



LADYSMITH RESOURCES CENTRE ASSOCIATION

# *Heart on the Hill*

## HISTORY

## **LADYSMITH RESOURCES CENTRE ASSOCIATION**

The Ladysmith Resources Centre Association was officially registered as a charitable organization on July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1992. However, there was a great deal of work and many meetings that took place prior to this event.

In order to get this fledgling organization off the ground, the Steering Committee made up of ten (10) individuals began to meet in March 1992 to discuss a name, a location to set up an office and a community needs survey. It was agreed amongst the members that it would be called **Ladysmith Resources Centre**. After receiving a letter from the registrar of Societies, Tom Beames (who had been in contact with them), learned that the word "Society" or "Association" must be included in the name. Following discussion the name was amended to **Ladysmith Resources Centre Association**.

Eventually, a month to month contract was signed with Hycourt to occupy a vacant space in their building on High Street, and permission was granted to begin some construction within the premises in order to provide offices and meeting rooms. One of the very first tenants was Ladysmith Employment Assistance Society (They would eventually change their brand to Ladysmith Employment Assistance Society (LEAS) once they relocated to their own space.) Over the next while, meetings and committee work progressed in finding tenants such as Nanaimo Probation Services, Canadian Cancer Society, Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACOA), etc. and in order to provide funding to establish the protocols of an office, the members of the Steering committee decided to each pool a set sum of money to rent and furnish this space which could be used as an office site. This first office was located at 225 High Street in the Hycourt Building and was the Centre's home from 1992 to 1994. Once this was taken care of, it was decided that, due to unknown funding, 2 Volunteer Aides should be taken on to manage the day to day activities of office volunteers who were called upon to work 3 hour shifts each per 5 day week to keep the doors open and answer the telephone. In actuality, one individual, **Sharon Greene** took on this role as the **Volunteer Coordinator**.

The first Annual General meeting of the Association was held on October 14<sup>th</sup>, 1993 at which time a board of directors was elected with 13 directors being accepted. In the Presidents report it was noted that the organization had set four goals for itself that first year.

- One was to make important services accessible to the community and during the first year of operation over 13 groups and organizations providing services locally had become established under the organizations umbrella.
- A second goal was to establish a means for local residents to access information about programs and services. This was accomplished through a staffed office being open Monday to Friday from 10 am to 4 pm by volunteers committed to the organization.
- A third goal was to sponsor or facilitate the provision of direct services to local residents. **Nobody's Perfect**, a parenting program was run in partnership with public

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health. As well, a counselling service was offered in Ladysmith through Nanaimo Family Life.

- The fourth goal was to complete a community needs assessment to learn what the citizens felt was needed. A grant was received from the Ministry of Health (Healthy Communities) and from the Ministry of Women's Equality to allow this to take place with a strong emphasis on community involvement and participation.

While at the High Street location the needs assessment was undertaken with a committee being struck to draft the questionnaire. Volunteers from the community were engaged to canvass the community and once the questionnaires were completed a facilitator was hired to process the data. This was then input to a computer program by volunteers from the office and from that point it was completed and put into a bound report format ready for distribution.

**1993** tenants: Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACOA), Cancer Society, Care Givers (Home support society), Ladysmith Employment Assistance (which then became it's own society), Learning Assistance, Chamber of Commerce, NA, PACE, Probation Service, John Howard Society and Take off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS) a national weight loss program.

**1994**

Very early in January, a special General Meeting was called for the explicit purpose of **amending the Constitution** of the Association in accordance with the requirements of Revenue Canada. It was felt by the board of directors that registration as a charity was vital to their ability to canvas for funds. With registration, a tax number would then permit the Organization to give donors a receipt that they could use for income tax purposes. At that point, and after a seven month delay, the application had been rejected based on Ottawa's difficulty in accepting the wording of various sections of our Constitution as it was then written. Therefore the board voted and accepted the following:

The deletion of paragraphs 2, 3, and 4 of the then constitution and revising # 2 to A, B, C and D to reflect the change issued by the Registrar of Companies on January 31, 1994.

In mid 1994 the office on High Street was leased to another business forcing us to move to a new location at 112-B French Street (Old Veterinarian Hospital). This move required a lot of renovation of the premises which was again all done by volunteers. The building then housed a Travel Agency, A Chiropractors office and the Association. In May of 1994, with an increasing and more complex workload and demand for service, an **office Manager (Sandy Barton)** was hired from those volunteers currently with the Centre. One of her duties was to run the day to day business of the office and oversee and coordinate the volunteers and utilize them in their field of expertise within the Centre.

One of the tasks taken on by the LRCA at that time was to become the "banker" for the "**New Directions in Health**" funds. Organizational and information meetings in Ladysmith and Chemainus were held to help residents to make a decision on forming their own Community Health Council in Local Health Area 67.

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A very small government grant was applied for and received to offer **Advocacy** services in our community. This resulted in hiring a worker for ½ day per week.

Two ladies, Julie Boyle and Monica Steida requested a meeting with the Board and made a presentation outlining their objectives to provide resources on parenting, offer space for families to get together, socialize, gain resources etc. They were applying for funding and requested the LRCA be their banker until such time as they were able to form their own society. This was accepted by the Board and was put into place once the money was received. This was the beginning of the **Ladysmith Association of Family and Friends (LAFF)**

1994 tenants: Probation services, Home Support, Cancer Society, Caregivers Support, Monday AA, Friday Ladies AA, TOPS, Wellness Support Group, Inter-Agency Group, Heart and Stroke, Nobody's Perfect, Chamber of Commerce and \*Ladysmith Women's Business Network.

