



ANNUAL REPORT

2019 - 2020



Christina Thomas

Board President

President's Report

Wow! This year has been busy, to say the least.

We started the year off with our annual retreat to create an action plan for 2019 - 2020. As we posted last winter, Vela was struggling, but we knew we had lots of creative actions to put forward. Very quickly we found that we had to put those actions aside and deal with Covid-19.

Vela's staff stepped forward and provided both leadership and information for families with Individualized Funding (IF) and Microboards. The amount of energy and commitment was above and beyond my expectations and as a parent who has a son with a Microboard, I appreciate Vela very much.

On a personal note, I would like to thank Lori Emanuels and wish her a happy retirement. Our family was fortunate enough to have her as our facilitator and valued her support in both setting up my son's Microboard and negotiating with Community Living BC.

On behalf of the Board, I want to thank Peter Barton for all his contributions to Vela Canada for the past four years and wish him the best as he steps down from his role on the Board. It is an honour for me to work with such committed and supportive people who make up the Board of Directors and staff.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Christina Thomas



Linda Perry

Executive Director

Executive Director's Report

This fiscal year 2019 - 2020 has been particularly challenging, fiscally and in growth management.

BC Gaming Grant

The BC Gaming Branch informed us that our mandate no longer fit their funding criteria. Needless to say, this created a great deal of anxiety. We have been feeling the challenges of our growth with no extra funding. The staff was incredible during this time and worked hard under stressful conditions. They were flexible and innovated to ensure we could provide superior services, even in a fiscally challenging time. I thank them all from the bottom of my heart.

I am pleased to report that early in 2020, after months of working with the Gaming Branch to better articulate our purposes and detail the work for which they had paid, we received funding for 2020 - 2021.

We are reorganizing our financial statements for the current fiscal year to reflect separate program lines that will clearly delineate what gaming funds are used for. We are most grateful to have had the opportunity to work with the Gaming Branch and better explain the role we play with individuals and families that are not served by Community Living BC.

Research with Community Living BC

We completed a research endeavor to submit to Community Living BC (CLBC) that clearly demonstrated the growth in our work with Microboards and people with Individualized Funding (IF). Over several months we were able to come to an agreement which reflects our actual workload for CLBC eligible individuals. We are extremely grateful that CLBC worked with us and it will allow us to continue to serve families and individuals we have worked with, as well as giving us the capacity to support new individuals and families.

Research Project with Centre for Inclusion and Citizenship at UBC & CLBC

We continued working on the research project looking at the social capital created within supports provided by Microboards.

This was in partnership with the Centre for Inclusion and Citizenship at UBC and CLBC. We found the results very helpful and informative to our work. Final findings are expected by the fall of 2020 and will be published on our website and social media channels.

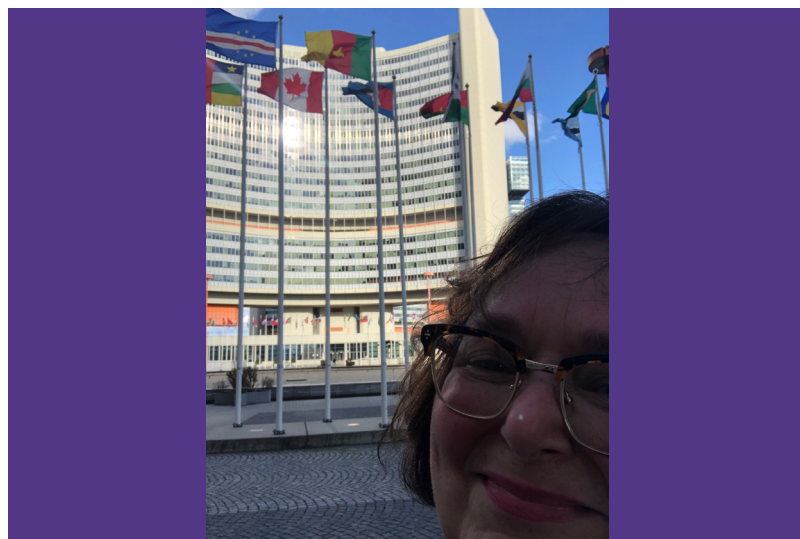
As part of the research we also worked with CLBC to look at the exact number of Microboards they fund and the level of need each individual requires. It was found that most people supported have very high needs. This was not a surprise to us, but confirmed our experience.

