



Amazing things happen...

Because of you

thousands of seniors, families, youth and children are able to look ahead to a brighter, more promising future

Because of you:

Young children leave school on Fridays with a backpack full of essential food for the weekend

Individuals with little or no income are able to have critical dental work helping them to maintain better overall health

Because of you:

Hundreds of teens with no family support are learning how to look after themselves

The youth of Abbotsford have a supportive, understanding medical clinic that meets their unique needs

Because of you:

Seniors have a place to find support and resources to meet their unique life situations

Everyone can find an advocate to help them with the 'rough times' they are going through

Because of you:

First-time moms and dads have a place to gain the confidence they need to raise a strong family

People of all walks of life are finding help to get a good job to support themselves and their families

Because you

have chosen to partner with Abbotsford Community Services, some pretty amazing things have been happening. Inside this pre-Christmas newsletter, we've featured just a few of those things for you. There are hundreds, probably thousands more stories just like the ones included here.

because of



WHAT'S IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO KNOW

You have had a hand in every single success, every person whose life has been in some way changed. Yes – you. Because without you, Abbotsford Community Services would not be the organization that it is. Thanks to your support, encouragement, and financial contributions we are able to continue helping people at any stage of life, with any circumstance in their life.

Thank you for your generosity.

Can we count on you again in this pre-Christmas season to keep doing the good work of 'People Helping People'?

With Warm Regards & Merry Christmas Wishes,

Janna Dieleman

Manager, Donor & Community Relations
604.859.7681 Ext. 204
Janna.dieleman@
abbotsfordcommunityservices.com

PS –
3 Easy Ways to Donate Today:
Mail – Phone – Online

Supporting Youth of immigrant families

This 14 year old Punjabi girl faced a number of hardships in addition to adjusting to a new country and being a teenager. Thankfully there were staff at ACS who could help her find a way through these challenges.

Harpreet was fourteen years old when she arrived in Canada with her father, mother and brother. She began attending WJ Mouat Secondary School but when her father became very ill she left school to work alongside her mother so the family could make ends meet. It was difficult leaving school but necessary.

The family lived in a tiny cramped basement suite and it came to light early on that Harpreet's younger brother had a learning disability. Because of that issue, the school connected the family to the South Asian Community Resource Office with a group of programs supporting 'at risk' immigrant and refugee youth.

Not only did her brother receive assistance, but Harpreet was encouraged to enroll at Bakerview Centre for Learning (then known as ACE) so that she might continue with her high school studies in the evening. It was difficult, but after work, she would come to the office to seek help and support with her education and English Language Learning courses.

Eventually she graduated with an adult diploma and was assisted further by applying for scholarships. She attended Stenberg College in Surrey for two years during which time her father passed away. Abbotsford Community Services staff continued to support and encourage her through that difficult time helping her through every obstacle she faced.

Today, at the age of 23, she is working as an LPN (Licensed Practical Nurse) and financially helping to support her family thanks to a job with a future. Even though she is very busy, she still comes by to visit often and volunteers her time and talents to give back to the programs that supported her along her journey.



Harpreet Sandu (left)
with staff member Palwinder Kelay





A Perinatal Depression Awakening

I was a mess. My amazing life was spinning out of control at a rapid rate. My planned pregnancy with my husband Ben was not going as I expected. This was not the happy, exciting time that I had signed up for. Things were not rainbows and lollipops.

I had heard of postpartum depression but never perinatal depression. I needed help but didn't know where to turn.

What They Don't Tell You

'They' tell you that pregnancy is a fun time of baby kicks and wiggles, planning and showers. No one ever talks about the months of endless nausea, countless sleepless nights from insomnia, the loneliness and the pain. Oh the pain ... pelvic pain ... round ligament pain ... leg cramps ... Braxton hicks, the list goes on. And there's the perinatal depression that no one ever talks about.

Then I heard about Best for Babies when I went on-line to see what Abbotsford had to offer. I tentatively made an appointment to see what it was all about, to see if maybe there was someone who I could talk to and who would maybe be a friend or could point me in a direction to go.

