



WHISTLER  
COMMUNITY SERVICES  
SOCIETY




# Annual Report

2019-20

MYWCSS.ORG



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# Executive Director's Report

Whistler Community Services Society's mission is to support and advocate for a healthy community. This year our staff, volunteers, programs and spaces continued to play a crucial role in the mental health, food security and financial needs of the community and the waste diversion process. These are challenging times and our staff and volunteers were asked to quickly adjust to change while navigating their own personal lives, in a pandemic climate, and adjust to the increasing needs within our community and changes within our agency. The health, safety and well-being of our staff and volunteers is most important as we continue to do this work and be a helping hand towards a healthy community. Over the last several months, the social justice and black lives matter movements have encouraged many of us, working for non-profits, to look inward and to reflect on our own policies, procedures and systems which enshrine oppression and lack culturally informed experiences. Colonialism has deep roots in our society and the events and social justice movements throughout our world are a reminder of the intolerable treatment of Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC). This has encouraged us all to reflect on our own thoughts, do our own work and look inward and reflect on the ways non-profits operates, how we support our communities and how we can continue to do better to support inclusivity, equality and diversity. At WCSS, we will stay committed to this process, we will listen, engage and most of all be willing to learn from our BIPOC colleagues and non-profits and charitable sectors.

As we continue to look inward, learn and grow our staff recognize this work cannot be done overnight but have a strong willingness to engage, provide a new lens on our hiring practices, internal operations policies and procedures and a desire to sit in conversations and educational opportunities where we can learn, identify our own biases and work in partnership with our BIPOC colleagues to continue on a journey which supports equality and diversity.

At this time, I would like to acknowledge the resiliency, strength and compassion of our people who work and volunteer for WCSS and specifically thank Lori Pyne who served as the Interim Executive Director from November 2019-June 2020. Lori has worked in various sectors of our organization such as manager of both our Re-Build It and Re-Use It Centre, Community Garden and Greenhouse Program (now with AWARE), developed our tool lending library, bottle recycling programs and most recently assumed the role as Operations Manager.



*"Community is about doing something together that makes belonging matter."*

Author Unknown.

Her energy and compassion are necessary and essential to the leadership of this organization and its ability to navigate challenging times with the onset of the COVID 19 pandemic. Our staff and management teams all rose to the occasion and despite shelter in place orders and isolation, at the beginning of March, many of our staff continued to work and provide mental health support, food security needs and served as an important protective barrier and safety net during the onset of the pandemic. WCSS was not immune to challenge and we experienced store closures of both of our social enterprises and some of our staff experienced job loss and change. We are grateful to those who continued to work and support during this pandemic and show gratitude to the staff who returned to work in our stores as we entered PHASE 2.

However, our ability to do this work would not have been possible without the support of our community. Whistler Community Services Society has always existed as a direct result of the generosity of our community. Our ability to continue offering services, support and increase our capacity during a time of adversity was made possible through donations from foundations, grants, individual donors and fundraising events. Thank you for your trust in the work we do and the programs and services we offer. WCSS, would not be in its 31st year without your support. Thank you so very much.

Our Board of Directors have always been a valuable, committed group of individuals who have worked hard to support this agency and our community. This year, they went above and beyond their volunteer commitments and assisted our staff to ensure our doors stayed open and our programs continued.

Most of all, during this time of uncertainty I have gratitude for the people who continue to shop in our stores, donate their goods and most of all show bravery and strength and ask for help. We need community and a sense of belonging more than ever. It truly takes a village, and despite a global pandemic we need to find ways to continue to cultivate a strong sense of belonging.

Your willingness to trust us with your goods, your donations and your resiliency to pick up the phone and access one of our programs to support your emotional health, well-being of your family or food security needs is not easy but important as we enter a time of financial insecurity and uncertainty.

Normalizing these conversations, advocating for mental health and asking each other for support and assistance assists breaks a stigma and shows a sense of strength which is needed more than ever. At WCSS, every day our staff and volunteers, donors and supporters are committed to bringing this community together in ways which lift us up, create a sense of belonging and reminds us more than ever that we all need a helping hand.

Jackie Dickinson  
Executive Director



## Chair Report

As a long standing member of the WCSS Board of Directors it has been an honour to have represented WCSS as Chair this past year. Being witness to the incredible dedication of the WCSS team and generosity of our community has been one of my greatest privileges.

At the very start of the pandemic members of the Board along with WCSS's senior management team sat in an office to consider the immediate days ahead. Similar to so many other organizations, tough decisions were made. For WCSS one decision would set the course for every other decision made. In those early days the small but mighty team at WCSS made the conscious decision that no one that reached out for help would be left behind. The actual and virtual doors of WCSS would stay open until every last person was able to receive the support they needed. The WCSS team brought that assertion forward in every decision made, and despite constant change and gaping uncertainties they accomplished this goal. At a time when most were forced to shutter their doors the team at WCSS was able to swing theirs open.

What WCSS has learned during this time has been profound. Today, the foundations and safety net WCSS has built for the community over the past 31 year are stronger than ever. The commitment in 2012 and every year since to meet the standards set out by Imagine Canada ensured that WCSS had strong governance and operational foundations to help ground the organization during the pandemic. The organization's dedication to sound financial management helped ensure the community could count on the relevancy of their donations to our organization. Every dollar raised for WCSS goes back into supporting our fellow community members, something WCSS is incredibly proud of.

While there is still a storm to be weathered, the strength of our foundations has positioned WCSS to be able to continue challenging itself to grow and learn. This past year has opened the door to new strategic relationships with organizations such as Whistler's Multicultural Network and the Kelty Patrick Dennehy Foundation.

It has driven conversations on new ways to create food security for our community and unique and innovative ways to extend our outreach services. It has also created space for WCSS to look more intimately at our role in ensuring diversity and inclusivity are actively considered and incorporated into every future decision the organization makes.

WCSS has long provided a vital safety net for members of our community in need of support. The incredible work WCSS was able to accomplish this year was supported by the entire community. Local kids held matching campaigns with their allowance. Our neighbors down south and abroad shared their passion for WCSS by donating funds while listening to our favorite Whistler Bands. Countless members of our community made donations that left us humbled by their generosity. Whistler's non profit community rallied around our organization driving donations to our front door and supporting WCSS with their knowledge and expertise. Countless businesses and stakeholders helped support the foodbank. And finally the Resort Municipality of Whistler, who with support of RMOW staff ensured WCSS was able to move forward quickly to address community needs.

This past year has brought into crystal clear focus the incredible work WCSS does. The culmination of 31 years of hard work and dedication brought WCSS to this moment, I truly believe this year has paved the way for the next 30 years for WCSS to be even stronger.

As Chair of the Board I would like to thank staff and volunteers for their tireless dedication and passion to ensuring that WCSS continues to be the Caretakers of Whistler Social Health and Wellness.

Jessica Averiss  
Chair