



# Stories

Archway Community Services Magazine

2019 / 2020

Stories of people  
helping people



## Open in Tough Times

Food Bank p. 11

## Going Virtual During a Pandemic

Counselling Services p. 8

## A Community of Online Learning

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**Archway**  
Community Services

Archway Community Services fosters community well-being  
and social justice through positive action and leadership.

Stories of people helping people

**OUR MISSION:** Archway Community Services fosters community well-being and social justice through positive action and leadership.

**OUR VISION:** Justice, opportunities and equitable access for all.

**EDITORS:** Danielle Windecker and Kelly Neufeld

**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:** Danielle Windecker, Kelly Neufeld, Rod Santiago, and Steve Carlton

**LAYOUT, DESIGN, & ILLUSTRATION:** Grant Bielefeld

**CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS:** Dale Klippenstein, Danielle Windecker, Kelly Neufeld, Lyndon Dueck, Rebecca Thuro and Archway Staff

*Photos contained within are representative of our last fiscal year until time of publication. Accordingly, many were taken before COVID-19 and thus do not depict guidelines on gathering size or physical distancing.*

**OUR PROGRAMS**

You can learn more about our programs at [Archway.ca](http://Archway.ca)

**CONTACT**

Archway Community Services  
2420 Montrose Ave  
Abbotsford BC V2S 3S9

604.859.7681  
hello@archway.ca



**ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

We acknowledge that we gather on the traditional unceded territory of the Stō:lō people. Stō:lō territory extends from the mouth of the Fraser River to Boston Bar. Locally, this includes the Matsqui First Nation and Sumas First Nation. We give them thanks for sharing their land and resources with us.

We acknowledge and are grateful to the City of Abbotsford for their permissive tax exemption. This exemption helps Archway to continue forwarding its mission of 'fostering community well-being and social justice through positive action and leadership' within Abbotsford.

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**Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada**

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# Letter from the Executive Director



**W**hen you ask Canadians who their heroes are of the COVID-19 pandemic, they speak of Dr. Bonnie Henry, of first responders, health care workers and grocery store clerks. I echo their sentiments and would add one more prominent group to the list of who is worthy of horn-blowing or to have a pair of John Fluevogs designed in their honour: COMMUNITY SOCIAL SERVICE WORKERS!

During the outbreak of the novel coronavirus SARS CoV-2, the community social services sector was defined as “essential workers” by the Province of BC. Whether ensuring access to basic needs like food and shelter for low income households, providing mental health counselling to youth, offering supports to socially isolated seniors, assisting temporary foreign workers and individuals with diverse abilities or a myriad of other services, Archway and community social service agencies like ours held up BC’s social safety net during our province’s greatest time of crisis.

At the start of COVID-19, Archway was faced with the dilemma of whether to remain open. We had to factor in the safety of staff and clients, the little information we were receiving at the time regarding provincial guidelines, various funders’ expectations and Archway’s mission and vision. We made the difficult but important choice to

keep our doors open, and we quickly redefined services and service provision to ensure both safety and relevance.

Staff in Archway programs utilized technology to offer virtual counselling, remote tutoring, online webinars and remote doctors’ appointments, just to name a few.

The Mobile Seniors Outreach program was introduced to assist older adults unable to leave home for groceries, prescriptions and other essential needs.

Our Youth Resource Centre organized video “trips” to Playland complete with pre-delivered mini-donuts and cotton candy.

There are now Facebook Live versions of our Family Centre and Best for Babies sessions (in English and Punjabi) with 400+ viewers. And STRIDE for Older Workers quickly adapted to a virtual learning environment, offering online workshops and loaning laptops to clients in need.

These highlights are just a few of the many innovative and responsive practices taking place throughout Archway. I also want to acknowledge the safety

measures applied in order to ensure essential services at our Recycling plant, Hearthstone Place, Autumn House, Sentinel House, Opioid Agonist Treatment Centre, Interpretation and Translation Services, Youth Health Centre and Food Bank to keep their doors open for service.

I give credit to our flexible and responsive leadership who quickly formed a COVID Response Team to shepherd the organization through the pandemic. They continue to play an ongoing role with our COVID “Next Normal” and “Planning Ahead” committees.

Thank you, also, to our resilient and inventive staff, board, and volunteers who keep finding ways to respond to the ever-changing and growing needs arising from these pressure-cooker times we live in.

Finally, thank you to the generosity of our donors and funders who are helping to alleviate the strain created by layers upon layers of complexities.

Now, if only I could get some Fluevog shoes commissioned to commemorate my heroes.

**ROD SANTIAGO**  
Executive Director

# Letter from the Board President



**D**on’t blink! That’s how fast things can change. I remember at the start of the new year thinking back on the previous twelve months and reflecting on the great and eventful year we had experienced at Abbotsford, er, Archway Community Services.

We navigated a change of name and successful re-branding of the agency’s identity; celebrated the first 50 years of service including the book launch by Walter Paetkau; successfully hosted the annual Cultural Diversity Awards, the Community Builders Awards, the Jake Virtanen Charity Golf Tournament; and created a new Strategic Plan to propel the agency forward in new and exciting ways. After a hectic and fantastic year, what could go wrong?

By mid-March, it was well known what could go wrong, not just locally, provincially or nationally – but globally as we locked down under COVID-19. Collectively, we followed Dr. Bonnie’s daily advice and ‘hunkered down’ to protect ourselves and our families. But what happened next at Archway speaks volumes about the agency, its mission and the character of the people who work here. Archway rose to the occasion and kept its doors open to as many people as it could and provided as many services as humanly possible to those who depend on us.

We are indebted to the leadership at Archway for providing pervasive care to all while encouraging programs to ‘find a way’ to keep services running for the vulnerable among us. The needs never stop and neither did Archway.

We are grateful to directors and program managers who created new ways to get the job done despite the shut down as well as physical distancing. We celebrate all staff for persevering through the first six months and for their resilience in bouncing back time after time. And it’s not over yet.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I wish to extend our sincere thanks to everyone in the organization for exemplary service to our community through thick and thin during these strange and challenging times. I know when we look back on this year, we will be proud for many reasons. Thank you, Archway team! Please don’t blink.

**STEVE CARLTON**  
Board President



STRIDE staff Frank and Lea with clients.

STRIDE

# Stepping Into a New Program

## During a Global Pandemic

Skills Training Results in Directed Education/ Employment (STRIDE) is one of Archway's newest programs and it has had an excellent and eventful first year thanks to the dedication of supervisor, Frank Amadasun, and his team.

Starting a new initiative is never simple, even when it's something as necessary as STRIDE, which helps local people over 55 gain employability skills and find meaningful, sustainable work. Experiencing a global pandemic on top of it all is something few could truly prepare for or predict.

Frank has a wealth of experience in recruitment and employment

services. Prior to STRIDE he worked in talent recruitment for a large company in Alberta, traveling globally to build their workforce. He was also a facilitator in a previous Archway employment program. This experience was crucial as he rose to the challenge of developing STRIDE and adapting during COVID-19.

Of course, there are always hurdles to jump over when starting anything new; coordinating logistics and staffing the department are expected, but not easy.

Once practicalities were addressed it was a matter of connecting with potential clients, but Frank knew they were out there. According to WorkBC,

mature workers in British Columbia sometimes lack technical skills, appropriate training opportunities and familiarity with current hiring practices. As a result, Statistics Canada has noted 58% of people 55 years and older feel their chances of finding sustainable employment are "not very good," a sentiment expressed by less than half of job seekers aged 20 to 34.

Knowing that there are people who need your services and connecting with them can be two separate matters, but with the support of the Archway Marketing and Communications department, word was soon circulating about STRIDE. "The more marketing one can do, the more aware people become; that awareness generates interest and interest drives curiosity," offered Frank. "It is this curiosity that brings clients to our doors because they want to know more about the services we provide."

And come to STRIDE's doors they have. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the program had supported 45 clients in various ways. "10 clients have secured gainful employment in various sectors, nine have received certification in short-term occupational training, and two have obtained occupational skills training," Frank reported.

To qualify for the program, participants must be unemployed or precariously employed, which means that they do not meet the typical definition of the unemployed. They may be working in unstable or unsustainable environments, earning a total employment income that is below the market basket measures, or in an occupation that is likely to be replaced by technology or automation in the near future.

Over 50% of unemployed people over 55 went to WorkBC offices to seek help in 2018. While those offices are helpful, the 55+ group was left in a bubble without intentional efforts to address their unique needs. As the need was recognized, the STRIDE program was created. STRIDE services are client-centred, and their curriculum supports individualized training.

STRIDE provides valuable skills enhancement through employability, essential skills and employment readiness workshops; short-term occupational certification and unpaid work experience leading to sustainable employment.

**"STRIDE provides a good opportunity for unemployed older workers. It is a place of refuge for overwhelmed older workers because it is specifically designed for them."**

In addition to serving their first clients in their first year, they have built community partnerships with employers and training institutions in order to leverage resources and expertise and harness best practices that will serve participants for years to come.

Participants in STRIDE benefit from transportation supports to travel to and from workshops and job interviews. The program also provides childcare supports to participants who may be responsible for caring for young children so they can attend workshops.

As a direct employer incentive, they offer wage subsidies to encourage employers to give STRIDE participants

opportunities to prove themselves for a period of four weeks. When a participant secures employment, STRIDE continues to provide post-employment supports to ensure nothing is left to chance.

They also facilitate two weeks of unpaid work experience for the benefit of participants who want to go into new careers or have limited experience. This measure affords clients the opportunity to assess the desirability of the job and gives the employer a chance to assess whether the participant will be a good fit. Best of all, STRIDE's services are free to program participants.

