivates a positive work culture that celebrates joy and productivity.

It is with deep gratitude and reflection that the management team recognizes that this year’s successes were made possible through the very essence of collaborative spirit. We share sincere thanks with our capable team, trusted Board members, valued volunteers, community partners and friends,

Leah Boisvert, Stephanie Kok, & Conrad Murphy

“Collaboration is the essence of life.
The wind, bees and flowers work together, to spread the pollen”
~ Amit Ray





Our Community

VIPCA acknowledges that Providence Farm is located on the traditional and unceded territory of Cowichan First Nations.

From the rich soil of Providence Farm's intended legacy, "Our focus shall be upon renewing the body and spirit and upon caring for the soil, and soil nurturing the people," our souls continue to be nourished; serving the needs and fostering the talents of the people of the Cowichan Valley. Especially those who are not easily accepted elsewhere.

It is with this mission in mind that Providence Farm commits to cultivating the sustainable values of harmonious relationships and inclusion with respected Cowichan tribes' neighbors, and friends. VIPCA is learning what it means to hold radical space for historical and generational trauma. We wish to listen with humility and offer sincere gratitude to those who choose to journey alongside us as teachers.

Envisioning a future that promotes healing and trust, we move forward with open hearts.

Providence Farm looks forward to tending diverse community gardens that embrace and celebrate current therapeutic programs, and stewardship of the 400 acres entrusted to our care. We are deeply motivated to create a safe place of healing for all who have come before and for those who will come after.

Welcome to Providence Farm!



Our Therapeutic Programming

Never underestimate the resilience gifted to us through nature, community, trust, friendship, and love.

Our 2021-22 Providence Family courageously met another unprecedented year with unprecedented strength, optimism, and perseverance. Together, grounded in nature, we navigated the curious seasons of C19, and together we defied the construct of social distancing; embracing each other and the uncertainty; allowing the experience to draw us closer than ever and inspire laser focus on the trajectory of programing.

In 2022, seniors in our Garden Club program proudly celebrated a return to full capacity. With confidence our seniors team cultivated and ensured the highest levels of quality care and safety for our seniors to rejoin us and benefit from an intentional “best day ever” philosophy. We are witness to the beauty and resilience of our seniors as their gardens bloom in “technicolor,” as their infectious laughter fills our hearts, and as their tremendous lifetime’s accomplishments lend us continued inspiration.

This year brought the addition of five highly credentialed and talented individuals to come alongside our legendary Program Support team who amongst them offer our newcomers the wealth of over 50 years’ experience and historical working knowledge of the Farm. Together we have seamlessly blended a newly inspired appreciation for diagnosis and clinical perspectives with the foundation of Horticultural and Nature Based Practices to create best practice.



Programming is now centralized around a continuum that promotes the interconnectivity of our core curriculums (Farm Stand / Animal Care, Greenhouse / Nature Based Activity, and Expressive Eco Arts), participants contribute meaningfully to a larger purpose, as is evidenced in our newly conceived “Farmily to Table” Kitchen Program. From the seeds participants thoughtfully nurtured to harvest, to the culinary experience of creating a nutritious meal, to the Farmily community that gathers at lunch to enjoy the fruits of our collective “labor” - we know “full hearts and bellies”.

Providence Farm programming continues to evolve as we harness our potential to realize the significance of achieving accreditation. We will be exploring the benefits of Positive Psychology over the next year as we implement programming interventions designed to deconstruct the negative impacts of C19.

Gratitude:

Programs wishes to offer our sincere appreciation and deepest gratitude to our participants – our chosen FARMILY. Thank you for lending to us your courage, for inspiring our direction and purpose, and for reminding us of the healing power of unconditional love.

At Providence Farm, we Plant Hope, Harvest Joy!

Stephanie Kok
Program Manager

“The oak fought the wind and was broken, the willow bent when it must, and survived”
~ Robert Jordan



Our Finance and Fund Development

The last few years have taught us there is no such thing as ‘normal’ anymore. The 2021/22 fiscal year continued as such and proved to be a hybrid year of welcoming back some pre-pandemic activities while other interests were still put on hold. This contributed to mixed patterns of financial impact in our operating budget. During the Summer of 2021, Providence Farm was able to allow the return of a limited number of rental groups that aligned with Covid protocols contributing to increased income from rentals. The Fall/Winter season, on the other hand, proved to be a different landscape in terms of Covid restrictions and we were unable to hold our annual fundraiser: the Winter Craft Fair, which led to decreased revenue from fundraising activities.

