



Together.



We are making contributions that offer solutions,
help in time of real need, change outcomes.

We are building excellence in philanthropy to
ensure our communities flourish.

Impact comes in many forms. The reverberations since March 2020 are still being felt through our communities and will for some time. With your support the Central Okanagan Foundation responded. In 2020-21 distributions in community grants and special projects totalled \$3,598,470. We think of this as more than money flowing into the community. What happens with that money in the hands of our funded organizations makes the difference and creates an impact. That impact will double in 2022 in two significant ways: the COF is increasing the usual 3.5% distribution to 7.5%, so the communities we serve will receive more than double the usual impact from grants distributions. Additionally, because of a strong earnings return on the funds in your endowments under administration, the COF's board of directors has agreed to increase the capital in your endowment funds by 1%. This will help you, our donors, distribute more of your endowment earnings to charities that you cherish and want to help in your community.

Thank you to our donors, volunteers, grant beneficiaries, charitable partners and community leaders.

We cannot possibly tell you all the beautiful stories, so we have chosen a few to share with you. Watch for our full annual report this spring as we make some exciting announcements.

The Numbers



Over **\$42 million** in assets

Portfolio
Return
over
\$5.5 million

Grants and
distributions to
community nearly
\$3.6 million

Endowment
contributions
over
\$2.3 million

See full financial statements at www.centralokanaganfoundation.org

Photography and stories by Glenna Turnbull

Food Bank

Fire Relief

The Central Okanagan Community Food Bank has experienced a 25 percent increase in cases since January 2021. That means supplying some 4500 hampers of food per month, but during the wildfire-ridden summer of 2021 many more Okanagan communities found themselves in need.

“When the fires broke out this summer, we had many impacted residents from 24 different communities surrounding Kelowna who needed extra support,” said Tammie Watson, Chief Development Officer of the COFB, “residents who never thought they’d need food bank assistance.”

With the help of the Central Okanagan Foundation and the Central Okanagan Community Food Bank volunteers, 1200 emergency fire relief hampers were boxed up and distributed to those who had suddenly found themselves forced from their homes.

In one and a half short months, the Central Okanagan Community Food Bank assisted fire impacted residents in West Kelowna, Peachland, Glenrosa, Penticton, Oliver, Osoyoos, Fintry, Falkland, Monte Creek, Vernon, Armstrong, Lumby, Slocan, Sicamous, Beaverdell, Cherryville, the Okanagan Indian Band, Princeton, Creston, Cranbrook, Sparwood, 100 Mile House and Ashcroft.

“Because of the Central Okanagan Foundation, neighbours experiencing the unimaginable emotions of trying to put their lives back on track were able to feed their families and had one less thing to worry about,” stated Watson.



“The support the Central Okanagan Foundation gave us really enabled us to continue doing what we do because (the fire) was a really big induction to what we were already providing to residents who are still trying to recover from the pandemic,” said Watson.

“Thank you for being there for us, so we could be there for others.” ◀

Central Okanagan Food Bank
Impact Fund \$10,000 Grant
Summer 2021

Creative Juices Stirred



Important components of a community art gallery are quality exhibitions, staff to curate, and the patrons that come to enjoy the art. But without funding, none of it is possible.

The Lake Country Art Gallery opened its doors in 2010 and offered eight or more exhibitions each year until COVID forced some cancellations and closures. In the spring of 2019, the Central Okanagan Foundation awarded the art gallery three years of operational funding which enabled the gallery to increase the hours for their curator,

Wanda Lock. And thanks to Lock's ingenuity, the gallery found a whole new way to connect with the community during COVID lockdown.

Like many other galleries, Lake Country Art Gallery started offering video tours during COVID, but Lock wanted to do more, so she began offering sneak peaks into artists' studios to see what they were currently working on.

A lot of homes in the community sprung to life during lockdown when the gallery held their

Re-Create Art Challenge. People recreated scenes from their favourite paintings and sculptures and then submitted a photo of it along with the original piece of art they were mimicking. From Renoir to Picasso, Van Gogh to Vermeer, it is worth a trip to the gallery's website to see the creative juices it stirred.

Once the Lake Country Art Gallery was permitted to re-open, classes in the adjacent art house and in-person visits resumed, including those by Lake Country's youth. "The high school is right across the street, and we've got the Boys and Girls Clubs and the elementary schools in the area as well. Sometimes they just drop by and other times they call us and we'll arrange a scheduled tour and activity," said gallery manager Petrina McNeill.

The gallery's most recent exhibition, Sea of Love, provided extra inspiration for George Elliot students. One of the featured artists and the gallery's curator, Wanda Lock are former students of George Elliot. The second featured artist also had a local connection having graduated with a

Bachelor of Fine Arts from UBCO. "It spawned a lot of conversations about the career paths of an artist and the route from academic art through to careers and working as a curator," said McNeill.

