

SRCHN Vision: Healthy thriving communities within the Sooke Region

SRCHN Mission: To support healthy lives in healthy communities through innovative, collaborative development and improvement of services for everyone.

Sooke Region Communities Health Network
Annual Report
July 15, 2020



Sooke Region Communities Health Network would like to acknowledge the traditional territories of the Coast Salish, SCIA'NEW Nation and T'Sou-ke Nation, and Nuu-chah-nulth Pacheedaht Nation to the west, upon which we work together to improve health and wellbeing for all.

Board Chair's Report

Thanks to a very active board, as well as all the work that the SRCHN (Christine), SRVC (Agnes) and Homelessness (Jen) coordinators and all of our volunteers have put in, we have had a very busy year.

After many years of perseverance, we finally got funding from the United Way of the Lower Mainland for the Sooke Region Better at Homes Program in October 2019. This program allows us to provide nonmedical care to seniors so that they can age in place with grace. Helping our seniors stay in their own homes increases their quality of life as well as decreasing costs to society. An Advisory Committee has been struck with representatives from Shirley, Otter Point, Sooke and East Sooke. SRCHN hired a housekeeper on contract and established a partnership with the Sooke Lions to provide minor home repairs. Volunteers visit seniors and do their shopping with them.

Thanks to Christine's grant writing skills we received the following grants:

- Island Health Wellness grant allowed us to deliver Falls Prevention Education in Sooke and Shirley.
 - UBCM gave us a grant to hire a nutritionist to do Education and Cooking Classes with seniors from Sooke, East Sooke and Shirley.
 - The New Horizons grant was multifaceted. We started some programs that would allow some of the work of Better at Home to happen until we received regular funding for it. Friendly Visiting, Music for people with Dementia and Social Gatherings were a few of the activities that happened under this grant.
 - Last year, the District of Sooke provided funding for SRCHN to gather information about the Mental Health and Addictions Services available in Sooke. Once the service provider survey is completed, we will gather the participants together in a round table to talk about gaps and potential solutions. This work is still under way and with additional funding we are planning a phase 2 of this program, which will allow us to consult with consumers and caregivers about their experience. The reports for both stages are to be shared publicly.
 - Capital Regional District has allocated Federal Reaching Home funds for SRCHN in collaboration with the Sooke Homelessness Coalition to build capacity around Homelessness and its prevention in the community, where community and the services providers are to develop a service provision model and a vision for the Sooke Region. The final report will take place in the next fiscal year. The SRCHN Board Chair currently chairs the Sooke Homelessness Coalition.
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- Jen negotiated with BC Housing to provide money for the administration of a shelter where the Homeless could self-isolate through the pandemic. This was a partnership with Sooke Shelter and many other service providers to supply wrap-around services for the residents.

A new role for SRCHN is to mentor the Sooke Shelter Board, whereupon they can prepare to take on funding to provide ongoing services to those experiencing homelessness and those at risk of homelessness in the Sooke Region. We have been working together in the management of the shelter and have invited a member of their board to sit on our board.

The Board will continue to update its rolling Strategic Plan this summer.

A lot of the work this year has focused on services for seniors. Without a seniors' centre in Sooke, the Age-Friendly committee has been providing ways to support the Sooke Seniors Drop-In Centre to maintain membership and activity. We continue to partner with the Sooke Region Lifelong Learning Program facilitating peer-to-peer learning sessions, provide support to a new Seniors/Youth Centre with affordable seniors housing, and supporting the amalgamation of the Seniors Activity Bus with the Seniors Drop-In Centre.

A newly formed working group will be looking at the issue of food security within the Sooke Region. Initial meetings have included the Sooke Food Bank and the Sooke Meals on Wheels Programs. Information is being gathered from Sooke Food CHI and the farmers in the area as well.

Because of the rapid growth in programming this year, the Treasurer's job became enormous. We have just hired a bookkeeper to take on the financial work. The finance committee will work closely with the bookkeeper to manage the budgets and financial planning.

The Board continues to be involved in many external committees and working groups:

Primary Health Services:

The District of Sooke Primary Health Care Working Group is actively working towards increasing primary health services in Sooke. A stake holders forum was held and most recently a community information session. Rick Robinson also sits on the Sooke Primary Healthcare Executive Steering Committee with Island Health and District of Sooke. Through the work of these committees, Premier John Horgan recently announced funding for Sooke to increase its primary health services with the addition of two doctors, a nurse practitioner and two nurses, as well as expanding the office to accommodate these increases. The expansion of the Sooke Medical Clinic has now been completed and they are working with Island Health to hire the staff mentioned above. SRCHN is still working towards a long-term goal of integrated, co-located services, likely in the form of a new Health Centre.

