



**Desert Sun
Annual
Report
2022/2023**





Executive Director, Marieze Tarr

WHERE WE ARE

As Executive Director of Desert Sun Counselling and Resource Centre, I am honoured to offer you a glimpse into the accomplishments of the last fiscal year. This last year we saw further expansion of our services in the communities of the South Okanagan, and I am happy to share some of the highlights of the year with you.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

Fee for Service Counselling: One of the big needs in our community is for counselling that falls outside of our counselling mandate (free counselling for women and children who have been victims of domestic violence). In the summer of 2023, we embarked on a journey to start the fee for service counselling program. We currently have 7 counsellors available for fee for service counselling and to learn more about this service or book your free introductory counselling session visit our website at desertsuncounselling.ca. This initiative has broadened our reach, allowing us to offer support to more individuals and families in need ensuring that mental health services are accessible to all.

Emergency Preparedness: In response to the unique challenges faced by our senior community and vulnerable population, we have initiated an emergency preparedness plan tailored to their needs. This initiative, made possible through funding from United Way, aims to ensure the safety and well-being of these individuals during times of crisis and uncertainty.

" Life's most persistent and urgent question is: What are you doing for others? "
~Martin Luther King Jr.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR CONTINUED

Purple Lights Campaign: In October, Desert Sun, in collaboration with the Ministry of Children and Families, hosted a purple lights campaign. Both the Town of Osoyoos and Oliver declared October, Domestic Violence Awareness Month and in both towns many businesses participated in painting the towns purple. This initiative not only illuminated our streets but also shed light on an issue that often remains in the shadows, fostering a community of support and compassion for women and children fleeing domestic violence.

Purchase of a 14- seater van with the help of RDOS: In the summer of 2023 Desert Sun started conversations with RDOS areas A, C and D councilors about specific needs in our communities and how we can partner and better serve our communities. They were curious about our services and the top needs of our community members. Together we identified transportation of seniors as one of the gaps in our area. Seniors need transportation to medical appointments and to our seniors programs. Currently, we have an older inefficient gas van that is unable to meet the needs of our communities. With their support, and some of Desert Sun's vehicle restricted funds we are now the proud owners of a brand new 14-seater bus.

Volunteer Program: With funding provided by the Red Cross, Desert Sun was able to hire a Volunteer Coordinator for the 2023/2024 year to bring new life into our volunteer program. We have recruited close to 30 volunteers, and we now have volunteer policies and procedures in place as well as a volunteer manual. This role has been instrumental in recruiting, training and engaging volunteers who are the backbone of our organization. The support and commitment of our volunteers amplify our efforts and extend our reach. We also celebrated the work of our volunteers and the first annual volunteer appreciate event in March.

Meetings with Ministers and our MLA Roly Russell: Our organization has been fortunate to engage in meetings with the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, Minister of Health, Minister of Families and Children, Attorney General of BC as well as the Minister of Forestry and the Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors. This has enabled us to advocate for our clients and their many unmet needs. Collaborating with our Provincial government give us the ear of the people that make policy decisions in our province which can lead to better outcomes for all our community members. We are fortunate that our MLA is really connected to the work that we do and the clients that we serve.

These accomplishments are a testament to the hard work and dedication from our staff, the Board of Directors, our volunteers and supporters. Each achievement brings us a step closer to our vision of a resilient, compassionate, and empowered community.

As we look forward to the coming year, we remain committed to our mission and excited for the opportunities ahead. Together we will continue to build a stronger, more connected South Okanagan.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude for your ongoing support and belief in the impactful work that we strive to accomplish.

Marieze Tarr



"We are not a team because we work together. We are a team because we respect, trust and care for each other."

