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# COMMUNITAS TURNS 50!



**We invite you to  
celebrate with us!**

**Visit our website to find  
out more about how we'll  
celebrate this milestone!  
[CommunitasCare.com](http://CommunitasCare.com)**

We are celebrating a milestone this year! What began as a small, grass roots initiative in 1974 has grown into an organization that serves people living with developmental disabilities, mental health challenges, and acquired brain injury in Metro Vancouver, the Fraser Valley, and Vancouver Island.

“We really want to take the whole year to celebrate our past, engage with our communities, and dream about what the future can hold for people of all abilities.



Our theme for the year is 'Our story. Our Community. Our Future' and our year-long celebrations will reflect these themes. Rather than focus on one celebratory day, we will hold a variety of events that will bring the Communitas family together from each community in which we are present.

We hope you'll join us for our open house events in Abbotsford and Campbell River. Each of our

homes and services will also have the opportunity to invite their neighbours, friends, and family to smaller, more intimate gatherings. The year will culminate with an event at The Reach Gallery Museum in Abbotsford.

We've also produced five short films, each one focused on a different aspect of the organization's area of service. You'll find these films on the Timeline on our website and live screenings are also being planned.

“One of our deep values is inclusion and our 50th anniversary seemed like an obvious opportunity to open the doors and invite our communities to explore who we are and what we do,” says CEO Karyn Santiago.

As you read through our newsletter, you'll also see how we're planning for our future with a view to grow

in several areas of service. We have a unique fundraising opportunity to help us achieve that growth.

These are just a few of the examples of how Communitas will celebrate 5 decades of service; more events are being explored and will be announced as the year unfolds.

“We really want to take the whole year to celebrate our past, engage with our communities, and dream about what the future can hold for people of all abilities,” Karyn says. “We invite our communities to join us in this celebration.”



# OUR COMMUNITY

We are grateful for the supportive communities in which we are able to do our work. We also celebrate the many ways in which the people we serve impact our communities. Here are a few inspiring examples:



## Following his passion!

Cam loves two things: sports and talking about sports. So when the opportunity arose for him to contribute to a radio show to talk about his passion, he jumped at the chance. That decision led to Cam creating his own show: The Cam the Man Show – a popular show on CIVL Radio.

[Read his full story when you visit \[comunitascare.com\]\(https://www.comunitascare.com\)/stories/new-radio-show-focused-on-cams-passion/](https://www.comunitascare.com/stories/new-radio-show-focused-on-cams-passion/)



## Making a dream come true

Alysha loves beautiful dresses and takes great care in how she presents herself. When she and her community inclusion worker, Hardeep, went into a local bridal shop, the staff there made a dream come true for Alysha, helping her try on dresses in her favourite colour and getting her photo taken.

[Read his full story at \[comunitascare.com\]\(https://www.comunitascare.com\)/stories/princess-for-a-day/](https://www.comunitascare.com/stories/princess-for-a-day/)



## Creating space

Seann loves riding the ferry, so most Mondays, he and his caregiver will hop on the Quadra Island ferry for the 10 minutes crossing, stay on the ferry for the trip back, and then enjoy lunch out in the community. Seann even had the opportunity to join the captain on the bridge, making the crossing extra special.

[Read his full story when you visit \[comunitascare.com\]\(https://www.comunitascare.com\)/stories/living-the-island-life/](https://www.comunitascare.com/stories/living-the-island-life/)



# A YEAR OF CELEBRATIONS



Welcome to our *Spring 2024 FOCUS* and welcome to a year of celebrations with *Communitas Supportive Care*. For fifty years now, our organization has supported communities, families and people of all abilities *In the Name of Christ*.

Our humble beginnings with the Samaritan Society for Comfort and Cheer, started as a response to parents who were advocating for non-institutional support models for their children. In partnership with MCC-BC, the work expanded rapidly, embracing de-institutionalization,

“ For fifty years now, *Communitas* has supported communities, families and people of all abilities *In the Name of Christ*.

establishing homes in various communities across BC and creating inclusive services that looked beyond the sheltered workshops of the day. In 1992, we registered as a separate legal entity called MCC Supportive Care Services, and in 2007 the name, *Communitas*, was adopted, identifying us as a 'place where all people were equal.'