**\* Ladysmith Women's Business Network was begun with founding members: Linda Carlson Treasurer, Sharon Greene, Secretary, Sandy Barton, President. All members of the LRCA.**

#### **1995**

The Personnel Committee was tasked with hiring a **Youth at Risk Worker** through financial assistance from the Ministry of Social Services and the Town of Ladysmith. This individual was to liaise with other youth serving agencies and individuals to provide a coordinated service to youth in the community. This was a partnership with Parks and Recreation Department – Town of Ladysmith, to also provide a recreational component as a tool to engage youth in appropriate behaviour. **Kim Chadwick was hired and began work in January 1995.**

As the Centre continued to become known and the demand for services was expanding it became imperative that a Coordinator for the Centre be hired. Much discussion took place in the early months of 1995. After advertising and receiving numerous applications for the position, one applicant was selected, however, she subsequently found she could not accept the position. It was then filled from within – **Dennis Lait**, the current Treasurer of the Association **was hired as \*Coordinator effective May 1995**, having resigned from the board to give support to the office manager, and to seek out grants and make applications for funding of various types. Also during that period, the volunteer bookkeeper (Linda Carlson) whose workload had increased substantially was now being paid an honorarium to administer the funds for all of the programs and operations as well as for a number of other programs in our service area.

***\* Coordinator was changed to Executive Director in June 1997 due to confusion with the term being used by program Coordinators.***

During the year, it became known that the Kinsmen were giving up their Tuesday night bingo license. The LRCA applied and was successful in taking on the **Bingo as of May 30<sup>th</sup>, 1995**, and this then became a continuously major source of funding for the Centre and its programs. Bingo was held in the gymnasium at Parks and Recreation until Nov. 5<sup>th</sup> 1996 when it was

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moved to the Eagles Hall due to floor resurfacing at P & R. Once complete they (Parks and Recreation) no longer wished to have the bingo take place there. Several succeeding moves became imperative, when a relocation from the Eagles due to space limitations forced a move to Aggie Hall but which also resulted in having to change the day of the meeting due to the Air Cadets having the hall on the regular Tuesday night which then became Wednesday night bingo. Later, we had to once again move the bingo due to renovations being undertaken at Aggie, and the Catholic Church Hall became the location to hold our bingo's.

Also in 1995, the LRCA joined forces with LEAS (Ladysmith Employment Assistance Society) who were in their own building by then, later known as Employment Navigators to run a Youth Employment program in the community. It proved to be very successful and became an annual contract for many years. The summer Youth employment project was funded to the Centre and 2 youth coordinators were hired. This proved to be beneficial to both the youth and the business community. Twenty seven job placements were actually filled in this pilot projects.

The Ladysmith Chamber of Commerce was run through our offices with the Office Manager providing a service as the Chamber "Girl Friday" and shortly after also taking on the role of Secretary for their board. At that time a large percentage of calls were for the Chamber and tourism and resulted in a small booklet being distributed called "Things to do in Ladysmith". This was a very popular production but with no funding other than from the LRCA it was discontinued after a couple of years.

It was decided that the Chamber work was becoming too much to be handled on a part time basis and the Chamber Board of Directors met and decided to hire an Office Manager to promote and do the Chambers business. Many individuals were interviewed and through the process it was narrowed down to a local resident, **Lorraine Browne**, who became the first **Chamber of Commerce Manager** in Ladysmith. (The Chamber remained with the Association until February 1998 when they relocated to an office of their own). *As an aside, it was interesting to note that one of the interviewees for the position coined the term "Heritage by the Sea" in her resumé, and the interviewing committee decided to "borrow" it as their slogan for the Town!*

In October and November of 1995 the LRCA instituted a project for Child Identification in conjunction with the RCMP. Local children were fingerprinted and photographed. This was provided free of charge to the community to aid in identification of children should an abduction take place. After about 4 years it was discontinued.

We learned that an application we had made for a **Pregnancy Outreach Program** was rejected because of our geographic location between Nanaimo and Duncan and also in that particular application we targeted all pregnant women rather than "at risk women". The Public Health Agency on High Street was then offering an "Open Door" clinic and through this process the clinic was experiencing a high incidence of young pregnant girls and also issues of low birth rate often due to medical issues associated with alcohol and drug use.

One recurring issue being asked of the Centre was for **Counselling services**, especially for those of limited means. It seemed that many people were “falling through the cracks” so to speak as they did not meet the Provincial Mental Health guidelines, as well as not being able to afford to seek out private counselling. It was during this year that **Tom Beames**, a Registered Psychologist and a founding and then current member of the board began to do a little pro-bono counselling for those who would not be helped otherwise. Year after year people would look to us for help with a wide range of issues, i.e., family, marital, personal and financial problems. Tom continued to try to help whenever he could and also began lobbying Mental Health Services. Once Tom retired, he started the Volunteer Counselling Program at the Centre with the help of Marilyn Quigley, another Registered Psychologist. In 2005, Linda Turner came to the Centre. Linda was a trained Life Skills Instructor and a volunteer counsellor who provided workshops and training, especially in the areas of self-esteem, parenting and relationships.

When Tom faced failing health, **Holly Smith, a registered counsellor** was hired in 2007 to take up the slack and continue to develop the volunteer counselling program. She was responsible to interview and have volunteers trained in counselling. Holly left the Association after a few years and John Parker, a registered psychologist who had been mentored by both Tom and Holly, agreed to step up and coordinate the program and provide training sessions, acting as a mentor to the volunteers, overseeing and assessing clients for the the volunteer counselors.

A referral service was instituted to provide house cleaners to Continuing care for seniors requiring assistance in their home. The workers for Continuing care were no longer to do house keeping as part of their job and it created a very real hardship for many seniors who had always relied on the help of the workers. This required the LRCA to act as a referral only and along the way there were many successes and some not so good. One individual who started her own business was contracting work out – which resulted in her being struck from the list. This was discontinued with the move from 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue as there didn't seem to be as much need as in the past.

There was exciting news for the community – McDonalds Restaurants had came to town. Prior to opening it's doors just before Christmas, the LRCA was approached by their management for a space to do job interviews for staff. In appreciation for allowing them use of an office and meeting room, both Dennis and Sandy were invited to the pre-opening for the business community and given gift boxed McDonalds pens.