COVID-19 hasn't slowed Frank and his teammates, Lea and Valerie down, either. While participation has decreased somewhat and opportunities to coordinate training and other opportunities for participants have become more challenging, they continue serving those in need in a hybrid approach. STRIDE quickly transitioned to an entirely online platform for those comfortable with computers, while maintaining physically distant in-person sessions for people with barriers to accessing online learning.

Despite all the obstacles they may face, people have continued to turn out for STRIDE sessions, proof of their dedication and resilience. Early client successes have included opportunities to expand their networks and obtain

qualifications that make them an asset to future employers.

One highly-qualified client simply needed orthotics so she could stay on her feet in the workplace, but they were out of her budget due to unemployment. Once the program helped her obtain them, she was quickly able to secure a job as a Client Solutions Advisor for a major Canadian bank. She is reportedly having the time of her life! About her decision to participate in STRIDE she shared, "you have everything to gain. What you learn about yourself will be the most valuable."

When asked what is particularly encouraging about the program, Frank said;

"STRIDE provides a good opportunity for unemployed older workers. It is a place of refuge for overwhelmed older workers because it is specifically designed for them.

"Some participants have told us that the STRIDE program means more than providing employment supports and skills acquisition training. They say they enjoy knowing they are not alone, which can be a trigger for various negative health conditions in older people.

"I look forward to more successes for our program participants. We will continue to restore dignity and hope to the growing demographic of unemployed or underemployed people 55+ in the Fraser Valley because there is so much more they can do. We find it particularly encouraging to see their glowing smiles when a participant gets employed to do his or her dream job." ■

# Going Virtual During a Global Pandemic



Abbotsford Addictions counsellor Ernest.



Anas (far right) and the MAP team outside the George Ferguson Way office.

Archway is proud to provide specialized counselling services for individuals seeking to address matters including substance misuse, sexual abuse, anxiety and depression. Specialized programs offer support to victims of crime, youth, parents seeking to improve mental wellness and newcomers acculturating to life in Canada.

Like many social service providers, Archway counselling staff were faced with distinct challenges at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some found that effectively maintaining connections to clients with unfamiliar technology was daunting. At the same time, some clients initially considered waiting until the pandemic was over to resume counselling services.

### Increased Demand

Counselling clients soon began reporting increased levels of stress and anxiety and have sought greater assistance with coping strategies during COVID. Concerningly, staff have also reported an increase in domestic violence files during the lockdown.

When it became apparent restrictions were not to be lifted quickly, both

counsellors and clients were eager to explore different options. Archway Clinical Counsellor Josie Kane, M.A., R.C.C, reported that many clients who were initially hesitant about virtual-only counselling found online services offered increased comfort and distance. Some began to open up more, and others who weren't willing or able to attend in-person sessions became receptive to the idea of phone and video sessions. "Don't assume good things can only happen face-to-face," she shared.

Josie's key to navigating the pandemic is "resilience;" building it in her clients and encouraging it in her coworkers and community. She finds it helpful to have "a sense of humour and a back-up plan," such as an alternate method of contact for a client in case of technical difficulties. Her positive attitude and perseverance have been vital while supporting clients. She also reaches out to others through COVID Facebook support groups and leaves messages of hope in the common areas of her apartment building. "Little things matter!" she exclaimed, such as reminding people they aren't alone.

"My mantra is, 'right now it's like this,'" she shared. It's a simple,

honest statement acknowledging current tough times and the fact they won't last forever.

### Building Bridges

At the Abbotsford Addictions Centre, Counsellor Ernest Chorabik is engaged in an Indigenous Addictions Pilot Project, which faces additional challenges during the pandemic. His goals are to increase the presence of Indigenous-specific counselling services in the Abbotsford area, assess the needs of underserved Indigenous people locally, provide counselling to those living on and off reserves, build bridges with community members and provide tools and groups for the 'Red Road Recovery program.' The 'Red Road' is a reference to following an Indigenous spiritual path during recovery and counselling.

These are important and significant responsibilities at any time, let alone during the pandemic. By July 2020 he had 37 clients and expects numbers will increase, especially as group recovery meetings at the Mission Friendship Centre were postponed during the pandemic.

While considerate of following guidelines during the pandemic for

the safety of clients and coworkers, as an essential worker Ernest has often remained on site at Abbotsford Addictions to help clients unable or hesitant to connect virtually. In addition to counselling sessions, he offers all Indigenous clients pre and post-session smudging, as he believes "culture is healing." Non-Indigenous clients may also participate if they wish, and he hopes it will open them up to new experiences and ways of thinking.

As the community has started to carefully reopen, he and Lesley Braithwaite, Supervisor of Abbotsford Addictions, have begun to reach out to Stó:lō Nation and Matsqui First Nation councils with the hope of making connections and offering more services to members living on and off reserves.

"Judging by the trajectory thus far, it augurs well for the remainder of the term and future continuation of the program," he shared.

### Moving Ahead

At the Archway office on George Ferguson Way, Anas Najim and his team have remained busy offering counselling and other support services

to newcomers through the Moving Ahead Program (MAP) and Stream B Counselling and Employment Program. Focused on refugee claimants and vulnerable immigrants and refugees facing multiple barriers to acculturation and addressing trauma, it was essential that they not lose access to these vital supports during COVID.

While sessions are traditionally one-on-one, during the pandemic most have transitioned to telephone and video conference check-ins. An added challenge is that, while staff at Archway speak more than 20 different languages and we have bilingual or trilingual clinical counsellors, it is sometimes necessary to schedule translators for specific languages.

"For many clients, counselling is a foreign concept to begin with and doing so virtually can be even more challenging. It takes a lot of trust building to get them to start engaging with counselling sessions," shared Anas.

MAP staff also provide support services, such as directing clients to the Archway Food Bank, assisting during doctors' appointments, helping complete government

paperwork and offering guidance with legal matters, banking and more. Through these interactions, clients slowly start to open up about other issues impacting family dynamics.

MAP staff also identified and addressed a unique concern, the amount of incorrect information about COVID-19 government benefits that was spreading throughout newcomer communities.

"Our duty was to clarify all benefits to clients using their first language, and send out explanatory publications," explained Anas.

### South Asian Community Resources

Also at our George Ferguson Way location, a clinical counsellor, bilingual in English and Punjabi, has been busy providing sessions to families and youth in distress through the South Asian Community Resource Office (SACRO). SACRO staff coordinated virtual and telephone counselling for family dysfunction, addiction, parental abuse, and educational supports. Some clients were stuck in India with limited help because of the travel

ban and staff had to support them through that turmoil virtually with a significant time zone difference.

SACRO staff also offered guidance on substance use and harm reduction when selling drugs or having police contact during the pandemic. They facilitated conversations between youth and their parents and gave advice on sexual exploitation and safely using dating apps.

Many youth and their families accessed SACRO services via phone and online messaging while others with less access to technology attended physically-distant meetings at the Archway office.

### Abuse Counselling

Archway Abuse Counselling programs also began offering both remote and in-person services during COVID-19, with the understanding that virtual services aren't suitable for all their clients.

Counsellors were conscious of increased reports of domestic violence as many intimate partners suddenly found themselves on lockdown with their abusers. Staff connected with clients in the most suitable ways for each situation and provided online information and resources for urgent situations via the internet.

The Abuse Counselling programs work with many different clients including women who have experienced domestic violence, children who

have been sexually abused, women who are seeking to exit the sex trade and individuals needing one-on-one short-term counselling.

### Helping Families

The Family Connections Counselling program offered remote and in-person counselling to individuals and couples during the pandemic. Clients were very resourceful in finding confidential places to engage in remote sessions and joined in from their vehicle, bathtub or storage room!

**"For many clients, counselling is a foreign concept to begin with and doing so virtually can be even more challenging. It takes a lot of trust building to get them to start engaging with counselling sessions."**

Marlayne Penner, Counsellor and Clinical Supervisor and Counselling Intern, Sebastian Wingfield found a creative way to offer the Mental Wellness Parenting Group by hosting a series of weekly videos. These mental wellness sessions, along with printable resources and supplementary videos, were made available to clients enrolled in the program through a private webpage they could access at their convenience from any device.

With significant increases in stress and anxiety widely reported this spring and summer, it was important to continue offering services for clients seeking to improve their mental wellness while parenting during the pandemic.

### Youth Support

Finally, over at The Foundry, a health and wellness centre for local youth aged 12 to 24, all counselling services were initially offered virtually at the start of the pandemic. Virtual peer support, phone chats, online messaging and virtual or phone counselling were some of the innovative services offered to youth, parents and caregivers.

In mid-July, in-person counselling sessions were restarted for existing clients, and now Foundry is open for face-to-face appointments with new clients two days a week, although they have yet to return to the walk-in sessions they once offered.

### Creative Counselling

While counselling is typically thought of as an in-person private or group activity, access to technology and the spirit of innovation have proved that services could continue during the pandemic. Archway counselling staff and their clients have demonstrated resiliency and adaptability during trying times in their pursuit of improved mental wellness. ■



SACRO Case Manager Parveen.

## FOOD BANK

# Open in Tough Times

How the Archway Food Bank keeps helping local people during a global pandemic

**IT** should come as no surprise that this spring and summer have been especially busy for the Archway Food Bank, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

### New Challenges and Increased Demand

Not only has demand for their services grown in new ways, but staff have been busy sourcing new suppliers when existing ones faced shortages. They've reconfigured distribution centres to maintain physical distancing, set up satellite services in various neighbourhoods and identified key focus areas in need of increased support, namely: local seniors, students

in the Abbotsford School District and temporary foreign workers.

The Food Bank also expanded and nearly doubled delivery services to meet the needs of those unable to leave their homes due to mobility challenges, self-isolation or quarantine.

The Archway Meals on Wheels program also experienced a 65% increase in demand for delivered prepared food for seniors. With more seniors than ever unable to afford prepared food, the Food Bank covered the cost so that seniors living below the poverty line could have access to the food they needed.