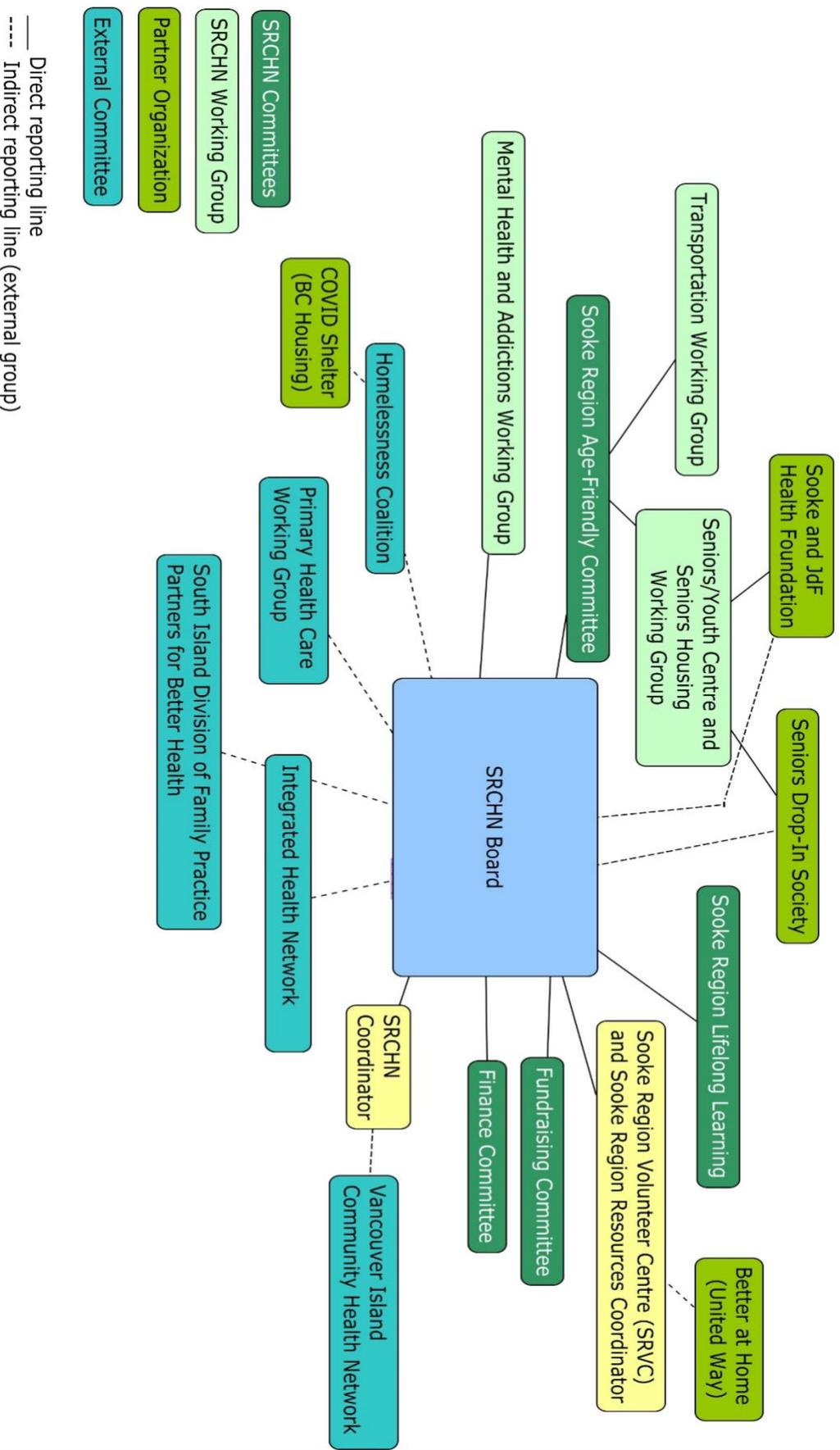
Other Primary Health collaborations include:

- South Island Division of Family Practice, Partners for Better Health
- Western Communities Primary Healthcare Steering Committee
Western Communities Patient Care Network Communications Working Group
- Urgent primary care centre development - western communities
- Regional Community Health & Care Directors Committee (island wide)

Thank you to all staff and volunteers for your dedication to working towards better health for those living in the area from East Sooke to Port Renfrew.

- Mary Dunn

Sooke Region Communities Health Network (June 2020)



Sooke Region Communities Health Network

Balance Sheet

As of March 31, 2020

	<u>Total</u>
Assets	
Current Assets	
Cash and Cash Equivalent	
Coast Capital Operating	115,993.98
Coast Capital Savings	740.75
Coast Capital Shares	5.00
Petty Cash-Volunteer Centre	405.81
Total Cash and Cash Equivalent	\$ 117,145.54
Accounts Receivable (A/R)	
Accounts Receivable (A/R)	-20,445.25
Total Accounts Receivable (A/R)	-\$ 20,445.25
Total Current Assets	\$ 96,700.29
Non-current Assets	
Property, plant and equipment	
Accum Amort Computer Hardware	-2,896.80
Accum Amort F&E	-80,206.26
Computer Hardware	897.11
Furniture & Equipment	80,206.26
Total Property, plant and equipment	-\$ 1,999.69
Total Non Current Assets	-\$ 1,999.69
Total Assets	\$ 94,700.60
Liabilities and Equity	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable (A/P)	
Accounts Payable	-1,000.00
Total Accounts Payable (A/P)	-\$ 1,000.00
Credit Card	
Visa 6000	272.59
Total Credit Card	\$ 272.59
Deferred Funding	0.00
GST/HST Payable	-654.24
Rental Deposits on Hand	1,966.57
Total Current Liabilities	\$ 584.92
Total Liabilities	\$ 584.92
Equity	
Opening Balance Equity	-2,896.80
Retained Earnings	90,415.49