Zero Project Conference

In February 2020, I was again invited to present on a keynote panel at the Zero Project Conference at the United Nations in Vienna. It was an honour. The focus was on how our work has been influenced by the connections we have made at the conference. It was nice to have the opportunity to look at the many opportunities this conference has offered us to grow in our practice and our knowledge.

Much Appreciation...

I would like to thank Vela's staff. They have honestly outdone themselves this year. Despite the hardships we faced everyone continued to create successes for so many people throughout BC.



Thanks to Kim Thomas, our Fund Development Officer, 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. She's always been a kind voice at the end of the phone for those calling in for assistance, as well as for staff.

Caitlin Goodsell jumped back in after her year of maternity leave and took on a number of projects this year handling them with skill and success.

Terry Robertson continued to bring people together, gather information and support initiatives that improved lives for so many.

Lori Cochrane certainly had a large upswing in

53

MICROBOARDS

NEW

9

**CHILDREN'S
MICROBOARDS**

35

**INDIVIDUALIZED
FUNDING**

work on Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland. Most of these folks had extremely complex situations. Lori handled their situations with kindness, skill and successful solutions.

This year saw a big shift in the composition of our team. Lori Emanuels retired at the end of February 2020. Lori's talent and humour are worked into the tapestry of Vela's history. She has helped so many families and individuals in this province. After 20+ years there is certainly a hole in our team structure. But I am so grateful for the many years of dedicated support she provided and will miss her creativity. We wish Lori only great times in her new adventure into retirement.

We were delighted to welcome Yvonne to the team to take over for Lori Emanuels. Yvonne filled in for Caitlin while she was on maternity leave, so she was already a much-valued team member; we are delighted to be able to offer her a permanent position.

Beat Joehl, our contracted accountant, continues to provide Vela with support around financial administration. Beat has been with Vela for 20+ years and we are grateful to have him on our team.

Alexi McGreer has again joined us as a contractor assisting with management of our communications. She has become an essential part of the information we share, how we share it,

where and when. Her contribution has been such a welcome support.

Vela Board members continue to contribute their skills and time to our purposes and plans. This year has been one of strategic thinking and development of a comprehensive work plan. I thank each of them so much: Christina Thomas-President; Barb Warkentine-Vice-President; Beth Ott-Secretary; Peter Barton-Treasurer; along with Directors, Alison Taplay, Vicki Gee, and Gabrielle Miller. Your guidance, ideas and contributions are so vital to Vela, thank you!

We have also had tremendous assistance from so many volunteers. Helping us arrange workshops and meetings, assisting in the office, providing us with professional advice, technical assistance and a great deal of hands on work repairing and fixing a multitude of things. On behalf of Vela my heartfelt thank you for all you have done and continue to do.

Vela is very much an example of the whole being greater than the sum of its parts. As a team with a vision we have and continue to accomplish so much. I am in awe of those that continually contribute to the whole of Vela. Thank you all so very much.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Perry

WORKSHOPS

35

**WORKSHOPS
& EVENTS**

12

**WORKSHOPS
WITH CLBC**



Kim Thomas

Fund Development Officer

Development Officer Report

I wish to acknowledge and thank all members who responded to our call for action and support at our most difficult moment. Your response raised \$5,000! I would also like to acknowledge the amazing staff at Vela who accepted the changes and challenges with their full support and understanding.

2020 marks the 30th Anniversary of our very first Microboard and the fact that this Microboard is still running speaks to the importance, need and value that a Microboard can make in a life.

Our plans for celebrations have of course been put on hold for the time being but I encourage you all to spread the word, share your unique stories with each other and the Vela team. Vela would love to hear about your Microboard and what it (and you) is currently doing. Please share your unique journeys, successes, and photos.

Memberships & Donations

In December 2019, Vela was extremely fortunate to receive another large donation from Mott Electric. Mott Electric found out about Vela's amazing work through Randy and Brent Wilson (pictured here with me). A huge thank you goes to Mott Electric (and Randy and Brent) for your continued support of Vela and our work with individuals for self-directed living.

Vela is making a change to our annual campaigns. We have heard your feedback and will be running two separate campaigns moving forward. A **donation drive** in November, and a **membership reminder/drive** in January/February each year. We hope everyone finds this new approach more efficient and easier to accommodate. As always, we are so grateful for your contributions and support.

