

## **A Message from the Executive Director**

One of the most profound lessons to be learned from the shedding of leaves is that letting go is a natural part of life. Just as trees instinctively release their leaves in preparation for winter, we too, must release burdens, attachments, and even aspects of ourselves that are no longer contributing to our growth. A tree doesn't mourn the loss of its leaves; it understands the necessity of this process to conserve energy and survive the colder months. In the same way, letting go of certain relationships, habits, thoughts, grudges or material possessions can allow us to preserve our emotional and mental wellbeing. Like trees, we need to conserve our resources for what truly matters. By letting go, we create space for renewal and growth. Trying to cling to the past, whether it's a job, a toxic relationship, or old ways of thinking only hinders our growth. There is wisdom in recognising when something is no longer serving us and allowing ourselves the freedom to release it. Letting go is not a sign of weakness; it is an essential process for personal growth and wellbeing. So, as the days get shorter and darkness comes earlier, as the temperatures cool and the snow blankets the ground, embrace this time of rest and renewal.

A sincere thank you to our funders, partners, volunteers, board, and most importantly, our staff. The work being done at the Kootenai Community Centre Society is truly a collaborative effort in building and maintaining an organization to be proud of. Our staff clearly demonstrate their commitment to assisting our community by delivering valuable programming, supports, and services through our Ending the Violence programs, our Daycare Centres, our Outreach program and our new Access to Benefits program.

KCCS' Annual General Meeting will be held at the Creston Public Library on Tuesday, December 10, 2024 @ 6:00 p.m. If you would like to become a member of our society, please join us at our AGM. You can either purchase or renew your membership there for \$5.00 or by completing our membership application online at <https://www.kootenaicommunitycentre.org/get-involved.html> Also, if you are interested in becoming a KCCS Board member, you can visit the same site and complete the Board Member Application form. Please submit your forms to our Administrator at [admin@kccsociety.org](mailto:admin@kccsociety.org).

From the staff and Board members at Kootenai Community Centre Society, we wish you all a safe and happy winter and a very Merry Christmas. Be kind and take care of each other.

Stephannie Dunn

## End the Violence Program

This fall as we welcome the changing of seasons and the turning of leaves, we too welcome the winds of change in our lives and the lives of our clients. Change is a constant and here at KCCS we do our best to help our clients move through past traumas, new experiences and walk alongside them as they begin what becomes the new normal on their journey.

During the month of September we held Take Back the Night, an event which provides awareness about Gender-based and sexual violence. We had three very incredible women share testimonials about their lived experiences and how they have moved forward. Rene Steenkamp, Julie Harper and Bryn Rachwalski, your bravery and resilience is inspiring, and our team at KCCS would like to again thank you for sharing your stories. On display at the event was a banner listing off the names of all the women in Canada whom have passed away due to domestic violence from 2018 to 2023, through this jarring visual KCCS was able to spotlight the ongoing effects of gender-based violence. The extensive list is sure to have a lasting impression on all those who viewed it. Many citizens and organizations came together to donate to this event including,

- Alex and Lisa Wilkinson – Photography
- Rhys Boekelheide – Videography
- Rory Rachwalski – (wo)manned the concession
- The Venue – Sound system and Lighting
- Rook Designs – Partial cost of our Banner
- Save on Foods – Cases of water
- McDonalds – Coffee & coffee cups

We would like to thank each and every one of them for attending, assisting, and donating to our event.

Starting in October we launched our new Access to Benefits program which aims to assist all individuals of any age or gender identity in attaining income, including the preliminary work of attaining ID, filling out applications such as various subsidy forms, Income assistance, Persons with Disabilities, Employment Insurance, Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security, Guaranteed Income Supplement, and any other form that may assist in obtaining benefits. As well, we can send referrals for counselling, and can assist in accessing various other community supports. This program runs every Tuesday from 10:00AM until 2:00PM at the Creston Public Library and will continue to run for the foreseeable future. The program runs on a drop-in, first come first serve basis, as well, we have provided referral forms for various community agencies.

Our Ending the Violence Support workers continue to provide emotional support, parenting support, advocacy, resources, and referrals. We continue to assist clients in navigating the court system, provide court accompaniment, assistance with co-parenting after separation, education on violence and abuse and ongoing emergency shelter support for women fleeing violence.

Over the last year KCCS has hosted a Pop-up shop which provided free items to those in need from housewares and apparel to small appliances. We have enjoyed getting to know all those that attended, though our Pop-up shop has now come to a close. If there is still a need for such items they are still available at KCCS.

Kootenai Community Centre Society has received a number of monetary donations from some lovely supporters throughout this last season. The organizers of Shovel Fest raised and donated \$750 to KCCS, while Two Nugs donated us \$500 for our programs. Furthermore, Good Company Coffee has shared scones with us to pass along to our clients. We would like to thank all of them for their kind donations.

For the months of October and November Grater Good Creston will have purple ribbons available by donation. October is National Domestic Violence Awareness month and November is Domestic Violence Awareness month in Canada. KCCS would like to thank the Grater Good and their lovely team for their ongoing support and their efforts towards bringing awareness to the effects of DV.

Finally KCCS hosted a fundraising event where we had a local performers donate their time and talents to put on an amazing show for the community. KCCS would like to thank the following performers:

- Arne Sahlen
- Danielle Sonntag
- Monte Anderson
- Stages School of Dance
- Keiffer Davies
- Pat Henman
- Steven Dressel
- Raine Ash
- Roslyn Greavette
- Hillaree Blackmore,

As well as our generous donors for the event:

- Columbia Basin Trust
- Pealow's Independent Grocer
- Save on Foods

### **Teddy Bear Daycare**

In June, we had our Graduation and bid farewell to 19 children off to Kindergarten!

Over the summer months we did a lot of outdoor morning play to beat the heat. The kids looked forward to running through the sprinklers almost daily!! We were very thankful to have a lot less smoke in the air this summer J

In September enrolment was opened up to our new families. They have become established in their daily routines and a part of the Teddy Bear family. We have also implemented yoga stretching after lunch, and the children thoroughly enjoy it

The next big celebration we are all looking forward to is Halloween. We have an annual Costume Party filled with fun, dancing, and snacks!

## Grizzly Bear Out of School Care

The Grizzly kids had a blast this summer!

We had many fun themed weeks filled with stem activities, games, art, creative play, and more!!

Some of the highlights were: an exploding messy science day, giant slip n slide on the hill, spray down by the Fire Department, glow in the dark dance party, and gemstone collecting.

We ended the summer with a SUPER Fun Day including bouncy castles, face painting, and carnival games!!!

We want to thank everyone who donated their time, snacks, or supplies to our summer program. We appreciate your generosity immensely!!

In September we welcomed many new Kindergarten children to Grizzly Bear. We provided care for full days (7:30am to 5:30pm) during the weeks of Kindergarten transition.

Now, we are back to Before and After School hours (7:30am-8:30am AND 2:30pm-5:30pm), with bus pick up and drop off at our location!! We are open FULL days on all SD8 Pro-D days. New this year----we will be open full time for all of YNS Pro-D days as well!!

The staff at Grizzly Bear look forward to spending this school year with your children