

A Message From the Executive Director

Spring! It feels like it's just around the corner. Spring is a season that symbolizes new beginnings, growth, renewal and rebirth. After months of cold temperatures that often result in many of us feeling the winter blues, spring reawakens us and our surrounding environment. At Kootenai Community Centre Society, we are all feeling the approach of spring and getting ready to enjoy the outdoors once again. The children attending our child care programs are full of energy and excitement, the child care staff are happy to be able to spend more time outdoors, the Ending the Violence staff are gearing up for our Take Back the Night event and those in our community who are without housing or shelter are starting to shake off the wet, bitter cold and look forward to warmer, drier temperatures in the days and nights to come. With spring comes a sense of hope, reminding us all that there is always a chance for new beginnings and fresh starts.

This spring, KCCS will be hosting our annual Take Back the Night event on May 23rd, 2025. This event coincides with the Survivors of Crime Week 2025 which aims to shine a spot light on the experiences of people impacted by crime and calls for positive change within the criminal justice system. The mission of Take Back the Night is to end sexual violence in all forms, including sexual assault, sexual abuse, trafficking, stalking, gender harassment, and relationship violence, and to support survivors in their healing journeys. KCCS is committed to ending violence for all people of all sexual and gender identities, races, ethnicities, nationalities, religious beliefs, ages, abilities, and statuses and we welcome all who will walk, stand, speak, chant, and/or rally with us until violence in our community is no more.

A recent poll conducted among residents of the Columbia Basin-Boundary Region, shows that access to child care has emerged as one of the lowest-scored determinants of well-being in our region. On a scale of 1 to 7, where 7 represents the highest level of well-being, access to child care received an average score of just 3.2. Compared to previous subjective well-being poll results, child care access in the Kootenay-Boundary region has deteriorated over time. Furthermore, a large gap becomes apparent when comparing the number of government-supported child care spaces in the region to the number of children aged 12 and under. According to the BC Stats Population Estimates application, there are approximately 22,000 children aged 12 and under in the region as of 2023. As a result, only 20% of children who may need child care have access to government-supported child care spaces. Currently, the Kootenay region has the lowest number of child care spaces in the entire province of BC coming in at 4,000 spaces, while northern BC comes in at 8,000 spaces, Thompson-Okanagan at 16,000 spaces and the Fraser Valley at 15,000 spaces. As a long-time child care leader in the Creston community, KCCS has engaged with many other child care organizations throughout the region regarding the lack of child care facilities in the Kootenays and we are hoping to bring our concerns forward to the government bodies that are responsible for these programs. Until then, we will continue to do what is best for the Creston community and look to ways that will sustain and increase the capacity of our child care programs. Look for KCCS representation at this year's BlossomFest Parade.

We are deeply grateful for each of you—the dedication, care, and persistence you bring to our community. Thank you for showing up and pushing forward with us despite the challenges we face in the world. Together, we as a community, continue to make a real difference in the lives of those who need it most. Stephannie Dunn

Ending The Violence

Over the last few months our Ending the Violence Program here at Kootenai Community Centre has become very steady. Our support workers continue to assist women with legal support, emotional support, housing support, advocacy and much more. We have helped many women apply for various housing subsidies during this housing crisis we are experiencing in British Columbia. Our Second Stage and Safe Home program accommodations have been consistently full.

KCCS is happy to welcome our current Practicum student to the team for the next few months whom, during the month of January put together health and wellness hampers for many of our clients.

The Access to Benefits program that KCCS has been facilitating is still underway, though our hours and location have slightly changed. The program is operating at the Creston Public Library from 10:00AM-12:00PM on Tuesdays, as well as 1:00PM-3:00PM on Wednesdays at the Trinity United Church and is still run on a drop-in, first come first serve basis.

Kootenai Community Centre has applied to extend our menstrual equity program through Food Banks Canada, this program has been greatly beneficial to many of our low income clients in the past and we are beyond grateful to be able to continue offering this form of support to the women we serve.

KCCS currently has two openings available for our part time Crisis Line Support Worker position. For any inquiries please feel free to send a resume to admin@kccsociety.org.

Teddy Bear Daycare

Everyone at Teddy Bear has been making the most out of the sort winter days. We had a visit from Santa Claus which made the children very excited to tell him what they were wishing for on the special day.

We ended our 2024 year with a celebration including fun food and a dance party! The snow arrived in 2025 and the children are enjoying sledding, making snow people and snow angels. We are looking forward to longer days and sunshine in the coming months.

Grizzly Bear After School Care

The crew at Grizzly Bear have been enjoying their days after school making slime, sledding down our hill, collecting hours for Read-a-thon, playing games and spending time with their friends 😊 Our next Pro D day is on Valentines Day!! We will follow the tradition at Teddy Bear and have a Pj dance party. In March we will have 2 weeks of full days during Spring Break. We will plan lots of fun activities, coordinating with the themes of the week. We look forward to warmer days outside and sunshine!!