community living society

imagine it - live it

Fall 2026

the Communicator



October is Community Inclusion Month

We are proud of the work we do at CLS and thank our employees for everything they do to ensure the people they support live their *lives with dignity and enjoy a full life*.

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A Disney Adventure at Sea

Rob went on a 6-day vacation in May. We were lucky to enjoy a couple of relaxing hours at the Air Canada Maple Leaf Lounge, courtesy of Rob's brother before we flew to San Diego. On Day 1 we were able to explore the city and take some great picture.

Then we boarded the Disney Wonder for a 4-day cruise back to Vancouver. When the ship left the dock we were welcomed aboard with Mickey's Sail Away Party, which Rob especially enjoyed and danced a lot.

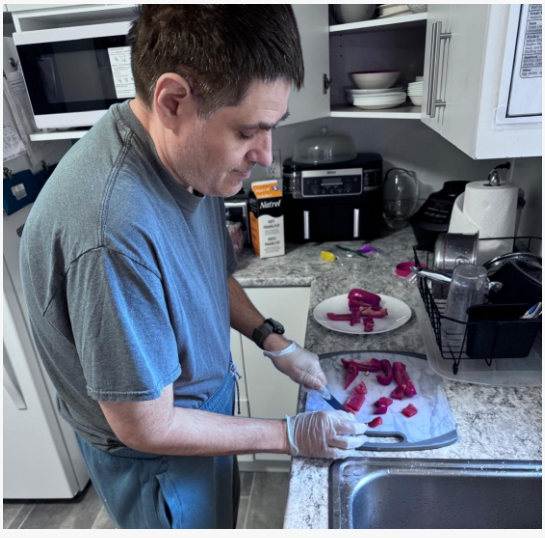
The four days were packed with activities, such as enjoying a variety of delicious food to watching amazing live shows such as *Golden Mickeys* and *Frozen*, taking pictures with Disney and Marvel characters, watching movies, and attending karaoke and trivia events.

On Friday, May 8th, which was Rob's birthday, the restaurant crew celebrated him by singing “Happy Birthday,” dancing, clapping, and encouraging nearby tables to join in the celebration. Rob was also served a special extra piece of cake for the occasion.

Thanks to everyone who helped make this trip possible and so enjoyable for Rob.







A Positive Change

Since moving to the Duthie home in August, 2025, Troy has shown significant improvement in his health and wellbeing. He has adopted a healthier lifestyle by exercising regularly, going for walks, and maintaining a balanced diet. As a result, during a recent visit with his family physician, he was able to stop taking some medications. In addition, Troy has established a meaningful weekly routine on Wednesdays, spending quality time with his wife, Michelen. Together, they enjoy having lunch at Metrotown, walking around the mall, visiting their favourite stores, and spending time catching up with one another.

Troy is working toward his goal of visiting Disneyland and has been diligently saving money for the trip. He continues to pursue volunteer opportunities by submitting his resume to businesses that offer inclusive employment opportunities for individuals with diverse abilities. The Duthie team has introduced visual supports to assist Troy in achieving his goals, and these tools have proven to be highly effective in supporting his progress.

At home, Troy takes an active role in household responsibilities. He enjoys helping with yard work, including mowing the lawn, and takes pride in helping to keep his home clean and tidy.

Together, these positive lifestyle changes and Troy's commitment to learning new skills and strengthening existing ones have contributed significantly to his personal growth, independence, and overall well-being over the past year.

Trip of a Lifetime

On May 11th, 2026, Brayden and Oso went to Japan, and it was an experience like no other. From the moment they touched down in Japan till today, they have been mesmerized by the sheer respect they have for the country and its culture. They explored Kyoto, Osaka and Tokyo and were immersed in rich history.

They took the bullet train from Tokyo to Osaka with a day trip in Kyoto where they took a knife sharpening class (they got to keep the knives!). They took boat rides, learned about sumo wrestling, the history of instant cup noodles, and went to 'all you can eat' restaurants. Brayden is very adventurous when it comes to trying new things (at least once), so they put that to the test by trying many different dishes – and enjoyed them all. They also made friends along the way and really soaked up all the learning experiences.

While in Japan, Brayden practiced his real-world skills by planning routes, learning how to read and understand maps and navigating different areas (there was a lot of walking!). All the shopping they did made their suitcases full to the brim with the many souvenirs brought back to share with loved ones.

Brayden was very grateful for the experience and hopes to experience it again later in life.













An Exciting Milestone

Rebecca had an exciting milestone in August. She rode her three-wheel bike all on her own for the first time!

She felt both proud and nervous; she showed great courage and pushed through her fear. Once she realized she could do it all on her own, she was incredibly excited and proud of herself.

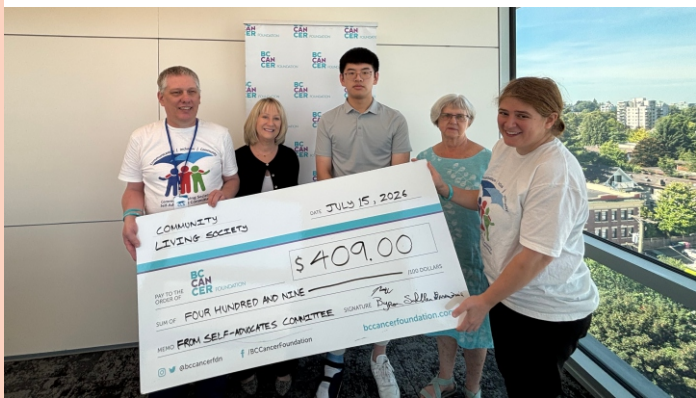
It was wonderful to see her confidence grow.

Through the fundraising activities at the CLS Employee Conference in June, the Self Advocates Committee were able to make a donation of $409 to the BC Cancer Foundation.

Communication | Inclusion | Community

Community Living Society
Self-Advocates Committee

They are very proud of this fundraising effort and look forward to more.



2025 Performance Measurement Summary

Each year Community Living Society (CLS) produces a Performance Measurement Report. Over the years the Performance Measurement Report has been refined; outcomes changed, survey questions updated, measurement indicators adjusted, and processes for collection revised.

This report tracks and summarizes the identified outcomes of CLS programs and services. The information and analysis derived from the performance measurement process is used to highlight areas of strengths and identify areas requiring improvement. The report is designed to provide essential information to CLS's management team and Board of Directors for them to monitor and make improvements to service delivery. It is expected that the outcome results will assist CLS employees to be more responsive to the needs of the people we support and their families/ personal support network members.

