



providence farm
A THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITY

Annual Report
2020/21



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.

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



Our Board of Directors

Board Chair: Noelle Philip
Vice Chair: Brenda Kuecks
Treasurer: Tom Todd
Secretary: Bev Sunderman

Directors: Gerry Hof
Dan Graham
Danielle Killam
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James Kuecks

Dear Members,

Last year I reported that we had completed our strategic plan. This year we have taken baby steps in the implementation of the plan. Our efforts have been somewhat hampered by COVID19, as well as an unexpected opportunity.

Despite that, we are committed to achieving Accreditation through CARF (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitative Facilities). Through accreditation, CARF assists service providers in improving the quality of their services, demonstrating value, and meeting internationally recognized organizational and program standards.

Work has begun on a Forest Management plan which turns out to be much more complex than expected. We have contracted with BC Wildfire Service for the removal of some danger trees. We expect this work to begin in the next few weeks, so for those of you who walk the property you may see tree removal activity.

An unexpected development was the purchase of 2 properties on Donnay Drive across from VIPCA property which consumed our attention for several months. VIPCA has infrastructure across these properties in the way of sewer pipe and access to the dam at the reservoir which needs regular maintenance. We were extremely fortunate to be able to purchase the properties without going into debt due to the kind and generous gesture of PVHS (owners of the land) to sell it to us for a fraction of market value. With the purchase of the properties, we protect our infrastructure and hope to realize a profit upon the sale of the properties which will be like a gift. Our heartfelt thanks and appreciation go to PVHS for making this possible for us.

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 and our founders, our staff, volunteers, past board members, all 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.

On behalf of the Board,
Noelle Philp,
Board Chair



Note from Executive Director

Dear friends,

The past year has been historic in so many ways for the community at Providence Farm and in our world. We collectively experienced pressing social change against a background of natural shifts through the seasons, and each one of us has navigated our way to find ourselves, in various forms of adaptation, to this place and time. Our individual and collaborative ability to innovate while resolving legacy issues has been a hallmark for the year that was 2020-21.

Like so many in our greater community, Providence Farm adapted to people alternating between attendance and staying home. A new type of Farm activity emerged based on the proximity of the computer; social events transformed into virtual meet-ups and outreach was assisted by the production of very well-received videos of Farm activity. To everyone's relief, however, the Farm and the harvest, continued to be hands-on.

Amidst the challenges of social and natural change a new and deeply felt appreciation for each other has joyfully settled upon us all. We are truly delighted when we are in person or on the land working the soil; in so many ways we recognize that healing is a process we navigate for a lifetime. It is with gratitude for the wisdom of nature that we invite you to join your hearts with ours as we courageously look to each other and the future while we continue trusting in Providence.

~ Tracy Parow



The Providence Community

In 1864, the 400 acres on which Providence Farm sits today was purchased by the Sisters of St. Ann. For the next 100 years, the Sisters operated a school on site. In 1921, the iconic Providence House was built and classes continued until June 22, 1964, when the school's bell rang for the last time.

In the late 1970s, a group of people with varied backgrounds and interests got together with the Sisters to discuss building community at the old St. Ann's school site and farm in Duncan. By July 12, 1979, an agreement had been reached to establish a registered charity, the Vancouver Island Providence Community Association (VIPCA), named in memory of Sister Mary Providence, the founder of the school and programs in Duncan in the 1800s. In 2009, the land was formally gifted to VIPCA by the Sisters of St. Ann.

The goal of VIPCA was, and remains today, to serve the needs and foster the talents of people in the Cowichan Valley, especially of those not easily accepted elsewhere. In the pages to come, you will learn about our many therapeutic programs and of the people that breathe life into Providence Farm today.

Welcome to Providence Farm.



Therapeutic Programming

Providence Farm is a therapeutic farm nestled at the base of Mount Tzouhalem in the Cowichan Valley on Vancouver Island, British Columbia. Since 1979, the Vancouver Island Providence Community Association, a registered charity and non-profit society, has been providing innovative day program activities.

Today, Person Centered Care is the theoretical foundation that supports programming, Nature Based Activity grounds our practice, and a Trauma Informed Approach guides Providence Farm's principles. From our early beginnings in Horticulture Therapy, activities now include many elements of Nature Based / Eco Therapies. The careful stewardship of 400 acres of land is foundational to this model.

