

Welcome to *Connect* Newsletter



Cowichan
Family
Caregivers
Support
Society

Issue 39



"The Tree of Becoming Everything You Were Meant to Be" by Coco Jones

In this issue...

- CFCSS has Moved!
- Welcome New Staff: Lynne
- New Resource: Hospice's Nav-CARE
- New Caregiver Support Groups Opening
- Advanced Care Planning
- New Resource: Community Link Worker

Artist Spotlight:

The tree of becoming everything you were meant to be

The image of this painting (taken by Ruth Warkentin) was last thing that I was able to get done before the quarantine began.

Through the grace of the internet, we can still connect with one another.

I painted this piece when my husband and I had to downsize.

It wasn't in the plan of what we wanted for our life,
but not unlike what we are all finding ourselves confronting at the moment,
it was what was before us.

Somehow we made it through - but
it was only possible through a great amount of help,
and the caretaking of our body, mind and spirits.
(which at times meant drinking some)

(For my husband that meant all things hockey,
for myself it's as simple as having some paint handy)

I always thought life was about the big deals.
It is so much more about savouring the small ones.

The waft of incense during morning prayers,
The touch of your beloved's forehead as it meets yours,
the grounding of the earth beneath your feet,
the voices of my children and friends.

Everything we are meant to be is played out in the smallest of moments.
None of us know what's ahead.

Take care of yourselves right now so you can be of benefit to others.

The boldest and biggest of blessings to ALL of the caregivers
and everyone in the front lines,
coco jones



Cowichan Family Caregivers Support Society
NEW: 1843 Tzouhalem Road Duncan BC, V9L 5L6
250-597-0886

www.familycaregiverssupport.org

Our mission is to acknowledge, appreciate and support people in their caregiving roles, to alleviate their stress, to improve their quality of life, and to raise awareness of caregiving through education and advocacy for all caregivers.



Dear Reader,

Once again, I have many exciting changes to tell you about in this newsletter. We have moved our office location and we are now located in the McKinnon Building at Providence Farm. From our windows we have a wonderful view of Mt. Tzouhalem and eagles are often seen soaring above the trees. A sense of peace comes over me when I am in our new space and I hope you will find comfort visiting us here. We have shared a poster with information on how to find us in this newsletter.

We have also been very fortunate to hire a second Caregiver Support Lead: Lynne Woollam. Lynne brings a wealth of experience and knowledge and we feel grateful that she joined our team. Please see her article introducing herself in this newsletter. We have revamped our Chemainus Support Group and are interested in opening some new Caregiver Support groups soon, including a Caregivers Diversity Support Group featured in this newsletter.

We have information about some new community resources: the Community Link Worker from Cowichan Seniors Community Foundation and the Nav-CARE program from Hospice and an article about one person's experience with Advanced Care Planning.

Just as we at the Cowichan Family Caregivers Support Society have been through many changes in recent months, I'm sure many of you are also going through changes in your own lives. Reaching out for support can be difficult but please contact us if we can provide support to you in your caregiving role.

I hope you find the information in this newsletter helpful.

Sincerely,

Sara Ferrario, BSW RSW
Executive Director

Please note: Much of the material for this newsletter was produced prior to the Canadian Covid-19 crisis. We have added an extra page at the end of this newsletter to address this.

You are not alone. We are here to support you.



We are Excited to Announce:



**Cowichan Family Caregiver
Support Society
HAS MOVED**

**To Providence Farm at:
1843 Tzouhalem Road**



Directions at Providence Farm:

- Turn onto the gravel driveway entrance.
- Drive up the road, past the big red roofed building, stay to the right and keep driving straight until the end.
- You will see a white building called the "McKinnon Building".
- Drive up the driveway on the right hand side behind the McKinnon Building to upper parking where you will find our office entrance.
- Signs will direct you to our offices from the parking lot.



**We apologize for any inconvenience.
For assistance with Directions to
Providence Farm
Please call us at 250-597-0886**



Introducing: Lynne Woollam

CFCSS New Caregiver Support Lead

As the recent addition in the role of Support Lead at Cowichan Family Caregivers, I have been orientating myself to offering one-on-one emotional and resource support to Caregivers as well as facilitating the Monday Support Group here at our new Providence Farm home.