1996



The LRCA outgrew the premises on French Street and on May 10, 1996 relocated to 721 First Avenue with a 2 year option to purchase the property. With 3 floors to work from, this buildings space was soon utilized to the maximum. Many renovations took place over the years and it housed us until 2011 when we moved to 2nd Avenue.

The **Rainbows** Program which offers grief and separation counselling to children came under the umbrella of the LRCA in September 1996 and began training sessions with volunteers offering sessions on a regular basis from the downstairs boardroom. This program operated financially under the auspices of the LRCA until September 2001. At that time a request for transfer of funds was made and accepted by the board and the program began operating independently through Bethal Tabernacle.

It was in 1996 that an application was submitted to the Ministry for funding of a part time Youth Drug and Alcohol Worker. The funding eventually came from ADAPT and funded a worker part time effective May 1<sup>st</sup>. **Dena Fairell** became the first **Youth Drug and Alcohol Worker** for Ladysmith.

A reproductive Health Clinic opened in the downstairs area of the Centre. This would allow youth and others to seek assistance away from the official "health clinic" and would provide a little more privacy for young people looking for birth control advice.

The association applied to become a **Community Access Centre** which would allow the general public access to computers and the internet. Two individuals were hired through a Youth Employment Program with CAP from December 1, 1996 to March 1998 while another individual was contracted to the Managerial position. Renovations on "The Barn" (the building on LRCA property facing Buller Street) were contracted out and the program was soon up and running. Classes were offered, although the goal of the CAP Site was to allow people to have access to computers and the internet.

Planning to open a "**Youth Centre**" in Ladysmith saw a couple of different locations used, without much success. The committee then began looking at a more central, downtown site, specifically what was called "The Barn" on Buller Street which housed the CAP Site on the main floor. This became somewhat of a political issue and was blocked by public outcry. The Youth Advisory committee at that point decided they may form their own society.

## 1997

In May, negotiations with the newly formed Youth Advisory Committee resulted in that group taking on the responsibility of paying the new Youth Coordinator as well as looking after the bills incurred by the Youth Centre and the Youth Council. All funds held by the LRCA were transferred into their bank account.

In June of that year, it became necessary to hire a part time **Receptionist** as the **Advocate, Don McConnel** was also substituting some of her time to this position making her job difficult. At that time, Cindy Halper was hired to work from 9:30 to 2:00 pm, Monday to Friday.

In November of 1997, the LRCA was selected to received the Deryck Thomson Award for recognition for exceptional contributions to community planning. The Mayor had submitted our name to the Social Planning and Research Council of BC.

Also, during this period of time, the **Seniors Office** opened under the leadership of the very knowledgeable and dedicated **Pat Edge**. Pat was very instrumental in making this into a people friendly program and office. Through her leadership many projects became available to help seniors such as the Phoning Tree which offered weekly calls to lonely or shut in seniors, 49<sup>th</sup> Phoners – whereby grocery orders were taken twice a week over the phone by volunteers and the 49<sup>th</sup> delivered to the senior or shut-in; the senior Van, providing a ride for seniors to medical appointments in Duncan or Nanaimo, Friendly Visitors which trained volunteers to provide a social visit to lonely, isolated or shut in seniors. The Seniors Page was initiated in the Ladysmith Chronicle and continues to this day. This is done once per month showing activities and events for seniors. Senior Showcase Forums, providing special events, education, safety and fun. Income Tax assistance, providing year round problem solving, tax credits, disability applications and previous years income tax returns. Although Pat was the mainstay of the office, many volunteers were trained to fill in when she needed a break or to assist on days she had events to handle.

Pat eventually became a member of the board of directors and remained so until her passing from failing health in 2012. Her commitment, dedication and financial generosity to the LRCA have been a godsend.



The **Christmas Cheer Fund**, formerly run by the Town of Ladysmith, and working in conjunction with the LRCA for the past couple of years, was officially turned over in it's entirety to the LRCA in early November 1997. This whole process has seen many revisions over the years since that time and requires a lot of staff time as well as a large contingent of volunteers.



Through the LRCA Advocate, Don McConnell, there was interest expressed from the Churches in the establishment of a Food Bank. This discussion carried on into early 1998 and following several meetings with Church representatives, a motion passed from their committee requested that the LRCA provide space for and administer the Food Bank project. It was suggested that they form a committee of seven to develop a working structure. Subsequently they met to discuss the working relationship between the Food Bank and the LRCA. By April of 1998 the group had met again and work began on painting and organizing building at #26 Buller Street to become the Food Bank. Eventually, the representatives of the local churches met as a group with the board of the LRCA and requested consideration of coming under the umbrella of the Centre for the time being. Meetings were held with the Management committee of the day and options were explored relating to the Food Bank becoming its own entity. It was decided at a meeting held of the Management committee in February of 1999 following a long discussion, that the Food Bank "would remain operating under the umbrella of the LRCA which is responsible for the Food Bank's financial accounts, insurance coverage, building, utilities and so on, but would not be involved with the actual running of the Food Bank". By falling under the LRCA's umbrella the Food Bank was then able to register with the BC Association of Food Banks in order to be able to provide (through the LRCA) income tax deductible receipts.

Looking for means to help raise additional funds for the organization, the promotions committee was approached by the office manager, Sandy Barton, with the idea of publishing an annual day planner. The Chamber of Commerce in Duncan had put one out and it was on this idea that ours came to fruition. A 1998 **Day Planner** was undertaken in June with ad space being sold to local businesses at the top of each page or full page ad space was also available for sale. Over the years the Day Planner was put together with the financial support of the community each year. The Planners were taken around to businesses to be put on display for sale and proved to be a sought after publication.

### 1998

In 1998 (It's first year under the umbrella of the LRCA) the **Food Bank** issued approximately 40 - 45 bags of food weekly and was housed in the building where it resided until our move to 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. In the summertime, volunteers would meet in the very early hours on Monday morning to pre-package hampers for Tuesday's distribution.

