

# Annual Report – 2024/25 Highlights





# Executive Director's Message

2024/25 has marked a significant period of growth for PCLA. We proudly expanded our services with the addition of Henderson House in Coquitlam and Rainbow Lodge in Burnaby, representing our most substantial program expansion since 2007. These new sites reflect our ongoing commitment to meeting the evolving needs of individuals living with mental health challenges across the Lower Mainland.

We were also very fortunate to receive major support from community foundations, enabling us to launch the Serene Spaces Project, a wonderful initiative that funded new bedroom furnishings across all residential sites. These upgrades have brought dignity, and therapeutic benefit to the environments our residents call home.

This year, we also deepened our partnerships. Our longstanding collaboration with UBC's Faculty of Dentistry continued to flourish, with students providing free on-site dental hygiene services to residents. Our work with BCIT's Nursing Program remained strong, offering meaningful psychiatric nursing practicums. Additionally, we were proud to launch a new partnership with Puretone Hearing Services, bringing accessible audiology care directly into our communities. We also embraced innovation through the implementation of a new Client Management System. This technology enhancement improves data-driven decision-making, and supports our commitment to evidence-informed practice, positioning PCLA to better respond to future opportunities.

As we reflect on the year, we do so with gratitude for the dedication of our staff, who continue to deliver person-centered, inclusive support with compassion; and pride in the partnerships and trust we've built with government, healthcare, and community funders. We also extend a sincere thank you to our Board of Directors for their invaluable guidance and support. Together, we are responding to the current mental health landscape and shaping a stronger future for those we serve.

Michael Kierszenblat, PCLA – Executive Director



# Board President's Message

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As the President of the Board of Directors of Pioneer Community Living Association (PCLA), I want to thank staff, volunteers, funders, partners, community supporters, and fellow board members for being part of our journey this past year.

Mental health continues to be one of the most pressing and complex challenges of our time. In the face of ongoing uncertainty and increasing demand for services, our association has remained steadfast in its mission: Supporting individuals on their journey to independence and mental health wellness.

This year, I am proud to report that we have made significant progress in many areas, with specific emphasis on strengthening the partnerships among funders and increasing our financial stability, both of which allows an expansion of the health and well being impact to existing and new residents associated with PCLA.

The leadership team has continued to push for meaningful systems changes and our board has remained committed to good governance, strategic visioning, and strong stewardship of our resources. I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to our Executive Director, Michael Kierszenblat - whose leadership has been instrumental in guiding our work and inspiring our collective impact.

Looking ahead, we know the need is growing - but so too is the opportunity. With the continued support of our stakeholders, we will keep advocating, innovating, expanding and building a future where mental health is understood, supported, and valued. Your trust, your time, and your belief in our mission are so important to our collective efforts. Together, we are making a difference.

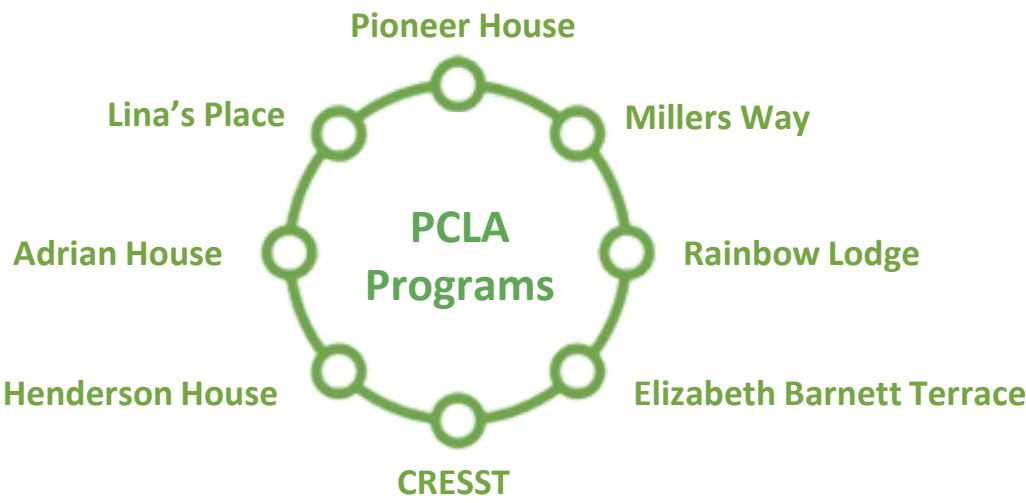
Scott Roberts, PCLA – Board President



Pioneer Community Living Association (PCLA) is a not-for-profit mental health organization dedicated to providing innovative housing and support services for individuals living with mild to complex mental illness. Since 1982, we have supported more than 350 individuals annually through a continuum of care that spans short-stay crisis intervention, assisted living, and supported independent housing.

