

Letter from the Director

And what a year it was! With 2020 in the books and 2021 already in full swing, I'd like to take a moment to look back on the last 12 months and lessons learned.

For myself and the clubhouse, 2020 was characterized by unprecedented challenges brought on by COVID-19. Never would I have imagined that just one week after starting at Connections Place, I would have to close our doors for 3 months and reimagine what was possible for this agency.

And, although we struggled, we rose up to safely meet the needs of our clubhouse community. Ultimately, 'disrupting isolation and staying connected' became our focus and what mattered most to our members.

So, as we look to the future with hope, please remember it will be the support that we give and get from one another that will make the difference this year. It's what matters most.



Chris Forester, ED



Reflecting on 2020

Some stats for 2020:

- ◇ We served 422 breakfasts and 1,638 lunches
- ◇ We had 1,930 visits from our membership
- ◇ We gave 75 tours to prospective members

Some of the highlights of the 2020 winter season include:

- ◇ Christmas-themed Pictionary and singing Christmas carols over Zoom
- ◇ A delicious turkey lunch cooked by our 'head chef' Louise
- ◇ Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve brunches
- ◇ Paris Roka Candy donating delicious goody bags with their famous almond roka for our members

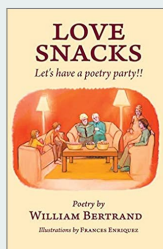


Just for Laughs

- ◇ What do you call a wolf that meditates? An *aware wolf*.
- ◇ What do you call a snowman with a six pack? An *abdominal snowman*.
- ◇ Time flies like an arrow. Fruit flies like a banana.

Staff Picks & Tips

- ◇ **TV Series:** *Bridgerton* (period drama), *Schitt's Creek* (sitcom)
- ◇ **Movies:** *Soul* (animated comedy-drama), *Mulan* (live-action action-drama)
- ◇ **TED Talks:** "*I'm fine*" — *Learning to Live With Depression* (Jake Tyler), *The Need for Human Connections and Why It Starts With Ourselves* (Molly Carroll)
- ◇ **Books:** *Love Snacks* by William Bertrand (poetry book by our recently published member!), *A Hope More Powerful than the Sea* (non-fiction refugee story by Melissa Leming)



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Artists' Corner

Roses and Sunshine

By William A. J. Bertrand

Roses and sunshine
 Rise up from your bed
 Wake up little sparrows
 It's almost breakfast time
 Wake up, wake up
 It's time to meet new friends
 Wake up, wake up
 The journey never ends

Father in heaven
 Loves little children
 Jesus our brother
 Bless little boys and girls
 Wake up, Wake up
 It's time to meet new friends
 Wake up, wake up
 The journey never ends

Roses and tulips
 Daffodils and daisies
 You are my people
 My treasure and joy
 Pray to our Father
 Be safe for a new day
 Help out at church
 Listen to God's voice

Wake up, wake up
 It's time to meet new friends
 Wake up, wake up
 The journey never ends

All day long you watch over me
 Never once did you scold me
 Tenderly you do nourish me
 You are a very good mother

Bitter Cold

Janai Breffitt



I hunger for it.
 Saliva collects at the corners of my mouth,
 as I reach between branches of the apple tree.
 I ate only the rotten half before,
 and now my gaze meets the red and ripe,
 sweet nectar nearly bursting beneath its skin.

The words shot from their jaws,
 tongues pulling back bowstrings through their lips.
 Arrows into a fawn,
 just learning to dance among the trees.
 It gathers itself up,
 like we do wood before winter,
 if we were children-
 stumbling, struggling-
 to keep the bundle in our arms.
 It limps away along the crunch of frost laden leaves,
 copper stench filling the undergrowth
 of the forest path it treads
 and hides amongst now.

Yes, I know I walked away.
 But do the leaves not fall from the trees
 when it grows cold?
 Does the fruit not fall to rot or burn
 on the woodland floor
 when the sun takes its turn
 to beat and to bruise?



Check out our private Facebook group for members:

Connections Place Private Members Group

From the Kitchen



Homemade gingerbread cookies.



Turkey lunch complete with stuffing and gravy!



Thank you Boston Pizza for providing lunch at our monthly birthday bash!

