

**2024**



# **Annual Report**



# Executive Report

This past year, QCEWS incubated yet another non-profit society. A program known as Brain-Body Fitness - developed within the **Universal Access Qualicum Beach Roundtable** - evolved into the **Oceanside Integrated Fitness Society (OIFS)**. We appreciate the leadership of **Darwin Fraser** and **Linda Fraser** in establishing OIFS and their ongoing commitment to providing this valuable service. The **Universal Access Qualicum Beach Roundtable** continues to advocate for accessibility in our community, with **Dianna Lamonte's** passion and dedication driving its efforts over the past year.

The **Social Connections Roundtable**, led by **Bernie Brochu**, had a successful year, hosting a number of Pop-Ups that sparked spontaneous conversations throughout Oceanside.

The **Early Learning & Childcare Council for Oceanside (ELCCO)** Roundtable continues under the experienced leadership of **Carol O'Connor**. ELCCO received a grant from **SPARC BC** to support research and community initiatives focused on recruitment and retention in the early learning and childcare sector. Under this grant, the Roundtable concentrated on local strategies to build capacity and enhance skills within existing programs, while also exploring new service models. Carol has also played an essential role in supporting Into The Woods Early Learning Childcare Studio. We appreciate the crucial funding support from **Lorraine Copas**, Executive Director, **SPARC BC**.

This year was marked by organizational review and development. Bernie Brochu initiated a partnership between QCEWS and **Scale Collaborative**, allowing us to participate in the **Thriving Non-Profits** and the **McConnell Foundation's Innoweave** programs, and hold a strategic planning session. We also acknowledge Sharon Tomczyk for her valuable role in our organizational review and development work.

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to **Lorna Gray** for her years of dedication to the Board and her invaluable service as Secretary. Another special thank you to **Stacey Mrack** for diligently managing our finances as Treasurer, alongside her other contributions to the Board. Thank you to **Jared Shaw** for stepping into the role as QCEWS vice-chair.

Looking ahead, we are excited to consolidate our organizational development efforts into Board renewal, the launch of effective Support Teams, and the promotion of QCEWS. As we continue this work, we remain committed to making a meaningful difference in the quality of life for all community members within Oceanside.

In CommUNITY

**Chair, Bill Preston**

# Infrastructure Development

Participation in the **Thriving Non-Profits and Innoweave** programs prompted QCEWS to evaluate its vision and organizational and infrastructure processes. The group examined whether its **mission and vision** accurately reflected their daily work, and assessed their monetary assets, equipment, and human capital.

- In June 2024, a **strategic planning session** led by **Lee Heron** discussed QCEWS's future direction and volunteer expectations, highlighting the need to update volunteer roles. Consequently, members began redefining executive roles and committees, (round and side tables) and developing a process to evaluate new initiatives.

The **QCEWS website** received a complete overhaul with a move to a new hosting provider, resulting in an aesthetically pleasing site with streamlined navigation. A special thanks to **Luc Brochu** for his significant contributions to this project.

## Innoweave Coaching

In 2023 QCEWS was successful in securing support in the form of an **Innoweave grant** from the McConnell Foundation to provide QCEWS with an experienced coach to help us manage the financing of QCEWS broadly and more specifically our adapted fitness project. The pilot phase of this project which ran for 6 months in 2023 was called **BrainBody Fitness (BBF)** which has since become its own non-profit called Oceanside Integrated Fitness (OIF). We were able to use this coaching support to help us better plan and fund this QCEWS initiative as well as expand routes to more prospective QCEWS funding sources. During this process QCEWS we reflected on our most notable successes and have begun to **re-imagine our organizational model** as non-profit incubator, that is, we support community members to form their own projects or non-profit organizations in response to demonstrated community needs.



## Thriving Non-Profits Training

Three QCEWS members participated in a five-month **Thriving Non-Profits** program. This program taught funding strategies for nonprofits and charities, including fee for service, social enterprise, asset mobilization, partnerships, and revenue diversification. The aim was to **improve fund mobilization** within QCEWS and provide enhanced support for partners.