The Chamber of Commerce had been considering alternate leasing arrangements for an office that was designated entirely to their own use. They moved their office from the LRCA building in February 1998 once they found other space.

At some point during 1998, representation of service organizations and charities at Casinos was changed by the BC Gaming Commission so that organizations had to submit applications for additional funding rather than sending representatives of the organization. This meant filling out Use of Proceed reports and submitting financials to prove "need". That first year we were approved for a direct payment of \$15,000.00. For many years later, we historically received \$30,000 to be put towards specific programs.

## 1999

**Victim Services**, formerly administered by the Town, had now been approved for transfer of administration functions to the LRCA. Meetings were held with the Town, Victim Services and the RCMP and a separate bank account was set up to administer the funds. It was our responsibility to pay the bills and wages as well as make application for funding of the program. There were to be no administration costs, however we would be paid for our share of CPP, EI and WCB contributions. At that time, the office was run by Lorrie Bell and was located behind the police office in a Britco building. Eventually, Victim Services was provided an office in the new RCMP building on 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

Industry Canada, which had been funding the Community Computer Centre provided it's final payment to us in April, thereby making the CAP lab our financial responsibility. In order to fund this Centre, application would then have to be made to Victoria Freenet to cover costs. They in turn would request funding for their region and provide payment to each satellite office (such as ours). Aaron Lagadyn, the coordinator was tasked with making it financially sound through classes and one to one tutoring as well as renting the space out to others wanting to provide specialized courses. Due to unforeseen circumstances and issues, the Computer Centre closed it's doors effective May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2001. A scaled down computer lab was then set up in the main building. Some of the computers were distributed to sites around the community to allow internet access to the public. At that time, conversations with the Food Bank were taking place to take over the space in order to give them more room for storage and distribution.

The **Parent Child and Mother Goose program** was developed in Ladysmith. The idea of the Centre promoting this program was drawn to the attention of the Board of Directors for consideration. After due consideration, funding proposals were drawn up and distributed to local service clubs and seven different funding foundations. The Edith Lando Foundation donated start up funding of thirty eight hundred dollars to this program and later in the year a further Fifteen Hundred was received from the Koerner Foundation. The first sessions of this program took place in April 2000, with Joan Astren and Leslie Stainsby (a registered speech pathologist) as facilitators.

Another fundraising idea, following on the idea of the Christmas Tree decorating theme run by Malaspina College was discussed and brought to fruition that year. We called ours "**Trim a Tree for Charity**". Local organizations, businesses and individuals could apply to decorate an artificial tree (or bring their own), decorate it in a theme and leave it up for judging and display throughout the Christmas season, beginning with Ladysmith Light-Up. Trim a Tree was run through Aggie Hall and proved to be very popular as a venue for Christmas parties with the ambiance of the lit trees around the perimeter of the hall. Unfortunately, after several years, some of the users of the hall complained that they wanted the trees removed as it impacted on their activities so it was moved to a couple of other locations for a couple of years but eventually died.

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Discussions had been taking place over the past couple of years about deferment of property taxes which were putting a burden on the Centre as the property owner expected us to pay them. Because we did not own the property, BC Assessments could not consider deferring taxes. The Board then discussed the options available as far as consideration of purchasing the property in order to qualify for tax deferment.

In the fall of 1999, the LRCA became the beneficiary in a private local residents Will. In it she specified that a percentage of her Will go to supporting the Rainbows Program, a percentage to Youth programs that address the physical and mental well being of youth and a percentage towards the development of a permanent facility for the LRCA. The Centre was notified that Mrs. Pamphlet had passed away shortly after and her estate was being settled by Joan Phillips. Through this process, the Centre undertook a "Planned Giving" process, developing a brochure and added it to the website.

### 2000

Access to **Mental Health Services** has historically been a problem for the citizens of Ladysmith, especially with the problems associated with transportation to and from Nanaimo since there is not a local bus system here. In early 2000, after much negotiation with Nanaimo and Duncan providers, a Mental Health Worker would come to Ladysmith every 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday.

It was during this period of time that **No Smoking laws** were being implemented and transitioning local business and establishments into providing smoke free premises. This non smoking rule affected our bingo and it was hoped would not be detrimental to attendance. Over all, it did not have an adverse effect and certainly made for a healthier atmosphere for both players and workers.

During the early part of 2000, the Centre applied for and was approved for a \$20,000 contribution to the development of a **Volunteer Center** through Involve BC. An individual was hired to get the project underway and this continued for approximately a year and a half, ongoing funding was unattainable and the worker moved on, while the program continued in a much smaller way with the LRCA concentrating on it's own volunteers.

As well, the BC Gaming Commission granted the Centre \$30,000 for direct charitable access. This was mainly for specific program purposes and partially for the Centre itself.

**Handicapped parking permits** are normally available only from applicable agencies in Nanaimo or Duncan. It was recommended to us that we contact SPARC to provide this service here in Ladysmith. In the beginning we printed and laminated our own Handicapped permits, but finding them not holding up, we eventually ordered them from Madills Office Supplier in a heavier plastic but much smaller format which continues to this day.

Toastmasters contacted the LRCA about using the facilities to provide their sessions and this was approved. At some point during the year another program entitled Speech Craft which is

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facilitated by Toastmasters was brought forward as this was meant for low income and disadvantaged persons, however it did not fly.

There was much discussion leading up to extending the **Addictions Program** to encompass adults in Ladysmith. A presentation was made to the Ladysmith Hospital Auxiliary for funding of this 6 month extension while we continued to re-negotiate with MCFD and our current contract to provide Addiction services to youth. Additionally, the worker was sent to training to deal with gambling addiction counselling as well and a support group was instigated for Monday nights with clients from both Nanaimo and Duncan attending. The additional funding from the Hospital Auxiliary for the adult worker ended after 6 months but the Centre continued to fund this position for a further 2 years with the LRCA assuming the financial responsibility for this half time worker for adult addictions. At the end of that time, the contract was awarded to the John Howard Society in Nanaimo and they actively sought out our Addictions Worker who terminated her employment with the LRCA. It was then that the current Youth at Risk worker began filling the position in conjunction with her position. In September the Youth worker requested she be able to take on the .5 position of Youth Addictions and also do .5 for Youth Worker, remaining in a full time position. In 2006, the funding for Addictions was withdrawn from Ladysmith and Kim moved on to ADAPT in Nanaimo. A new Youth Worker was hired to take her place and the position to this day has a high turnover of workers due mainly to funding levels.

