



Lookout  
Emergency  
Aid Society

Solutions  
Outcomes



# Lookout Society

2014-2015 ANNUAL REPORT

# Lookout Society

## Solutions Outcomes



### MANDATE

We are a “social safety-net” that provides housing and a range of support services to adults with low or no income who have few, if any, housing or support options. Because they have challenges in meeting needs and goals, we place minimal barriers between them and our services.



### VISION

To help transform the lives of people with few, if any, housing options. To go beyond traditional solutions to homelessness by fostering growth and change, providing innovative services and building collaborative partnerships.

### BELIEF

We believe helping people help themselves is essential in addressing homelessness and all the issues that surround it. Securing appropriate housing is the first and most essential step in helping individuals achieve responsible independence.



*These small murals can be found outside the LivingRoom Drop-in Centre.*



Tom  
Roberts

Board Chair

**T**his has been a year of remarkable and exciting change for the Lookout Society. First we welcomed our new Executive Director Shayne Williams, a dynamic leader with extensive experience and passion for working with the most vulnerable people in our community.

Then, five months later, Lookout merged with Keys: Housing & Health Solutions – an achievement that extended Lookout’s housing strategies and expertise to Surrey, a community on the verge of creating its own purpose-built shelter and housing centre. Similarly, Keys introduced Lookout to innovative health and housing services, like the low-cost dental clinic, sober living opportunities and a community farm.

The merger was the result of exploration and intense conversations at the board level. This dialogue opened the possibility to other opportunities such as Dovercourt, a 110-year-old former hotel in Lynn Valley where Lookout now offers low-cost sober living for 20 individuals.

The board realizes Lookout needs to diversify, not only its programs but also its sources of funding. Most of Lookout programs rely heavily on our important partners BC Housing, Vancouver Coastal Health Authority and Fraser Health Authority. However, stricter controls being placed on government funding means Lookout must seek additional sources of income and innovative partnerships.

To this end, the board agreed to continue the relationship established between Keys and the newly-branded Lookout Foundation to support our services, most notably through fundraising.

To move Lookout forward we needed a plan. Through two workshops, directors of the newly merged boards identified Lookout strengths we can build on and challenges we will address.

The result was Lookout’s first ever public Strategic Plan that we launched on April 30. This plan will guide us for the next three to five years and is built upon the original foundation forged by the Lookout Society.

I applaud my fellow board members who identified six prime goals and related actions. I also thank the Lookout leadership team, all the staff and clients who offered suggestions and ideas.

I am sure they will recognize their voices within the plan.

After a year of remarkable firsts, we look forward to a somewhat calmer time. That way the merged board, leadership team and staff can focus on what Lookout does best: serve those who are most vulnerable.

With our additional programs, housing opportunities and one more community to serve, the Lookout Society is set to make a greater impact in the lives of people in need.



“Without help from everyone at Lookout I would probably still be sleeping in some doorway or worse.”





Shayne  
Williams  
Executive  
Director

**I**t's hard to believe a full year has transpired since I began as the Lookout Society's Executive Director. I would be remiss if I didn't say thank you to the entire society for making me feel instantly welcome.

One of my first assignments was working 30 shifts with frontline staff in our various programs. Each shift was an experience I won't forget and a perfect way to learn about Lookout, our services and amazing people.

I can attest that we have a solid foundation of client-centered services in all five of our communities – Vancouver, the North Shore, New Westminister, Surrey and Burnaby. The wealth of knowledge, compassion and ideas that staff shared with me is an inspiration and I plan to periodically work frontline shifts.

We officially merged with Surrey-based Keys: Housing and Health Solutions Dec. 1, expanding Lookout both regionally and creatively. It is a great match with a shared vision and services that complement the other, making the entire organization stronger. My hat goes off to the executive team who faced the challenge of combining two administrative systems, amalgamating two staff and unifying our programs. Congratulations.

Another major accomplishment is the creation and release of the Lookout Society's new Strategic Plan at the end of April.

The Board of Directors knew we needed a plan to guide future decisions. Rather than rest on our strengths, refine current challenges and maintain the status quo, the board has a larger vision. It is their longterm plan that we should extend our expertise and passion to serve more individuals with a diverse range of services within more communities.

I am proud of this plan and its six goals that boost effectiveness through collaborative approaches with partners, enhance opportunities for a diversified and skilled staff, and expand our capabilities internally and externally.

