



providence farm
A THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITY

Annual Report
2022/23



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 the 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

To responsibly steward the organization's entrusted assets for the community's benefit.

To be a leader in demonstrating the therapeutic benefits of harnessing nature and community as allies.

To maintain organizational momentum while respecting the legacy of past contributors.

"There is longing among all people & creatures to have a sense of purpose and worth. To satisfy the common longing in all of us we must respect each other." ~ Chief Dan George



Our Purpose

“...the Farm was intended to be a place of opportunity, open to those with unmet needs... a place to grow (figuratively and literally), take risks, support collective dreams, and create social change”

Jack Hutton – Founding Father

It is an honor to uphold the foundation of Providence lent to us by Jack Hutton, Sister Frieda Raab, Jack Pearce, and Devon Mills (founding members) and the tremendous efforts of all those who came alongside them since 1979.

Providence Farm serves those most vulnerable in the Cowichan Valley. We are a Trauma Informed agency, providing adult Community Inclusion Day programs through a Person-Centered lens. Our application of practice is celebrated in Nature Based and Horticultural Therapies. In 2022-2023 Providence Farm provided opportunities for growth and healing to over 100 participants, individuals with diverse abilities and needs through contract supported referrals (CLBC and VIHA).

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.



A note from Our Participants

Acknowledging our participants as critical stakeholders in Providence Farm, programs wisely champions participant voices and ideas to influence the spirit of programming; ensuring that we navigate forward with genuineness and sensitivity. Commemorating last year's tradition, we workshopped the concept of what it means to belong and how "belonging" is reflected in Providence.

Participants wish to share this community workshopped message with 2022-23 Providence supporters:

Dear Friends,

"At Providence Farm we have permission to be our authentic selves. Together, we create a safe place, where we know trust and true friendship. We honor each other with kindness and compassion. This is what creates a sense of belonging.

Our gift to you is belonging.

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 quirky, unique, supportive, flexible, advocates, kind, encouraging, adaptable, brave, funny, playful, capable, resilient, competent, confident, strong, sensitive, empathetic, joyful and essential!"

Friendly, Accepting, Respectful, Mindful, Inclusive, and Loving, Y - we are FARMILY

"True belonging doesn't require that we change who we are; it requires that we be who we are." ~ Brené Brown



Our Board of Directors

Board Chair: Bev Suderman
Vice Chair: Ron Bogdonov
Treasurer: Danielle Killam
Secretary: Marie Rowland

Directors: Douglas Hume
Roxie Eremko
Gerry Hof
Linda Love

Dear Members,

Heartfelt gratitude from the Board of Directors to all the staff members, volunteers, donors/funders, and members that make Providence Farm the healing place that it is today!

Our role is to serve the needs and foster the talents of people who are not easily accepted in our society. Our role is also to steward the land, while creating opportunities for renewal on the land. Therefore, the VIPCA strategic plan (2021-2024) is established around seven pillars:

1. Growing and diversifying our nature-based therapeutic programs;
2. Focusing agricultural production on crops and activities that support our therapeutic objectives;
3. Establishing a positive and productive relationship with our closest neighbors, the Quw'utsun people;
4. Implementing a forest management plan;
5. Encouraging public participation at the Farm in a manner that is safe for our participants;
6. Diversifying and expanding our revenue base, to be able to achieve our vision and mission, and
7. Taking care of our team.



I am happy to report that we are making progress in all areas of the strategic plan. Highlights from the activities of the past year include:

- Completion of the Forest Management Plan – Cowichan Tribes has been helpful in reviewing and commenting on the draft Plan. This process has brought us closer together with our neighbors perhaps opening the door to joint resolution of other matters in the future. The forests on Providence Farm are part of the increasingly rare Coastal Douglas Fir ecosystem. The intent of this Plan is to manage the forest to maintain its health and to allow it to grow into old growth. To achieve these aims, limited harvesting may occur.
- An innovative joint leadership structure has been approved by the Board, on a trial basis. This trial is for 3 years, starting January 2023, with the leadership roles assigned as follows:

Leah Boisvert: Director of Operations, responsible for financial management, fundraising, human resources administration, contract and lease management, and board support;

Stephanie Kok: Director of Therapeutic programming, responsible for all client programming, including assuring the right mix of therapeutic adult day programs, ensuring that each client has a personal care plan, hiring and training programming staff, and the accreditation process.