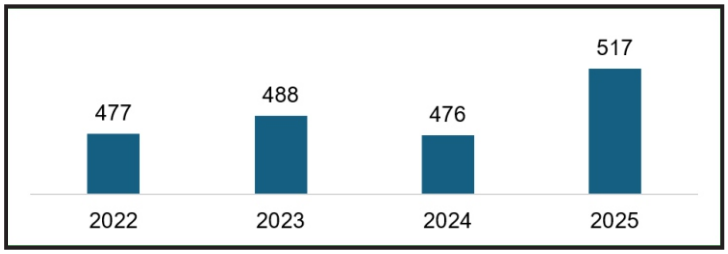
Demographics of the People We Support

The 2025 net increase in referrals/intakes was high, at 85 new Supported Individuals to CLS. This year, all programs had entrances, with the most growth experienced by Employment Services; Independent Living; Individualized Supports; and L.I.F.E., particularly among people aged 19 to 40.

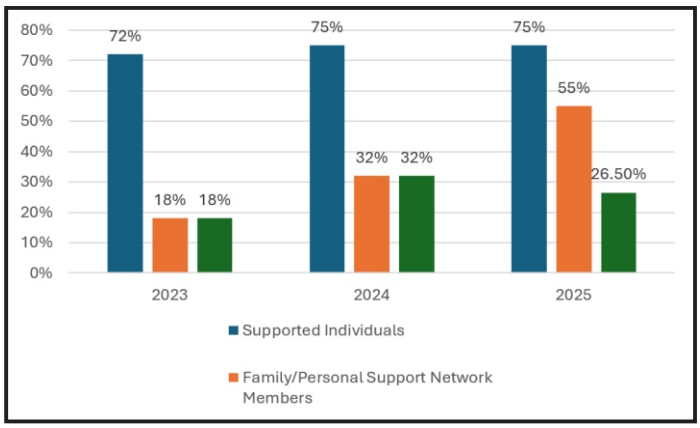
Younger generations are increasingly attracted to services such as L.I.F.E., Independent Living and Employment Services. Additionally, during the last three years the younger age groups have been referred to CLS for Home Share. In Independent Living, the majority of Supported Individuals are under the age of 30, and the move into this program is their first time living in their own home.

The majority of Supported Individuals in Staffed Homes are in the later stages of life, with 67% of the over the age of 51 and 11% above the age of 70, a 1% increase from 2024.

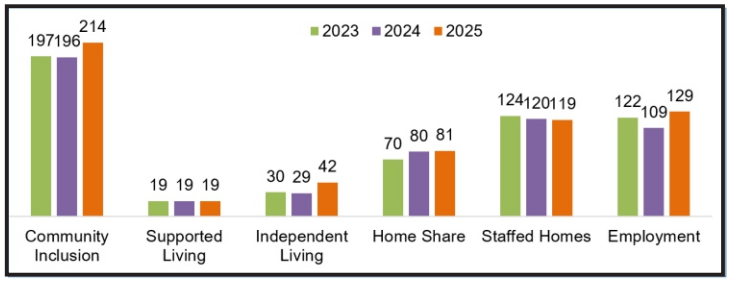
Total Supported Individuals



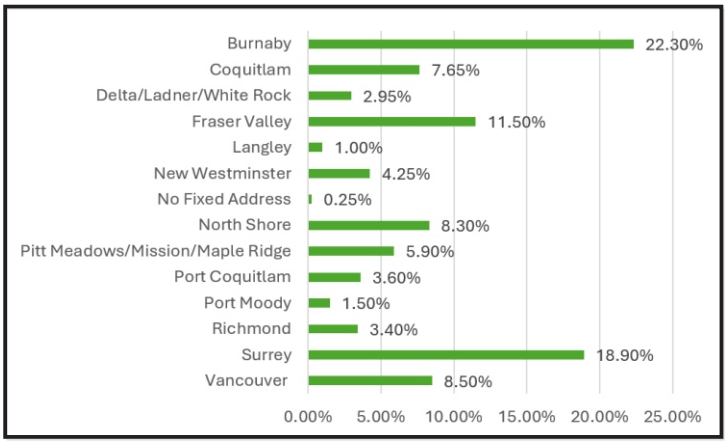
Survey Completion Rate



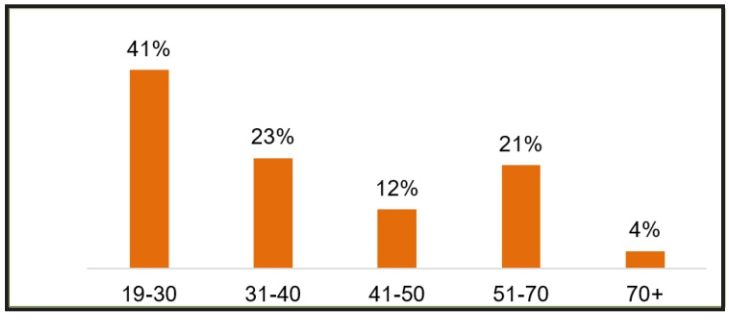
Total Supported Individuals in each service



Total Supported Individuals by geographical location



Age of Supported Individuals - all programs



"The staff are awesome, friendly, supportive, inclusive, encouraging and help me to learn life/cooking skills. I love my house and support staff."

"CLS is a trusted and collaborative community partner, dedicated to strengthening supports for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families through collective action and shared commitment"

"My family member's team is the best I've ever seen at her home. It really has made a huge difference in my family member's life with her support people also being deaf or being fluent in ASL. They are also fabulous role models. Her needs are easier for her to communicate in her own way and be understood completely. And respected."

Satisfaction Survey Results

The survey results from Supported Individuals, family/personal support network members and interested parties (including employers), were overwhelmingly positive in 2025. Below are the summarized results of the surveys.The survey response rates for all stakeholder groups were:

- Supported Individuals 75%
- Family/Personal Support Network Members 55%
- Interested Parties 27%

Community Inclusion Programs

In 2025, Community Inclusion had 30 new Supported Individuals enter services and 24 people exit services.

On average Supported Individuals in Day Supports, Individualized Supports, and L.I.F.E. are present in community 93% of the time, exceeding the 90% target.