When creating the operational budget for the 2021/22 fiscal year the finance office was able to better predict the most likely Covid scenarios and subsequently reflect this reality in the budget. This resulted in minimal budget impacts as covid restrictions changed further. Thankfully, outside support funding was secured to make up for Covid related impacts and revenue impacts were kept minimal - keeping the overall budget stable and ending the year at break even point.

Through the ups and downs of financial management through the second fiscal year of Covid, one piece of the puzzle that has never waivered has been the support we have seen from our donors and donor organizations. It is through the steady and continual contributions from members of our community that Providence Farm has been able to confidently continue providing programs and services for some of the most vulnerable members of our community. For this we are incredibly grateful!

Leah Boisvert
Finance and Fund Development Manager

Financial Statements are available to members upon request.

“Life isn’t about waiting for the storm to pass,
it’s about learning to dance in the rain.”
~Vivian Greene



Rent Space from us



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Share In Kind Donations



Make a Donation



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Volunteer

15

ways

YOU CAN SUPPORT PROVIDENCE FARM



Become a Member



Shop at our Thrift Store



Buy from our Farm Stand



Attend our Events



Book your Events at The Farm



Serve on our Board of Directors



Share your Community Connections



Help Us Help Others

providence farm
A THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITY





Our Site & Agriculture

To maintain one hundred thousand square feet of ageing buildings and four hundred acres of land requires a great deal of teamwork and organization. With the help of long-term volunteers and dedicated site and agricultural staff we have done just that while managing to improve and add to farm infrastructure. One of the primary goals in the 2021-2022 fiscal year was to improve the accessibility of Providence Farm to further strive for inclusion among our participants. Projects such as the construction of wheelchair accessible walkways and upgrading lighting have increased accessible space for programmatic use and beautified Providence Farm. Repair of critical infrastructure such as the sanitary pump, front entryway steps and water-main has ensured our capacity to provide safe, accessible space to serve our community.

Garlic represents an ideal crop for Providence Farm as it is conducive to participant engagement, garners a high price and is in demand locally for sale. The focus of our efforts in the past year have been on improving agricultural methods in order to produce the highest quality and quantity of garlic while maintaining the health of our soil. The implementation of methodologies such as winter cover cropping, hang drying garlic, crop rotation and soil organic matter recruitment are examples of such efforts.

We look forward to building on our momentum and growing together in the coming year!

Conrad Murphy
Site Manager

"I took a walk in the woods and came out taller than the trees"
~Henry David Thoreau



2021-2022 Site Projects:

- Renovated white farmhouse for caretaker use. Included asbestos remediation of attic space and installation of new heating systems.
- Built a concrete wheelchair accessible walkway to new chicken coop
- Purchased drone for conducting site surveys and roof inspections. Site assistant completed basic drone pilot certification.
- Painted main floor hallway and board room of Providence House
- Replaced front entryway staircase and upgraded steps to composite
- Renovated Segues space into what is now know as Eco Arts
- Replaced power pole in front of the building and added lighting
- Purchased log splitter and used it to create 6 cords of firewood from fallen trees to be sold locally in spring
- Replaced rail system for the sanitary pump system. Purchased back-up pump for future installation.
- Sheep Barn upgrades: built wheelchair accessible concrete pad, upgraded lighting to LED and installed motion lighting around the barn.
- Excavated and Repaired CTRA water main
- Replaced fire alarm panel in Providence main house
- Plumbed gas line to header house to feed new radiant heater
- Sixteen windows were professionally restored and upgraded to have double pane glass and superior weather stripping in Providence House
- B.C. wildfire, in association with Kohutzun forestry service, worked for 8 days removing brush from around buildings to protect farm infrastructure from wildfire
- Repaired compressor on walk in freezer

2021-2022 Agriculture:

- Harvested and sold 1300 pounds of red Russian garlic
- Held annual U-pick pumpkin event
- Planted 16,000 cloves of garlic for 2022 crop
- Agriculture Assistant, Cassandra, took horticulture course on growing potatoes
- Planted 400 sieglinde potatoes for summer harvest
- Planted cover crop of clover and winter pea in 2021 garlic field
- All Site/Agriculture staff underwent tractor and ATV training
- Engaged in a research project with the University of British Columbia to study the effects of biochar on soil
- Purchased a colony of Honeybees for spring



“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.”
~Anne Frank

Our Team

(to 31 March, 2022)

Our staff work diligently in their areas of expertise, going above and beyond to ensure the achievement of cohesiveness and supportive elements in our supportive community. This dedicated group of talented and trained individuals includes a group of relief staff, supported staff, caretakers, seasonal, part-time and full time staff.