Conrad Murphy: Director of Infrastructure and Agriculture, responsible for the maintenance of existing buildings, trails, forest and farm land, as well as the construction of any new infrastructure, and implementation of agricultural activities.

The Board extends its deepest thanks to Leah, Stephanie, and Conrad, for their care and dedication to the work of Providence Farm, and for recognizing the need for change.

At the Farm, we see growing needs for services, while government funding is not keeping pace, either with the need or with inflation. This means that there is a renewed need for fundraising, and for friend-raising. VIPCA is part of the community. The community needs the programming we provide, and we need the support of the community to offer that programming.

Thank you for your membership and your support. Let us know if you would like to become more actively involved with the Farm through volunteering, donations, or Board service.

On behalf of the Board,
Beverly Suderman, Chair



A note from Our Executive Leadership

Deconstructing the norm has required courage. Navigating the curiosities and challenges of these past years, the trifecta affectionately known as the "Head" (Leah Boisvert, Director of Operations), the "Heart" (Stephanie Kok, Director of Therapeutic Programs), and the "Hands" (Conrad Murphy, Director of Infrastructure and Agriculture) are championing what our Cowichan neighbors have gently invited us to consider; collaborative spirit and a credo that includes Respect, Love, Generosity, and Kindness as the cornerstones for fostering a truly inclusive and supportive community (principles that we also see directly reflected in our VIPCA mission).

With these values in mind Providence Farm has retired the traditional hierarchical structure and is piloting the concept of shared leadership 2023 -2026.

Locked arm in arm with the generous support and strength of our respected Board of Directors, Leah, Stephanie, and Conrad have encircled to protect VIPCA's entire team of "Nature Based Practitioners" with Providence's precious participants at the core. Our trifecta has been entrusted with the evolution of the traditional structure of hierarchy and is encouraged to confidently pioneer a model of shared leadership. Inspired by the virtues of reciprocity, value of integrity, and harmonious relationships, we humbly recognize that Providence Farm deserves and requires vast experience, expertise, and exhaustive attention. We trust that our shared leadership model will promote sustainability through embracing collaborative spirit and enlisting the talents of our entire team.

With open minds and hearts, our shared leadership team fervently offers to its VIPCA community, and respected friends of the Cowichan Valley a renewed sense of shared sensitivity, passion, genuineness, enthusiasm, trust, commitment, optimism, perseverance, and progressive direction for those who are now in our care, with mindful reflection for those who came before us, and consideration for those who will to come after. "Our focus shall be upon the renewal of body and spirit and upon people caring for the soil, and the soil nurturing the people".

Leah Boisvert, Stephanie Kok,
& Conrad Murphy

"We cannot live only for ourselves. A thousand fibers connect us with our fellow men." ~ Herman Melville





Our Community

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

This year has continued to inspire Providence Farms intentionality for creating a safe place that inspires a sense of belonging for all people. We are witness to a time where social media has powerful influence and promotion of special interests, and where calendar dates are being created to honor important subjects commanding social recognition. Respectfully noting the myriad of colors that weave the brilliant tapestry of the day, we humbly acknowledge that it would be impossible to capture them all. Including some and not others we feel is counterintuitive to fostering true community inclusion.

Together, as a community, we have afforded thoughtful consideration and invested mindful deliberation toward our ethical responsibility and commitment to promote and practice Person Centered Care. Thus, as we move forward and for the years to come, we will advocate for the awesome simplicity of belonging.

Social belonging is a “critical human need that individuals must satisfy to maintain their identity, physical well-being, and mental health.” (Maslow). Encouraging and providing opportunity for individuals to self-actualize means providing the emotional resources they need to develop their authentic selves. Providence Farm remains committed to celebrating and respecting the uniqueness and wholeness of each person. With unconditional positive regard, we respect personal values and ways of being in the world that may differ from our own. As a community we will promote belonging by coming alongside people, meeting them as they are, and where they are at. Envisioning a future that promotes healing and trust, we move forward with open hearts.

Welcome to Providence Farm!



Our Therapeutic Programming

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

Our 2022-23 Providence Family continued to shine brightly as a beacon of hope. Reframing the curiosities of the time as opportunity. Programs solidified best practice, created, and implemented progressive participant intake packages, deployed Case Management, welcomed exceptional new team members, facilitated professional and agency development trainings, hosted celebrations to honor the strength and resilience of community, and continued striving towards the excellence of achieving CARF accreditation.