This year, PCLA residents stayed deeply engaged in their communities. Our person-centered programs, grounded in psychosocial rehabilitation, build independence and meaningful community connections. With a dedicated team and strong partnerships, PCLA empowers individuals to live with dignity, pursue personal goals, and thrive in safe, inclusive environments.

PCLA’s spectrum of mental health housing spans 8 properties and ranges from short-term crisis intervention to supported independent living. As the mental health of our residents varies, with many having serious and persistent mental health symptoms, we offer a range of services to meet their needs



## Vision

Sharing a vision toward independence that is personalized, realistic, and holistic.

## Mission

Supporting individuals on their journey to independence and mental health wellness.

## Land Acknowledgment

We would like to recognize that we are conducting our business today on the traditional, ancestral and unceded shared territories of the q̓w̓a:n̓ ǻ̓ ən [Kwantlen] and Qayqayt [key-kite] First Nations, and home to the North Fraser Métis Association



# Snapshot of Organizational and Client Success

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**125,556** hours of direct care provided.



**53** clients benefitted from our on-site Dental Hygiene and Audiology Programs.



**358** clients placed and supported across our programs and locations.



**90%** of clients feel safe and respected at their residences.



**87%** of clients placed in our longer stay programs are engaged in recreational, volunteering, employment, and educational opportunities.



**89%** of clients note they are very satisfied with the PCLA staff support.



**35** student nursing and social worker post-secondary practicums completed.



**87%** of clients feel optimistic about their recovery journeys.



# Donor Impact Highlight: The Serene Spaces Project

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## Transforming Living Spaces for Wellness

In 2024, thanks to the extraordinary generosity of the Al Roadburg Foundation and the Y.P. Heung Foundation, we launched the Serene Spaces Project. This initiative aimed to significantly improve the quality of life for residents facing moderate to severe mental health challenges.

The project directly addressed feedback from resident and family focus groups, which highlighted a strong need for more peaceful, accessible, and dignified personal spaces. Understanding these needs, we embarked on refurbishing bedrooms across all PCLA facilities.

With this necessary support from both foundations, we were able to transform 67 resident bedrooms in our PCLA homes. These upgrades included new bariatric beds, dressers, desks, mattresses, and calming decor. Every element was carefully chosen to promote comfort, dignity, accessibility, and mental wellness. Each site received personalized attention, ensuring the newly designed spaces met the unique therapeutic and practical needs of its residents.

The impact of these improvements has been profound, especially for residents managing anxiety, mobility challenges, or a history of trauma. These essential upgrades would not have been possible without the support of our donors. Their contributions enhance the physical environment and reinforced residents' sense of stability and self-worth.





# Year in Review: Henderson House - A Giving Community

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Henderson House, one of PCLA's newest supported residential programs in Coquitlam, provides a safe and nurturing home for individuals living with mental illness. This past year has seen remarkable growth, driven by residents and staff who are building meaningful connections that extend beyond its walls.

An example of this is our participation in the City of Coquitlam's Adopt-A-Street program. What began spontaneously with a resident collecting litter during a park visit has blossomed into a collective purpose. Residents now take pride in maintaining neighborhood streets, transforming a simple gesture into profound environmental stewardship and community ownership.

Cinema Fridays remain a cherished weekly tradition, bringing residents together. These moments of connection, coupled with structured support, empower residents in their independence and mental health wellness journey.

As one resident, Joshua, shared, "The staff are amazing. Henderson is very upscale. I feel at home here." Another resident, Jack, reflected, "Henderson House is an amazing place. It has helped me overcome lots of emotions and challenges... I know now how to control and cope with my anxieties and emotions in a healthier way."

Henderson House is more than a residence; it's a place where healing is nurtured, contributions are valued, and every individual feels supported, safe, and seen.



# CRESST: Stabilization and Comfort Short Term Support

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## Community Response and Enhanced Support Stabilization Team

CRESST provides safe, short-term crisis stabilization in a home-like environment, reducing trauma while maintaining dignity. CRESST serves as a bridge between acute care and community support, helping individuals regroup and build foundations for wellness. By diverting appropriate cases from hospitals, the program reduces emergency room pressure while offering more cost-effective, person-centered care.

