



ANNUAL REPORT

2021/2022





Executive Director, Marieze Tarr

WHERE WE ARE

Despite another year of social distancing, work from home, virtual meetings and all the other related COVID-19 issues 2021/22 was a successful year for Desert Sun Counselling. We saw huge growth in our program participation and helped more people than ever before.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

Securing funding for the renovation of the main house at Sandalwood. This house has now been converted into a safe home. The South Okanagan is amidst a huge housing crisis, and we are struggling to move women into independent housing after their safe home stays as there is nowhere for the women to live. We can now accommodate up to five women and four children at any given time. Despite this 250% increase in safe home space, we are still housing women in hotel rooms. We are so grateful to our community for their financial support of our organization- this along with extra funding from BC Housing and Women's Shelter of Canada has allowed us to support many more than the five women at any given time.

Our Youth Connection after school program has been another success story. Youth has benefitted so greatly from this program and the results have been so encouraging that this program will be expanding to include both of our elementary schools in Oliver.

"Each morning we are born again, what we do today is what matters most."

-Buddha-

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR CONTINUED

Another successful Fundraiser! Our generous donor, once again, stepped up to the plate and matched every dollar raised up to \$25,000. We are so grateful for his generosity and of course for everyone who donated any amount, big or small, - we raised \$88,000. This extra funding helps us provide extra (free to the community) counselling hours, outreach support to our most vulnerable community members, extra safe home support staff and funding for our Community Kitchen.

Desert Sun is continuing to diversify our programming to meet the ever-changing needs of the communities. We are seeing a huge need in services for our seniors. Never before have we seen so many seniors struggling with food security and affordable housing. We are trying to meet this need through our Therapeutic Activation Program (TAPS), Better at Home Program and our Outreach Program.

We are grateful to our Desert Sun Staff and Board for continuing to go above and beyond every day to help so many vulnerable people and people in need in our communities. Without the dedication, compassion, and empathy from all the Board Members and Staff at Desert Sun none of this would be possible. I would like to thank each and every one of you for what you do in our communities. You are changemakers!

Marieze Tarr



"A truly amazing team is hard to find,
difficult to part with and impossible
to forget"

WHO WE ARE

ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

Executive Director: Marieze Tarr
Executive Assistant: Michelle Bell
Financial Coordinator: Kelly Taylor

PROGRAM COORDINATORS

The Parent Connection/Community
Kitchen/Community Garden: Nancy Aatelma
Early Years: Melissa Graham
Parenting Skills Program Okanagan Correctional
Centre: Nancy Aatelma, Marieze Tarr, Michelle Bell
Roots of Empathy: Brittany von Burg
Affordable Housing: Michelle Bell
Better at Home for Seniors: Brittany Von Burg, Natalie
Gurden, Jill Oakley
Men's Shed: Ariel Ozorco
Computer Tutor: Ariel Ozorco, Donna Morgan
Therapeutic Activation Program for Seniors (TAPS):
Bonnie Dancy, Donna Morgan, Alicia Osland
Youth Connection Program: Brittany von Burg

COUNSELLING AND OUTREACH STAFF

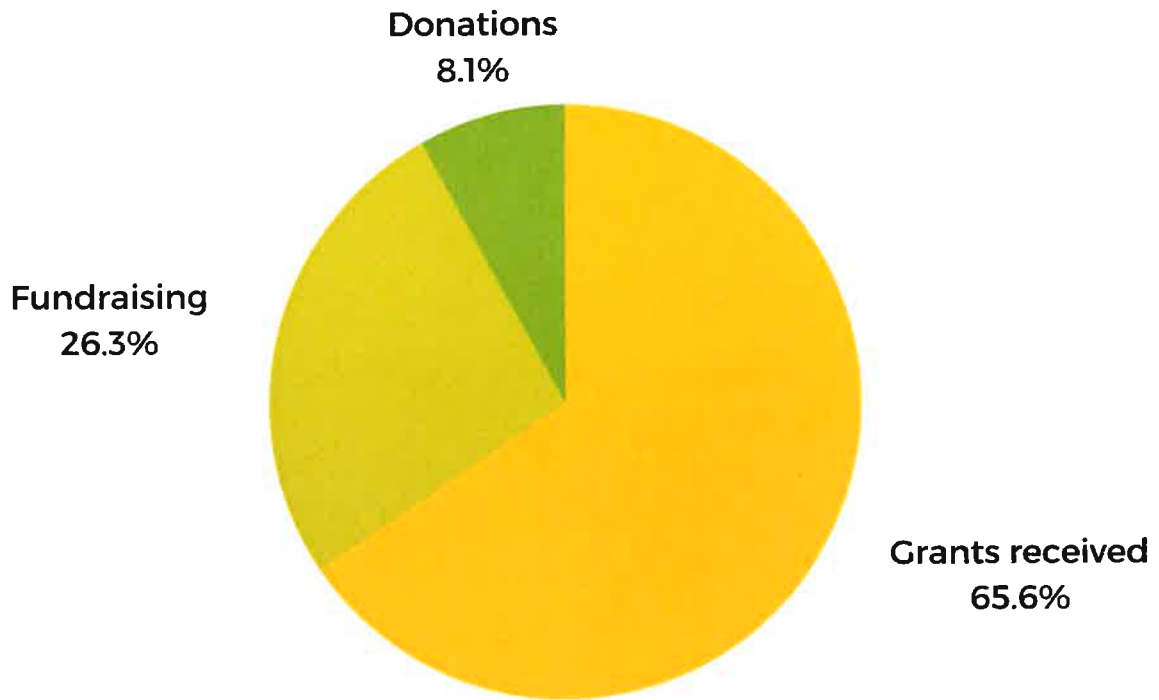
Rebekah Humphrey: Clinical Manager
Chad Teigen, Travis Kehler, Tonya Sonai, Pavan
Dhaliwal, Jeremy Crowe, Lauren Ibaraki, Debbie
Frechette, Nicky Shaw, Rossana Garcia, Lisa Lewis, Tara
Havig, Ashley Frederick and Michelle Bell