In keeping with these goals, Lookout opened Dovercourt, a 20-room residence in Lynn Valley that offers low-cost sober living in a community desperately short of affordable housing. Also we are part of two pilot projects in Maple Ridge and Langley, involving our outreach team and harm reduction. In addition, we are in the midst of the Imagine Canada and COA (Council on Accreditation) accreditation processes.

Surrey is the fastest growing community in Canada with a population soon to exceed Vancouver's. Yet homeless services lag far behind – just one of many underserved communities in our region.

At the same time, the provincial and federal governments are pushing for a Housing First approach – one where people are housed first and then client-driven supports enable them to move forward. These are precisely the types of services Lookout excels at providing.

I thank the Board for their commitment, insightfulness, willingness to make big decisions, patience and guidance as we work through major transitions. At the forefront throughout, Lookout's objective is always the people we serve.

## Strategic plan goals

- Strengthen program effectiveness
- Increase capacity and versatility
- Grow a positive culture
- Expand communication
- Enhance community profile
- Boost board governance and accountability



## Solutions: housing that fits

Over the years Matt has worn out his back and his knees, like many of life's chances that have come his way and then slipped away.

Matt's debilitated joints mean he can no longer work in construction, his livelihood when he wasn't on a bender mixed with heroin, "good times and partying."

The opportunities he squandered in the past now translate into fewer choices for Matt as a 45-year-old with little education.

Despite all of this, Matt has made his most important decision – one he realizes should have been made years ago.

Matt, more than ever, wants to be the best father he can for his eight-year-old daughter. Today he is focused on sobriety and a career, although he's not sure what that will be.

"She's pretty important to me and one day I would like to support her. So things need to change," he says.

After being sober for three months, he moved into Dovercourt – one of the first tenants in the Lookout Society operated building. The 110-year-old former hotel in Lynn Valley offers 20 men affordable and sober living as they transition into responsible and independent living.

"It seems a good place to be. I want to stay here as long as I can so I'm ready to move on," says Matt.

Dovercourt opened in April and offers a range of housing for the people Lookout serves as they transition out of homelessness. One size does not fit all, says Shayne Williams, the society's executive director.

It's not just a greater continuum of housing that's needed. In order for people to get into the workforce, the Lookout Society is creating

programs for people to build employment skills.

On the North Shore, the HAVE Culinary Training Society has partnered with Lookout and operates the North Shore Shelter kitchen.

Clients are taught culinary skills that helps them find employment in the hospitality industry. Many are hired days after graduating.

This summer another social enterprise will begin moving clients into jobs. A moving business will operate out of the North Shore Shelter, with clients taught important work skills and resume writing. The social enterprise has already purchased a moving van, thanks to a grant from Hockey Helps the Homeless, and customers are lined up.

The HAVE Café, which wants to expand into the catering business, will use the social enterprise for food delivery – increasing HAVE's business and ability to train more Lookout clients. The City of North Vancouver and Mills Basics are other customers.

Cycleback, which teaches people to be bicycle mechanics, and I's on the Street, a micro-cleaning social enterprise, are a few of the other work training programs Lookout has been involved with.

Lookout's commitment to a range of housing and building employment skills helps solve another problem. The society's shelters are typically full and there are long waiting lists for transitional and supportive housing. More housing and employment programs result in better flow through rates, allowing people to move from homelessness to independent living smoother and quicker.

Just like Matt, who envisions having his own place and a job.

"I've lived homeless and in addiction so I would like to be able to help those going through it," he says. "Maybe with Lookout after I get training."



# Programs: for body and soul

“**N**ow I’m building my life... finally, happily. I like the direction my life is taking.”

With these words Lynn describes her new world that began when she moved into Julian House in Surrey just months ago. “I’m like the kid at Christmas time every morning when I wake up. I feel like that all day,” she says.

For Lynn, hope is taking root.

Hope and dreams have been a rarity for her. Instead, she was more familiar with homelessness, addiction, abuse and violence and poor health.

Julian House gives Lynn stability, an affordable place to live and services she needs. Operated by the Lookout Society, the house provides six independent units for individuals with compromised immune systems.

Located on the second floor of the Lookout’s Health Services Building on 135A Street in Surrey, tenants rely on various programs found downstairs. They include the Djaef Mahler high protein food bank, the low cost dental clinic, the Surrey North Community Health Centre, the Positive Haven support lounge for individuals and families living with Hep C and HIV/AIDS.