Through structured programming and one-on-one support, residents develop essential coping tools and gain insight. Staff build meaningful connections that often become turning points in recovery. CRESST is a launchpad that meets individuals in crisis and guides them toward hope and stability.

This year, CRESST underwent a transformative refresh thanks to generous donor contributions. Every client room was re-furnished with new beds, desks, lamps, blinds, and a fresh coat of paint, creating a more welcoming and comfortable environment for those in crisis. Facility-wide updates also included new paint for common areas, upgraded living room furniture and enhanced amenities.

These improvements enhance the therapeutic atmosphere and provide dignity and comfort during a vulnerable time in clients' lives. While the stays at CRESST may be brief, the care and environment leave a lasting impression.





# Celebrating Staff: Barb Rutherford

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For over 25 years, Barb Rutherford has been a trusted presence at PCLA whose calm energy and deep compassion have touched the lives of countless residents and staff. Barb first joined PCLA in a part-time weekend role. Eight years later, Barb moved into a full-time position. "It offered stability, and it came at the right time," she shares. "It felt like the universe aligned."

Today, Barb participates in morning meetings, helps run community check-ins, and provides gentle support to residents. "I've seen some clients return, and when they recognize me, there's comfort in that," she says. "They know the place is clean, safe, and that someone cares."

With financial support from PCLA's Employee Educational Fund and encouragement from colleagues, Barb enrolled in a Mental Health Worker Course. "I've wanted to do this for years, but with an autistic son who needed support, there just wasn't time," she explains. Now, with her son thriving at university, Barb found her moment. "I'm near retirement, but I want to finish strong, with something that furthers what I already do every day."

What keeps Barb motivated after 25 years? "The people," she says without hesitation. "I've made close friends here, and the clients are wonderful. When they come back and see a familiar face - it means something." She values being part of residents' wellness journeys, understanding that compassion can make all the difference.



**We are lucky to have Barb as part of the PCLA family, both clients and colleagues will continue to benefit from her generous heart and unwavering belief in everyone's potential to heal and grow.**



**PIONEER COMMUNITY LIVING ASSOCIATION**

# Celebrating Staff: Kebede Abate

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Kebede Abate has been a constant, caring presence at PCCLA for more than two decades. A true community leader, Kebede brings deep compassion and lived experience to every role he takes on, whether it's supporting PCCLA clients, mentoring new immigrants, or sending medical aid overseas.

Kebede joined PCCLA in 2002 while completing his diploma in mental health. "I started on weekends, just Saturday and Sunday," he recalls. "Now, it's been 24 years, and I'm still here because I love the people." That love extends far beyond his work at PCCLA.

Originally from Ethiopia, Kebede came to Canada as refugee in 1999 and quickly became a leader in his new Canadian community, serving as:

- Chairperson of the Ethiopian Community Association
- President of the Human Rights Commission of BC
- Chair of the African Descent Society

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Kebede coordinated the shipment of eight 40-foot containers of medical supplies to war-affected areas in Ethiopia, with help from local community leaders. He also supports and mentors newcomers adjusting to life in Canada - often in one of the seven languages he speaks.

In 2025, Kebede was awarded the King Charles III Coronation Medal, recognizing his decades of service. But he remains modest: "I don't work for awards or money. I work because helping people - that is my culture. That is my heart."



**At 72, Kebede continues to work at PCCLA and shows no signs of slowing down. His presence is foundational to the spirit of care and community that PCCLA is proud to represent.**

# Partnership Highlight: Puretone Hearing

This year, PCLA was proud to initiate a new partnership with Puretone Hearing Clinic, a local audiology provider dedicated to making hearing care accessible. Puretone generously donated their services, with their audiologists visiting several PCLA residential sites to offer on-site hearing assessments, hearing aid fittings, cleanings, and follow-up care.

By bringing professional audiology support directly into our spaces, Puretone has eliminated key barriers to care, ensuring that residents are supported in regaining access to the sounds of daily life. Sessions have already had a noticeable impact: residents who had been living with undiagnosed or untreated hearing loss are now receiving the devices and support they need. Staff have also observed improvements in communication, engagement, and overall well-being. Restored hearing directly contributes to enhanced social interaction, greater participation in daily activities, and an improved quality of life.

We are deeply grateful to Puretone Hearing Clinic for their professionalism, warmth, and commitment to accessibility. This invaluable donation exemplifies the kind of community-based, wraparound care that aligns with PCLA's mission of promoting independence and holistic wellness.