They explained to me about the weekly meetings and the many tangible benefits I would receive from the program.

"...I would not be the stable mother that I am today without the support at Best for Babies."

About the gift cards for groceries or the farmer's market coupons. About the many donations of baby items that I could access.

They told me about the guest speakers from the community that could teach me about the day to day care my child would need.

And I learned about the nutrition knowledge available and the free healthy meal that would fill my belly each week. Did I need the practical support of diapers and groceries and baby clothing and weekly hot meals?

Well – yes. But that's not what kept me coming back week after week.

It was the people. The relationships. The love I felt when I asked my million and one questions about breastfeeding and birth plans and immunizations. It was that I was never judged. Never judged when I ended up in the mental health unit of the hospital because I had lost it. Never judged when I couldn't keep it together and was in tears most meetings.

I found friends; women who were in the trenches of pregnancy and uncertainty like I was. Women who became my good friends and staff who have become mentors to me on this motherhood journey. They were kind and generous in every way.

I did not fit the 'expected' demographic of someone in need of a program like this. I'm happily married and we have a reliable income and a safe and healthy home. But the truth is, I would not be the stable mother that I am today without the support at Best for Babies.



Very Grateful for Lunch with the Bunch

My mom passed away August 29, 2007. Not only have I experienced the grief of losing my best friend, but I have also been thrown into a world of being my father's primary care giver. My only sibling lives in Pennsylvania with her family. Any doctor will tell you, as one told me, that the percentage of losing the second parent shortly after the death of a spouse is quite high due to grief and loneliness.

"Your program gives hope, support and assurance that our aging loved one will not be forgotten in this youth oriented world."

Lunch With the Bunch has provided my father with companionship, laughter, fun and certainly something great to look forward to every Monday; and for this, I am grateful to you and to God for putting you and this community service in my life. My father suffers from Parkinson's and so he is not permitted to drive, he is also on a fixed income, which prohibits costly cab fares on a regular basis. Dad does use Handi-Dart and has cab savers, which I am also extremely grateful for.

The volunteer service of picking dad up and dropping him home is equally appreciated. I realize what a labor of love it is for those involved, especially with the soaring gasoline prices of late. My dad lives with my fiancé and myself

and although I do drive dad many places myself, it is impossible for me to do so on a regular basis due to work.

Providing for aging parents is something most of us will have in common, and to say that this role is one of the toughest roles in life would be an understatement. The responsibility can be overwhelming at times. Your program gives hope, support and

assurance that our aging loved ones will not be forgotten in this youth oriented world. You also give busy and stressed out caregivers such as myself a helping hand. It is impossible for me alone to supply all the fun and 'outings' for my father. Not all elderly people have the financial resources to look forward to a trip to Mexico every year.

I see the joy however and twinkle in my dad's eyes looking forward to going to Lunch with the Bunch every Monday.

Thank you to Abbotsford Community Services for this wonderful program.

Gratefully and Respectfully
Yours,

LOOKING FOR ACS ALUMNI



ACS Looking for Our Alumni in Preparation of the 50th Anniversary in 2019

In order to prepare for the milestone 50th Anniversary event in 2019, ACS needs to hear from you!

Have you ever been a volunteer with any of the programs like Meals on Wheels or a Conversation Circle?

Were you ever a client or group participant in any of the programs like Family Centre Drop-ins or received counselling at the Abbotsford Addictions Centre?

Were you a staff member at one time in your career?

Were you ever a member of the Board of Directors?

Are you a loyal financial (or gift in kind) donor to any of our programs?

We want to hear from you. Get enrolled as an ACS Alumni Member today and receive your exclusive updates on the Countdown to 2019. Insider information will be given only to those who register as Alumni.

P: 604.859.7681

Janna.Dieleman@
AbbotsfordCommunityServices.com

(We will need your name, what your affiliation was/is with ACS, the years of your affiliation with ACS, email address, and phone number)