Lynn also attends OWL (Other Women’s Lives) meetings for women experiencing homelessness, poverty, addiction or suffering from abuse.

Surrey North Community Health Centre numbers:

 **5,279**  
Health clinic contacts

 **2,024**  
Dental clinic contacts

She has become a peer-to-peer counselor with OWL and gives back to others living the lifestyle she survived. Lynn also passes on her experience and supports people at the Lookout Society’s 24-hour Front Room Resource Centre and those living on the street.

“I haven’t had this much confidence in a longtime. It just feels really good to help out and be asked for advice,” she says.

“Living here, being in Positive Haven and having all of this makes me want to give back. Because a lot of people here have given me a lot.”

What’s so important to Lynn embracing her new life is housing and programs that serve her body and soul.

Community-based solutions, innovative and client-driven programs and services and an expanded continuum of housing are priorities set out in the society’s recently unveiled long-term strategic plan.

“My old life was killing me and it was just survival,” Lynn says. “I am so much better off than I have been for a long time.”



# Outcomes: need to give back

**F**aith is something Cordelia found in herself. Now she intends to pass it on to other vulnerable women staying in Lookout Society shelters and housing.

Her faith is Freedom, Acceptance, Intuition, Trusting and Health. In the past they empowered Cordelia and helped her overcome adversity. Most recently she needed these virtues to her create and guide the non-profit FAITH Wellness, which will do the same for other women who have been homeless.

Cordelia got the idea for FAITH while staying at the Lookout Society's Yukon Shelter and Transitional Housing Centre. However, it took a few years and overcoming several obstacles for her realize it.

In 2010 Cordelia and her sister suddenly found themselves homeless. They had been living together with her sister's boyfriend, who began physically abusing the sister. After one abusive incident, the two were literally left on the side of the road by the boyfriend.

Cordelia ended up at the Yukon while her sister found a place to stay on the North Shore.

"When I first arrived there I was very fearful of everything. I'm a shy person to begin with but when I first got there I didn't speak to anyone," says Cordelia.

Having been brought up in a well-off family, she was also "shocked" by the homeless lifestyle. Her confidence dwindled and she found herself caught up in the drug culture in order to cope.

It was a brief period in her life.

"I stopped right away because I didn't want to live that way," she says.

The experience, however short-lived, helped her understand more about herself and the person she wanted to be.

Her self-awareness grew more while attending women's programs with the Raven Song Community Health Centre near the Yukon Housing Centre.

Cordelia, who was already active on the tenant advisory committee, started her own women's support group at the Yukon. For the first meetings no one attended. Eventually more and more women began showing up for the weekly meetings.

These days the meetings are full, even though Cordelia has moved from the Yukon to her own place in a BC Housing building.

That's where faith comes in. Cordelia's non-profit will keep the women's support group at the Yukon running. She's also started one at Lookout Society's Sakura So Residence and plans to bring the program to more Lookout buildings as her non-profit expands.

Cordelia is in the midst of applying for non-profit charity status and has already received a \$1,000 grant from the Vancouver Foundation.

"What I would like to see is these women living a healthy lifestyle. I want them to take their lives back and give them the freedom they deserve," she says.

"Cordelia's story is an an example of how safe and stable housing with the right supports can help people move on with their lives," says Shayne Williams, executive director of the Lookout Society.

"In many ways she represents the changing face of homelessness, people who find themselves with nowhere to live because of poverty, a housing crisis and abuse," says Shayne.

"Cordelia also tells us that lifestyle, skills and work-related programs are essential to helping people move forward. That's great to hear because we are committed to these kinds of programs and giving our shelter guests and tenants opportunities to grow."



Lookout Society outreach worker Dave speaks with a man in a Vancouver alley. Lookout has outreach workers in every community it serves.

# Outreach: when people fall

**W**hen people fall through the cracks, Lookout Society outreach workers are often be their first source of assistance and, hopefully, the moment when their situation begins to improve.

That was certainly the case with Larisa.

Today the New Westminister resident lives in an apartment but recently she found herself homeless for the first time in her life.

“I’ve worked all of my life. I’m very independent and don’t need much help,” says Larisa, describing the lead up to her homeless situation.

