



**Annual Report  
2018/2019**



## **President's Report**

### **Christina Thomas**

This year we welcomed two new board members, Barb Warkentine, and Gabrielle Miller. Their combined expertise is invaluable. In addition to our newest members, the rest of the board members bring a diversity of knowledge, understanding and commitment. You can read about Vela's Board of Directors on Vela's website. We are looking to add new members to our Board of Directors, if you are interested, please contact Vela's office.

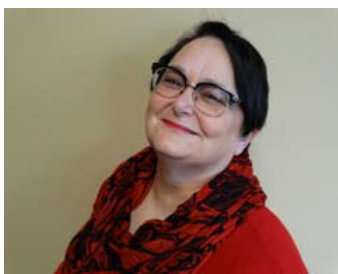
I would like to thank: Vela's Board of Directors who give their expertise and time; Vela's Executive Director, Linda Perry, who's dedication to the philosophy of Microboards is unending; Kim Thomas' dual hat of looking after the daily operations and funding opportunities; and the incredible staff who are out in the communities directly

supporting families (Terry Robertson, Caitlin Goodsell, Lori Emanuels, Lori Cochrane and Yvonne van Oort). Thank you.

The Board of Directors, along with Linda and Kim, meet once a year to have a face-to-face retreat where we set annual goals. This year we celebrated the amount of goals we reached in the past year. As we made our next set of goals we emphasized how important it is to have connection. Microboard Mingles have started happening throughout the province. When one comes to your community, I would strongly encourage you to attend if you're interested in seeing how others are operating their Microboard. It is amazing how invigorating and diverse each of them is as they reflect the choice of the person in the centre.

I am looking forward to another positive year working with amazing people.

Respectfully submitted,  
Christina Thomas  
President



## **Executive Director's Report**

### **Linda Perry**

This fiscal year 2018/19 has been one of hard work and positive results.

We have seen the development of over 50 new Microboards this year and have assisted with significant time approximately 30 people accessing Individualized Funding (IF). We continue to receive short calls and support requests for new IF recipients. This year there were approximately 215 such calls.

We continue to see an increase in the number of people experiencing very complex situations and support needs. I am very proud of the response

from our staff. They are creative, respectful and determined to meet those needs and support people to positive conclusions. This is often stressful for all involved, but our facilitators support each other and the individuals and families in ways that continue to make me proud to work with such a dynamic and talented group of people.

We continue to provide workshops, presentations and group meeting information sessions all around the province. This year we provided over 50 of these sessions.

We have held meetings with the staff at Community Living BC and continue to create strong relationships that compliment the work we do together.

The reality of the additional work demands, combined with fixed fiscal support, has led us to

again seek out additional sources of revenue. We have been able to provide a small amount of income from consulting and have once again used some of our reserve funds. But thanks to Kim Thomas, our Fund Development Officer, this year Vela has grown its donations and memberships. We are very grateful for the generous donations and increased uptake in membership as this is essential to our financial wellbeing. We are very thankful for Kim's hard work and her resulting success.

Beat Joehl, our Accountant, continues to provide Vela with support around financial management. Beat has been with Vela for 20 years and we are very fortunate to have him on our team.

We have also embarked on a research project looking at the social capital created within supports provided by Microboards. We are happy to be working with the Centre for Inclusion and Citizenship at UBC and are appreciative of the matching funds provided by CLBC and Mactacs. These funds have helped to make this research possible.

We continue to provide consulting support in Australia, Ontario and more recently in Norway. This new partnership has been very positive, and the exchange of learning has been very exciting.

In February 2019 we were again invited to attend the Zero Project Conference at the United Nations in Vienna. The focus was on Community Connections and we had a successful presentation and very much enjoyed the workshops as well as continuing to build on the relationships we have been developing internationally.



Once we had wrapped up at the conference, Kim Thomas and I went to Norway for our first face-to-face consultation with Uloba. During that time we signed an affiliation agreement and have forged a new and exciting business relationship.



*Left to right: Vibeke Marøy Melstrom, CEO of Uloba, Independent Living Norway, Linda Perry, Jan Kåre Stura, Board Chair, Uloba, Independent Living Norway*



After that, I then went on to Northern Ireland meeting with families from both Irelands that are interested in looking and invigorating the Microboards in both countries.



*Linda Perry sitting with parents, Valerie from the North of Ireland and Terease from the Republic of Ireland*

At the end of this fiscal year, we also began developing a new format of meeting with Microboards and IF families. We have labeled these “Microboard Mingles”. Nellie Wong, a very active parent advocate from Burnaby suggested this and we are very grateful for her support in organizing the first one. The first meeting was a great success and we plan to continue to hold them in communities where interest is being expressed. We are using this format to share information and collective best practice, as well as update on the latest changes in systems that impact Microboards and IF users.

