

SOS Annual Report

Shining Bright, Spreading Light
Empowering Our Community



2023-2024



Who We Are

SOS is a volunteer-based, non-profit charity meeting the needs and enriching the lives of District 69 residents since 1968.

Our Mission:

To improve community through programming and provide a safety net for School District 69 residents.

Our Vision:

A supported and inclusive community.



Table of Contents

4 Messages from the Board Chair and the Executive Director

5 Board of Directors

6 Thrift Shop

7 Fundraising - SOS Impact Campaign

8 Program Information and Statistics

14 SOS Programs and Community Collaborations

15 Volunteering with SOS

16 Financial Information

17 Condensed Financial Statements, and Quality Foods,
Biz for Good Partner

18 SOS Staff Teams

19 Impact Makers Gala

20 SOS Programs Collage



Message from the Board Chair

One of the things that I learned early in my career as an engineer is to embrace certainty whenever I could find it. Despite what you may have imagined, a lot of engineering requires developing solutions that can function despite uncertainty: We never have all of the information we would like and we have to deal with all the things we don't know for sure.

It seems to me that the world is becoming a more uncertain place. Very few things in our lives have not undergone radical change in the past decade. Think of our climate, which is moving from what we have always understood to an uncertain future. Think of our societal norms, which seem to be tested and revised in ways that most of us never thought. Think of our daily lives, so much seems to be shifting in an unknown future, not all of which is positive. In light of this uncertainty, it is appropriate that our theme for this Annual Report should be "Shining Bright, Spreading Light, Empowering our Residents," alluding to something that is not changing - the sun will rise tomorrow

just like it always has.

And like the sun, SOS is here every day doing what we can to meet the needs of our community. I like to think that each day there is someone who we help that would not have had that help without our intervention. We bring a little certainty into their lives: Certainty that they can get through another day. Giving them light, warmth and hope. And of course, that help would not occur without the involvement of you and people like you. Whether it be by donation, volunteering, or just by using our Thrift Shop, you have been the bedrock that we have used to bring certainty to so many others in need.

You will read elsewhere in this report about all the things we have achieved last year because of your support. One of the things I have learned is that, at least in Oceanside, we can be certain of that support. ~ Paul Ruffell



Message from the Executive Director

We made a joke at a staff meeting a few years ago that nobody can declare they are "very busy" as it was being repeated constantly. Beyond our normal busyness assisting residents and facilitating programs last year, we coordinated a host of events including our Learning Series, Thrift Shop Anniversary, Teen Shopping Events, Mixers for the Middles and we hosted our inaugural Impact Makers Gala, among other projects and events. We never know how any of our new initiatives and events will be received, but we were elated with the response from our

community. We were also delighted to receive the Not for Profit of the Year Award at the Business Awards held by the Parkville & District Chamber of Commerce. Thanks to

the support and encouragement of our community, we continue to fill our "busy" days creating a safety net for residents and providing them with the tools they need to shine. ~ Susanna Newton





Board of Directors



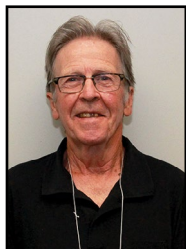
Paul Ruffell Chair

A consulting engineer for 40 years, Paul has volunteered on several private and non-profit Boards.



Brandon Charlesworth Secretary-Treasurer

Raised in the Comox Valley, Brandon is a Chartered Professional Accountant and a partner at Robbins & Company.



Mike Cochrane Director

Mike works in renovation and home maintenance. His aunt, Edith Chamberlayne, was a founding member of SOS.



Karen Corkery Director

Karen worked in the Finance and Industry departments of the federal government and retired to Qualicum Beach.



Sally Hamel Director

Sally previously worked as a therapist for the Fraser Health Authority and CMHA in mental health and addictions.



Dawn House Director

Dawn practiced law for the Ministry of the Attorney General and now enjoys volunteering.



Andrew Lane Director

Andrew worked as a manager in Human Resources and Skills Development Canada for the federal government.



Andrea Manson Director

Andy operated a private nursing business for 30 years. She believes in the importance of volunteerism.