97% of Supported Individuals in Day Supports and Studios are engaged and involved in contributing to their community at least once per year, exceeding the 90% target.

On average, 78% of Supported Individuals are engaged and involved in skill development, not meeting the target of 85% quarterly.

100% of Supported Individuals in Community Inclusion indicate having opportunities to make choices, exceeding the 90% target.

86% of funded service hours were delivered, below the 95% target (92% in 2024). Upon analysis, there was a reasonable explanation for this outcome however, changes will be made to try and improve this result in the future.

It took an average of 8 weeks from referral to beginning of service which met the 8-week target.

CLS identifies a Supported Individual's goal as their ambition or effort, aim or desired result. Goals are specific, measurable objectives tailored to the Supported Individual's aspirations and needs, focussing on enhancing socio-emotional well-being and personal development. Each Supported Individual has a minimum of one goal. The Community Inclusion programs did not meet their individual targets regarding activities a Supported Individual engages in that are linked to their goals. By program:

- Individualized Supports: 40% (Target: 75%)
- Day Support & Studios: 73.4% (Target: 75%)
- L.I.F.E.: 65% (Target: 90%)

Upon analysis, CLS has determined that the targets set in 2024 are realistic and appropriate.

CLS has done a significant amount of work on measurable goals training for staff, however the concepts can be challenging to put into practice. The Directors for the four programs will work with their respective teams and the 2026 performance measurement planning will determine further plans to improve the results for next year

Supported Living

The survey response rate for Supported Individuals in Supported Living was 84%. The Supported Living outcomes have positive 2025 results, meeting the targets in three out of five measurements.

The program had zero unplanned moves in 2025.

100% of Supported Individuals in the program indicated having opportunities to make choices, exceeding the 95% target.

75% of Supported Individuals reported they are engaged and involved in skill development, not meeting the 90% target.

CLS defines skill development as working on a skill that increases and/or maintains independence, enhances personal development, or promotes the Supported Individual's quality of life.

CLS is considering how to ensure the Supported Individuals completing the surveys have clarity and understand the questions. For 2026, Leaders will go over the questions one by one prior to providing the survey to aid in this process.
2025 results:
66% 1x per week Target: 90% 1x per week

The program did not meet the 95% target with 93% of funded hours being delivered.

CLS has observed over the last few years how once Supported Individuals have secured housing, their support needs often decrease.

The program exceeded the target in 2025 with a 1.25-month average between expressed desire or need to move and placement for the Supported Individuals accommodated.

Independent Living
Growth of the Independent Living program has continued with 13 new housing units added through partnerships with housing providers M'akola and Sawmill Co-op, both in Vancouver.

The survey response rate for Supported Individuals in Independent Living was 85%.

The Independent Living outcomes have positive 2025 results, meeting the targets in three out of six measurements. However, given the complexities of services in this program, the outcomes are under review as part of 2026 performance measurement planning.

The program had zero unplanned moves in 2025.

89% of Supported Individuals in the program indicated having opportunities to make choices, not meeting the 90% target. The change from 2024 (100%) is curious, however the supports provided in Independent Living are driven by the Supported Individual's choices, making the program entirely self-determined. As noted, CLS will be reviewing the outcomes to determine relevance and potentially improve methods of measuring effectiveness of the program.

75% of activities a Supported Individual engages in were linked to their goals, meeting the 75% target.

86% of Supported Individuals reported they are engaged and involved in skill development, not meeting the 90% target.

Following analysis of supports through 2025, there appears to be a high amount of skill development, in most forms of support provided. It is possible that the Supported Individuals may benefit from clarification of whether they are in fact working on skill development to increase the validity of this data and meet or even exceed the target.

73% of funded service level hours were delivered (70% in 2024): The program did not meet the target of 95%, but improvement was noted. CLS has observed over the last few years how once Supported Individuals have secured housing, their support needs often decrease. This has led to some Supported Individuals declining to accept support.

The program exceeded the target in 2025 with a 1.75-month average between expressed desire or need to move and placement for the Supported Individuals accommodated.

CLS partnering with affordable housing societies over the last few years has increased the number of affordable housing units available to individuals supported in Independent Living. Supported Individuals moved in with the following CLS partnerships in 2025:
- M'akola Housing Society, Vancouver - 10 units
- Sawmill Housing Cooperative, Vancouver - 3 units

Home Share
The survey response rate for Supported Individuals in Home Share was 79%. The 2025 results for Home Share outcomes meet the targets in seven out of eleven measurements.

100% of Home Share Providers indicated they feel that support offered by the agency met their needs, exceeding the 90% target.

93% of Supported Individuals in Home Share are present in the community during home share supported time at least two times per week, meeting the target of 90%.

94% of Supported Individuals in the program indicated having opportunities to make choices, exceeding the 90% target.

There were six breakdowns in service resulting in 7.4% of Supported Individuals experiencing unplanned moves (2.5% in 2024, 4.3% in 2023 and 1.2% in 2022). This did not stay below the 5% target. It was a challenging year in the Home Share program, with complex situations CLS has worked to mitigate.

87% of Supported Individuals in Home Share that choose to engage in the home-life indicate they feel included, not meeting the 90% target.

CLS improved the methods to distribute satisfactions surveys to the Supported Individuals in Home Share, having the Home Share Manager oversee the process, which in turn may have allowed for more clarity for Supported Individuals resulting in a more accurate representation.

CLS tracks the longevity of Home Share placements. This year mean was 7.3 years, the median was 4 years, and the mode was 2-3 years (in 2024, mean: 5.11 years, median: 3.8 years and mode: 2 years).

18% of Home Share Providers exited from providing services in 2025. The program did not meet the target (14% in 2024, 11.75% in 2023 and 17% in 2022).

There has been a significant increase in monitoring and adjusting procedures in the Home Share Program. Changes in the program including role accountabilities, support from the Quality Assurance department, reduction to the amount of independent suites in Home Share situations may have led to increased turnover.

CLS, along with other service providers in the province have been and will continue to advocate for CLBC to increase the pay rates for Home Share Providers.

In 2025, the program met the 90-day target with five new Supported Individuals averaging 62-days from intake to placement. This is indicative of transitions following a positive matching process.

55% of accepted referrals were successfully matched. The program did not meet the 90% target. In 2025 there were nine accepted referrals, with five placed and four awaiting matching at the time of this analysis.