**MICROBOARD**  
*Mingle*

I would like to again thank our staff team. They have, yet again, worked very hard and created successes for many people throughout BC. I am proud of their tireless creativity and mutual

support. I am so incredibly lucky to work with such an awesome group of women.

Our board members generously contributed their skills and energy to our growth and well being. I am very grateful to each of them: Christina Thomas - President; Barb Warkentine - Vice-President; Beth Ott - Secretary; Peter Barton - Treasurer; along with Alison Taplay, Vicki Gee, and Gabrielle Miller - Directors. You’ve all provided guidance and hard work, thank you!

I’ve learned in my role as Executive Director it is so important to be able to work in a strong partnership with the President, so I would also like to say an extra thank you to our President, Christina Thomas. She has provided me with support and clarity. I feel fortunate to work in partnership with Christina.

Lastly but certain not least, a very special thank you to Vela’s volunteers. You provide us with your commitment, skills and expertise. This year has seen a great deal of activity with our volunteers, many of whom have gone WAY beyond expectations and their support has been wonderful.

Respectfully submitted,  
Linda Perry  
Executive Director

**“If you want to go fast,  
go alone. If you want  
to go far, go together.”**

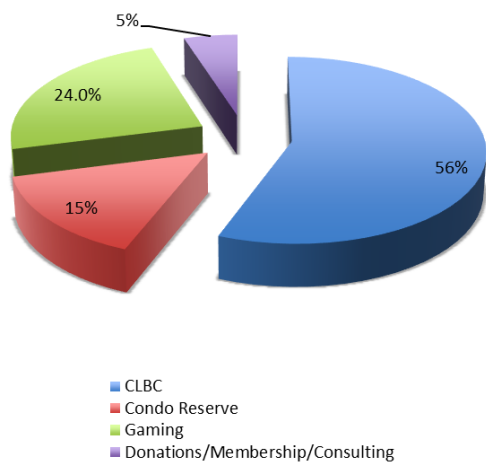
**– African Proverb**



# Summary of Where our Money Comes From and Where it Goes

The detailed breakdown of our finances are listed in our Audited Financial Statements.

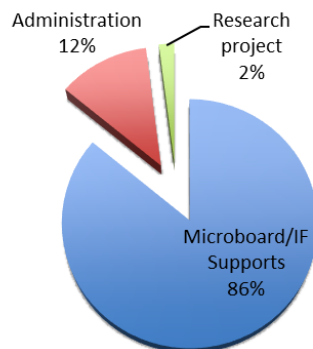
## WHERE OUR MONEY COMES FROM



## "IN KIND" SUPPORTS = \$85,720



## HOW WE PUT OUR MONEY TO WORK





## Development Officer's Report Kim Thomas

Vela's work continues to grow and so does the pride I feel for working at such an amazing organization.

In May of 2018, I was part of the Vela team that attended the Inclusion BC's conference held in Kelowna. This was particularly exciting for Vela as one of the key presenters was a young woman with a Microboard.

In February of 2019 I was extremely honoured to attend the Zero Project Conference in Vienna with our Executive Director, Linda Perry. Vela's work is received with great interest internationally and the relationships we are forming at these conferences are invaluable. As part of this trip I also travelled with Linda to Norway to meet with an organization (Uloba) to discuss Microboards. Uloba will be sharing our model as an option for some of the people that use their services. The days spent at Uloba were extremely successful and ended with an Affiliation Agreement signed between Vela and Uloba. I look forward to hearing the exciting stories of Microboards in Norway.



*Kim Thomas, Vibeke Marøy Melstrom and Linda Perry meeting at Uloba (Norway)*

I have also had the opportunity this year to work with Vela's Communication Contractor developing information material to better promote our important work.

## Membership & Donations

I am proud to report that membership has increased by ~32% this fiscal and extremely happy to share that Vela was again selected to receive a substantial donation from Mott Electric. Vela is fortunate to have several long-time donors, relationships I greatly value. It is these donors, along with our new donors, that have resulted in an increase of almost \$10,000 compared to last year. This surpasses the personal goal I set for myself at the end of last fiscal.

## Goals/Objectives (2019-2020)

My goals for the upcoming year are to further grow our Membership and Donor base. I also look forward to continued work with our Communication Contractor on development and marketing materials.