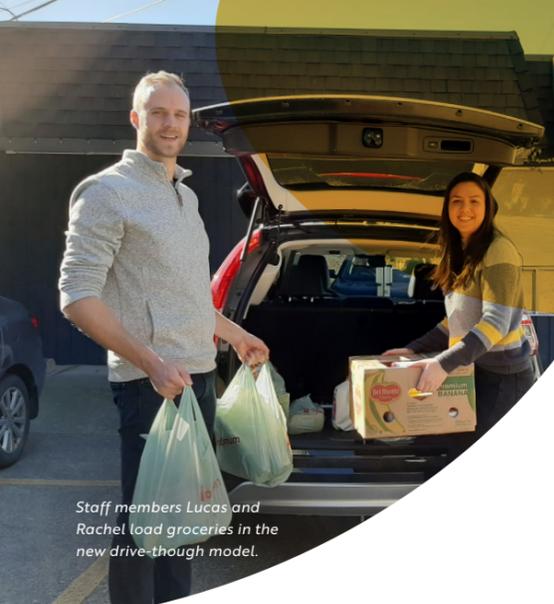
### Starfish Program

At the height of the pandemic, students who relied on Starfish Packs found themselves at home without this supplementary food, and some students who'd never needed a Starfish Pack before suddenly did.

Given the evolving situation and changes in the school system, the families were provided with grocery gift cards in April while the program transitioned from weekly to monthly distribution of essential pantry food items. The Starfish Pack program fed 500 students in May and June, which was a 64% jump from previous months.



Operations Supervisor Nick with donations.



Staff members Lucas and Rachel load groceries in the new drive-through model.



Starfish Coordinator Meghan with food for schoolchildren.



Programs Supervisor Huw helps load groceries for delivery.



Rachel encourages online donations.



Matt helps unpack deliveries.



JESS wanted to make use of her time while laid off and chose to volunteer with the food bank because it's a tangible and direct way of helping the community. Initially, she was surprised at what she discovered! The food bank building was smaller and the volunteers within its walls were more diverse than she imagined. As a volunteer, she helped pack hampers and sorted fresh produce for distribution.

As Starfish Packs are traditionally brought to the students' schools, the Food Bank staff were especially grateful to the Abbotsford School District for ensuring each child received their food, either by making their school available as a pick-up location or in some cases delivering right to the child's home.

### Community Support

The Archway Food Bank has been able to answer the increased demand and transition to new ways of operating thanks to a generous community. Individuals and organizations have supported Archway in continuing to enhance access to food in a safe manner

while faced with food shortages and limited contact with others.

While the need for volunteers was increasing, it was apparent that many long-term volunteers were themselves vulnerable. New volunteers stepped in to fill the gap and donned personal protective equipment and maintained physical distancing while sorting food and supporting their neighbours.

### Fluctuating Donations

With the economy beginning to reopen, the Food Bank is watching to see what the "next normal" will be. Since the pandemic hit, both the fresh and non-perishable food stock has fluctuated.

The donated fresh food that the program has come to depend on has been decreasing, which has meant more purchasing. Thanks to the amazing financial response of the community and emergency government supports, staff were able to purchase close to \$73K of necessary food, right when it was needed.

Another unknown is the ability to hold fundraising events that the community has rallied around. The Archway Jake Virtanen Charity Golf Tournament has been cancelled for 2020, and the Toys for Tots Christmas Breakfast is being re-imagined.

"Right now, the future feels especially unpredictable," said Dave Murray, Manager of the Food Bank and Philanthropy. "We are brainstorming ways to keep engaging our donors and our community, while doing our part to keep everyone safe by physically distancing."

### Increasing Access to Food

The effects of this pandemic will be long-lasting for some vulnerable groups. Some jobs may never return, and government benefits will eventually end. Through it all the Food Bank will continue to innovate to reduce barriers people are facing

in accessing food and connect them with the wide range of Archway programming.

"We are so grateful for the immediate care and action from our community and the support of volunteers. Without donations and volunteer time, we wouldn't have been able to ramp up deliveries, ensure our shelves remained stocked, roll out safety protocols, process fresh food, distribute food hampers and provide culturally appropriate food," said Dave. "Thank you to all our supporters for helping to reduce food insecurity in Abbotsford." ■



Volunteers Kiran, Tara and Lily.

"The staff have been so sweet. The best part of volunteering has been working with such a kind group of people and feeling so useful doing the job that is so needed."

A coalition meeting prior to COVID-19.

FRASER VALLEY HUMAN DIGNITY COALITION

# 20 Years of Responding to Hate and Honouring Diversity



**B**ack in 1999, people in the Fraser Valley were starting to talk. They were concerned about incidents of racism and discrimination, and keen to do something about it. In response, a number of local organizations collaborated to benefit the community by responding to hate and honouring the diversity of local people.

What is now the Fraser Valley Human Dignity Coalition (FVHDC) was developed, and it became one of the first organizations of its kind in BC to respond to critical incidents of discrimination.

## Racism Through the Years

Throughout the last 20-plus years the coalition has continually received reports of racism, white supremacy, heterosexism, sexism, Islamophobia, and other forms of discrimination. They work to address these knowing they are both making a difference and dedicating themselves to a job which sadly may not be 'done' anytime soon.

Often, world events influence the incidents which occur in the community. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 in the US, there was a significant rise in local reports of anti-Muslim and Islamophobic incidents. In 2016, when the federal government committed to bringing Government Assisted Refugees to Canada there was increased racism and discrimination towards newcomers, including newly arrived

Syrian refugees. Most recently in June 2020, reports increased significantly with heightened awareness of the Black Lives Matter movement.

## Community Protocol

In 2004, the coalition developed the Abbotsford Community Protocol: A Response to Critical Incidents of Discrimination and Hate Crime. This is repeatedly revised with the latest information on how community members can respond to and report incidents of discrimination and hate crimes. A highlight in the FVHDC's history is this protocol being adopted as a best-practice tool that other communities use as an example in creating their own community protocols to respond to discrimination, racism and hate crimes.

## Raising Awareness

While the adoption of the Abbotsford Community Protocol was encouraging, one challenge the FVHDC has continually faced is keeping community members informed and encouraging them to report incidents. Limited funding for the coalition means limited activities it can host in the community with member organizations and community partners. Funding has been gratefully received from the provincial government, but there is always more that could be done.

Of course, during the COVID-19 pandemic the ability to reach the community has been especially hampered by the postponement of community events. FVHDC members have transitioned to online meetings and connecting with people via social media. As always, they adapt.

In recent years, to keep meetings relevant and effective they invite guest speakers to share personal experiences

In 2019, the FVHDC held the Intersections at the Block event at The Reach Gallery Museum, on the International Day for Elimination of Racism. This event, with over 200 diverse attendees, was key for highlighting young adult Black, Indigenous, People of Colour and immigrant performers. It also featured several community organizations and booths including an Indigenous clothing designer with items for sale; Health Initiative for Men; Queer Life in Colour with Him; UFV's University Feminist Project; RACE Anti-Racism Network; Amnesty International; World University Service of Canada; the Gurmat Centre with Turban Up; Renovatio Creative Co. which creates and sells accessories that include an Indigenous, feminist perspective; and Archway Community Services.

## Looking Forward

While it can be challenging to work for two decades towards the elimination of racism and discrimination and still see it occur locally and globally, the coalition does so tirelessly. Their enthusiasm for the rights and dignity of all people has never waned.

"Even encouraging one person to change their perspective is a cause for celebration," explained Alison Gutrath, Program Supervisor for the Archway Diversity Education Program who currently co-chairs the coalition. Other members also share that dedication. Celine Ahodekon, Equity Representative for racialized members in the Union of National Employees, shared her perspective: "Whether it is to apply for a job or to make a volunteering commitment, I always read, first, the mandate of the company or organization. As a human rights and social justice advocate in my Union and in my workplace, I joined The Fraser Valley Human Dignity Coalition because their mandate responds to my values. As human beings, we are all born free

and equal in dignity and rights and that is what FVHDC stands and advocates for. By joining FVHDC, I felt like my voice could be heard and together we could work to address issues of racism and hate in the community. Therefore, making Abbotsford a safe and healthy community for all its residents."

Whether advocating and being an ally for Indigenous rights, Black Lives Matter, the LGBTQ2S+ community or refugees, the Fraser Valley Human Dignity Coalition has played an integral role in our community. They educate on and celebrate diversity in all its forms and manage an important protocol that tracks incidents of racism in our community to report to all levels of government.

Manpreet Grewal, Director of Multicultural and Immigrant Integration at Archway celebrates the coalition's work, stating, "we are proud that Abbotsford was one of the first communities in BC which got key stakeholders together to address critical issues of racism and bigotry. Archway is strongly committed to its work in building inclusive communities and we're grateful for all the partners who came to the table to carry on this important work. We also thank the Province of BC for supporting community-based responses through its Organizing Against Racism and Hate initiative in the past, and through the Resilience BC initiative now."

Ideally, a day would come when the dignity and value of all people is so apparent that organizations like the FVHDC are no longer needed. While that may not be the reality, our community is fortunate to have people dedicated to taking up the cause. ■

**"As human beings, we are all born free and equal in dignity and rights and that is what FVHDC stands and advocates for."**

with the community. They have also hosted interfaith dialogues and talks in response to discrimination. Most recently, FVHDC members joined a local Black Lives Matter demonstration, with member Harold Rosen of the Abbotsford Interfaith Movement noting that it was "peaceful and friendly, while generating the collective sense that effective action must be taken to remedy systemic injustice."

ROD SANTIAGO

# Marking 10 Years as Executive Director

Executive Director, Rod Santiago, recently marked 10 years at the helm of Archway Community Services. This past decade has been filled with tremendous growth and change for the organization, with much for him to reflect on.

