

German - Canadian Benevolent Society of British Columbia



Annual Report 2022 - 2023

Spirit of caring since 1965

GERMAN - CANADIAN BENEVOLENT SOCIETY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Spirit of caring since 1965

OUR VISION

Working in partnership with our community to:

- Develop, deliver and inspire a high level of care
- Create and nurture a vibrant community connected to our German/ European culture.

OUR MISSION

Providing quality care and support for the aging.

OUR VALUES

- We are committed to high standards, ongoing improvement and the well-being of those we serve.
- We foster open communication, progressive leadership, and team cohesiveness throughout the organization.
- We celebrate the commitment and dedication of our employees and volunteers.
- We provide an environment for people to learn and grow.
- We respect our organization's history and promote the traditions and cultural roots of the German-speaking community.
- We welcome and support a multicultural environment.
- We are fiscally responsible.
- We build effective relationships and partnerships with our wider community.

OUR IDENTITY

WHO WE ARE

We provide housing, health care, therapeutic and wellness services to seniors with complex care needs.

WHAT WE ARE KNOWN FOR

We deliver our services to our clients in ways that promote a positive view of self, build on a person's strengths, nurture human connection, create a sense of safety, offer the freedom to choose and promote meaning, growth and joy.

We create community through outreach, volunteering, cultural events, social gatherings, education, mentorship and sharing of talents.

We offer connection to those who want to reaffirm their German/European Culture and welcome the richness of the multi-cultural community we live in.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The strategic plan identifies five strategic priorities:

- Care and Services
- Staff and Volunteers
- Physical Environment and Resident Safety
- Financial Health
- Society and Community Engagement

The Board of Directors provides the governance and vision for the German - Canadian Benevolent Society of BC. The Board works with management to establish overall strategic direction, regularly reviews the organization's long-term plans, significant issues affecting the organization and evaluates results. The Board ensures appropriate membership and stakeholder consultation.

Board members are elected by the Society's membership and are appointed for three-year terms. Board members can serve a maximum of three consecutive three-year terms.

Learn more about the current board members on the Society's website: www.gcch.ca

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2023/2024

Terms of Directors	1 st Term	2 nd Term	3 rd Term
Christine Craik, President	2020 – 2023	2023 - 2026	
Richard Wittstock, Vice President	2019 – 2022	2022 - 2025	
Mark Sulzberger, Treasurer	2023 - 2026		
Alex Sayn-Wittgenstein, Director	2017 – 2020	2020 – 2023	2023 - 2026
Ulf von Dehn, Director	2017 – 2020	2020 – 2023	2023 - 2026
Carola von Hahn, Director	2016 – 2019	2019 – 2022	2022 - 2025
Petra Kuret, Director	2018 – 2021	2021 - 2024	
Rudolf Kischer, Director	2020 – 2023	2023 - 2026	
Robert Shaw, Director	2021 – 2024		

WHAT IS A HAUS?

The residents of the German - Canadian Care Home live in 5 neighborhoods (Haus), each named after a German city, chosen by the residents: Hamburg Haus, Frankfurt Haus, Dresden Haus, Berlin Haus and Bonn Haus.

PARTNERS IN CARE

The residents of the care home, as well as their family members, friends and caregivers are key partners in the successful operations of the care home.

There is a Resident Haus Council for each Haus that meets monthly and provides residents the opportunity to participate in affairs and decisions within the organization.

Family members, friends and caregivers are encouraged to participate in the regular Family Council meetings and the decision-making process on matters affecting the daily lives of the residents. It is also a forum for group support, education and counselling.



REPORT BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER JUTTA PURCHASE

AT THE 58TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE GERMAN - CANADIAN BENEVOLENT SOCIETY OF BC HELD ON JUNE 26, 2023 IN VANCOUVER, BC

“Good evening and thank you for joining us for the 58th annual general meeting of the German - Canadian Benevolent Society of BC. I will be reporting on organizational highlights, improvements and challenges of the past year. Before I begin, I would like to introduce the leadership team members who are here this evening, Saeideh Khakshour, Ken Shiu, Rositsa Dorosieva, Rosemary Kustner, Elef Thomas, Irene Tang, Holly Lai and Fiona Smith who is taking the minutes this evening; the team has been working with great dedication to maintain and improve the care and services we provide to residents and families.

INTRODUCTION

The past year was very much a year of taking action, reviewing the value of existing practices, re-introducing practices we had abandoned during the pandemic and developing new policies and procedures to meet the up-to-date standards of Accreditation Canada.