One of the recurring issues experienced by the Association was a permanent facility. Over the years many options and locations were looked into and considered. These included an addition to Aggie Hall, the United Church building if they decided to rebuild, the Community Health Centre (old hospital) as well as the then current site on First Avenue. An architect (Robert Boyle from Nanaimo) was engaged and agreed to draw up plans to accommodate the growing organization on that site.

Late in December of that year an addition was made to the Seniors program...a lending cupboard of medical supplies such as scooters, raised seats, walking canes and the like. Basically donations were made from private citizens and in turn we would lend these appliances or scooters out to whomever required assistance. Eventually, the LRCA donated most of the equipment such as scooters to individuals to keep and also the rest to Red Cross or anyone who could use it.

A new fundraising venture took place during the year, the production and painting of **outdoor lanterns**. These were made and painted with decorative designs by a small group of volunteers. They were sold for \$25.00 each. A decent profit of over a thousand dollars was raised that first year. However, it was decided to discontinue making these due to liability issues around improper use.

## 2001

During the summer, a local resident, a teacher who works in Duncan came to the office enquiring about the possibility of starting a tutoring program for ages kindergarten to grade 6. This then was presented to the board for consideration and was approved. This was the beginning of the “**Bright Lights**” tutoring program. In the beginning, some money was donated by a few of the local service organizations and a small fee was put in place based on ability to pay. The LRCA funded the program as the tutors and a coordinator were being paid until eventually, it was volunteer driven, due mainly to lack of funding.

About this same time, the **United Way's Day of Caring** accepted our application to work on the LRCA property. This project would be undertaken and done in a day with assistance from local business people, United Way workers, staff and volunteers from the LRCA and any board members or family members willing to take part. This project saw the excavation, building of a stone wall and garden at the side of the property allowing a seating area for people to relax and visit. This was a major project and it was completed that day. A rock mason donated his time to teach us how to set the rocks and ensure a well built and stable wall. Overall, this was one of the most ostentatious projects we tackled.

## 2002

It was noted in the January board minutes that a total of **189 families received Christmas Cheer Hampers** in December 2001.

Early in the year there were many meetings of the Ladysmith Health Care Task Force of which the LRCA was a member agency. These meetings were held to discuss possible hospital closures and it became very clear that the direction the town was leaning was to establish a Community Health Centre should the hospital be shut down. It would then be located where the old hospital was. This was all in keeping with the New Directions in Health initiative to form Health Regions and regionalize health care in the larger centres. Many discussions involved the LRCA in this process as it was hoped we would move into the facility to operate our programs and services. Eventually, this idea was discarded as the Health Centre would not accommodate our Food Bank, nor some of our user groups in the evening. As well, space limitations would clearly restrict active growth of programs.

The position of **Program Coordinator** was initiated with the hopes it would take some of the load from the Executive Director, especially with the day to day questions and inconsequential business. This position was funded by the LRCA itself but was terminated at the end of July, not being cost effective in keeping with the Centre's budget. However, it was later reviewed and once again in 2011 the position was revived and staff hired.

The Friendly Visitors program, an addition of the Seniors office began in the fall of 2002. This was a follow up to the Phone Tree project. It offered quality time to shut-ins who are lonely and or isolated and was operated by trained volunteers.



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The first annual Teddy Bear Picnic was held at Transfer Beach Park with some of our Early years programs taking part. This was a partnership with Pacific Child Care agency.

As **Planned Giving** is becoming a great way for people to make gifts to charitable organizations either through cash, securities, real estate, or deferred gifts and the like, the board instigated a process along with a brochure to promote this type of activity within the Association. Over the years many people have designated the Centre as the recipient of gifts in these forms or to be a designee of "in lieu of" gifts when they pass on.

One of the earliest programs we received government funding for was our **Advocacy program**. This originally began in 1995 and was funded for .5 day once per week. Funding of this program has always been minimal and the LRCA subsidized it until November 2002 when the contract with the Ministry of Human Resources ceased to exist. At that point, the worker decided to volunteer his time in order to make the shift in services easier for clients who would have to be referred to Nanaimo or some other government service. The following year, funding was found to have Bob develop a volunteer program. However, in 2005 Bob left the Centre on Medical EI due to losing his sight.

One of the other ongoing issues with space allotment was with the **Food Bank**. They were in very cramped quarters and food storage was on the top floor which was proving to be hazardous to the workers, mainly aged individuals. Meetings were held with the Food Bank Committee and a committee of the board to iron out an agreement and the Management committee agreed to pay a rental of \$650 a month to rent the entire bottom floor, shed and sharing upstairs as required with the LRCA. This gave them double the space to work from without having to run up and down stairs. One half of the building was used to bag and service the clients and the other half for food storage.

### 2003

Noted in the Executive Directors report for January 2003 was the numbers from Christmas Cheer 2002: 173 families received hampers, and the overall income for the period was \$17,642.82. From this food had to be purchased and other related expenses paid.

Early in the year the **Farmers Market** was being discussed again as a possible means of ongoing fundraising. The newly formed FRAM committee (Fundraising and Membership) looked at it as a possibility and in April the Advocate of the day presented a draft outline to the committee for consideration. This early market could be held Sunday at the LRCA property but should be only a FARMERS market. As time went on, discussions took place to determine whether the market would be a fund raising event or a program. One of the goals would be to provide life skills training for people from the Advocacy program to staff the market. Later it was determined this would fall under the Fund Raising category and not be categorized as a program. Eventually the project was put on hold until a proper business plan could be done as this concept would become one of our major fundraising ventures if it was developed. Eventually a

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committee of interested people was formed and many meetings were held to try to develop this idea but the lack of property on which to hold it became the biggest hurdle.