We remained determined to deconstruct the negative social impacts of C19. Appreciating the awesomeness of neuroplasticity, we researched and employed the power of Positive Psychology by fostering therapeutic spaces that intentionally generated positive thinking. Over the course of the year, we were witness to generalised lowered levels of anxiety, decreased behavioral outbursts, and increased regular attendance. The efficacy of this practice is undeniably evident in the 60 plus smiling faces of our daily participants.

In 2022 we thoughtfully evaluated our participant intake packet. Giving rise to consideration for Trauma Informed approach and Person-Centered theory, we decoded and recreated the Family Welcome Package to better reflect agency values. Praised by our CLBC, VIHA contractors for our innovative approach we confidently launched the Family Welcome Package initiative in 2023 (including updating all existing participant files).

This year Providence Farm's Therapeutic programming welcomed the essential addition of a Case Manager to provide a continuum of care between our home shares, contractors, and interdisciplinary teams. The Case Management position serves as an advocate with our participants at the core. With accreditation on the horizon this position will shine as we implement our Person Centered Care plans.

"There is no Wi-Fi in the forest, but I promise you will find a better connection." ~ Ralph Smart



Nature Based Practitioners had the opportunity this year to engage in valuable trainings designed to support not only programs but overall agency growth and awareness. As a collective, we participated in SEVA (nonviolent crisis intervention) training and created our “Family Signature Scent” inspired by a training on the efficacy of aroma therapy. Programs invited a prominent, Vancouver Island HTR therapist to facilitate a HT (Horticultural Therapy) workshop, and a resident Cowichan artist to share with our Eco Arts program the sacred practice of Cedar Weaving. As an organization, we attended Building Bridges: Through Understanding the Village... it was a brilliant year of inspired learning and growth, we are grateful to our teachers.

Celebrating the tremendous accomplishments of 2022-2023 in community was a delight. Participants designed themed quarterly recognition luncheons to promote “positive vibes”. Their favorite this year was the “Somewhere Over the Rainbow” celebration. Participants described, “the magic of the Farm feeling just like a rainbow”. With the brilliance of technicolor, we let our kaleidoscope of colors shine! In November, Providence invited dignitary’s, volunteers, contractors, neighbors, and friends of the Farmily to gather and share the bounty of our fist Fall Harvest Luncheon, an event designed to nurture our mission of promoting harmonious relationship. We trust that this will be a long-lasting tradition as we reach out to larger community with open arms and hearts to create a place of belonging for all.

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

Yours now, and forever over the rainbow,

Stephanie Kok

Director of Therapeutic programming

Planting Hope. Harvesting Joy

“The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate action of it's members.” ~ Coretta Scott King



Our Finance and Fund Development

This year as you review our finances and financial statements from the past year, I encourage you to look a little deeper at the income sources, in particular focus on the variety of income sources that make up our yearly operating budget. I hope that as you review our income lines you will appreciate the beautiful mosaic of categories that make up our yearly income, it is this diversity that provides the backbone of our day-to-day operations and programming.

Our financial statements, the income section, is a direct reflection of the greater communities' support of our programs and an investment of their confidence in the direct benefits of our work. Working through the income lines you will notice the contributions from support agencies such as Community Living BC and Island Heath, through a competitive review process they have chosen to place their limited funding in the programs we provide. However, this alone is not enough to sustain impactful and life changing programming. Another complimentary layer to the tapestry includes the great support from foundations, community organizations and local business walking along side individual members of the community who choose to donate their hard-earned dollars to support our programs. Joining this you will notice a line of income from fundraising efforts, a nod to the dedication of our small but mighty staff and volunteer team who go above and beyond to ensure the resources needed to provide high quality programming are available to those we serve.

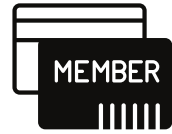
The day in and day out of our nature based therapeutic programs would not be possible without the parade of organizations, foundations, and individuals that are committed to supporting the work that we do. Our organization is grateful for the myriad of community support that comes together to make up the financial backbone of our organization, which goes to benefit some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

Leah Boisvert
Director of Operations

"There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about." ~ Margaret J. Wheatley



Book Your Events
at the Farm



Become a Member



Volunteer



Make a Donation

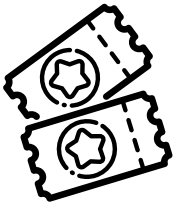


Tell your friends
about us

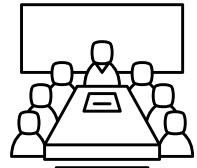
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Ways