Profit for the year		6,596.99
Total Equity	\$	94,115.68
Total Liabilities and Equity	\$	94,700.60

Wednesday, Jul 01, 2020 06:20:59 PM GMT-7 - Accrual Basis

Sooke Region Communities Health Network Coordinator

Program Reports

Reduction of Seniors Self-Isolation

Funder: New Horizons Federal Grant (\$21,875.00)

1) Volunteer home visiting program

- a) Seniors visiting seniors – traditional home visits or at our local seniors' homes.
- b) Joggers or cyclists visiting seniors – joggers doing their rounds in their neighbourhoods can pop in and visit seniors while getting their exercise. We have seen an excellent example of this in the United Kingdom.
<http://www.bbc.com/news/av/uk-43844724/my-78-year-old-running-coach>
- c) Inter-generational visits to the seniors nursing home – we will encourage children and youth to visit our seniors nursing home in a chaperoned manner.

2) Music therapy

- a) Music therapy through iPod/mp3 devices – Not everyone can be communicated with, despite visitation, however music therapy is a program that has proven to be effective for people suffering from dementia. Used iPod shuffles and mp3s provide them with easy to access music which is chosen especially for them.

3) Pet visiting program

- a) Private dog walkers visiting seniors – while out, dog walkers can pop in and chat to seniors
- b) Pet owners visiting seniors – either to private homes or our local seniors nursing home

4) Walking program

- a) Walking outings - A walking coach - at either seniors' home facilities or private homes in the same neighbourhood – is a valuable way to get slightly frail seniors moving out of doors
- b) Organized dog walkers visiting seniors – professional dog walkers in the region are able to help with walks for the fitter seniors, with the permission of the dog owners.

5) Seniors' social dance

- a) Dance - Through a survey done at a recent seniors' event, there was much mention of the need for dancing sessions and an annual dance. Working with our regional Lifelong Learners' group, we will intend to arrange dance sessions throughout the year and finish off the year with a dance event.

6) Supporting our local seniors' transportation network

- a) Seniors Bus transportation to events - We are fortunate to have a seniors' bus and they are available to transport seniors for a minor fee. They already provide field trips, but need support to transport seniors locally.
 - b) Contact drivers – this is a volunteer driving service that brings seniors to medical appointments. They are in need of new volunteers and that these be trained.
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c) Encourage use of public transportation – with a buddy system, help seniors, especially those with mobility challenges, to overcome their anxiety about using the bus.

Timeline: March 2019 - March 2020

Objectives: Reduce social isolation, particularly among less mobile seniors

Number of clients: 97

Number of paid personnel: 2 coordinators

Number of Volunteers: 18

List of partners: Ayre Manor, Sooke Dance Studio, Edward Milne Community School, EMCS Society, BC Transit

This home visiting program served some of the needs which we are now able to provide through the Better at Home program, and is there were many popular activities. For example, square dancing sessions took a life of its own and continued with initiative of the participants themselves. Music therapy took place at Ayre Manor and will continue after this grant is over. The St. Valentine's tea was organized at the local high school where the arts students met with seniors from Ayre Manor and many seniors and youth wanted to continue meeting in social gatherings.

Contact Drivers were provided with support and participated in some programming. A free door-to-door bus service was made available to events. However, BC Transit information session had to be postponed due to Covid-19.

Seniors Healthy Cooking Classes

Funder: Union of BC Municipalities (\$15,000.00)

A healthy diet is essential to optimal aging, and we have worked to encourage seniors to prepare and enjoy nutritious meals. Cooking sessions were held twice a month over 10 months, using recipes from the BC Province Seniors Eating for Seniors Guide and slow food movement. The cultural and ethnic food evening was popular, with groups preparing meals under the instruction of a cook and at times a nutritionist. The meals were shared in a common setting to encourage social interaction, and local restaurants were encouraged to host sessions. This program was open to the public, with space for up to 20 participants at a time. Sessions were filmed to upload on our local Lifelong Learning YouTube channel, so that they are kept for posterity and can be seen by those who are less mobile.

Timeline: July 2019 – February 2020

Objectives: Provide clients with knowledge about local food services for seniors, and coaching on nutritional cooking and the maintenance of a healthy diet. Through exercise provide necessary body movement and education on how to keep body in shape when at home, and through social

interaction with peers, provide options for social engagement and an overall improvement in wellbeing.

Number of clients: 30

Number of paid personnel: 1 facilitator/program developer, 1 coordinator

Number of volunteers: 2 (kitchen prep)

List of partners: Edward Milne Community School Society (kitchen), Sooke Options for Community Living Association (Transport)

In all, there were five sets of four cooking sessions, with 30 participants in total. There were two field trips to regional shops to show where ideal produce can be found. A cookbook with nutritional information is in development, which we hope in time to with the public. We also developed a series of cooking videos with nutritional guidance.