We are definitely still on a path to finding our bearings and have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels in many areas whether it be the cost and availability of equipment and supplies, use of staff overtime, sick time or staff recruitment. There remains more uncertainty but we are also finding opportunities for improvement.

CARE AND SERVICES

During the past year, the number of residents moving in and out of the care home dropped to pre-pandemic levels indicating a stabilization in the care home. The demand for long-term care remains high and any vacancies fill quickly. However, we have been experiencing difficulties filling empty beds in one of our special care neighbourhoods due to the high number of double rooms which are often challenging for residents living with dementia. There were times when we were not able to move a new resident into a vacant bed because the person in the room simply couldn't tolerate a room mate. Hence the occupancy in the care home averaged around 96% which is a bit lower than the usual 98.5%. Not filling a bed is a difficult decision and, understandably, VCH wants to fill all available beds but sometimes the risk to other residents and staff is too high.



We are engaged in several quality improvement strategies to reduce resident agitation and develop interventions and responses to residents with challenging behaviours. Under the guidance of Saeideh Khakshour, we are currently partnering with the UBC School of Nursing in a study that looks at the effects of virtual reality and how Virtual Reality (VR) can support the psychosocial well-being of residents living in long-term care. The program provides immersive viewing experiences tailored for older adults who may or may not have dementia. We have been offering this to residents in Berlin and Bonn Haus and the feedback has been so positive. One nurse wrote: “the VR videos take residents to fascinating and fantastical places; this decreases their agitation and anxiety. The images seem to stay with them even after the video is finished and visibly improves their mood.” The positive effects have been so convincing that we decided to continue with the program beyond the length of the study.

Our efforts to move from a medical to a social model of care has continued and progressed during the past year. We have named our care model “Comfortzeit”. Comfortzeit is a concept which describes the state of being it aims to achieve for residents, an overall sense of comfort at this stage in their lives. The name describes the focus of all our activities and includes care and services, the staffing model and the physical environment and design.

The model will not be fully realized until the completion of the new care home, particularly as it relates to the staffing model and environment. However, we have already implemented many strategies that support this new vision.

We have also applied to trademark the word Comfortzeit as it describes a care model that we developed and is unique to us.

Last December, the care home participated in another accreditation survey with Accreditation Canada. It had been 6 years since our last survey, a very long time, the delays caused by the pandemic. Accreditation Canada has moved to a continuous quality improvement process, meaning that accredited organizations must complete certain milestones each year. There still continues to be an onsite visit at the end of the fourth year. Our last survey went very well; I want to recognize Rositsa Dorosieva who coordinated the preparations and the leadership team and staff for their commitment putting everything in place that is required to meet the standards. GCCH was awarded “Accredited with Commendation” a result we are very proud of. Because Accreditation Canada was transitioning to this new process, we had an opportunity to continue working on the standards we had not met with a deadline of June 6th. We are now waiting to hear whether our award will be raised to the highest possible one “Accredited with exemplary standing”.

Update July 6, 2023: After reviewing the submitted evidence Accreditation Canada awarded the organization with the highest possible level of accreditation - “Accredited with Exemplary Standing”.





ENVIRONMENT AND SAFETY

During the past year, we purchased 22 beds from a German manufacturer; after some delays, the beds were delivered in October last year. The German manufacturer puts an emphasis on the bed's comfort which aligns well with our Comfortzeit concept.

In light of the pending redevelopment of the care home we have refrained from making large purchases or expensive repairs to the buildings. However, resident safety and comfort remain a high priority. During the past 12 months we finalized the installation of the air conditioning in the West side building. Generally, we are doing more maintenance than replacements or purchasing new equipment. I want to recognize Elef Thomas and his team for coming up with creative solutions to fix our aging building infrastructure where parts are often very difficult to source.

SOCIETY

Last year's Christmas Fest was again a virtual event with an online auction and food sales. The online auction is proving to be very popular. We are definitely reaching more bidders and hence raising more money than with a live auction. We are planning an in-person Christmas Fest this year, although we will be changing the format from pre-pandemic times. All the activities will take place in this Atrium and outdoor spaces. We will share more information in the fall.

STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Our staffing situation has improved and stabilized in the last year. There are still difficulties, mostly around the recruitment of registered nurses, but we have been able to hire care aides. At the end of last year, the provincial government lifted the single site order, that restricted staff to working in one care home only. The change did not result in casual staff going back to working in multiple care homes as there is currently a lot of overtime hours available to them. However, we are beginning to see a reduction in our OT hours which is welcome news due to the inherent cost.