YOU CAN SUPPORT
PROVIDENCE FARM



Attend our Events



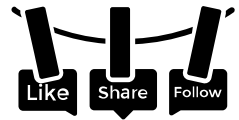
Serve on our
Board of Directors



Shop at our
Thrift Store



Shop at our
Farm Stand



Follow Us



Our Site and Agriculture

In the 2022-23 fiscal year our focus was on upgrading ageing critical infrastructure and increasing the accessibility of our buildings. One project completed in the 2022-23 fiscal year which was years in the making was the lift and repair of the back concrete deck. Due to the extreme weight of the deck an engineer was required to provide loads for all the columns that were replaced. The deck was then hydraulically lifted to support the weight of the deck while the new steel columns and engineered beam could be installed. The completion of this work was critical as the deck serves as a daily access point for our therapeutic programming and a much-loved aspect of the property for event rentals.

Accessibility was another primary focus for the site team over the past year. With the help of program staff and participants, barriers to accessibility around the farm were identified. Issues such as slippery surfaces were addressed by adding high visibility adhesive strips to areas such as the front steps, back deck and rear entryway to St. Anne's Garden. The accessibility of farm stand was also identified and as a result the decision was made to build a new farm stand with accessibility as a core component of the design. The site team work-shopped the design with participants and staff before the project was initiated once again highlighting the value of collaboration.

This past year we continued to develop best practice for growing garlic, our main cash crop, as well as potato, pumpkin, and onion in commercial quantities. Specifically, our team planted two garlic seed varieties in 3 different growing conditions to determine which were the most productive and required the least labour input. With the ongoing effects of climate change, soil water retention has been of particular concern. To mediate the effects of drought conditions coupled with the clay soils present on this land the use of mulch between and within rows was implemented to increase water retention. Another method employed in the 2022-23 growing year was over winter cover cropping using winter rye to suppress weeds, provide natural mulch and increase soil porosity for the following years (2023) crops. Please see the following page for specific site projects list and agricultural quantities for the 2022-23 season.

I am honoured to share the stewardship of this land with our participants, staff, tenants, caretakers, board of directors and honoured volunteers.

Conrad Murphy
Director of Infrastructure and Agriculture

"To be a farmer is to be a student forever, for each day brings something new" ~John Connell



2022-23 Site Projects:

- Installed two green cone digestors to facilitate composting of bones and fat on site
- Sold 5 cords of locally harvested danger trees as firewood
- Hired a full-time custodian
- Hired two Agricultural Techs, two Environmental Techs and 1 Event Summer Student through the Canada Summer Jobs program for 2022
- Purchased new BBQ and stand-up freezer for event rentals
- Renovated caretaker bathroom
- Purchased 2 new tents for event rentals
- Installed new commercial dishwasher for Providence main kitchen
- Built a new man-gate for allotment gardens
- Extended range of Wi-Fi to accommodate site-wide wireless security system
- Installed custom cabinetry in the classroom for tenant storage
- Hydraulically lifted back deck and replaced columns with steel tele posts. Also replaced main beam supporting the lower deck

2022-23 Agriculture:

- Planted 22,000 cloves of garlic for 2023 harvest
- Planted 400 hills of potatoes for 2022 harvest
- Rehomed four Southbend Baby doll sheep as therapy animals
- Rehomed a 100 bird flock of heritage egg laying hens
- Purchased vermicompostor and filled with a population of red wiggler worms for composting
- UAV/Tractor training with Ag/Program staff
- Planted 40 new blueberry bushes
- Harvested 1800 lbs of garlic
- Partnered with University of British Columbia to study the effects of Biochar on Soil Health

- Electricity consumption data sent to Viridian electric to do a solar evaluation to determine the potential for installing a solar array
- Upgraded to voice over internet phones site wide
- Installed new exhaust fan in south cold frame to better control temperature
- Installed Hi-visibility grip stripes on front and back access points to Providence main house
- Site Assistant completed drone aviation course
- Built a new office for Director of Infrastructure & Agriculture in southwest corner of main house
- Installed new LED lighting on the south corners of main house
- Built a new farm stand with more capacity & accessibility features
- Installed window coverings on second floor south facing windows
- Installed new sanitary pump for sewage system
- Installed heat pump in Providence dining room and St. Ann's Garden Club

