



ANNUAL REPORT

2021/2022

Self-Directed Living,
Fulfilling Life



Co-Executive Director Report



Kim Thomas, Co-Executive Director

COVID-19 has continued to present many challenges over the past year, but it has also brought opportunities for creative solutions. Vela staff and families have continued to adapt to virtual models of support – showing growth and resiliency in the face of many barriers.

One of the silver linings of the pandemic has been the expansion of our support to families through electronic means. We have continued to successfully host regular 'Chats with Vela' and webinars for the families connected to Vela and had over 1000 attendees join our events during the last year. We have learned that gathering virtually is easy to access, and creating connections online is possible. As we look towards the future, we know that returning to in-person support is important for connecting, however continuing virtual support allows us to reach a wider range of individuals and families. We believe this hybrid model will allow the greatest flexibility to meet the needs of those we support.



Caitlin Goodsell, Co-Executive Director

Early in last year's fiscal, the policy around criminal record checks changed and moving forward each Microboard and Individualized Funding user was required to set up their own account with the Criminal Record Review Program to process staff's criminal record checks. Unfortunately, it was not a clear process, so in anticipation of questions we created supporting how-to documents, hosted webinars, and created videos to support families through the change. Our process was quickly picked up by Community Living BC (CLBC) and became a regular distribution by CLBC's staff as they directed families to this new change.

Our informed options for the criminal record check change were very well received and led to an increase of awareness of our organization for families supported by CLBC. Many people initially connected with us through the criminal record check process, but then expanded their requests for support into other areas.

Early this year we were lucky to hire a new facilitator, Angela Branch, who will be covering support to our Vancouver Island Microboards and Individualized Funding users. She has been a wonderful addition to the team, and quickly learned the ropes around the criminal record check changes to support families with this process as the deadline of March 31st drew near.

Vela's members and donors continue to be an integral part of our success. Even through this difficult year, we have seen an increase in both members and donations. This is true testament to the value of relationships between Vela staff and the families we support.

We extend our appreciation to everyone who has helped make this year of change smooth and exciting. To our wonderful Board of Directors for being willing to adapt as we found our footing in our new roles. To our (semi) retired mentor and friend, Linda Perry, for her guidance and support as we stepped into the role that she built over the past 31 years. To the families who accepted us with open arms, and embraced the change despite having so many other transitions happening around them. And finally to our staff – we could not have survived the past year without a team who believed in us and stepped up every time we asked for something new or changed the way we work. They have all gone above and beyond, letting their passion for the work lead their dedication; especially during the past few years which have been challenging, frustrating, and sometimes very defeating.

Respectfully,
Kim Thomas & Caitlin Goodsell

40

Total Webinars

21

Total Chats with Vela

1146

Total Event Attendees

282

Criminal Record
Check Webinar
Attendees

323

Criminal Record
Check Direct
Assistance

President's Report



Alison Taplay, President

I am pleased to provide this report to Vela Canada's members and community on behalf of your Board of Directors. Your board has been very active this year despite the many other challenges each director has faced in their family life exacerbated by the ongoing pandemic. Here are the highlights!

In June 2021, we transitioned to our new leadership with Co-Executive Directors, Kim Thomas and Caitlin Goodsell. Kim and Caitlin have lead Vela through another very difficult year, working tirelessly to support families and individuals to develop and sustain self-directed supports. We are grateful for their knowledge, skill, and dedication, and appreciate the support they give the board. The Annual General Meeting marks the end of their first year in their new roles and provides us the opportunity to recognize them and their team for the good work they all do.

On November 27, 2021, we participated in governance training with Dr. Greg Thomas, who has formal training in parliamentary procedure and policy governance. The training was outstanding, and we are grateful to Greg for donating his time and expertise to Vela. What we learned has enabled us to adjust some of the board's structures, including moving to shorter, more productive meetings and using committees more effectively. Committees at this point include human resources, nominations, and member engagement. Ad hoc committees this year were for office space and bylaw review. Committees provide opportunity for board members and sometimes others to contribute their gifts and talents to Vela.