Some changes were public, like the advocacy for what eventually became Hearthstone Place and changing the agency's name from Abbotsford Community Services to Archway to be more descriptive of who we are and all we encompass. Other changes happened behind the scenes as the agency grew rapidly and needed to strengthen how we work amongst departments and with the community in order to better achieve our mission of fostering community well-being and social justice through positive action and leadership.

## A History of Helping

Prior to joining the senior leadership team at Archway, Rod had a wide variety of experiences in the non-profit sector. In the late 80's he was director of Settlement Services with Immigrant Services Society of BC. Among a variety of responsibilities assisting immigrants and refugees, he oversaw Welcome House – an arrival point for newcomers to Vancouver.

**"Because we have such an exceptional leadership team, I've given myself the freedom to not try to be strong all the time."**

He then spent eight years as a planning consultant with United Way of the Lower Mainland. Along with providing funds and organizational support to agencies, Rod also offered social planning assistance to various municipalities and communities.

Additionally, during the early 90's when diversity wasn't the prevalent cause it is today, Rod was part of the small team that supported 53 non-profit agencies through a three-year multicultural, anti-racist organizational change process. This was the first initiative of this magnitude to help our sector become more inclusive and accessible.

Wanting to utilize their experiences in a global setting, Rod and his family embarked on a journey to Uzbekistan in Central Asia, where they spent five years developing social enterprises in a country run – at the time – by one of the five worst dictators of the world. This enabled him to work alongside women living in extreme poverty; many were the third or fourth "wives" of men who didn't adequately provide for them and sexually abused them and their young daughters.

One initiative Rod was working to establish provided training to women in the art of creating silk carpets. Women who participated could then sell the rugs internationally for considerable sums, make their own livelihoods and forge better futures for them and their children. What

set this initiative apart from others was the sense of dignity that it would develop for the women, and that the project would eventually be self-sufficient.

Rod and his family acculturated to living in Uzbekistan, learned Uzbek,

and designed initiatives to be sustainable long after the Andijon massacre that eventually led to their family's exit from the country.

Immediately prior to joining Archway, Rod was the Director of Youth Services at Chilliwack Community



Rod speaking to local schoolchildren.

Services. That role enabled him and the youth team to address very real and present youth challenges such as addictions, mental health, homelessness, suicide ideation and gang involvement. In Chilliwack, Rod was instrumental in starting innovative youth programming, including transitional supportive housing.

## Throwing His Name in the Ring at Abbotsford Community Services

One day, he heard that Thelma Schrock, who took over for Archway founder Walter Paetkau, was planning on retiring herself.

"I'd never been an Executive Director before," he indicated. "Quite honestly, I never thought I had a chance because this was an agency of such complexity with such an incredible reputation. Nevertheless, I chose to apply."

The application process was long, with the current leaders and board at Archway wanting to ensure they selected the right person for the job. Rod progressed through early rounds, and along the way

connected with people in Abbotsford – his community – about the agency, gaining a further depth of knowledge and respect for our work.

"The more I learned, the more I fell in love with who this agency was and what it stood for. ACS stood for advocacy and social justice, tenets I believed in," Rod stated. He went on to highlight his respect for the foresight of Archway founder Walter Paetkau and the amazing things that Directors like Shairose Jinnah and Manpreet Grewal have accomplished.

Eventually, Rod recounted having a final set of interviews first with staff and then with the Board of Directors. When offered the role, he prayed about such a major decision, consulted his wife and family, and happily accepted.

## Becoming an Executive Director

Entering in as only the third Executive Director of an organization with a forty-year history, Rod described the experience as "rich and rare." He reflected on Walter's creation

of the agency from scratch and the assembly of such a gifted team whose ideas and strengths turned into innovative programs and fighting for the causes we believe in.

When Thelma Schrock stepped in as Executive Director, he reflected on how she and the Board of Directors were so strong in governance, systems and structure. They set in place new policies and were instrumental in the agency's accreditation with CARF.

Working at United Way of the Lower Mainland had given him a view into the operation of hundreds of different nonprofit organizations. To be invited to lead an agency that was so strong in operations and governance in programs and administration was "like being handed a dream job on a silver platter."

## Personal and Organizational Growth

With that as his starting point, Rod had the privilege of continuing Archway's development and growth. He has experienced many moments of joy and celebration as well as our share of challenges. Most surprising to him in the last decade has been the continual discovery of how skilled, knowledgeable and passionate our staff are about what we do.

"I love our team. I am amazed by the wealth of experience and enthusiasm we have in-house. We're very fortunate to attract and retain the talent that defines Archway. So many diverse people come together for a common cause and that's what makes Archway unique - in comparison to other organizations.

It's our complexity and how well our very different parts work with each other in

service to individuals, families and community." That love and appreciation for people is evident, as "people" remain Rod's favourite part of his job.

Reflecting on what initiatives he is most proud of, the Hearthstone Place supportive housing project and Foundry youth health centre immediately came to mind for Rod. His pride for Hearthstone stems not just from the accomplishment of a beautiful building and the level of excellence at which Neil Stark, Megan Capp, their team and the residents maintain the site, but how the agency and its supporters stood up for the message that every individual deserves a roof over their head. "Not everyone in community accepted that message right away," Rod recalled. "But now there are few visible detractors to the Abbotsford Homelessness Action Plan."

"We introduced the concept of 'housing first' at a time when dumping chicken manure and ripping up the tents of individuals living rough was sanctioned in Abbotsford. Our agency took the brunt of the hit at that time. Because our team works so hard to run such a great residence, we've paved the way for 'justice, opportunities and equitable access for all.' I'm really grateful that today other groups don't have to fight to open low-barrier supportive housing initiatives."

"Another first I'm really proud of is the way Shairose Jinnah, Simone Maassen, our Youth Resource Centre team, and the community pulled together to create Foundry Abbotsford. We are part of starting a one-stop, made-for-BC approach to delivering mental health, primary

care, substance use, community social services, employment, education, food security, and many other supports to youth and young adults, all in one place. Now youth only have to tell their story once and we, their providers, coordinate efforts rather than putting up unnecessary hurdles and roadblocks. It's an impactful model of service delivery that I believe would be transferable to other populations like seniors or women."



Rod making balloon animals for children at a multicultural picnic.

When queried on how he's changed during his tenure at Archway, Rod reflected that he is learning to ask for help and to pace himself. These were qualities he was terrible at when he first arrived as Executive Director.

"Because we have such an exceptional leadership team, I've given myself the freedom to not try to be strong all the time. Not that I've arrived, but I'm learning that I don't have to be "on" continually. I can take breaks too. My mental wellness counts; mental wellness counts for each of us."

In his capacity as Archway's Executive Director, Rod is part of various causes. He is currently the vice chair of the Community Social Services Employers' Association (CSSEA) of BC. He is on the Homelessness Action Advisory Committee of Abbotsford City Council, on the Advisory Committee of Peace and Conflict Studies at UFV, and is a part of Equal Work – Equal Pay B.C.

Rod always makes time for a few essentials in his day. These include self-reflection, prayer, and family; his wife Karyn, his daughters and their partners, and his granddaughters. Rod lives for Kalia and Nina! He also loves to spend time with friends and values the opportunities he gets to mentor others.

When not in the company of groups of people, Rod and Karyn love to explore 'off the beaten path' parts of the world (often with packs on their back.) Alternatively, Rod finds true replenishment when he can disappear for a week-or-so to go canoeing, tenting or snowshoeing somewhere really remote.

Pondering what the next ten years may hold, Rod indicated he most looks forward to continuing to learn together, as an agency. His sense of purpose, love of people and vision keep him going even during challenging moments.

He shared, "I'm not one to be satisfied with what is, so I look forward to what ought to be and what we can become together. Ever striving for justice, opportunities and equitable access for all." ■

## LEGAL ADVOCACY

# No Adjournment of Services During COVID-19

Over the last five decades Archway has provided a significant number of legal aid and legal advocacy services, and these community supports didn't stop during COVID-19.

When lockdown guidelines were implemented by the Province of BC, many legal services were put on hold. Courthouses were closed and legal professionals were forced to find new ways of supporting clients without seeing them in person. Our three legal advocacy programs were able to adapt to this new model and continue helping people as best they could during such a trying time.

### Legal Advocacy for Agricultural Workers

Border closures and travel restrictions quickly filled life with uncertainty for agricultural workers who are essential to our local economy and food supply. They include everyone from berry pickers and other produce farm employees to nursery and greenhouse staff, poultry and dairy farm hands and production

plant staff. Initially there was a lot of confusion about obtaining work permit renewals, being unable to travel home or being stuck at home, unable to travel to work. Some workers traveled to Canada only to lose their jobs a short time later and others were subjected to abuse and were on the edge of returning to their home countries. Others had jobs awaiting them but were stuck in other countries due to travel restrictions, such as the country-wide lockdown in India.

At Archway, our Legal Advocacy for Migrant Workers program includes Claudia Stoehr, our Spanish-speaking advocate, Sarbjit Gill and Ricky Bhadesh, Punjabi-speaking advocates and supervisor Gurcharan Dhillon.

Through their combined expertise, they helped temporary foreign workers access food and support during periods of quarantine, apply for other work permits and find new employment, register with Global Affairs if they were Canadian citizens abroad and even apply for CERB and BC Emergency Benefits if they were eligible. "There

was a lot of work involved in making the program pivot in response to the pandemic," explained Gurcharan. "We had to very quickly ensure the team had the proper equipment to work remotely throughout the pandemic. At the same time, we had to make sure that clients who had little to no access to technology were not falling through the cracks." The team worked on applying all of Archway's COVID-19 guidelines to ensure staff safety for those continuing to work from the office.