## 2004

Over the past 5 years the LRCA had submitted proposals to Health Canada to fund a prenatal program in Ladysmith and each year it was turned down due to there being existing programs in place in Nanaimo and Duncan. Finally, approval was given to our proposal and the program named **"Born Healthy"** by Sandy and Linda came into being in March of 2004. It was located to the "Family House" at #12 Buller Street which had room for an office, the kitchen and livingroom area for nursing mothers. The program focuses on expectant and new mothers who are at risk of having, or have newborns in the 0 to 6 month category of low birth rates or other factors that put them in the high risk category...be it health, low income or social isolation. Initially funded only by Health Canada, it was eventually provided with additional short term funds through BCPOP, United Way, Success by Six and the general revenues of the LRCA itself.

Early in the year, a new position was instigated called Youth Activities/Prevention Worker. This position was to pick up the slack of the .5 left when Kim took on the .5 Addictions work.

The Farmers Market once again surfaced with one of the Board members setting up a meeting with both the Downtown Business Association and the Chamber of commerce. At that point, the business plan was still being developed but due to misunderstandings and individuals not following through on promises, the committee once again fell through.

In 2004, the Town approached LRCA with an offer to provide 2000 sq. ft. of building site that could be incorporated into the proposed renovations to the Frank Jamison Community Centre. This offer failed because the available space offered fell very short of the Centre's basic needs, parking was an issue, and concerns were expressed about the way in which contiguous operations could work to the benefit of all. And finally, serious concerns were raised about financing.

## 2005

Back in 1998 and again during this year, discussions were taking place on various aspects of a **location site for the LRCA**. It was felt by the Town, that the property owned by LRCA was too valuable to be used as it was and could possibly house a tax generating business of some kind. With this in mind, it was proposed to us by the Mayor (Town) that we could occupy a designated site on the grounds of Aggie Hall. Tentative plans were drawn up and a further meeting resulted in the proposal being abandoned as the Town insisted that, as part of the project, LRCA must pay the full cost of a complete renovation of the Hall's washroom facilities as well as the complete renovation and addition to the building.

Following this, VIHA put forward the possibility of the LRCA being granted a space in the basement of the East Wing of the existing old hospital building, following completion of upgrading and a complete renovation in the immediate future. This offer was rejected on the

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grounds that there was no clear date for completion of renovation, there was no clarification as to the terms of the occupancy, difficulty of client access to the basement area, questions about possible loss of autonomy, especially following an address to the Board by the then Director of Nanaimo Family Life in which she pointed out how fortunate we are to have no direct or indirect connection with Government!

Another proposal was offered that VIHA in cooperation with the Town free up an adequate area on which LRCA might build it's own, stand-alone facility on what is now Hospital parking space at the corner of Symonds St. and 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue. This possibility was dependent on the Town and VIHA being able to iron out the legal complexities around who would, in fact be our landlord. It appears nothing further was done to address this and the issue was allowed to die.

In 2005, the Town once again approached LRCA asking that we once again explore the possibility of working with the Director of Parks Recreation and Culture on new plans that would provide the Centre with 2000 sq. ft. As before, this proposal did not meet with our expectations or needs.

In mid 2005, it was learned that the Rocky Creek pub building would be donated to the LRCA and all we had to do was move it to our own property. If this did not take place it would be destroyed in order that the land be ready to build condos on. Eventually, this fell through due to Town officials being in total disagreement with it's relocation to First Avenue.

In February the LRCA purchased the **house at the end of the block** at #12 Buller Street. This property was of great value for use by childrens programming with Born Healthy, Parent Child and Mother Goose and Adventures in Early Literacy having their own separate space to run from. Evenutally, a Dads group was underway and some volunteer counselling took place from the building when not in use as well.

One of the most expressed issues in the community was **transportation** to medical appointments outside of Ladysmith and the difficulties with accessing them with the current Island bus service. Parks and Recreation had a van which they operated to transport children and adults to events and which it was hoped could be shared with the LRCA to transport people to these appointments when the bus was not in use. It was required that we find volunteer drivers who could be called upon to drive the bus. They in turn would expect the LRCA to pay for the medical exams required and ensure adequate insurance coverage. A request was made to the Hospital Auxiliary and was approved for \$8,300. This combined with \$2,000 from Parks, Recreation and Culture ensured the van would be on the road. A trial period of 6 months was undertaken to get a breakdown of actual costs. Eventually, another van was donated by a private citizen and the old van was sold as it was found to be very costly to operate and was not in very good condition.

In August of 2005, Nanaimo Community Living Services hired **Tina Fabbro** to start a community support service for adults in Ladysmith and area who have developmental disabilities. This

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group was called Community Link. In 2006, this program expanded and funds were applied for by the LRCA from the Vancouver Foundation. As well, local service clubs and Community Living continue to provide some financial back up. Tina now provides this service as a business venture and rents an office from the LRCA on an ongoing basis.

As well, HRDC approved a request to fund a Ladysmith 0 to 6 Community Development project for three years with **Social Development Canada** (SDC) Funds. In 2006, the Coalition heading this project hired **Louise Ward** to carry it forward to address the issue of social inclusion of children and families in Ladysmith and surrounding rural areas. Her role was to strengthen and enhance existing partnerships between the groups working with children in the 0 to 6 category and to develop a community plan for programs and services.

## 2006

It was interesting to note there were only **115 hampers** filled for Christmas Cheer in December of 2006. This has been a constant decrease from 187 in 2001. This may be an economic indicator of growth and employment opportunity for the local and wider community as a whole.