Please remember I am always available should you have any questions about how to donate, whether you currently are an annual donor, would like to become a monthly donor or are thinking about a legacy donation, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kim Thomas  
Development Officer



"I have found that among its other benefits, giving liberates the soul of the giver."  
- Maya Angelou



## **Facilitator's Report, Lower Mainland**

Caitlin Goodsell

As in previous years, this year is shaping up to be busy and present new challenges. My report is brief as I started my maternity leave in October 2018. My replacement,

Yvonne van Oort, will provide a more detailed report for the rest of the year.

From April 2018 to October 2018, I made a total of 26 new contacts. Fourteen of those individuals and families chose to set up Individualized Funding (IF). I also assisted five people to set up Microboards that are not funded by Community Living BC (CLBC) and five Microboards that were funded by CLBC. As of October, there were still two individuals that had not determined whether they would prefer a Microboard or IF.

A great deal of my time was spent supporting existing Microboards and IF users. In total,

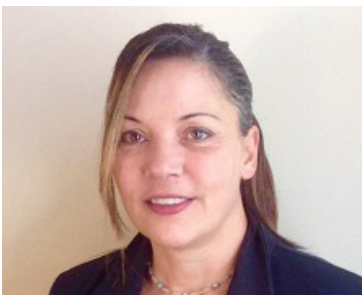
there were 43 people in this category. There were two individuals with IF and 41 people with Microboards. Of the 41 with Microboards, nine were funded by our gaming revenue and 32 were funded by CLBC. Of the Microboards, 18 of those were linked to specific transition assistance requests.

I was also very involved in assisting Microboards transitioning to the new Societies Act. This kept me busy for the first six months of the fiscal year.

I provided two larger presentations in the past six months. The first was an introduction to Microboards and IF for the Catholic Schools of Vancouver (held in Vancouver and had about 65 attendees). The second was at the North Shore Transition Fair (had about 30 families/individuals come by).

I'm looking forward to hearing how the rest of this fiscal year has gone.

Respectfully submitted,  
Caitlin Goodsell  
Facilitator



## **Facilitator's Report, Lower Mainland**

Yvonne van Oort

I started at Vela in September 2018. I took over Caitlan

Goodsell's position as a Mainland Facilitator while she is away on maternity leave for a year. I have a long history with Vela having worked with a few of the first Microboards that incorporated back in the late 1990's. I was completely in awe of the concept of Microboards and saw firsthand

how empowering they were not only to the individuals at the center of them but also their family and friends.

Before starting at Vela I could not have imagined the amount of knowledge it takes to navigate the complicated system associated with the job. I soon realized that understanding the complexities involved in navigating the system would be challenging. Luckily, I enjoy being challenged at work and have come to really enjoy the learning curve.

I have been really busy since starting at Vela. During the initial two weeks, Caitlan familiarized me with the families I would be working with on

her caseload along with an overview of the role of a Vela Facilitator.

Once Caitlan officially left on maternity leave, I was fortunate enough to be mentored by Lori Emanuels and spent some time working with her in the Okanagan region helping families establish and maintain Microboards, and as well as negotiate contracts with Community Living BC (CLBC) Analysts. I learned a lot during my trips to the Okanagan with Lori. Once the Christmas break was over, it started getting busy with more mainland families looking to start Microboards and/or Individualized Funding (IF). With the help and guidance from all the Vela Facilitators, who are always so graceful with their time, I started helping families in the mainland who had already incorporated their Microboards with proposals and budgets.

**The following is a breakdown of the activities I have undertaken:**

- Incorporated new Microboards
- Helped families understand and gain knowledge of IF
- Attended two PATH meetings
- Budget support
- Proposals and Individual Support Plan preparation
- Financial and banking support and information
- Referrals to other agencies
- Attended five transition fairs
- Transition planning from Child to Adulthood with families
- Prepared with family's interviews with host agencies
- Advocacy support for families with multiple barriers
- Helped families in crisis get the help they needed
- Advised parents on college and work programs their son/daughters may be eligible for
- Gave information to families about representations agreements

I have worked with 10 existing Microboards and in addition, have helped incorporate 10 new Microboards and worked with three families who selected IF.

I have enjoyed every moment of the work I have undertaken and look forward to the next half of the year. I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to work at Vela and feel honoured to work among such knowledgeable, caring and passionate co-workers who are doing such great work to help the families they serve. I am also thankful for everyone at Vela for helping me learn the role of a Facilitator and giving up their time in their very busy schedules to guide me.

Respectfully submitted,  
Yvonne van Oort  
Facilitator







## **Facilitator's Report, Vancouver Island**

Lori Cochrane

This last year has been a very busy one, to say the least, I have made contact with 109 families.