Claudia noted that while she could work effectively from home, it didn't have the same "feel" as seeing clients in person; however, it was necessary for safety's sake. "In Latin culture people are very sociable," she advised. Most of the farm workers are used to being able to drop by the office when they need support. Even when they work long hours six to seven days a week, the Legal Advocacy team adjusts to assist them.

Already dealing with uncertainty, the lockdown amplified their sense of isolation and loneliness while they



Legal Advocacy Supervisor Ilana and Family Legal Advocate Frances.





◀ Claudia with a van full of donations for migrant workers.



▲ Sarb, Claudia and Gurcharan at the 2019 Health Fair for Agricultural Workers.

***“ We had to very quickly ensure the team had the proper equipment to work remotely throughout the pandemic... to make sure that clients who had little to no access to technology were not falling through the cracks.”***

were away from their homes and families. “Whether we connect in-person or virtually, we like to let the migrant workers know they are not alone and that as an agency we are here to help them,” said Gurcharan.

The program was able to help over 900 temporary foreign and migrant workers who arrived during the pandemic and needed to be advised immediately on quarantine requirements and other guidelines. Connections to staff who speak their language was both comforting in an unfamiliar place and ensured newly arrived workers knew what was expected of them regarding COVID.

### **Family Legal Advocacy**

Frances De Beir in the Archway Family Legal Advocacy program is also busy supporting clients remotely, many of whom are experiencing new challenges arising from the pandemic.

During COVID-19, Frances quickly noticed her clients’ needs changing. When courthouses began to close, only documents for urgent matters could be filed. Many clients struggled to see their children. “Unfortunately,” Frances reports, “the other party sometimes uses

***“ Arming people with knowledge is sometimes as much of a success as winning a case.”***

the pandemic as a reason for denying parental access even though court orders are still supposed to be followed.”

Other clients have come to Frances for assistance with obtaining protection orders against abusive former partners, speaking to duty counsel, preparing to self-represent, being granted

interim access to their children and obtaining more legal aid hours.

It’s Frances’ first year in her role as an Archway Family Legal Advocate and she’s noticed many clients find completing court forms challenging or aren’t certain how the legal system works. She’s glad she can be there to support them, even if it is via the phone or internet.

### **Community Legal Advocacy**

The pandemic is also a time of economic uncertainty, which is manifesting in different ways throughout our community. Ilena Candiani, the Community Legal Advocacy Supervisor, has been busy supporting people in Abbotsford while her co-worker Kim Donaldson works out of Chilliwack. Due to physical distancing measures, they both began working remotely and connecting with clients and others by telephone or video conferencing.

While Ilena and Kim have seen a decline in evictions and holds on

Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (MSDPR) cheques during the pandemic, such situations haven’t entirely stopped. While the Residential Tenancy Branch initially had a Ministerial Order put in place halting most evictions since the end of March, it has now changed. In most cases, evictions are once again permitted and evictions for non-payment of rent resume September 1st. Ilena and Kim note that tenants who were unable to pay rent during COVID-19 have until July 2021 to repay the arrears.

Initially, the MSDPR had suspended most holds on cheques at the start of the pandemic. Most holds are in place when clients need to provide further information such as identification, medical reports, employment insurance information or similar. COVID-19 made obtaining such information challenging, necessitating the hold. However, as all levels of government adjust to the “new normal,” information is becoming available and holds are being reintroduced.

The ever-changing circumstances result in a significant increase in Kim’s and Ilena’s workloads as measures protecting clients are lifted. They are also busy preparing to assist with overpayment of Canada Emergency Response Benefits (CERB). Ilena notes that, “while CERB was rolled out quickly in order to help citizens get some income, little to no proof of eligibility has resulted in many people collecting benefits for which they were not eligible.”

Ilena also notes that while the volume of disability applications decreased at the start of the pandemic due to doctors’ being focused on the pandemic, they, too, will start to pick up.

As everyone adjusts to the current situation and the government offers various financial supports for those facing hardships during the pandemic, questions arise regarding applications and eligibility. Helping people who are facing evictions, being found eligible for benefits after a denial or learning what their rights are to avoid being taken advantage of are successes for her, and helping people create road

maps to accessing community services are highlights! “Arming people with knowledge is sometimes as much of a success as winning a case,” she shared. As supervisor of the legal advocacy team, Ilena is also there to support her team. She has found adapting to the “new normal” both physically and emotionally challenging but remains committed to her work.

The work of Ilena, Gurcharan and their respective teams proves that even when a pandemic brings most of the world to a standstill, legal advocacy remains an essential service. As our community continues to adjust and cope, they remain available to help vulnerable people in need. ■



Community Legal Advocate Kim.



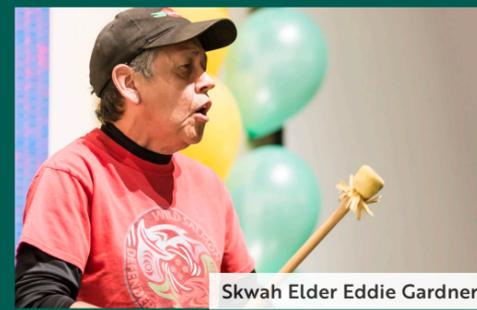
Three Executive Directors



SYAP Team at Halloween



Staff Recognition



Skwah Elder Eddie Gardner



Settlement Sun Run Team



SACRO Team with BC Award for Youth Leadership



Recruitment Fair



2019 Halloween Fundraiser for United Way



Northview Volunteers at Family Centre



George Ferguson Way Staff



2020 Cultural Diversity Award Recipients



2020 Rally Against Exploitation

# 2019-2020 A Year of People Helping People



2020 Cultural Diversity Awards



2020 Recycling Mind Grind Competition



Addictions Staff and Rod



Urban Farm Produce for Farmers Market



Archway Launch Day



Better at Home



2019 Orange Shirt Day



LINC Class



2019 Inclusive Employer Award Recipients



Discovery Drive-by Wave



2019 Community Builders Awards



Board President Steve Carlton



2020 Pink Shirt Day



Prospera Youth Angel Tree



2019 Purple Light Nights



2019 Toys for Tots



50th Anniversary Open House



Indigenous Brushing Ceremony at Foundry

# Providing Clarity During a Global Pandemic



Illustration by Grant Bielefeld.

ITS staff in their office.



fearful, but we knew services like medical interpretation would be more important than ever and that temporarily shutting down wasn't an option," said manager Ivona Kado.

As British Columbia entered lockdown ITS initially experienced "a landslide of

cancellations" from clients uncertain about what the coming weeks and months would bring. Despite that decrease in interpretation and translation work, however, there was still much to do in figuring out how to keep staff and freelancers safe.

With increased safety measures in place and personal protective equipment provided, interpreters began attending acute care facilities in the Fraser Valley and throughout the Lower Mainland. ITS

provided interpretation services for patients who spoke languages other than English and connected with health care providers to offer their services. This included arranging interpretation services by phone or video chat instead of typical face-to-face meetings.

A number of interpreters set themselves up exclusively for interpretation via video from their home office. They secured a reliable Wi-Fi connection and the right equipment to be prepared for bigger than usual volumes of work from home.

"They quickly became experts in video interpretation," shared Kado. "This wasn't something we had offered in the past and COVID was the push we needed to stay competitive and meet the needs of our clients."

Back in the ITS office, staff transitioned their workspaces to provide physical

distancing for those who needed to come in and helped set other team members up to work successfully from home. Whether staff were at the office or at home, they were all able to contribute and monitor the online database for outstanding bookings or cancellations.

"We found that our workload was literally 'melting away' as all hands were on board" said Kado.

Overall, business in this normally bustling social enterprise decreased dramatically from an average of 200 assignments or calls a day down to approximately 25 in March and April.

Interpretation requests were the hardest hit as people gathered less often. Translation work was not as heavily impacted and the program's regular clients including government

agencies and police departments continued to send in documents.

While work started picking up again in the last half of May, no one knows if the trend will continue or what the future holds. ITS was

**"We found that our workload was literally melting away as all hands were on board."**

encouraged to see several large contracts extended, particularly in the area of medical dispatch.

As a social enterprise, ITS supports other Archway programs as well as providing jobs for six staff members and over 500 freelancers, many of

whom are immigrants. "Some depend on work from us for a full-time income while others use it as an opportunity to supplement their income," said Kado. "A continued loss in work would have an effect on so many people."

"We so appreciate the ongoing support from our long-term clients and look forward to working with businesses again as they return to normal. We've been in business for over 26 years and look forward to continuing to contribute to our vibrant, multicultural community."

The past few months have proved especially challenging for many non-profit organizations and social enterprise projects but resiliency, determination and the ability to adapt are enabling ITS to provide those services through the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. ■



## FAMILY CONNECTIONS AND FAMILY EDUCATION

**T**he Family Connections and Family Education programs are vital services offered by Archway during what are already challenging times for parents and their children.

Family Connections helps to strengthen and preserve healthy relationships between parents and children, increase family functioning, facilitate supervised visits and provide counselling, support and assistance during periods of crisis. The program works closely with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), Child and Youth Mental Health (CYMH), and Fraser Valley Aboriginal Children and Family Services Society (FVACFSS).

The Family Education program offers a wealth of experience working with families and groups. Facilitators bring insight, information, and humour to psycho-educational parenting courses within a caring and non-judgmental environment. Often, people participating in Family Education are referred by MCFD and FVACFSS, but self-referrals for parenting classes are accepted.

Kim Prins, the supervisor of both programs, reported that during the COVID-19 pandemic, parents in Family Connections experienced job loss and couldn't access community resources they normally utilized. Many were unable to see their children in-person due to self-isolation guidelines and were understandably concerned that progress towards being reunited with their children would be delayed.

Family Education participants were experiencing similar issues, and all were feeling increased stress and loneliness during the pandemic.

# Support During Unprecedented Times

*Supervisor Kim with Elvia and Lisa.*



Elvia with a craft kit she's prepared.