**Photos far left clock-wise: Group photo of some residents at Twin Firs, 1970's. The Cedars home. Opening ceremony of The Cedars, 1974. Opening ceremony of the Brandon Centre, North Island, 2014. Photo top this page: Groundbreaking for Evergreen homes, 2024.**



The leaders of that day stepped into the other opportunities God placed before them: supporting people struggling with mental illnesses; providing families with respite; beginning drop-ins for people with acquired brain injury; and establishing a presence in community through innovative social enterprises and employment services.

Today, our diversity of supports continues to reflect the unchanging mission of *Communitas* to **be a place of belonging, growth and contribution for all people.**

Today's commitments & values are unchanged and I am deeply grateful for the people who went before us at *Communitas* – people who serve with a sense of God's calling – and with a desire to support an **abundant life for all abilities**. The words we use are so much more than words; they reflect our ongoing desire to serve, to include, and to being a part of making our communities a place that all people can call home.

I stand amazed and grateful for the many people who have made our first 50 years at *Communitas* a truly amazing journey.

With gratitude,  
**Karyn.**

**Explore 50 years of our history!**

Visit our interactive timeline to see videos and highlights of 50 years of service at [Communitascare.com/timeline/](https://Communitascare.com/timeline/)







# YOU CAN BE A CHAMPION!

## Support the Communitas 50 Fund!

You can support one of our champions or become a champion yourself! Learn more at [CommunitasCare.com/Communitas50-fund](https://CommunitasCare.com/Communitas50-fund)



As we celebrate our 50 year history, we are taking the opportunity to look to our future. As we plan for the next 50 years, we hope to grow in several areas of service: home living options, mental health, life skills, and employment. We need people to champion these goals and to that end, Communitas has launched the Communitas50 Fund. We're recruiting 50 Champions who, together, will raise \$500,000 to make these dreams reality.

Sarah De Klein is head of philanthropy and donor relations for Communitas. She is excited to see that several champions have already stepped up to accept the challenge of raising funds.

“It is only together that we can continue to create inclusive communities where everyone has a place to contribute and thrive.”



“We are so grateful to be part of a compassionate and generous community,” Sarah says. “It is only together that we can continue to create inclusive communities where everyone has a place to contribute and thrive.”

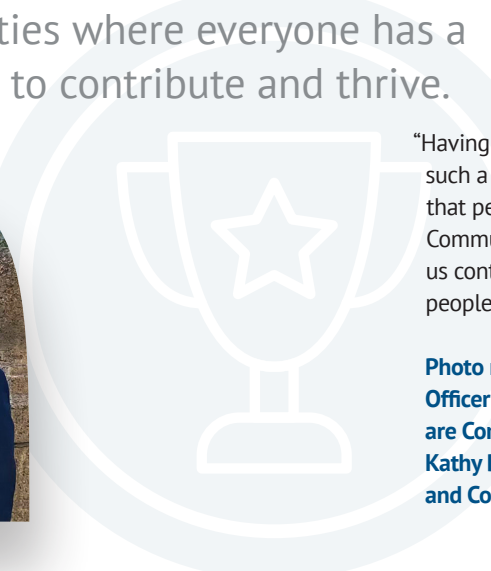
Kathy Doerksen is one of our Champions. Kathy has been on the board of Communitas since 2015 and currently serves as our board chair.

Kathy was one of the first people to sign up for this fundraising opportunity. Her experience with the organization makes her confident that funds raised will benefit both the people we serve and the communities in which we live.

“Having been involved with Communitas for such a long time, I can say with confidence that person-centred care is at the heart of Communitas,” Kathy says. “I hope you’ll help us continue to make an impact on the lives of people living with diverse abilities.”



**Photo right: Wilfred Wong, Chief Financial Officer at Communitas, and his wife Stella are Communitas 50 Champions. Photo above: Kathy Doerksen, long time board member and Communitas 50 Champion.**





# HELP US CELEBRATE!



**We have several events planned for this year and hope you will join us!**

- June 6 – Taste and Tour in Campbell River
- June 14th – Community Carnival at Cooke’s Presbyterian Church in Chilliwack
- June 20 – Taste and Tour in Abbotsford
- November 22 – 50th Anniversary Celebration at The Reach Gallery in Abbotsford

**This is just the beginning. As the year goes on, we’ll add more events to our list. Visit [CommunitasCare.com/Events](https://CommunitasCare.com/Events) for all the details!**



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