WHO WE ARE

ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

Executive Director: Marieze Tarr
Executive Assistant: Michelle Bell
Finance Manager: Jas Nahal

PROGRAM COORDINATORS

Parent Connection/Community Kitchen/Community Garden/Early Years: Nancy Aatelma
Early Years: Pavan Dhaliwal
Parenting Skills Program Okanagan Correctional Centre: Marieze Tarr, Michelle Bell
Roots of Empathy: Nancy Aatelma
Affordable Housing: Michelle Bell
Better at Home for Seniors: Armelle Garska, Georgia Vanderbyl
Men's Shed: Ariel Ozorco
Computer Tutor: Ariel Ozorco, Donna Morgan
Therapeutic Activation Program for Seniors (TAPS): Bonnie Dancy, Donna Morgan, Alicia Osland, Lisa Lewis, Armelle Garska
Youth Connection Program: Annie Davidson
Community Support Workers: Stacey Melara, Cassandra Atkins

COUNSELLING AND OUTREACH STAFF

Clinical Manager: Rebekah Humphrey:
Counsellors: Chad Teigen, Peter Kok, Tonya Sonai, Pavan Dhaliwal, Jeremy Crowe, Rossana Garcia
Outreach Staff: Lisa Lewis, Ashley Frederick, Stacey Melara and Michelle Bell

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Board Chair: Rachel Cox, Maureen Doerr
Treasurer: Gayle McConnell
Board Members: Heather Andrews, Patricia Roberts, MaryAnne Galey, Marco Bosjniak, Susan Cran

REPORT FROM TREASURER

As we reflect on the past year, I am pleased to report that the Society's financial health remains strong. Our commitment to providing essential services at the lowest cost possible, while ensuring long-term sustainability for our stakeholders, continues to guide our financial strategies.

We engaged Reid Hurst Nagy Inc. Chartered Professional Accountants for an independent third-party review engagement. The reviewers provided an affirmative report, reinforcing the reliability of our financial statements. Here are some highlights from the past fiscal year:

Financial Infrastructure

- We maintained a robust budget process with strong control systems and detailed account management, ensuring transparency and accountability.

Revenue & Expenses

- Revenue increased by 10% year-over-year, driven primarily by an increase in BC Housing programs and community donations.
- Expenses increased by 8%, largely due to personnel and program delivery costs.

Balanced Budget

- Through prudent financial management, we operated with a nominal surplus, enabling us to reinvest in our programs and maintain financial stability.

Risk Management

- We adhere to risk management best practices, strengthening our financial safeguards and contingency planning.

Cash Balances

- Cash balances remain healthy, supporting operational stability and future projects. This includes prudent reserves maintained for unexpected challenges and strategic funds set aside for future opportunities to address gaps in community services.

Community Impact

- Increased funding has allowed us to expand our services, reaching more individuals in need while maintaining the quality and impact of our programs.

Key Budget Drivers & Considerations

- Personnel Costs: As a service-oriented non-profit, personnel costs represent the largest portion of our budget at 62%.
- Program Delivery: Our programs are designed to maximize impact, requiring specialized staff and resources. We focus on maintaining efficiency while ensuring the effectiveness of our services.

Conclusion

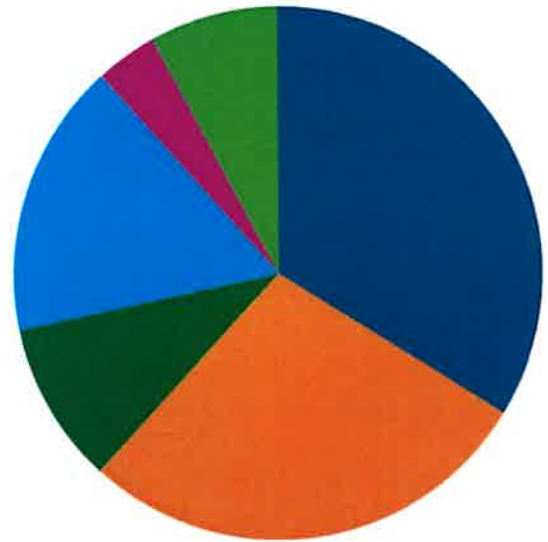
As a Treasurer, I am optimistic about our financial future and our ability to serve our community effectively. Thank you for your continued trust and support, which enables us to fulfill our mission and expand our impact.