The bylaw review took a substantial amount of director and staff time and effort, but the result is the proposed amendments presented to the membership at this AGM. Changes were initiated to provide for electronic meetings, and to promote inclusion by changing the handling of gender, however once the review was underway, we identified several other changes we believe will improve our bylaws.

In spring 2022, the board and staff met to develop a strategic plan to advance Vela's vision and mission over the next five years. Using the PATH planning process, and thanks to the invaluable insights shared by the staff team, we were able to finalize short- and long-term strategies in these goal areas:

Access – Access to self directed supports and services continues to increase.

Sustainability – Microboards are sustained as key family contributors age.

Innovation – Innovations increase the quality and quantity of support.

Collaboration – Our common goals are advanced through collaboration.

Governance – Vela continues to be governed effectively.

I'll close by extending my sincere appreciation to my fellow directors: Val Cook and Beth Ott who have taken on a lead role with member engagement (Beth also serves as our Secretary); Vicki Gee, Vice President, whose governance expertise has been vital this year; Barb Warkentine who continues to contribute her financial knowledge in the role of treasurer; and Paul Thomas, who brings his technology expertise and his perspective as a self-advocate to our discussions. Paul's contributions helped the board reflect on the complexities inherent in planning self-directed lives when higher risks are involved.

I want to also acknowledge Gabrielle Miller who served on the Board from 2018 to 2022. Gabe had to step away from the board this year because her family needed her full attention, but her prior work promoting Vela's vision and assisting with both advocacy and fundraising was amazing. It has been my great honour to be part of this board and to work closely with your Executive Directors.

Respectfully,
Alison Taplay



Special Projects Report



Linda Perry, Special Projects

I can't believe it's been an entire year since my retirement as Executive Director. It's been so great to see Kim and Caitlin step in with such enthusiasm and working so hard for Vela. How fortunate for us! This report is a summary of some of the goals and accomplishments as the Special Projects Coordinator.

1. Research Project: Redefining the Social Contract

Queen's University's School of Rehabilitation Therapy, Sociology, and the School of Policy Studies, in Kingston, Ontario, are conducting a two-year research project on rebalancing formal and natural support for people with disabilities and their families. This study will explore three Canadian organizations, Vela Canada, Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network, and Degrees of Change.

The overall goal of this partnership is to understand balancing formal (paid support providers) and natural (unpaid support providers) supports to families who have members

with developmental disabilities to advocate for social policy and systems change that will value and recognize families and other natural community supports.

2. Senior Parents Project

I am developing a proposal for the government requesting additional supports for Microboards regarding administration and human resources. Our draft project will be considered by Community Living BC in September 2022.

3. The Vela Book

I am writing a book summarizing the historical evolution of Vela Microboards; the lessons we've learned, and the principles to follow. With over 30 years of developing a successful system of independent living, we wanted to document it. The book will include several stories of individuals and their Microboards. These stories will be used as examples of successful activities that demonstrate a Microboard's principles and functions in action. A collection of international data is being pulled together to reference and support the premise of the book.

I am grateful that I have two editors volunteering their time to review the book and assist with the process. The book is currently in the draft phase.

Respectfully,
Linda Perry

A Microboard Story



Trevor Cook, Sports Broadcaster

For three years, Trevor Cook lived his dream of being a sports broadcaster. It all started with a shared passion between Trevor and one of his Microboard members, Kevin, who was a coach with the BC Minor Association. With Kevin's connections he landed Trevor a volunteer opportunity conducting the hockey game commentary for the Coquitlam Major Midget team, the Vancouver NE Chiefs. With his quick wit and knowledge of hockey, Trevor became an important part of the team and almost every weekend would go down to Planet Ice, an ice rink in Coquitlam, where he joined another young man who was the play-by-play announcer. The games were broadcasted on the internet where the team and fans enjoyed Trevor's commentary. In honour of his time as a sports broadcaster, Trevor was given his own business cards to flash around – something that has brought him a lot of pride and stands as a concrete marker of his accomplishments and contribution to his community. Microboards offer many benefits, but the connections and support provided by Microboard members is one of the greatest rewards.