Moira Rosser Director

Moira retired from a career in Communications. She enjoys volunteering and expanding her vocal jazz repertoire.



Bonnie Wallis Director

Bonnie has an accounting office in Parksville. She has enjoyed volunteering with several local organizations.

Thrift Shop

April 2023 - March 2024

Highlights: Jackie Brice took on the position of Thrift Shop Operations Manager in early 2024, and Jessica King stepped up as Assistant Operations Manager. Jackie has been with SOS for 21 years and Jessica for 18 years. A staff appreciation event, celebrating the Thrift Shop's 20th Anniversary at its current location, took place September 21. Two Teen Shopping Events were hosted at the Thrift Shop, in the Fall of 2023 and Spring of 2024, and a new Winter Solstice Shopping event took place on December 21, 2023.



**Staff
Members
37**



**Donation
pick-ups
539**



**Active
Volunteers
70**





SOS IMPACT CAMPAIGN

Transforming Lives Together

Gale worked hard her whole life, so when she found herself in her seventies without enough money to live on, she began feeling hopeless (her name has been changed to protect her identity).

“Life got going and I was going to buy [a house] but that didn’t happen and now that’s really impossible,” she said. “And now the rents are nowhere near where they were five or six years ago so there’s no way I can afford them.” After receiving some inheritance from her parents, her partner left with every dime she had. She went back to work but got very sick, and said her body just shut down. She had nowhere left to turn when she called SOS.

The SOS Seniors’ Advocacy Services Coordinator helped Gale access government benefits that she was unaware she was eligible for, including Employment Insurance, additional pension funds, and she received back-payments from the federal government. SOS also helped Gale apply for low-income housing, she’s been accepted and is now on the waiting list. Gale was relieved



Brenda, SOS Seniors’ Advocacy Services Coordinator.

with the support she received from SOS.

“I could breathe again,” Gale said. “Some people ask me, why didn’t you do this and why didn’t you do that on your own, but if you don’t know the right questions to ask, then how do you know to ask it?”

This is not an isolated story. In less than a year, SOS has been able to help recover more than \$120,000 in government benefits for local seniors. The SOS Impact Campaign continues to raise funds to provide supports to help seniors age in place, stay connected with others, and provide financial support during times of emergency. For more information, visit www.sosd69.com/sos-impact-campaign



Oceanside Better at Home - Grocery Bus



Medical Appointment Transportation



Seniors Connecting

Program Information

Children, Youth & Families

April 2023 - March 2024

Time in Comfort for Tots & Caregivers (TICTAC)

A welcoming and nurturing environment for children to play and build social and emotional skills while parents and caregivers take a much-needed break.

"TICTAC has been so wonderful for our family. The boys love it and look forward to it every week. I love the break for myself to talk to other moms and not feel so alone with parenting struggles."

Total participants: Parksville: 259 Qualicum: 194



Kids Movement: Play, Express & Grow

Fun activities inspire confidence, friendships and a healthy self-image. Staff and volunteers provide mentorship and support. SOS provides transportation to the program from all District 69 Elementary Schools.

"Since starting this program, my daughter has been so excited to go to school, make friends and just all round seems way more confident and capable!"

Total participants: Parksville: 44 Qualicum: 41



Intergenerational Family Night

Families get to spend quality time together while SOS serves dinner and cleans up afterwards. SOS provides the entertainment such as arts, crafts, games and music. We welcome seniors into the group to engage with families.

"It's so nice to meet other families and to see the kids play together. The dinner is wonderful and it saves me cooking for once. Thank you."

Total participants: Parksville: 136 Qualicum: 150

Program Information

Children, Youth & Families

April 2023 - March 2024

School Night Out

A safe place for youth in grades 7-8 to express themselves, go on outings and connect with their peers. Youth play games and music, and create art and crafts. Staff and volunteers provide mentorship.

"I really like that I have gone on field trips I didn't know existed like archery and I met my best friend there."

Total participants: Parksville: 50 Qualicum: 27



Youth Open Space

A positive place for teens in grades 9-12 to connect with others, eat tasty food, play music, create art and receive support from staff.

"My teenagers love Youth Open Space. For immigrants like us and not familiar with the people and place, YOS helps them meet new friends and become comfortable here. Plus they enjoy the activities and food, especially the field trips."