Since 2018, I have been particularly tested in providing quality family caregiving myself. I experienced first hand the challenges as well as the immense personal gifts in assisting my brother to fulfill his wish of living his last years of life at home.

I gained a new appreciation for the people in my life who understood the complexities of this situation and were able to stand by and provide support. After thirty years of a professional career assisting people with a range of challenges, I know these last years personally took me to life at the core, adding a greater depth to my ability to be there for others.

Here at Cowichan Caregivers, I've had the pleasure of meeting some of you; I am honoured and inspired by your stories and our common humanity. The Support Group energy has been nourishing when we felt safe enough to cry as well as laugh together. In a group a few weeks ago, after people reflected on their challenges, a caregiver shared a funny story that had all of us laughing. I witnessed such a human strength in being able to collectively express and connect with the range of our emotions.

One of my passions is making space to notice what we already have. By pausing and taking pleasure in the 'little things,' I expand my enjoyment of life for what it is and move from exhaustion to appreciation.

At a recent family gathering, I shared a few moments with my ninety-one-year old father: I was singing "Over the Rainbow" when I heard my Dad chime in to sing along for a few lines. With experiences like this, I have an increasing awareness inside where joy and pain are woven as one.

My hobbies are exploring the natural landscape here in the Cowichan Valley along with cherishing time with a diverse group of family and friends. I am also a Registered Counsellor and meet people privately in this capacity. Overall, I gather in the wisdom and enjoyment from all of my activities and integrate them into everyday life.

I look forward to meeting you as we continue to discover how we can help to enrich each other's lives.

CFCSS is thrilled to welcome you, Lynne, and we are so happy that you will be enriching our team!

Cowichan Family Caregivers Support Society

Are you a Family Caregiver?

A family caregiver is someone who gives care & support to a family member or friend with a chronic illness, disability, or medical condition.

Am I the Only One?

Being a family caregiver can be a lonely job. You can feel that no one else really understands what you are experiencing. But there are lots of caregivers in your community! While no one is going through exactly the same thing as you, there are lots of commonalities, too.

Need to Talk?

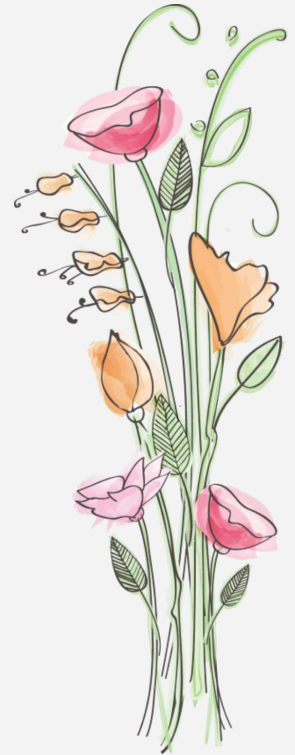
It helps to talk! We are revamping our Family Caregivers Support Group in Chemainus. A support group is an opportunity for caregivers in similar situations to connect and share their experiences and feelings. Group members, together with a Facilitator, create a safe, confidential environment – a chance to talk about the challenges of the journey, and share strategies and helpful resources.

When and Where?

The Support Group in central Chemainus meets Wednesday mornings. We also run groups in Duncan and Ladysmith and want to open more new local groups.

Interested?

Call and leave a message saying you are interested in the Chemainus Support Group or to join one of our other groups: **250-597-0886**



Planned Giving

A portion of your estate can be directed as a gift to benefit and support a charitable organization. There may be significant tax benefits to your estate for such gifts.

With a planned gift to the Cowichan Family Caregivers you can leave a legacy to improve the quality of life for other caregivers.

Contact our office for more information:

250-597-0886

Do you shop at Country Grocer in Cobble Hill?

If so, please save your till tapes for us. Country Grocer supports caregivers by giving us a percentage of till tapes we return. Simply bring the till tapes to your support group meeting or let Sara know you have some to give: **250.597.0886**.



Community Information: New Local Resource



Cowichan Seniors
Community Foundation

135 Third St., Duncan, B.C. V9L 1R9
Tel: (250) 715-6481
cscfoundation@shaw.ca
www.cowichanseniors.ca

What is the Cowichan Seniors Community Link Project?

