



# 2020 Annual Report

Volunteer Grandparents



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## A Message from the Chair

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As a chair of the board of Volunteer Grandparents, I found myself thinking about stability and commitment and the two main themes for this year's annual report, particularly in this COVID-19 times. We are steadfastly committed to our mission, "to bridge and enrich the generations by fostering intergenerational understanding, communication and cooperation between the generations".

Through the skilled program leadership of Veronica Grossi, we delivered yet another year of excellent programming - albeit virtually. I would like to expressly acknowledge the 'supporting seniors letter writing campaign' which was funded by the Government of Canada which has made a significant difference in the lives of those it has touched. In step with this program activity, we have experienced a noticeable increase in volunteer engagement and a general increase in community support. This in turn has led to more value for our participants and an increase in community awareness and support.

I am pleased to report that our funding streams remain stable. I'd like to say a big 'thank you ' to our funders, the City of Burnaby, BC Gaming and the Federal Government for their continued support in our hour of need. On behalf of our members, I want to assure you that you have made a huge difference in our community through your investments.

As I look back on our successes this year, I also want to recognize the immeasurable contributions from our volunteers, our staff, and our Board of Directors. The program participants who connect with our society every day inspire and humble us. I honour them for their enduring commitment to establishing intergenerational bonds and for building a stronger community.

Now, more than ever in this time of COVID-19, and the social isolation, we know categorically that our intergenerational programming matters. We are in this together and we will get through this together. Be kind. Be calm. Be safe.

Woosang Lee, Chair  
Volunteer Grandparents

# 2020 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

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2020 has been unlike any year in our 48 year history. From the start of this pandemic, Volunteer Grandparents worked hard to do our part to 'flatten the curve' and keep our members safe. In the summer of 2020, Radhika Patel created a guide highlighting ways to remain connected in a safe way during the pandemic. Additionally, our staff and Board Members worked and met remotely throughout the year. In the face of adversity, we were able to shift our enriching mentoring programs to the most vulnerable of populations, seniors residing in care homes, by initiating a Letters to Seniors Program. We also distributed the Florio Bursary in 2020 to enhance the well-being for youth in our community.



## CANADA SUMMER JOBS FUNDING

Radhika, our Program Developer, was hired through Canada Summer Jobs Funding for a 10 week work term. One of her main tasks was to create the framework and launch our new initiative, our Letters to Seniors Program. Participating in this program involves sending kind letters/drawings to isolated seniors living in care homes. The second phase of the program involves matching youth to seniors in a pen pal relationship.



Ava, our Administrative and Marketing Assistant, worked passionately on editing and improving our legacy book, Growing from the Roots. Thanks to an In-Kind Printing Grant received from the City of Burnaby we were able to reprint our cherished book. She was also involved in keeping our social media sites up to date and launching our Florio Bursary Program.

## VOLUNTEER GRANDPARENTS' FLORIO BURSARY RECIPIENTS

In 2020 our focus for the Florio Bursary was on youth mental wellness and connections. Funds were dispersed to youth to enable individuals to enhance their computer technology and internet access, participate in art and dance classes, and provide support with tutoring. With the help of the Government of Canada and the United Way of the Lower Mainland, we were also able to extend the Bursary and offer it to more members of our community through our partnership with MOSAIC. The total amount of funds dispersed in 2020 was \$1975 to 10 well deserving youth.

**Canada**

Funded by the  
Government of Canada

**United Way**  
Lower Mainland

Administered by United Way  
of the Lower Mainland



# LETTERS TO SENIORS

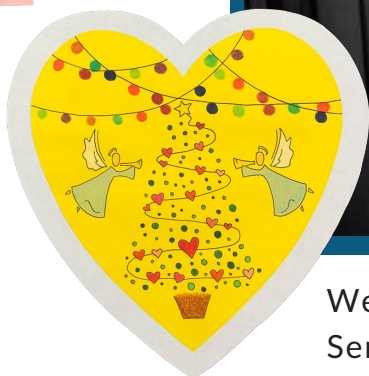
In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, staying connected with others was more important than ever. Falling under our mission to bridge and enrich generations, in the summer of 2020, we initiated a new program aiding the creation of intergenerational connections within the community in a safe and engaging manner. Our new program called Letters to Seniors involves supporting isolated seniors with encouraging, meaningful handwritten letters sent by volunteers of all ages. The program consists of two phases:

Phase One: Volunteers of all ages send drawings / short cheerful cards / letters to us for isolated seniors

Phase Two: Youth and seniors who are eager to build a connection with one another join the pen-pal format of the program, where they send letters back and forth and discuss their interests, hobbies, etc.



Between July 2020 and December 2020, 255 volunteers registered for our Letters to Seniors Program. During that same time frame, 13 of our community partners distributed 1152 messages and drawings of hope to isolated seniors that they serve. Additionally 45 seniors and youth participated in the Pen Pal phase of the program.



We received media coverage of our busy Letters to Seniors Program by CBC on Christmas Day.

Photo Credit: Ben Nelms/CBC



## Board of Directors

Woosang Lee, Chair  
Sarah Fantin, Vice-Chair  
Jeff Scheffel, Director  
Kami Grovue, Director  
Sally Kann, Director

## Staff

Dave Baspaly, Executive Director  
Veronica Grossi, Program Manager

## THANK YOU

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL OF OUR VOLUNTEERS, FAMILIES, FUNDERS,  
PARTNERS AND DONORS. YOUR SUPPORT AND GENEROSITY ENABLED OUR  
SUCCESS IN 2020!

## SPECIAL THANKS TO...

THE PROVINCE OF BC: COMMUNITY GAMING BRANCH  
THE CITY OF BURNABY FOR THEIR IN-KIND PRINTING GRANTS  
CANADA SUMMER JOBS  
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF CANADA



Funded by the  
Government of Canada



Administered by United Way  
of the Lower Mainland

"OUR MISSION IS TO BRIDGE AND ENRICH THE GENERATIONS BY  
FOSTERING INTERGENERATIONAL UNDERSTANDING, COMMUNICATION  
AND COOPERATION BETWEEN THE GENERATIONS."



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