This was so popular that the cooking groups wanted to meet again for potlucks and other cooking social events. Some participants discovered that they were neighbors and have continued to meet for dinners after the classes were over.

Falls Prevention

Funder: Island Health Healthy Communities (\$12,000.00)

The Falls Prevention sessions for seniors and their caregivers were run with 12 3-hour sessions. There was advice on how to secure the home as much as possible, as well as increasing balance through exercises. Each group was provided with resource materials from the regional Island Health Wellness office, as well as other relevant local services. The content came from the Canadian Falls Prevention course provided by University of Victoria.

Timeline: March 2019-March 2020

Objectives: The short-term objectives were to reduce injuries and anxiety in the home and create awareness of relevant resources. Long-term, it is hoped that participants will be able to stay safe, have fewer falls in the home and share what they have learned.

Number of clients: 24 (14 in Shirley and 10 in Sooke) ages 60-91

Number of paid personnel: 1 facilitator/program developer, 1 coordinator

Number of volunteers: 1

List of partners: Leslie Barker, Manager Community Health Services, Esquimalt, Westshore, Sooke, Island Health was a consultant and provided brochure information. Roy Desveaux, Community

Paramedic helped us to identify vulnerable individuals. Other relevant service providers helped to support the vulnerable seniors.

The importance of this program has been in its preventative approach. The seniors who took part were appreciative, and were interested in having re-fresher sessions in the future.

Mental Health and Addictions Services Inventory

Funder: District of Sooke (\$7,000.00) and Victoria Foundation (\$16,000.00)

SRCHN established a Mental Health and Addictions working group, with members including a retired public health nurse, a mental health support worker and a retired psychologist and university professor. The latter will advise the group on the process, content of the survey and final report. This tool will identify with more clarity the actual and expected future service needs.

Phase 1 – Preparing the package

Dr Roy Brown's helped to create the survey questions for service providers, consumers and families/caregivers. This will be followed up by interviews, focus groups, and we will be using an external ethics committee to review the material.

Phase 2 – Data collection

This phase is currently on-going.

Phase 3 – Analysis and report

Analysis will be done by the working group, with a report written by the coordinator and reviewed by the working group. The report will be shared publicly, and a public consultation forum will be held before Nov. 2020.

Timeline: November 2019 – November 2020

Objectives: The plan is to bring together quantitative and qualitative responses describing the challenges and impacts that are experienced by service providers, consumers, families and caregivers. With this an inventory and analysis will be carried out for current mental health and addiction services in Sooke.

Number of paid personnel: 1 coordinator

Number of volunteers: 7

List of partners: Mental Health and Addictions working group: Rebecca George (Lead), Sally Mclean (SRCHN), Hermione Jefferis (AVI), Mary Dunn (SRCHN), Margot Swinburnson (SD62), Janice Hlady, Dr Roy Brown (consultant)

Better at Home and Sooke Region Volunteer Centre Coordinator

Program Reports

Better at Home Program

Timeline: October 2019-June 30th 2020

Number of clients: 28

Available services: friendly visits, housekeeping, yard work, transportation, small repairs

Number of active volunteers: 20

Volunteer hours: 260

Partners: Our Sooke Region Better at Home Program has established a working relationship with **Sooke Lions Club**. Both organizations have an interest in supporting individuals, within the Sooke region, to live in their own residence as long as possible. Sooke Lions Club has supported individuals for some time in various ways, including, but not limited to, minor home repairs at minimal or no cost to the individual living in their home. Our agency is responsible for identifying residents who might need local home repairs. Once a Better at Home client has given permission to share their name and address with the Sooke Lions, the Sooke Lions meet with the client to determine the services to be provided, at their sole discretion. The Better at Home Coordinator is available to assist with client communications, upon request. Sooke Lions provide an email outlining their decision in relation to that client and when the project is to proceed, including a rough completion date.

Sooke Region Better at Home Program has a partnership with the **Orange Taxi**. Their transportation services are subsidized by our Better at Home program based on a sliding scale. Clients receive Better at Home vouchers so they only pay their portion to the cab company, and the remaining balance is paid by our agency at the end of each month. We offer this transportation for local grocery shopping for our seniors.

Sooke Region Better at Home Program has also established a partnership with the local **Meals on Wheels**. Their hot meals are delivered to our clients requesting this service and a sliding scale cost is applied.

CONTACT Loan Cupboard is a local non-profit organization which provides the rental of medical equipment suitable for home care needs. Transportation by volunteer drivers is offered for medical appointments in Sooke, Colwood, Langford and Victoria. They refer their clients to Sooke Region Better at Home Program or our registered clients are referred to them if medical transportation is needed.

We also have a partnership with **T'Sou-ke First Nation** to be able to reach members of their community to access their needs and offer appropriate Sooke Region Better at Home program services.