Gayle McConnell, CPA, CGA
Treasurer

FINANCIALS IN NUMBERS 2023/2024

REVENUES

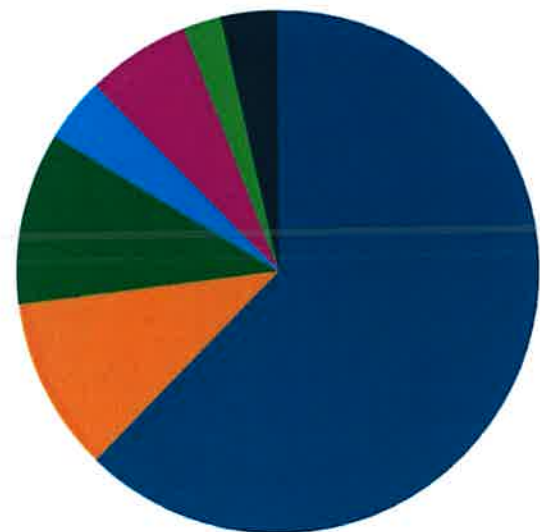
Government Funding	605,734	34%
Program Specific Grants	500,526	28%
Donations & Fundraising	296,011	17%
Educational Partnerships	176,640	10%
Rental & Property Revenue	140,154	8%
Earned Revenue	67,985	4%
TOTAL	1,787,050	100%



■ Government Funding ■ Program Specific Grants ■ Educational Partnerships
 ■ Donations & Fundraising ■ Earned Revenue ■ Rental & Property Revenue

EXPENSES

Personnel Costs	1,050,551	62%
Program & Client Services	180,707	11%
Facilities & Operations	179,757	11%
Depreciation and Financing	108,867	6%
Administrative and Professional Fees	65,952	4%
Transportation	58,276	3%
Marketing and Fundraising	39,422	2%
TOTAL	1,683,532	100%

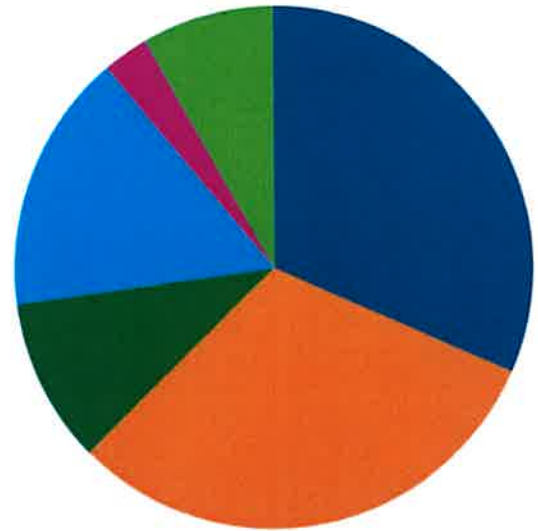


■ Personnel Costs ■ Program & Client Services
 ■ Facilities & Operations ■ Administrative and Professional Fees
 ■ Depreciation and Financing ■ Marketing and Fundraising
 ■ Transportation

FINANCIALS IN NUMBERS 2022/2023

REVENUES

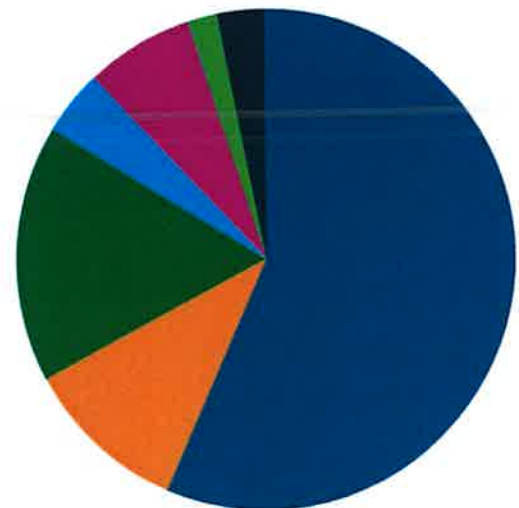
Government Funding	514,382	32%
Program Specific Grants	504,415	31%
Donations & Fundraising	260,405	16%
Educational Partnerships	167,080	10%
Rental & Property Revenue	132,060	8%
Earned Revenue	46,908	3%
TOTAL	1,625,250	100%