That all changed when a back injury forced her to take a leave from work. She qualified for government assistance but payments were delayed for months. As a result, Larisa was unable to pay the rent and buy food. Then her landlord evicted her with short notice and suddenly she found herself homeless.

“I didn’t have food. Before I would judge people who did not have food and say, ‘So why do you not go to work.’” says Larisa, who immigrated to Canada after surviving four years of war in her native Bosnia.

The stress of being homeless took an emotional toll on Larisa. She began suffering from the symptoms of post-traumatic stress syndrome, the result of seeing war close up a decade earlier in Bosnia

Larisa says she’d still be couch surfing or living on the streets if she hadn’t walked by the Lookout Society’s Russell Housing Centre, come in looking for food and met outreach worker Michelle.

“She is my angel. My life became better when I met her,” she says.

Michelle, using her knowledge of community resources, connected her with Burnaby’s Progressive Housing Society, which supported her with affordable housing and a rent supplement. Larisa also got food and help with receiving her overdue government payments.

Michelle’s outreach assistance also included lending an ear to Larisa, who was depressed, distraught and suicidal.

“Outreach is so important because it really saves lives,” explains Michelle. “We take people from crisis to resolution.”

Despite the important work they do, there’s a need for more outreach workers in almost every Metro Vancouver city.

“People are staying homeless longer because we don’t have the resources to help them,” says Michelle. “And that’s making more people suicidal, depressed and vulnerable.”

Lookout Society outreach workers understand it’s important to get people off the streets quickly. There’s research that supports their concerns.

Addictions and mental and physical health problems, both existing and emerging, worsen the longer an individual stays homeless. The risk also increases the chances of being a victim of crime, sexual exploitation and trauma, according to findings in the 2013 report *The State of Homeless in Canada*.

Larisa, who was homeless for just a short time, has first-hand understanding of how homelessness can adversely affect individuals. She was better off than many during her homeless episode, thanks to a friend who let her let her sleep on her couch.

“It was very stressful not knowing if I would eat or where I would sleep. I could not tell what the future would bring,” she says. “I could not have stayed homeless for much longer.”



# Lookout Society's year of **Highlights**



Charity Intelligence, Canada's information source on charities, gives the Lookout Society a **AAAA rating** for its sound fiscal management and commitment to accountability and transparency.

The Dundarave Festival of Lights raises more than **\$33,000** for the Lookout Society. Funds raised go towards services and programs at the North Shore Shelter.



The Lookout Society goes all out at Christmas time, handing out stockings and gifts to **1,600** shelter guests and tenants.



Shayne Williams becomes just the **2nd** executive director in the Lookout Society's **43-year** history, replacing Karen O'Shannacery.



H'Arts for the Homeless gala at the Imperial in Vancouver draws top entertainers and generates **funds to furnish** the newly-completed Sakura So Residence.

The Lookout Society volunteers and staff sell **785** Raising the Roof toques at SkyTrain stations, New Westminster City Hall and throughout our communities.



Lookout introduces a **3-year** strategic plan to guide the society into the future.

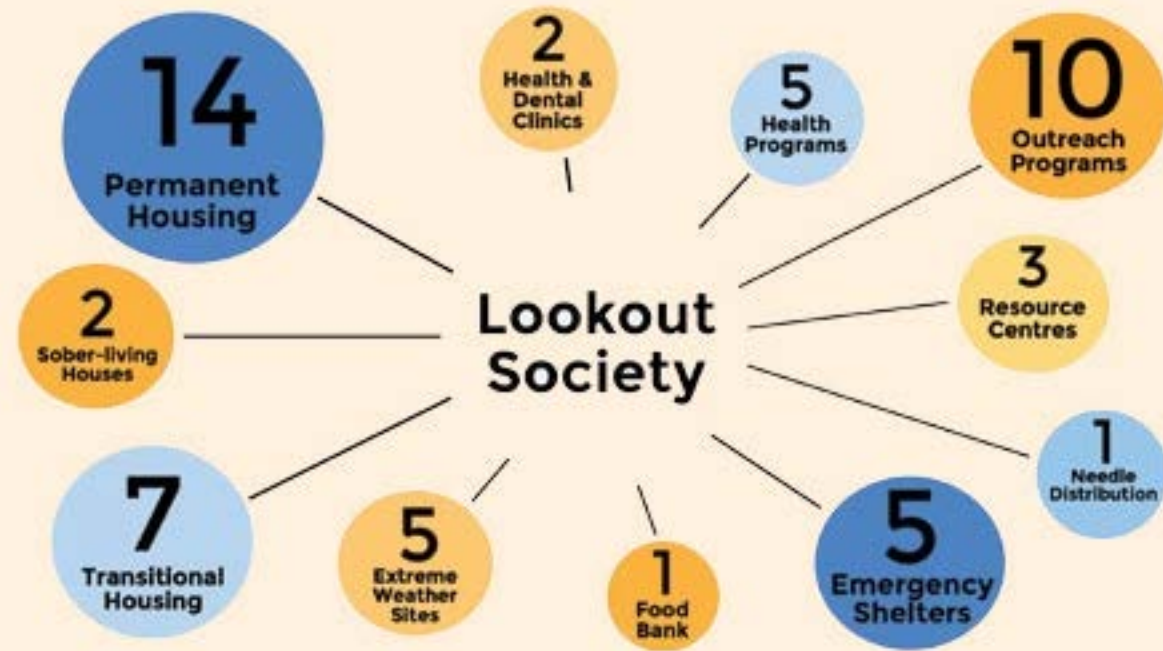
The plan creates a map that allows the society to continue to expand its services and serve more vulnerable people.