- Partnered with Cow-op to sell produce through their online market
- Planted cover crop of winter rye for 2023 pumpkin patch
- Signed three-year lease for lower hay fields
- Purchased potato plow for harvesting garlic and potatoes
- Attended webinar on pollinators in agriculture provided by climate change adaptation program
- Partnered with Young Agrarians for potential land leasing opportunities



Our (to 31 March, 2023) Team

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

Director of Operations: Leah Boisvert
Director of Therapeutic Programming: Stephanie Kok
Director of Infrastructure and Agriculture: Conrad Murphy
Case Manager: Beth Whelan
Administrative Assistant: Hanna Wheeler
Finance Assistant: Farrah Todosichuk
Event and Volunteer Coordinator: Denise Gerhardt
Horticulture Coordinator: Michelle Harrison
Nutrition Program Coordinator: Charlotte Hewson
Program Support Workers: Adrian Fletcher, Tim Fraser, Kallie Laycock,
Sharon Rumley, Emily Schuurman, Aiyden Warren
SAGC Coordinator: Cindy Ross
Relief: Molly McLaughlin, Jordan Cain
Seasonal Staff: Cassandra Blanchard & David Sullivan
Site Assistant: Jamie Roerick
Peer Mentors: Carmen Baker & Steve Bull
Custodian: Lisa Bulcock



Our Volunteers

A tremendous thank you to all the friends in our community who volunteer their time, energy, and spirit. We are so grateful for your contributions to making our Farm the special place that it is. We not only benefit from your skills and hard work, but from your kindness, friendship, and assistance in fostering a community of belonging. Our sincere and lasting thanks!

In 2022-23 our volunteers assisted with an impressive variety of endeavors. Whether it's working alongside our site and agriculture team, helping in the kitchen, running Farm Fashions, supporting administration, helping in therapeutic programming, rocking our seasonal events, or completing woodworking projects, we can count on our volunteers to keep our hearts and bellies full, and our grounds prosperous and beautiful.

The ever changing landscape of this past year has offered our perspective a new lens through which we can reimagine volunteerism. Alongside our excellent community of individual volunteers, we welcomed several large groups from local schools and organizations: Queen Margaret's School, Shawnigan Lake School, Camosun College Horticulture Technicians, and the local Shriners. This was an incredible opportunity for our organization to learn about the capacity for reciprocal benefit natural to volunteering. We gained insight into how through volunteerism students gain work experience and fill requirements for graduation; as well as how companies can achieve their benchmarks for participation in greater community and create diversity in work for staff.

Thank you again to our volunteers, not only for what you do for us, but for what you teach us. This past year has been a powerful lesson in how volunteerism fosters happiness by activating what we fondly call the "the happiness trifecta"; a surge of dopamine, oxytocin, and serotonin that comes from helping others, connecting, and being active. Empowered by this learning, we are motivated to develop volunteer programs and curriculums that continue to grow the reciprocal benefits of volunteering.

"Volunteers don't get paid, not because they're worthless, because they're priceless." ~ Sherry Anderson

Friends of Providence Farm

Margaret Adam	Jim & Maureen Dias	Betty James
Richard & Jean Addison	Bernie Dinter	Carol Jensen
ALF Software Inc.	Patti Doeg	Sheila Johnson
Wendy & Richard Aschacker	Muriel Doris	JP Construction
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Susan Bannerman	Megan Doerksen	Renee June
Normal Barkley	Drillwell Enterprises	Bernice Kachuk
Derek J. Baskerville	Ralph Eastland	John Kaye & Catherine Macavity
Tanya & Bryan Bass	Eclectic Avenue Vintage	Family & Friends of J.W. Kidd
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Karen A Chaster	Margaret Hammond	Bert Manthey
Chemainus Healthcare	Cathleen Hart	Rick & Jacquie Martinson
Auxiliary	Karen Hartley	Richard Matthews
Clement Family	Tom Henry & Violaine Mitchell	Robert McAree
Cocks Family Foundation	Gerald & Charlotte Herkel	Colleen Mcaskill
Patricia Conrad	Donna Hert	Don & Lynn McAskill
Cowichan Folk Guild	Charlotte Hewson	Delta McDonell
Marion Y Csepe	Gerry & Mary Hof	Grant & Teresa McKinnon
Margaret Davidson & Pat Wolff	Dianne Hopkins	Grant Mellemstrand
Leighton & Arlene Davis	John & Ruth Howells	Leighton Mellemstrand
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	Jack & Claudette Hutton	

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**Thank you to all 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





Join Us

- Become a member
- Sign up for our monthly electronic newsletter
- 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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