Sooke Better at Home has a good relation with **Worklink**, which offers employment services in Sooke. Workers often see volunteering as a way to balance work life, learn new skills and contribute to a community they care about. Employers are interested in seeing volunteering as a professional development activity that can help their employees to achieve performance improvement objectives or learn new skills. This might also be an amazing opportunity to get some experience to fill a gap in their employment history. We also have other partnerships with: **Island Health, Ayre Manor and District of Sooke**

The decision to fund the Sooke Region Better at Home Program gave us the green light to go ahead with the preparation stage, where we made connections with existing local organizations and groups to work together towards success. It allowed us to find the best possible housekeepers and volunteers for the program, and build some new partnerships to be able to quickly and effectively implement this new exciting program in our community. Within a few months, we were able to prepare all the necessary office procedures, make a volunteer handbook, prepare all marketing materials and recruit an amazing group of very dedicated volunteers who were ready to work as friendly visitors in our community.

We organized an orientation for everyone and spread the word of the program amongst our seniors. We worked very hard to organize the Sooke Region Better at Home launch event and received amazing feedback from 25 seniors who were planning to attend. We invited not only seniors but also members of all seniors' organizations in Sooke to be sure everyone knew enough to spread the news and refer clients to our program. Unfortunately, Covid-19 came and we had to cancel this event at the last moment.

Training and resources offered to the volunteers providing Better at Home services to seniors through your program:

At the Sooke Region Better at Home Program, we wanted to be sure that all our newly-recruited program volunteers understood the program expectations. They were expected to participate in an Orientation Session where they received our Volunteer Handbook. We discussed their rights and responsibilities, personal conduct during at-home visits, liability, injury and safety protocol, confidentiality, boundaries, qualifications and guidelines. It was a great time to ask any questions they had and to get to know each other. Some had experience working with seniors already, some were very new to their new roles, so it was an amazing chance to learn from each other.

We knew that our friendly visitors might need some more training about building relations with seniors, so decided to have another training about "How to keep personal boundaries". This training was an integral part of our orientation for all Better at Home volunteers. The workshop was

facilitated by a Mental Health Clinic Counselor and it was another very successful and interesting workshop to bring to our program.

Our next workshop was offered for all volunteers and residents in Sooke Region area. As our seniors' population is growing, we decided to increase the awareness of dementia in our community. We offered a workshop where people could learn how to make our community dementia-friendly. Participants learned how to help people living with dementia and how to make them feel that they were included and supported. This workshop was facilitated by the guest speaker from the Alzheimer Society (and was open to the public). A lot of volunteers, and people whose family members have dementia attended. It was very informative and well-attended training. It brought a deeper understanding of this problem to our friendly visitors. We were also planning to offer Adult to Adult Communication workshop at the beginning of April, but due to the Covid-19 situation, this workshop has been put on hold.

Workshops for Seniors

Sooke Region Better at Home offered free of charge workshops and our volunteers facilitated or helped to coordinate them. Our volunteers really enjoyed organizing these workshops. Our local seniors learned how to make macramé, attending 3-week sessions to learn the basic technique and work together to help each other to reach their goals. It was interactive and a fun experience for all participants.

Volunteers with the Sooke Region Better at Home also organized a workshop on "How to make a Christmas Decoration". This workshop was very well-attended and was offered just before Christmas. Everyone wanted to bring their Christmas spirit, socialize and just have fun. This was yet another chance for our seniors to prove that they are creative and love to learn, doing things together in a friendly atmosphere. It was not only the opportunity to take part in an activity, it was a chance to meet new people, socialize and have fun.

After the success of these two workshops, Sooke Region Better at Home Program found a space at a local church to organize seniors' gatherings. As our local seniors lost the Senior Centre a few years ago, the fact that they might have a space to meet again to socialize was welcomed wholeheartedly. There have been two meetings so far. The first one was just before Christmas and it was a very special. The founder of the local Rotary Club attended, we had simple gifts for everyone and offered some drinks and snacks. Our volunteers were there to serve and to make every senior feel special that day. Our seniors were very happy and deeply touched by this event. In the New Year, it was time to celebrate Valentine's Day together. We met at the same church and everyone went home with a big chocolate heart. It was another special and rewarding event. We were planning to hold meetings every month, but this will have to wait now until the Covid-19 restrictions are lifted.

Safe Seniors, Strong Community Program

Timeline: April 2020-March 2021

Program that matches seniors who need support with non-medical essentials, to volunteers in their community who are willing to help.

Available services include grocery shopping and delivery, meal or food delivery, prescription drop off and pickup, as well as phone wellness checks and or virtual friendly visits.

Registered number of clients for grocery shopping: 39

- Clients who were asking for help: 13
- Shopping volunteers: 9
- Check in clients: 20
- Check in volunteers: 21

Total number of services provided so far:

- 515 checks-in
- 73 grocery shopping
- 103 meals delivery

Sooke Region Volunteer Centre

Timeline: July 2019-June 2020

Number of volunteers:

- 14 people came to the Sooke Region Volunteer Centre to volunteer for Safe Seniors, Strong Communities Program
- 34 people came to dedicate their time and work with seniors under New Horizon Grant and Better at Home Program
- 15 people came to ask about any volunteer opportunity in Sooke.