100% of Home Share Providers indicate that their needs were responded to in a timely way by employees, exceeding the 95% target.

Staffed Homes
The survey response rate for Supported Individuals in Staffed Homes was 73%. The Staffed Homes outcomes have positive results, meeting the targets in all six measurements.

The program had zero unplanned moves in 2025. 100% of Supported Individuals in Staffed Homes indicated having opportunities to make choices, exceeding the 90% target.

97% of times Supported Individuals in Staffed Homes are present in community at least one time per week, exceeding the 95% target.

97.4% of times Supported Individuals connect with at least one Unpaid Person with whom they regularly interact with every month, exceeding the 95% target.

The program exceeded the 95% target with 100% of funded hours delivered.

The program exceeded the target in 2025 with a 3-month average between expressed desire or need to move and placement for the Supported Individuals accommodated.

There were two Supported Individuals who moved to different Staffed Homes due to changes in their mobility and overall needs. Both stayed in their same communities on the North Shore with accessibility modifications made for each of their new homes.

Employment Services
The survey response rate for Job Seekers/ Participants in Employment Services was 65%. The Employment Services outcomes have positive 2025 results, meeting the targets in seven out of eight measurements.
The percentage of new Job Seekers that were successfully placed in employment within the first six months of services did not meet the target for one of the two applicable funding categories:

1) Lower Mainland PSI (Personalized Support Initiative) – 50% of job seekers obtained employment within 15 weeks.
2) Lower mainland DD (Developmentally Disabled) -75% of job seekers obtained employment within 15 weeks.

The target is 75% job seekers will be placed within 15 weeks (average).

Participants were employed an average of 34 weeks per year in Employment Services exceeding the 30-week target.

53% of employed Participants received more than minimum wage exceeding the 45% target.

The average wage for employed Participants was $19.43 in 2025, above the target of minimum wage ($17.85 per hour as of June 2025, $17.75 per hour prior to this).

35% of employed Participants received a job enhancement this year meeting the 35% target.

89% of at-risk job in jeopardy situations were prevented from breakdown (at the time of identification of imminent breakdown), exceeding the 75% target.

100% of Job Seekers were in active job search within three months of intake.

Participants were employed in 23 sectors, exceeding the target of 20 sectors.

Employee Profiles



Taranjeet Bhangu

Manager of Supported Living

What is your favourite thing about working at CLS?

My favourite thing about working at CLS is the opportunity to make a meaningful difference in people's lives every day. I enjoy building relationships with the individuals we support, helping them achieve their goals, and working alongside such dedicated and compassionate colleagues. Seeing even small moments of growth and independence is incredibly rewarding.

What is a passion or hobby of yours?

Outside of work, I enjoy spending quality time with my family, especially my son. I also enjoy learning new skills, reading about leadership and finding ways to grow both personally and professionally.

If you could meet one person (dead or alive) who would it be?

If I could meet one person, it would be my middle brother, who we lost in 2020. More than anything, I would treasure one last conversation with him-to hear his voice, share a hug, tell him how much I miss him and talk about everything we never had the chance to say.

Where do you want to travel, but have never been?

I would love to visit to Europe and Japan. The beautiful mountains, peaceful scenery and rich culture have always been on my travel bucket list.



Jennifer Hernandez

Team Lead- Villa Rosa

What is your favourite thing about working at CLS?

While I enjoy working for CLS, my heart is really at Villa Rosa. I have the privilege of supporting some incredible individuals every day. I also work with an amazing team and a supportive Manager. It truly feels like we're all working toward the same goal of helping the people we support live their best lives.

What is a passion or hobby of yours?

I enjoy paint-by-numbers, diamond art, and burlesque dance. While they may seem very different, they all let me express my creativity in their own way. I love paint-by-numbers and diamond art because they allow me to create something beautiful with step-by-step guidance, and burlesque gives me the opportunity to build confidence, have fun, and express myself through movement. They're all great ways for me to relax, recharge, and be creative.

If you could meet one person (dead or alive), who would it be?

Jesus Christ. I'd love the opportunity to sit down with Him one-on-one. I have so many questions about the past, the future, and life in general, and I can't imagine a more meaningful conversation.

Where do you want to travel but have never been?

If money weren't a factor, my answer would be… everywhere! I would love to see the whole world. Every country has its own history, culture, food, and beauty, and I'd love the chance to experience as much of it as possible.



Doug Smith

Counsellor - Keith 2

What is your favourite thing about working at CLS?

I have found that working with this organization, and the people that I have been in close relationships with through the years, has been special. The growth manifest from our long-focused associations has been more difficult than I might have imagined... but also... it has been more meaningful than I could have imagined as well. Supporting individuals with distinct and diverse qualities, and helping facilitate their engagement in life, finding the depths within themselves, and connecting and discovering what life has to offer, continues to be rewarding.

What is a passion or hobby of yours?

I have a passion for both art and music which I have explored throughout my life and enjoy facilitating the explorations of the men I support, as well.

If you could meet one person (dead or alive) who would it be?

There are many people through history I'd love to meet. I'd like to sit down with William Blake and learn about his experiences in life.

Where do you want to travel, but have never been?

The world is full of interesting peoples, places and cultures. Closer to home I'd like to explore more of British Columbia.

Congratulations!

Promotions & New Appointments at CLS

Benedict Gascon
Information Records Clerk

Suchari Fernando
Payroll Clerk

Irene Luu
Administrative Assistant

Jashanpreet Kaur
Team Lead- Supported Living

Kim Hokanson
Acting Team Lead Individualized Supports

Glenet Brown
Employment Developer

Anna Gao
Director of Programs

Jane Waka
Human Resources Generalist

Heidi Yan
Acting Human Resources Administrator



Francine Kabuo is a Counsellor at 43 Hastings. She welcomed her baby girl Anaiah Balyeyune on January 19, 2026.



Kayden Grabarek is a Counsellor at Villa Rosa. He welcomed a baby girl Soledad Yoshimi on April 13, 2026.



Naveen Dhaliwal is a HR Administrator at CLS. She welcomed a baby girl Aayra on June 5, 2026.