Many of these families have been referred to me, by calling into the office, as their first point of contact. However, I have seen a sharp increase in the number of calls that I have received through word of mouth.

Since last March, I have supported the development of 12 Microboards and 11 new families who have chosen to do Individualized Funding (IF). Sometimes these families are not ready to commit for months and possibly years after my involvement.

I have assisted 20 families who have funding from Ministry of Health and Community Living BC (CLBC), 16 families who have CLBC funding and interface with Mental Health services.

I supported families in 37 meetings with CLBC, as well as, two families whose children are not allowed to go to their local school and are making requests for the Ministry of Education to fund them at higher levels for home school or specialized settings.

I have supported 19 families dealing with housing issues/model issues. The individuals were either losing their homes or their caregivers or required something different to meet the needs.

I have supported two families to create their Microboards in one day. These families had removed their loved ones from untenable living situations and required quick action in order to minimize the gap in funding/service.

During the last year, I have been involved with families who live in Comox, Courtenay, Cumberland, Parksville, Port Alberni, Coombs, Qualicum Beach, Nanaimo, Duncan, Ladysmith, Victoria, Delta, Surrey, Langley, Mission, North Shore, Vancouver, Richmond, Burnaby and the Tri-cities. Importantly, this information paints a picture of the amount of understanding Vela facilitators must have with regards to multiple funder regions/offices and the multitude of service providers and generic resources we work with.

### **The following is a more general list of many of the activities I have engaged in over the last year:**

- Formal and informal planning
- Meeting support and guidance
- Incorporation support
- Employment support
- Model design
- Budget design
- Representation agreement support
- Crisis support
- Attending AGM's
- Microboard strengthening for self-advocacy
- Info fair planning
- Documentation support
- Problem solving many complex situations
- Host agency agreements
- Interface with lawyers, counselors, nursing, OT/PT services, multiple generic resources, funders, service providers, specialists and many other professionals
- Transition support for youth and seniors
- Supporting families to move between CLBC regions

### **I have been able to recognize a few trends over the last year. These include:**

- Microboards struggling to find employees. This trend was the same last year and continues to be a very difficult problem to resolve.
- An increase in the level of complexity of the situations that families face.

- Funding levels that are not working for many families.
- Inconsistency in important information provided to families.
- An increase in the number of families connecting with the Quality Service Advocate/ MLA's.

Finally, as a team we have been working hard on defining the most important features of our roles. An important finding of this process has been that many families come to us having struggled and having had numerous adverse experiences. Understandably, it may take a long while for them to trust anyone, including us. We must assess every situation as unique and give each family the kind of time and specific support they require. Often, the trust comes from always being available and ready to listen, sometimes conversations late at night or over weekends and

always non-judgmental and encouraging. We listen to the whole story, the past the present and the future. We show and prove our empathy in all the ways we can. These principles are required for each family to feel safe to move forward in their own time and to trust in us and our process.

In conclusion, it is a privilege and an honor to serve and support families. Our team at Vela is an amazing group and although we all bring our individual skills and knowledge to our role, it is our shared values and understanding of the needs and experiences of families that binds us in our mission.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lori Cochrane  
Facilitator



## **Facilitator's Report, Lower Mainland & Interior** Lori Emanuels

The Thompson/Okanagan regions and the Lower Mainland continue to remain

extremely busy.

The past fiscal year has resulted in positive funding results for a smaller number of adults and children.

### **Lower Mainland**

Unfortunately, one family in Children's Services was in severe crisis. However, there is resolution in sight and a partnership with another sector of government. This will be a precedent setting.

In the Lower Mainland most of my time has been dedicated to various aspects of support to individuals and families. For example: one Microboard has decided to manage the supports for their family member again. Initially the Microboard managed services when the individual was a child. When they became an adult the Microboard received support via an agency. Almost eight years later, the Microboard is the Employer of Record. The former Service Provider was very supportive. Community Living BC (CLBC) managed the change of contract seamlessly.

### **Children's Services**

- One child's funding is secured
- One child is in the process of incorporation
- Two individuals are interested

### **Adult Services**

- Two adults have incorporated and are in the process of securing funding
- Two individuals are in the process of incorporation

## Interior

The Thompson/Okanagan, especially Kelowna, remains busy. Kelowna has a high proportion of Microboards. The CLBC staff have been very supportive of Microboards and Individualized Funding. Sadly, two wonderful managers in Kelowna have passed away.

### Children's Services

- Three children are in the process of incorporating

### Transitioning Youth

- One person has secured funding
- One person is in the process of forming a Microboard

### Adult Services

- Nine individuals are in the process of forming Microboards and will be seeking funding

There have been various Microboards who have needed support regarding staff recruitment and

retention, compliance, and renegotiating contract increases. Some Microboards have required very intense front end and ongoing supports.