I am always available should you have any questions about how to become a donor or to make a legacy donation. Please feel free to contact me at any time.

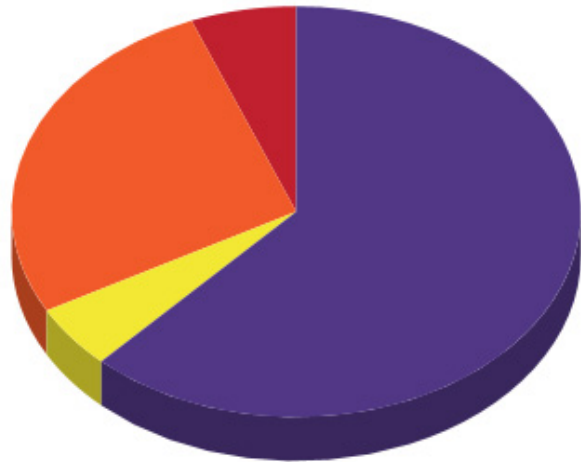
Respectfully submitted,

Kim Thomas

SUMMARY OF FUNDS

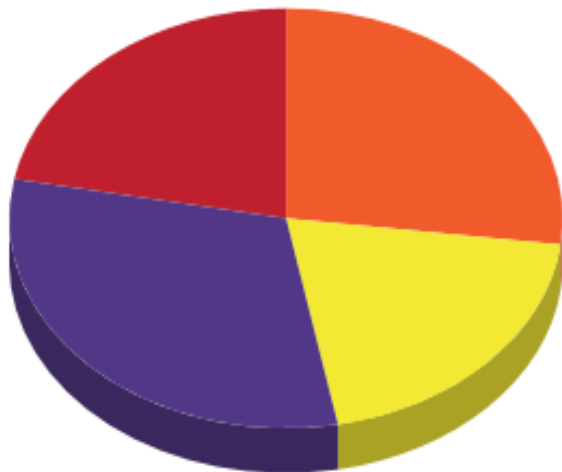
Where Our Money Comes From

Community Living BC	62%
Gaming	27%
Donations, Membership & Consulting	6%
Special Project CLBC	5%



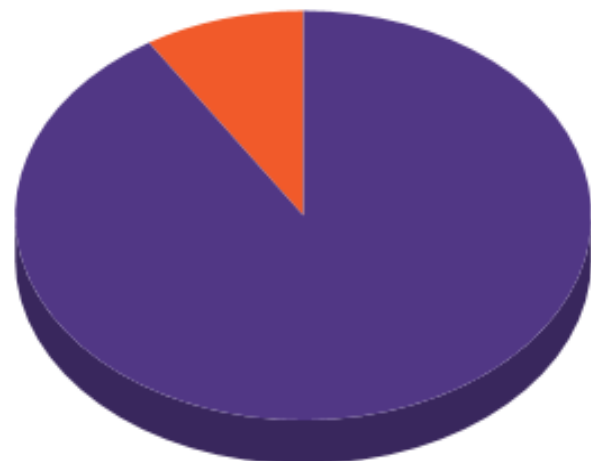
In-Kind Supports

Workshops, etc.	31%
Office Support	27%
Professional Consulting	22%
Tech Assistance	20%



How We Put Our Money To Work

Microboard & Individualized Funding Supports	91%
Administration	9%





Caitlin Goodsell

Lower Mainland Facilitator

**NEW
MICROBOARDS**

5

13

**NEW
INDIVIDUALIZED
FUNDING**

Facilitator's Report

Lower Mainland

It has been another busy year, even though I was only officially employed for half of it. I jumped back into my work with Vela in mid-October, after a year away for maternity leave, and it felt like coming home – I missed my Vela family!

Last summer I did a bit of work with CLBC to produce the new Individualized Funding reporting form training videos. By doing this while I was off, it made the transition back into work much smoother, and I am grateful I had the chance to step in for this project as it was a wonderful learning opportunity working collaboratively with CLBC.

When I officially returned to work in the fall, I was busy co-hosting workshops around the Lower Mainland on how to use the new IF reporting system. The updated reporting form went live in early November, which then resulted in an uptake of calls around the system. We tried our hand at hosting Zoom webinars, which were well received and relatively easy to navigate.