Congratulations everyone and welcome to the three little girls

Happy Work Anniversary

Congratulations to all celebrating work anniversaries June-September 2026

3 Years
Yomi Kuponiyi
Pauline Chidi Uneze
Keiko Kobayashi
Filomeno De Leon
Kyle Iu
Megan Richter
Niloofar Aghajani Houshyar
Deborah Eto
Tosin Ajewole
Celda Ouano
Ayodeji Adesanya
Perpetua Agu
Lola Adeleye
Wole Kuponiyi
Mawata Suwarly
Warren Kang
Jashanpreet Kaur
Funmilayo Olaniyonu
Owen Mclachlan
Erik Bednarczyk
Esther Mbagwu
Jashanjot Kaur
Kayden Grabarek

4 Years
Joel Ruma
Breanne Brooks
Anthony Fawcett
Fanta Toure
Avneet Kaur
Noel Acosta
Aileen Castel
Joy Tully
Mohinder Badyal
Donald Guimpayan
Henry Brinas
Toyin Obasa
Sylivior Birungi
Amrita Sharma
Jesselin T'Kenye
Jasleen Samra
Christine Coffey
Salina Tesfamariam
Jason Gonzaga
Nagaysha Brown
Kavindi Samarasinghe
Jessie Browne
Seema Bhagat
Karen Aranas
Myrlin Java
Jennifer Hernandez

5 Years
Janeth Labunog
Randall Lim
Susana Villareal
Monique Power
Taranjeet Bhangu
Moinya Sanfa Graham
Scott Baitz
Maria Tejada
Ishaan Chander
Arlynn Nobel
Halle Golding
Navansh Bindra
Sybil Bayog
Flor Daroy

6 Years
Helen Li
Julie Raymond
Verna Uy
Harneet Kaur
Kaitlyn Cheng

7 Years
Hayley Miller
Titilola Babatunde-Alabi
Judy Wilson
Nick Herrera
Cindy Purdon
Aubrey Lussier
Brigitte Gagne
April Ordonez
Prakash Jaiswal
Maria Leticia De Lemos
Sharon Lee
Kelly Williams
Don Don Gaite
Sophie Rhodes

8 Years
Catur Ningrum
Gurshvinder Brar

9 Years
Eva Yu
Sandy Basi
Sean Lee
Paul Kang
Anna-Christine Avefjall
Tiziana Nolet
Shane Temple
Adam Wood
Laura Casas-Perez
Adam Van Loo

10 Years
Joel Kvarnberg
Caroline Sarich
Elysia Bernard
Shirley Villar
Shirley Delos Reyes
Sheila Sharma
Alexia Ntoutou Mbou
Cheryl Jacques
Heidi Gao

11 Years
Xavier Luck
Kevin James Sass
Samantha Dickson
Michael Robert Lewis

12 Years
Nancy Aguilar
Gina Tolonics
Ashley Mann

13 Years
Ralph Artiza

14 Years
Froilan David
Sheila McNeil

15 Years
Anna Gao

17 Years
Penny Palak
Joanne Lozano

18 Years
Jessy Singh
Ed Villar
Josephine Wong
Abdi Hussein
John Davidson
Dawn Berryman

19 Years
Brenda Henderson
Oliver Samonte
Cary McCarthy
Bel Acero

20 Years
Nieves Acero

21 Years
Ausif Nawaz
Cristina Caampued
Joseph Dube
Dominique Gard

22 Years
Jodi Leech
Rosa Mejia-Gonzales

23 Years
Ahmad Shahlounezhad
Nick Chitheka

26 Years
Ali Hosseinzadeh
Max Sumner
Dee Blackmore

27 Years
Jackie Farmer

28 Years
Duncan Williams
Kulwant Sidhu

29 Years
Shaun Vecchio
Carl Danroth

30 Years
Hassan Hussein

31 Years
Tina Chevalier

32 Years
Anish Ahmed

33 Years
Gregory Joiner

34 Years
Wayne Adams

35 Years
Janice Del Valle

37 Years
D'alquen Jackson

38 Years
Graeme Weeks

39 Years
Jeanne Durnion

44 Years
Trudy McClughan

In Memory



Russell Meyers

September 13, 1960 – June 30, 2026

If you ever visited one of the homes where Russell lived, you would know that he was truly the heart of the home. He had a remarkable ability to light up a room simply by walking into it.

His smile was contagious and could brighten anyone's day. A cup of coffee and a slice of apple pie brought him genuine joy and were among his favorite simple pleasures.

Russell's family and friends meant everything to him. Just hearing about them would light up his face and make his love for them unmistakably clear.

Over the years, Russell built countless meaningful connections and lasting friendships. He stayed in touch with many friends through phone calls, Zoom chats, and lunch outings. The relationships he nurtured were a reflection of his kind and caring nature.

Russ enjoyed watching the Harry Potter and Star Wars series and loved spending time at the library, whether listening to audiobooks or quietly turning the pages of a good book.

Despite the health challenges he faced in his final months, Russell remained positive, gentle, and appreciative of those around him. Above all, he was thoughtful and always treated others with warmth, kindness, and respect. His bright smile, generous spirit, and genuine compassion touched the lives of many.

Russell leaves behind a legacy of friendship, kindness, compassion, and love that will never be forgotten.

He will be deeply missed by many and fondly remembered by all who had the privilege of knowing him.

Our thoughts and heartfelt condolences are with Russell's family, friends, and everyone whose life was touched by his presence.



Newmarket Van Donation

On July 24th, we celebrated, this incredible gift of a brand-new, accessible van from Ann and Guy Collette to their daughter Celeste and to the home of Newmarket. Prior to this, coordinating outings for the home was a logistical challenge, often having to leave someone behind or in a separate vehicle.

Now, with a fully equipped, specialized vehicle parked right outside, the freedom to explore as a group has finally arrived. This generous gift means that all the individuals in the home can experience the joy of going out, attending community events, and exploring together. It is much more than a vehicle—it is a beautiful way to now share countless adventures.

The Talent We Can't Afford to Overlook

September was Disability Employment Awareness Month in British Columbia, a time to recognize the contributions of people with disabilities and reflect on an important question:

How much talent are we overlooking when we focus on barriers instead of abilities?

Through our work in Employment Services, we have the privilege of supporting Job Seekers who bring determination, creativity, resilience, and valuable skills to the workforce. We also partner with employers who discover firsthand the benefits of creating inclusive workplaces.

One lesson has become increasingly clear: disability is rarely the barrier to employment. More often, barriers stem from misconceptions, limited opportunities, or workplace systems that were not designed with inclusion in mind.