Work gets underway on the Lookout's farm on Barnston Island. In addition to growing vegetables, the farm has beef cows. Much of the food goes to the Djaef Mahler **high protein food bank** in Surrey for individuals with immune deficiencies.

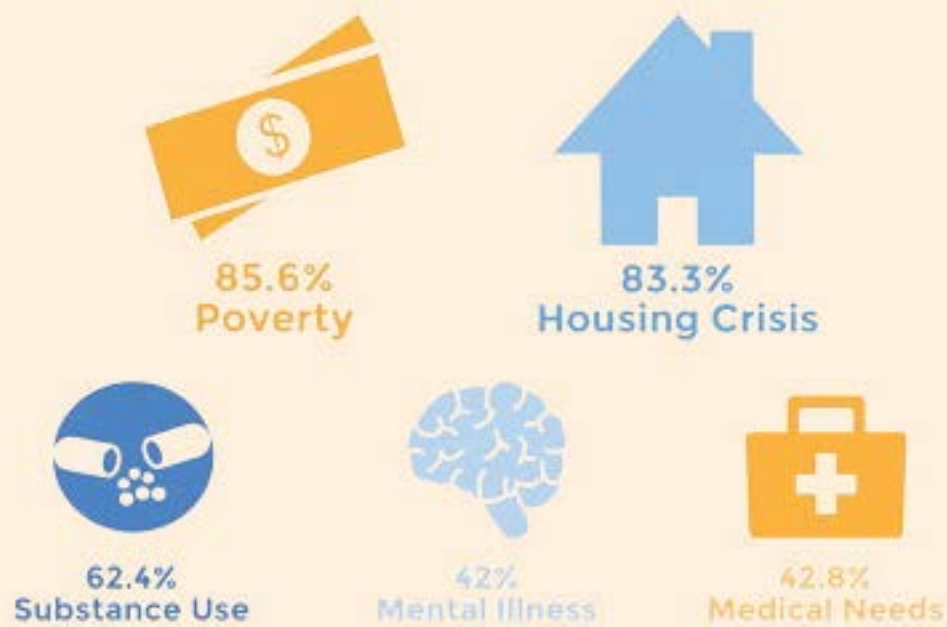
Dovercourt, a **20-unit residence**, opens in Lynn Valley and provides sober affordable living. The former hotel allows Lookout to offer a greater continuum of housing.

# Lookout Society by the numbers



The Lookout Society houses **1,117** people and operates **22** buildings and **5** extreme weather shelters. We serve thousands more people through the **52** programs we provide.

Based on intake interviews with our shelter guests, the top **5** contributors leading to homelessness:



Meals served at the Front Room and the LivingRoom resource centres:



Meals served at Lookout Society's **5** shelters:



Lookout's **1,117** housing units within our continuum of housing:



Our five emergency shelters were forced to turn away people **20,688** times because they were full.



# Donor Honour Roll

The Lookout Society would like to express special appreciation to the following individuals, businesses and organizations.