I continued assisting families and one of the trends that I encountered, among both new and existing individuals, was that there were a high number of very complex situations, meaning that the time spent with each family, individual, and/or Microboard increased. While there were definitely some challenges along the way, each of these situations presented a learning opportunity to gather information that we will be able to apply in the future should this trend continue; which I suspect it will since we often seem to get people who don't fit into typical models of support because of their complexities.

During COVID-19 we hosted weekly Zoom meetings which were very well attended with 25-50 people. The feedback we received has been very positive and I suspect that hosting Zoom meetings on various learning topics will be something we will continue going forward.

I am looking forward to another year of learning and working with families and individuals to navigate an ever-changing landscape.

Respectfully submitted,

Caitlin Goodsell



Yvonne Van Oort

Lower Mainland/Okanagan
Facilitator

11 NEW
MICROBOARDS

3 NEW
INDIVIDUALIZED
FUNDING

Facilitator's Report

Lower Mainland/Okanagan

I covered Caitlin Goodsell's maternity leave until the end of October 2019 and then assisted Lori Emanuel's in the Okanagan region. I worked with Lori so I could become familiar with the families, service providers and CLBC staff before she left. The plan was for me to take over the Okanagan region after her retirement, which I am delighted about.

At the end of October, Lori E, Linda, and myself travelled to the Okanagan to attend Individualized Funding (IF) workshops. We also organized a Meet and Mingle gathering for new and older Microboards. That was a huge success and a good turn out with many families interested in starting a Microboard for their sons/daughters.

I also helped many Microboards and IF agents with the general maintenance of their supports. This included: revising budgets; attending meetings with Community Living BC (CLBC) and BC's Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) employees; PATH and other planning sessions; answering employee questions; referrals; assisting with care plans; developing financial plans and banking supports; assisting families searching for Host Agencies; helping with the interviewing process; and, supporting Microboards and IF agents with recruitment of employees when needed.

I have so much gratitude to be working with the Vela team. The work has challenged me and kept me on my toes. I have really enjoyed listening and learning from other facilitators and our amazing Executive Director, Linda Perry, as they are pioneers in the field and have a vast amount of knowledge. I also enjoyed meeting all the wonderful families and working in collaboration with them on their Microboards and IF supports for their sons and daughters.

I want to thank everyone for being there for me during my learning curve, especially Lori Emanuels. I know I have big boots to fill, but I am up for the challenge. I wish her a happy retirement.

Respectfully submitted,

Yvonne Van Oort



Lori Emanuels

Lower Mainland/Okanagan
Facilitator - Retired

Facilitator's Report

Lower Mainland/Okanagan

It's with mixed feelings that I write my final Annual Report. After twenty-two years of employment at Vela, I retired at the end of February 2020. I'll miss the people that I've met and worked with through the years. This includes individuals, families, Vela Staff, Community Living BC (CLBC), BC Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), and the School Districts. I wish everyone the best, especially during this global crisis.

I'm grateful that Yvonne Van Oort is the person that has taken over my position. I have known Yvonne for twenty-five years, and she is knowledgeable about the services and supports within our sector.

I would like to add that it has been a privilege and a pleasure to connect with so many wonderful people and families.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Emanuels





Terry Robertson

Northern BC Facilitator

**NEW
MICROBOARDS 9**

**4
NEW
INDIVIDUALIZED
FUNDING**

Facilitator's Report

Northern BC

Hello from a cold windy north. Spring has yet to show its face and the world crisis is touching our rural communities just like the bigger communities in our province. I am hearing from families that they too are experiencing all the shortages everyone is having but some of these little towns only have a single store. Some do not have a clinic, let alone a hospital, so their fear of strangers coming to their communities is very high. Most of my contact with these families has been by email and phone for the past several months and will continue that way for the near future. Due to their remoteness, families tell me they are missing the casual conversation that happens when we meet in person. I understand that and hope to be able to get back out to see individuals and families when it is safe to do so.

For the past year, the work in my region has been very busy. The issues families have been facing seem to continue to be more complex. As the Director of Regional Operations from Community Living BC (CLBC) in Prince George described it, "Vela seems to get the crunchy bits." Meaning that families looking for IF or a Microboard are families who need more individualized supports and that many of these individuals have very specific care needs to allow them to lead a full life in the community.