Total participants: Parksville: 65 Qualicum: 48



GradWear

Helps local grads look and feel their best for graduation ceremonies, without all the costs. Provides new and gently used outfits, plus shoes and accessories, for \$5.

A local youth who had moved to Sweden came back for prom and was able to attend because of this program. Not only did the suit fit perfectly, he was so happy with it, he wore it home from his GradWear appointment.

Total participants: 39

Program Information

Children, Youth & Families

April 2023 - March 2024

After School Tutoring Program

After school professional, one-on-one tutoring services assist students in grades 6-12 in Math and English at no cost. Light snacks are provided.

"My daughter's marks in Math are significantly better. This goes a long way in boosting her confidence, and creates a more positive experience at school. Math used to be her least favourite subject. It's not anymore."

Total participants: 31



Caring for Community at Christmas

Provides special gifts to local children and youth in low-income families. Adults receive grocery store gift cards. Christmas stockings are assembled by local Newcomers' Clubs and delivered by SOS volunteers to seniors who are isolated.

"My little boy got a bike. I thought maybe we would get a couple books, or some jammies. I would never have been able to provide a bike for him. He's going to be able to ride that for a few years to come."

Adults assisted: 1,144 Children and youth who received gifts: 1,107



Recreation Assistance for Children & Youth

Low income families receive funds to help register children and youth in recreational activities and summer camps that they would otherwise be unable to afford. The program also assists with applying for provincial sports grants.

"It has helped my son make new friends, learn new skills, and be an active part of our community. I am so very thankful for this program that betterers our children's lives."

Children & youth assisted: 177 Activities funded: 260

Program Information

Adults & Seniors

April 2023 - March 2024

Counselling Referral

Provides referrals for short-term counselling to low-income individuals, and couples. Professional counsellors help residents work through challenges and develop strategies to cope, and improve their quality of life.

"I think about so many people who never come forward to talk to a professional to help and heal. I am very grateful for the strength of empowerment I now have."

Total referrals: 136



Emergency Assistance & Advocacy

Provides help in cases of hardship with essentials like food, medicine, clothing and household items. Advocacy assistance helps residents overcome financial obstacles, and promotes self-sufficiency.

"You have literally changed my life and I can't thank you enough."

Essential assistance vouchers issued: 328

Advocacy meetings: 186 Number of showers provided: 371



Homeless Prevention Program

Assists with housing and supports for a targeted group of residents who are homeless or at immediate risk of homelessness. Eligible residents receive rental subsidies, funded by the BC Government.

"SOS is very resourceful, and they were very helpful in getting me into a place."

They check in with me regularly to see how I am. It's just been great."

Clients housed: 57 Ongoing client support: 148

Program Information

Adults & Seniors

April 2023 - March 2024

Income Tax

Provides assistance for low-income residents to file their taxes at no cost. SOS volunteers receive CRA training and file tax returns electronically.

"That program was extremely helpful because when you don't make enough money to pay someone to do your taxes, and you don't know how to do them yourself, you can't get them done."

Total participants: 1,158 Total tax returns filed: 1,577



Medical Appointment Transportation Service

Safe and friendly transportation to and from medical appointments within District 69 by SOS Volunteers.

"Thank you so very much for helping me in my time of need. I would have been really stuck without your assistance."

Number of drives: 430 Clients: 100



Meals On Wheels

This program helps residents maintain health and independence by delivering hot, nutritious meals, three times a week. The food is prepared at Arrowsmith Lodge and delivered by SOS volunteers.

"By having this dependable meal service, it ensures our parents can maintain their wishes to remain living at home as long as possible."

Meals provided: 18,582 Average monthly clients: 103

Program Information

Adults & Seniors

April 2023 - March 2024

Oceanside Better at Home

Provides a range of non-medical support services to help seniors aged 65+ remain in their own homes. The program is administered by SOS in partnership with the United Way British Columbia and funded by the Government of BC.

"I am 92 years old and I have been able to stay in my own home because of the assistance I have received from this program."