First let's address Social Prescribing.

Social prescribing is most clearly defined as a mechanism for linking patients with non-medical sources of support within the community. The idea that prevention is better than cure is brought to life with social prescribing. It aids seniors with 'ageing in place', giving them a better quality of life, and in turn cuts down on their need for the health care system.

Support might include:

- Finding a suitable physical activity
- Getting nutritional support
- Learning new skills to maintain independence
- Connecting to volunteering opportunities in the community
- Finding and joining a social club
- Help with finding aid, or completing and delivering forms

Social Prescribing has been proven to be an effective means of enabling Primary Care Givers to refer patients with practical, social or emotional needs to a range of local, non-clinical services through the support of link workers. The term Link Worker is relatively new to Canada, yet has been in place for some time in other areas of the world, such as in the U.K. It refers to the role of the individual who assists clients to fill in the gaps between available services and the knowledge of the services by health care providers, connecting patients to the services, with the goal of reducing the demand on emergency health care. As the ageing population grows, this issue will be of increased concern. Link Workers provide a proactive means to lessen the demand on medical services to some degree.

The Cowichan Seniors Community Foundation has received funding by the United Way (Lower Mainland Division) to staff a Community Link Worker model to fill this gap in the communities of the CVRD. Debbie Johnson has recently been hired (Contact information below) to fill this position.

For the next 2.5 years, Community Link Worker support will be available throughout the Cowichan Valley to assist senior clients over an extended period of time (3-4 visits over a year) to develop wellness action plans that include nutritional, physical, social and medical actions to improve quality of life, with the aim of extending independent living while decreasing the need for emergency medical services. This team will also work with the Primary Care Network, the medical community, and local non-profits to identify and address client needs.

To contact Debbie:

Debbie Johnson, Community Link Worker
PH. 250-252-5575
Email: linkcscf@cowichanseniors.ca



Caregivers Diversity Support Group

LGBTQ2+

A **Family Caregiver** is someone who gives care and support to an adult family member or friend with a chronic illness, disability, or medical condition.

Each care giving situation is **unique** – the caregiver may be living full time with the care recipient, or visit them in a long term care facility a few times a week. Sometimes caregivers are part of a team that includes friends and other family members. These are all care giving situations, and the people involved are all caregivers.

Each family is also unique and *some families are non-traditional*. They may be families of choice, where the connection is through friendship, rather than bloodlines. If the care recipient, the care giver, or any member of the family is gender, or sexually non-conforming, the experience of interacting with the health care system may be uniquely challenging. To respond to this unmet need, we are planning a new caregivers support group for sexual and gender non-conforming people and their families.

A **support group** is an opportunity for caregivers in similar situations to connect and share their experiences and feelings. Group members, together with a Facilitator, create a safe, confidential environment – a chance to talk about the challenges of the journey, and share strategies and helpful resources.

We believe that by offering a **Caregivers Diversity Support Group** we can create a safe place for caregivers to be who they really are, and share their experiences with others who will accept & understand, without judgment. All of our support groups are confidential, and facilitated by a caring person, with a shared personal experience of care giving. For our **Diversity** group, the Facilitator is queer and has a non-traditional family.

If you or someone you know might be interested in the

Caregivers Diversity Support Group, please call

Cowichan Family Caregivers at **250-597-0886**



Donate online with Canada Helps at:

<https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/cowichan-family-caregivers-support-society/>



Find us on
facebook



Nav-CARE Program at Cowichan Hospice



Nav-CARE **Making Connections, Making a Difference**

Nav-CARE is a new program offered by Cowichan Hospice in partnership with UBC. This program is offered free-of-charge to anyone 55 years or older who is living with a life-limiting illness, anywhere in the Cowichan region.

Nav-CARE volunteers can help improve the lives of those living with life-limiting illnesses by creating connections to community, local services and resources, while providing caring, consistent emotional support.

Specially trained volunteers with connections to health care providers work with you to access resources and services in your community. Regular visits from a Nav-CARE volunteer are focused on enhancing your quality of life while providing companionship and emotional and practical support.