People with disabilities represent one of Canada's largest and most diverse talent pools, yet employment rates remain significantly lower than for people without disabilities. Behind these statistics are individuals seeking the same things most of us want: meaningful work, financial stability, a sense of purpose, and the opportunity to contribute.

As employment consultant and disability advocate Barbara Coloroso once said:

"Difference is not the problem. Intolerance of difference is the problem."

Working alongside people with disabilities has reinforced a simple truth: potential exists everywhere. When employers focus on strengths rather than limitations, they gain dedicated employees, fresh perspectives, and valuable talent.

Consider these questions:

- What opportunities can we create?
- What barriers can we remove?
- How can we focus on ability rather than disability?
- What talent might we be overlooking?

Creating inclusive workplaces is a shared responsibility. When people with disabilities have equitable access to meaningful employment, businesses benefit, communities grow stronger, and individuals have the opportunity to thrive.

Let's celebrate ability, challenge assumptions, and ensure that talent is recognized for its potential, not limited by perception.

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Inclusive Workplaces Build Stronger Communities

Thank you to the 60+ employers CLS Employment Services works with who have committed to an inclusive workplace.

A New Beginning in Hope

Moving to a new community often brings opportunities for growth, but it can also mean leaving behind familiar routines, relationships, and employment. For one young woman, relocating to Hope, BC meant saying goodbye to a long-term job she had valued and facing the uncertainty of starting over in a new town.

The transition was not without challenges. Like many people navigating a major life change, she wondered if a new employer would recognize her skills, dedication, and the many strengths she could bring to the workplace. Despite these uncertainties, she remained committed to finding meaningful employment and building a new chapter in her life.

With support from the CLS Employment Services team, and through her own perseverance and determination, that opportunity soon arrived. She was welcomed to the team at The Silver Chalice Pub, a local business that recognized her potential and provided a chance to grow and contribute within the community.

Today, her new role is about much more than employment. It represents resilience, confidence, and the power of community inclusion. Her journey is a reminder that when individuals are given the opportunity to showcase their abilities, meaningful employment can create lasting connections, foster independence, and open the door to new possibilities.

Stories like hers highlight the impact of inclusive hiring and the importance of supporting people to achieve their employment goals, wherever life may take them. Through partnership, perseverance, and community support, a new beginning can become a pathway to success.

Happy Birthday



Dominik celebrates 23 years



Mark celebrates 58 years in Star Wars Fashion



Successes at 12th

We are thrilled to share some stories reflecting the inspiring journey of the three people living at the 12Th Avenue home in Burnaby.

Jean

For much of her life, Jean preferred the comfort and security of remaining in her own suite. However, through the patience, perseverance, and creativity of the dedicated team, she has made truly remarkable progress. Today, Jean is spending more time outside her suite and is actively participating in household activities such as helping staff in the kitchen chopping vegetables. She has attended birthday celebrations, parties and community events, where she listens to live music, dances, and shares meals with friends.

Russell

Historically, Russell has preferred quiet environments opposed to busy community settings. However, he has shown increased comfort while participating in community outings and social activities. Recently all three people living at the 12th home enjoyed lunch at a local restaurant, for the first time as a group.

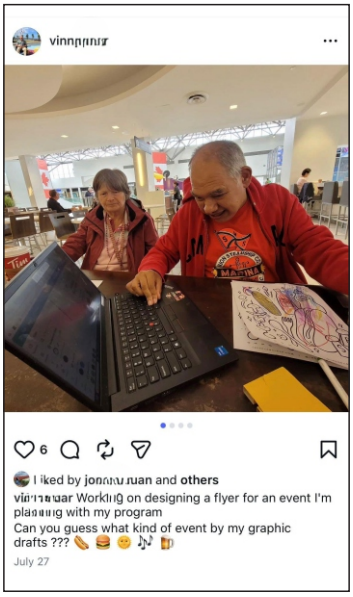
These accomplishments are a testament to the dedication, perseverance, and person-centered approach of the entire 12th Avenue team. A special thank you to Greg (Team Lead) and the team for their unwavering commitment to everyone's well-being, personal growth, independence, and quality of life. Through the team's support and the courage and determination demonstrated by Jean and Russell, we are witnessing meaningful and lasting transformation. Their journeys remind us of the profound impact that person-centered support can have and the positive outcomes that are possible when people are empowered to achieve their goals at their own pace.

Active Support at CLS

Every Moment has Potential - Little and Often - Adjusting Support to Ensure Success - Maximizing Choice and Control







Vinny took an active role in planning a summer BBQ with his day program at Waterfront Opportunities Centre. He was supported to design an eye-catching flyer to invite his family and friends to the event.

Staff provided Vinny with BBQ-themed colouring pages for inspiration. He enjoyed colouring the pages and used the graphics and ideas he liked to help create his flyer.

Vinny used Canva to design the flyer with Staff supporting him by navigating the laptop and Canva program, while Vinny actively directed the design by pointing to the graphics and images and verbalising "hot dog" "burger". He made his own choices about the visual elements of the flyer, using ideas from the colorings pages he had completed.

Once the flyer was completed, Vinny was supported to share it through his social media accounts and send it to family and friends by text. He was actively involved inviting the people who were important to him to attend the BBQ.

Vinny also participated in planning the shopping list for the BBQ and helped create the RSVP list. He was involved in making calls on his personal cell phone and keeping track of the RSVP's so food could be purchased and prepared.

Vinny was very proud of the event and the role he played in planning and organizing it. He was particularly happy to see his family attend and appeared proud of his contribution.

Gutter Ball Fun

Fatima organized a group outing and invited others to attend. After choosing the date and time, she contacted Scottsdale Bowling Alley to reserve the lanes.

The event was a great success, with everyone enjoying themselves. Between the occasional gutter ball and the constant laughter, it was a fun and memorable experience for all.







An Unexpected Meeting

Vinny visited the new Harry Jerome gym for the first time. He was really impressed with the space and especially enjoyed seeing the variety of adaptive equipment available. He compared it to other gyms he has visited and felt that Harry Jerome offered some great choices to support his workouts.

While working out, a young gentleman approached Vinny and told him that he recognized him from his workout videos on Instagram and TikTok. Vinny was absolutely delighted to hear this! He proudly flexed his muscles and showed his phone, reached into his belt bag and handed the young man his card. The two connected on Instagram, took a photo together and quickly hit it off. They spent time laughing and joking together, creating a wonderful new friendship.