Our volunteers dedicated more than 600 hours. The Sooke Region Volunteer Center is run from a part-time office (2 afternoons and one morning per week) and a very significant portion of our services is delivered by volunteers. Our mandate is to promote and support volunteerism in the Sooke Region.

We promote volunteerism by:

- providing information about the rewards of volunteering;
 - connecting people with rewarding volunteer opportunities;
 - assisting local groups in meeting their volunteer needs;
 - coordinating events to celebrate volunteers
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- centralizing listings for local volunteer opportunities through a website that serves citizens & organizations from Beecher Bay to Port Renfrew

Our goal is to provide leadership on issues relating to volunteerism by partnering with local organizations, schools and community leaders to identify needs and mobilize volunteer responses. We create networking & collaboration opportunities for individuals and groups.

- Our center provides resource information for local people about businesses and places to go and ask for assistance. SRVC is recognized as a resource and referral center in our community as evidenced by community members contacting us directly in search of local assistance.
 - We successfully run an annual Free Tax Program, which includes scheduling all clinic days, completing paper work, coordinating pick up and drop off of tax-related documents and any follow up required. Due to Covid-19, we had to suspend our program in March and we reopened it for drop-off only at the end of May. This year we were able to help 70 people. The program is still open and we still have calls from people who would like to have their taxes done. Four tax program volunteers were involved to help this year. Two of them also helped last year, two were new. All of them have already said that they would love to help next year!
 - We organized a Community Celebration Event at the Baptist Church. This was an amazing opportunity for non-profit organizations to come and share information about the great services and resources they offer to the public. We had food, music, fun and shopping opportunity for everyone. This was the first event of this kind. Everyone enjoyed it a lot and we were planning to organize it again this spring. Unfortunately, it had to be put on hold.
 - Our Sooke Region Volunteer Centre hosted a workshop for all non-profit organizations in Sooke about volunteer trends. It is obvious that those trends are changing. With so many amazing projects and causes in the community, volunteers have lots of options to volunteer, so we offered a two-hour workshop to take a deeper look at volunteering trends and volunteering management. We explored how groups, organizations, and projects could better recruit, retain, and celebrate their volunteers. This workshop was facilitated by Lisa Mont-Putland, Executive Director of Volunteer Victoria. It was very well attended and everyone enjoy it very much. We are planning to have a few more workshops so that our local non-profit organizations can share their experience and learn from each other what successful volunteer management looks like.
 - Our Sooke Region Volunteer Centre volunteers facilitated a Square Dancing group at the Legion. This was a very popular activity in our community as 25 people attending every week.
 - Sooke Region Volunteer Centre was planning to distribute seniors' activity questionnaire in our community to learn what kind of activates seniors would love to participate in. We have had volunteers interested in facilitating workshops such as:
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- Art (painting, watercolour, collage)
- Crafts (sewing, knitting, crochet, needle work)

Thanks to the following partnerships, we are planning to help more seniors in our community:

- Partnership with Sooke Lions Club – Their volunteers have undertaken a small repair program for Better at Home clients.
- Partnership with Rotary Club – Their volunteers want to help to host monthly events at the Holy Trinity church to make seniors feel more connected in our community.
- Partnership with Harbourside Lioness – Their volunteers would like to help facilitate some workshops at Ayre Manor.

It was a very busy time with a lot of new projects and very successful connections in the community. Hopefully the pandemic situation will not last long and we will be able to continue all the activities that we were doing.

- Agnes Kossakowska

Covid-19 Response Isolation Shelter in Sooke

SEAPARC Recreation Facility - Arena Project: March 12, 2020 - June 30, 2020

Sooke Region Communities Health Network

Jen Wilde - Homelessness Programs Coordinator, July 2020

I would like to acknowledge that we have done this work on the traditional territories of the T'Sou-ke Nation

Introduction

The Covid-19 Isolation Shelter in Sooke was developed from the District of Sooke Covid- 19 Vulnerable Populations Response Plan (See Attached). This project was created and implemented by the efforts and involvement of the Sooke Homelessness Coalition which is comprised of the following partners:

- Sooke Region Communities Health Network
- Sooke Shelter Society
- Our Place Society
- Greater Victoria Extreme Weather Protocol
- Sooke Crisis and Referral Centre
- T'Souke Nation
- AIDS Vancouver Island
- Doctors of the World
- BCEHS - Community Paramedic
- Sooke Food Bank
- District of Sooke
- Sooke RCMP
- Sooke Bylaw Enforcement
- Sooke Harbourside Lions Club
- Sooke Rotary Club
- Sooke Multi-Belief Initiative

Along with the support of:

- Emergency Management BC
 - BC Housing
 - Vancouver Island Health Authority
 - Capital Regional District - Reaching Home Program
 - Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness
 - Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction
 - Victoria Foundation
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Overview of the Covid-19 Response Isolation Shelter in Sooke

Shelter Development and Response Plan

Mid-march of 2020, it was clear that we were entering into a global pandemic. A strategy was being developed regionally to respond to the unhoused, vulnerable populations in the Greater Victoria region.