***"We have delivered hundreds of craft and snack kits and done nearly 600km of driving in the process."***



Freddie with snacks to prepare for families.

### Adopting New Methods

COVID-19 has been challenging for everyone, but Kim and the Family Education and Family Connections team saw that clients who were already experiencing challenges might be disproportionately affected. Accordingly, they quickly moved all services online or via telephone, including client and child visits, counselling, outreach meetings and parenting classes.

Recognizing that digital literacy and access to technology differ from client to client, program staff were delighted to discover many people found it easier to engage online or by phone than they had in person. Others who lacked access to technology were provided with access to a physically-distant and regularly cleaned client computer at Archway for virtual visits with their families.

In Raising Up a Family, a program with a focus on local Indigenous culture and parenting, staff have also made an incredible transition to offering their services in new ways during the pandemic. Classes have been offered online, culturally appropriate crafts and even 85 meals have been delivered to families. Online sessions have also been facilitated with a drummer from the Stó:lō Nation.

Staff were also able to support people with mental health concerns and expanded their outreach services to include COVID-related anxiety. Additionally, they referred clients to other Archway programs or community organizations who were adapting services during COVID, including Abby Dads, the Family Centre, online doctors, counsellors and online AA meetings.

Childcare staff working with the Family Education program have also demonstrated their innovation and kept busy during the pandemic. At a time when no in-person visits were possible, they increased cleaning protocols, donned personal protective equipment (PPE) and created 310 craft kits and 310 snack packs to deliver to the doorsteps of program participants!

"We have delivered hundreds of craft and snack kits and done nearly 600km of driving in the process," shared staff member Freddie.

### Adjusting to the 'New Normal'

As the Province of BC has moved forward into new stages of reopening, so have the Family Connections and Family Education programs.

Ever cautious, staff have resumed conducting supervised visits and counselling with increased cleaning practices and additional PPE. Outreach is also resuming in-person; meetings are conducted in backyards, playgrounds and other safe outdoor spaces where confidentiality can be maintained and PPE is worn.

As of July, Family Education classes began operating in a hybrid model, with physically distant in-person morning sessions and online afternoon sessions. Despite everything going on, clients are still engaging and participating, even maintaining contact with staff if they're out of the area. For example, one client who was in Alberta and unable to get back to BC had program information mailed to him and attended classes online.

Kim is pleased to see that educational outcomes of virtual participants are parallel to those of in-person attendees pre-COVID. Interactions between childcare workers and families also remain positive. Children report looking forward to snack and craft deliveries and parents appreciate maintaining connections with childcare staff.

### Looking Forward

Kim and her team look forward to providing more inperson classes and childcare again as the situation improves. They are eager to reconnect face-to-face with participants, offer more programs for people who feel isolated and enable children to interact in person with safe and healthy protocols in place.

At the same time, they recognize it's likely programs will never operate in the exact same way they did before the pandemic and are excited to continue exploring how technology can help them deliver services more broadly.

Family Connections, Family Education and their clients have certainly risen to the occasion during an unprecedented situation. They are a testament to the resiliency of people who deal with stress, uncertainty and keep finding new ways to learn, grow, help one another and connect. ■

# For Skilled Immigrants

## SUMIT'S STORY

### Adjusting to a New Life in Canada

The Career Paths for Skilled Immigrants program at Archway Community Services helps newcomers find related employment to their former careers. It's designed to break the stereotype of doctors driving taxis and provides newcomers with one-to-one support, financial assistance and training by employment counsellors.

When Sumit Paul Singh immigrated to Canada in 2016, he planned to open a physiotherapy clinic like the clinics he had owned in India. He quickly found out that his licensing didn't transfer and the process of getting certified was long and expensive. In a moment of desperation, Sumit considered becoming a security guard or care aide so he could support his family.

When he became connected with the Career Paths program, he began to feel like he could "get his life back." After 20 months in program, he obtained licensing and is proud to be the first Registered Manual Osteopath in BC.

He now works full-time as a Registered Manual Osteopath at the Newleaf Total Wellness Centre and various other centres.

"It was a total transition of my life and now I'm living my dreams," said Sumit. "It gave me direction, knowledge, financial support and better understanding to reach my goal to become a Registered Manual Osteopath in such a short period of time."



"It's so rewarding to see our clients regain hope and independence," said Mary Finch, the program coordinator for Career Paths. "With the continuing labour shortage, it's in everyone's best interests to have workers using their full potential."

"Our program is tailored to each individual to help them find something suitable and figure out the steps to obtaining meaningful employment using their experience or training abroad. The barriers newcomers face can be financial or sometimes it's just a lack of awareness of the Canadian working culture that stops them from getting hired." "My team and I help our clients unlock their potential in Canada, and we're so proud to be a part of our clients' success stories." ■



Newcomers interested in accessing the program can find more details about the eligibility requirements at [Archway.ca/CPSI](https://www.archway.ca/CPSI)

## GURDAS' STORY

### Banking on a New Life in Canada



Moving is challenging. Whether you're packing up and transitioning across town or across the province, it's exhausting, stressful and takes time to settle in.

Those stresses are magnified when you move to a new country, but people like Gurdas do so well they make it look easy. Adjusting to a new language, culture, community and career are challenges he is tackling with a smile on his face.

#### Connecting in Canada

Gurdas arrived in Canada in March 2019; less than a year ago. His wife had already been here for seven years and he was finally reunited with her and their young daughter. Although happy his sponsorship had been approved, Gurdas initially felt lonely and isolated.

In India his career kept him busy, but unemployment left him home alone. While looking after his family was important, it was different than what he was used to, especially in a place where the people and surroundings were unfamiliar.

Over eight years, Gurdas had built a successful career in banking and was keen to continue it in Canada. But where would he start? Would he have the necessary qualifications?

Gurdas' wife referred him to Jen Romero at Archway Community

Services, where he leaped at the opportunity to participate in programs for newcomers. Conversation Circles with Jen's Community Connections program offered support while practicing English in an informal setting. He made friends and shared food while bonding with other newcomers. Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) classes then helped him put his English skills to the test.

Next, he enrolled in the Career Paths program for skilled newcomers, seeking career advice from supervisor Mary Finch.

"Mary taught me how to prepare myself for a Canadian work environment," Gurdas shared. The Career Paths left him "feeling really encouraged that he'd succeed here."

Initially, Gurdas was employed at a cheque cashing business, but he wanted to further his career in a mainstream financial services environment. Mary suggested he reach out to credit unions instead of big banks and ask for practicum opportunities.

#### Prospering at Prospera

Gurdas' decision to seek opportunities at Prospera was a great one; though the Clearbrook branch he visited wasn't hiring, staff there immediately saw his potential and referred him to Delair Branch Manager Eileen.

"He needs to be a Prospera employee!" was the message she received.

Eileen gave him a chance to work on a part time, casual basis without a practicum, allowing him to jump into the Canadian workforce sooner than he expected. Soon, a full-time position was his.

"I had no doubt he was the right person for the job," stated Eileen. A quick learner with a positive attitude, Gurdas fit right in with the team. "My colleagues accept me and support me very well," he reported. "I feel like this is my family.... working here is wonderful."

Once concerned he'd have to start from scratch despite eight years of work experience, he's delighted to already be doing work on par with his responsibilities in India.

Gurdas is happy to share that the support he received from Archway was instrumental in his success settling into life (and work) in Canada. In less than a year, he's become part of the community, even volunteering at an Archway 50th Anniversary book launch event.

"It might take some time," Gurdas advises other newcomers, "but keep trying, don't give up. Success will come to you." ■

# 10 Years of Supporting Fathers

## in Active Parenting



**R**eg Unrau has been with Abby Dads for nearly 10 years; joining in the 'early days' of the program which supports local fathers as they endeavour towards healthier relationships with their families.

Abby Dads was initially part of the New Beginning Young Parent program which supports secondary school students who are parenting. The Ministry of Family and Child Development (MCFD) has provided funding for father support workers in this capacity since 1994. As the need for more support for fathers grew, Abby Dads became a separate program in 2010. It now supports young fathers in New Beginnings and fathers of all ages in the wider community.

Reg recalls that the program was much calmer when he started in June 2011. If even half a dozen dads and their kids would attend "My Daddy and Me," a drop-in play time session of it felt busy.

By comparison, in 2020 before COVID "My Daddy and Me" consistently welcomed 10 to 12 dads with up to 20 children for the Saturday morning sessions, followed by 6 to 8 attendees for "My Daddy and Me Snack Time" afterwards.

Other Abby Dads sessions are also busier these days. Anger Awareness classes used to run twice a year with 6 to 10 participants, but continuously cycled sessions of both it and Men in Relationships now consistently draw 12 to 15 dads in both English and Punjabi. These classes focus on helping men to strengthen all their relationships, with a focus on immediate family members.

Reg is encouraged to see more and more dads come out for the various programs Abby Dads offers. Seeing the tangible change in the fathers he serves has kept him enthusiastic for

the work he does! When asked what some of his favourite aspects of the job are, he replied, "getting to spend time with the dads and walking the road to restoration together. Watching them support each other has also been very gratifying to observe."

In addition to busier, fuller programs, the Abby Dads team has also grown over the last decade. Initially run by Reg and supervisor Jeff McLean, today a team of four facilitate various sessions throughout the week in both English and Punjabi. In addition to their own programming, they also connect clients with other Archway services, such as the food bank and parenting classes, as well as community resources. To date, more than 100 Abby Dads participants have also received counselling from Masters' students interning at Archway!



**"The passion and dedication that the men doing this work exude is very inspiring."**

Other changes have included focusing on fathers with children of all ages as opposed to just those with kids under age six and developing close relationships with local Crown Counsel and MCFD staff. Synergy with these partners and effective communication between the MCFD, fathers and Abby Dads staff have been obvious in resulting client successes.