In 2020-2021, we expanded best practice to recognize the paramount importance of delivering services that are Trauma Informed. Trauma Informed Care (TIC) shifts the conversation from "what is wrong with you", to "what has happened to you". Providence Farm now incorporates the key principles of a Trauma Informed approach in all facets of operations. These principles also inspired the thoughtfully constructed agency wide expectations of "FAMILY". FAMILY is an acronym that illuminates our behavioral expectations while celebrating a TIC approach:

Friendly, Accepting, Respectful, Mindful, Inclusive, Loving, and Y – because Providence Farm is a safe place for you and for me.



This past year offered an unprecedented opportunity for Providence Farm to celebrate and reap the therapeutic benefits of grounding in Nature Based Activities. Witness to the uncertain times of Covid 19, we found solace in nature. Nurturing the bounty of produce in our greenhouse, tending to our gentle flock of chickens, caring for fuzzy therapeutic bunnies, and showcasing the fruits of our labors on the farm stand provided a sense of peace. Nature gifted us great purpose during these curious times, our mission to care for each other and the land never felt so alive or brought us closer together. In a time that recommended social distancing, we realized that no distance could separate the heart of FARMILY and that never are we alone in nature.

Here are a few achievements from this past year...

Navigating the curious season of C19 served as an invitation for Providence Farm to shine as a beacon of hope. Inspired by nature's resilience, Providence Farm found the courage to carry on.

Community Outreach: From the onset of Covid 19, programing was determined to continue to provide community connection to those in our care, at a time when those most vulnerable needed us most. Providence's front line Support Workers provided supportive phone / Zoom calls to home shares and participants, extending our continued friendship, love, and assurance.

Programs and Site also collaborated to provide outreach to our First Nations neighbors. Our loyal flock of chickens generously provided hundreds of dozens of eggs to our Cowichan Elders Kitchen in their time of need. We are honored to have had the opportunity to extend our friendship and support.

Virtual Programming: Providence Farm Productions was conceived from a desire to provide an additional opportunity for community connection; promoting uplifting, hopeful, and heart filled respite from the merciless and often



disheartening news that plagued many living rooms. Providence Farm News was established to spread the contagion of joy. Weekly instalments continue to be produced on our YouTube channel with the intention of providing education, entertainment, hope, and inspiration. Episodes showcase the beauty of our land, our people, and of diversity.

Collaborative Spirit: The interdependence demonstrated in nature resonated deeply as we relied upon our collaborative spirits to see us through the extraordinary time of a pandemic; helping us to better appreciate the magnitude and influence of the voices of many coming together as one. As a result, Programming launched participant lead initiatives designed to provide invaluable insight to decisions of consequence. Our participants provided the foundation for FARMILY expectations, for example, through a series of collaborative focus groups. For 2021/2022 we are looking forward to developing a participant hiring committee and advisory board to help ensure that we are maximizing the potential of Programs.

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!

“When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say ‘Look for helpers. You will always find people who are helping’.”

~Fred Rogers

Finance and Fund Development

The 2020/2021 fiscal year was a year like no other with the global pandemic proving to be the ultimate stress test on many organizations. The Finance and Fund Development office of Providence Farm hit the ground running starting the fiscal year (April 1, 2020) amidst mass Covid shutdowns. Efforts became quickly focused on budget revisions as the impact of Covid closures became clear from a financial perspective.

During this time, parallel to the work of budget revisions was the research and monitoring of rapidly emerging Covid relief funding and grants. Doing this work in tandem provided clear understanding as to what areas of the budget were expected to experience shortfalls and what funding strategies could be available to support Covid related revenue losses.

Through the intense work of budget revision, rapid fire grant applications and crisis management, the integrity of the relationships that Providence Farm has built over the years became evidently clear. It was the strength of these relationships that allowed us to hold steady through a period of very uncertain times. Key funding partners graciously stepped up to fulfill areas of revenue loss while ongoing funders held strong in their committed support of Providence Farm. This solid financial backing allowed us to focus our energy on finding new and creative ways to provide programming to our participants and to maintain our stewardship of the land.

It is with great pride that I can report, due to the strong foundational work of many individuals dating back long before my own employment with the farm, that during a time of crisis Providence Farm (including its finances) was able to adapt where needed without compromising the services delivered to our vulnerable clientele.

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



Site Update

"I took a walk in the woods and came out taller than the trees."