ALPRO Aluminum	H.Y. Louie Company Ltd.	Nina Leemhuis
AMD Consulting Services	Hannah-Rachel Production	North Shore Masters & Wardens
Bon Voyage Travel & Cruise	Harley Rothstein	Northwood Church
Brenda Hogg	Hollyburn Country Club	Orbis Investments (Canada) Ltd.
Bridge to Faith	HSBC Bank Canada	Rick Diamond
Brock Dorwant	ICBC	Roderick Swenson
Bruce Brown	Ieva Wool	Royal Bank of Canada
Canadian Mattress Recycling	Jenny Westwood	Royal Canadian Legion
Canadian Psychological Assc.	John Bingham SR	North Vancouver School District
C. Neil Smith	John Cameron	Sheila Hughes
Cassidy & Company Barristers	Jonathan & Tara Meadows	St. Cuthberts Anglican Church
Catalina Dina	Judy Taylor	St. Andrew's-Newton Presbyterian Church
Catherine Nakagawa	Kathryn Neilson	Starbucks-Surrey
Clara Hartree	Kenneth Volkenant	Susan Yurkovich
Craig Newsholme	Korean Youth	Telus Corporation
Deborah Stephan	Losbeans Trading Company Ltd.	The Shivyog Group
Don Vicic	Lunny Atmore Management Corp.	The Surrey Firefighters Assc.
Elaine Shepherd	Margaret & John Newton	Urban Barn Ltd.
Fluor Canada Ltd.	Marilyn R Hintz	Vancity
Forum Equity Partners Mgmt Inc.	Maryse Lalonde	Vancouver Odd Fellows Lodge
Garden Protein International	Master Cleanse Productions Inc.	VPG Realty Inc.
Gary A Paike	Mike Dussault	West Vancouver Fire Fighters
Goodwill Show Productions	Miles Industries Ltd.	West Vancouver Optometry Clinic
Guildford-Surrey Lions	Mohanad Khaleel	West Vancouver United Church
Graham Lawrey	Mount Oliver Lutheran Church	Yyoung Wellbeing
Gwil Crane Service Division	Najwan Stephan Tozy	

\* There are many other wonderful donors not included on this list because of space restrictions. Without their support we would not be able to offer the supplies, services and enhancements that have a profound benefit to the people we serve.

## Special Thanks to:

Active Fire	GBL Architects Inc.	Nester's Market
Choices Market	Guru Nanak Sikh Temple	Raising the Roof
Coast Capital Savings	Harper Grey LLP	Red Ribbons for Life
Crowe Mackay	Hockey Helps the Homeless	Warren J.A. Mitchell
Darwin Construction	Kindred Construction	We Love Van Water Inc.
Delview Construction	Launching Pad	Whole Foods Market
Dundarave Festival of Lights	Matra Construction	
Empire of the Peace Arch Assoc	Maxwell Floors	

\* Special thanks to the hundreds of individuals who dropped off sleeping bags, blankets and warm clothing during the winter. Also, thanks to those who have dropped off furniture for our clients and tenants moving into their own homes.



**4,676**

Number of  
Lookout Society  
Volunteers



**48,107**  
Total Volunteer Hours



**Lookout Emergency Aid Society**  
Established 1972

429 Alexander Street  
Vancouver, B.C.,  
V6A 1C6  
[www.lookoutsociety.ca](http://www.lookoutsociety.ca)

## Senior Staff



**Shayne Williams**  
Executive Director



**Leonard Levy**  
Director of  
Administration



**Darin Froese**  
Director of  
Operations



**Leo Lu**  
Director of  
Financial Services



**Jodi Sturge**  
Director  
of Human  
Resources



**Wes Everaars**  
Director of  
Development



**Megan Kriger**  
Director  
of Quality  
Improvement

The Lookout Emergency Aid Society's sound fiscal management practices and commitment to accountability and transparency earned it a 4-star rating from Charity Intelligence, Canada's independent charity evaluator.



## Board of Directors



**Tom Roberts**  
Board President



**Terry Brock**  
Director



**Georges Maltais**  
Honourary  
Vice-Chair



**Janet Currie**  
Director



**Dan Steinberg**  
Director



**Baird Blackstone**  
Vice-Chair



**John Dyer**  
Director



**Alita Stoelers**  
Director



**Annie Storey**  
Treasurer



**Luke Johnson**  
Director



**Jindra Casperson**  
Director