The last decade has been both challenging and rewarding to Reg.

"Abby Dads staff create an atmosphere of trust and continue to build strong relationships with fathers in the community," said Maria Cargnelli, the Manager of Early Years and Family Supports at Archway. "Counselling is an extension of this and has given dads the opportunity to engage in a counselling program that can look at their unique needs."

While tough moments have come and gone, he has many happy memories of his time so far. A particular highlight was seeing the first group of Punjabi-speaking dads graduate from the Anger Awareness program. Since then, the number of dads of South Asian descent participating in Abby Dads has continued to grow significantly.

"It has become very real, the impact we are having on our community," said Reg. "The passion and dedication that the men doing this work exude is very inspiring. We have a ton of fun together, too!"

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Abby Dads has shifted gears to place more emphasis on individual support. Staff have been phoning or arranging video chats with program participants as well as running most of their sessions online.

Reg and his team have developed a scheduling system to ensure time is carved out for each dad. "Flexibility and creativity have become the norm," he shared. They've also arranged for parking lot meetings with lots of physical distancing for those with technology limitations.

Like many other community programs, Reg sees Abby Dads offering more online services even after the pandemic is over. Doing so could create more opportunities for dads who may travel or do shift work that makes attending weekly sessions hard. "We thrive on being together physically," he stated, thinking about the fantastic bonds developed and progress made over the last 10 years of getting together. "But we have learned we can be effective and connected while being apart. The current situation has resulted in substantive developments in our attitude towards offering our services in different ways."

With that ability to adapt and go with the flow, the important work done by Abby Dads will undoubtedly continue for years to come! ■



Abby Dads Supervisor Reg with program participant Daniel.

# Comfort and Safety During COVID-19

As the seriousness of COVID-19 was becoming rapidly apparent, Archway Community Services saw an opportunity to act. With a longstanding history of supporting our community in times of crisis, existing resources in the Seniors Department were quickly deployed to provide new supports for older adults, an especially high-risk group.

Within days, discussion led to a newly created program called the Archway Mobile Seniors Outreach. When it was announced on Facebook on March 16th there were over 100 shares which reached almost 10,000 people. The phone calls started coming in almost immediately and still haven't stopped.

The Mobile Seniors Outreach program supports Abbotsford seniors in staying safe and healthy during this

time. It ensures that seniors choosing to self-isolate have access to the things that they need. This includes volunteers delivering groceries or essentials and assisting with setting up online services including banking, pharmacy, grocery shopping and

***"It's been inspiring to witness the strong positive, results we see from government and community coming together to help our seniors."***

communication apps. It also provides daily wellness checks, friendly virtual visits and resources to other community supports including Archway programs such as the Archway Food Bank.

### United Support

In March, the Government of BC announced more funding for United

Way of the Lower Mainland to bolster seniors' supports. This enabled United Way to create the Safe Seniors, Strong Communities program through BC211, their existing referral service. As a result, the Archway Seniors Department was chosen as one of the 24 hub sites in BC and now oversees this service from Langley to Lytton.

Working in conjunction with Mobile Seniors Outreach, staff and volunteers are doing daily virtual wellness check ins, delivering essentials – such as groceries or meals to seniors, and assisting with supports – such as refilling prescriptions and making online connections to friends and family. By doing their best to ensure the same staff or volunteers remain connected to repeat callers, meaningful relationships can be built between seniors and those providing the services.

"It's amazing what a phone call can do," shared Karen Kenny, the supervisor of Archway Better at Home. "There's a sense of relief and connectedness you can hear through the phone."

Even before COVID, studies showed that roughly one in five Canadians experience some degree of loneliness or social isolation which can instigate or amplify adverse health issues.

"Seniors are at especially high risk as they may have lost their life-partner, be disconnected from their social circle or children, and may be questioning their role in society," said Megan

Capp, the Manager of Social Justice, Seniors, and Housing at Archway.

"COVID has only amplified the loneliness facing seniors which, along with fixed pensions and other multiple barriers, can lead to seniors feeling trapped. This new initiative allows us to continue fostering healthy and positive aging in our community, and across the province."

### Other Archway Seniors Services

Archway has long provided services to seniors, such as Meals on Wheels which began in 1972, a weekly Lunch with the Bunch program and income tax assistance since the 1970s. We have also been the Abbotsford Better at Home provider through United Way since 2013.

Lunch with the Bunch, Medical Transportation and Income Tax Assistance programs are temporarily suspended to reduce in-person contact. As soon as it is safe to do so, these programs will be gradually reopened

as the supportive impact they have on seniors' lives is considerable. Some Better at Home services have already been re-started with additional COVID-19 safety protocols.

Archway Meals on Wheels has seen a 65% increase in orders and has adapted services to provide contact-less delivery. As many of the volunteers are themselves considered vulnerable to COVID, protocols were adopted to ensure both volunteers and clients remain safe.

If needed, the cost of the meals is covered through Archway Food Bank donations. For seniors who can prepare their own food but have limited transportation, the Archway Food Bank offers a Senior Delivery service to ensure no one is left without access to food.

"COVID has exposed and magnified existing gaps in services for vulnerable groups," said Capp. "It's been inspiring to witness the strong positive results we

see from government and community coming together to help our seniors.

"While COVID has modified the way we provide services, we as an organization remain committed to 'justice, opportunity and equitable access for all.' We are thankful daily that government has dedicated funding to this important area and remain grateful to all of our dedicated volunteers who make these programs possible." ■



Nancy and Karen with Meals on Wheels vehicle.





LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION FOR NEWCOMERS TO CANADA

# A Community of Online Learning

Spring break; a chance to relax, have fun, and spend time with friends and family. But this year, while many were beginning to enjoy spring break, the COVID-19 pandemic was evolving rapidly. This left employers, families and organizations scrambling.

The Archway Language Instruction for Newcomers (LINC) program operates following the Abbotsford School District calendar, and LINC teachers were monitoring the COVID-19 situation during their two weeks off while wondering what it would mean for their classes.

Not wanting to leave their students without support during such a challenging time, teachers like Jas Randhawa and Sara Marazzi and Teaching Assistants like Bev Goertz quickly adapted from in-person learning to taking their classrooms online for the first time.

"The smooth transition from face-to-face to online was only made possible due to an incredibly supportive LINC management team and a truly remarkable group of students. My students' commitment to learning and building a vibrant

and supportive online community far exceeded my expectations," reported Sara, a LINC teacher. Their students were delighted at the chance to keep studying; despite everything, their desire to learn was so strong.

LINC students range in age from 17 – 80+ and come from around the world. Even without the stress of a global pandemic, many encounter obstacles when trying to get to weekly classes. In the current situation, those can be compounded by looking after children at home and sometimes overcoming lower levels of digital literacy in addition to English literacy.

What really amazed program manager Paula Mannington was the heightened sense of community within LINC learners. Students supported each other through challenges like job loss and parenting issues while teachers

sourced digital devices and arranged the delivery of educational packages for those without access to technology. Teachers also organized online learning games for further English practice and studying for citizenship.

Some students even used the quiz format with their families for fun.

Referrals were made to other Archway programs, like the Food Bank. Childcare workers supported parents in their pivot to remote learning and sent preschoolers packages with materials to help with their transition to kindergarten this fall.

With the now-online courses, the

*"They gave us a sense of community during the pandemic! I also found it exciting to learn in a new way. I am proud of the new digital skills I have gained."*

Assia, Morocco

nature of the learning evolved too. The focus in LINC is typically on "settlement language" which covers the types of conversations and scenarios newcomers may find themselves in during daily life. Suddenly there was "pandemic language" too. What is the CERB? Are jobs stable? What is physical distancing?

Martha, who completed the LINC program in February, even reported a new job opportunity that came out of the COVID situation. She had joined LINC to boost her confidence and settlement knowledge and

pursue a career. Now, she's become the COVID-19 Community Builder for United Way Lower Mainland, maintaining online engagement for vulnerable groups.

"The class gave me confidence to read current events and fiction in English; classmates and the classroom community gave me incredible confidence. Learning about Canada and the language have been key for me!" Martha recently shared with Paula. As a qualified RN overseas, she has also secured a spot in the Return to Registered Nursing Program at Thompson Rivers University.

That classroom community is vital, and the LINC program has done an incredible job of replicating it online. While not all students have been able to transition to remote and virtual learning, more than 70% have. "Students miss the face to face but are grateful to continue learning," shared LINC teacher Jas. "For many, this is the highlight of their week."

On her first day of virtual instruction Jas had just four pupils join her, but word spread quickly. The next day there were eight, and soon 12. Before she knew it, she was dividing them into two groups so she could sufficiently focus her attention on each one's progress.

*"Connecting online for me was a form of human touch and warmth."*

Robert, France

Like many of us adjusting to COVID-19 some students felt especially isolated and lonely. However, strengthening their sense of community and improving their English through their LINC connections was helpful.

Normally during June, LINC classes come to a close and staff host the annual Celebration of Learning event. A graduation ceremony of sorts, it's a time for students to showcase their learning and to celebrate what they've accomplished. While the in-person event was cancelled this year, teachers are keen to ensure each student's achievements are still commemorated.

*"I was worried at the beginning but it was a very good experience! Participating in the breakout rooms was fun, comfortable, and helpful for my English."*

Amy, Korea

"It's not my efforts but the efforts of the students that have made online learning possible," shared Jas. "Together, we're keeping their hopes and dreams intact during this difficult time." ■

ABBOTSFORD YOUTH HEALTH CENTRE

# Partners in Wellness

**Y**outh workers in Abbotsford used to spend hours each week trying to help their clients access medical care. When they did find care, it was sometimes judgemental or ill-suited to the needs of vulnerable youth.