Services: Housekeeping: 1,755 Grocery Shopping: 130 Yard Work: 169 Grocery Bus: 359 Transportation: 193 Friendly Visiting: 490



Seniors' Advocacy Services

Assists seniors in finding supports and solutions through SOS programs and other resources. The program provides emergency financial aid for things like food and medicine, helps with government forms, and provides advocacy.

"You are amazing! Without your skillful expertise this would not have been possible. I am still amazed that you sailed through the bizarre obstacle course of forms."

Client appointments: 2,472 Vouchers issued for emergencies: 244



Seniors Connecting

A friendly, comfortable place to meet others and enjoy social interaction.

Participants enjoy guest speakers and refreshments.

"Seniors Connecting is very important. We don't have much of a social life and have health problems, and this is a great outing with lots of nice people."

Parksville attendances: 1,219 Members: 89

Qualicum attendances: 1,293 Members: 50



SOS Programs

Client Services



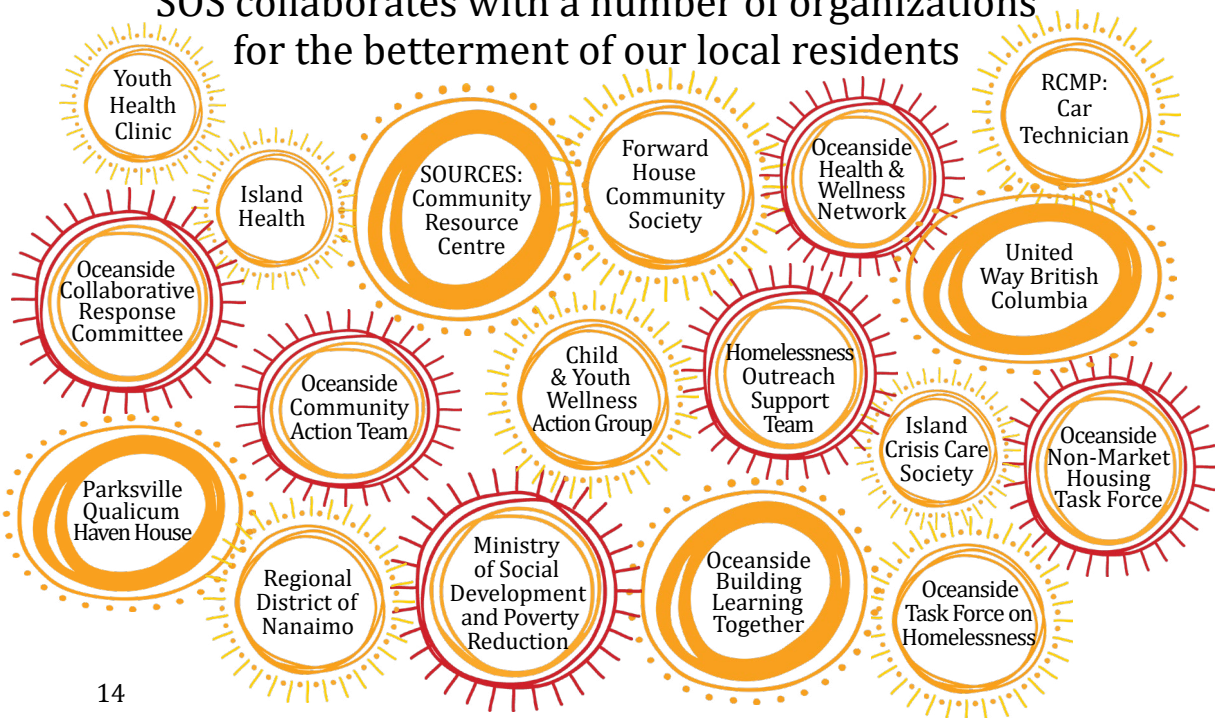
- Caring for Community at Christmas
- Counselling Referral
- Emergency Assistance & Advocacy
- Homeless Prevention Program
- Income Tax
- Meals On Wheels
- Medical Appointment Transportation Service
- Oceanside Better at Home
- Personal Growth Groups
- Seniors' Advocacy Services
- Seniors Connecting
- Shower Program

Children, Youth & Families

- After School Tutoring Program
- Intergenerational Family Night
- GradWear
- Kids Movement: Play, Express & Grow
- Recreation Assistance for Children & Youth
- School Night Out
- TICTAC
- Youth Open Space

Supporting Community Together

SOS collaborates with a number of organizations for the betterment of our local residents



Volunteering with SOS

Ellen and Brian Freestone attribute the SOS Meals On Wheels program with bringing them closer together.