Vinny returned to the gym where another very special connection was waiting for him. He unexpectedly bumped into his aunt, cousin and her grandson. Vinny was excited to show them his photos and Instagram posts, including the picture he had taken with his new gym friend, Ammir. When Vinny showed Karen the photo, she recognized Ammir and said, **"**Vinny, that's your cousin on Papa's side!**"** Vinny was incredibly happy to discover this family connection. Just as he was getting ready to work out with Ammir, he excitedly showed him the photo of their shared cousins. Vinny then began speaking Punjabi with Ammir and explained that they were cousins. What started as a new gym visit and a chance meeting with someone who recognized Vinny from social media turned into a new friendship and an unexpected family connection. Vinny was proud, excited and clearly delighted to share the experience with everyone around him.

This was a wonderful example of how Vinny's confidence, personality and love of fitness are helping him build meaningful connections within his community.

Growing More Than a Garden at Sardis House

This spring and summer, Craig, Chris, Mark and TJ were very busy creating something truly special: their very own vegetable and flower garden!

The project began with the purchase of raised garden beds. Each bed was measured to guarantee they were at an accessible height to ensure everyone could comfortably participate in planting, tending, and harvesting their own garden.

Before planting began, they added their own personal touch by painting the raised garden beds in their favourite colours: blue, yellow, red, and green. The colourful garden beds brighten the outdoor space and showcase each person's creativity and individuality.

Choosing what to grow was a highlight of the project. Each person carefully selected a variety of vegetables and flowers based on their preferences, giving them ownership of their garden spaces. Whether planting vegetables to harvest or flowers to add beauty and colour, each person created a garden that was uniquely their own.

As the season progressed, they all cared for their gardens. They enjoyed spending time outside and their daily routines of watering, tending, and observing their plants grow. This has been a rewarding experience, drawing a sense of pride, responsibility, and achievement.

More than just a gardening project, the Sardis Garden has blossomed into a place of connection, creativity, and growth. By selecting, planting, and caring for their own gardens, they built a beautiful outdoor space that reflects their personalities and provides enjoyment for everyone who visits.







Team Burnaby at the PNE

Team Burnaby Day Program participants enjoyed a wonderful and memorable day at the PNE. It was a fun-filled Friday that provided everyone with an opportunity to explore a lively environment and participate in a variety of activities together.

The PNE was a great setting for the group because there was something for everyone to enjoy. The day was filled with excitement, smiles, and opportunities to make personal choices and engage with the community.

Jerry enjoyed looking at all the different options of food throughout the PNE. He was excited to see the variety of options, especially considering Jerry celebrates “treat days” on Fridays, where he budgets for a “big lunch” once a week. He was provided an opportunity to make his own choices, practice social skills and experience some of the unique and fun foods that make a PNE visit special. Jerry also loves taking pictures of his fun foods and sharing the photo with others.

Karim enjoyed seeing all the farm animals. He was interested in observing them and seemed very engaged by the experience. The animal exhibits provided a great opportunity for him to explore something he enjoys.

Ali really appreciated being part of the larger community, being surrounded by other people, experiencing the energy of the PNE, and participating in an event that brought so many members of the community together. The outing provided him with a meaningful opportunity to feel included and connected, while trying something new. Ali looked especially cool in his new sunglasses he got free from the PNE.

Nader enjoyed the nice walk around the PNE grounds. He appreciated being outdoors, taking in the sights and sounds, and having the opportunity to explore the different areas of the fair.

It was such a beautiful day to enjoy such a fun event! Outings such as the PNE can help build confidence, independence, community participation, positive social connections, while exploring personal interests. The group supported and encouraged one another, creating a positive and inclusive atmosphere.

Overall, the PNE outing was a very successful and beneficial community experience. Everyone was able to find something that interested them and enjoy the day in their own way. It was a great opportunity to have fun, experience something different, strengthen community connections, and create positive memories together. The smiles, engagement, and enthusiasm throughout the day demonstrated just how valuable these community outings can be.









CLS Annual Picnic 2026

CLS hosted another wonderful picnic on August 15th at the Scandinavian Community Centre. Approximately 325 people attended the picnic and were entertained, won prizes, ate yummy food, and listened to some great music. Congratulations to Gerene who won the 50/50 draw – on her birthday!

We would like to thank all of the volunteers. Without their help this event could not happen.

Thank you to Save on Foods/Scriptcare for donating 4 cakes which were gobbled up in a hurry.

Our door prize donors listed below were very generous this year, donating over 30 prizes. Thank you to Luis and his Property and Fleet team for facilitating this.

- Video Building Repairs and Maintenance Ltd
- Westland Insurance
- Patturn Electrical
- Centrum Solutions

Mark your calendars.
We look forward to seeing everyone next year. We are doing something a little different.
It will be on a weekday:
Wednesday August 11th 2027 from 11-1.

Scan/Click here for the photo gallery from the photobooth.



















Photo Gallery














Photo Gallery





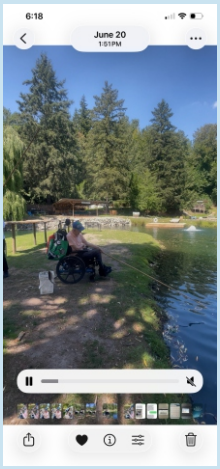






























We attended the Surrey Teachers' Association Convention and saw some familiar faces and met some new ones. It was a great opportunity to connect with educators and share a little bit about Studio 73.

Mridu completed her Neighbourhood Small Grant and her collaboration with Frank Hurt Secondary School. The students ended up completing two mini libraries. They had no plans for the second library, so we took it off their hands. After Mridu and the team gave them a bit of paint, we kept one for our street and gave the other one to Leslie and Lorraine to place at their home. Leslie, in particular, was very keen to donate many of her books to get it started. The Studio 73 ladies keep ours well stocked with books purchased with a CUPE 402 donation, and most recently, a donation of hundreds of children's books from The Thrift. This shop is the first of many thrift stores that fall under The Free Store Chilliwack's community umbrella.

We attended the MMIWG2S March in Langley to honour Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit people, and to stand in solidarity with families and communities affected by this ongoing crisis.

We led a team-building class for 29 participants in Vancouver with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC. On this day, the team wore their Moose Hide pins to show support for the Moose Hide Campaign, a grassroots movement of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people working together to end violence against Indigenous women and children and promote a safer future for everyone. After the class, Fatima joined another “Let Her Talk” event for their “Mastering Makeup” event.