In 2009, the City of Abbotsford approved a Child and Youth friendly report that recommended, in part, that our community would greatly benefit from having a youth health clinic. Far from being just a “nice idea” to achieve at some point in the future, the City intended the clinic be running in one to three years and well-utilized in three to five.

Youth service providers went to work over the following year with representatives from Archway, Child and Youth Mental Health, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, Impact, the University of the Fraser Valley, the Abbotsford School District, Abbotsford Youth Commission and local faith groups meeting monthly for collaborative planning.

In time, the group identified that a health centre, not solely a medical clinic, would be most ideal for local youth. “It’s about compassion. It’s not just a medical clinic,” explained Shairose Jinnah, Archway Director of Counselling, Child, Youth and Family Services.

By November 2010, the Abbotsford Youth Health Centre (AYHC) opened its doors at the Med West medical

clinic, with equipment donated by retiring local physicians.

## Pop-Up Youth Health Care

The ad hoc clinic opened each Tuesday for four hours and was staffed by dedicated volunteers. Each week they’d set up a ladder and use duct tape to secure their banner so youth passing by would know they were there! “It was very grassroots and unorthodox,” shared Simone Maassen, Archway Manager of Youth Services. Initially, patients were brought to the centre by youth workers in the community, although it didn’t take long for word to spread.

Over the next few years, the AYHC moved several times, as locations were no longer available, opportunities to expand arose and more partnerships were formed. These partnerships

included Bakerview School who hosted a satellite Youth Health Centre on their campus, and UBC Residents who were scheduled to assist at the youth health centre amidst their rotations.

## Permanence and Recognition

In 2013, the Abbotsford Division of Family Practice and Newgen Pharmacy helped facilitate the Youth Health Centre’s move to their first dedicated location. Finally, no more bedsheets as dividers and music playing at reception to drown out conversations and provide some semblance of privacy! Over the next several years the number of programs, operations, staff and patients continued to increase.

By 2014, the excellent work the centre was doing in the community was being recognized further afield. The

AYHC was delighted to be nominated for a Premier’s Award for Community Partnerships in the Lower Mainland, an honour they were presented with at a ceremony in Victoria. From day one, the power of partnerships has truly been vital to their success.

“This is a community collaboration. In this day and age, you can’t have a well-rounded initiative without it. The partnerships we form in Abbotsford are amazing, you don’t have them in every community!” exclaimed Dr. Elizabeth Watt, AYHC co-founder and current medical director.

Partnerships have also become vital to the retention and recruitment practices of the Abbotsford Division of Family Practice, with most attending Medical Doctors having once been Residents at the



AYHC won the BC Premier's regional partnership award and were provincial finalists.

AYHC waiting area inside Foundry Abbotsford.

centre that have chosen to stay and practice in our community.

Over the last decade, increased demand for the centre's services has been met with ongoing support from family practice residents, attending physicians, nurses, nurse practitioners, social workers and medical office assistants.

### Wellness Taking Shape

In 2016, the AYHC took the first steps towards exploring what would eventually be a BC-wide collaborative and integrated youth health and wellness model. Today, these centres, located across the province, are known as "Foundry; where wellness takes shape." To youth, the name has multiple meanings, including, "I have been found; I am finding; and I am forging relationships."

In 2018, Foundry Abbotsford opened its doors at a beautiful new centre that was created with input from numerous partners and youth themselves. Foundry offers core services including the AYHC, counselling and peer support, as well as other programs such as dietician sessions, exercise and yoga classes, which are developed and provided according to client interest and need.

Foundry programs span the breadth of mental, sexual and physical health.

At Foundry, youth who may not have access to a family doctor can access primary care, attend follow-up and investigative appointments, and be referred to other supports under one roof. This reduces barriers that can prevent young people from receiving quality care.

***"This is a community collaboration. In this day and age, you can't have a well-rounded initiative without it. The partnerships we form in Abbotsford are amazing, you don't have them in every community!"***

Today, the Abbotsford Youth Health Centre remains as collaborative as ever. As part of Foundry, it is supported by Foundry Central, Archway Community Services, Child and Youth Mental Health, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, Fraser Health and the Abbotsford Division of Family Practice. It also receives generous support from multiple foundations, businesses and private donors.

### A Decade of Care

In the last ten years, the AYHC has transitioned from a part-time clinic to a busy, instrumental part of Foundry Abbotsford, an essential resource for youth 12 to 24. Staff who once wondered where their next round of funding would come from or when they would have to move can now welcome youth in their "dream clinic" and know they'll be around to offer the best health solutions for years to come.

Today, the AYHC continues to provide primary care from adolescence through the difficult transition stage into adult healthcare. During the COVID-19 pandemic, they were especially well-positioned to offer a hybrid model of in-person and virtual health services and guidance to young

people and experienced minimal decrease in patient numbers.

As part of Foundry, AYHC continues into their next decade, dedicated to offering services that fulfill their mission, "to help Abbotsford's youth develop the lifelong habit of protecting and enhancing all aspects of their health." ■

## ADMINISTRATION

# Behind the Scenes at Archway



IT Team during a virtual team check-in.

As the COVID-19 situation grew more serious, Archway teams knew they had to act. Precautions needed to be taken to keep clients, volunteers and staff safe while our doors remained open for essential services to continue.

While Archway program staff were busy assisting clients, coordinating with funders and transitioning to virtual services, our administrative staff were hard at work supporting them behind the scenes.

From facilities and human resources to accounting and IT, Archway administrative staff and leadership came up with dynamic plans and creative ideas to support a rapidly evolving situation and unprecedented uncertainty.

### Facilities

The Facilities department continues to be integral to managing the developing COVID-19 situation. In early March, hearing reports that the pandemic was growing, they immediately stepped up cleaning protocols. Archway custodians Judy

Folster, Teresa Hiebert and Rani Sekhon are fastidious about cleaning washrooms, kitchens, floors, offices and high traffic areas with safety and well-being topmost on their mind.

"Rani knows that if our building isn't clean then we are at risk. She is doing her part with everything she's got to protect us, and with a grateful attitude that humbles me," shared Archway Executive Director Rod Santiago.

The Facilities team has also installed directional signage, plexiglass barriers and hand washing stations to help maintain safe flow of traffic, reduce contact and keep staff and visitors safe.

### Information Technology (IT)

Our IT department nimbly engaged "out of the box thinking" as the situation worsened and many staff began self-isolating. They quickly supplied frontline workers with mobile phones, laptop computers and other technology that enabled them to work securely and maintain connections with clients from home.

The IT team has also managed a substantially increased flow of support and training requests; double the "tickets" they normally receive! Despite the demand, they have offered quick and friendly help to staff adapting to new technology, such as remote applications to communicate and hold virtual meetings. The IT department adopted a shift rotation schedule that assured maximum support coverage while maintaining minimal in-person contact with various departments and each other.

IT Supervisor Alvaro Silva and his team were also integral in securing financial relief for the Archway Food Bank from their internet service provider for two months, enabling them to concentrate more on feeding the hungry and less on expenses.

### Central Support

The Central Support team is truly the "front line" when it comes to assisting visitors to Archway; they're at the reception desk to assist visitors and provide essential clerical support to all Archway programs.



▲ The Central Support Team outside the Montrose location.



◀ 2019 Admin Team Day.

▼ Finance Team in their Halloween costumes.



Judy in Facilities with empty sanitizer bottles from just a few months of COVID.

***"We have adapted the reception area and waiting room to follow suggested guidelines, but also remain welcoming and open for our clients."***

"We have adapted the reception area and waiting room to follow suggested guidelines, but also remain welcoming and open for our clients," advised Central Support Supervisor Meredith Lee Sperling.

Central Support has also installed plexiglass at the counter to keep both sides safe, highlighted hand sanitizing stations on the walls and put helpful tips and reminders on the foyer TV.

Their team has developed a new rotation of working in-office and from home to increase physical distance while continuing the flow

of support, using Microsoft Teams regularly and check-ins to stay on top of their responsibilities.

Crucially, Central Support also manages the PPE program, distributing supplies to Archway programs. They have built relationships with local donors and receive donations of reusable masks and ear savers while sourcing hard to find cleaning materials and disposable PPE.

### Finance

Accounting Supervisor Melissa Miguel and Payroll Supervisor Robin Rodzinski noted that as the

situation developed, their teams transitioned to new circumstances very quickly. They began working in a rotation to maintain increased physical distancing while ensuring Archway programs continued to meet financial responsibilities. Robin even began delivering virtual Group Benefit meetings for new staff.

"I would love to give credit to our finance team in how quickly they adapted to the new normal and embraced technology to deliver accounting and payroll services, in addition to getting ready for the year-end audit without

missing a beat," stated Director of Finance Tina Poudrier-Beck.

### Human Resources

The Human Resources department has faced unique challenges, supporting staff members who suddenly found themselves in challenging situations. Many staff with children had to stay home without the usual routine of school or the assistance of care providers. Others were out of the country and unable to get back when expected.

HR staff also pivoted to quickly offer new staff onboarding, orientation and training sessions online when the usual in-person meetings became unfeasible. This helped ensure staff members weren't without crucial information and policies.

Some Archway programs also faced potential staffing changes as they learned it may be a considerable time before they could operate as usual. These highly sensitive situations

were handled with respect and care by the human resources department, who understood the stress that came with rapid changes and increased uncertainty.

### Marketing and Communications

As the situation unfolded, the Communications team supported the COVID Committee, provided virtual training on communication tools and developed internal and external communications plans to share essential information about new guidelines and operational changes within Archway programs.

They also communicated with programs to keep the website up-to-date, developed multiple social media messages highlighting the supports Archway programs are offering the community and shared guidelines and information from credible sources in a variety of languages.



As we get used to the 'new normal' one thing is certain; Archway administration staff are dedicated to supporting our programs so they can continue fulfilling our mission of "justice, opportunities and equitable access for all." ■



*Stories of people helping people*