Equipped with experience in emergency response shelters and existing partnerships from this work in the Greater Victoria region, and specifically in Sooke, the Homelessness Programs Coordinator (identified as “the HPC” in this document) took on the task to create a Vulnerable Populations Response Plan for the District of Sooke in collaboration with the Sooke Homelessness Coalition and the unhoused residents of Sooke.

A site was determined by Emergency Management BC and a plan was developed around the use of the SEAPARC Arena. The CRD, SEAPARC, District of Sooke, BC Housing and the HPC developed an operating plan and sought out an organization to support operations. With the regional challenges around the unhoused, vulnerable populations, there was some difficulty in obtaining an operator to take on the project. Sooke Region Communities Health Network was asked to step in and offered up their organizational support.

Model of Care

The development and implementation of this response shelter was created from the input and direction of both the unhoused residents of Sooke and the services in direct support of that population. Each person interviewed for the intake process was involved in the resources support plan and the operational plan for the shelter and for their own care.

Sooke Shelter Society acted as both the referral agency for intake and the community support and food service for the shelter operations. They provided insight, familiarity and continuity of care to the unhoused population as they were brought into the program and into the shelter itself once we opened the doors.

The overall model of care was based on a peer driven, harm reduction model of support developed within the guidelines of the Covid-19 vulnerable populations response plan from the provincial health authority. Within this model, we were able to provide support as requested by the residents with numerous resources providing in-reach to the shelter and offering up accessible services. Covid-19 guidelines were managed with hygiene protocols and service protocols. Health of the residents was monitored twice daily with temperature checks and screenings.

Shelter Staffing and Operations

The operational plan for the shelter was developed by the HPC and supported by the Sooke Homelessness Coalition. (It is attached to this document.)

21 shelter staff were hired overall for the project. 4 left the project before the end date due to

personal reasons and 5 are unavailable to continue this work in the event that we open up another facility. The remaining 12 staff would like to continue this work.

There was a great variety of skills and capacity from the staff hired due to time constraints. Many were brought in from the Sooke Shelter Society volunteer pool. Others were working in other community support roles. Others were new to this line of work but demonstrated the compassionate ability to support the work needing to be done. All staff were provided with a half day training which included the following:

- SRCHN - Intro and Paperwork
- Public Health Nurse - Overview of Covid-19 including Symptom Screening
- CRD, SEAPARC - Site Safety Training
- AVI - Harm Reduction, AVI Health Services, Naloxone and Overdose Prevention
- AVI - Substances and drug checking services.
- HPC - Shelter Operations Overview
- HPC - Questions and wrap up

Staff were provided an account to HSABC (Homelessness Services Association of British Columbia) trainings which was supplemented during their time at the shelter. Only a handful of staff took advantage of this extra training.

The HPC provided on-the-job training during the first few weeks of operations and supported the staff to assist with the creation of the new shelter environment in consultation with the residents.

After numerous discussions with the residents, most felt that their staffing support team was good and they felt free to express their concerns and their objections to the levels of service provided to them. There were compliments and complaints regarding staff personalities and the HPC made every attempt to work with the staff to navigate the complaint process and the service provided to the residents.

Shelter Occupancy and Demographics

A total of 38 unhoused Sooke residents were identified in March 2020. A total of 24 of these individuals completed an intake for service. 5 of them were sent to the motel project in Victoria and 19 accessed the shelter at SEAPARC. Another 8 individuals accessed supports from the shelter but never stayed within the sheltering environment or completed an intake for service. 32 out of the originally 38 identified unhoused residents of Sooke accessed services.

Of the 24 registered individuals:

Number of Residents	Age Group	First Nations/Metis	Veteran	M/F/T/O
4	19-25	1 Metis		1M, 3F
5	25-35		1 - Afghanistan	5M, 0F
7	35-45	1 FN, 1 Metis		2M, 5F
3	45-55	1 FN		2M, 1F
3	55-65	1 FN		3M, 0F
2	65+			1M, 1F

Break Out Statistics:

- 9 Females and 16 Males
- Youngest - 20 years, Eldest - 74 years
- 3 individuals identified as First Nations and 2 identified as Metis.
- 1 individual identified as a Veteran having served in Afghanistan.

4 pets were brought into the shelter. 2 dogs and 2 cats. One of the cats had kittens within a short period of time and they were sent away for foster care. The remaining 3 pets stayed with us until the closure and were well mannered and looked after.

2 individuals presented as a safety concern for the shelter environment and were removed by RCMP. Both presented with co-current mental health and substance use disorders. In both cases, we were unable to secure additional supports for these individuals even with a collaborative approach from all service providers.

One individual was housed through a coordinated effort between the HPC, BC Housing, CRD - RHP Covid-19 Funding Strategy, Sooke Shelter Society and the Sooke Food Bank. This individual had denied access to supports for approximately 3 years prior to accessing services at the shelter. The intake date to housed date was 6 weeks in duration.

One of the elders of our group was taken into detox (and eventually the hospital) where a plan to have him placed in an assisted living facility is still in progress. The Street Nurse from AVI is actively participating in his care in Victoria and providing him with continuity of care.