~Henry David Thoreau

The care and maintenance of Providence Farm is a perpetual undertaking and an adventure. This past year was no exception!

Year after year, care of our buildings, upgrades of our equipment and maintenance of our land relies heavily on a crew of skilled volunteers and dedicated seasonal staff.

With the Covid concerns and closures of 2020/2021 Site staff found themselves in their own version of 'unprecedented times' with events at standstill, volunteers hard to find and yet the ongoing demands of site/agriculture still moving forward.

As a result, this past year called for crossover between the different dimensions of the farm; a coming together with all hands-on deck to maintain the grounds and to care for the land. This included Site assigning tasks to staff who normally occupy administrative or programming roles. Together we came together to complete groundskeeping tasks such as weeding gardens, lawn maintenance, poultry house care, fields regeneration and even a review of harvest methodology to maximize efficiency given the circumstances. The dedication of our community allowed us to accomplish remarkable things, despite covid related limitations.

Site updates in 2020/2021:

- Painted the exterior of Providence House
- Planted 22,000 garlic
- Installed a new heating unit in the McKinnon building
- Renovated The Roost from store to programming area to accommodate indoor pandemic restrictions
- Renovated the washrooms in the Header House
- Provided diversity by planting carrots, cauliflower, and other minor crops.
- Executed an innovated and well received "drive through" plant sale in April 2020 where customers were delivered product to their cars!
- Sold out our pumpkins from the pumpkin patch and offered hayrides which were well-attended and fun
- Site manager retirement and hire
- And more...

We did all of this together! And then, had the great fortune of celebrating being COVID free on The Farm for all of 2020/2021.



Our Team

(to 31 March, 2021)

Our staff work diligently in their areas of expertise, going above and beyond to ensure the achievement of cohesiveness and supportive elements in our Therapeutic 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: **Marc Beauchamp***

*Administrative Assistant: **Maria Hiles***

*Administrative Support Worker: **Connie Allan***

*Caretaker: **Donae Capps***

*Event and Volunteer Coordinator: **Carolyn Morris/Densie Gerhardt***

*Nature Based Activities Coordinator: **Pete Stacey***

*Nutrition Program Coordinator: **Peter Bowen***

*Peer Mentors: **Bill Baker***

*Peer Mentors: **Carmen Baker***

*Peer Mentors: **Steve Bull***

*Program Administrative Support Worker: **Cindy Ross***

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

Theresa Dupont, Adrian Fletcher, Tim Fraser, Kori Kelloway, Andy Paquette,

Sharon Rumley, Emily Schuurman, Bev Thompson

*SAGC Coordinator: **Brooke Maver***

*SAGC Assistant Coordinator: **Liz Reynolds***

*Seasonal Staff: **Cassandra Blanchard, Zoltan Irvine***

*Site Assistant: **Danny Hachey***

*Site and Agricultural Support Worker: **Gordan Mckay***

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

~Anne Frank



Our Volunteers

The Covid restrictions of 2020/2021 made the powerful impact of our volunteers perhaps more apparent than ever before. Volunteers have been deeply missed and continue to be celebrated here at Providence 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, Farm Fashions, Fix-It Shop, the Kitchen, Nature-Based Therapy, Segues, Site, St. Ann's Garden Club, Woodwork and much more.

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

Along with enthusiasm and spirit, Farm volunteers offer valuable 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!

"Plant seeds of happiness, hope, success, and love; it will all come back to you in abundance. This is the law of nature."

~Steve Maraboli



Friends of Providence Farm

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 2020-21:

ALF Software	Ester's Dream Foundation
All In One Fund	Farm Credit Canada
Bendickson Memorial Fund	Island Ford
Bev Angus Fund	JP Construction
Canada Summer Jobs	Knights of Columbus
Community Farm Store	Legion Poppy Fund
Community Gaming Grant	Mill Bay Garden Club
Duncan Christian Seniors Home Society	Vancouver Foundation
Duncan Lions Club	Victoria 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 Dhliwayo

Friends of Providence Farm

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**Thanks to all of those donors who requested to remain anonymous.
As well, thanks to all of our volunteers whose names are not listed here
but whose time and energy is priceless.**

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



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Continuing the Legacy



We acknowledge the financial assistance
of the Province of British Columbia





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- 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
- Contact us to learn how to become a volunteer
- Walk the Labyrinth and enjoy the healing garden
- Make a tax deductible donation
- Contact us to learn more



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