Through shared smiles, Ellen says, "Driving together is a great way to further develop those important marital qualities such as patience, self-control, and graciousness!"

The couple has volunteered in the SOS Meals On Wheels program (MOW) for over two years. The meals are prepared by professional staff at Arrowsmith Lodge and the menu is created under the guidance of a certified dietitian. SOS subsidizes the meal cost keeping it affordable for clients, and SOS volunteers deliver the meals three days a week. The program is available to local residents who need help maintaining a healthy diet.

The Freestones agree, "MOW is more than just a food delivery service; it also brings a break, a conversation, and some cheer to those who may often be quite isolated. And it serves as an informal wellness check."

Brian and Ellen are now both retired and have flexible schedules, and believe MOW is



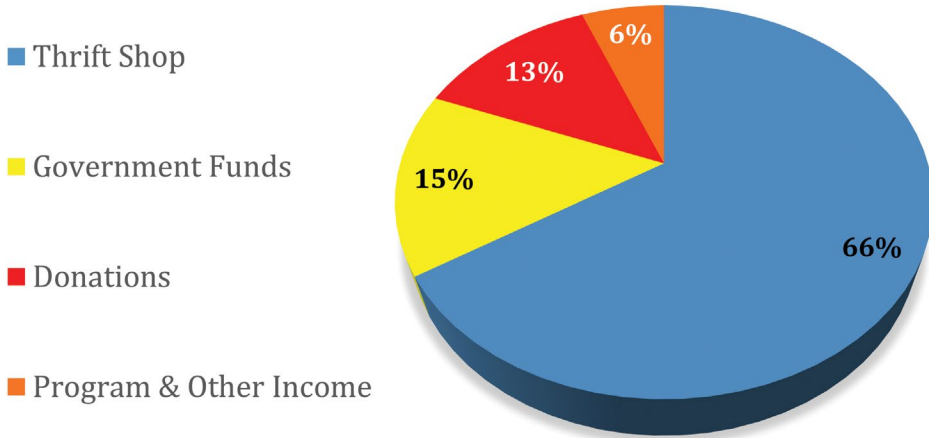
"a good way to volunteer together and give back to the community." Over the years, the couple has become familiar with their beloved route and says, "We have worked out our partnership and really enjoy our time together meeting with our SOS clients."

Ellen and Brian have made friends with fellow volunteers and MOW clients. "One of the things that we see over and over again is how people can stay in their homes longer because of a community of neighbours and organizations like SOS who are looking out for them," says Ellen. SOS is actively recruiting volunteers, to learn more or sign up, visit sosd69.com or call 250.248.2093 ext. 230.