Trevor has had his Microboard for 10 years and it consists of six Microboard members that are friends and family who have known Trevor for a long time. "My life wasn't necessarily bad before creating a Microboard, but now it's better because I have a Microboard," says Trevor. Along with supporting Trevor to live his dream of being a sports broadcaster, Trevor's Microboard also helped him pick where and how he wanted to live. "I am able to live more independently and freely," adds Trevor.

Trevor and his family set up a Microboard for Trevor because his family believed that this would be the best way to help Trevor live on his own. There was also concern of what would happen to Trevor once his parents passed. "The good thing about having a Microboard is that I will continue to have the support I need long after my parents pass away. We have a good system going and hopefully it continues that way," says Trevor.

There are many positives to having a Microboard, however they do bring their own challenges. Trevor mentions that he finds staff coming and going hard. "I get really close to my staff and find it really hard when they leave. I don't like a lot of change, so it's really hard for me when staff leave," says Trevor.

By having the support of a Microboard Trevor can focus on the things that he wants to do, like being a sports broadcaster. "I get to focus on being the best version of myself," concludes Trevor.

Accomplishments

Support Worker Central (SWC)

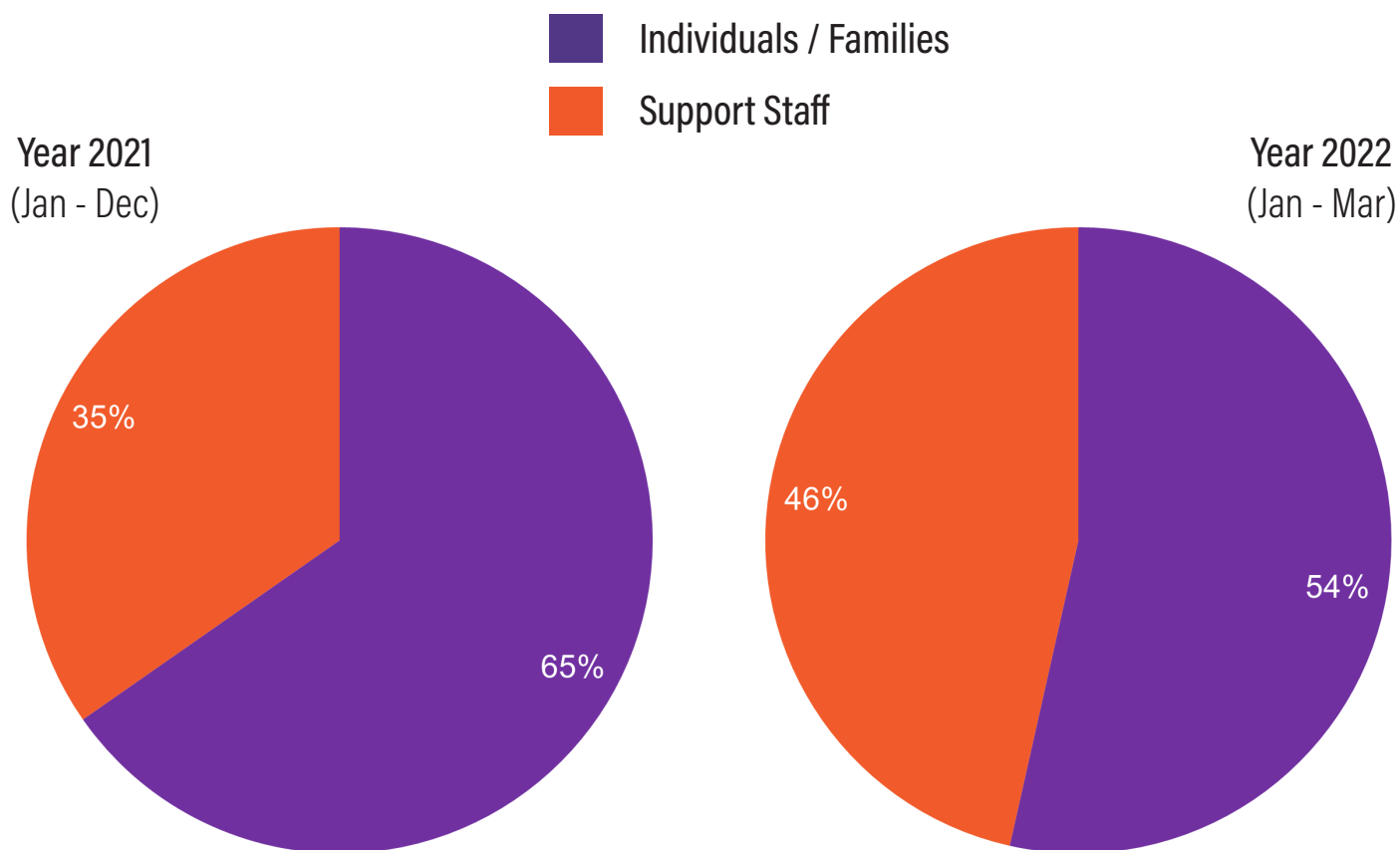


Support Worker
Central

This year we wrapped up the Support Worker Central project with the Family Support Institute. This was a two-year project funded by the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction. The grant allowed us to rebuild and refresh Support Worker Central as a website connecting potential families and individuals with support workers around the province.