Due to the heavy work load on the Executive Secretary, **Graham Hadley**, one of the Centre's Literacy tutors was hired on a temporary basis as a controller for the Centre. Processing of invoices, coding and separating out the GST as well as review of journal entries for accuracy and completeness and ensuring our accounting was prepared for auditing were part of his job.

During the year, the LRCA decided to go ahead with some renovations to the LRCA. This entailed painting the reception, computer lab, kitchen area and hallways. New flooring was laid in the Reception and kitchen area and upgrades to the electrical for the Reception area.

In December, Megan Vandersluys came on board to work as the Youth at Risk Worker replacing Stephanie McCune who left on maternity leave. (Stephanie did not return to the position). In October 2007, Megan turned in her resignation as she had found another job in Nanaimo. This was an ongoing problem with the funding available in Ladysmith. With Megan leaving this left the LRCA without a youth worker. Late in 2007, two new workers were hired. Maike Lammel was hired to work in partnership with the highschool while Lindsey Krish was hired to complete the Youth at Risk segment. Maike's role soon evolved into working with children aged 5 to 12 while Lindsey dealt with the older youth 13 to 18 years of age. In 2009, the Ministry integrated both these contracts into what became known as **Special Services to Children**.

## 2007

Concerns over space, lack of heat in the upstairs or ventilation in the summer, issues of dust and lighting and disabled access to the building had begun surfacing more and more all the time. Staff were doubling up on office and meeting space and this led to more active searches for funds to expand the current building. Discussions began taking place with the Town and also with the Ladysmith and District Credit Union. There was a possibility of partnering in a new

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building and these discussions soon became known with inquiries from other organizations in the town. Concerns about the safety in the facility came to a head when one of the volunteers from the Cancer office took a tumble down the basement stairs and cracked her collar bone. The board agreed that some dollars needed to be spent to upgrade the facility. Demolition was begun in July and new stairs going both to the bottom floor and the top floor were installed with wider hallways. New flooring was laid in the reception and kitchen areas along with painting in the main level. Also, a new bathroom was installed for the staff in the old outdated space. Volunteers came together to do the painting both upstairs and down. Cost of the repairs and renovations totaled just over \$11,000.00, but well worth it.

It was noted in the Board minutes of May, 2007 that the LRCA was now able to do **on-line banking**. This was expected to provide up to date reports rather than having the reports outdated by a month or more.

A funding application was submitted to the Victoria Foundation to provide a **support group for new fathers and men** who would soon be fathers. This came about through the Born Healthy group noting the attendance of pregnant women and new moms, but there didn't seem to be anything for the fathers. The initial application was provided through FASD and the effects of alcohol on unborn children. With financial support, two men were hired to run this program once per week, on Saturday mornings, where the fathers could bring their babies or other small children, enjoy a breakfast prepared by the facilitators and have general discussion around the issues of Fetal Alcohol and how it affects unborn children. This program was slow to start but over the years and further funding it has grown and is enjoyed by local dads and their children. It is also now just called the Dads Group and no longer is just about FASD.

In late 2007, the Ministry for Children and Family Development was providing some capital funds for **partnerships that would enhance the delivery of service to children and their families**. Several meetings were held with the Boys and Girls Club who were also looking for new space. It was agreed that our organization and the Boys and Girls Club would submit applications together for capital funds to add onto our current buildings footprint in order to be able to provide the space for both organizations to operate from. Conceptual drawings were made and submitted along with a request for \$750,000.00. This meant the Boys and Girls Club would operate from the lower floor with day care services, infant toddler care, before and after school care. The LRCA children's programs would relocate from the "house" at #12 Buller Street to the new location leaving the "house" available to relocate the Food Bank. This project became known as **The HUB**.

## 2008

An application was made to HRSDC for a **\$50,000.00** grant to improve accessibility to the LRCA through an **Enabling Accessibility Fund Program (EAF)**. A letter was received in October advising that our application was successful. This came on the heels of a proposal from the Town of Ladysmith to form a new partnership with the Town, Boys and Girls Club and Seniors Society to erect a new building on the old Tennis court building below the current Seniors



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Centre. Once we had accepted this partnership we learned we would not be able to take this funding with us to the new site and it was returned.

Discussions were taking place over the past year with our neighbor to purchase his property. We had been given the right of first refusal at an earlier date when Mr. Torrie decided he could no longer live there. Later in the year, Mr. Torrie agreed to sell us the property. This purchase would then allow us to have the whole block on the Buller Street Side from the gas station to First Avenue. It was learned that our right of first refusal would end November 28<sup>th</sup> of that year. With this date advancing quickly in the scheme of things, the property was secured by a private individual associated with the LRCA (for the benefit of the LRCA). In the late summer, the Ladysmith and District Credit Union became involved, having attended a board meeting to discuss the possibility of purchasing the current LRCA properties should the High Street Partnership take place. Their plan was to acquire all three properties and erect a financial centre on it. In October of 2008, the Ladysmith and District Credit Union gave a letter to the LRCA advising that they are willing to purchase 721 First Avenue and 12 Buller for an agreed fair market value. As well, they would be willing to purchase 20 Buller Street for fair market value from the private individual. Should the LRCA not relocate, the LDCU promised to sell 20 Buller Street back to us for the original purchase price.

In early 2008, the Ministry confirmed they will provide \$250,000.00 to the LRCA as their share. Further meetings with the Boys and Girls Club saw a Memorandum of Understanding being drawn up between the two organizations to work together on the project and building expansion.

**Triple P**, an evidence based parenting program first developed in Australia was becoming the standard parenting program in the country. This program replaced Nobody's Perfect, and in February a Memorandum of Understanding was signed to embed Triple P within the organization by promotion, education and support of Triple P. Staff providing this program were trained and became accredited providers of this sought after parenting tool.

**Sharon Hamilton** was hired as the Associations **bookkeeper** in March of this year. This position has always been a challenge for the bookkeepers who weren't very cognizant of "projects" within the Simply Accounting program. With so many programs and different funding streams and bank accounts, this position required someone very familiar with Simply accounting projects and Sharons experience proved her value soon getting the accounting on track.

