



2023 Annual Report

Volunteer Grandparents



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A Message from the Chair

2023 was a year where we continued our process of rebuilding and rebounding. We continued to market our programs in the community and regained program awareness. Our programs and services continue to build back from the low engagement that was experienced throughout the pandemic. I am happy to report that our Letters to Seniors Program has remained consistently popular.

Thanks to Verona Grossi's continued heroic efforts and commitments to intergenerational programming, Volunteer Grandparents is strong in its three main areas of service: The Volunteer Match Program, The School Match Program, and the Letter Writing Campaign to Seniors.

I want to thank our funders for their generous donations. Thank you to the City of Burnaby for its community contributions and the Provincial Government for its Community Gaming resources. Without these investments, we would be unable to deliver vital programs and services.

Finally, I want to thank Veronica for her dedication and tremendous efforts and my fellow Board members for their strong leadership. We look forward to continuing to grow our intergenerational programming and building stronger volunteer relationships within the City of Burnaby and across the province.

Most importantly, thank you for being our members. Thank you for your volunteering and participating in intergenerational services.

Woosang Lee,
President of the Board

2023 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

In 2023 we continued to offer our three main programs in our community: the Family Match Program, our School Grandparent Program and our Letters To Seniors Program.

On May 25th, 2023, Volunteer Grandparents held its Annual General Meeting at the Shadbolt Centre. In addition to reviewing the year gone by, the AGM was an opportunity to celebrate a very special milestone - **Volunteer Grandparents' 50th Anniversary**. The Board, Volunteer Grandparents' staff, and our beloved community came together to honor the organization's legacy, watch a special video tribute, and enjoy an amazing cake!



In celebration of Volunteer Grandparents' 50th anniversary, it was important to go back to the beginning and recognize the hard work of our founder, Marjorie Anderson. The passion and love from Marjorie Anderson set the tone for the work that we continue to this day. She strongly believed in the importance of older adults and the power of intergenerational connections.

“How can children, without the benefit of at least one older person, grow up to feel that they belong, are part of the continuum of mankind, are part of something larger, and hence become adults responsible for part of that?”

- Marjorie Anderson

Volunteer Grandparents would like to express our deep gratitude to the City of Burnaby for providing us with funding and always being a strong source of support for the organization and our mission.

In 2023 the City of Burnaby proudly proclaimed September 10th as Grandparents Day. Volunteer Grandparents is thankful for their support and shared belief in the importance of grandparents and the strength of intergenerational connections.



Bridging Generations

LETTERS TO SENIORS

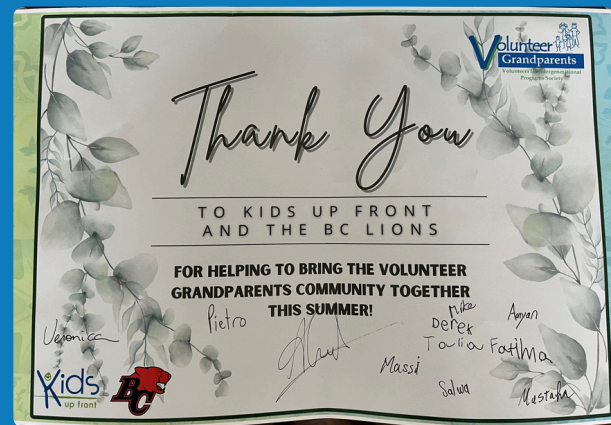
In 2023, a total of 722 letters were created in our Letters To Seniors Program: 579 of these were handmade cards, drawings, and letters sent by participants in Phase 1 of the program, while 143 were longer letters exchanged between senior and youth pen pals taking part in Phase 2 of our program.

Special thanks to Thomas, a wonderful volunteer who helped us review and sort the Phase 1 letters in December.



SUMMER EVENT 2023

On Saturday, July 22nd, Volunteer Grandparents held its 2023 Summer Event at the BC Lions Game. We thank Kids Up Front Vancouver and the BC Lions for providing tickets to our members and giving our community the opportunity to come together and cheer on the Lions to a 19-9 victory over the Roughriders.



~ SOME OF THE ATTENDEES SIGNED A THANK YOU CARD FOR KIDS UP FRONT AND THE BC LIONS ~



Rachelle Patille, M.A. in Gerontology at Simon Fraser University

In 2023, we partnered with Rachelle Patille who completed her thesis research on our program. She connected with senior volunteer mentors and past youth participants in our Family Match Program to learn more about the importance of intergenerational connections.

“I would like to take a moment to sincerely thank all of the volunteer grandparents and youth who took part in my thesis research. Your experiences and points of view are necessary to create more intergenerational programs and improve opportunities like this across our province and country!”
Rachelle Patille



“YOU DON’T HAVE TO BE RELATED TO BE FAMILY”: AN INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAM IN METRO VANCOUVER

RACHELLE PATILLE, MA

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

Explore how **long-term community-based, nonfamilial intergenerational opportunities**, like the Family Match, impact the lives of **participants of all ages** as well as gain a deeper understanding of the **organizational attributes of intergenerational programming**.

PARTICIPANT OVERVIEW

- 5 younger adults**
 - 60% male
 - 40% female
 - 60% Caucasian
 - 40% Asian
 - 16-22 years old
- 4 older adults**
 - 100% female
 - 75% Caucasian
 - 25% Asian
 - 75-84 years old
- 1 program provider**

KEY FINDINGS

- Flexible and participant-led** programming creates **choice, control, and agency** among participants
- Participants **use boundaries** to keep unsupportive biological relationships and friendships “separate” from the volunteer grandparent-grandchild relationship to protect all relations
- Volunteer kinships transcend** beyond volunteer grandparent-grandchild relationships as multigenerational relationships are cultivated **expanding participants' social support networks** and family
- Parents act as a gatekeeper** to the volunteer grandparent-grandchild relationship and contribute to **relationship maintenance and longevity** by keeping communication channels active with the volunteer grandparents
- Volunteer grandparents'** expression of **generativity** contributes to their volunteer grandchildren's **personal growth, skill and character development**, and **decision-making**.
- Parental separation, family dynamics, physical distance**, and the COVID-19 pandemic **actively strained** the volunteer grandparent-grandchild relationship
- Technology** creates a **bi-directional communication** channel between volunteer grandchildren and grandchild during periods of time/or distance apart.
- Participants gained exposure and purposeful contact** with **different generations** where they **shared cultures and perspectives** enhancing their **acceptance of diversity** while creating and maintaining a long-term volunteer kinship.

Board of Directors

Woosang Lee, Chair
Sarah Fantin, Vice-Chair
Jeff Scheffel, Director
Kami Grovue, Director
Sally Olarte, Director
Pat Thomas, Director
Mackenzie Hoff-Bell, Director

Staff

Dave Baspaly, Executive Director
Veronica Grossi, Program Manager

We would like to thank all our volunteers, families, members, and community partners. Your support and generosity enabled our success in 2023!

Additionally we would like to extend a special thank you to our partners and funders, specifically the City of Burnaby, BC Community Gaming, and Kids Up Front Vancouver. With your support, you have ensured that our programs continued to serve our community.



Burnaby is located on the ancestral and unceded homelands of the hə́ŋqəmiŋə́m and Sḵw̓xwú7mesh speaking peoples. Volunteer Grandparents is grateful for the opportunity to work and live on this territory.



“Our mission is to *bridge and enrich the generations* by fostering intergenerational understanding, communication and cooperation between the generations.”

CHARITY NUMBER: 108186347 RR0001