If you are living with a life-limiting illness and are feeling isolated and overwhelmed sometimes, you aren't alone.

Nav-CARE volunteers can help:

- Relieve feelings of loneliness, isolation and anxiety
- By being someone to talk through important decisions and future plans.
- Facilitate connection to community and the world at large.
- Locate local services and resources to help manage your illness.
- Assist to re-engage in hobbies and other interests.
- By providing a one-to-one relationship tailored to your specific needs.



For more information, please call:

250-701-4242

or email us at frontdesk@cowichanhospice.org

www.cowichanhospice.org



3122 Gibbins Road
Duncan BC V9L 1G2
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cowichanvalleyhospice.org



**Family Caregivers
of British Columbia**

Advance Care Planning A Work in Progress

BY RACHEL CARTER

For many of us, picking out a birthday gift for a loved one is a difficult task if we don't know what they want. Imagine trying to make decisions on their behalf about their healthcare needs.

The concept of Advance Care Planning resonated with me as soon as I heard about it. The importance of ensuring that those who may need to make decisions on my behalf know what I want makes sense.

Much like providing a list of gift ideas, it seems sensible to provide information about my potential healthcare choices. As a healthy, young adult this turned out to be easier said than done because I can't tell loved ones what I want if I don't know myself. The more I've learned about Advance Care Planning, the clearer it has become that it's an ongoing, iterative process.

Some concepts and ideas were fairly simple to understand and I was able to easily form opinions. Others, however, required more reflection. For example, I'd heard the phrase "not to be a burden," but quickly realized I didn't fully understand its significance. Being a burden? What does that really mean?

In my adult life, I hadn't been in a situation where I needed to be cared for beyond minor illnesses. Similarly, I had not had reason to provide this kind of care to others. That lack of experience made it difficult to conceptualize whether "being a burden" was important to me if I became seriously ill.

Not long after I began documenting my Advance Care Plans, I broke my arm and required surgery. I didn't respond well to the procedure or the medication, and I required support from those around me. Admittedly, being looked after by my partner for the first few days was comforting; his attention and assistance was nice. But then days turned into weeks and I started to understand. I began to fully appreciate just how draining it was on him to take care of all my needs. I started to imagine how exhausting it would be to continue to look after me without knowledge of my impending recovery. And I realized how badly it made me feel that I was inflicting this upon him.

That experience helped inform my opinion on what it means to be a burden and to consider how I wanted to manage future health needs in my Advance Care Plan.

I viewed this experience as the perfect opportunity to revisit the conversation; to form new thoughts and opinions, and to rethink those previously discussed. For me, it confirmed that Advance Care Planning is meant to be a fluid process.

Rachel Carter is a Research Manager at the BC Centre for Palliative Care but wrote this piece as a member of the public.

Family Caregivers of British Columbia is a registered non-profit dedicated 100% to supporting family caregivers. Find more information at: <https://www.familycaregiversbc.ca/>

Thank you 100+ Women Cowichan!!

100+ Women Who Care Cowichan is a powerful group of local women making an immediate, direct and positive effect on the lives of our community. On March 3, the 100+ Women Who Care Cowichan voted to donate approximately \$10,000 to our organization to support Caregivers in the Cowichan Valley. The Cowichan Family Caregivers Support Society Board, staff and volunteers would like to express our deepest gratitude to all the members of 100+ Women Who Care Cowichan for voting and donating to support caregivers in

our community. We are incredibly grateful to this group for the difference they are making for our and other charitable organizations in the Cowichan Valley. Check out more pictures on their Facebook group at:

<https://www.facebook.com/100womencowichan/>

100 Women Who Care Cowichan is looking for new members. 100% of your donations to go directly to local charity.

If you are interested in joining 100 Women Who Care Cowichan please email: 100womencowichan@gmail.com

Visit their website at: <https://100womencowichan.wordpress.com/>



Do you shop at Thrifty Foods?

Cowichan Family Caregivers is now a part of Thrifty Foods Smile Card program.

The system is simple and has a big impact! Simply get a Smile Card from us and Thrifty Foods will donate an amount equal to 5% of the dollars you load on to your Smile Card.