***"They're really amazing clinicians and a wonderful resource to have."***

**- Vanessa, PCLA Team Member**





# Partnership Highlight: BCIT Nursing Placements

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PCLA has continued its partnership with the BCIT Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program, providing nursing students with experience in community-based mental health care.

During the 2024/2025 fiscal year, there were 27 placements across our locations. This collaboration offers students a unique practicum placement at PCLA sites, where they engage directly with residents living with moderate to complex mental health challenges. This hands-on approach exposes students to the delivery of person-centered support outside traditional hospital environments.

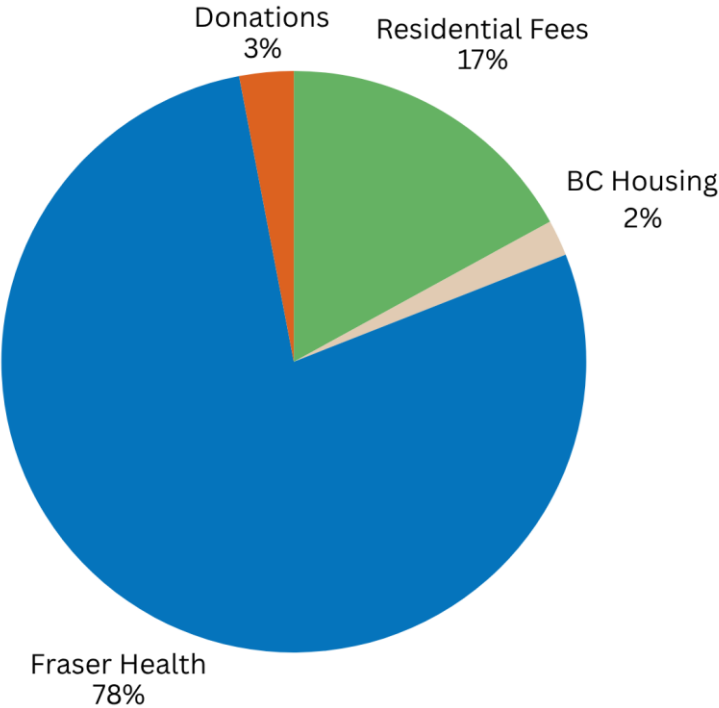
The partnership helps shape a new generation of nurses who are clinically capable and grounded in empathy, trauma-informed care, and relational practice.

***“During [my time] at Miller’s Way, I connected with most of the residents through simple, everyday activities. This experience highlighted the impact of active listening for therapeutic relationships. I now understand that being present, creating a safe space, and being consistent can be more powerful than I had ever imagined...This rotation has deepened my commitment to learning and advocating for mental health care.”***

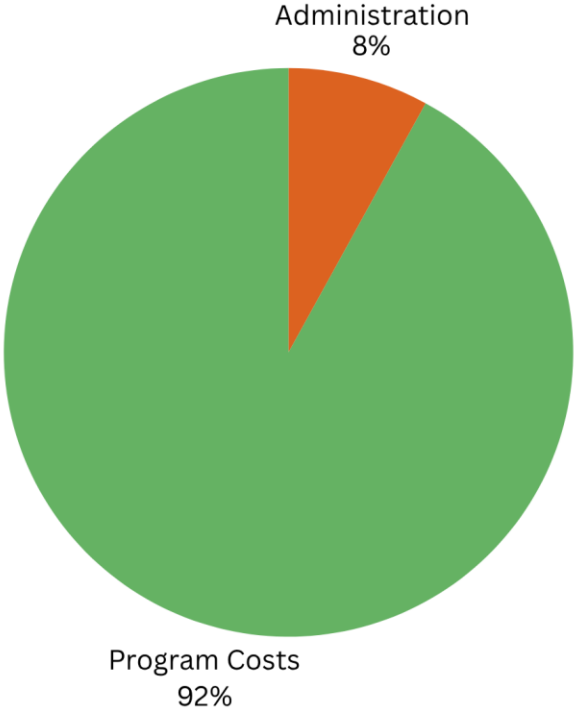
**- Antonella (Toni) Jones RN, MSN**



## Revenue \$8,750,022



## Expenses \$7,934,283



As we conclude another successful year, we would like your continued support. Your donations directly transform lives, empower communities, and create lasting change. Please consider contributing today and join us in our mission to provide innovative housing and support to people with moderate to complex mental illness.

Please donate via our website [here](#).

**Thank you for believing in our work!**





# Our Year in Pictures

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PIONEER COMMUNITY LIVING ASSOCIATION



## Our Funders



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## Implementation Partners