The ongoing staffing crisis has affected the success of the new site, but we are optimistic that with the ongoing support of Community Living BC (CLBC) and the partnership with the Family Support Institute, that moving forward we will be able to create solutions to make the site more effective and respond to user feedback.

New Registered Users of SWC



Accomplishments

Microboards, Social Capital and Quality of Life

For the past two years, the Canadian Institute for Inclusion and Citizenship at the University of British Columbia, in partnership with Vela Canada and Community Living British Columbia, have been conducting a qualitative research study on the impacts of Microboards on social capital of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We are thrilled to present the findings of this project.

Researchers learned that Microboards are autonomous, person-centered, empowering, and interconnected; and that because of these four characteristics Microboards act as a “vehicle” for increasing social capital and quality of life. The more social capital (or connections) that a person has in their network, the greater quality of life they will have.

[View the full report on our website.](#)

Microboards™, Social Capital and Quality of Life

A Two Year Research Project by the Canadian Institute for Inclusion and Citizenship at the University of British Columbia, in Partnership with Community Living British Columbia and Vela Canada



Virtual Sibling Meetups

We helped support the Sibling Collaborative’s Sibling Virtual Meetups for Western Canada. There is a need for more supports for siblings of people with disabilities, and we believe Microboards are a viable option for all parties involved. We look forward to encouraging more opportunities for siblings.