Book Review: *My Grandfather's Blessings*

By Kevin Dobbs

This review is for *My Grandfather's Blessing* by Dr. Rachel Naomi Remen. The author is a cancer physician and clinical counsellor who specializes in mind-body imagery.

Sprinkled into these vignettes are insights and wisdom by Dr. Remen's grandfather who, prior to his death, was an Orthodox Jewish Rabbi.

I personally found this book to be inspirational, reinforcing, and heartwarming.

Inspirational from the viewpoint of thinking that it is possible to achieve great healing experiences during the course of one's lifetime.

Reinforcing because I could relate on a personal level to some of these healing stories, as I have had similar experiences.

And heartwarming as this book is full of real life healing vignettes that speak to the potential triumph of the human soul and spirit over what can be, at times, great human suffering and pain.

Current Programming



Lunch/Coffee at the Clubhouse — 12pm Monday to Friday

The clubhouse is providing a \$2 healthy bagged lunch that can either be eaten on site or taken home. Space is limited to 7 members on site, so as to ensure for adequate physical distancing, with an additional 7 spaces for pick-up. Please call the clubhouse to book your lunch!



Community Walks — 2pm Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays

Let's enjoy some exercise and fresh air together! Space is limited to 3 members and 1 staff so we can practice safe social distancing. Please call the clubhouse to book.

- ◇ Mondays — Macaulay Point (meet in the parking lot)
- ◇ Wednesdays — Cedar Hill Golf Course (meet in the parking lot off of North Dairy Road)
- ◇ Fridays — Breakwater (meet in front of the café)



Virtual Wellness Check-In — 2pm Tuesdays

Connect with your clubhouse friends from the comfort of your home! Members are invited to check-in about how they're doing in a safe and supportive environment. See our website calendar for details on how to connect using the Zoom app or your phone.



Virtual Music Group — 2pm Thursdays

Join us as we explore and enjoy music together, whether it be through YouTube or learning to play ukulele together! Members of all musical backgrounds and levels are welcome. See our website calendar for details on how to connect using the Zoom app or your phone.



In the News

Connections Place was featured in the CHEK News Vital People feature in early December.

Local business owner Marian Paris of Paris Roka

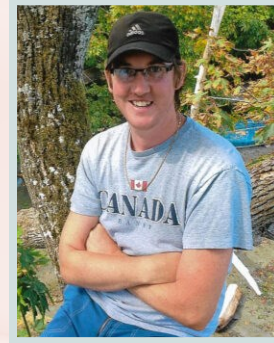
Candy helped us kick off our season of giving by offering to match \$2,500 in donations with the goal of raising \$5,000 in support of mental health services and programs at Connections Place (and that goal was met!).

Marian believes strongly in the work being done at the Connections Place Society Clubhouse. In her words: "Our candy fundraising, in memory of my son Daniel (1986–2013), has been devoted to supporting this new clubhouse — a place of hope and belonging."

A huge thank you to Marian Paris and CHEK news!

In Loving Memory of Josh

In November we lost a wonderful member, and friend, of the clubhouse — Josh D'Lorge. Our heartfelt condolences go out to his family and friends. Josh will be deeply missed and fondly remembered as a kind soul who shared his passions around writing, music, and art at the clubhouse.



Welcome to the Team!

Zoë Pitt Program Staff, Membership Unit



Hello! For those of you who I have not had the pleasure of meeting yet, my name is Zoë! Throughout the Clubhouse's winter shutdown, I have been focusing my efforts into outreach. This has been a wonderful opportunity as a newer staff member to get to know many members! Increased outreach has meant making plenty of phone calls, emails and going into the community to meet with members for a coffee or a walk. If you would like to meet for a community visit, please contact the Clubhouse or email me directly at zoe.pitt@connectionsplace.org. I would love to meet with you!

Gavin Meek Reach-Out & Development Coordinator



Gavin graduated from the University of Victoria with a Bachelor of Commerce, specializing in Entrepreneurship. Gavin has a passion for sustainability. After working for various organizations in Victoria and Greater Vancouver, he's developed an appreciation for the outdoors and everything beautiful British Columbia has to offer. As a longstanding Victorian (and 10th-generation Vancouver Islander), Gavin is eager to find fulfilment in his work and make a positive, lasting impact on the community. He is very excited to apply his business background to the mission and work with an exciting team at Connections Place.