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

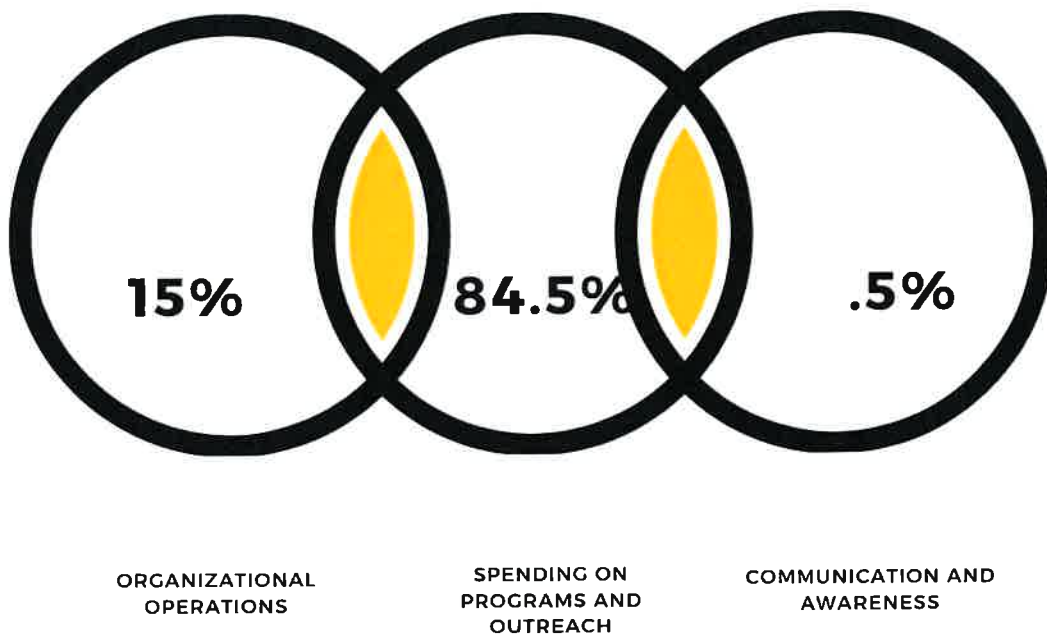
Board Chair: Rod Kitt
Treasurer: Gayle McConnell
Board Members: Heather Andrews, Rachel Cox,
Patricia Roberts, MaryAnne Galey, Kyle Johnson

FINANCIALS AT A GLANCE

Desert Sun Organizational Funding



Desert Sun Organizational Spending



STRATEGIC PLAN



YEAR IN REVIEW

19 Programs to empower people of all ages to experience an enhance quality of life

\$120,000 received from Women's Shelter of Canada for improvements to our safe homes.

\$88,000 raised with our virtual fundraiser. Thank you to our communities!

Over 5,000 meals served to families and seniors in the communities of Osoyoos, Oliver and Ok Falls

35 students had 2127 hours of support and connection in our after school youth connection program.

19 staff participated in Indigenous Cultural Safety Training

78 women received support through our outreach program

24 children participated in our spring break camp with the theme "Sustainable Living" partnership between Men's Shed (seniors) and youth

\$90,000 grant from Women's Shelter for counselling support

Partnership with "Gateway to Trades" where youth built a shed for the safe home to provide extra storage for supplies and equipment

Desert Sun played an integral part in establishing the South Okanagan Situation Table

5,008 people were referred and advocated for by our Desert Sun Office

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

19 programs to enhance the quality of life

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:

- Community Outreach: Referral and Advocacy
- Shelter and Crisis support for women and children leaving intimate partner violence and women at risk of homelessness.
- Parenting Education and Support, a Community Kitchen, one on one parenting support to at-risk parents, and the Parenting Skills program at the Okanagan Correctional Centre.
- Early Years Program
- Counselling for Women, Children & Youth, and Men
- Affordable Housing
- Support for Seniors wishing to maintain their independence at home (Better at Home)
- Men's Shed (access to the shed was limited due to COVID-19 restrictions).
- Therapeutic Activation Program for Seniors (TAPS), a program to address loneliness in seniors.
- Fearlessly Facing Forward Camp (did not run in 2021/22 due to COVID-19)
- Summer Youth Drop-In Centre (were not offered during 2021/22 due to COVID-19)
- Youth Shelter
- Youth Connection Program

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.

WHAT WE DO CONT'D

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 provide 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. This program was offered virtually due to COVID-19 restrictions.

WHAT WE DO CONT'D

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. This program was not offered last year due to COVID-19 restrictions.

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 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. This program was offered in a limited way due to COVID-19.

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.

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HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Volunteer

We need volunteers to transport clients to and from appointments, volunteer administrative support and volunteer childcare.

Fundraisers

We always need help with our fundraising events and then of course we always appreciate your financial support!

Donations

We rely on the generosity of our communities and grants to offer the programs necessary to increase the quality of life for our community members. Without your support and our fundraising efforts, we will not be able to offer the many programs that we do. For your convenience, we have also added **Planned Giving** in the form of a direct bequest in your will. For more information or to request a package please contact our office at 250-498-2538.



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 and the Roman Catholic Women's League in Oliver are some of the organizations that donated to our organization in 2021/22.

