

## Kootenay Community Council

Community councils have been established across the province to work collaboratively with community partners to support community inclusion, citizenship and full participation of people with developmental disabilities.

Each community council acts as an ambassador and a bridge to creating inclusive communities. Together with CLBC staff and managers they will enhance the creation of safe environments, improve access to community resources and acknowledge the gifts and contributions of people with disabilities.

In addition, they will help develop and promote creative solutions which improve community access and inclusion. The councils will also identify research that will enhance our knowledge of how best to support people in community.

### Areas Supported

The council represents the communities across the Kootenay region including Castlegar, Cranbrook, Creston, Fauquier, Fernie, Fruitvale, Golden, Grand Forks, Invermere, Kimberley, Nelson, Nakusp and Trail.

### Members

The Kootenay Community Council has a combination of individuals who are self advocates, family members, service providers and community members. See the member biographies to learn more about the current Kootenay Community Council members.



## 2014–2015 Kootenay Community Council Goals

Our work plan this year identifies strategies to achieve the following goals:

- Serve as a vehicle to inclusion
- Raise public awareness of council's role
- To continue fostering partnerships with stakeholders in the supported communities
- Facilitate parent and family member involvement with our council
- Participate in local community events
- Recruitment of diverse council members to support above goals

## Kootenay Community Council Accomplishments

- Council members met with local MLAs, city councils, and city planners to advocate for incorporation of principles of inclusion into Kootenay area communities
- Hosted a community dance honouring employers who employ individuals with diversabilities
- Participation in various events throughout the region during Community Living Month, such as hosting high school sessions to introduce and promote the council and its goals
- Hosted a hospitality room at the Kootenay Region Association for Community Living (KRACL) Conference, which provided an opportunity to support self-advocates and their families and further educate about community council activities
- Provided an information session at the KRACL conference
- Provided support for self-advocates to attend various conferences throughout British Columbia

## Supports Available to Council Members

- Costs of council participation are covered by CLBC, including:
  - meals at meetings and transportation expenses to/from meetings
  - travel and accommodation expenses for out of town meetings
  - funded respite to enable meeting and event attendance
  - childcare expenses
  - other expenses incurred to attend regular and special meetings
- Local CLBC staff person with dedicated role to support council activities and facilitate member contributions
- Staff at CLBC headquarters with roles in supporting the 13 community councils across the province
- Financial assistance may be available for members to attend special events such as conferences, workshops, and other personal and/or professional development events

## What Council Membership Involves

A typical term on community council is two years in duration. The Kootenay Community Council meets approximately once per month, typically with a break in meetings over the summer. Meetings are arranged to best suit availability of the current members and are typically held in Cranbrook, Creston, or Castlegar. Members also meet via teleconference, especially in the winter months when travel is more difficult. The council typically has an annual two day long planning retreat.

Council members also attend a variety of events, such as the council dance last year, and community events according to availability and interests. Some council members take on additional roles, such as acting as the Council Chair, or as the Provincial Advisory Council representative for our region. For members who are available for these appointments, there are opportunities for travel within the province to work with council members from other regions.

## Becoming a Council Member

Council members go through a process including nomination by two current Kootenay Community Council members, a criminal record check and driver's abstract screening (if the member will be driving with others in the vehicle as part of their council work). The prospective member provides names and contact information for two references, which are checked by a CLBC staff member. The council then decides whether to proceed with the nomination, and if so, the collection of information is then forwarded to the CLBC Director of Regional operations.

Community members are always welcome to attend a council meeting to find out more information.

## Who We Are

### Lynnetta Beingessner

Lynnetta is a Cranbrook self-advocate who is highly involved in the community around her. She works at REALM, a local service provider, and her job duties include answering the phones and doing errands. Lynnetta's hobbies include taking pictures (and sharing them with those in her life), playing computer games, and she is an expert knitter. Lynnetta's friends value her as a good listener and a calming presence in their lives. When Lynnetta is not working or relaxing at home with her collection of angels, she can often be found at Tim Hortons.

### Kira Bernier

Kira lives in Cranbrook and spends her professional time as a peer-support worker with REALM. Kira's activities as a self-advocate are extensive and she is always looking for ways to apply her skill at understanding people's emotions toward problem solving and helping others. Others are drawn to Kira's bright personality and humour. In her spare time, Kira enjoys artistic pursuits such as singing, dance, acting, and scrapbooking. She also participates in sports such as football, softball, and soccer, which she balances with activities like reading, writing, sleeping, and playing on her phone. Kira is looking forward to applying her interest in helping others toward being an active and enthusiastic member of the Kootenay Community Council.

### Susan Davis

Susan is a community mental health nurse who works in the area of developmental disabilities. She works with clients throughout the East Kootenays. She is also a home share provider and provides at home respite care as well. Susan and her home share client currently attend the Therapeutic Riding program in Creston on Mondays which is very fun! As well as being on the Council, Susan is also a past board member of the Options for Sexual Health group. Susan will be retiring from nursing soon and hopes to spend more time on some of her hobbies: knitting, gardening, walks with the dogs, fishing and camping. Susan is married to Jon, and has 5 children and 3 grandchildren.

### Kathleen Elias

Kathleen is the Executive Director of the Kootenay Society for Community Living, based out of Castlegar. Her career with KSCL started in 1998, and she has contributed to the field of community living in a variety of roles.

### Donna McCready

Donna is the Executive Director of Cresteramics, a service provider in Creston, and a long-standing member of the Kootenay Community Council. She has spent her career working with and advocating for youth who have experienced significant challenges in their lives and people who are most reliant on others for support. Some specific examples include teaching bullying and self-esteem skills in schools and working with community agencies to advocate for others. Outside of work, Donna's most significant experiences in life include building life-long relationships with friends and family, and expressing her love for children and pets. In her personal time, Donna likes to stay active by playing baseball, going for walks, doing yoga, and gardening.

### Kayleigh Postmus

Kayleigh lives in Fruitvale with her mom and dad, Debbie and Ben. Kayleigh also lives with her brother, Arie, a Selkirk College student who plays for the Provincial Championship Hockey Team, the Selkirk Saints. Kayleigh's oldest brother, Jacob, lives in Vancouver and works in the exciting film industry, and her other brother, Adam, will be attending the University in San Jose in California. Kayleigh has worked at Walmart in Trail for 8 years and loves her job. She is very active in Special Olympics, participating and competing in five-pin bowling, floor hockey, snowshoeing, bocce, soccer, club fit and basketball. She loves to follow sports and has lots of sports friends. Kayleigh is also active in Zumba and aquafit. She loves her dog Shep, and misses her other dog Nikki!

Additional Recruitment Package Documents:

Community Council RAC card with local contact information

A copy of the Terms of Reference from the Members' handbook

A copy of the linkage to the CLBC Board and management diagram on page 11 of the Members' handbook

CLBC "Welcome" brochure

CLBC supports currently available in the East and West Kootenays printout

Folder for package to be compiled in