

ANKORS Executive Director's AGM Report for June 28th, 2021



This is our second year of hosting our AGM in a pandemic! Since March of 2020 when the COVID 19 health emergency was announced ANKORS staff, peers, volunteers and community partners have responded to the emergent needs of those living with and at risk for HIV, HCV, people who use drugs and those vulnerable to homelessness and housing insecurity. It has not been an easy time as the pandemic created a worsening situation for the overdose crisis and we have all endured a great deal of loss, crisis and challenges. Yet, ANKORS has maintained its grassroots values and approach to social justice and has wrapped a great deal of support around people who would otherwise have not been provided with the crucial harm reduction services needed during this time. I can't say enough about the responsiveness of the team to providing compassionate care and services to those so desperately needing support during these times. You are all true warriors who respond to complex situations with compassion, creativity, innovation, ethics and teamwork.

As an organization we have also strengthened our commitment to taking action on racism; the decriminalization of drugs; access to safe drug supply; addressing homelessness; gender violence and homophobia. We are committed to be action oriented and aligning with our Indigenous community partners on Indigenous rights. We are committed to combating racism and

discrimination and are working to become better informed; more inclusive and more action-oriented in addressing systemic violence and oppression. I know that many of you have aligned with ANKORS as employees and volunteers because you have a deep personal commitment to social justice and we all hold each other accountable in bringing our best selves to this work and growing personally and professionally to meet the challenges.

ANKORS has always benefited from the courage and dedication of staff, board, peer leaders volunteers and community partnerships. This past year, we experienced some staff changes with two retirements (Gary and Serge); some staff who left for work and life in other communities (Joe and Jasmin) and Chloe and Laura who found some exciting new opportunities in Primary Care and Interior Health Harm Reduction Leadership. We also welcomed new staff (Amelia, Katia, Jen, Kalin, Chris, Connor, Tiffany, Lisa, Matt, Brooklyn, Meagan, Joel, Leanne) and we are excited to work with our new team members who are bringing some great energy and skills to the table.

I also want to recognize the amazing work of David who has managed the front of house at ANKORS West during this challenging time. David has done a great deal of work to get the office in top shape and to introduce the nutrition and hydration program. Polly has also done a great job of supporting the team and the work in the East Kootenays. Each one of you has contributed in so many incredible ways. Trans Connect has maintained services by its nimble approach to its virtual offerings; Peer Navigators, REDUN and EKNPUD have supported those who have been dealing with the fall out of the overdose crisis; Rob has supported people in alleys, camps and under bridges through his compassionate and courageous outreach; the OPS has continued to offer its exceptional service; Jess, Patrick and Nikki have been provided excellent peer support in harm reduction; Rosie has feed so many people with the Harm Reduction Breakfast; staff have worked in the Warming Centre and now the Hub (Dakota, Sheldon, Erin, Vera). Your ability to follow the need and deliver excellent service is exemplary. Alexis is now the Indigenous Harm Reduction Coordinator in the East Kootenays. Patrick and Alexis also operate the drug checking program in the East. The Support Recovery Team has worked so hard to support people in recovery during this time. Lisa, Jess, Sam, Amber, Tiffany, Holly, Alex have supported and

championed the harm reduction work in our communities while making sure that peers are valued and recognized for the work. Thank you also to the amazing OAT team of David, Erin, Aleta, Laura, Zak and Joel!!

This year we made the decision to purchase a site for the Support Recovery Program. This is in process with support from BC Housing. We are very excited to consider our program having its own permanent home. I would like to acknowledge Nora's support in leading the management of the housing purchase and renovations. Thank you also to Leah who does the bookkeeping for ANKORS and makes sure we are all paid on time and handles all of our questions with such calm and grace. We really appreciate you every day. I'd also like to acknowledge the board members and volunteers who contribute your time to the work of ANKORS. Thank you.