## Social Connections



This Roundtable is intended as the hub for events and projects that encourage **social engagement** among people who live, work, study and play in the Oceanside area. In 2024 our primary activity was the **Conversation Nook pop up**. This involved setting up a sun/rain shelter with chairs and signs encouraging passerby to simply stop by and chat with a pop up

In the summer of 2024, we participated in six of the **QB Thursday night markets**. Since then we have experimented with winter pop ups which have also been well received. The idea guiding the Conversation Nook pop ups to demonstrate the human need for **face-to-face conversations** thereby increasing level of trust in our communities. The Conversation Nooks are cheerful, convivial gathering spots with people sharing a moment in time.—**Bernie Brochu**



## Save the Commons

QCEWS volunteers worked collaboratively within a community group called Save the Commons. This grassroots community group formed in response to the Qualicum School District's call for input on the best uses for the Qualicum and Craig Street Commons. It developed a proposal submitted to the Qualicum School District in October 2024 to try and keep these sites from being closed or sold. A closure of these sites would cause the disruption of community groups, services and activities that take place at there.

## Collaborations and Contributions

# Early Learning Child Care Council for Oceanside (ELCCO)



ELCCO began 2024 with the goal of establishing a web presence. This provided the infrastructure to promote the additional grant funding that **SPARC (Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia)** had provided to continue the **Recruitment and Retention** project. With the support of a web designer and administrative assistant, a **website and logo** were developed and with a free Microsoft 365 package we were able the introduction of the first survey on the website in May 2024. (<https://elcco.ca/>) The survey was developed to meet the needs of local government liaisons, determining the current childcare needs within the Oceanside area. The survey was developed with feedback for stakeholders and hosted on the ELCCO website. Actions taken to promote the website and survey:

- The ELCCO tent at the May **Qualicum Family Day** was shared with the Wonderful World of Books.
- Cards were printed to hand to families with the link to ELCCO website and Survey as well as promote the \$10aDay Action Petition - **Child Care Coalition of Advocates of BC**
- Email messages were sent to ELCCO members and family day homes asking educators to promote the website/ survey to the families on their childcare waitlists. Other Advocacy work: ELCCO in response to the SD69 Requesting for Public input into the disposition of French Creek Elementary School, highlighted the need for more childcare and the Ministry of Education and Childcare's commitment to utilizing school property for childcare and social housing. (See website of letter) Letters were sent to the **Town of Qualicum Beach, City of Parksville** highlighting the OCP actions recommended in the **ChildCare Needs Assessment Action Plan**, to support childcare. (Letter can be found on the ELCCO website) Regular scheduled Zoom meetings were planned monthly until June, the remainder of the year there were no meetings as the Chair was not available. Looking forward to reenergizing in 2025, as there is still much work to do.

**Carol O'Connor - ELCCO Chair**



# Brain Body Fitness 4 All (BBF4A)

Submitted by Stacey Mrack & Lorna Gray

Following the successful completion of the **Brain Body Fitness Pilot Project** in October 2023, we recognized the critical need for an adaptive gym in our community. To continue the program, we secured a **\$15,000 grant from SPARC BC** in November 2023, launching the **Bridging Project** under the name **Brain Body Fitness 4 All (BBF4A)**.

With Bill's support, we partnered with personal trainer **Kaeden Letcher**, who was contracted for six months to run gym sessions **three times per week** at **Qualicum Commons, Room 12**. Kaeden, whose mother, **Holly Carnegie Letcher**, was a key member of **Universal Access Qualicum Beach (UAQB)**, re-engaged past participants, and by February, the gym was fully operational with **12–17 attendees weekly**.

In March, funding from the **Huka Bike sale** and a **Coastal Community Credit Union grant** enabled us to purchase two essential pieces of adaptive gym equipment: a **Functional Trainer** from Fitness Etc. and a **Step One Recumbent Stepper** from Ortho Canada.

As the Bridging Project neared completion in April, we sought a long-term solution to sustain the program. Founding UAQB members **Darwin Fraser & Linda Feil** had expressed interest in continuing the initiative and developed a new non-profit, **Oceanside Integrated Fitness Society (OIFS)**. After several meetings and close collaboration, we successfully transitioned BBF4A to OIFS on **August 15, 2024**. They now operate the gym **at Qualicum Commons, Room 12**, ensuring its ongoing service to the community