Securing funding when requested remains a top priority. We continue to meet with individuals and/or their families, Service Providers and our funders to ensure that there is a continuity of information, funding and services throughout the Province.

In closing I would like to say that as always, it's a privilege to work alongside the individuals and their families that we support. I would like to thank CLBC and MCFD for their commitment to families and Vela.

Our relationship with CLBC and MCFD continues to grow. Vela has offered me this opportunity and for that I'm truly grateful.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lori Emanuels  
Facilitator



### Facilitator's Report, Northern BC Terry Robertson

Hello again from the North. I know it is spring because I will be traveling five out of the next eight weeks. Spring always brings

a rush of trips to the far-flung communities in my region as I attempt to see families who I may have only had phone contact with through the winter.

As always with the individuals and families I meet around my region there is a lot of learning that happens before people decide about choosing

either a Microboard or Individualized Funding (IF). This of course is typical but I find that in small communities where there are no other families who may have a Microboard or use IF it takes time for folks to fully understand the possibilities these models of support can provide when there are no examples for them to witness in their community. I tend to tell a lot of stories, some personal about our own Microboard experiences and stories about friends' experiences so folks can better visualize what their sons' and daughters' opportunities might be.

One of the trends I have noticed in my work the past year is the personal stress families are under, very difficult family dynamics. I think I could say that from conversations with my coworkers that they are seeing this trend too. That heightened personal stress is bringing many

more complex issues and difficult relationship dynamics to the already challenging work I must help families navigate. It makes working out support needs very complex. This challenges my ability help the individuals and their families discover what they really want and need and then adjust those differing family positions into a model of care that works for their particular situation. I am sure that in years past I have said that I felt our jobs have become more complex over time, but this year feels like it has ramped up even more. Like always the complexities take time to work through so everyone is on the same page and understands the potential for outcomes. With all these challenges, watching individuals and their families get what they need for support, the way they need it continues to be the most rewarding part of the job.

In June of 2018 I made my first trip to Fort Nelson to meet families, school administrators, community agencies, and local Indigenous leaders. Fort Nelson is 500 miles north of Prince George and it is a community that is isolated and therefore in need of information and ideas to help families create good lives for their sons and daughters.

Each year I get calls from new families in new locations around the region. There always seems to be a new adventure and new learning experience for me as well as the families I meet. I am looking forward to the next adventure.

### **Summary of this year's activities**

- New Microboards (MBs) this past year - 6
- New Individualized Funding (IF) this past year - 2
- New contacts for the past year (families interested in MBs and IF) - 64
- Contacts from years past not yet committed to IF or MB – 15
- Existing IF requesting additional new supports this year – 9
- Existing MBs requesting additional new supports this year – 31

- Requests by CLBC staff to help an existing PCS, IF contract who has gone astray – 13
- Requests from other agencies or support services requesting help with a situation – 21
- Transition fairs – 4
- Presentations of MBs and IF – 3
- Keynote and two other presentations at Inclusion BC Conference
- Newsletter committee
- CLBC's Complex Care Initiative Committee

Respectfully submitted,  
Terry Robertson  
Facilitator



# A Heartfelt Thank You to Our Funders and Donors

## Individual Donors

A. Pope  
A. McGreer  
Aaron's Community Club Society  
Alice's "My Way" Society  
Alison Rodrigues Society  
All About Leah Society  
Amy's Spirit of Strength Society  
Arren's Charisma Society  
B. Ott  
Bree's Courageous Spirit Society  
Brooklyn's Society of Love and Laughs  
Craig's Friendship Society  
D. Conder  
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G. Oseki  
G. Townson  
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J. Jensen

J. Lee  
JD's Home Run Support Society  
Jesse's Environment Support Society  
Jiwon's Joyful Journey Society  
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M. Lavoitha  
M. Richards  
M. Wareham  
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Maureens H. Independent Living Society  
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Nolan's Society for Creating Choices  
P. Russell  
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P. Tesan  
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Robyn's Support Society  
S. Atkinson  
S. Balachanoff  
S. Belair  
S. McDonald

S. Willoughby  
Shannon Armstrong Support Society  
T. Ferworn  
T. Moffat  
T. Preston  
Team Geordy Society  
The Bich Tran Society  
The Paul Thomas Society  
V. Gee  
V. Nosella  
Vincent Tang's Qianjin Society

## Monthly Donors

C. Thomas  
T. Babiuk

## In Memory of Amber

J. Peterson  
K. Thomas

## Corporate Donors

Mott Electric