## 2009

A report from the Christmas Cheer program disclosed that 141 families or individuals received Christmas Cheer Hampers this year, an increase over two years ago.

Early in the year discussions continued to be held with a contractor to build on the First Avenue property. As well, it was at that time that serious negotiations began taking place to see us located in a new building located on the site of the old tennis courts. It was decided that the

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Boys and Girls Club would relocate to the old Health Unit building, occupying the whole building. A total revamp of the building from the top down took place. This meant the Seniors Society would have to be relocated to part of the top floor of the new building to be erected on the site of the old tennis court., sharing the new building premises with the LRCA. This project became known as Spirit Square.

In June, the LRCA entered into a contract with Ladysmith and District Credit Union to facilitate the sale of 721 First Avenue for the sum of \$330,000, for 26 Buller for \$255,000 and 12 Buller for \$270,000. This agreement was finalized in February of 2010 giving the LRCA a cheque in the amount of \$466,578 once all expenses and the mortgage was cleared. This money was then put into a high interest account with plans to use it for program development and assisting with current programs and staff wages.

## **2010**

With meetings on the Spirit Square development taking up most of the Executive Directors time, a new staff person was brought on board to help take some of the strain off him. Samantha Corrington took on the position of **Project Coordinator** with a mandate to learn the programs and services offered by the LRCA and to assist the ED with other duties and tasks as directed. Unfortunately she terminated her tenure in January 2012 due to family issues along with other personal reasons.

A great deal of time was spent early in the year reviewing the leases for both the Boys and Girls Club and the LRCA to hash out an agreement for occupancy that would work for all. As well, in order for the project to complete, the LRCA was asked to commit funds from capital reserves to the new building site of up to \$400,000. The LRCA agreed that it could contribute up to this amount (which eventually amounted to \$363,000), but wanted agreement with the Town on how this money would be repaid. This became a long drawn out process and in the end an agreement was reached.

In October, an application was made to New Horizons for Seniors to run a project which is designed to establish a seniors council in Ladysmith. This funding was approved. This council would eventually have the power to influence and possibly have input to the Official Community Plan as well as other planning that would have an impact on seniors for whatever reason.

## **2011**

Christmas Cheer reported 167 individuals or families were provided with Christmas Cheer Hampers this year. This is once again a substantial increase in three years.



Site construction progressed to the point that the LRCA could begin moving in on May 1<sup>st</sup>. Some finalization of finishes and other accoutrements would continue until completed. The move from First Avenue and Buller Street took place over a period of 2 days with the help of a few staff and volunteers. This was a huge undertaking as it also involved putting heavy desks together at the new site and setting up the offices and meeting room. The Grand opening of the Spirit Square site took place on June 24<sup>th</sup>.

In mid 2011, the LRCA was in a position to purchase a new wheel chair accessible van thanks to financial assistance in the form of donations from some local service clubs and the Health Care Auxiliary. The old donated van was beginning to show it's age and ongoing repairs were becoming a detriment to its use to transport individuals to appointments in Nanaimo or Duncan.

An application was processed for provincial funds through Community Action Initiative Funding (CAIF). This funding would involve youth from the community to develop a youth lead business. After many meetings with youth and interested adults and business leaders from the community the project that was decided on was to be called Project Reel Life. This project would see the youth learning how to implement a youth led movie theatre in town. This project was awarded up to \$200,000. A Project Manager was hired to move this forward as the High School had indicated an unused room could be transformed into a theatre and would also tie into utilizing other services and students from the school. However, this did not work out and the school property was taken off the table and work began to look for a site that would accommodate a movie theatre.

Another interesting award was made to the LRCA through the RCMP Family Violence Initiative to develop a successful training manual for our volunteer counselors and to carry out the training and recruit new volunteer counselors to the program. This is based on the RCMP's national strategy to help decrease family violence in Canada.

## 2012

With many new members on the LRCA board of directors, discussions were taking place about the role of the board. An ad hoc committee was formed to look at the Governance model and how it would fit with the LRCA.

The Project Reel Life was experiencing many ups and downs with trying to find space within the town that would be acceptable to everyone concerned. Eventually the funders were notified of the problem and agreed to extend the time line from 18 months to 24 taking the project completion date to January 2014. The inability to find an affordable site put the project in jeopardy until discussions with the funders took place. They advised the project that they were happy with the work that is being done even though it is behind on the objectives set out in the timeline, but that they see this as a good learning opportunity and experience for the youth.

In April, a new **Program Manager, Cindy Warren** was hired to fill the void left by Samantha Corrington. Part of Cindy's role was to get involved with the Project Reel Life.

The LRCA's first employee (Sandy Barton) retired on May 22<sup>nd</sup>. As succession planning had been taking place for the past two years, Wendy Chapman then stepped into the roll taking on the full duties of the Executive Secretary at that time.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July, the LRCA celebrated it's 20<sup>th</sup> year of operation. An open house and celebration took place and Rollie Rose, who officially cut the ribbon at the opening ceremonies in 1992, returned to cut the ribbon for the 20<sup>th</sup> year.

One of our valued board members, **Pat Edge**, passed away June 29<sup>th</sup>. A celebration of life was held towards the end of July. Pat was instrumental in running the Seniors Office and she became an advocate for seniors assisting in any way she could. She and her husband Gordon were extremely generous people and worked in so many ways to help the Centre. Over the years, the Edges had given the LRCA substantial donations of money and her last bequest to us was her house. The house was put on the market and the sale finalized in March 2013. This provided some much appreciated funds to the LRCA. Pat had stipulated that the money from the sale of the house was to be used at the discretion of both Dennis Lait and Sandy Barton to enhance programs and program expansion and to help in which ever way they saw fit, but was not to be used for the property or building currently occupied by the Centre as it was not owned by us.

(Completed to June 2012 and updated as of May 2013 – SB)