■ Government Funding
 ■ Program Specific Grants
 ■ Educational Partnerships
■ Donations & Fundraising
 ■ Earned Revenue
 ■ Rental & Property Revenue

EXPENSES

Personnel Costs	880,100	57%
Facilities & Operations	258,962	17%
Program & Client Services	165,607	11%
Depreciation and Financing	109,329	7%
Administrative and Professional Fees	64,858	4%
Transportation	47,512	3%
Marketing and Fundraising	29,366	2%
TOTAL	1,555,734	100%



■ Personnel Costs
 ■ Program & Client Services
■ Facilities & Operations
 ■ Administrative and Professional Fees
■ Depreciation and Financing
 ■ Marketing and Fundraising
■ Transportation

STRATEGIC PLAN



YEAR IN REVIEW

Fee for Service
Counselling Services
has been established.
Visit
desertsuncounselling.ca
to learn more about this
service and to book an
appointment.

22 programs to
empower people of
all ages to
experience an
enhanced quality of
life.

\$68,000 raised
with our virtual
fundraiser. Thank
you to our
communities!

Partnership with RDOS Area A, C & D and
Town of Oliver and Osoyoos led to the
purchase of a 14-seater bus to help with
the lack of available transportation for
seniors in the South Okanagan.

Alcohol Use Disorder awareness
campaign in partnership with the
Canadian Alcohol Use Disorder Society
and funding from South Okanagan
Community Foundation kicked off
with a very well attended workshop in
the Spring.

CBCHB approved Desert
Sun's request for proposal
to deliver up to a
maximum of 25 BC
Housing benefits - 15 to
women and children
experiencing domestic
violence; 10 to people at
risk of homelessness.

102 patients from the
Primary Care Network
supported to navigate the
medical system and
access resources they
need.

1st Annual Volunteer
Appreciation Lunch



\$99,000 grant from
Red Cross to build and
enhance our
Volunteer Program

We lit our communities
purple to create awareness
about Domestic Violence



Desert Sun
Board
participated in
governance
training.

80 seniors registered with our
Emergency Preparedness Program.
This initiative, with funding from
United Way, ensures their well-being
during times of crisis and
uncertainty.

78 Christmas
hampers provided to
families through
"Share the Spirit"

Elder Abuse Awareness Barbecue
to create awareness of neglect,
violence and abuse of seniors



WHAT WE DO

We facilitate supportive programs to empower people of all ages to experience an enhanced quality of life in their homes, schools and communities. We at Desert Sun focus on the following service areas:

Referral and Advocacy

Community Outreach, assists individuals and families in connecting them with the appropriate services. We provide help with completing income assistance and other legal forms. We advocate on behalf of our clients to relevant agencies and organizations.

Safe Home and Crisis Support

The Women's Crisis Line, provides emotional support to women who struggle with relationship issues and feelings of isolation. We provide information regarding community programs and we make referrals.

Safe Home Program provides food, clothing, shelter, transportation and advocacy to women and children fleeing from intimate partner violence, 24 hours a day, 365 days per year.

Youth Shelter, provides shelter for youth who are fleeing violence or conflict at home and are at risk of homelessness.

Parenting Education & Support/Community Kitchen

The Parent Connection, a place for parent/care givers to meet and share their parenting concerns. The Parent Connection is an interactive participant focused program, which offers a variety of supports for families. We offer: Mother Goose, Nobody's Perfect, Circle of Security, Baby Talk, tips on parenting, nutrition, and budgeting, information on community resources, gently used clothing exchange, car set lending program plus much more.

Parenting Skills Program, this program is facilitated in the Okanagan Correctional Centre to inmates who want to learn more about parenting. The intent is to break the cycle of intergenerational violence and trauma and to give inmates a better understanding of the affect of trauma on the developing brain of a child.