We continue to pay close attention to staff wellness and staff appreciation activities and just held our annual staff appreciation event with a BBQ and service awards. 3 employees celebrated 25 years of service. Led by Rosemary Kustner, our very active and lively staff social committee regularly organises fun events and raises funds in support of the staff Christmas party.

The strength and mental resilience of staff are at the core of their ability to provide personalized care to residents and families. As such, we continue to offer an employee assistance program contracted with the Family Services Employee Assistance Program where employees and their families can access professional counselling services free of charge plus many other supportive services. In addition, we have a robust staff education programme delivered by our Staff Educator, Judy Rowbotham, regular "Zen Dens" a meditation room and a quiet room for staff to relax and destress for a few minutes during their breaks.

Our goal for this year is to increase staff satisfaction by 10% and to increase the number of active volunteers by 20%.



KEY FINANCIAL DATA FROM THE AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING MARCH 31, 2023

as presented by Jacklyn Kelly, Auditor, at the 58th Annual General Meeting of the German - Canadian Benevolent Society of BC held on June 26, 2023 in Vancouver, BC

GERMAN - CANADIAN BENEVOLENT SOCIETY OF BC

Revenue	\$140,086
Expenses	\$(100,711)
Net Operating Surplus/ (Deficit)	\$39,375

GERMAN - CANDIAN CARE HOME

Revenue	\$14,158,475
Expenses	\$(13,864,550)
Operating Surplus/ (Deficit) before Amortization	\$293,925
Amortization	\$(47,613)
Net Operating Surplus/ (Deficit)	\$246,312

Combined net assets for the Society and Care Home are \$10,713,522 and liabilities are \$4,824,098. Fund balances, beginning of year plus excess of revenue over expenses and employee future benefit re-measurement costs result in fund balances, end of year of \$5,889,424. The revenue of \$14,298,561 is offset by expenses including amortization totaling \$14,012,874 for a net surplus of \$285,687.



FINANCIAL HEALTH

Despite significant challenges and many uncertainties, we finished the fiscal year with a small surplus. Overall, VCH has been responsive and has funded all Covid related additional expenses.

We applied and received a grant from HEC towards staff education and held a 3-day training on the Eden Alternative at the care home. We invited staff from other care homes to participate and on March 20 people attended the Eden Associate training at GCCH.

The Financial Health team led by Ken Shiu set a goal last year to reduce the Amounts Receivable of unpaid resident user fee accounts which had grown to over \$100k. This was no easy feat as each case is different and involves various stakeholders. The efforts however paid off and the outstanding payments went from \$105k to \$7,900.

Another quality improvement project in finance is the implementation of a new staff scheduling and payroll system. This project is almost complete and so far, we are very satisfied with the new system, the responsiveness and support we are receiving. The new payroll system has many self-serve features which staff can use and should significantly cut down on the paperwork such as requests for leaves, shift exchanges etc.

SUMMARY

In closing, I would like to recognize the incredible dedication and hard work of the care home staff, including the staff of our partners Sodexo and Community Therapists, the exceptional support, commitment and hard work of the management team and the unwavering support and many hours of volunteer work contributed by the directors of the Board.

I want to thank Irene Tang and her staff for the BBQ, Fiona Smith for coordinating this AGM and Ana Seya, Society Secretary for preparing the handouts. We look forward to the new year, to further stability, to more social events, and to a decision on the redevelopment of the care home. Thank you for your attention."

**UPDATES FROM STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
AT THE 58TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY**

REDEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE chaired by **Richard Wittstock**

The Committee Chair started his report by thanking Jutta Purchase for her dedication to the care home. At last year's annual general meeting the redevelopment project was on the verge of going before City Council, and Richard was asking Society and community members to submit letters of support, which many members did. Richard expressed his gratitude for this support. The project was unanimously approved by City council on July 7th and since then the redevelopment committee and project manager have been working with the City through the various zoning agreements. Next steps of going through the detailed design is currently largely on hold until Vancouver Coastal Health funding approvals are received. This commitment is currently delayed and in a holding pattern until a firm funding commitment from the Province is received. The board of directors are in communication with the Province who has given assurance that the German - Canadian Care Home redevelopment project is at the top of their list and a funding commitment is expected soon. The board is in the process of requesting a meeting with the Minister of Health to further discuss the project. Richard encouraged members to write to Minister Adrian Dix or their MLA to make a case for the need of the care home building to be replaced.