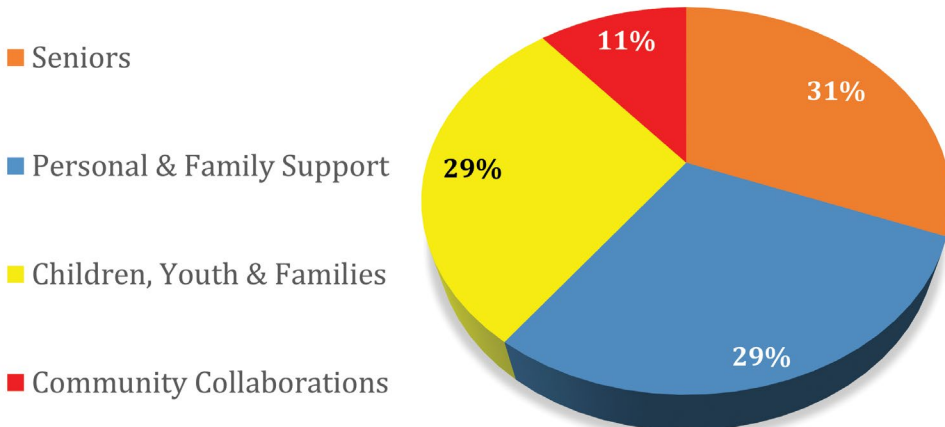


Financial Information

Revenue Sources



Program Expenses



Condensed Financial Statements

Statement of Financial Position	2024	2023
Assets:		
Current assets	\$676,295	\$467,202
Cash & short term investments - internally restricted	1,309,361	1,317,409
Long term investments	179,983	656,039
Long term investments - internally restricted	600,000	600,000
Capital assets	2,495,579	2,531,301
	\$5,261,218	\$5,571,951
Liabilities & Net Assets:		
Current liabilities	\$335,486	\$324,362
Deferred revenue	45,842	84,570
Deferred capital asset contribution	32,946	34,995
Net assets	4,846,944	5,128,024
	\$5,261,218	\$5,571,951
Statement of Operations		
Revenue:	\$4,758,835	\$4,365,150
Expenses:		
Management & administration	328,725	309,166
Programming & operations	4,611,690	4,389,720
Amortization & asset losses (gains)	99,500	110,932
Excess of revenue over expenses	\$(281,080)	\$(444,668)

A Legacy of Balancing Profit with Purpose

A fixture in our community since 1982, Quality Foods has demonstrated a proud history of feeding the stomachs and social needs of residents in our community. So when we approached them in 2021 to provide grocery gift cards to distribute to low-income individuals and families during our Caring for Community at Christmas campaign, they stepped up in a big way. In fact, they provided \$10,000 in gift cards each year for the past three years to ensure families could purchase groceries for a special holiday meal. As a proud SOS Biz for Good partner, they have also donated both sponsorship funds and auction items as the Title Sponsor for our June 7, 2024, Impact Makers Gala, with all



proceeds supporting vulnerable seniors in our community. When asked why QF feels so passionate about community involvement, Dianna Rivard, QF Executive Assistant explained that: “Being part of the community is important to us, it’s in our history and our culture, just like it is the foundation of SOS. We believe this is a perfect partnership.”

SOS Staff Teams

Staff Years of Service

5 years

Norma Artus,
Thrift Shop Merchandiser

Cynthia Burnett,
Thrift Shop Merchandiser

Pamela Smallenberg,
Thrift Shop Merchandiser



10 years

Rob Taylor,
Thrift Shop Shipper/Receiver



20 years

Jackie Brice,
Thrift Shop Operations Manager

Thrift Shop Team



Administration Team



Child, Youth & Family Programs Team





Inaugural Fundraising Gala Successful

SOS began planning for the inaugural Impact Makers Gala in late 2023, and the Gala Team's hard work came to fruition on June 7, 2024. More than 120 local impact makers helped SOS raise \$82,000 at the Gala.

"The turnout was great, and the entertainment was spectacular," said Susanna Newton, SOS Executive Director.

The event raised money to support vulnerable seniors to age in place, stay connected with others, and receive financial support during emergencies. The event was held at Tigh-Na-Mara Seaside Spa Resort & Conference Centre. It began with welcome bubbles and appetizers with the sounds of jazz music by Gary Lovell in the background. Guests bid on 27 incredible silent auction packages donated by supporters.

Past SOS Director Don Dempson and Chief Michael Recalma of Qualicum First Nation gave opening remarks and then guests indulged in a gourmet dinner. After dessert, the crowd



enjoyed entertainment by Tom Jackson, a renowned Canadian actor, musician, activist, and Companion of the Order of Canada. One lucky winner won a raffle prize of brunch for two with Tom and Alison Jackson at Cedar's Restaurant. Susanna said it was wonderful to see the community engage in the online auction and raffle, and attend and enjoy the event.

"Every dollar from the Gala goes to SOS programs that support our local seniors, so Thank You to our community, the sponsors and everyone who attended and participated!" she said.





District 69 Society of Organized Services

245 Hirst Avenue West | PO Box 898 Parksville BC V9P 2G9 | 250-248-2093

744 Primrose Street | Qualicum Beach BC | 250-752-2040

sos@sosd69.com | www.sosd69.com |   

Charitable Number: 107021537RR0001