Supporting caregiver resources and supports is as easy as that.

Call today to get your Smile Card:
250.597-0886



Cowichan Family Caregivers Support Society

Donations Welcome!

Please consider making a donation that will help us maintain and expand our services to assist in supporting caregivers in the Cowichan Valley. Make your cheque payable to Cowichan Family Caregivers Support Society . Donate online at www.familycaregiverssupport.org or mail your donation to 1843 Tzouhalem Road Duncan BC V9L 5L6

Caregiver Support Groups

Duncan

1st & 3rd Tuesdays
2nd & 4th Mondays

Ladysmith

2nd & 4th Tuesday

Chemainus

1st & 3rd Wednesdays

To attend a support group, or for more information call 250-597-0886.

Please contact us if you'd like to see a caregiver support group in your area. We are considering starting new support groups in Lake Cowichan and South Cowichan/Mill Bay, so please let us know if you'd like to attend a group in these areas. Email us at sara@familycaregiverssupport.org

Board of Directors

Dan Vaillancourt, President
Tracy Taylor, Vice-President
Jim Dakin, Treasurer
Robert Weston
Georgie Grant
Phil Devitt
Jodie McDonald

Staff

Sara Ferrario, Executive Director
Amanda Marchand, Caregiver Support Lead
Lynne Woollam, Caregiver Support Lead
Sage Goode, Support Group Facilitator



Thank You to our Funders:

We acknowledge the financial support of the following:

- Island Health
- BC Gaming
- Chemainus Healthcare Foundation
- Ladysmith Healthcare Auxiliary
- United Way of the Central and Northern Vancouver Island
- United Way of the Lower Mainland
- Ernest and Frances Hudson Family Fund
- Town of Ladysmith



Our funders allow us to support our mission to acknowledge, appreciate and support people in their caregiving role, to alleviate stress, and to advocate for the rights of caregivers.

Cowichan Family Caregivers Support Society's Family & Friend Caregiver Supports Program is funded by the Government of BC and managed by the United Way.

Healthy Aging

by United Way At home. In community.



United Way
Lower Mainland



Dear Caregivers,

By now you have heard about the COVID-19 virus. This situation is causing some extra tension and stress in some caregiving situations because of the impacts this virus could have on personal health as well as possible impacts on access to services/supports. Reducing social contact can add to feelings of isolation as a caregiver.

You are not alone. Our services will still be there to support you through this time. Please reach out if you need support and we will continue to reach out to current caregivers who have been receiving our support as we always do.

Below you will find information about how we will continue to provide you with support services with good health practices.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

Warmly,

Sara, Amanda, Sage and Lynne

A new coronavirus is the cause of an outbreak of respiratory infections, now known as COVID-19. The number of cases worldwide is changing quickly. B.C. has confirmed cases of coronavirus; however, the risk to Canadians continues to be low. Anyone who is concerned that they may have been exposed to, or is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, should contact their health-care provider or call 8-1-1. Until more is understood about the virus, older people and people with a weakened immune system or underlying medical condition are considered at higher risk of severe disease.

We want to keep caregivers informed about our Caregiver Support Groups and one-on-one meetings regarding possible impacts stemming from the emerging situation around the COVID-19 virus. The Cowichan Family Caregivers Support Society takes this matter seriously and we are doing our best to support public health while ensuring that our support to caregivers continues. The health, safety and well-being of our employees, volunteers and caregivers is our top priority and we are following the lead of Canadian public health authorities at this important time. Please email us with any questions or check our website's "News" tab and Facebook page for updates.

Email: sara@familycaregiverssupport.org

Phone: 250-597-0886

Website: <http://familycaregiverssupport.org/wp/news/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/cfcss/>

We can practice physical distancing by:

- If you're feeling unwell stay home,
- avoiding physical contact by not handshaking or hugging, stay 6 feet away from people in public
- practicing proper respiratory etiquette (cover your mouth if you cough or sneeze)
- frequent handwashing.

For up to date information on COVID-19 please refer to the following resources:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/symptoms.html>

<https://www.islandhealth.ca/learn-about-health/diseases-conditions/novel-coronavirus-information>

<http://www.bccdc.ca/>