NEW Microboards

18

Lower Mainland

6

Vancouver Island

3

Okanagan

8

Northern BC

ASSISTED Microboards

112

Lower Mainland

12

Vancouver Island

10

Okanagan

55

Northern BC

NEW IF Users

69

Lower Mainland

17

Vancouver Island

5

Okanagan

11

Northern BC

ASSISTED IF Users

166

Lower Mainland

26

Vancouver Island

12

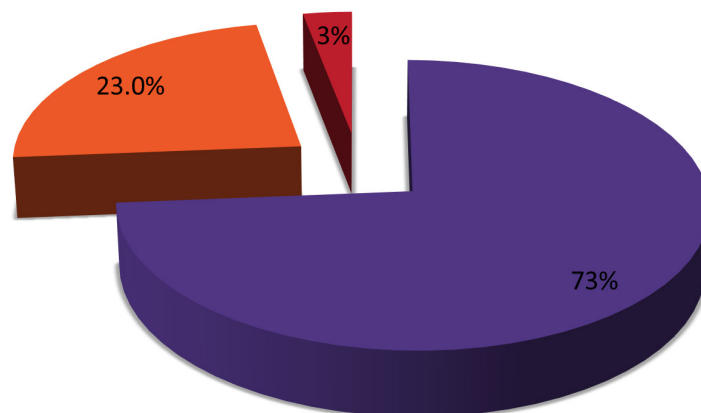
Okanagan

55

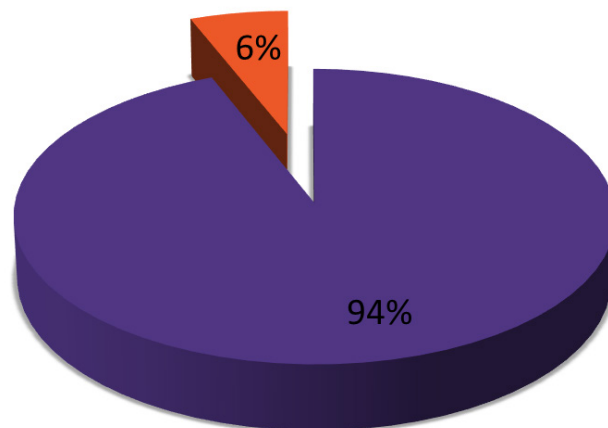
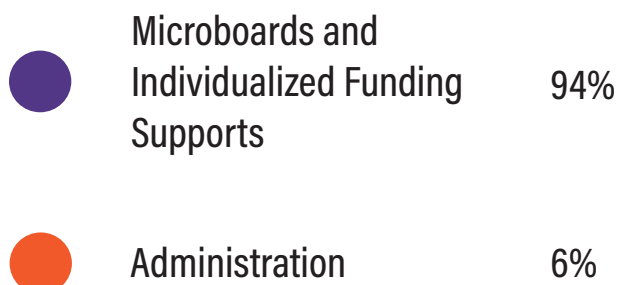
Northern BC

Summary of Funds

Where Our Money Comes From



How We Put Our Money To Work



In-Kind Supports

Office Support
Office Repairs
Consulting on Board Governance,
strata matters, policy documents
Tech Support
Research

Total In-Kind Supports
\$9,170

Vela Staff



Kim Thomas
Co-Executive Director



Caitlin Goodsell
Co-Executive Director



Terry Robertson
Facilitator



Lori Cochrane
Facilitator



Yvonne van Oort
Facilitator



Alison Found
Facilitator



Angela Branch
Facilitator



Alexi McGreer
Communications

Board of Directors



Alison Taplay



Vicki Gee



Beth Ott



Gabrielle Miller



Paul Thomas



Val Cook



Barb Warkentine

Donors and Funders

Funders



Donors

Montly Donors

A. Taplay
C. Goodsell
C. Thomas
K. Thomas
T. Babiuk

Corporate Donors

Mott Electric

In-Memory Donors

M. Whareham - In memory
of D. Whareham

Individual Donors

A. Clegg
A. Karaliolios
A. McGreer
A. Pope
Aine Rathwell's Independent
Society
Allen's Great Life Society
Arren's Charisma Society
B. Fallowfield
B. Ott
Bree's Courageous Spirit
Society
C. Johnson
C. Lafortune
C. Walker
D. Campbell
D. Hinton
D. Mansell
D. Ralph
E. Calder
E. Hogg
F. Hodaly

Family Ties Support Society
Friends of Manuel Society
G. Cameron
G. Oseki
G. Townson
H. Enns
J. Ennis
J. Finnegan
J. Huguenard
J. Lee
Jay's Action Yes Society
JD's Home Run Support Society
K. Houllind
L. Diep
L. Horning
L. Paynter
M. Bancroft
M. Glaze
M. Lavoitha
Maureen's Independent Living
Society
N. Tejani

N. Wong
P. Ferris
P. Tesan
P. Thomas
R. Schlogl
R. Wilson
S. Aloï
S. Berryman
S. Dirks
S. Malholtra
S. Malough
S. Tang
T. Ferworn
T. Jimmo
T. Preston
V. Nosella
W. Hall
W. Weeks