16 of the residents that came into our care participated in active case planning that included mental and physical health, applying primary care to each resident, substance use management and supports, personal goal setting, applications for income assistance or disability, reclamation of ID, bank accounts, and application for the Supportive Housing Registry. Case plans were managed through a coordinated effort between the HPC and the AVI health and harm reduction team.

Neighbourhood Plan for Residents

During the intake process with the unhoused residents of Sooke, we discussed a concept that we commonly referred to as the “neighbourhood plan”. This plan was developed in consultation with each of the residents to refer to how we participated and contributed to the neighbourhood. We identified the different levels of the neighbourhood as:

- All the residents living in the shelter
- The shelter staff and SEAPARC staff
- The properties adjacent to SEAPARC
- The Sunriver Community
- The Sooke Community

We discussed our relationship to each of those levels and how to best relate to them given their circumstance. These discussions included:

- Interpersonal relationships with each other and how we could support those relationships.
- Personal boundaries and safety
- Respecting the shelter staff and the SEAPARC staff and making every effort to contribute to the care of the space
- How to participate in the community spaces and improve relationships with the Sooke community at large
- How difficult it was to be seen as being less worthy of respect and courtesy by the community and how to respond to this
- How to improve our community participation and contribution to the safety and security of communal spaces.

We worked together to create a better conversation with the different levels of the “neighbourhood plan” to engage in a dialogue that was more conducive to their healing process.

Community Response and the Addition of Security

The announcement of the SEAPARC shelter operations was met with a great deal of mixed reactions from the community of Sooke. Initially, the resistance consisted of complaints on social media platforms and eventually resulted in the assault of SRCHN employees while setting up the site. Once the unhoused population was moved into the shelter, there were incidents of yelling and screaming, filming of the operations and a variety of projectiles tossed at the residents. Numerous individuals attempted to gain access to the shelter space to “see what was going on” or to take pictures. Staff were given a directive not to allow anyone in the building without approval from the director of operations. After consultation with Sooke Homeless Coalition, BC Housing and the residents themselves, security was added to the shelter plan with direction to intervene between the public and the shelter space itself.

Community Donations and Services

On numerous occasions, residents from Sooke and specifically the Sunriver community stopped by and provided the shelter with donations of doughnuts, muffins, cookies and pizza. These gifts were shared with a declaration that they wanted us to know about those who supported our work and the unhoused residents of Sooke. Many also attempted to provide the shelter with clothing and blankets which we were unable to accept due to COVID restrictions.

A month into operations, we were approached by a local counsellor who volunteered to lead a mindfulness groups twice a week for the residents. This was attended with varying results by the residents and staff. On average there were 3-4 attending. On one occasion, there were 14 individuals in attendance to this offering.

External Community Support for Housed Residents of Sooke

On multiple occasions, the HPC was approached to look after individuals looking for emergency community support during the operational period. The HPC was involved in 7 referrals to other community services. We had 2 youth that were referred to Kiwanis Emergency Youth Shelter and 2 women that required extraction from violent domestic situations into the Sooke Transition House. One of which was assisted with case planning her back to her family in Ontario. The other was referred to Sooke Shelter Society to receive a rental support in a new home. Another 3 individuals were redirected to emergency mental health services through CARES.

Resource Support Strategy

Due to Covid-19 isolation guidelines, we were tasked with ensuring that the residents of the shelter were able to meet their needs without too much travel. We adopted an in-reach strategy that allowed most of their needs to be met from within the shelter environment. The following community supports regularly attended the shelter:

- Sooke Shelter Society - Community and Food Service
- Westshore AVI - Health and Harm Reduction
- Dr Pocock (via tablet with support from AVI)
- Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction
- VIHA - Mental Health and Substance Use Counsellor
- Forbes Pharmacy

Food Service was also provided from off-site locations and delivered twice daily from Sooke Shelter Society. We had two primary providers for the individually packaged meals; Jenny's Country Pantry and Sooke 2 for 1 Pizza.

Media Relations and Communication Strategy

Media releases were created with a coordinated effort between BC Housing, District of Sooke, CRD and SRCHN. BC Housing took the lead on media response and the HPC answered follow up, operational questions.

The HPC provided updates twice a week to the SRCHN chair and designate via Zoom along with daily updates via email about incidents and requests for information.

The Sooke Homelessness Coalition met weekly for the HPC to provide updates to the coalition and to support the work being done moving forward from a committee perspective.

Funding Partners

This project was built on a collaborative approach of supports from numerous funding sources. BC Housing provided the primary operational budget with support from the CRD RHP Covid-19 Funding Strategy for staffing costs. The Sooke Food Bank provided support with the purchase of individual food service containers and ingredients for the restaurants. The Victoria Foundation provided support for food service, outreach food supports and food supplements. The CRD RHP Covid-19 Funding Strategy provided support to AVI to provide health and harm reduction and to the Sooke Shelter Society to provide a fund for rental supplements.

This funding collaboration was supported and assisted by the Coalition to End Homelessness as part of their regional Covid-19 - Vulnerable Populations Strategy.

- Jen Wilde