Executive Director: Tracy Parow

Finance Manager: Leah Boisvert

Program Manager: Stephanie Kok

Site Manager: Conrad Murphy

Administrative Assistant: Maria Hiles

Executive Director Assistant: Elizabeth Evans

Finance & Program Assistant: Farrah Todosichuk

Event and Volunteer Coordinator: Densie Gerhardt

Horticulture Coordinator: Michelle Harrison

Nature Based Activities Coordinator: Pete Stacey

Nutrition Program Coordinator: Peter Bowen

Peer Mentors: Bill Baker, Carmen Baker & Steve Bull

Program Support Workers: Kristin Arneson, Muriel Brakefield, Jordan Cain,

Mystiah Compton, Adrian Fletcher, Tim Fraser, Charlotte Hewson, Kori

Kelloway, Sharon Rumley, Emily Schuurman, Polly Stokes, Bev Thompson

& Beth Whalen

Relief Support: Connie Allan, Maureen Briglio, Brittany Dorland & Molly McLaughlin

SAGC Coordinator: Cindy Ross

Seasonal Staff: Cassandra Blanchard, & Yahya Irvine

Site Assistants: Marc Beauchamp & Andrew Free



Our Volunteers

Our community benefits immensely from the incredible diversity of skilled individuals contributing to the care and maintenance of all facets of the Farm.

Over the years, many volunteers have donated their time and energy to assist in an array of activities and events including Administration, Agriculture, Eco-Arts, Fix-It Shop, Garden maintenance, the Kitchen, Nature-Based Therapy, Site, St. Ann's Garden Club, the Thrift Store, Woodwork and much more.

Unfortunately, Covid restrictions over the past 2 years have made a powerful impact on the number of active volunteers we have. Volunteer skills and experience is invaluable to operations here, and we are on the look out for individuals who may have that extra time to give!

Along with enthusiasm and spirit, Farm volunteers offer their time, skills, experience, and advice; all contributing towards the successful mission of Providence Farm.

Providence Farm supporters are encouraged by the energy and commitment of its continuing volunteers; our community is simply not the same without this vital group of generous people!

Thank you!

Denise Gerhardt
Event and Volunteer Coordinator

Be like water making its way through cracks. Do not be assertive, but adjust to the object, and you shall find a way around or through it."
~ Bruce Lee



Our Friends & Supporters

We are honoured to be supported by the community in many ways, including donations from individuals, businesses, corporations, and foundations. The work we do would not be possible without the generous support of our donors.

The contributions from the following donors impacted the lives of Providence Farm in 2021-22:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 100 Women Who Care | Farm Credit Canada |
| All In One Fund | Frances Kelsey Secondary Dry Grad |
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| Bev Angus Fund | Island Savings Credit Union |
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| Chemainus Health Care Auxiliary | Legion Poppy Fund |
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| Community Gaming Grant | Mill Bay Garden Club |
| Duncan Christian Seniors Home Society | Vancouver Foundation |
| Duncan Lions Club | Victoria Foundation |
| Ester's Dream Foundation | |

“Bless the world with your mind, heal the world with your heart, lift the world with your soul; elevate the world with your life”
~Matshona Dhlwayo

Friends of Providence Farm

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**Thank you too to the donors who requested to remain anonymous.
Thank you sincerely as well to all of our volunteers whose names are
not listed here but whose friendship, time and energy is priceless.**

The Therapeutic Programs at Providence Farm are made possible with support from:



We acknowledge the financial assistance of the Province of British Columbia





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- Become a member
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- Shop at our Farm Stand, or find Providence Farm products in season at your local store
- Become a volunteer
- Make a tax deductible donation
- Contact us to learn more!



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