We ran another mobile class this quarter with Belinda's Connection Café. We are grateful to participate annually and want to thank Lynn Vera-Lay for including us in her monthly arts-based social program for adults 55+. It's always a pleasure to be part of this program and spend time with such a great group.

We volunteered several times with Vancouver Food Runners, and thanks to Stephanie's idea, we volunteered for the first time with the Surrey Food Bank. We always appreciate opportunities to get out into the community and lend a hand wherever we can.

We participated in the annual Newton Car-Free Day, which takes place right in front of our storefront. It's a great event that brings the community together with local businesses, vendors, activities, and entertainment, and we always enjoy seeing so many people out enjoying the neighbourhood.





We went to a National Indigenous Peoples Day celebration at Moody Park, where we enjoyed wonderful singers, dancers, drummers, and vendors. We also attended Surrey Pride, where there were so many wonderful people, vendors, and performers. It was another great day filled with lots of colour, fun, and community spirit. Jill attended Chilliwack Pride again, and it was another success — lots of fun, colour, and positive vibes.

Fatima received a Celebration and Activity Grant from the City of Surrey for her Acts of Kindness event. She purchased supplies to create 60 care packages for unhoused community members in our area, then invited neighbouring businesses to come by and help build the packages. Over the next several weeks, she and the team went out and hand-delivered them. It was a wonderful project and a great way to connect with and give back to people in our community.

Carrie has been making beautiful framed art pieces in preparation for the upcoming Inclusion Art Show and Housing Central Conference. It has been wonderful to have her back and see her creating again.

Mridu and Fatima attended the “Long Table,” a single continuous table of about 280 feet and an outdoor evening dinner event hosted by the Downtown Surrey Business Improvement Association (DSBIA). It was a lovely evening with perfect weather, delicious food, and wonderful people.

The team completed a large order of 402 dishes, thanks to DSBIA and PCI Developments. And from this order, we ended up receiving another order from PCI, which cleared out all of our framed glass art! We are very grateful for these opportunities and for the continued support of organizations that value the work our team does.

While having so many great opportunities this quarter, we wanted to take a moment to recognize one of our regular customers, Gabriel. Since COVID and up until very recently, he had been a staple at our shop, with visits and phone calls several times a week. He was drawn to the team and the kindness he received, and we were equally fond of him. He was a very giving person, and his presence became a familiar and special part of our days. He will be missed.















PotteryWorks

A highlight of our summer was the Canada Day Coquitlam Festival at Lafarge Lake. This was a huge event attended by tens of thousands of people. Our figurine painting table was a major success all day long and we sold many pieces of pottery. We enjoyed attending the L'Arche community event in the park, which was highly successful as well.

PotteryWorks had our usual give away table at the CLS picnic and met so many employees and Supported Individuals. It's always a great event and everyone appreciated the free pottery.

We were awarded another bursary from the North West Ceramics Foundation, a non-profit organization whose mission is to support the teaching and development of ceramic arts in B.C. The Foundation commended PotteryWorks for many years of teaching ceramics and supporting artists with diverse abilities to develop their creative practice as potters.

Snap Photo Squad had an incredibly successful excursion, photographing the preparations for FIFA World Cup in Vancouver. They caught some incredibly interesting views of the excitement in the city.

James Lash is celebrating since his painting was chosen by The Inclusion Art Show Committee, for their annual show poster. James has been especially excited about this painting, so it's wonderful that it was selected.

Finally, in the summer of our 26th anniversary, PotteryWorks celebrated the birthday of one of our original artists, Rob Bell. Rob has been working with focus and talent for all of our history and his work is a top selling item in our studio.





Accreditation

You might be hearing the word "Accreditation" around CLS these days. As a requirement of Community Living British Columbia (CLBC), all service providers are required to undergo a survey process every three years. We have been accredited by CARF since 2007.CARF is an independent organization that looks at agencies like CLS to make sure we are providing safe, respectful, and person-centred services. Being accredited helps confirm that we are doing good work and continue to improve. We are getting ready for our upcoming survey, and we wanted to share what this means and why it matters.

When will it happen?

- Monday November 16 - Wednesday November 18, 2026

What will happen?

- Over 3 days, CARF surveyors will spend me learning about CLS. They will:
    - Visit most of our locations
    - Talk with people we support, families, employees, and CLBC
    - Learn about how our services are provided
    - Look at how we support rights, choice, inclusion, safety, and more
    - Provide recommendations and suggestions in areas where we have opportunities to learn and grow

The surveyors are friendly and experienced; they work or have worked in similar agencies.

What does this mean for CLS?

- The CARF survey is an opportunity to:
- Celebrate our strengths
- Highlight the voices of people we support and families
- Learn how we can continue to improve our services

We are proud of the work we do and are grateful to everyone who helps make our community welcoming, inclusive, and supportive.

If you have any questions or would like to know more information, please speak with Jade Braunwell, Manager of Quality Assurance– jbraunwell@clsbc.ca

DONATE TODAY!

Your generous donations provide real opportunities for the individuals supported by the CLS to live life to the fullest.

You can contribute by sending cash or a cheque to:
Community Living Society
7th Floor – 713 Columbia Street
New Westminster, BC, V3M 1B2

Donation receipts sent to our office via cheque or cash will be issued for amounts in excess of $10.

Donations via credit card can be made by visiting our website:
https://www.canadahelps.org/en/dn/m/5841/donation

If you have any questions, please contact us at 604.523.0303 or email at contactus@clsbc.ca

Thank you for your consideration.

JOIN TODAY!

Become a CLS Member

Date_____

First Name_____

Last Name_____

Phone_____

Address_____

_____

_____

Email _____

There is no fee to be a CLS member. Memberships are renewed on an annual basis at or after the Annual General Meeting.

Members must:

- be 18+ years of age
- be interested in advancing the purposes and supporting the activities of the Society

Members cannot be:

- An employee or contractor of the CLS
- An employee of the government of the Province of British Columbia or Canada whose duties are concerned with the affairs of the Society.

If you would like to be a member of the CLS, please send this completed form to us:

By Mail:
7th Floor- 713 Columbia Street, New Westminster, BC, V3M 1B2
By Fax:
604-523-9399
By Email:
contactus@clsbc.ca