Lock starts planning exhibitions at least two years in advance and tries to strike a balance between 'career' and 'local' artists. The gallery also holds an annual members show and sale. "I love the whole idea of Art for Life," Lock said, "and we want to fulfill that philosophy here at the gallery."

She believes art offers us a different way of seeing the world. "I think Art for Life is about being human," she said, "it's what makes us us – that creativity we possess." ◀

Lake Country Art Gallery

Okanagan Community

Response Fund Grant \$5,000



Sign With Me



The Okanagan Regional Library introduced the American Sign Language (ASL) Sign With Me story time in 2017 after receiving funding from the Central Okanagan Foundation to pilot the project. The project received a second year of funding from the Central Okanagan Foundation in 2018 to continue the pilot program. Rising interest in the program led the library to add an ASL Basics program for teens and adults.

In 2020, the library received a further 3-years of operating funding from the Central Okanagan Foundation to build on the success of these programs. In this period, the number of ASL programs offered by the Okanagan Regional Library has nearly doubled.

The exponential growth in popularity of Okanagan Regional Library's ASL Sign With Me story time and ASL Basics classes make for a great story,

but for Tara Thompson, Community Engagement Coordinator for ORL, the individual impacts of these programs make for an even better story.

"I remember watching one ASL Sign With Me story time where the baby was deaf," recalled Thompson, "the dad was sitting on the floor with her in his arms. She became completely enamoured watching Kayla telling the story."

That's because there is so much more to ASL story time than just words being read aloud. Between the oversized books, felt boards, and learning to make words with their hands, children (and their parents) discover a whole new language.

Led by teacher Kayla Malito, all of the ASL programming moved online during the pandemic. "We had to get creative when the pandemic hit,"

Thompson said. Being online enabled the library to reach an even wider group and they've decided to keep online Basics classes running alongside the now resumed in-branch programs.

It's estimated as many as one in ten children may have some type of hearing difficulty and while this program is wonderful for them, it is also a great learning tool for hearing children. "ASL is its own language," Thompson explained, "and sometimes people just need a different language to express themselves." ◀

Okanagan Regional Library
Multi-Year Funding \$36,000
over 3 years



Farewells



Brian Sanders

Brian is a partner with the accounting firm Crowe MacKay LLP and has held numerous roles at the Foundation which included providing leadership as Chair of the Board since 2018 and Treasurer from 2011 until 2018 and participating on the Executive Committee, Investment Committee and Human Resources Committee. Brian has done a great deal to make our Foundation and communities stronger. We are most grateful and we wish him well.

The Central Okanagan Foundation would also like to recognize and thank our other outgoing directors, Raghwa Gopal and Mary Butterfield.

For more information about our Board, please visit www.centralokanaganfoundation.org ◀

Supporting Wellness



"We never realized how much we needed the camaraderie until it was taken away"

So noted Mick Armstrong pegging his points on the cribbage board with his buddies Dave and Don at the Peachland Wellness Centre's weekly Men's Coffee and Cards program.

Holding a royal flush in his hand, Dave Lieuwen confessed, "Our wives had to practically force us out the door when it started," but this weekly socializing time has grown to become something the men eagerly look forward to every Tuesday afternoon.

"During COVID, we met outside, but the wind kept blowing the cards away," laughed Don Gowing, so they are thrilled to be back to their regular spot indoors on the lower level of the Peachland Wellness Centre.

Research has proven repeatedly that there is a direct correlation between socializing and

maintaining good mental health and the weekly Men's Coffee and Cards group is just one of the ways in which the Peachland Wellness Centre helps its community members to form much needed social connection.

There are similar programs for women. "We've also got a Ladies Support Group, a Bereavement Group, and we're just getting back to our Sunshine Singers and Jammers groups, as well as a Tai Chi Wellness group," said Program Director, Bonnie Hall.

"One vision of the Peachland Wellness Centre is to support people to be socially active," noted Christina MacMaster, Executive Coordinator, "so we have upwards of thirty programs and services on the go at any given time."

It is thanks to the multi-year operational funding received from the Central Okanagan Foundation that the Peachland Wellness Centre can run thirty programs and services.

While COVID put a damper on participants being able to meet face to face, the in-person groups have resumed with masks and/or social distancing mandatory along with a valid vaccine passport.

"You can see the difference in the ladies," noted MacMaster, "they're so excited they can get out and socialize again without being afraid." ◀

Peachland Wellness Centre
Multi-Year Funding \$36,000
over 3 years

For more information please contact us:

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