Many new families have been contacting me requesting my presence in their communities. The new families are starting to look at support options for their children in their mid-teens. I hope it is a reflection of my years of information workshops about IF and Microboards finally gaining traction in this large region.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Robertson



Lori Cochrane

Vancouver Island/Lower
Mainland Facilitator

NEW
MICROBOARDS **13**

15 NEW
INDIVIDUALIZED
FUNDING

Facilitator's Report

Vancouver Island/Lower Mainland

In this last year I have made contact with 89 families. I have continued to see a sharp increase in the number of calls that I have received through word of mouth.

Recently, 14 new families from Victoria have shown interest in direct funding. These families came to Vela because of a workshop I provided. This is significant because I have done most of my work in the Northern part of the Island.

I have supported the development of 13 Microboards and 15 new families who have chosen to do Individual Funding (IF). The number of families I have supported to do IF has increased over last year by 60%. The remainder of the families are at various stages of development within IF or Microboard development.

Approximately 30% of the families have both BC Ministry of Health and Community Living BC (CLBC) funding. A smaller number of families receive funding from CLBC and Mental Health. I have supported the development of 3 children's Microboards through Child and Youth Special Needs (CYSN).

Linda Perry and I held a "Microboard Mingle" in Parksville that was attended by 13 families. Everyone thought it was an excellent opportunity to share their stories and ask questions. As a result of the Mingle, the families connected and coordinated a BBQ in the park.

Microboards are still struggling to find employees. This trend was the same last year and continues to be a very difficult problem to solve. As a result, I have supported a number of IF and Microboard families to develop Host Agency agreements.

Respectfully submitted,
Lori Cochrane

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS & FUNDERS

INDIVIDUAL DONORS

Aaron's Community Club Society
Alan's Team Society
Alexi McGreer
Alice's My Was Society
Alicia's Independence & Helping Hand Society
Alison Rodrigues Society of Family and Friends
All About Leah Society
Allah Help Paul Madden Society
Allan's Great Life Society
Amy's Spirit of Strength Society
Angie's Kare Society
Arren's Charisma Society
B Fallowfield
B van Engelen
Brooklyn's Society of Love and Laughs
C Lafortune
C Thompson
Catherine's Future Advisory Group
Chase Balachanoff Society
Craig's Friendship Society
D and J Duckworth
D and R Mansell
D Hinton
David Belair Development Society
Dirk Huysman
Douglas Kerr Family and Friends Support Society
E Hogg
E Loughery
Emily Lee Circle of Support Society
F and B McCann
Family Ties Support Society
G and G Oseki

G and T Robertson
G Townson
Get Tuit Society
H Enns
J Finnegan
J Holder
J Huguenard
J W Lee
J.L. Minchin Society F.I.P.
JD's Home Run Support Society
Jesse's Environment Support Society
Jiwon's Joyful Journey Society
John Deady's Circle of Support Society
K and M Glaze
K Ball
K Houllind
Kevin's Superteam Society
Kokom's Nosism Society
L Demman
L Paynter
L Peters
Le Hope Access Society
Lee Russell Society of Family & Friends
Lenora Mae Support Society
M Houweling
M Lavoitha
M Wareham
Marianne's Citizenship Society
Mark Anderson Community Living Support Society
Master Brett's Jedi Society
Matt's Adult Planning Society

Maureen's Independent Living Society
Nolan's Society for Creating Choices
P and S Siu
P Ferris
P Tesan
Queen of Nature Society
R and D Wilson
R and R Thiessen
R and V Gee
Robyn's Support Society
S Allan
S Demers
S McDonald
S Minchin
S Tang
Shannon Armstrong Support Society
Simply Kristina Society
Steven Glenn Choices & Opportunities Society
Steven Linemayr Support Society
T Ferworn
T Preston
Team Geordy Society
The Bich Tran Society
The Michael Wittman Society for Autonomy
The Paul Thomas Society
The Vincent Tang Qianjin Society
V Found
V Nosella
W Hall
We Make Life Easier Home Cleaning
We Support Naomi Siu
M Richards

MONTHLY DONORS

A Taplay
E Thomas
G Miller
T Babuik

IN MEMORY DONORS

In Memory of Amber Welsh
- B Ott
- J Peterson
In Memory of Ronald Perry
- R and D Wilson
Lori Emanuels Retirement
- P Siu

CORPORATE DONORS

Mott Electric

Langara College Student's Union

FUNDERS