PUBLIC RELATIONS & FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE chaired by **Rudolf Kischer**

The Committee Chair reported that as part of public relations and in an attempt to have the Society create more German cultural events the public relations and fundraising committee did the following:

- November 27, 2022: A gathering of Society members was organized at the Black Kettle Brewery to watch the German Soccer team play against Spain in the World Cup. Over fifty people were in attendance including Hans Stocker the German Vice – Consul.
- In December 2022 eight Society members attended the annual Christmas dinner hosted by the German Canadian Business Association.
- Society representatives attended a meeting organized by the German Consul General, regarding the possibility of founding a German umbrella organization in Vancouver. The Vice Consul General is intending on moving ahead with the creation of this organization.

The Society received over \$35,000 in donations last year and raised almost \$12,000 through the Christmas Fest. The intention was to launch a big fundraising campaign once confirmation of the funding from the Ministry of Health for the rebuild was received. This was expected in the fall of 2022, but unfortunately has not happened yet.

Plans for next year are to have two or three public relations and fundraising events, and once funding approvals for the redevelopment project are received, the committee is planning a big fundraising push in support of the project

OUTREACH COMMITTEE chaired by **Carola Von Hahn**

The Committee Chair stated that last summer there was hope that by now the new care home may have started construction and there would be need to find an interim venue for outreach events. But this ended up not happening and ten more outreach events were held at the care home throughout the last year.

Events included an Oktoberfest celebration with real beer, a Karneval event, seasonal music events such as an Adventsfeier and spring music with poems and stories, a well-received presentation by Dr. Florian Gassner on the Ukrainian/Russian conflict, a presentation on the Ayurvedic approach to health, movie afternoons, and a presentation by German Consul Marc Eichhorn on the challenges and rewards of working in different countries.

Under the guidance of Waltraud Custer, the outreach coordinator, volunteers always ensure there are beautiful table decorations and coffee and cake at outreach events.

The atmosphere is "gemütlich" and contributes to lively conversation amongst visitors.

Last year each event attracted on average thirty-five to forty visitors.

The outreach events provide Society members and friends with the opportunity to stay in contact with each other and the care home.

The Hauspost, German - Canadian Care Home website, Facebook and LinkedIn pages keep our members informed, but nevertheless Society membership is declining. The board is trying to think of new ways to keep the Society relevant and engage old and new members. To hold Society membership has been a tradition for many Vancouver residents with a German background, and we are looking at new ways to appeal to a culturally diverse community and find a common cause through supporting excellent care for seniors.

In the new year the outreach program will expand to two monthly events with the aim of creating program content that will hopefully attract new visitors.

In July there will be an outreach event featuring German & English love songs. Requests and ideas for future programming are always appreciated.

Carola thanked Waltraud for her dedication to the outreach program and presented her with flowers. Her hard work and devotion are much appreciated.



'OAK LEAF' DONORS

Oak leaves are placed on a special donor wall in the care home in recognition of donations of \$500 and more. We thank the following donors for their generosity:

- ◆ Inge Delville - Pratt - In memory of Otto & Marianne Franz
- ◆ Gerlinde Bader
- ◆ Larry Kancs
- ◆ Fritz Ziegler Fund
- ◆ Harald Krebs
- ◆ Prospera Credit Union
- ◆ Elke Swantje
- ◆ Irma Lamoureux - In memory of Richard & Johanna Hibler
- ◆ Irene Schmalz
- ◆ Otto & Regina Lukat
- ◆ Walter Mechler
- ◆ Monika Albrecht - In memory of Inge Riebel
- ◆ Christel Frankenberger - In memory of Anton Frankenberger
- ◆ Rose Maurer - In memory of Kurt Maurer
- ◆ Rose Maurer - In memory of Else Maurer
- ◆ Estate of Marketa Goetz - Stankiewicz - In memory of Marketa Goetz - Stankiewicz
- ◆ Fograscher Family Fund
- ◆ Barbara Seidel - Schuster
- ◆ Karl Walter
- ◆ Margery Wilke
- ◆ Betty Lou Jee Mack
- ◆ Werner Kuret
- ◆ Kathryn Jamieson
- ◆ Gunther & Antya Schrack
- ◆ Kurt & Else Maurer Fund
- ◆ Diana Skene
- ◆ Margery & Heinz Wilke

THANK YOU

We would like to sincerely thank our sponsors for their support of our Christmas Fest 2022



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