DS Cooks, addresses the physical health and well-being of children and adults by teaching participants about nutritious foods, shopping on a budget and how to prepare food in nutritious ways. Information on preserving and freezing food is taught and pre/post-natal vitamins are available for pregnant and nursing women.

Early Years Program, provides support for parents of children 0-6 years old. This program is an outdoor based program to teach children and families the importance of play, nature and being outside an unplugged from technology. We model positive parenting and provide parenting support. All the learning activities are play-based.

Roots of Empathy (ROE), teaches students emotional literacy by using a mother and a baby in a specific classroom for the duration of the school year. Students become more self-aware and also see their own vulnerability in the vulnerability of the baby. They see empathy in action by watching the bond between a mother and a baby.

WHAT WE DO CONTINUED

Counselling for Women, Children, Youth and Men

Women's Counselling provides individual and group counselling to women over the age of nineteen who have experienced childhood abuse, in adult abusive relationships and/or experiencing sexualized violence.

Women's Circle provides women with a ninety-minute group session once a week. The Women's Circle is a safe place of support for women who are going through difficult times and the circle also provides support to women who are currently on the women's counselling waiting list.

Children & Youth Counselling provides individual and group counselling for children 3-18 years of age, exposed to intense family conflict/transition and/or abuse. Our counsellors also provide in school counselling and support to children and youth of all ages who are facing mental health issues.

Youth Connection -this program provides positive childhood experiences to our at-risk 9-12 year old's through connection with caring adults. This program is an after-school program that was offered at one of our elementary schools this past year.

Community Support Worker: This program is in partnership with Interior Health. Desert Sun provides one CSW to each of the communities in Oliver and Osoyoos to work in local family practices to provide socio-emotional support to patients as part of the new team-based primary care network. The CSW provide outreach support (help with following treatment plans, psychosocial support, stabilizing vulnerable patients), help with completion of forms, assist patients and families with life skills support. The CSW's are the connection between patients in need and the services they need in the community.

Fee for Service: At Desert Sun, we are committed to supporting the mental health and well-being of individuals in our community. The expansion of our services to include Fee for Service Counselling sessions, fills an important gap for individuals who require support that falls outside the parameters of our existing free counselling program. By offering a free consultation call and a range of skilled counsellors, we strive to provide accessible and effective care to all those seeking our services. We invite individuals and couples alike to visit our website and take the first step towards their journey of healing and growth.

It is our aim to positively affect the lives of our community members through preventative programs, parent support, ending violence, promoting healthy relationships, supporting early childhood development and seniors independence.

HOW CAN YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Volunteer: Be the change you want to see!

- Transport clients to vital appointments
- Provide crucial administrative support
- Offer compassionate childcare

Your time changes lives. **Sign up today!**

Fundraise: Turn events into impact!

- Join our dynamic fundraising team
- Organize your own community event
- Spread the word and rally support

Every dollar raised transforms our community. **Get involved now!**

Donate: Your generosity fuels our mission!

- Make a one-time or monthly donation
- Support specific programs close to your heart
- Consider a legacy through Planned Giving

Without you, our programs can't exist. Your support directly improves lives in our community. Don't wait - **donate today!**

Ready to make an impact? Contact us now at 250-498-2538 or visit our website to learn more about how you can change lives in the South Okanagan. (desertsuncounselling.ca)

Together we can build a stronger, more resilient community!



THANK YOU!

We would like to thank the many businesses, private donors and service organizations that donate to our organization. without your support we would not be able to help all of the people reached in this snapshot below.

- Government of Canada
- Province of BC
- Women's Shelter of Canada
- Community Foundation of South Okanagan/Similkameen
- Osoyoos Credit Union
- Valley First, Interior Savings
- Decoda Literacy Solutions
- Town of Osoyoos
- Shoppers Drug Mart
- Royal LePage Shelter Foundation
- BC Gaming, Quilting Guild of Osoyoos and Oliver
- Dorcas Ladies
- Women of Oliver for Women Society
- United Church of Osoyoos
- Roman Catholic Women's League in Oliver

